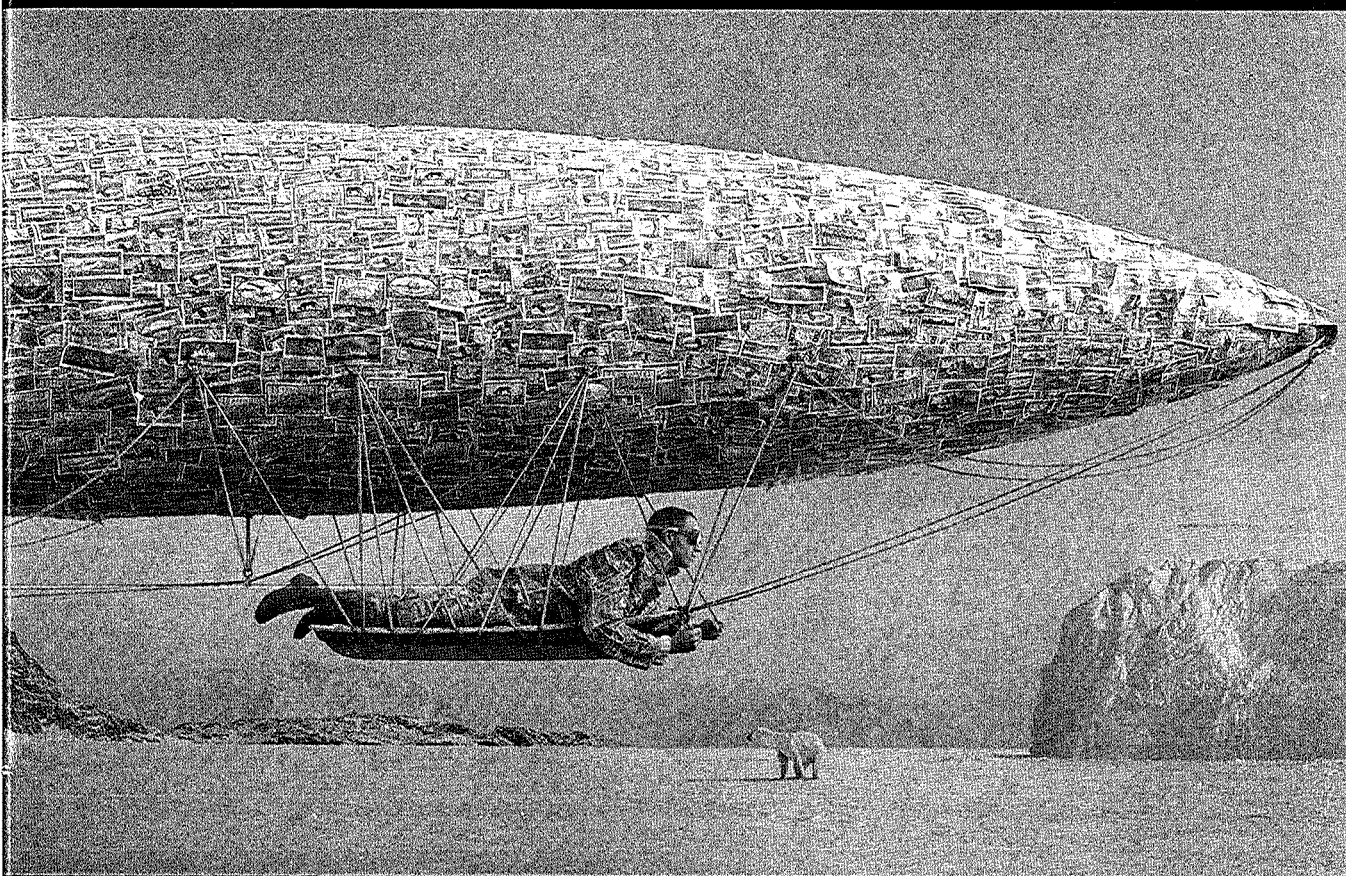


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Currencyballoon (Cropped), 2008 Nicholas Kahn & Richard Selesnick

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Eisbergfreistadt: The Fictive and the Sublime

“
How can something exist
that, although actual and
present, does not partake of
the character of reality?
”

Wolfgang Iser, *The fictive
and the imaginary*, p. 2.

In May of 2008, the curator team of Nicholas Kahn and Richard Selesnick launched a new exhibition, *Eisbergfreistadt*, at the Yancey Richardson Gallery in New York.¹ *Eisbergfreistadt*, or Iceberg Free State, introduced the public to a fascinating but little-known event in the history of Middle Europe: the grounding of a giant iceberg off the German port of Lubeck in 1923. Possibly taking this unprecedented arrival as a sign of impending apocalypse, the townspeople responded by declaring the iceberg a free trade area and producing all kinds of ephemera relating to their new symbolic principality, from songs to playing cards. A group of architects interested in the structural properties of ice created designs for a utopian city made of frozen water. Zeppelins ferried the curious to explore the iceberg, and a masked ball held on the iceberg caused it to split in two. One-half melted *in situ*, while the other drifted back to its home in the polar north with a handful of stranded passengers (they were eventually rescued).

The Yancey Richardson exhibition included a variety of items related to the Iceberg Free State—panoramic photographs taken on the iceberg itself, a set of playing cards, a kayak-like wooden boat. The most unusual, however, are dozens of different “Notgelder”, the emergency currency issued by the Weimar Republic during the period of hyperinflation that lasted from 1921 to 1923. By the end of the *annus horribilis* of 1923, the exchange rate had reached 4.2 trillion marks to the dollar—an event far more apocalyptic than a stray iceberg, and surely contributing to the horror with which that floating signifier from the far north was greeted (Figure 1).²

What one notices first about the Iceberg Free State Notgelder is the imaginative relish with which they are designed, especially compared to other Notgelder of the same period (Figure 2). They point to the iceberg as a transformative event for the Lubeckers—after all, an iceberg near the poles is a familiar symbol of polar fantasy, conjuring images of expansiveness, transcendence, purity, danger, and conquest. That same iceberg, misplaced, anomalous, becomes a catalyst. It spurs the production of Notgelder which, devalued, are in turn reworked into something else (Figure 3). Just as ordinary Notgelder were used as wallpaper or fuel for stoves, Iceberg Free State Notgelder were used to make clothing—both a dress and a coat made of Notgelder were included in the Yancey Richardson exhibition, and one of the photographs shows a woman wearing a

there are too many ruptures in the narrative (some fairly evident, some not). And in fact, contrary to what I may have previously implied, all of the displayed objects were apparently created by Kahn and Selesnick themselves—the photographs, the Notgelder, the zeppelin, a wooden boat, and so on. But note that I have only their word for this, just as I have only their word for the iceberg event—the only information I have on either point comes from the artists themselves. And this is interesting because, typically, what artists have to say about the factual conditions of their art doesn’t greatly alter the terms of its reception. But one cannot assess Kahn and Selesnick’s work without being repeatedly made aware that one only has their word *that such-and-such actually happened*.³ The effect of this foregrounding of evidentiary questions is to place the narrative back in the frame of history—even if the frame is that of *unproven* history, or anecdotal history, or partial history. Even if it turns out that everything they say about *Eisbergfreistadt* is untrue, that judgment can only be called into being within the frame of history. Or to look at it from another angle: from within a purely fictional framework, the question of whether the Lubeck iceberg ever existed is immaterial.

Let us consider the nature of the collision between history and fiction in *Eisbergfreistadt*. In creating their project, Kahn and Selesnick were acting as if the iceberg had indeed grounded off Lubeck (and a good many other as ifs enter the work as well). The key term here is “as if”: Wolfgang Iser, in his landmark work on fiction entitled *The fictive and the imaginary* (1993) notes that this as-if construction is a critical aspect of fiction, bracketing off both what we take to be the real world and at least some of our conventionalized responses to that world.⁴ Indeed, it can be argued that to respond to anything at all with an as-if state of mind puts you instantly into the terrain of fiction.

