

THE MEMORY OF FORM

Corten Steel Sculptures in Public Space

Volume I

CATALOGUE ESSAY

The Memory of Form

Corten Steel Sculptures in Public Space

İlker Yardımcı's corten steel sculptures unite, in a single presence, the form constructed by reason and the surface worked by nature. The works gathered in this catalogue were designed for parks, building forecourts, courtyards and open squares; each was conceived as a public presence leaning on the soil, the trees and the sky of its site.

The forms arise from the purest constructions of the artist's language, rooted in geometric abstraction: spheres opened up by a lattice weave, interlocking rings, ribbons twisting around their own axis, stacked discs and plates, segments unfolding like a fan, and square plates whose surfaces are carved with circular voids. The never-closing loop of Poetic Loop, the movement left half-finished in Incomplete Movement, or the knotted lines of Nexus Aeternus draw a fluid rhythm out of a precise construction. The repetition of modules proposes an order; the voids between them let that order breathe.

Corten steel gives this geometry a living skin. The layer of rust that forms on its surface over time is not decay but a crust that protects the material from within. Darkening with rain, lightening in the sun, shifting its tone from season to season, this layer frees the sculpture from being a finished object and makes it part of a living process. Its colours, ranging from orange to brown, ochre and crimson, are the colours of earth, dry leaves and bark. The works therefore stand not as foreign additions to a natural setting, but as formations that have risen from it.

There is a fertile contrast between the texture of the material and the precision of the geometry. The lines are sharp, the curves calculated, the proportions balanced; yet the surface covering this rigorous structure is everywhere slightly different, irregular and organic. One softens the hardness of the other; the other gives direction to the first's disorder. Geometry offers the rust a skeleton, and rust gives geometry a memory. In this way reason and nature complete each other in one body without excluding one another.

In public space this relationship becomes an encounter that unfolds over time. In daylight the matt warmth of the surface comes to the fore; in the evening the light seeping through the perforated spheres and woven bodies redraws the sculpture like a lantern in the darkness of the city. As viewers walk around the work, openings overlap, shadows fall on the ground and the form takes on a different appearance. With its durable structure corten steel defies the years without maintenance; yet this permanence is not a frozen one, but an existence that continues by changing.

The Memory of Form brings Yardımcı's geometric research together with the rhythm of nature. These sculptures are like thresholds connecting the city to nature and nature to the city. Every rain, every season and every year leaves a new trace on their surfaces; accumulating time within their completed forms, the works continue to be silent and lasting witnesses of public space.



