OTHER VISION

TAMMY MCGOVERN

Intuition, play and experimentation, rather than direct messaging and narrative, are driving forces in my art making process, and have influenced both the collection of material, and the construction methods that lead to the final pieces presented in this thesis show. The content of my work is about embodied sensations, and I want that to lead to someplace that feels both introspective and emotionally connected, even if a narrative thread is difficult to pinpoint or identify. The exhibition title, *Other Vision*, references some motivations in choosing to work this way, as well as hinting at ways of encountering the works, both as producer and as audience. My practice is rooted in electronic media, with a focus on video, sound, responsive screen-based work, and most recently, works on paper. The videos, installations and prints included in *Other Vision* present outcomes of explorations in all of these areas. They showcase experimentation with form, interests in working with various tools for real-time manipulations, and explorations of bringing these works into immersive real-space environments.

The methodology of creating the works in this show fall under broad and loose categories of automatic poetics and performance. They feature the results of ongoing experiments working intuitively with MIDI instruments and other tools for real-time creation of compositions, as well as using oscillators that regulate changes of image and sound control parameters at various rhythms and frequencies. Each work starts from a point of not knowing, of trying things out and of finding surprising juxtapositions along the way. Performance is an aspect of the work in that the final edits are 'prints' of "post-production" actions working on the material, such as creating sequences of clips, or filtering images with color or temporal effects. Performances are also an element of some of these works as on camera events that take place at the moment of recording, whether that's reading with as little inflection as possible, or performing an everyday activity with minimal sentiment. Intensities emerge as combinations and afterimages, like colors shifting and becoming unstable with changing contexts and arrangements. Imagining the movements that make each piece is something that becomes part of the work, with the material and the experimentation becoming and shaping form. In addition to the recordings of action as videos, this show also includes works in print that freeze moments from the videos, allowing for another type of interaction with the images, and another opportunity to make the processes of the effects and constructions visible.

Along with personally captured footage of ordinary moments, I also incorporate imagery from corporate and mass media, as well as digital text and voice. Whether found in appropriated materials, or in images of familiar seeming environments, I'm interested in using materials that hint at a shared sense of reality, common spaces or ordinary activities that lay a common ground. Although this body of work isn't intended to be biographical, I do want to foreground engagements with, and manipulations of the material, often by using formal approaches that emphasize edits, draw attention

...relevant to making art is the both simple and complex fact of how you group things together. It is an intricate pattern of thought made visible in actions of handling, placing, removing and replacing.

Briony Fer

to the presence of the camera, repeat images and sounds, and play with movements in and out of frames. This results in a strong sense of formalism to the work, although, because of the images chosen, there is also a sense of the personal and the intimate. The intention here is for the detached sense of formalism in the works to also and simultaneously provide a sense of intimacy and a hinting at a personal, creating an intensity between the subjectivism evoked by something closer to a diary film, and the structural feel of a regular and predictable pattern of motion and change.

Capturing images: Selecting moments to record and images to edit

An image captures my attention on at least two different occasions: the first is when I am first noticing and recording an image, and the second is when I am making selections during the editing process.

Image and video recording most often happens spontaneously, in an almost casual way, during the course of everyday activities, without having a specific plan or project in mind. I carry a camera with me, often a smartphone, capturing moments because I see an interesting character on the street, or I see something very beautiful like the landscape going by, or something out of the ordinary or changing in the environment around me. I capture images of birds a lot because I find them fascinating and their motion is beautiful, and I capture images of spaces and locations because

they have a strong sense of character. The framings also are important as they hint at the presence of my own body, positioning me in the world, and this closely relates to the onscreen performance recordings, where my own presence is the visual material of the work. There are also many other images I capture for the same reason that anybody else, artist or not, records life - because there's a moment that I want to remember and that I want to hold onto like a keepsake. So sometimes an image is a keepsake and sentimentally motivated, and other times an image is just a peculiar moment that I don't know exactly why I'm drawn to capture it, but I do.

