

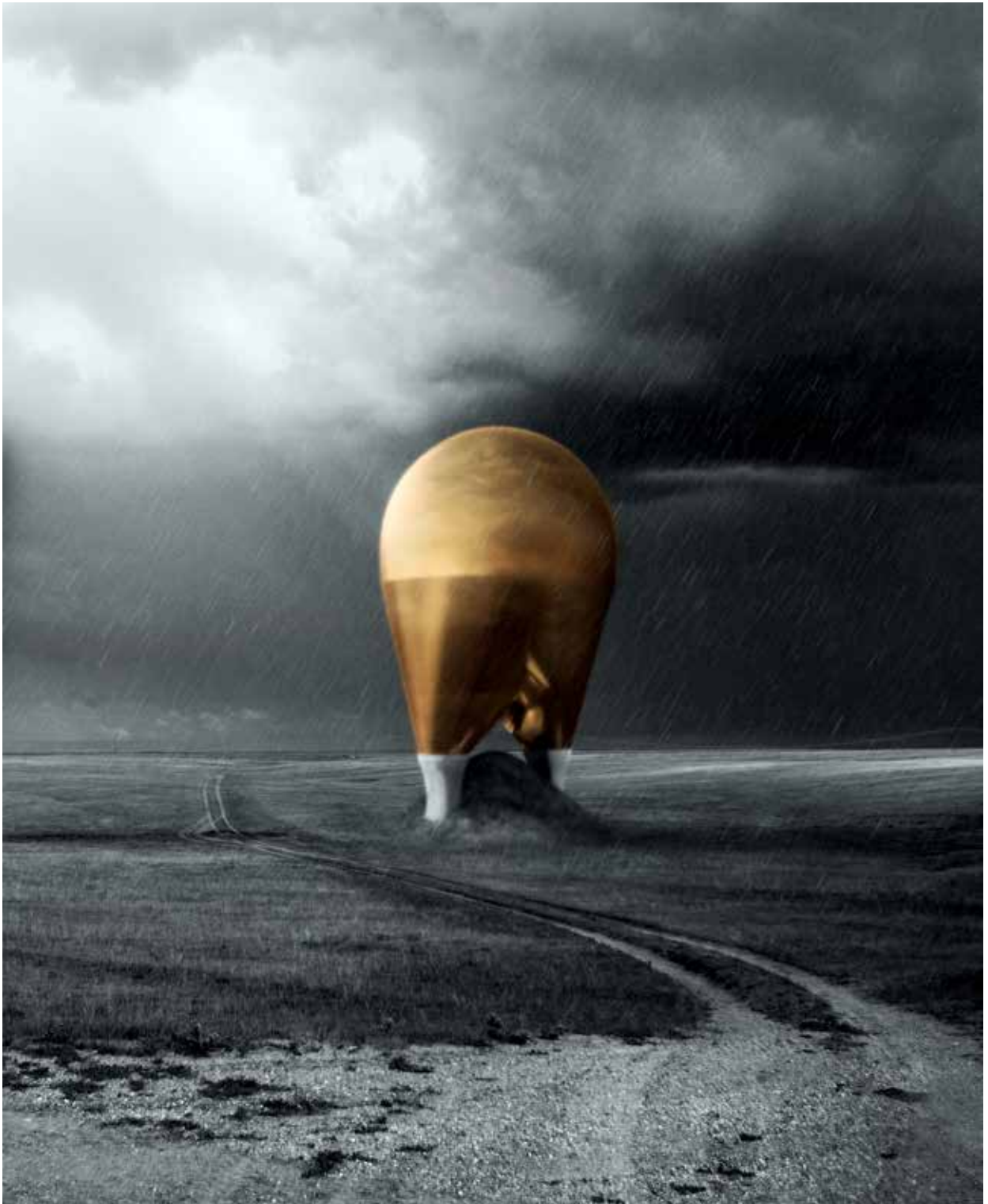
Unexpected Encounters

Clark Thenhaus
California College of the Arts

The American prairie is a context decidedly unfamiliar with the typology of domes. It follows that domes are most often encountered as rotund crowns atop civic, political, or religious buildings common to more densely populated situations. Thus, domes and the American prairie have not been properly introduced, much less properly socialized with one another. In many ways this all makes perfect sense. The histories, myths, significations, politics, and narratives of domes and the American prairie, while each compelling in their own right, have such few causes for shared interests. Yet in speculating on their contact with one another inherent qualities of each are enhanced, even exaggerated, by the other's presence, each seeming to re-author the other.

This surrealist technique - bringing things into contact that do not otherwise belong together - encourages novel readings of relationships between architectural form and context that opens up new territories for speculative work. Questioning this encounter between dome and prairie affords experimentation with new expressions for an old typology and casts form and context into new formal, social, cultural, and political arrangements.

This image attempts to extend the canon of object-in-field representations, such as Hans Hollien's 'Aircraft Carrier City in Landscape' (1964), Stanley Tigerman's 'The Titanic' (1978), or the mega-structures and primitive forms of SuperStudio's insertions into vast landscapes. While many of these works serve as cultural or ideological critiques, this image is less of a critique on, say urbanism or digital formalism, but rather intends to promote thinking about alternative sites for architectural experimentation deeply rooted in architectural typology as a medium for study rather than formal invention.



Other Domes Out There
Clark Thenhaus (Endemic)
2015
Photo-collage with digital rendering
Keyword: Re-authorship