At the same time, I would argue that *actualizing* a fiction through objects and other entities removes that project from the realm of pure fiction. It is notable that the *Eisbergfreistadt* project (unlike some of Kahn and Selesnick’s earlier work) includes almost no explicit, written narrative, apart from a single newspaper clipping (Figure 4). Most of the narrative must be inferred by the viewer based on her prior knowledge of history, geography, and art. One might say, as a preliminary oversimplification, that although the *Eisbergfreistadt* show probably does not document any historical

objects. In drawing its terms from both fiction and non-fiction, fictive art might be a realization in art of Marianne Moore's famous definition of poetry: "imaginary gardens with real toads in them."⁶

Nicholas Kahn has said that if he and Richard Selesnick had their way, their names would not be attached to their work at all, and they would not allow their publicity to give any hints about the truth status of their work.⁷ It is partly for this reason that I chose to call Kahn and Selesnick curators rather than artists at the outset.⁸ What is the value of withholding information, or offering misleading clues, about the truth status of the work? Does that value pertain primarily to the moment of creation or the moment of reception?

In considering this question, one place to start is with the photographs, which visually dominate the show. These include some fairly small photographs that look like 1920s-era cityscapes, as well as images of men in animal-headed costumes. As with some of Kahn and Selesnick's earlier projects (notably *Circular River* and *Scotlandfuturebog*), the most compelling photographs are extreme panoramas six feet wide, with a width-to-height ratio of over 7 to 1. The bulk of these are situated in a polar landscape—presumably the remnant of the Lubeck iceberg after it drifted north. For example, one shows a group of five men digging a frozen comrade out of the snow, while in the background can be seen half a dozen seaplanes and airships (Figure 5). Another shows the airship whose skin is entirely plastered in Notgeld hovering over open sea, with a row of icebergs sitting on the distant horizon (Figure 6).

Wolfgang Iser identifies three principal kinds of fictionalizing acts that are necessary for worldmaking: the first is *selection* from various, often disparate systems (history, culture, myth) existing outside the created work; the second is *combination* of such elements; and the third is *self-disclosure*. Here, the photographs include referents pointing to a known and still present world (the Arctic), others that point to known but past worlds (centuries of polar exploration; airplanes and airships of the 1920s; model airplane kits of the 1950s), and still others that point to possible but unfamiliar worlds (Eisbergfreistadt Notgeld; the polar imaginary). These elements, which dominate most of the photographs, can be accepted by a spectator as pertaining to—as asserting—a unified, quasi-historical narrative (Figure 7).

Difficulties arise with other elements of the images and objects that interrupt this convenient framework. Some are fairly obvious: the visual aesthetic of the *Eisbergfreistadt* panoramas seems more aligned with the 1950s than the 1920s, creating a temporal rift at the heart of the project. Or: on one wall is a five-by-five grid of

images pertaining to the *Eisbergfreistadt* narrative in which formal and stylistic inconsistencies between the images are so strong that the implicit subject of the piece becomes the indigestibility of these differences (Figure 8). Other interruptions are subtler: an attentive viewer may suspect that in that photograph of men digging a grave, all five are the same man, cloned.⁹

Scanning any of these images (especially the larger ones) plunges one into a turmoil of constant re-evaluation. For example, when I come upon the image entitled *Snakeboat*, what I first see is a long, slender open boat being paddled by a man in a polar bear suit (Figure 9). Ok, it's not a kayak, which seems wrong; but since just behind me in the gallery sits this exact same boat, constructed of wood and snakeskin and twine, I am reassured by the fact that *at least the boat is real*. Then I notice that the boat is not in the water, but sitting on the ice; more wrongness to swallow. I am forced to keep noticing things and consciously working them into a whole because there is nothing in the image that I can simply accept as, for example, in a landscape photograph we ordinarily accept the factuality of the grass, the trees, the clouds, and so on.

It is only when I step very close and begin to scan the panorama carefully that I see an array of tiny ruptures in the photographic surface created by the subtle marks of collaging and digital post-processing. Here two photographs seam together; there something has been painted in to resemble a photograph. Too numerous to be understood as failures of the artists' technique, these miniature ruptures are like the Barthesian *punctum* run amok; in place of a singular visual moment that proves to be the decentered key to an image are a hundred tiny, unobtrusive moments that destroy it as a photograph, and in doing so, constantly renew it as an image.¹⁰ Or one could argue, following Hal Foster, that these ruptures constitute a kind of "traumatic realism," a gap wherein we lose history and gain its spectral twin: a sense of what might have been ("as if").¹¹

To the extent that the viewer does not pick up on these clues, the project as a whole is endowed with an aura of reality; but it also fails as fictive art. In other words, for the project to succeed (as I think it does), at least some of the clues must be accessible to the viewer. Here we come to Iser's third kind of fictionalizing act: self-disclosure as fiction. In effect, the fictive art project does not work properly unless cracks of disclosure are left open for the viewer to enter.¹² Once the spectator does pick up on those clues, she is forced into a relationship of play with the work. She can be angry at the deception, or dismissive of the thinness of the reality facade, or charmed by the fictive elaboration (to name only three possible attitudes), but in all cases she must engage with it. If, as Iser says, "the fictionalizing act converts the

reality reproduced into a sign,"¹³ it is likewise true that the signs that the fictive artwork creates under these operations of self-disclosure have fuzzy referents. Interacting with the work becomes a process of nailing these signs to new referents, that is, in some sense reconventionalizing the signs. In this sense, the signs work almost performatively, in that the act of pointing-to is also an act of bringing-into-being.¹⁴ One could even argue that the image emerges from this process as a diegetic work of a peculiar kind: if I understand that everything in it refers not to "our world" but to the world of the *Eisbergfreistadt* narrative, then it can be understood diegetically. *That* world is—must be—self-consistent, for who shall say that any part of this fictional narrative *does not belong*?

Kahn and Selesnick make the evidentiary condition of photography and objects part of their implicit subject matter. Where one thing can be doubted—say, the sheer number of planes and zeppelins in the polar regions in 1923, or the phenomenon of exquisite color photographs supposedly taken decades before anything of similar quality was seen again—anything can be doubted. Doubt, in fact, becomes the primary ground of all further seeing. It could even be argued that the project exists to raise and nurture doubt, not to settle it; and thus that *at every moment belief is being put back on the table*. It is instructive to contrast what Kahn and Selesnick are doing with what Jeff Wall is doing in some of his staged and montaged photographs—for example, his 1993 *Sudden Gust of Wind (After Hokusai)*. Wall's image does not raise much in the way of ontological questions, and this is because the work has the aura of a studio shoot even when it takes place elsewhere. The props remain *props*; they do not transform into historical or evidentiary *artefacts* under the pressure of narrative. Absent the ruptures found in Kahn and Selesnick's work, the same kinds of doubt (and belief) cannot operate.

The question of where the work takes place brings us to another set of problematics in Kahn and Selesnick's work. For the most part, these are not studio photographs; it is clear, rather, that taking the pictures involved long treks into the wilderness (or at least what can pass photographically as wilderness) with the large amount of equipment needed for complicated set-ups. It is easy to imagine the kind of group camaraderie and energy needed to carry out these projects, while at the same time one is aware of an essentially private, even arcane, aspect to the events documented. Kahn and Selesnick's images prompt us to inspect them for evidence of the conditions of their making, to ask: *what was it like to be there?* Indeed, one of the truly appealing aspects of these projects is the viewer's sense that behind every image lies a set of perfectly real (if odd) events. It cannot be accidental that Kahn refers to a project like

Eisbergfreistadt as a "living novel" in which all of its collaborators are taking part.