Later when I'm in an editing state, a stage of putting pictures and sounds together, this becomes another stage of activity that happens spontaneously, and is a process immersed in the immediate and the intuitive. I'm interested in surprising myself, and in responding to the emotional effect that I feel when I see an image, rather than in constructing an intentional and preconceived emotional or narrative message. I'm going into the editing room without necessarily thinking, "I'm going to make a piece about my anxiety around our current climate crisis, or my fear about what's happening with race relations, my frustration over class inequalities, or my difficulty in getting through the loss of someone close." Instead, those are things that might be my own background noise as I focus on process. I'm not thinking about the meaning in the work, I'm thinking about all formal things, I'm looking at maybe a gesture that captures my attention, or I'm looking at a clip from an advertisement or some piece of commercial media, that evokes a feeling or highlights a detail that I may not have noticed on previous
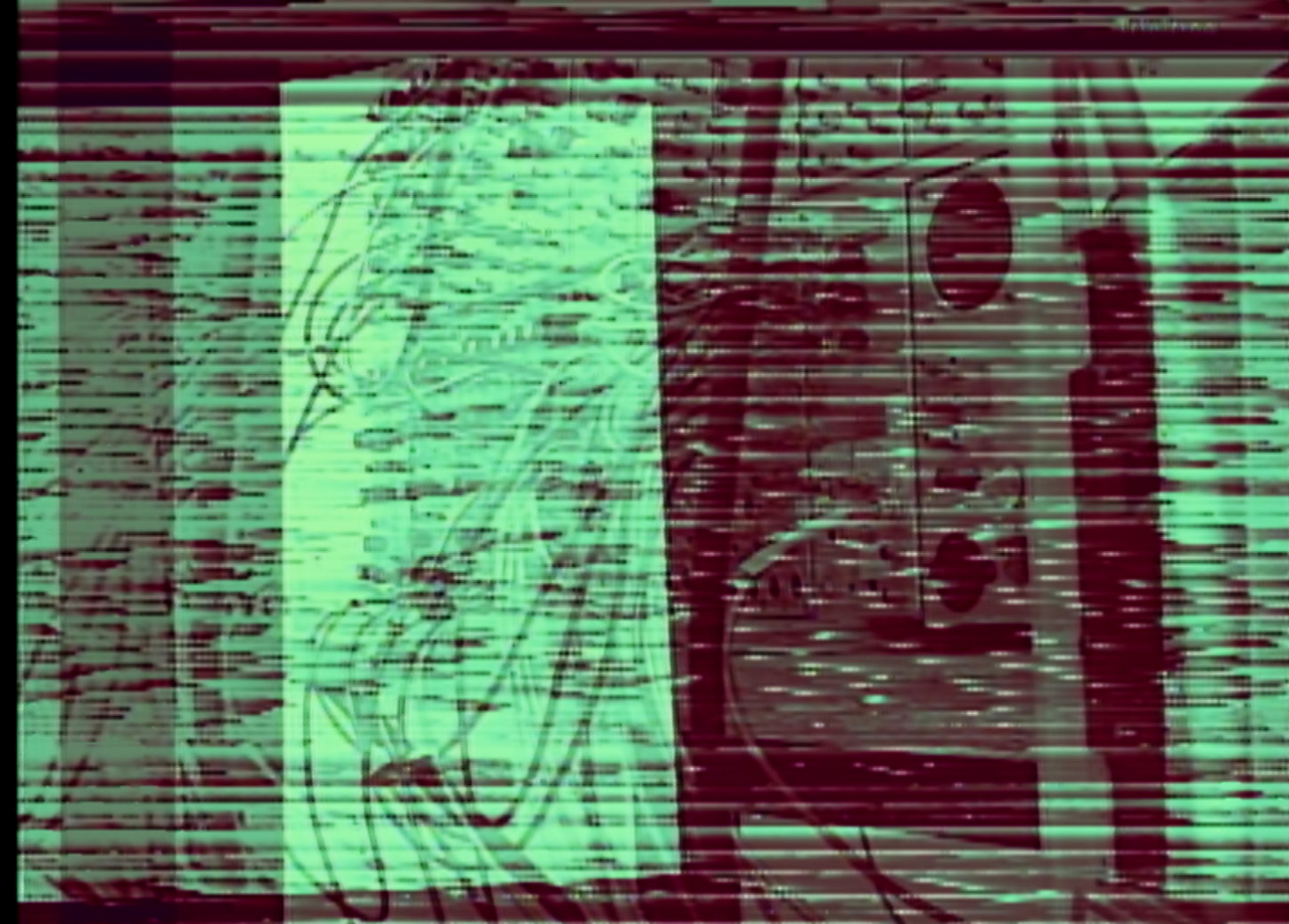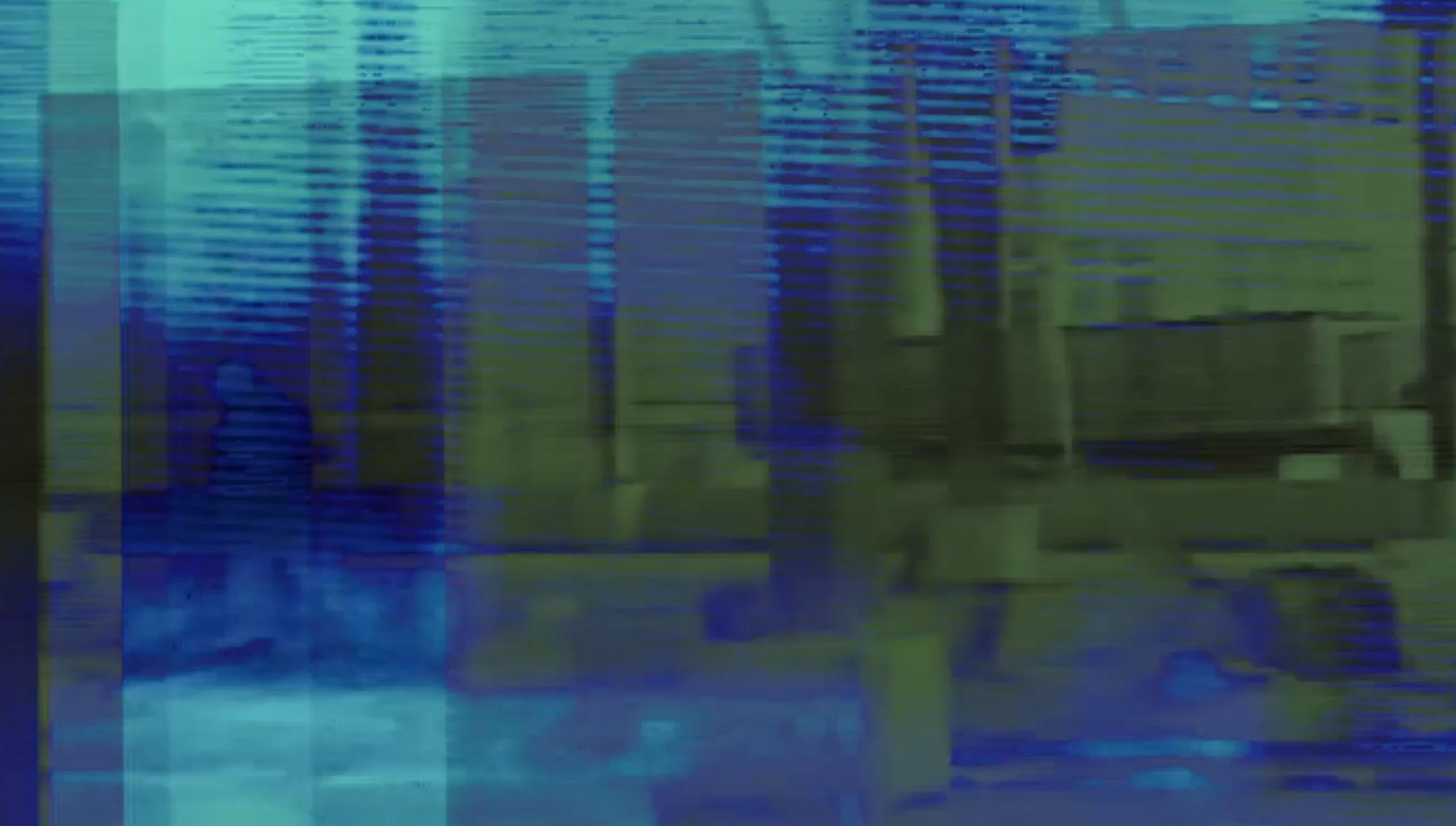
encounters with that material. Editing in terms of filmmaking tradition means putting together images that have some kind of relationship with each other, or that carry through a metaphorical significance, or that progress a narrative forward, whereas the relationships I create aren't things that are concrete or narratively driven, but are relationships focused on formal or rhythmic construction in time - having more to do with finding in a juxtaposition or the transformation through an effect, something different in the new images created through combinations than what I may have seen in any of the raw images before.

This process of editing happens by starting out in an experimental way, playing between initial decisions being made somewhat randomly, such as choosing a starting image that is easy at hand and works in an interesting way with an effect, and then continuing on from there. Through the process of formally working this material, finding new adjacencies, finding new framings, and exploring changes through filters, I am able to transform the look or ambiance of an image, or amplify feelings that I might have already had when first capturing the image. I might find myself thinking things like, "Wait a minute, I need something that looks like this, or I need something that has motion to it, or I need something that is more settled and tranquil." I start to realize, "I've got too many, jumbled images that all have too much motion in them and are competing with each other,"

then that's how I know that I need to make a change and choose something different. It's a process of figuring out which of these chaotic images do I swap out for something a little bit quieter. It's not uncommon for me to be stuck at this point for a couple of hours or days or longer, just knowing that one particular image has my attention, and through finding something else that fits with it formally, a new intensity or emotion is created. Recognizing eventually what fits with it is intuitively driven, I know it when I see it, but I don't know it before I see it.

