

A Thesis Presented to
The Faculty of Alfred University

The Destiny We Should Not Be Destined To

by

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In partial fulfillment of
the requirements for
the Alfred University Honors Program

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Under the Supervision of:

Chair: Andrew Deutsch, Professor Sonic & Video Art

Committee Members:

Judy Livingston, Associate Professor of Graphic Design

Eric Souther, Assistant Professor Video Art

Introduction

I. Nature

Where would I be without the beauty of the Earth? Throughout my life, nature has been the main thing consistent in my life. Whether I'm happy, sad, angry, or confused, nature has a cleansing property that allows me to clear my head and stop thinking. It's amazing we get the opportunity to explore so many different areas on Earth and take in the surroundings. Every place has its own wildlife, unique to its environment. Personally, my favorite has always been the forest and mountain areas. Being able to hike and see different ecosystems existing is a treat.

Nature is also a place of community. A little cabin in the middle of the Adirondacks holds a place of friendship, love, and good energy. The experiences I've had in this cabin have been nothing short of life changing and have taught me to appreciate what's right in front of me. To be fair, it's hard not to appreciate what's in front of you when you wake up and look outside to a beautiful mountain range.

II. Art

Something else that has brought me a lot of joy is art. Like most people going to school for art, I've been drawing since I was little. It has been my creative outlet for a while. Art allows you to capture feelings that are otherwise impossible to explain. Like nature, art gives me the opportunity to cleanse myself of any negative thoughts and feelings I'm having in the moment.

My journey with art hasn't always been positive, however. In high school, I decided to start taking art my sophomore year. I had been doing art on my own, but I wanted to improve my skills, and potentially go to college for art, and become a concept artist. When I started class, I

quickly realized I was not as good as a lot of my peers. I always felt like I was never complimented on my work, and that the work I did create was subpar at best. I also found out I preferred a more abstract, free style. Unfortunately, that didn't really align with the project we were given in high school, so I suppressed that desire to work freely, and continued to do what I thought was expected of me.

When applying to art schools, there are often "portfolio reviews" prior to applications. These reviews give you a chance to talk to the schools you are interested in and get feedback on what you have.

I walked in, portfolio in hand, feeling nervous but excited. I had already talked to a few schools and got relatively positive feedback. The school that was hosting the portfolio review was MICA, Maryland Institute College of Art. Because the school was hosting, they had several professors reviewing the portfolios, rather than a recruiter from the school, which is what most schools had.

As mentioned before, I had every intention of doing concept art in the future, so my plan was to go to school for Illustration. I was put with one of the Illustration professors. The girl that was going before me had an amazing review. The professor was extremely impressed with her, and they were having amazing conversations. Then, it was my turn.

The professor tore into me. He asked me if I've gotten positive feedback so far. I said yes. He informed me that all those people were recruiters and told me that they were just being nice to make me want to go there. He was not going to be nice. He told me I had no passion, and probably should major in something else. He did let me know that I would get into MICA because of my grades, but not because of my art. He said if I really wanted to continue with art

I'd need to start being passionate about what I'm doing. I left the portfolio review holding back tears and realizing that I will probably not get into any schools.

The thing is, he wasn't wrong. I didn't have any passion for the work I was making. I enjoyed the process of course, but I didn't really have any drive. Truth be told, I still don't know why I decided to major in art. It wasn't my passion, I wasn't good at it, and I didn't even have any support behind me. Maybe I was just trying to prove something.

I'd like to mention that I did end up getting into all but one of the schools I applied to. That one professor was right, my grades carried me to victory. Of course, in the end I chose to go to Alfred University. I could not even think about going to MICA after being berated at the portfolio review.

Now, after completing my college career, I have found the passion I was looking for in art. With the support of my professors, namely Andrew Deutsch, Judy Livingston, and Eric Souther, I was able to find the path I wanted to take. Funnily enough, freshman year whenever I would talk to my family members about majoring in art, they would always ask if I was going to do graphic design. It was always an adamant NO. I thought I would abhor graphic design. Turns out, graphic design was something I really enjoyed, and illustration was the thing I realized I didn't actually have a passion for.

So, to all my family members, yes, I am doing graphic design.

III. Combining My Passions

The subject matter of my art always eluded me. Like most college students, I was figuring out who I was, and trying to work through that. I noticed that a lot of my peers' work revolved around their identities or mental states, and I felt like I should do the same. Unfortunately, I came

to the realization that that topic was not what I wanted to make art about. Yes, I was struggling with my mental health and who I was as a person but making art about the subjects did not help. I felt like I was trying to phone it in and express myself in ways I didn't feel that fit me.

During lockdown, one of the only things that was still consistently there was nature. Nearly every day I would take a hike around a local park/nature reserve. Once we were able to come back to school, the obvious thing to make art about was COVID. However, I discovered a new subject matter I could revolve my art around: nature! It felt so obvious. I loved spending time outside, so it made sense to create art appreciating it.

Around this time was also when I realized I enjoy making ambient sound pieces. The idea I can make people think of things and experience emotions without creating visuals for them was very exciting. That eventually translated into my visual art this year, where I began to create the abstract artworks I've been holding myself back from creating.

Beginning to use nature as a subject matter was very fulfilling, but also left me with a sense of guilt. I felt like I was taking nature for granted. It heals me, gives me happiness, and brings me closer to my friends. What do I do? I drive a car, buy single-use plastic, and order things online. Nature is trying to be kind to us, but we are not treating it the same way.

IV. Climate Change

Unfortunately, a seemingly polarizing topic, climate change is already affecting us whether we want to admit it or not, and it will only get worse. Now is the time to start coming together to stop the warming of the planet, or by 2050 we will be in our own brutal hell.