This notion of active participation distinguishes the work from older forms that it visually resembles, such as *tableaux vivants* or (to look further back) bas-relief sculptures. As in both forms, the main subject of the *Eisbergfreistadt* panoramas is generally a strongly posed group of figures centered in the near foreground, where they partly block off the rest of the pictorial space. Behind this central group is typically an open landscape whose vastness is underlined by the panoramic framing. The net effect is of a mythic narrative frozen at a portentous moment. The conceptual redundancy of freezing motion in an already frozen landscape can be taken as a bit of photographic tongue-in-cheek, but it also underlines how complex is the operation of the liveliness-lifelessness-lifelikeness triad in Kahn and Selesnick's work. There is about this work that quality that makes the terms *nature morte* and "still life" less synonyms than two aspects of a single idea.

I would argue that it is the *inaccessibility* of the constructed world of *Eisbergfreistadt* that accounts in part for the immobility of the imagery. While narratively claiming to exist in the timeline of real history (1923), the work also posits at least two alternative histories—one with highly improbable airships zooming around at the poles in 1923; and another with two contemporary artists creating an airship in their workshop in the early 21st century. The viewer knows these cannot all exist and is always trying to either close the gap between them (revising real history) or definitively driving the project out of what is understood as history altogether (into "pure" fantasy or fiction). But to give up and say it is just a couple of guys with cameras and some props misses the point to the same degree that describing a person as "a collection of 6 gazillion atoms" does. Moreover, those elements of the work that are fictive stand outside our temporality in an important sense; as soon as they are brought into existence—as objects, in photographs—they exist forever. They bear witness to their own history, and thus they testify in some degree to the project narrative. They have been, to use Iser's term, actualized, and this actualization cannot be undone, regardless of the degree to which the work calls on those other narratives we term history.

Western engagement with the polar realms has always taken place in a liminal space between projective fantasy and proximate reality—between the semi-tropical Antarctic of Edgar Allan Poe's 1838 *Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*, and the icebound Antarctic of 1916 where Ernest Shackleton's shipwrecked party survived under upturned lifeboats (Figures 10 and 11).¹⁵

The heyday of Western polar fantasy was probably the 19th century, typified by such paintings as Caspar David Friedrich's Romantic *Eismeer* (Sea of Ice, 1824) and Frederick Church's similarly titled late-Romantic *The Icebergs* of 1861 (Figures 12 and 13).¹⁶

Both are devoid of evident life—there are only signs (rusty pack ice, fragments of shipwreck) pointing to lives lost. The narrative is that of the sublime: a landscape of natural power and terror in which puny humans seek to find a role commensurate with their ambitions.¹⁷ The drive is less representational than narrative: the primary purpose of both paintings—as of the photographs that followed from the early 20th century expeditions of Shackleton, Robert Falcon Scott, Roald Amundsen, Robert Peary, and others—is to imagine (and thus help to actualize) the space of conquest.¹⁸

But the narrative of discovery, like other conquest narratives, has a powerful subtext of futility and loss: the thing discovered is a thing abandoned for the next object of desire. Such narratives can exploit only a tiny area of the imaginary; despite their grandiosity, they are imaginarily stunted. In re-entering the abandoned realm of the Arctic imaginary, Kahn and Selesnick invest the terrain with a different set of valences.¹⁹ Their Arctic is the antithesis of the sublime: it is heavily populated—people, animals, airplanes, clothing, and equipment abound—comfortable, playful, almost domesticated. The aura is that of a folktale, with such familiar tropes as animal-men, doubles, caves, treasures, and journeys (Figure 14). As in a folktale, events take place both just down the road (on the Lubeck iceberg) and far, far away (at the poles).

For an analog to an image like *Cardgame*, one has to look to the less spectacular photos of polar exploration; for example, Herbert Ponting's photograph of Robert Falcon Scott in his expedition hut: claustrophobic, cluttered, and mundane—yet organized both visually and spatially to suggest a stage set (Figure 15).

It is here, where we find the real already marked with the sign of the theatrical, that we can see one point of origin for *Eisbergfreistadt*.

And yet—the passing of the era of geographic discovery reopens the possibility of geographic invention. In this sense, *Eisbergfreistadt* descends more directly from the literary imaginary of works like *Arthur Gordon Pym* than from either Falcon in his hut or Church's icebergs.²⁰ Poe's only completed novel, *Arthur Gordon Pym*, begins as a fairly conventional shipboard adventure tale, turns into a horror story of extreme calamity and suffering, and ends in a series of semi-mystical episodes. As the 1838 novel nears its abrupt finale, Poe pulls out all the

stops, creating deep in Antarctic territory a tropical island, a labyrinthine cave with wall inscriptions in an unknown tongue, a rain of ashes, a gigantic cataract of fog or steam, and an enormous shrouded figure “of the perfect whiteness of the snow.”²¹ Poe's reinscription of the Antarctic is further inflected by a meta-narrative frame in which Poe excuses himself from being the novel's author by means of the now-classic “as told to” device. In a signed preface, “A.G. Pym” claims that the story is an authentic account of his “extraordinary series of adventures in the South Seas and elsewhere”²² as told to Poe from memory since Pym had kept no journals during his travels.²³

Adding to the contest over authenticity is an unsigned “Note” at the end of the book in which the meaning of the cave and its inscriptions is partially elucidated, with accompanying diagrams of the wall glyphs (Figure 16).²⁴

It is unclear who is responsible for this exposition, since the Note states that “the gentleman whose name is mentioned in the preface” [i.e., Poe himself] has declined to undertake the task of writing the Note due to “his disbelief in the entire truth of the latter portions of the narration.”²⁵ Thus, after reducing himself to a scribe in the preface—a mere witness to truth—Poe reverses himself and belittles Pym as a teller of tall tales in the postscript. These meta-narratives expanded the ways in which the narrative they bookend could be both read and misread, with the result that some reviewers took it to be a novel, while others accepted it as a travelogue, and still others rejected it as a hoax.²⁶

In Poe's day, these differences of opinion were taken to be problematic, as well as irreconcilable. The question to which his reviewers sought an answer was: which one was it? But I would argue that one can only understand fictive art if all these categorizations are simultaneously true. *Eisbergfreistadt* is a “living” novel, and a travelogue (in the form of art), and a mild sort of hoax—but it cannot be reduced to any one of these aspects. One consequence is to force spectators into a position of what one might call suspended anxiety in which resolution is always deferred and further exploration always required. And this is not a failure on the part of the spectator, for as a created world, *Eisbergfreistadt* itself appears as something unfinished, incomplete, unresolved—in this sense, it projects an aura quite the opposite of that which defines most artworks. What it offers is less an aesthetic encounter than a game of hypotheticals.

Notes

¹More information about *Eisbergfreistadt* and other Kahn and Selesnick projects can be found at their website, <<http://www.kahnselesnick.com/>>. The author wishes

to thank the artists for providing images of their work to accompany this article. Reproductions of Kahn and Selesnick's work, originally in color, are used by permission of the artists. A note on spelling and translation: Kahn and Selesnick appear to use “Lubeck” and “Lübeck” interchangeably in their project. I have preferred the Anglicized spelling here as it underlines the otherness of their version of the city. “Eisbergfreistadt” is more correctly translated “Eisberg Free City” or “Eisberg Freetown,” but I have chosen to go with their preferred alternate title of “Eisberg Free State.”

²It may be that the Lubeck iceberg, detached and melting, is intended by Kahn and Selesnick as a retrojected symbol of global warming, but discussion of this possibility lies outside the scope of this article.

³Even their press release lays emphasis on what it terms “the actual event” of the iceberg.

⁴Wolfgang Iser, *The fictive and the imaginary: Charting literary anthropology* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), p. 13. I am also indebted, here and later, to Nelson Goodman's 1976 book *Ways of worldmaking* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing).

⁵I purposely do not use the term “illustrate” because it does not fully address the degree to which the objects and photographs themselves create the narrative. Likewise, I prefer not to refer to the objects as “props” since the term as normally used does not embrace something that functions simultaneously as a fine art object and a prop.

⁶Marianne Moore, “Poetry.” From *Observations* (New York: Dial Press, 1924).

⁷Conversation with Nicholas Kahn, May 29, 2008.