Constructing Patterns & Non-Narratives: Making decisions on the formal structure in the editing

My process is one of trying things out, building up subsegments, working out the parts to the whole, and arriving at forms and arrangements through play and experimentation. Ideas are in the relationships that develop from working with the materials and tools. The raw recordings and samplings, along with captures of real-time recordings of working with voltage controlled analog tools like the Sandin Image Processor, or with digital tools like TouchDesigner and the Signal Culture applications, all contribute to the building of a collection of things and ideas that might be further layered and worked when I edit these fragments together.
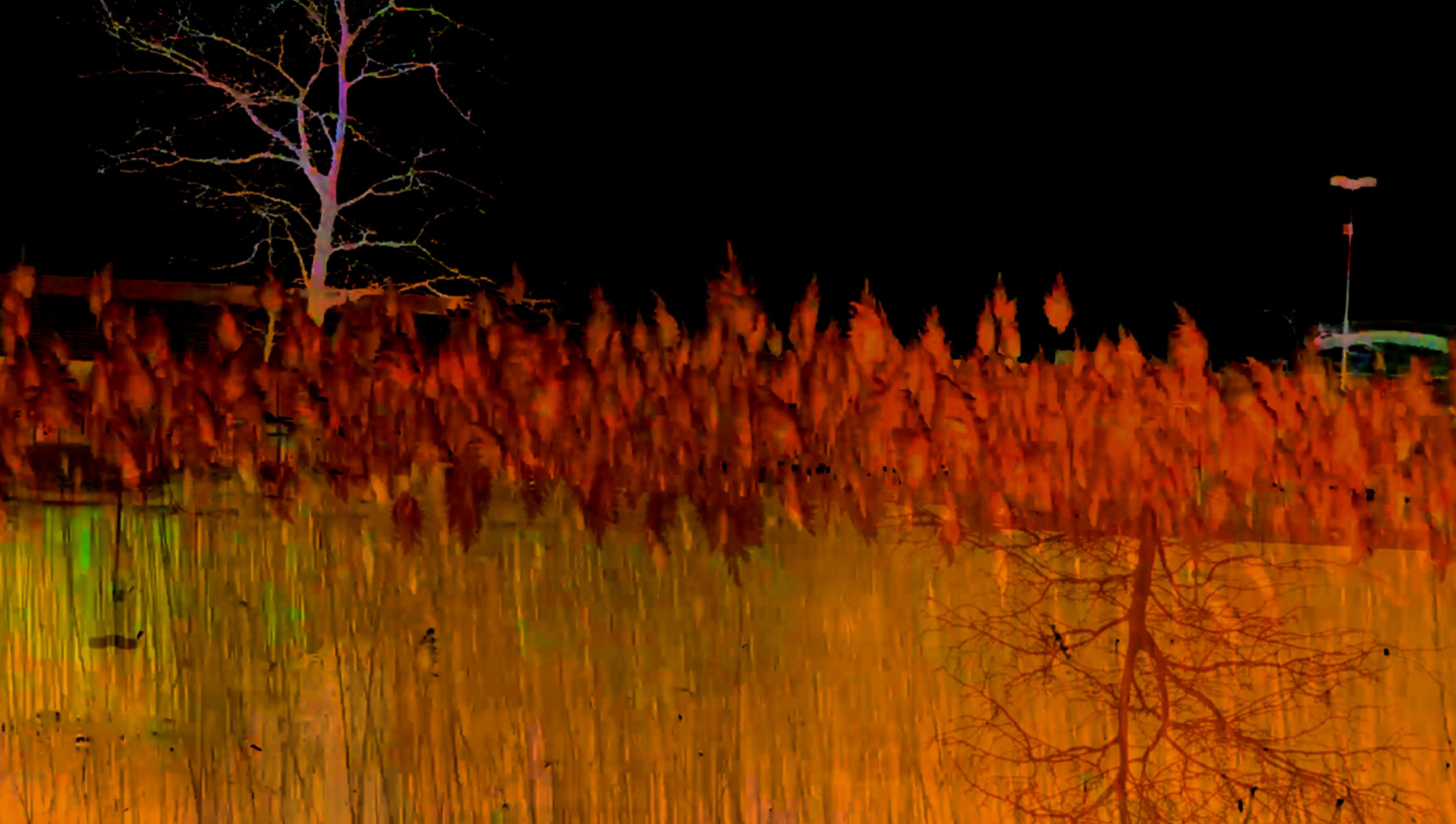
"The thought of the spectator and the thought of the author don't come together in a determined way, instead they affect each other within the zone of indeterminacy."

Jacques Ranciere

During the editing process, there are certain kinds of formal things that I'm drawn to, like flicker and dense layering where different parts of one image might show through into another image in an unexpected way. I might play with speeds slowing things down or speeding things up, or literally turning something upside down or inversing its colors. What I see emerge from doing processes like this sparks my next move and shows me how to continue on with constructing my timeline. I'm interested in the new vibrations, states of emotion, and atmospheres that these sorts of changes evoke. It's a process of discovery for me. I'm not trying to construct a specific narrative, and when clear narratives do develop, I'm not always happy. I prefer to be a little bit confounded by my own construction, and surprised by images that I wouldn't have thought of in a completely intentional way. What helps keep me focused on how to make moment by moment decisions is figuring out how combinations can work out formally, and bringing images together that make space for each other somehow when they're juxtaposed one after another, or one over another. My interest at this stage is rooted in seeing how the different elements will interact with each other, and because of what the original material is, I can trust that there will be something emotional there, I know that there will be something that feels meaningful there that I might reflect on, and reflect on differently from one moment of viewing to the next.

