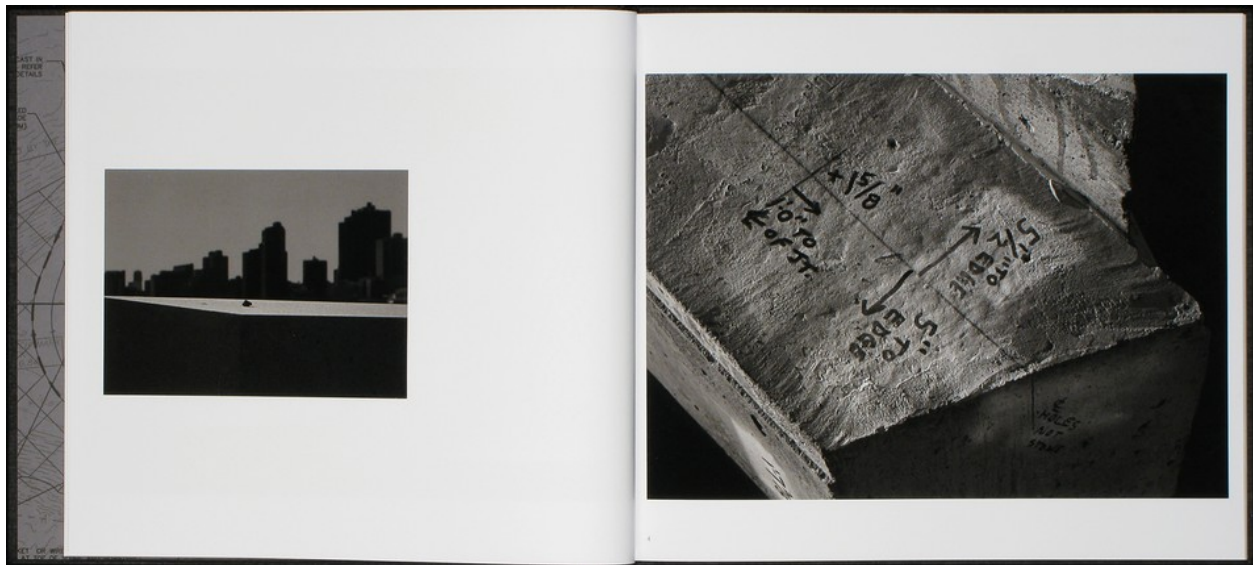


BARNEY KULOK: BUILDING (Aperture 2012)
Reviewed by Lucas Blalock

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Barney Kulok's new collection of pictures is not, as one might think, about architecture (here, Franklin D. Roosevelt Four Freedoms Park on Roosevelt Island in NYC), nor is it about the architect (Louis Kahn), yet both are hauntingly present. Kulok's black and white details of marble pavers, laborers, blueprints, cast off 2x4's, and fill dirt, use the site in a less conventional way; as a studio. At first glance Kulok's pictures don't present the signifiers of much reflexive contemporary practice. There is no colorful fabric, no lighting scheme, no uncanny juxtapositions, no double exposure, no Photoshop. There is though a sense of incompleteness, of investigation, of theater; the feeling of seeing, an awareness of an invisible armature. And it is these latter qualities that situate Kulok's work among the more forward of his peers. After all, it is not a delimited aesthetic or style that the current "crisis" of reflexivity in photography offers, but a far broader and deeper opportunity to think in pictures.

As a volume, *Building* is the rare photography book that adds another level of viewership to the work therein. The plates have nearly the depth of their silver gelatin counterparts, and the book has an impressive quietude that idiosyncratically shares space with the feel of a working document.