⁸Kahn and Selesnick have been tagged with a raft of different terms by writers uneasy in designating them as artists. For example, a review of *Eisbergfreistadt* by Mark Freeney in the *Boston Globe* (May 13, 2007) suggests that “cultural historians,” “connoisseurs,” or “curators” could all be preferable designations. Kahn has said that he is more comfortable calling the team curators than photographers (conversation with Nicholas Kahn, May 29, 2008).

⁹And further suspect that all the clones are either Kahn or Selesnick, populating their own world. One is reminded here of Oscar Rejlander, who pioneered similar compositing techniques early in the history of photography.

¹⁰It is striking, also, that at the small scale of reproduction, it becomes difficult to determine that the

panoramas are photographs rather than paintings, thus constantly renewing the battle for that kind of truth value which only photography can offer. I am indebted to Lise Patt for drawing this point to my attention.

¹¹Hal Foster, *The return of the real* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996).

¹²In writing, a metafictional text has been defined as one that “systematically draws attention to its status as an artefact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality.” (Patricia Waugh, *Metafiction: The theory and practice of self-conscious fiction*, Routledge, 1984). If it is true, as Iser argues, that fiction by its nature already draws such attention to itself, then the distinction between fiction and metafiction may be one more of degree than of kind.

¹³Iser, p. 2.

¹⁴Here I am extrapolating from a point Iser makes in discussing philosopher Cornelius Castoriadis's idea of the radical imaginary. Iser, p. 216.

¹⁵This latter event took place in 1916, during the Shackleton-led Imperial Trans-Arctic Expedition.

¹⁶Note that the masthead visible in the foreground of Church's canvas was added later, sometime between 1861 and 1863.

¹⁷In *White horizon: The Arctic in the nineteenth-century British imagination* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2007), Jen Hill (citing work by Jessica Richards) argues that there is a strong counternarrative to masculinist polar fantasy in such works as Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*.

¹⁸Polar fantasy becomes ever more closely linked to nationalist narratives of conquest, culminating in the neo-Romantic German *Bergfilmen* of the 1920s and 1930s, where it is refracted through the thematics of nascent fascism. Although the work of Kahn and Selesnick stands closer to the *Bergfilmen* in time than to romantic painting, it is essentially alien to the seductive fantasy of transcendence through physical duress that is the hallmark of *Bergfilmen*. Visually, also, the work of Kahn and Selesnick is more beholden to the romantics and to early photography (which was heavily inspired by romantic themes and forms) than to these neo-romantic films. For more on *Bergfilmen*, see Nina Power's excellent article, “Mountain and Fog,” in *Cabinet*, no. 27 (Fall 2007).

¹⁹It should be noted that a resurgence of the polar imaginary can be discerned in the recent rush by the circumpolar nations to lay claim to extended parts of the Arctic seafloor, in advance of massive ice melts that are expected to uncover huge new resource-rich terrain.

²⁰A contemporary analog can be found in Philip Pullman's trilogy *His Dark Materials*, which features polar settings and folk archetypes such as a talking polar bear. I can't say whether Kahn and Selesnick were directly inspired by Pullman, but I feel that structurally the *Eisbergfreistadt* project owes more to Poe's metafictional framing than to Pullman's more straightforward tale.

²¹Edgar Allen Poe, *The narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket*, Episode 12, p. From Project Gutenberg, *The works of Edgar Allan Poe*, Vol. 3 (of 5) of the Raven Edition (release date: May 18, 2008). <<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/2149/2149-h/2149-h.htm#2HCH0012>>. Accessed November 17, 2008.

²²Poe, *Arthur Gordon Pym*, Preface.

²³In fact, the story is partly based on accounts by various real explorers. Poe's sources for *Arthur Gordon Pym* include the 18th century journals of Captain James Cook, *Benjamin Morrell's narrative of four voyages* (1832), and an 1836 report to Congress by Jeremiah Reynolds entitled "An Address on the Subject of a Surveying and Exploring Expedition to the Pacific Ocean and the South Seas."

²⁴The Gutenberg Project edition of *Arthur Gordon Pym* does not include the glyph illustrations. Another online edition of the novel at <<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~ma98/silverman/poe/frame.html>> does include the glyphs on the Notes page: <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~ma98/silverman/poe/agp_note.html>.

²⁵Poe, *Arthur Gordon Pym*, Note.

²⁶The publishing history of this novel is somewhat tangled. The first two episodes appeared in the *Southern Literary Messenger* under Poe's byline in 1837; it was only when the full story was published in novel form the following year that the preface was added claiming that Pym had actually dictated it to Poe. Consequently, what

had originally appeared in the *Messenger* as fiction was now reclassified in the preface as having appeared "*under the garb of fiction*" (italics in the original)—an unusual move on Poe's part, since while nonfiction is often "outed" as fiction, the reverse is extremely rare.

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Figure 1. German 50-million-mark Notgeld, 1923.



Figure 2. Kahn and Selesnick, Assorted Eisbergfreistadt Notgeld, 24" square, multimedia, 2007.