V. The Destiny We Should Not Be Destined To

After doing extensive research into the effects of climate change, and how our world will turn out if we don't try and stop it, I found myself with these extreme emotions. Nature is a privilege, not a right, and if we keep abusing it like we have it forever, we will soon lose it. I began to create art to try to convey these emotions revolving around the future we are building for ourselves. I believe if people would feel the same emotions I was feeling, there is no way they could be complacent and watch the world burn.

I have noticed that a lot of people move a bit too fast to appreciate what's around them. While I can't stop people on the streets and force them to look at what they're missing, I can do that through my art. Given that sound is a time-based media, it forces people to stop and listen and think, even if it's just for 5 minutes. The prints I create allow the viewer's sonic experience to be guided, which is also a useful trick to get people to slow down and listen.

Nature is beautiful, powerful, awe-inspiring, and all around us. We are incredibly lucky to live in a world where we can enjoy the outside world. However, the only way we will get this enjoyment to last is by being more environmentally friendly and taking care of our world. While my art isn't going to single-handedly reverse climate change, I hope it inspires people to take care of what they have now and be more aware of their impact.

Current Events & Research

Summary

An article titled “The Energy Shock,” published on October 16th, 2021, dives into the first big energy scare of the green era, and how it will affect the world going forward. This energy scare is derived from several events occurring throughout the world, including rising gas prices in the USA, blackouts in India and China, Britain using coal again, and Russia reaffirming its grip on oil. The panic this has caused reaffirmed the fact that as a modern society, we need energy. Without reform, there will be an influx of energy crises and eventually, revolts.

The world’s economy has cranked back up since global demand dropped by 5% in 2020, thus causing demand to surge even as stockpiles run low. Oil, gas, and coal are all running below their usual levels making these markets especially vulnerable. The price of these energy sources has also risen by 95% since May.^{vi} From floods in Asia impeding coal deliveries, to wind slacking in Europe, these disruptions have caused a lot of strain on renewable power.

There are three primary problems with our future energy outlook. First, in order to reach 0 carbon emissions by 2050, which is the pledge of world leaders, the investment into energy must be double where it is now. Fossil fuels still take up 83% of the primary-energy demand, and this needs to drop to 0. Shock tends to slow the pace of change, which is why it is necessary to push past these strains and pull towards a cleaner future. Second, Russia is the source of 41% of Europe’s gas imports. This will only rise as it opens a new pipeline and develops markets in Asia. Lastly, the design of energy markets is extremely flawed. Many countries have shifted to open systems where electricity and gas prices are set by markets, and if prices spike, vendors just add supply.

As a global economy, there needs to be a more diverse supply of energy, which, for example, will decrease the chokehold Russia has on the supply of gas. More global trade is also needed, as only 4% of electricity in wealthy countries is traded across borders.

Overall, this energy shock has solidified the fact that Leaders must act, rather than just make these promises. There is an inadequate investment in renewables and transition fossil fuels, rising geopolitical risks, and extremely flimsy safety buffers in power markets. These will not only make it harder to reach the net 0, but also cause more crises and energy shortages.

Related Research

When reading about the strain switching to renewable energy puts on the world, it is easy to forget why it is so vital for the world to make their energy output more sustainable. To fully understand the importance of cleaner energy, one must look to the future that is waiting for us.

In 2018, the NRDC (Natural Resources Defense Council) released an article titled “Climate Scientists to World: We Have Only 20 Years Before There’s No Turning Back,” written by Jeff Turrentine. This article details the climate scientists' findings, and what we need to do to obtain a brighter future. To avoid global catastrophe, we must reduce our carbon emissions by as much as 40% by 2030 and avoid global warming reaching 1.5 degrees Celsius.

It is important to note that the NRDC has since released another article in 2021 titled: “PCC: We’ve Already Warmed the Planet to Catastrophic Effect, but the Level of That Catastrophe Is Up to Us,” once again written by Jeff Turrentine. As one can tell from the title, global warming did unfortunately reach the dreaded 1.5 degrees Celsius. As noted in the article, we do still have a chance to keep global warming at 1.5 degrees, or even bring it below there. To do this, however, we need the entire world on board, and thus decreasing our carbon emissions needs to be a common goal.

One of the most important takeaways from the article is our outlook. With global warming, droughts, wildfires, floods, hurricanes, and famines will not only be extreme, but also commonplace. These will become seasonal norms, like the changing of the leaves. TIME released an article in 2020, sharing an adaptation from the book: *THE FUTURE WE CHOOSE: Surviving the Climate Crisis* by Christiana Figueres and Tom Rivett-Carnac. The article, aptly titled “What the World Will Look Like in 2050 If We Don’t Cut Carbon Emissions in Half” details a fictional but realistic view on the world in 2050 where we failed to reduce our carbon emissions.

In this hypothesized world, pollution has made it impossible to go outside without a face mask, which only a few will be able to afford. A common theme throughout this story is the idea of the wealth gap and poverty being even more extreme than it is now. An economic collapse is inevitable with extreme flooding ruining infrastructure in coastal cities. Thousands will be displaced, and relief may never come to these areas. Furthermore, refugee problems, civil unrest, and bloodshed over diminished water availability will bring mass migrations. This bloodshed will be sparked by battles between the top 1% and everyone else, as the rich will be willing to pay anything to get as much water as they want. Something as necessary as water will quickly become a luxury, and the entire world will eventually collapse, leaving the rich who were able to continue to afford the extreme prices of these necessities.

This summary just scrapes the surface of the detailed and gruesome description the article goes into. With this inevitable outcome, it is difficult to be at all optimistic about the future. Turrentine mentions this in his 2021 article mentioned previously. As noted, “Global surface temperature will continue to increase until at least the mid-century under all emissions scenarios considered.” One could justify their carelessness for the environment by noting the slim chances

of success, or even worse double down on destructive behaviors, since that grim future is inevitable. Turrentine reminds us that there is a third option, “replace optimism with determination.” Determination is necessary to come together and create a common goal of protecting our future.