001

Untitled

Corten steel



002

Untitled

Corten steel



003

Human Conditions

Corten steel



004

Lyrical Accumulation

Corten steel



005

Untitled

Corten steel



006

Untitled

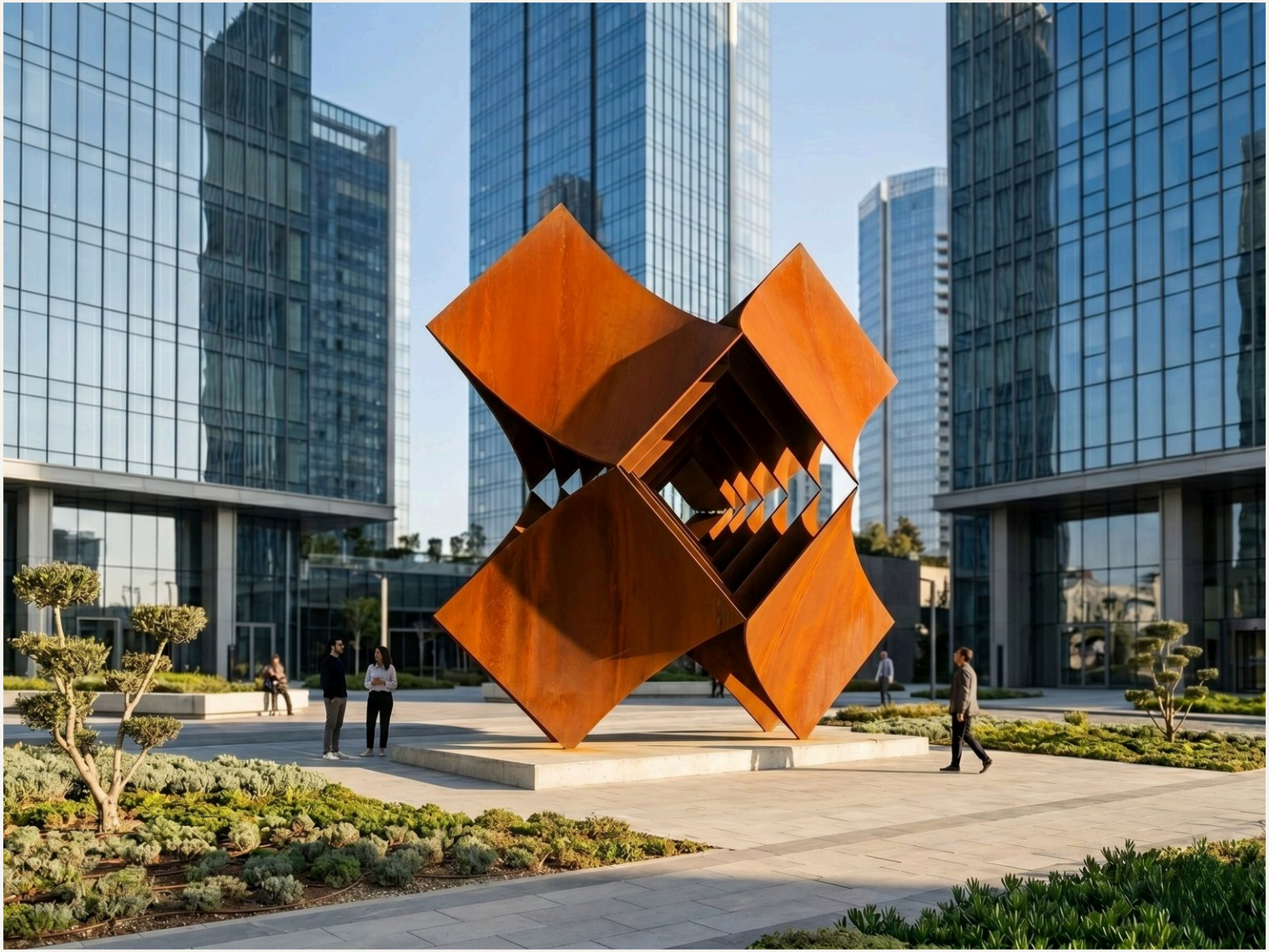
Corten steel



007

Untitled

Corten steel



008

Nexus Vacui

Corten steel



009

Untitled

Corten steel



010

Untitled

Corten steel



011

Mundus Silens

Corten steel



012

Untitled

Corten steel



013

Untitled

Corten steel



014

Untitled

Corten steel



015

Untitled

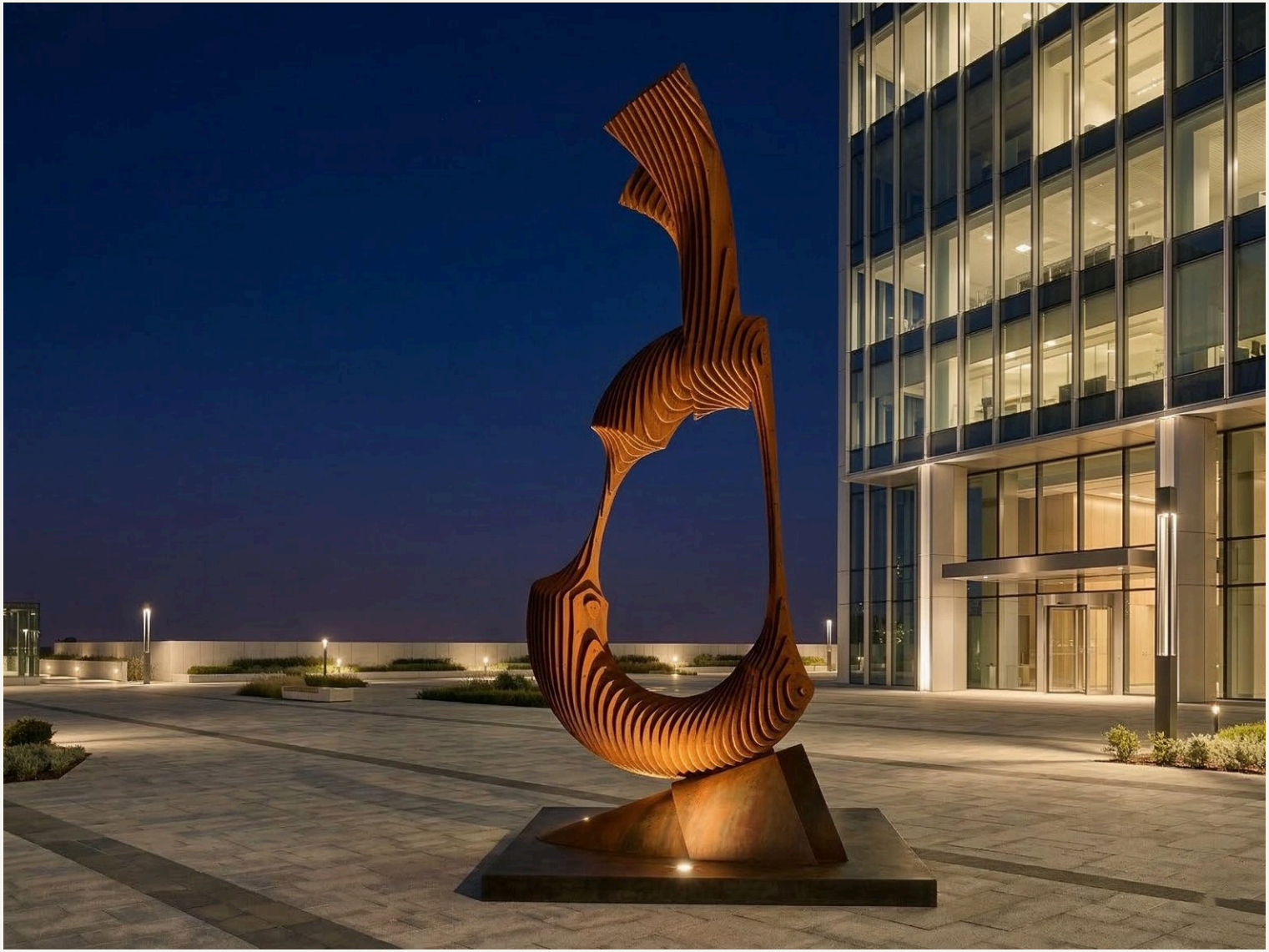
Corten steel



016

Untitled

Corten steel



017

Untitled

Corten steel



018

Poetic Loop

Corten steel



019

Untitled

Corten steel



020

Untitled

Corten steel



021

Composition

Corten steel



022

Untitled

Corten steel



023

Untitled

Corten steel



024

Untitled

Corten steel



025

Untitled

Corten steel



026

Untitled

Corten steel



027

Composition

