

# MCA Chicago's 'Homebodies'

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Most of us here at IIT live in some sort of home, right? In a sense, we are all homebodies—people occupying the space we call home. The word “home” can evoke several different emotions and memories in us. Some people feel completely relieved when they cross the threshold into their home at the end of a long day, while others might dread going back home, remembering the conflicts between him or herself and the other member(s) of that home. Home has also come to represent certain jobs expected of each person occupying the space. Even the pure architecture of the home sometimes comes to mind.

Regardless of your feelings about “home,” everyone can relate to an aspect of the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago’s (MCA Chicago) current exhibit, “Homebodies.” On display through October 13, this art gallery is not meant for passive strolling beside artwork that cannot be touched or photographed.

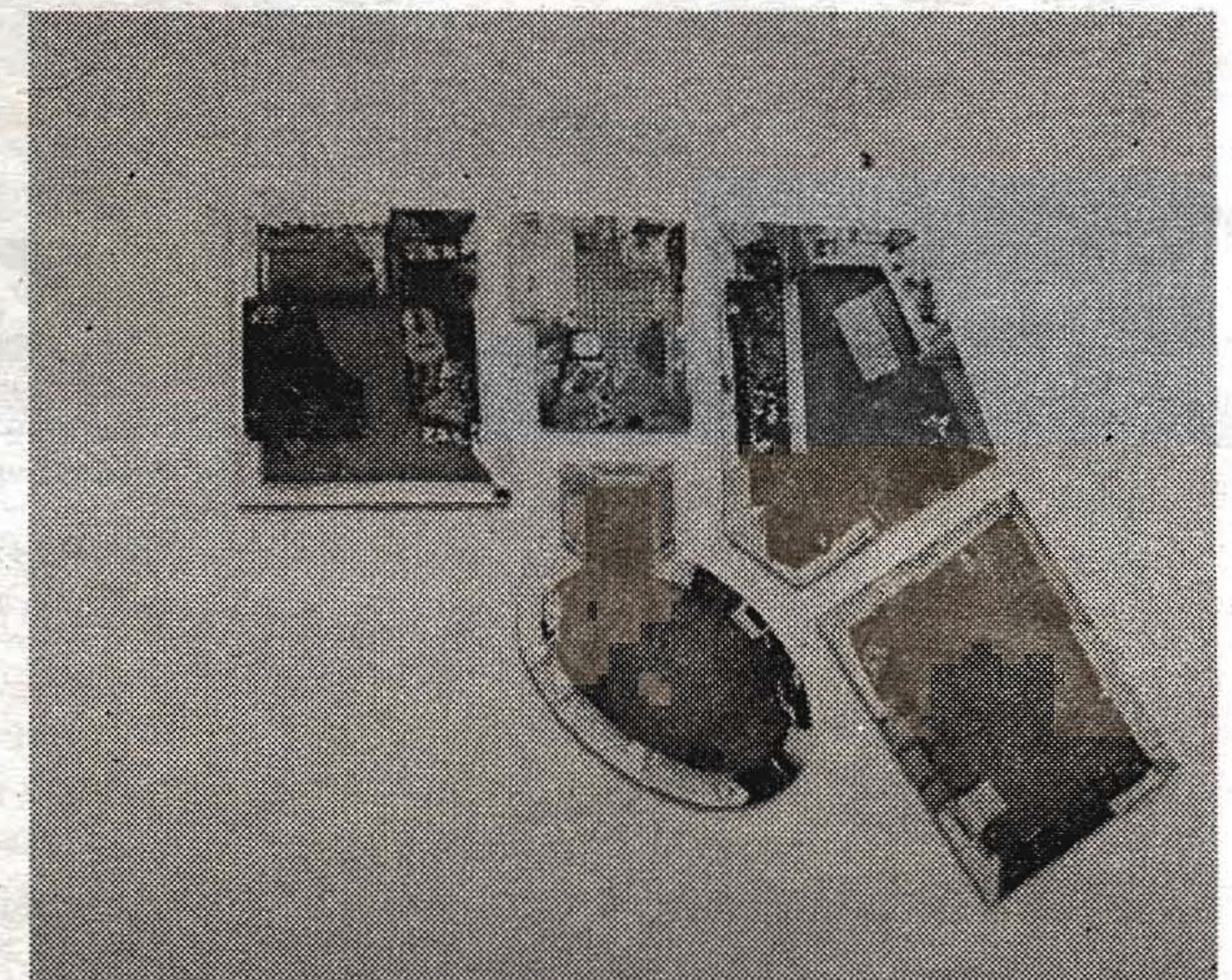
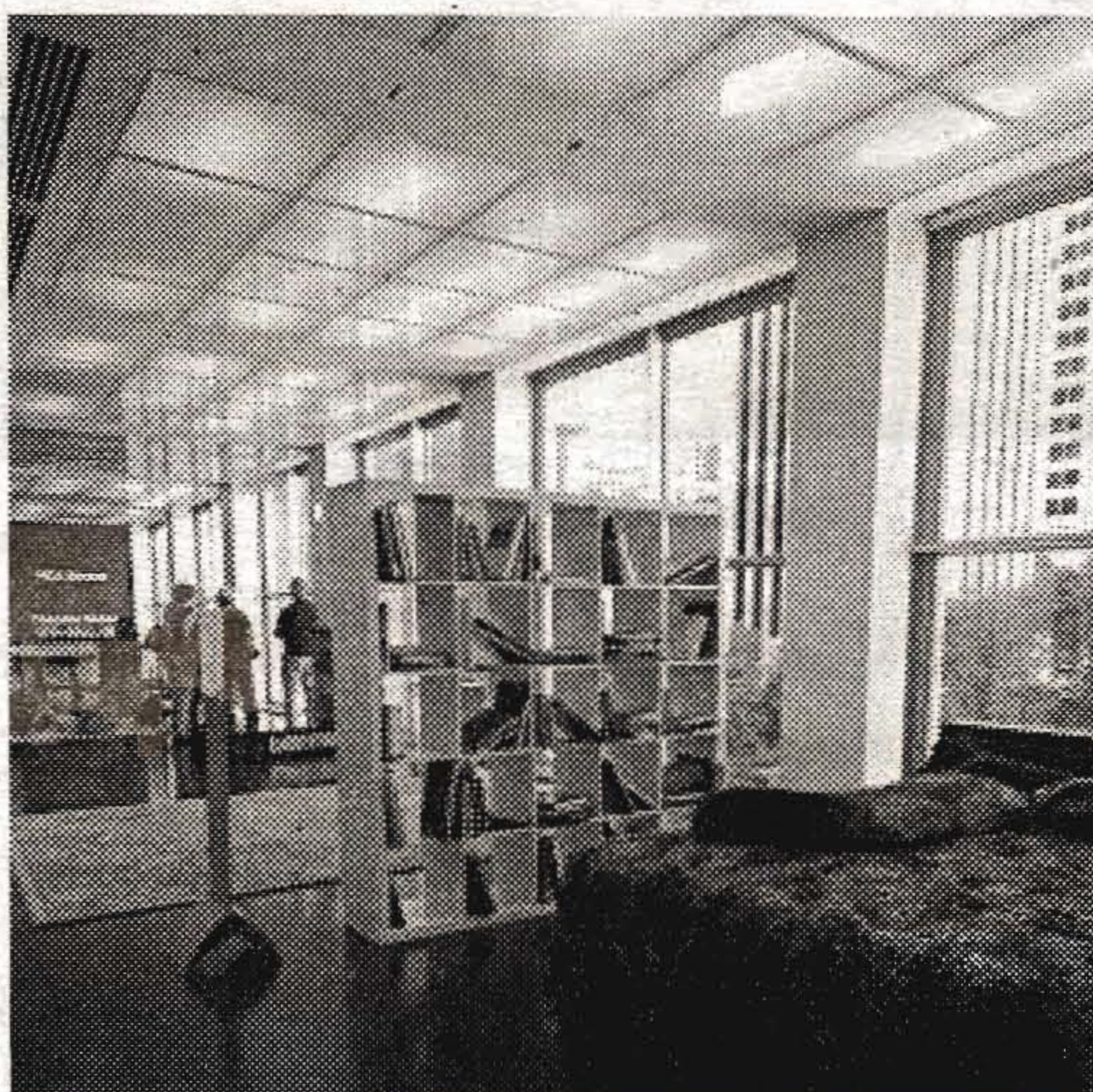
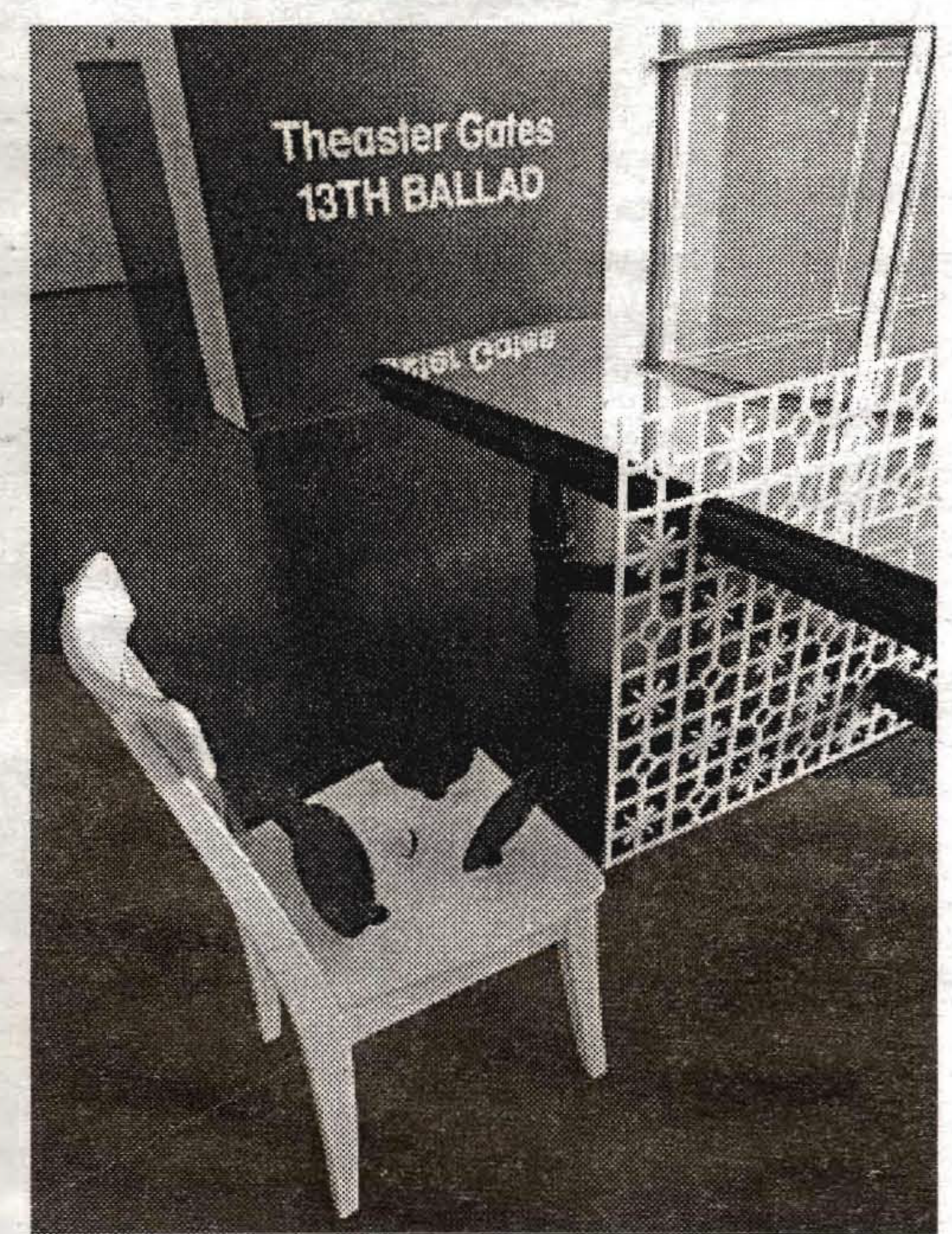
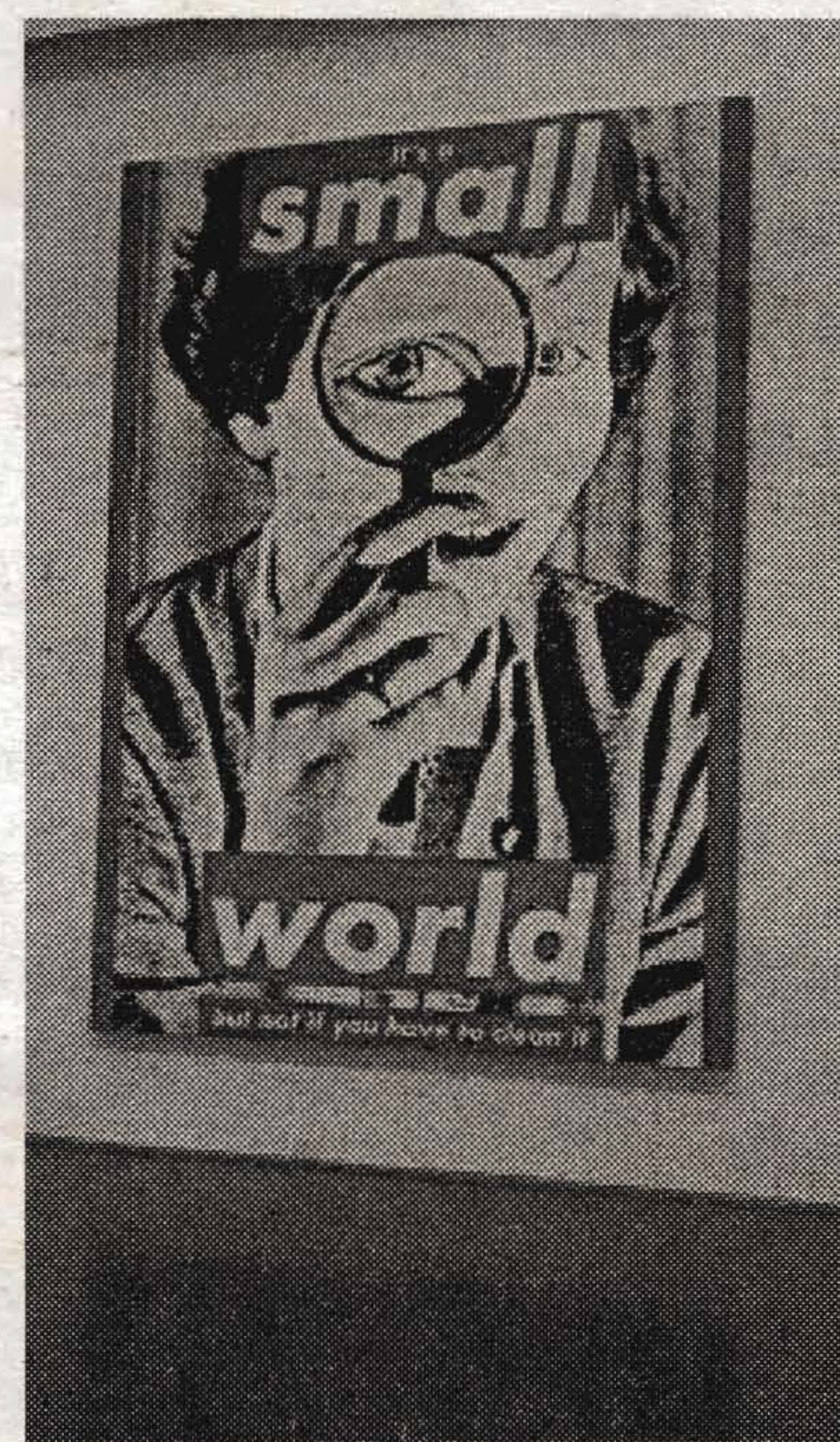
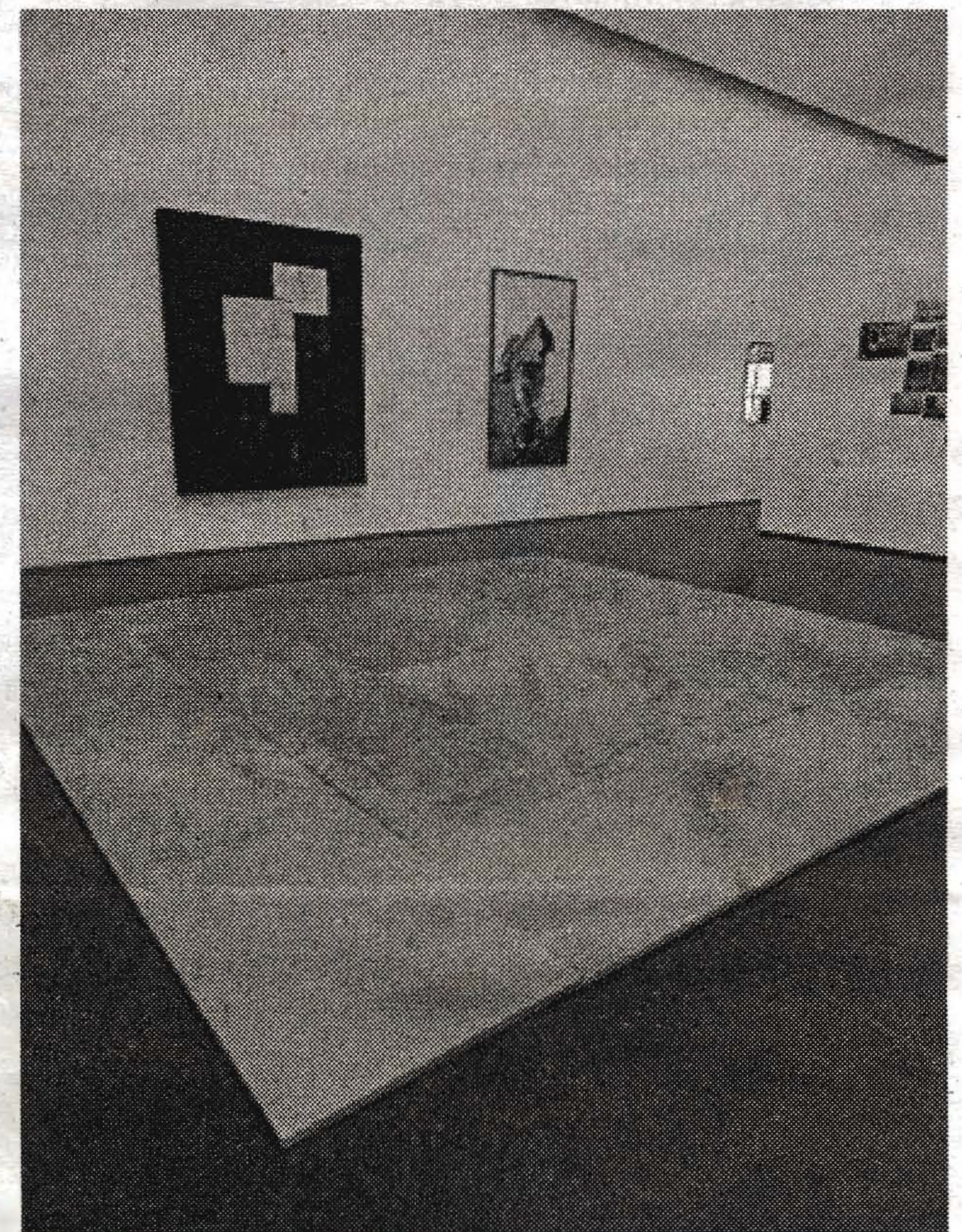
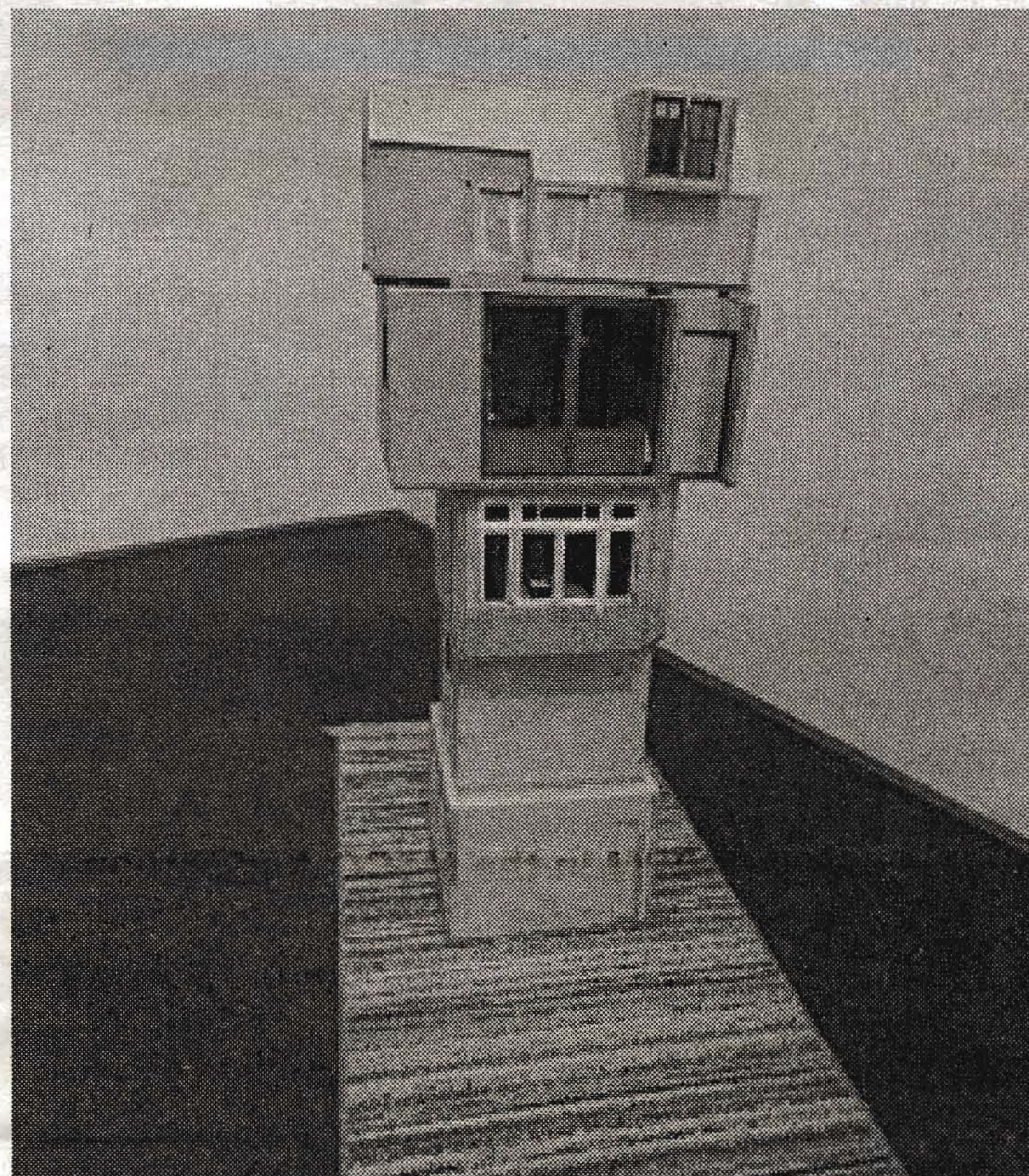
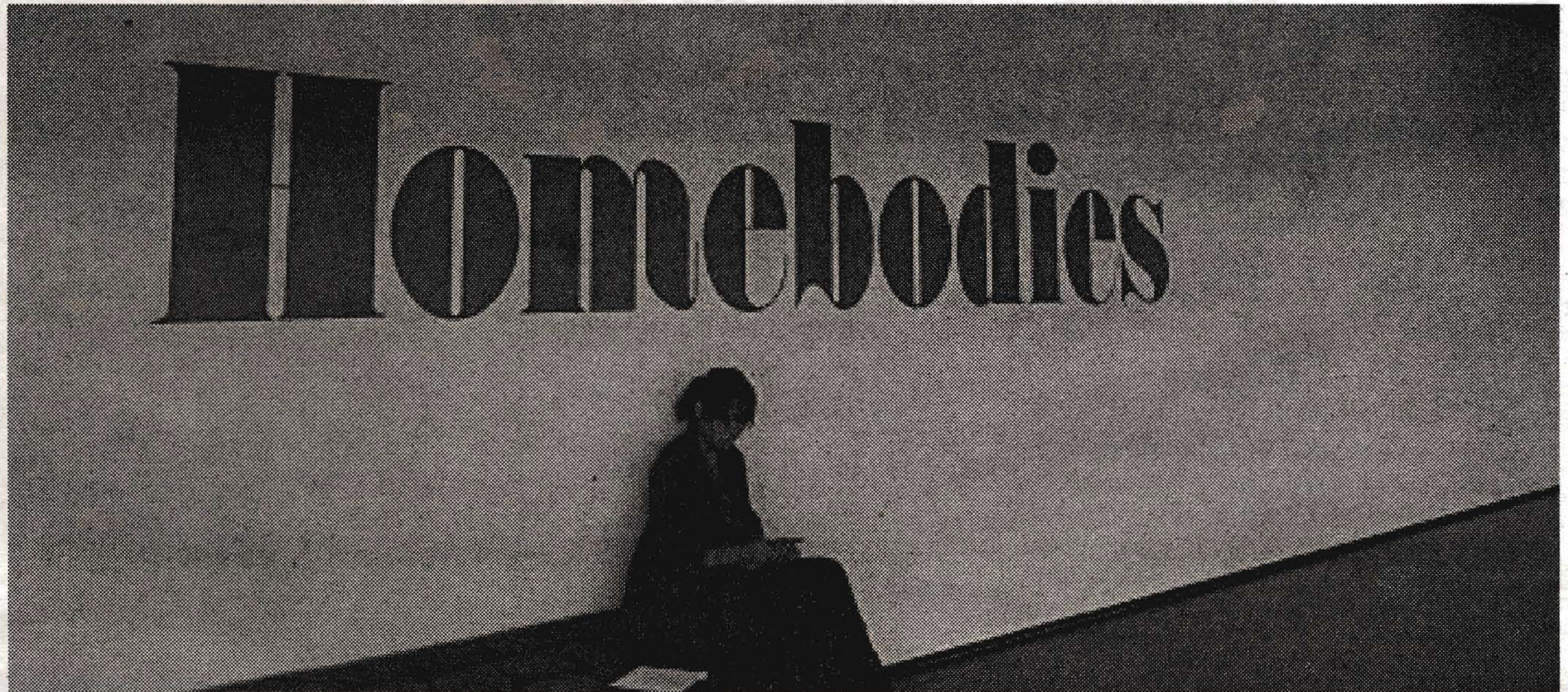
“Homebodies” encourages direct involvement of the viewer in making the artwork. Upon first entering the exhibit, there is a series of interactive installations along the set of windows facing out the front of the building: Alberto Aguilar’s “Home Field Play” is composed of five different stations, each with instructions for one to interact with the pieces provided to make the art come alive.

Each station illustrates various activities done in a home, but with a twist. You are presented with opportunities to play ping pong on top of a mirror, rearrange a bunch of chairs in different orientations within the perimeter of a carpet, change the VCR tape and watch two movies at once on television screens rotated sideways with the image reflected in a mirror, make music with bells as you bounce a balloon to keep it afloat, and recline on an incredibly soft bed, sinking into the faux fur with a book off the adjacent shelf.

Once you’re content to move on from the Home Field Play (which might take a while since it’s so much fun), the artwork shifts to occupy the walls for the most part, rather than the floor. However, you are allowed to walk through an amazingly detailed, thin, green home, and there is even an actual nail salon installation hidden in the back of the exhibit. The nail salon becomes a real, functioning business on select Saturdays, and you can make an appointment to get your nails done there by a professional.

The list of completely unexpected surprises continues, including a short movie chronicling the story of a family occupying the model showrooms at Ikea.

No matter what comes to mind when you think about the word “home,” there is something you can relate to in the Homebodies exhibit. Since most of the artwork is at the proper scale for human occupation in the space, this exhibit truly comes to life, connecting the viewer with the artwork and encouraging you to rethink your image of home. “Homebodies” is on display at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago (show your student ID to get the small student rate and entrance to the entire museum) only through October 13, and it is a great way to temporarily escape the intensity and stress of schoolwork.



Photos by Khaleela Zaman