Another more recent article from the economist titled “COP-out” has a very pessimistic view on COP26, which was held in Glasgow from October 31st to November 13th. The author of the article does admit change is possible, but likely leaders will not be proactive enough to make these changes. Promises are important, but the action is far more important.

COP26 has since ended, and CNN released an analysis by Angela Dewan and Amy Cassidy titled “COP26 ended with the Glasgow Climate Pact. Here's where it succeeded and failed.” One of the big wins with the Glasgow Climate Pact is that fossil fuels are mentioned for the first time.

Artist Statement

In the year 2050, we will have to come face to face with all the negatives we put into this earth, and deal with the consequences. The effects of climate change are already being seen today, more extreme hurricanes, wildfires, record breaking heat, and more; all of which will be amplified in the future. We need to take action now and try to slow the warming of the earth, so we can eventually reverse the effects of mistakes we've made. To do this, we need full participation from the world; no one can take the backseat for this one.

I have always found myself gravitating towards nature and the natural in my work. I am constantly in awe of the beauty it can have. However, given the state of the environment, it is hard to create these appreciative works without feeling guilty; like I am taking for granted the current beauty of the world. If the environment continues to decline the way it is now, there will no longer be beauty to appreciate.

After doing extensive research into the effects of climate change, and how our world will turn out if we don't try and stop it, I found myself with these extreme emotions. Nature is a privilege, not a right, and if we keep abusing it like we have it forever, we will soon lose it. I began to create art in order to try to convey these emotions revolving around the future we are building for ourselves. I believe if people would feel the same emotions I was feeling, there is no way they could be complacent and watch the world burn.