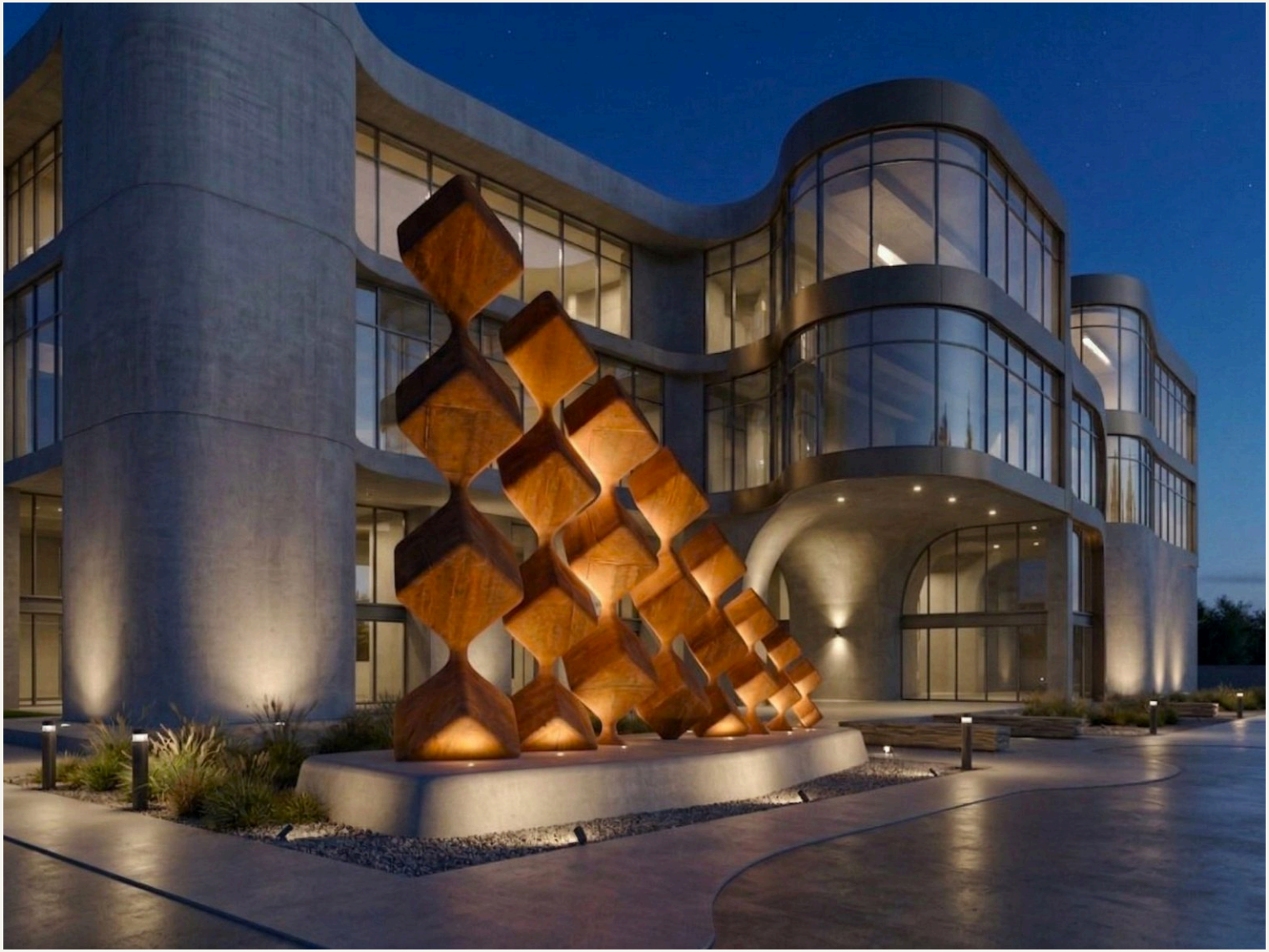
Corten steel



028

Poetic Loop

Corten steel



029

Untitled

Corten steel



030

Untitled

Corten steel



031

Untitled

Corten steel



032

Untitled

Corten steel



033

Untitled

Corten steel



034

Untitled

Corten steel

Prof. Dr. İlker Yardımcı

Prof. Dr. İlker Yardımcı is a sculptor, designer and academic whose practice centres on sculpture for public space. A graduate of the Department of Sculpture at Dokuz Eylül University's Faculty of Fine Arts, he completed his master's degree (2007) and his Proficiency in Art (2011) at the same university's Institute of Fine Arts. He is a professor in the Department of Sculpture at Düzce University's Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture, where he teaches sculpture in the urban environment, digital sculpture and computer-aided sculpture design.

"Confusion of Prism", selected for the 2008 Beijing Olympics, and "Lyrical Message", one of 15 international sculptures selected for the Olympic Park of the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics, are among the works that define the artist's position in international public art. His works stand in squares, parks and collections in Türkiye, China, the USA, Ukraine, Argentina, Taiwan, Luxembourg and the Czech Republic. Exhibitions include the International Beijing Art Biennale (2012, 2017), the Lih Pao Biennial (Taiwan, 2014) and the Esch-sur-Alzette European Capital of Culture Sculpture Exhibition (Luxembourg, 2022). In 2024 he received the Excellent Award at the Wuhu Sculpture Thematic Exhibition "Carving the Renowned City of Jiangdong · Shaping Wuhu of the Era", organised by the China Sculpture Institute and the Wuhu Municipal People's Government.

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Images are digital visualisations of public-space proposals.

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