Chance, intentions and meanings:

On one hand, as anyone who follows me on social media knows, I don't publicly share many moments of my life. My artwork is about as close as it gets to sharing anything private or intimate. If something feels meaningful and emotional to me, whatever the specifics of those meanings and those emotions are, then that's very personal without the result necessarily being about me or about sharing anything regarding my opinions about the world. It's just evidence or traces of a performance or an encounter, and the emotional involvement with what's being presented on the screen. The meaning is something that's personal to me, but I would hope evokes something intimate or personal for my audience in a way that if a viewer feels something that goes further than just the formal elements of seeing a flicker or feeling the intensity of a rhythm, then that is as much as I hope for in a connection. If a viewer sees something that makes them reflect on something in their own life or something of their own view of reality, and their own feeling of being in the world, then I think that doesn't need to be shared with me, and what I feel doesn't need to be shared with them. There's something meaningful in this very formal object having also elements of the personal and intimate injected into it as evidence of my own body and the world. That alone, the consideration of existence in and movement through this world, is the meaning that I'm willing to share in an explicit way with people.
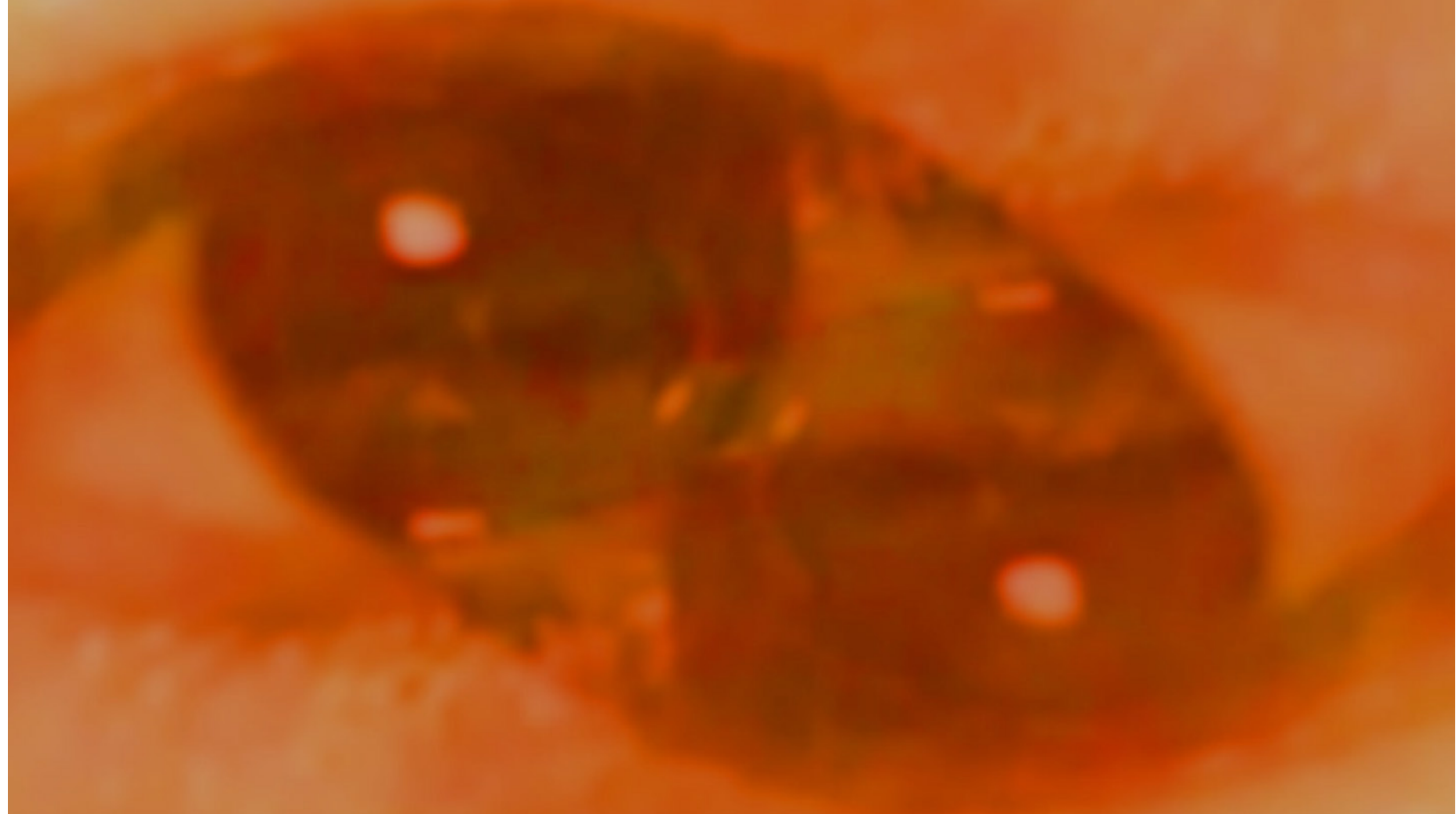
"The subject is the physical qualities of the film and structural process of making the film...the work is about perceptual responses so that the subject becomes the viewers of the work themselves"

Paul Sharits

Fast images and legibility of the work:

The images in my work are things that I consider like notes in a piece of music. Different elements are hard to see on their own, what ends up being seen might be just an overall pattern. You see a rhythm or you see a pattern, texture and layers, rather than seeing individual images, but there are times when the viewer might also glimpse individual images, since there are individual images in there. It depends on how your eye and your attention focuses. But you don't see "nothing", there's something in front of your eyesight. Maybe on one level, a viewer feels that they don't see anything because the image moves so quickly or is so obscured with layers that the image becomes completely obliterated by perception itself, but if there are still traces of emotion there, then that's something that I think is interesting and is something that seems valuable to me, like the way I might emotionally connect to a non-lyrical piece of music. You're not perceiving each individual note so much as the whole composition, the relationship of everything to each other. I'm not unhappy for people to be able to focus in on a particular image, especially since there's so much repetition and typically there are so few images that make up an individual video work that you do have the opportunity to see those individual elements presented to you. Likewise, in my interactive works, I tend to incorporate very few images and a lot of repetition. On prolonged or multiple interactions, a viewer may see those images,
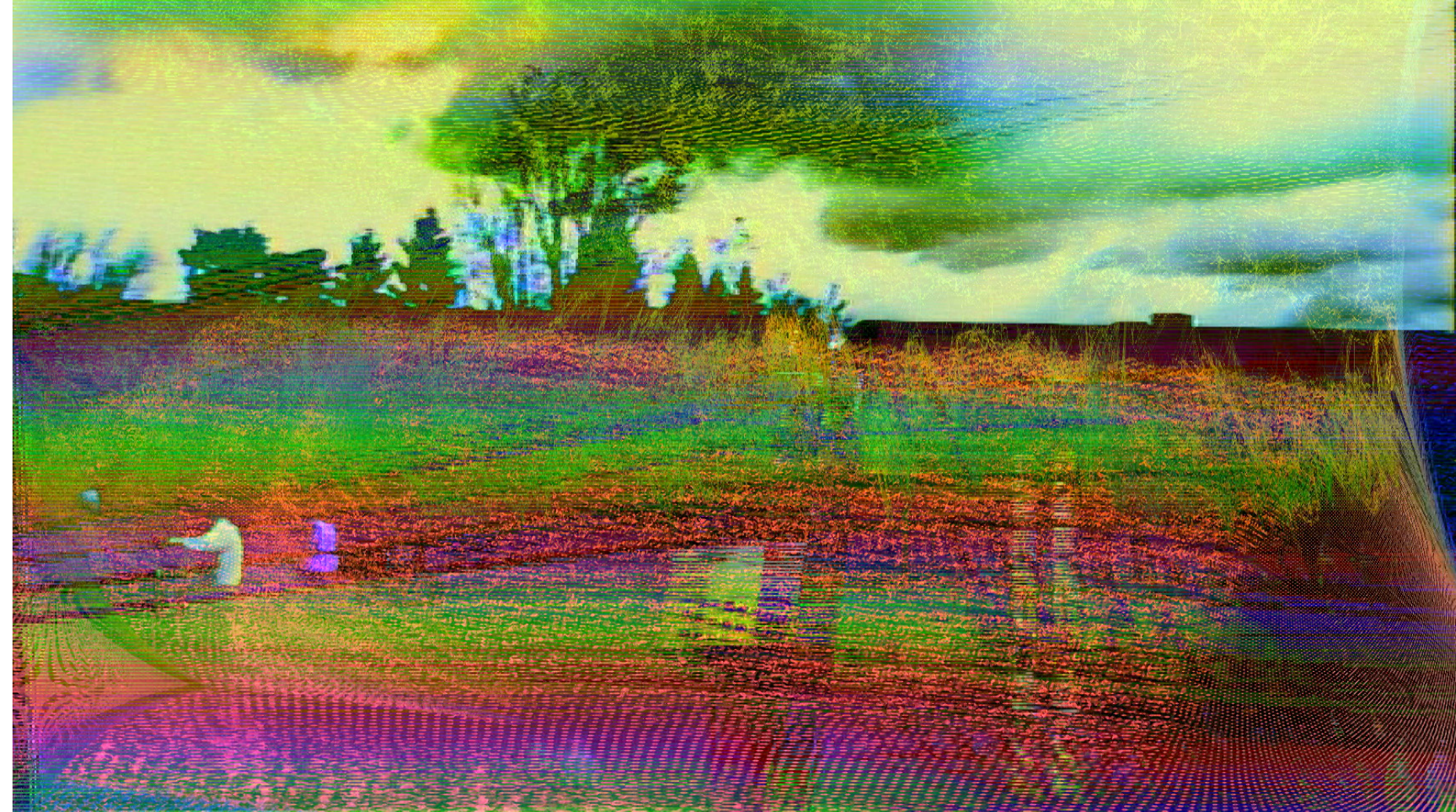
In concrete perception, memory intervenes, and the subjectivity of sensible qualitites is due precisely to the fact that our consciousness, which begins by being only memory, prolongs a plurality of moments into each other, contracting them into a single intuition.

Henri Bergson

to

fell

or pick up on individual words. If they do, and if they get stuck mentally on those things, then they're in the boat that I was in when making the work, more or less. But if they don't see those individual images, or if they see something else, then that something else that they're seeing is a thing that's mysterious and interesting to me as well.

Encounters and Interactions: Viewers and Content

To a certain extent, all of these pieces, and all artwork and objects, are interactive. What a viewer fixates on, or where the viewer's curiosity leads them during a viewing, becomes part of the interface to the work, and part of how you access the work. Interactivity has more to do with approach and self-awareness, finding that you want something and trying to find your way to that something. Thus, interactive here isn't just about responsive or reactive image or text or sound, even though that is obviously one way that I work, but interactive is also being aware that you are making decisions, foregrounding that your attention is being pulled in different ways. There's also ambiguity in how that attention is being pulled, there's a question around how much of that direction of attention is orchestrated through what I've put together on the screen, and how much of that is driven by the memories, attitudes and individual fixations that the viewers themselves bring to the work. My interest is in emphasizing an awareness that not everyone's attention is pulled in exactly the same way, and