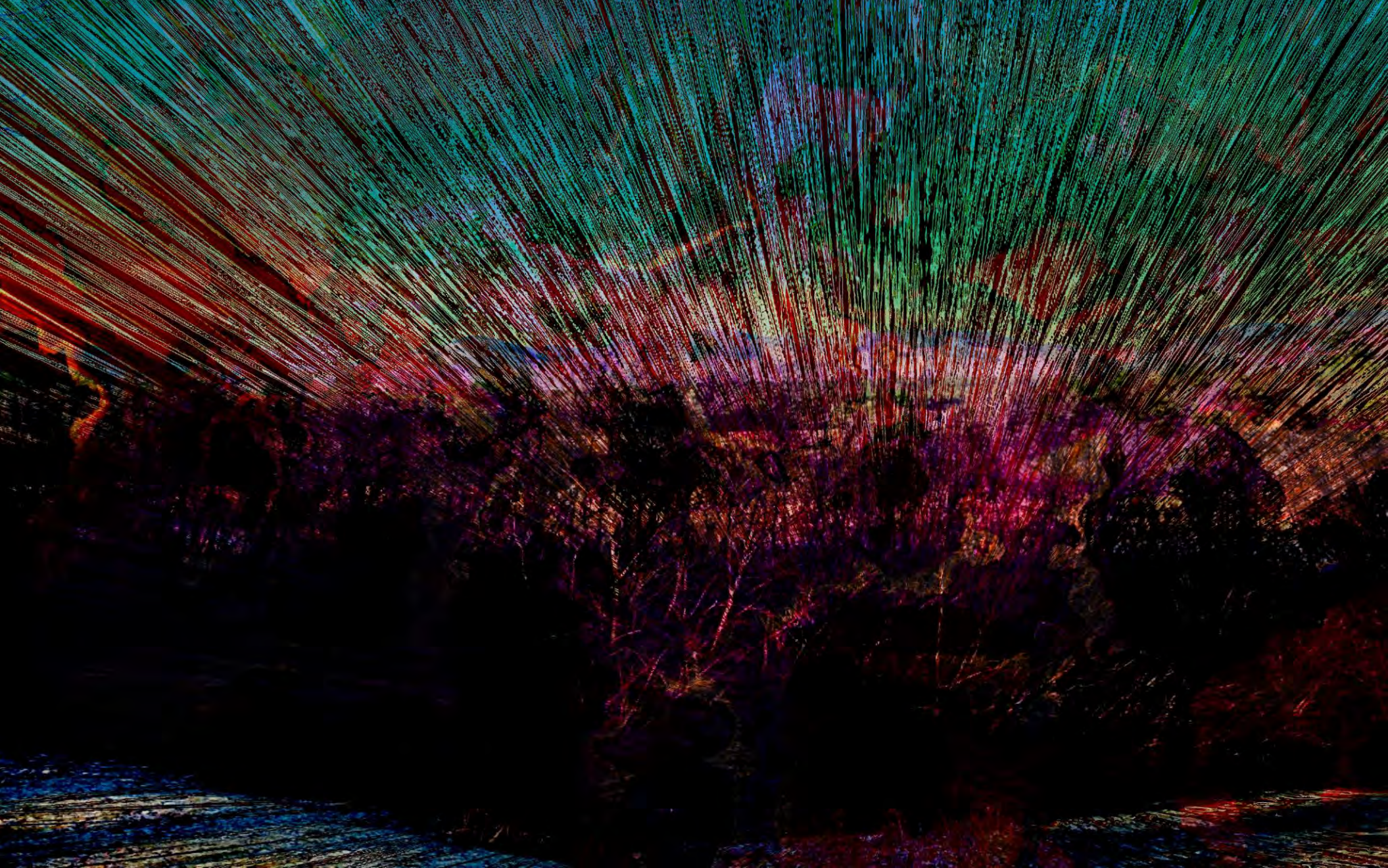
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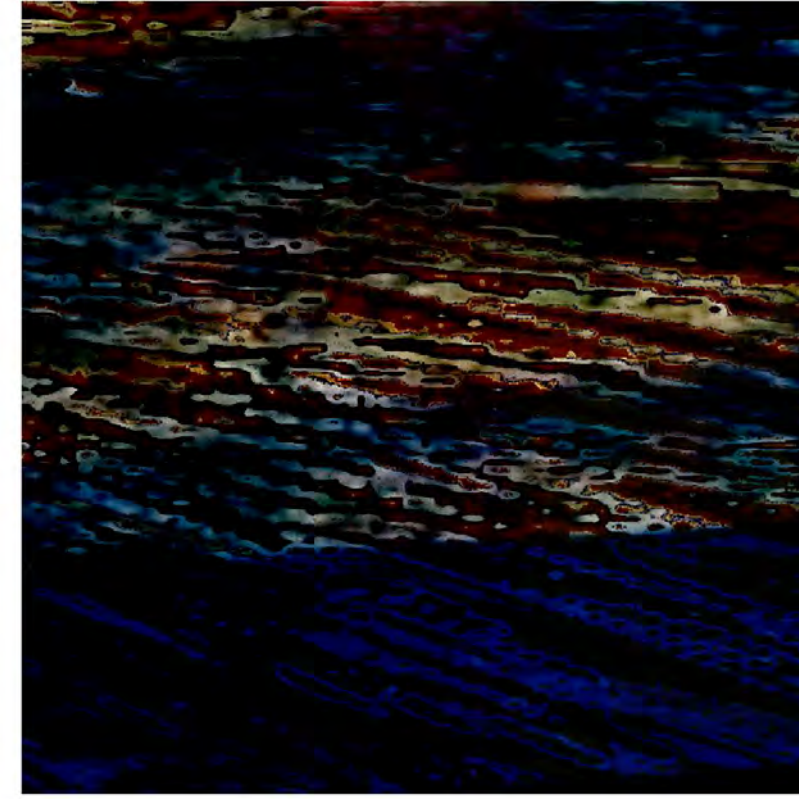
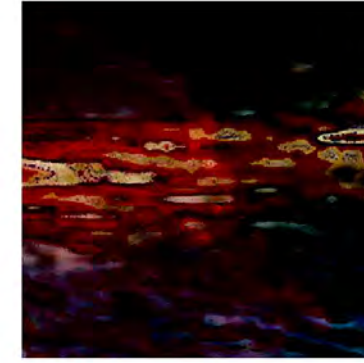
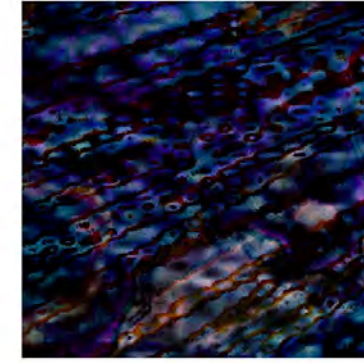
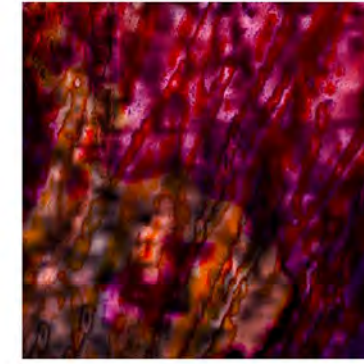