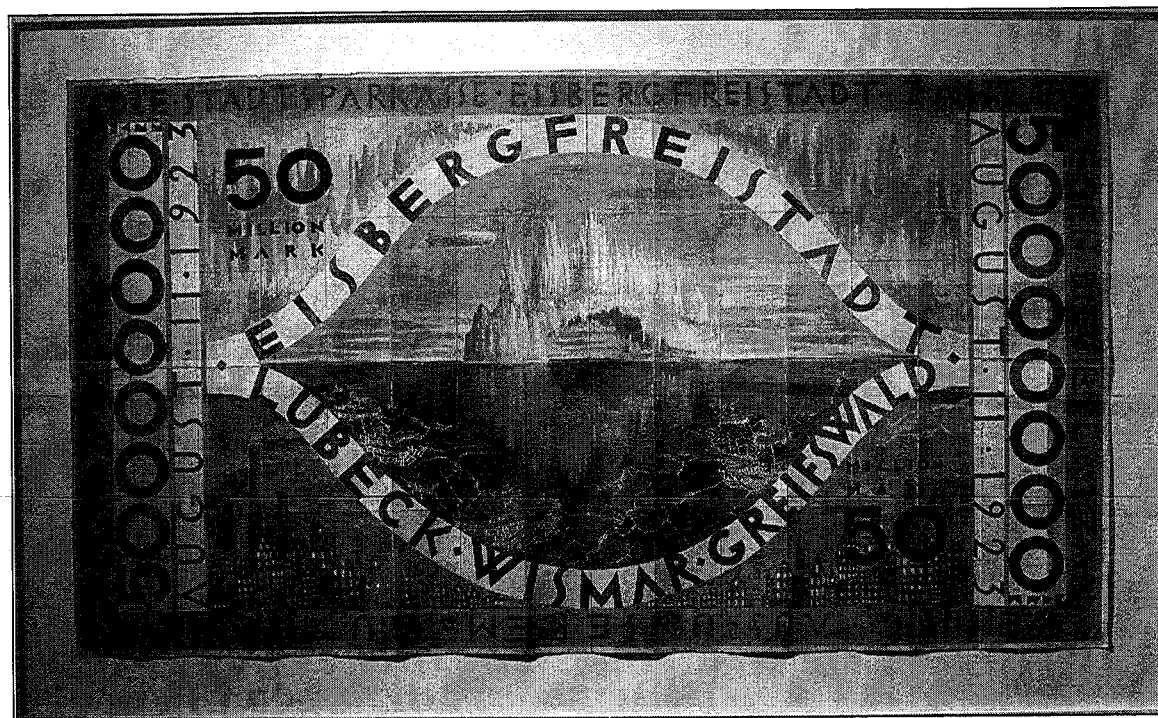
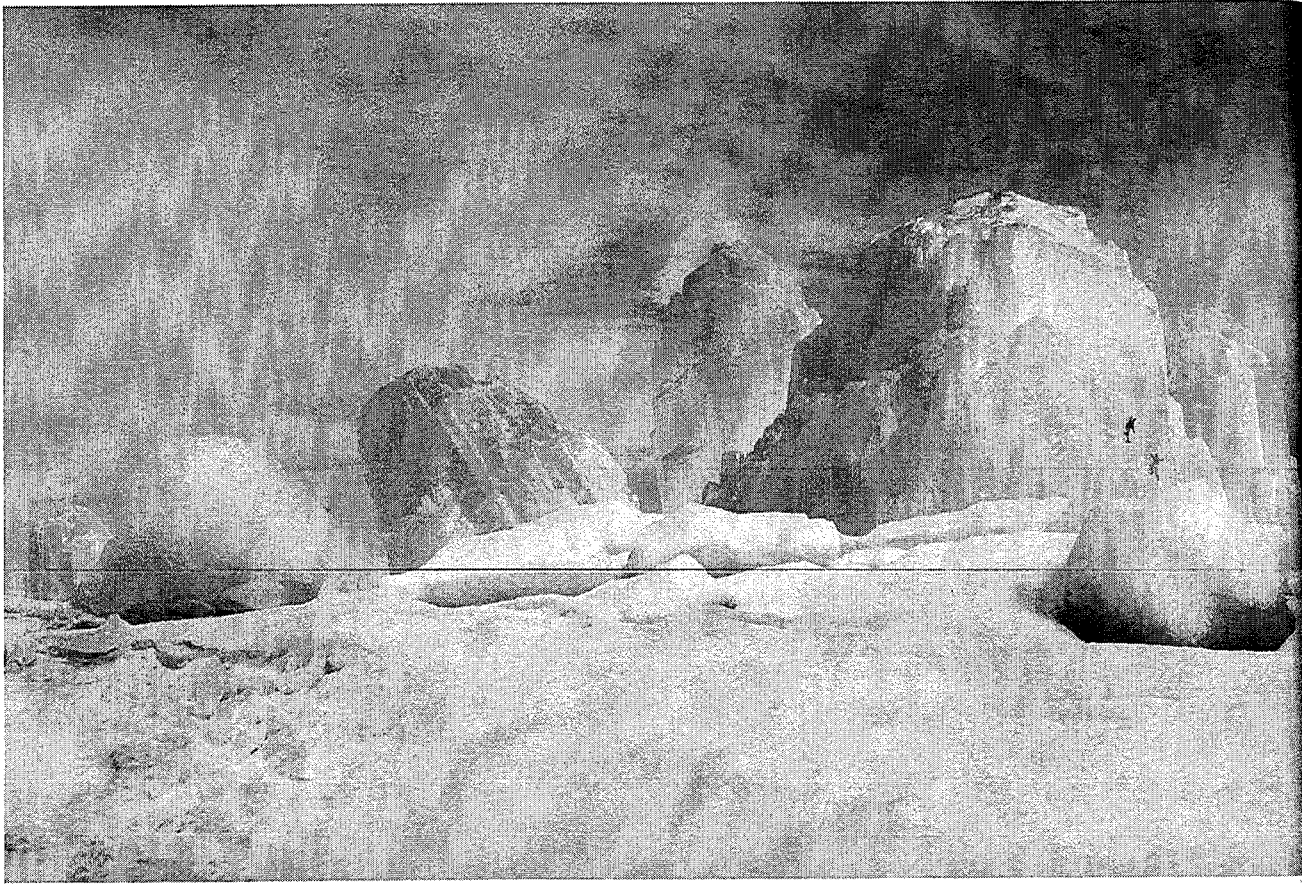


Figure 3. Kahn and Selesnick, 50-million-mark Notgeld, 30" x 50", flashe on paper, 2007.



Figure 4. Kahn and Selesnick, Eisbergfreistadt Newspaper Clipping, variable size, multimedia, 2008. This image was not included in the New York exhibition; however, as of November 2008, it was featured on the project website <<http://www.eisbergfreistadt.com/>>.