that viewing and sensemaking experiences are extremely personal and individualized conditions. In the end, I hope to create a space and to orchestrate a way of viewing that allows and highlights a wide range of othership, that simultaneously evokes a sense of empathy that doesn't require that we are one or that we are similar in order to reach that sense of empathy.
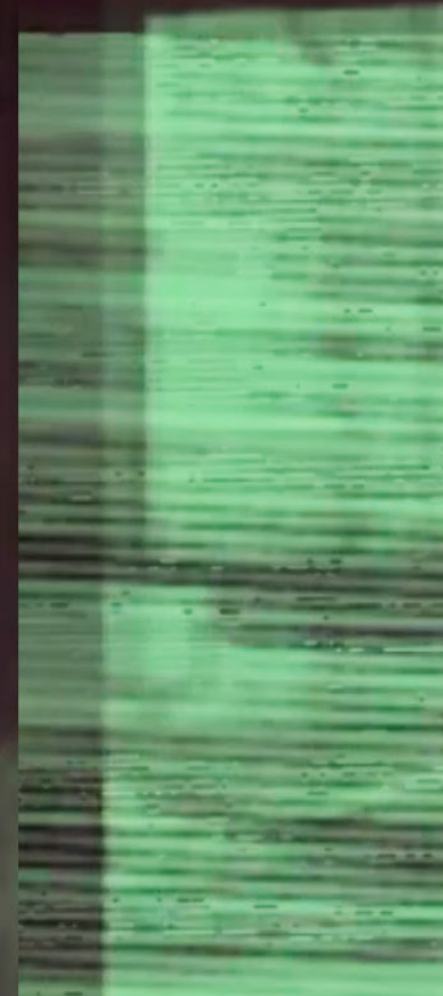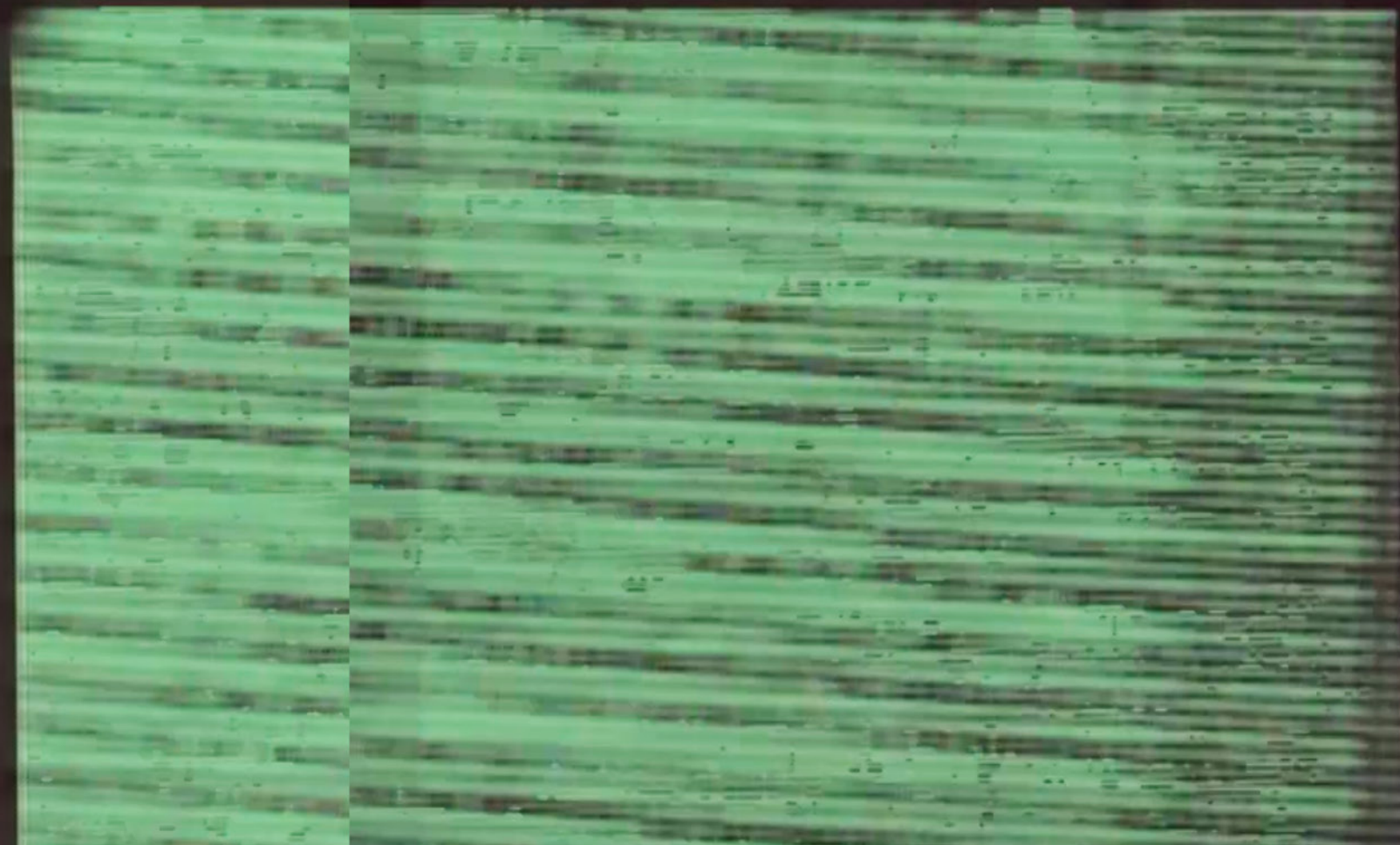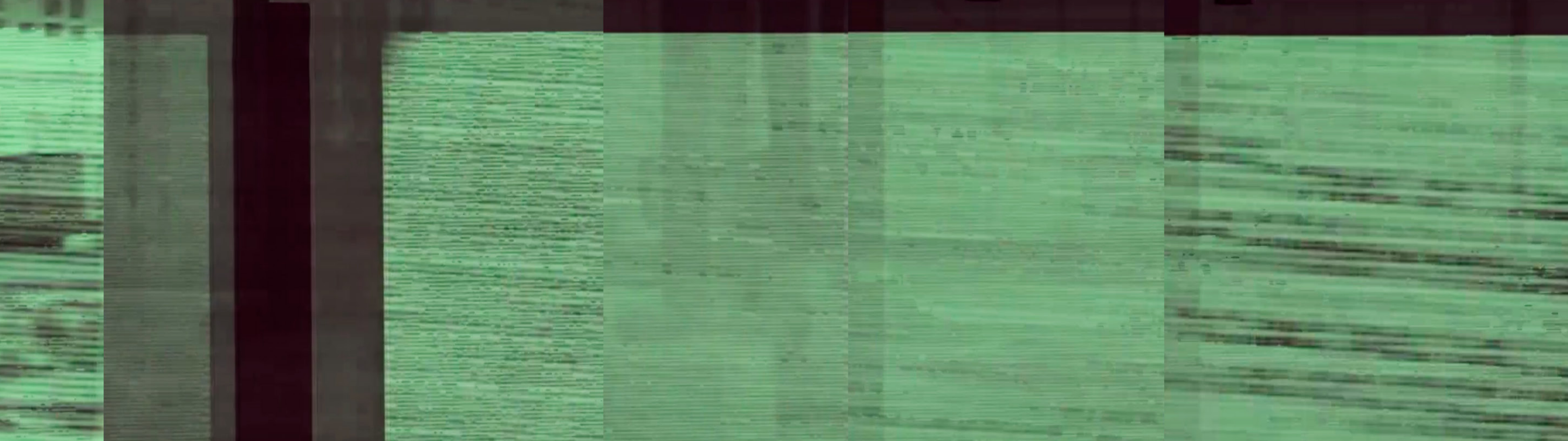