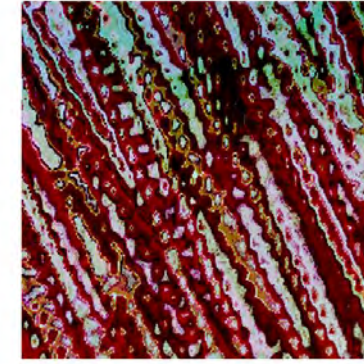
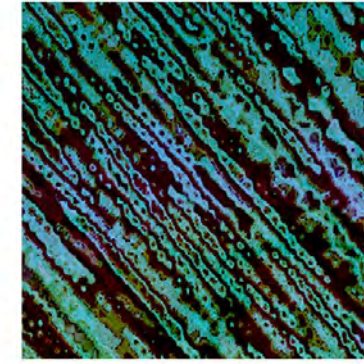
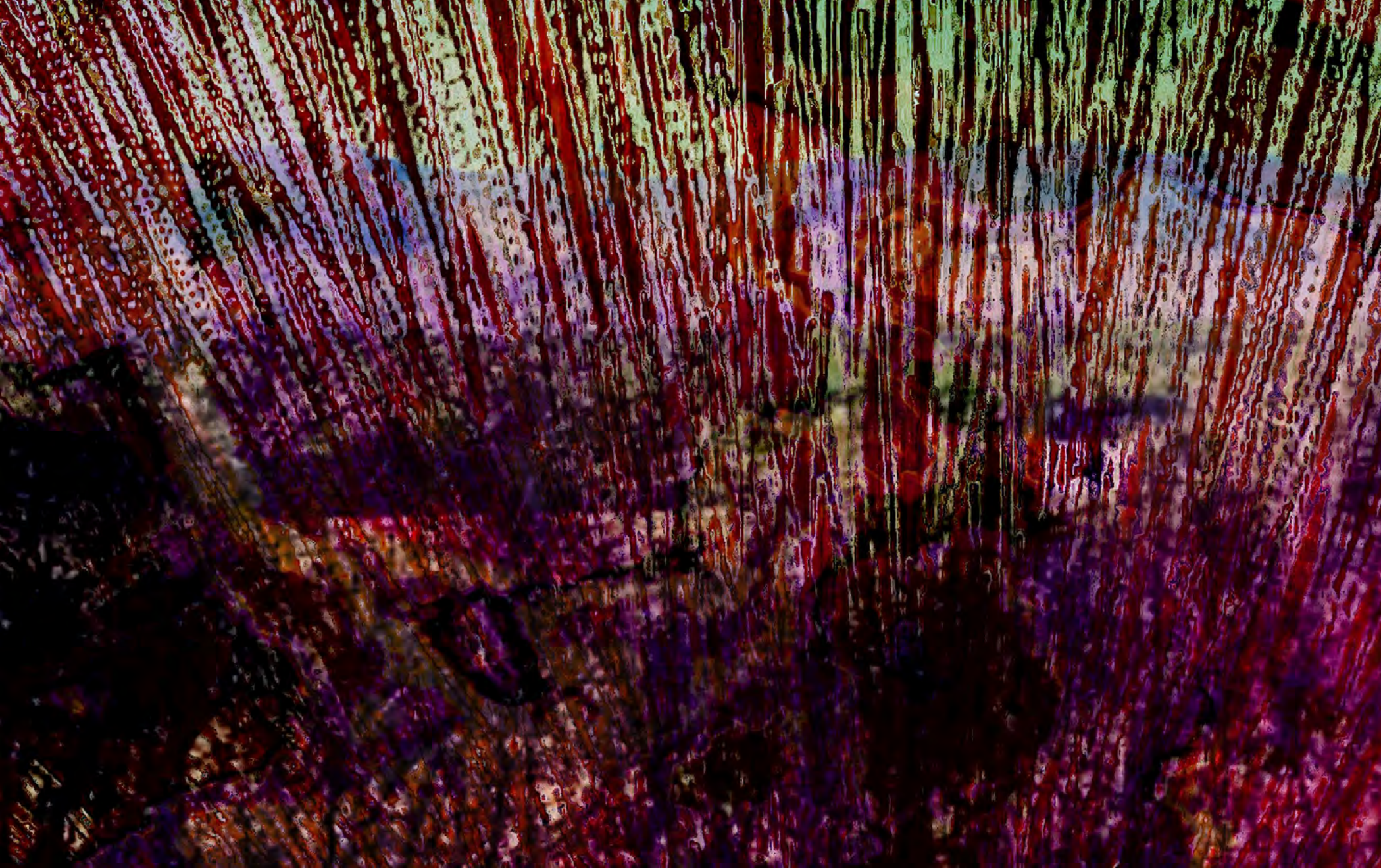
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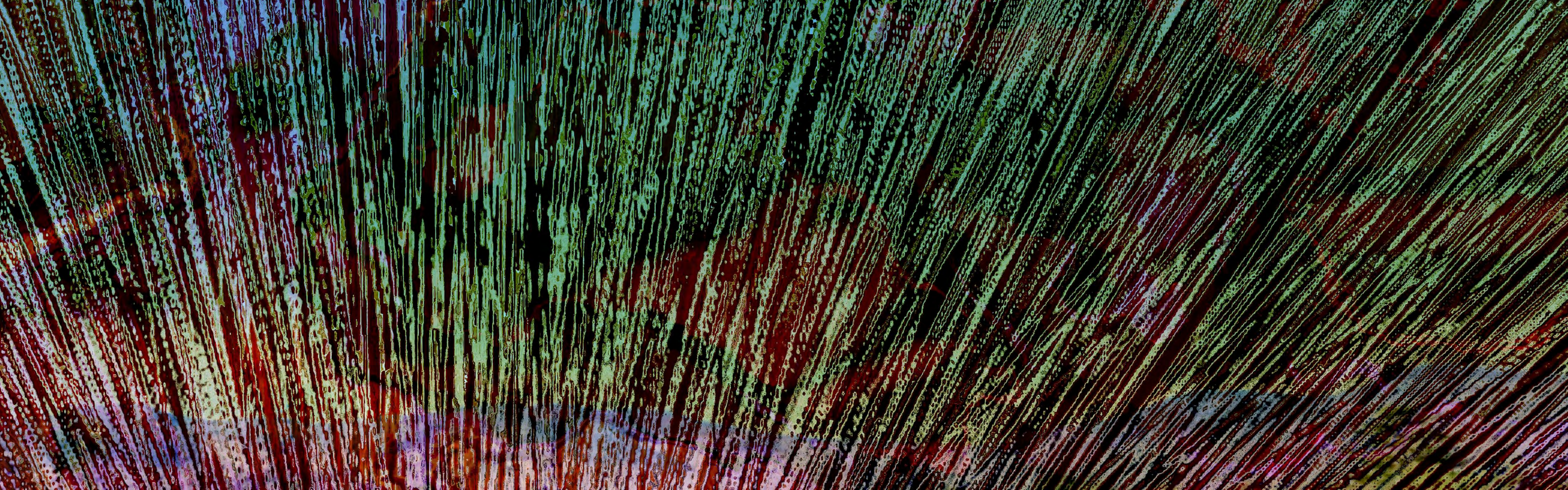
An Ending // 24" × 34"