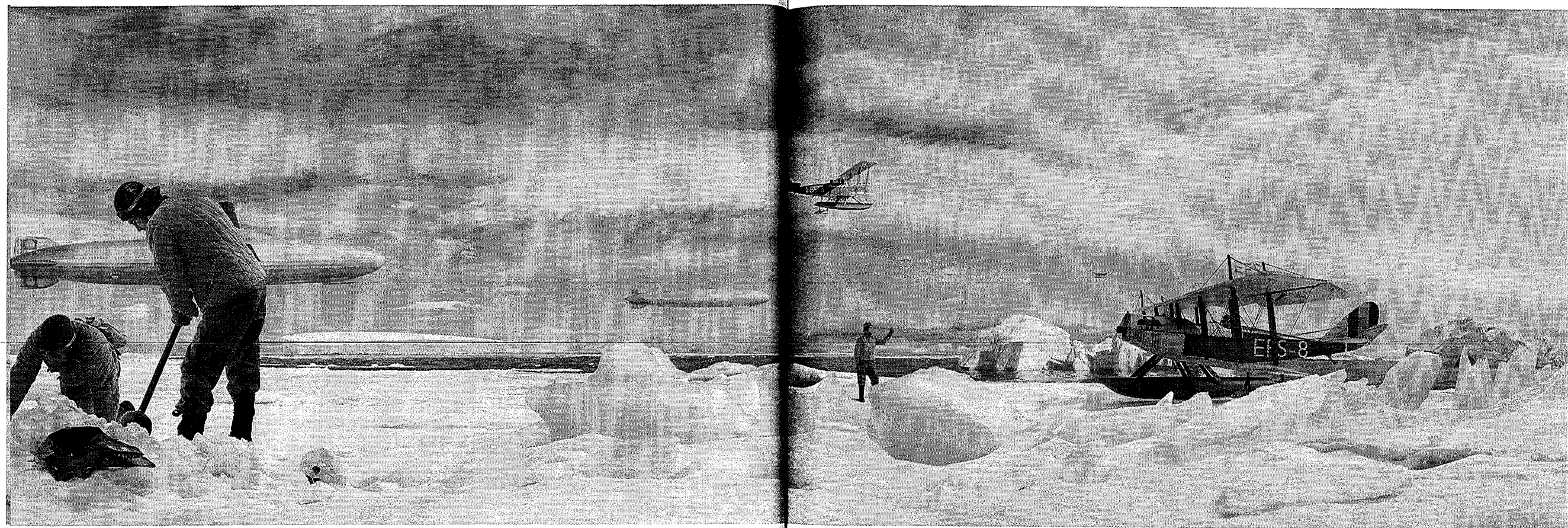
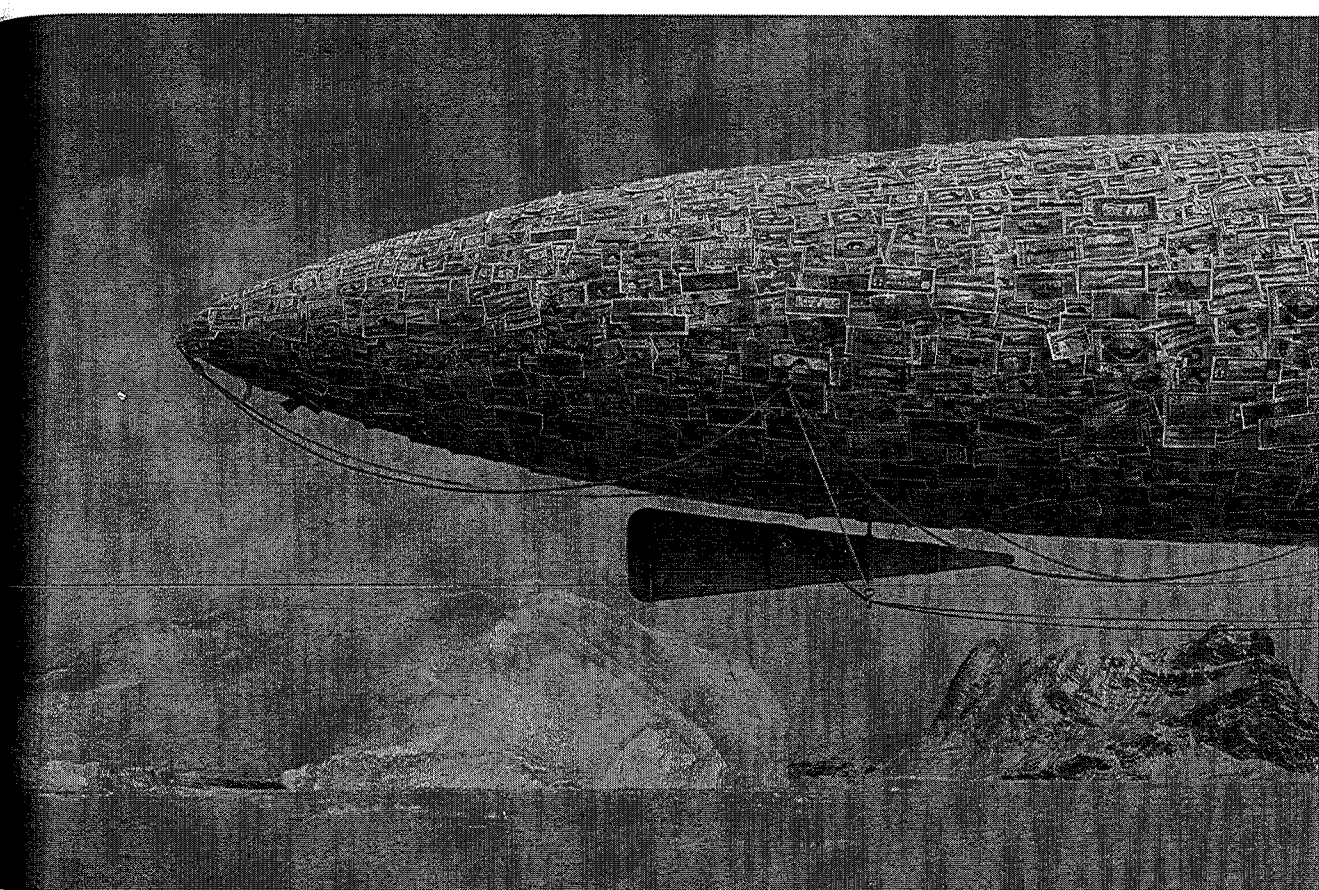
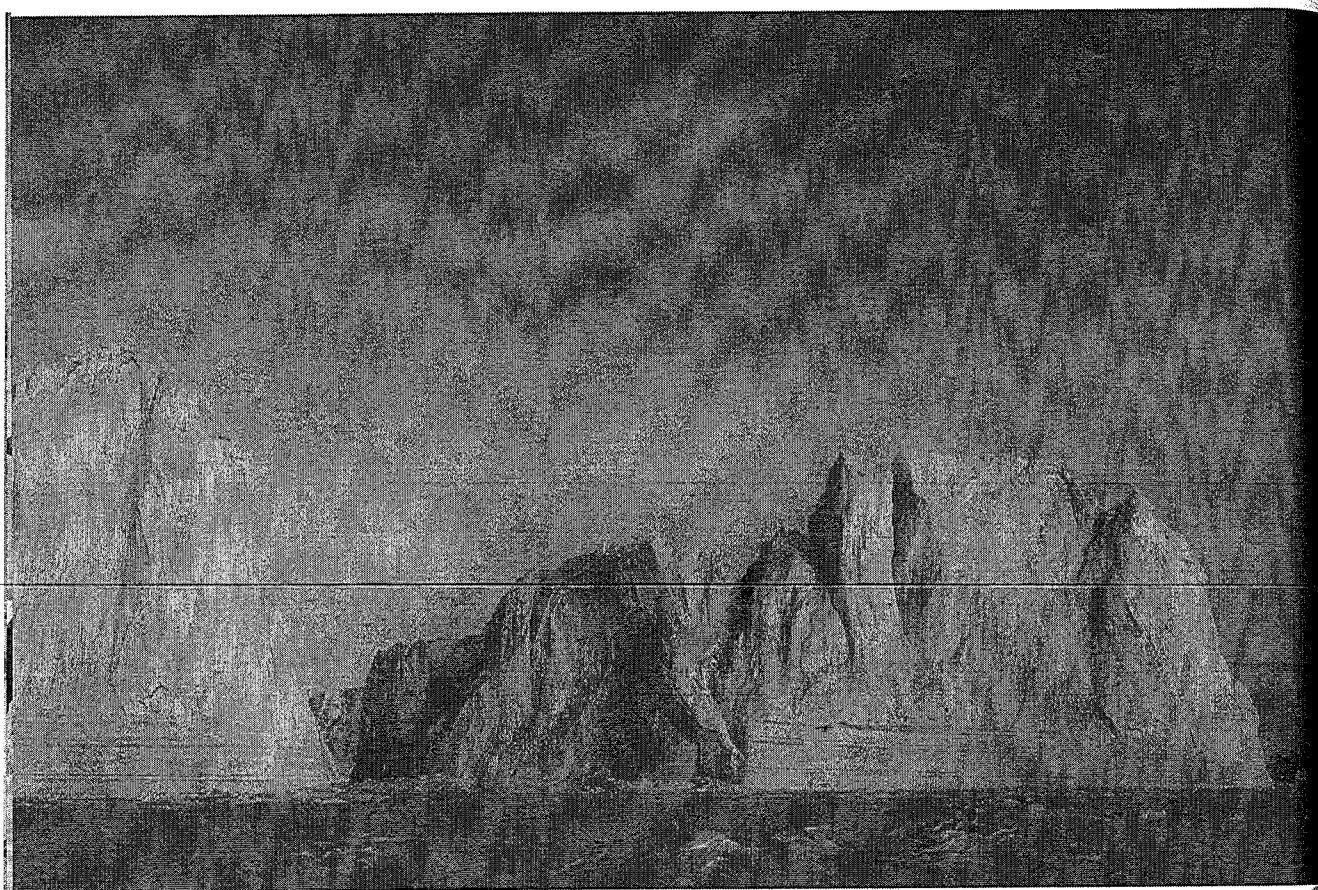


Figure 5. Kahn and Selesnick, Seaplane, 10" × 72", digital print, 2007.



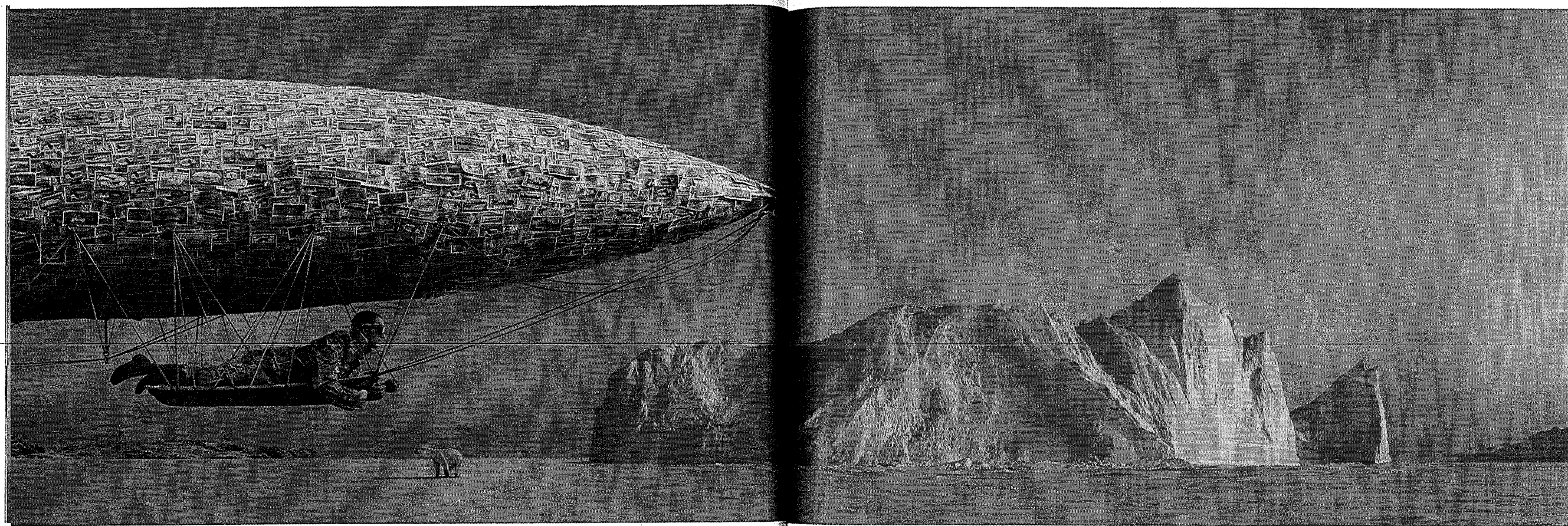


Figure 6. Kahn and Selesnick, Currencyballoon, 10" × 72", digital print, 2008.