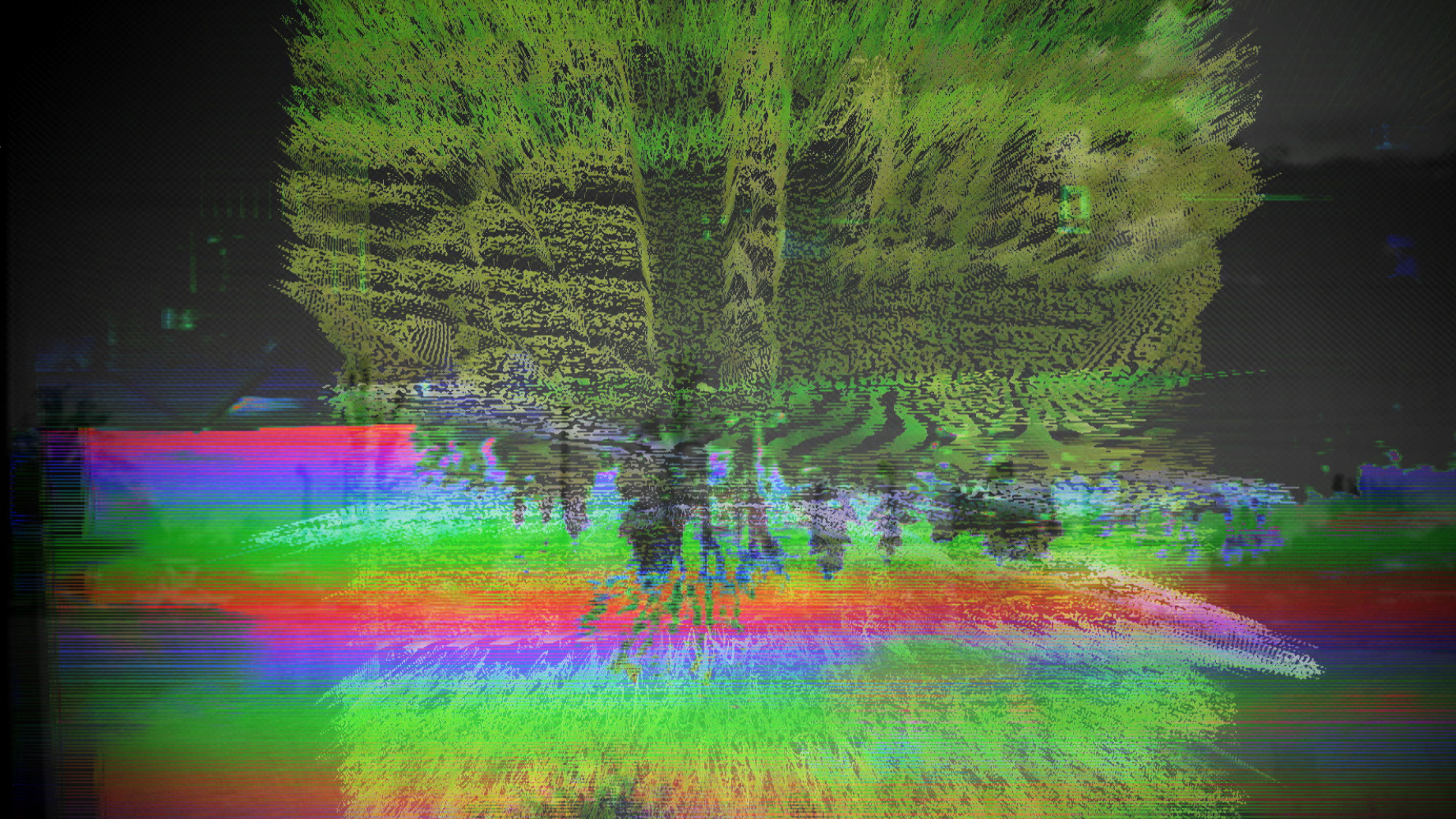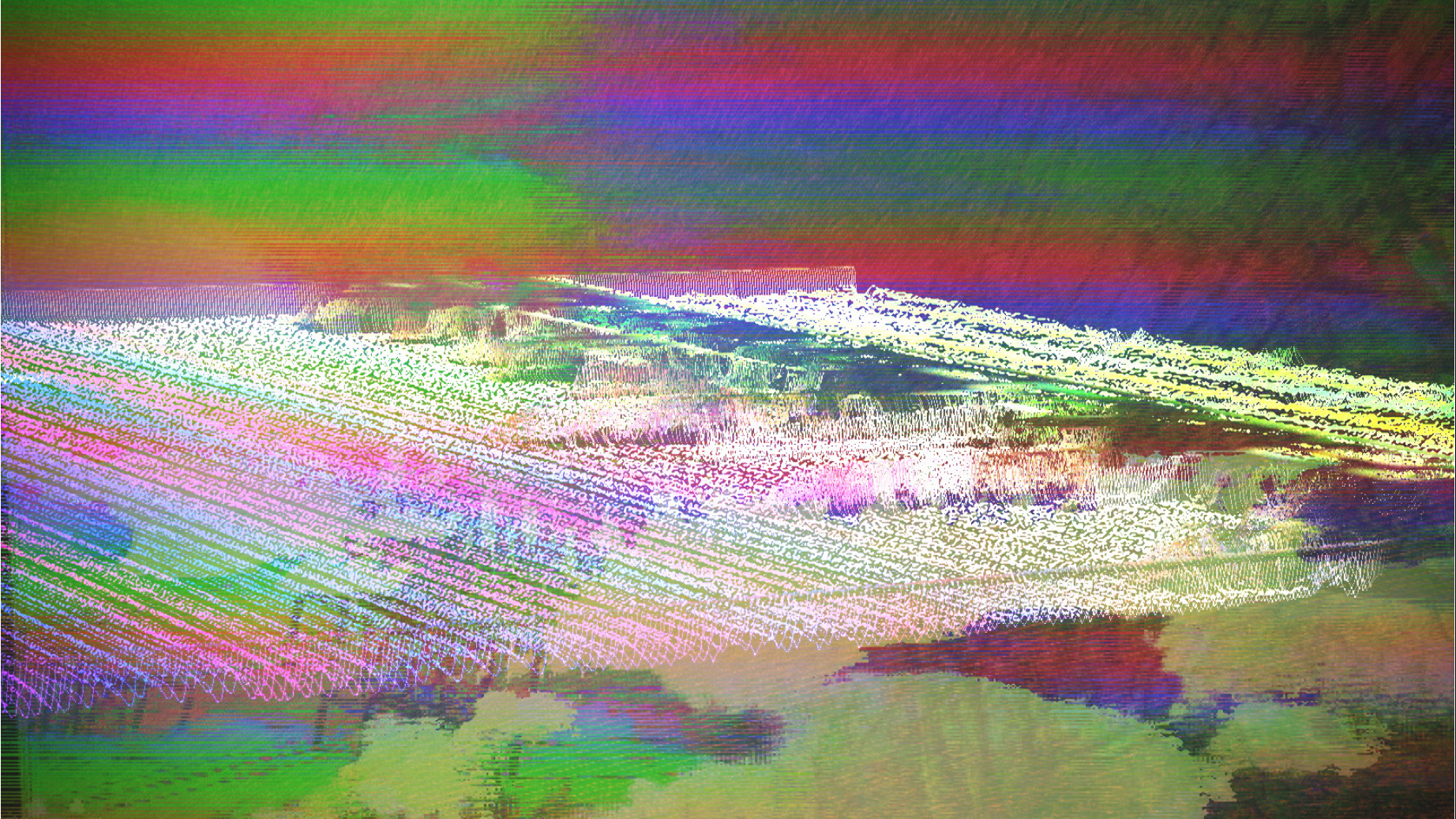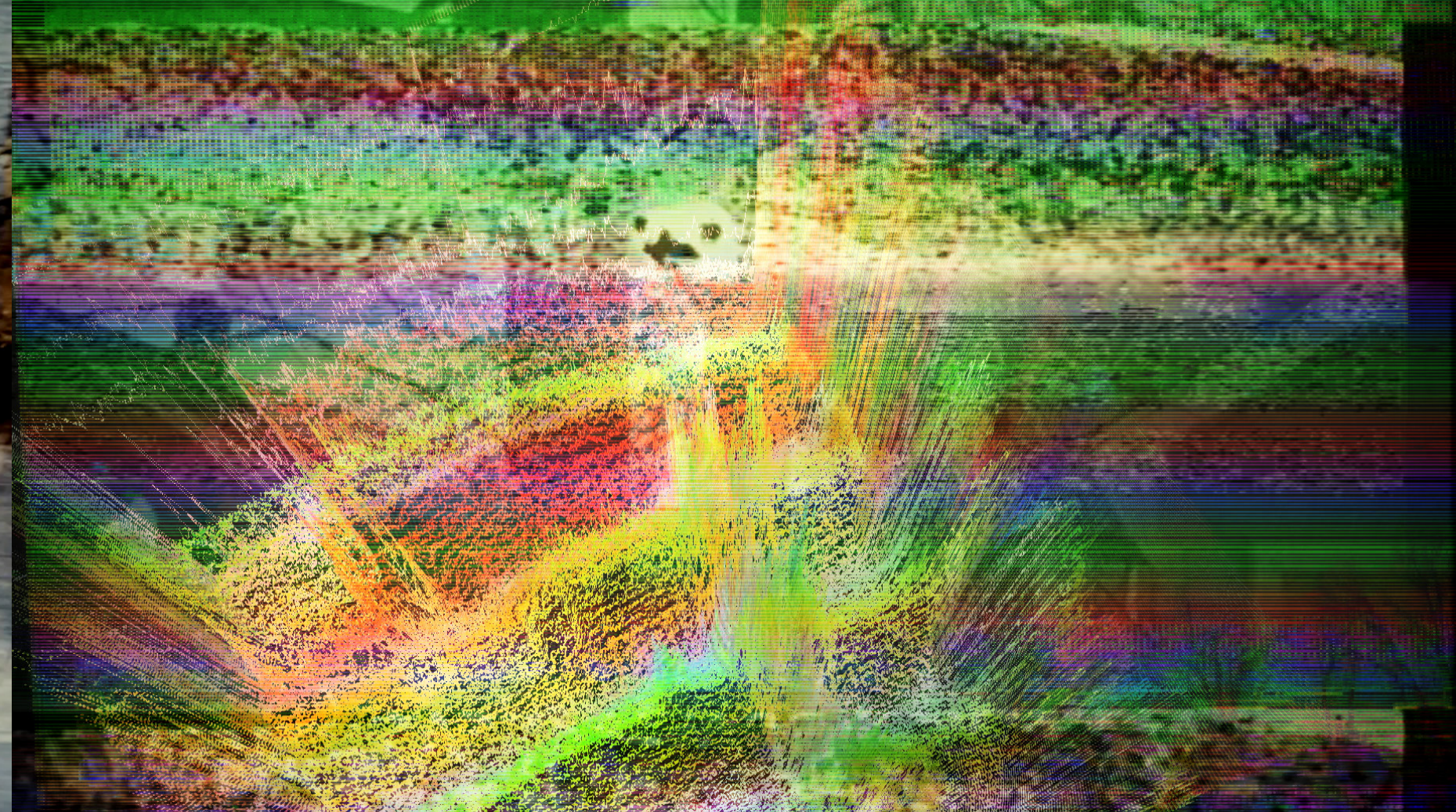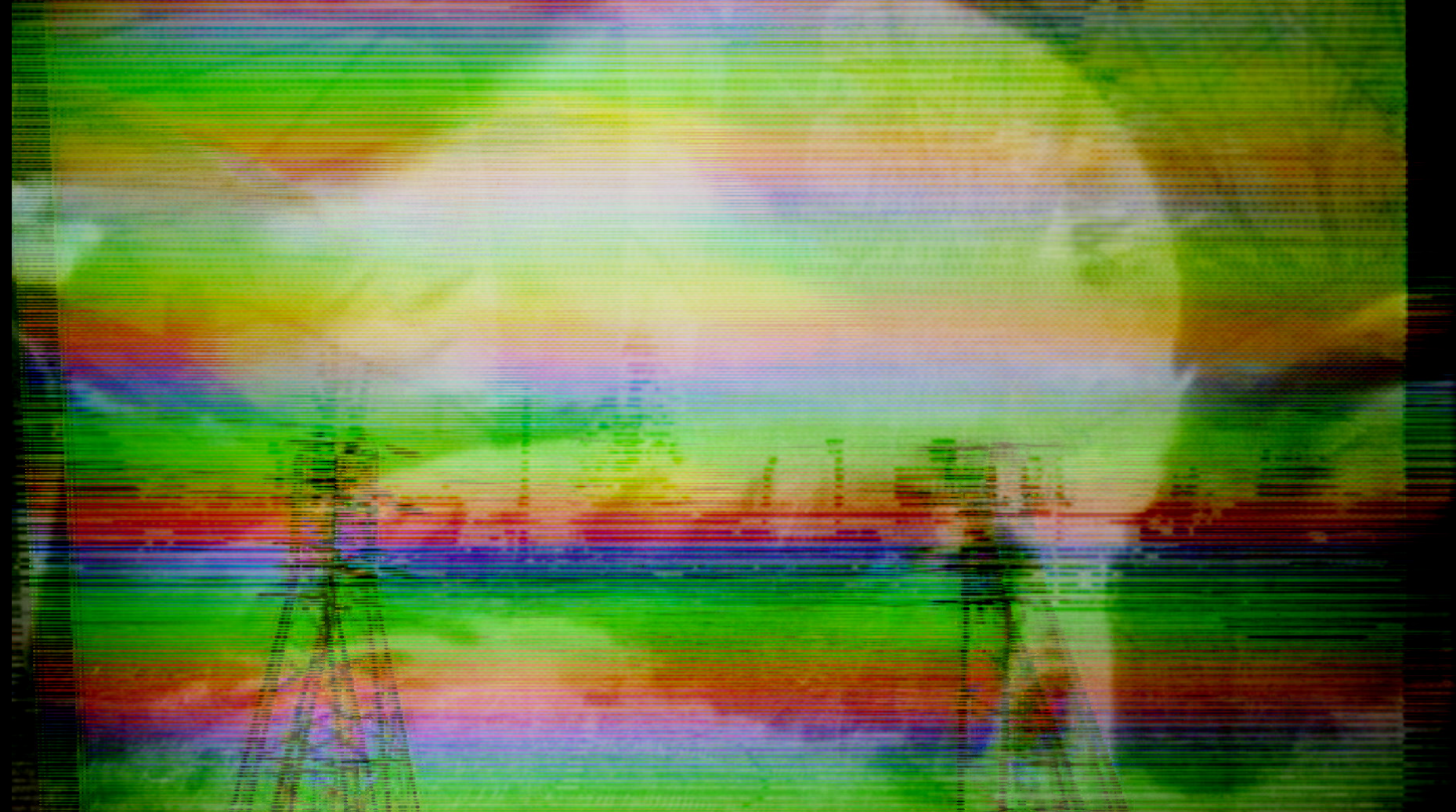
Don;t name it, as they say, because instantly you offer it to this peculiar authority.

Robert Creeley