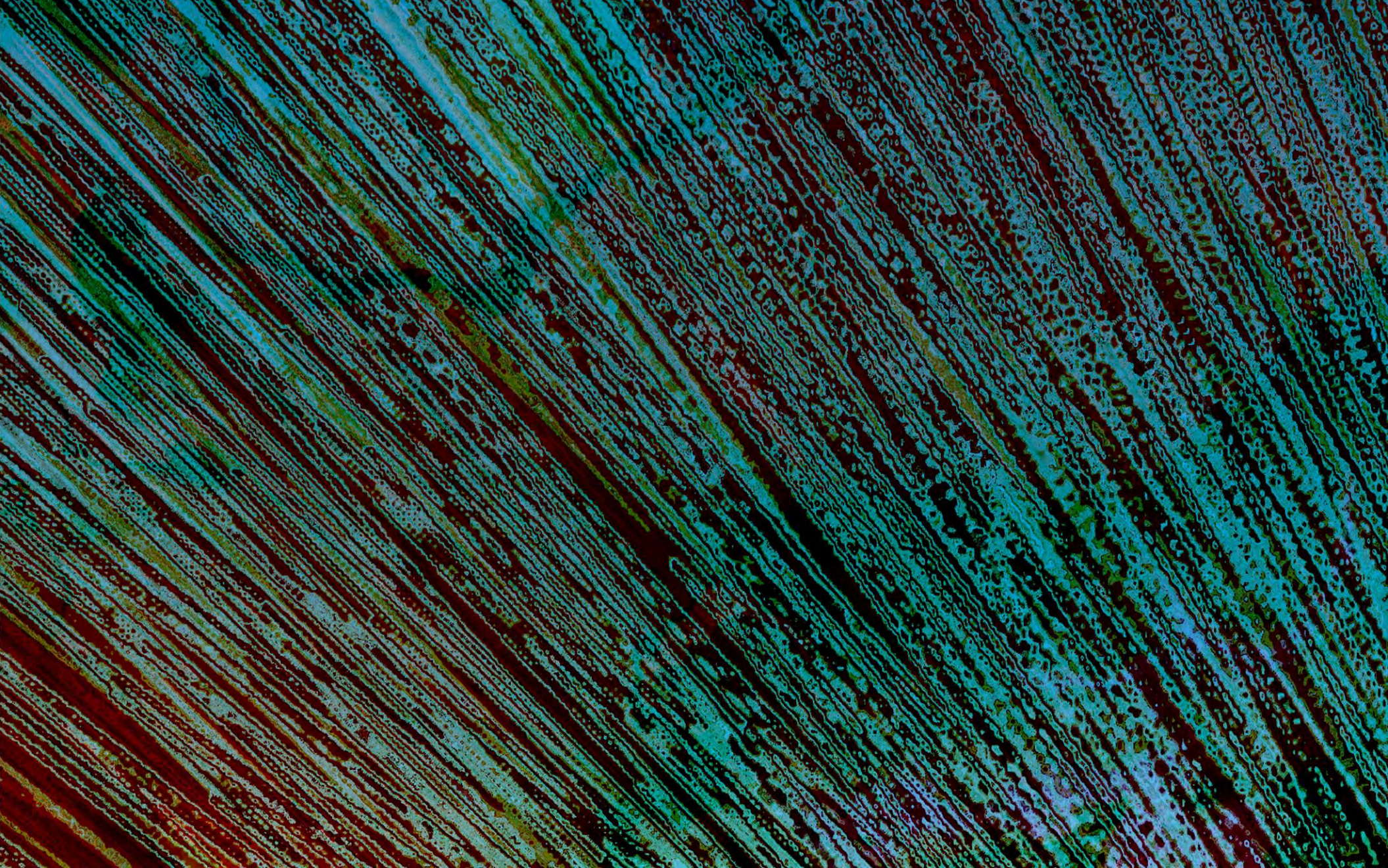
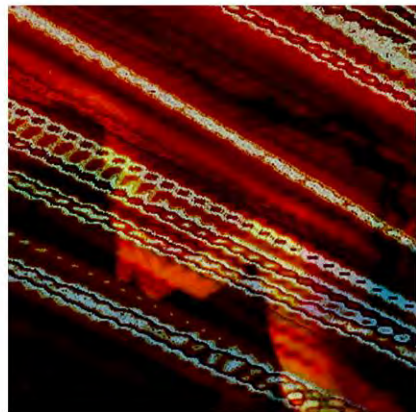
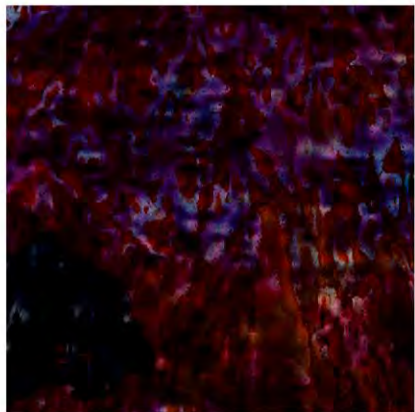
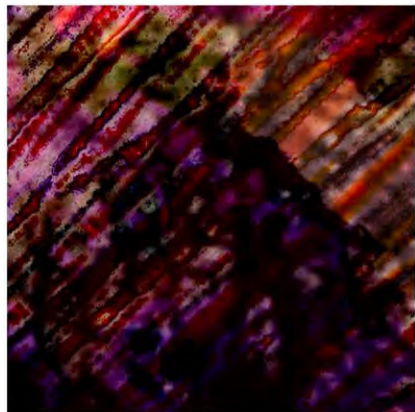
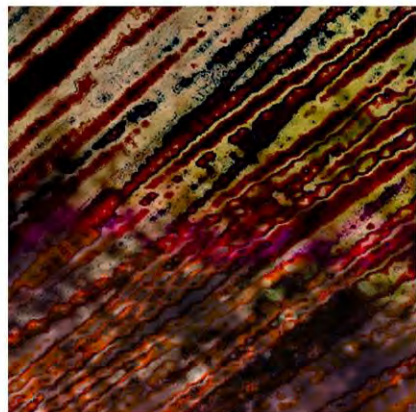
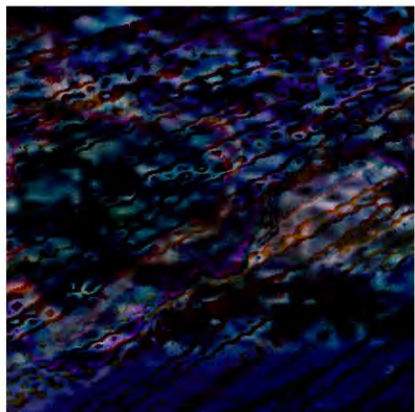
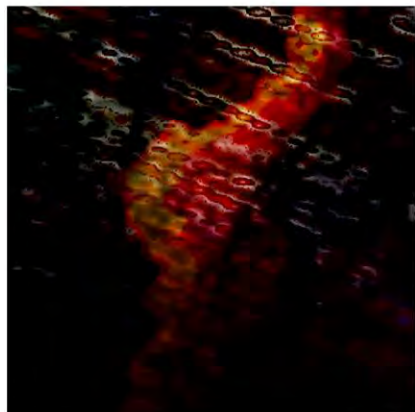
It is 2050. We were unable to turn the tides on climate change.