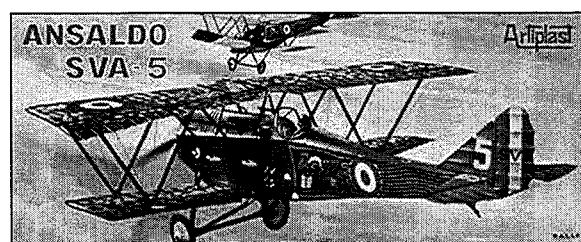
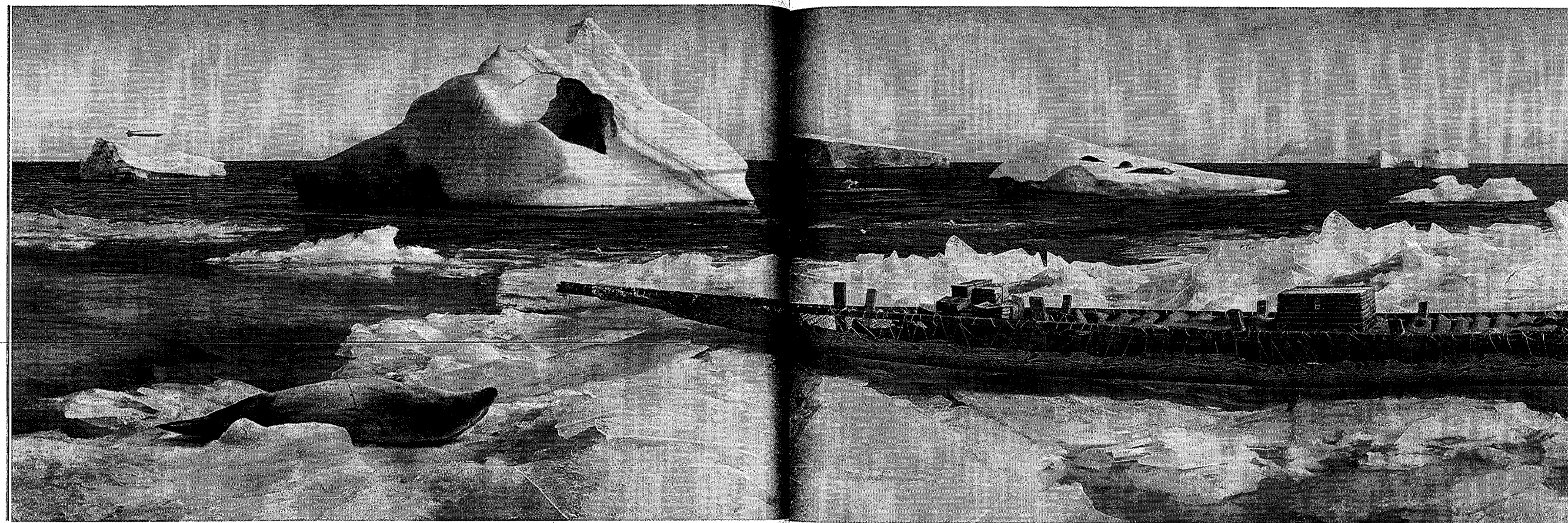


Figure 7. A typical 1950s era model plane kit.



Figure 8. Kahn and Selesnick, *The Story of Eisbergfreistadt*, 48" square, digital print, 2007.



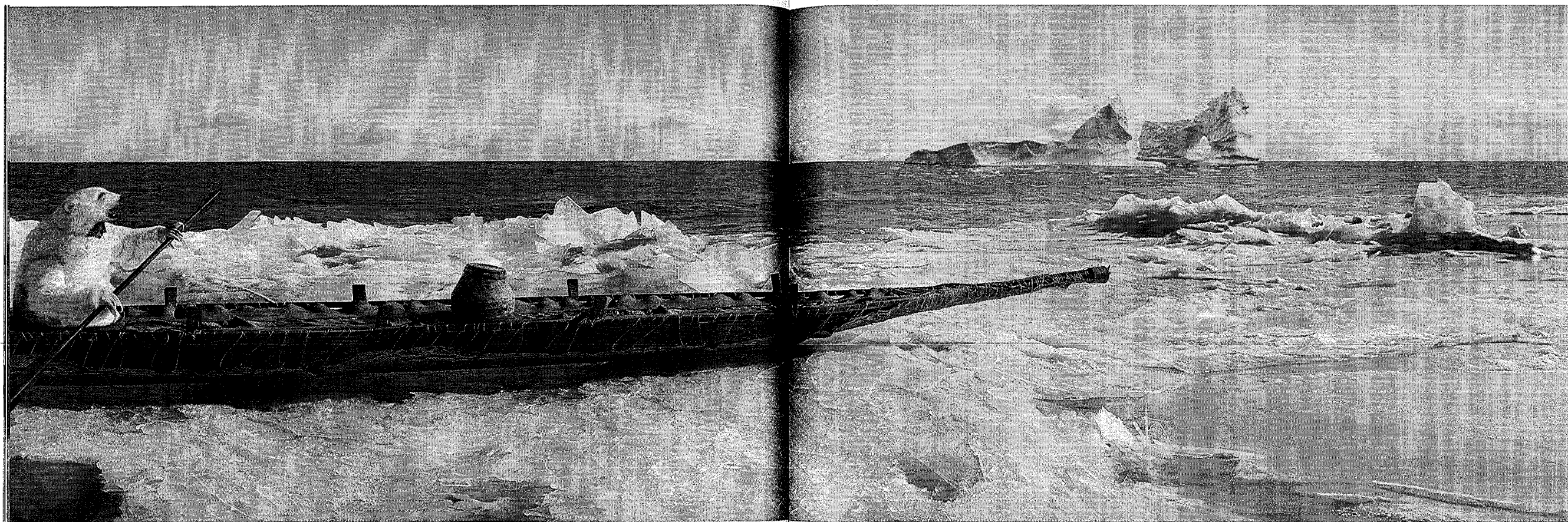


Figure 9. Kahn and Selesnick, Snakeboat, 10" × 72", digital print, 2007.

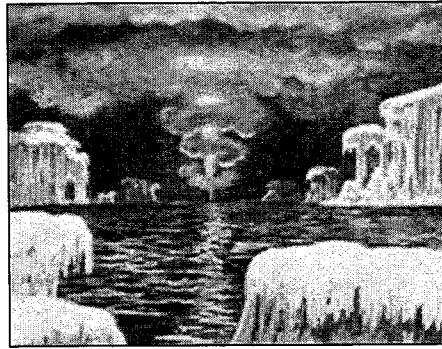


Figure 10. A 19th century engraving, identified as the aurora borealis in William Poole's 1906 book about the hollow-earth theory, "Phantom of the poles." Prints like this were used to illustrate both scientifically inspired fantasies such as Poole's book and the often partly fictional first-person accounts of polar explorers.

Figure 11. Members of explorer Ernest Shackleton's expedition stand next to a hut constructed from two upturned lifeboats on Elephant Island in the Arctic Ocean, 1916.

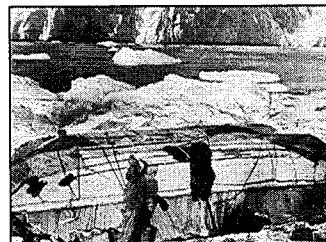


Figure 12. Caspar David Friedrich, *Das Eismeer* (Sea of Ice), oil on canvas, 50" × 38"; 1823–24, collection of the Hamburg Kunsthalle.

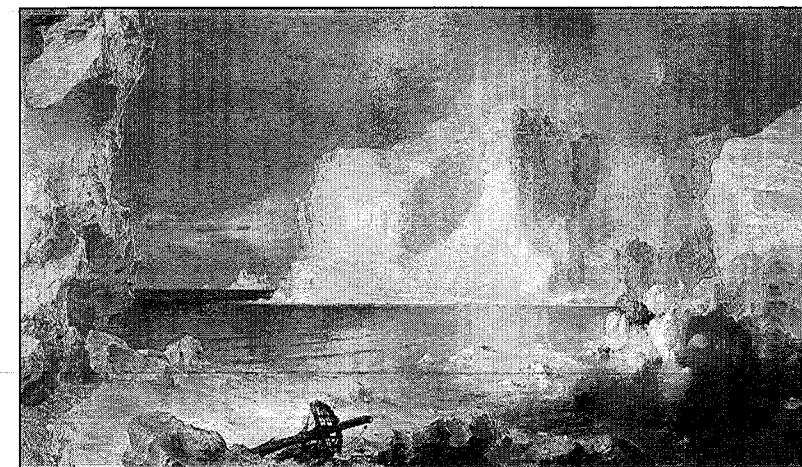
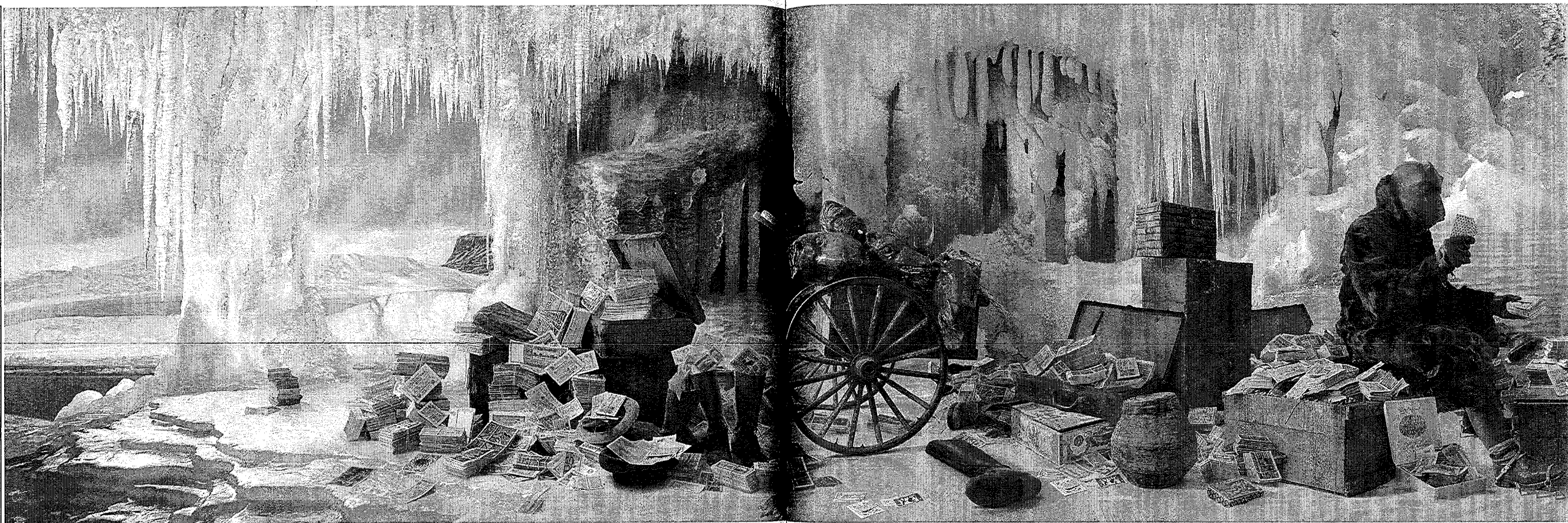


Figure 13. Frederick Church, *The Icebergs*, oil on canvas, 65" × 114," 1861; collection of the Dallas Museum of Art.



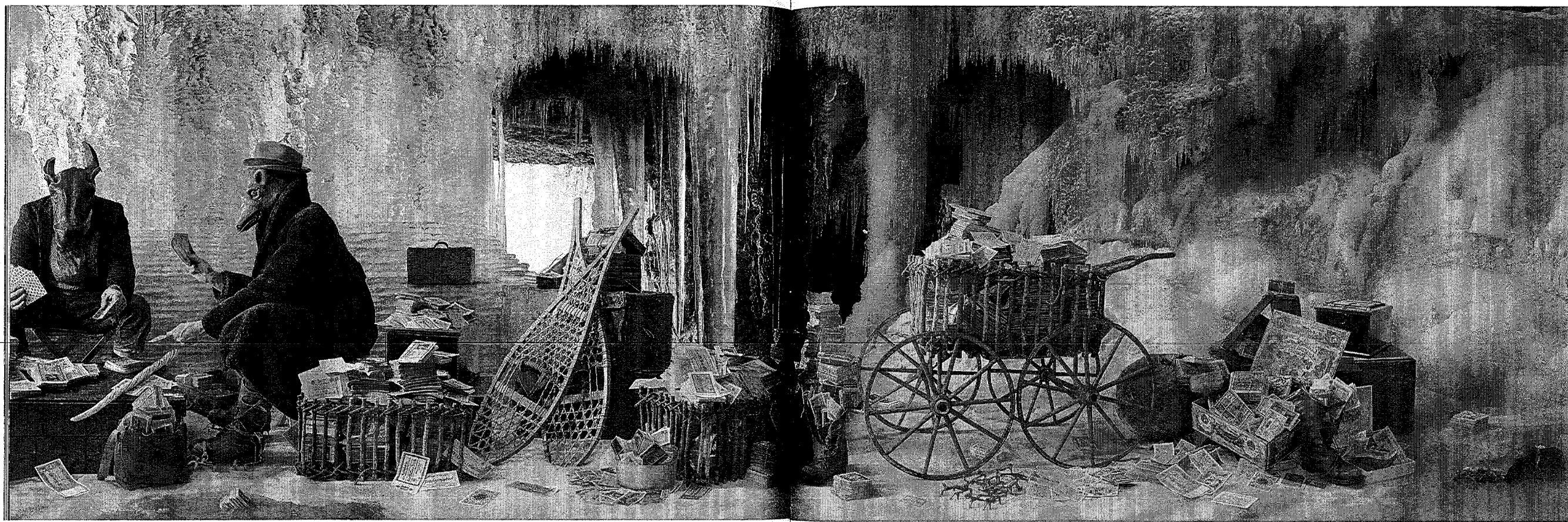


Figure 14. *Cardgame*, 10" × 72", digital print, 2007.

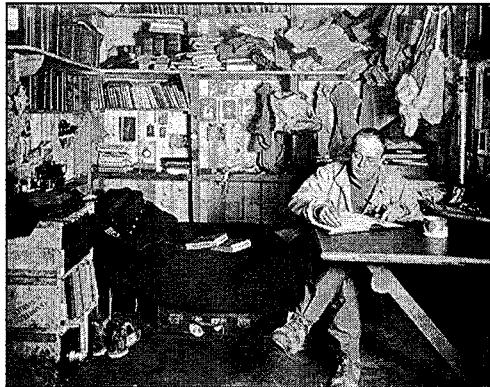


Figure 15. Photograph of Antarctic explorer Robert Scott Falcon by Herbert Ponting, 1911.

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Figure 16. A cave glyph, as illustrated in an early edition of Arthur Gordon Pym.