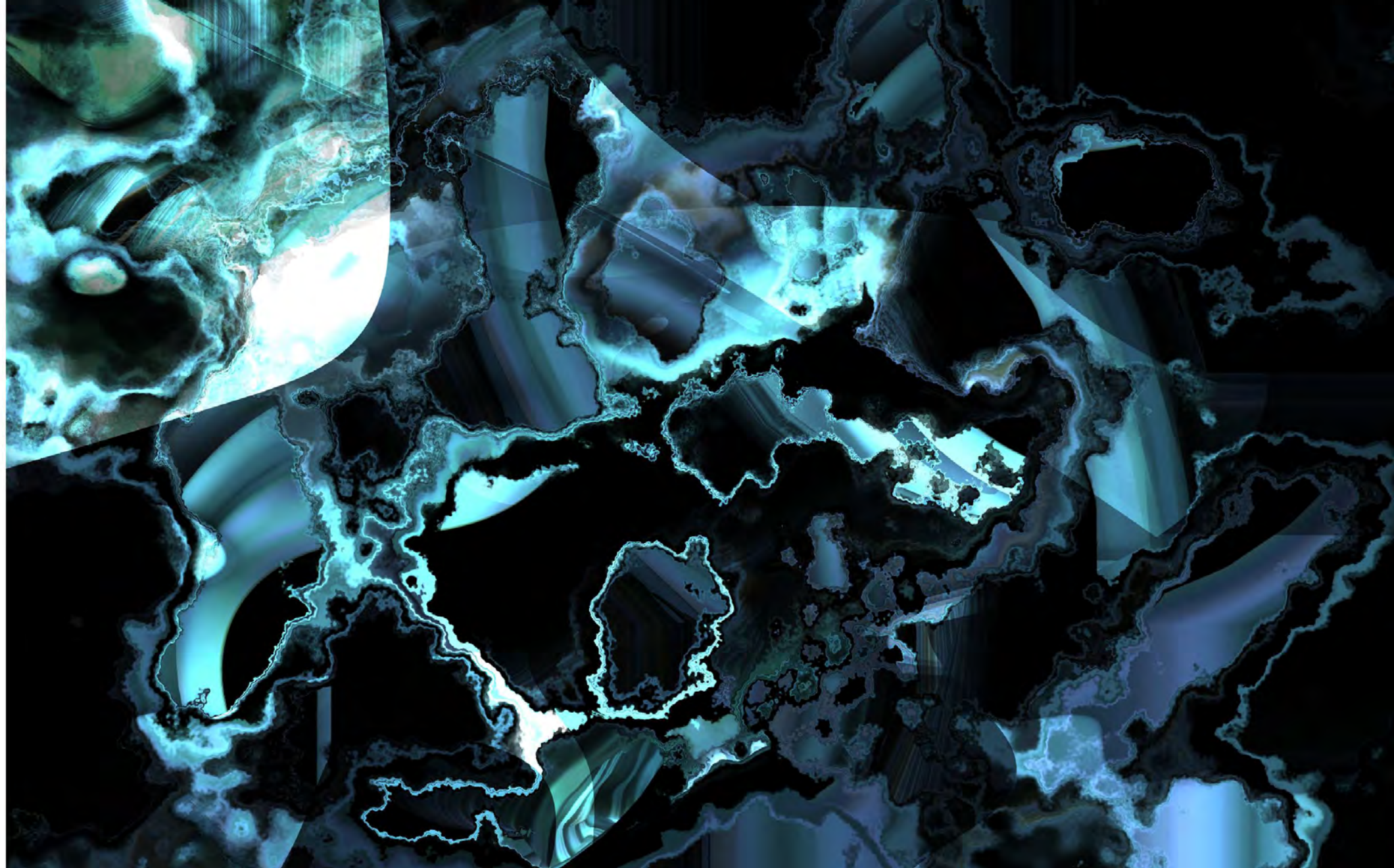
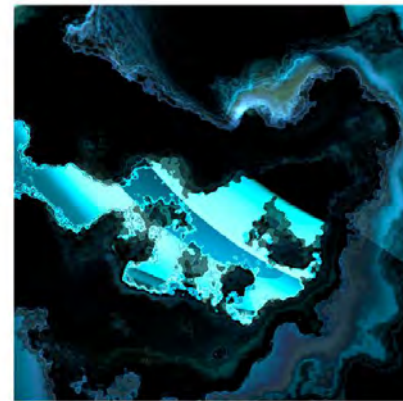
We are now facing the consequences.



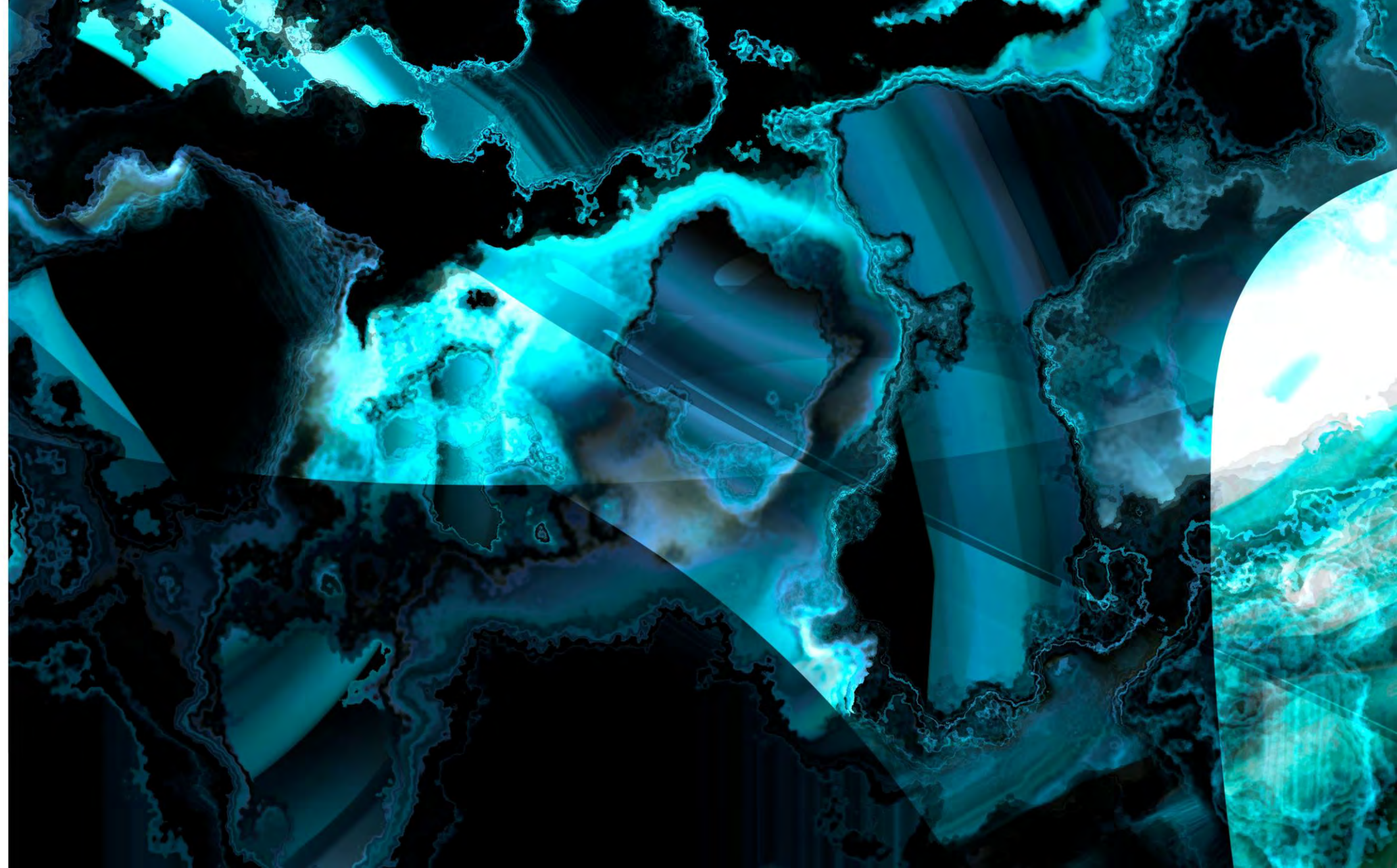
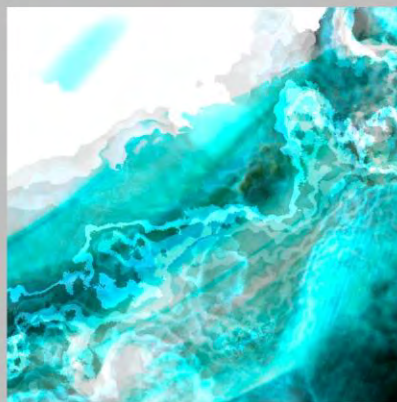
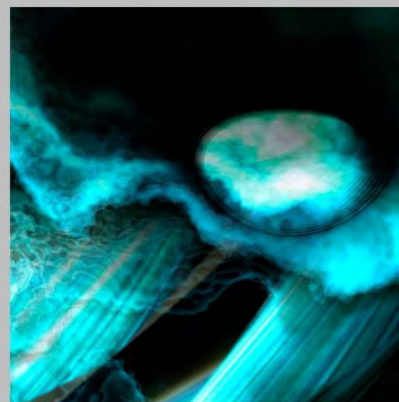
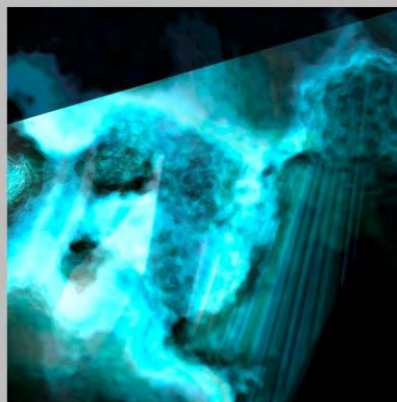
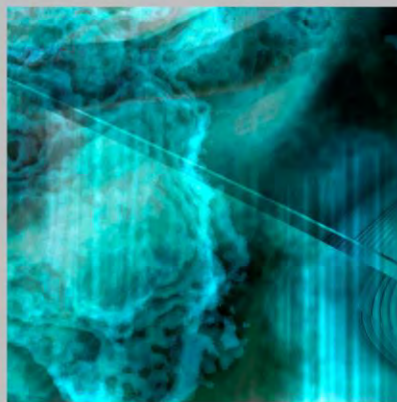
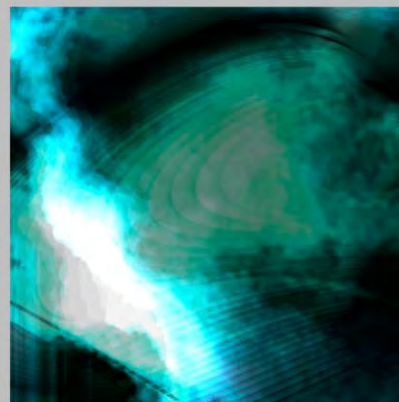
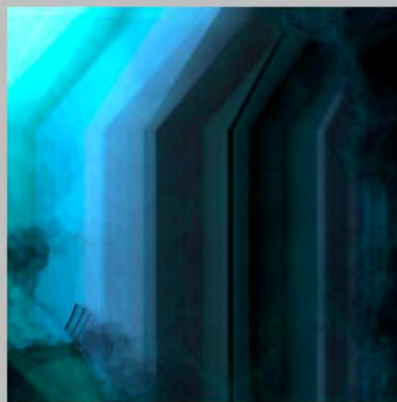






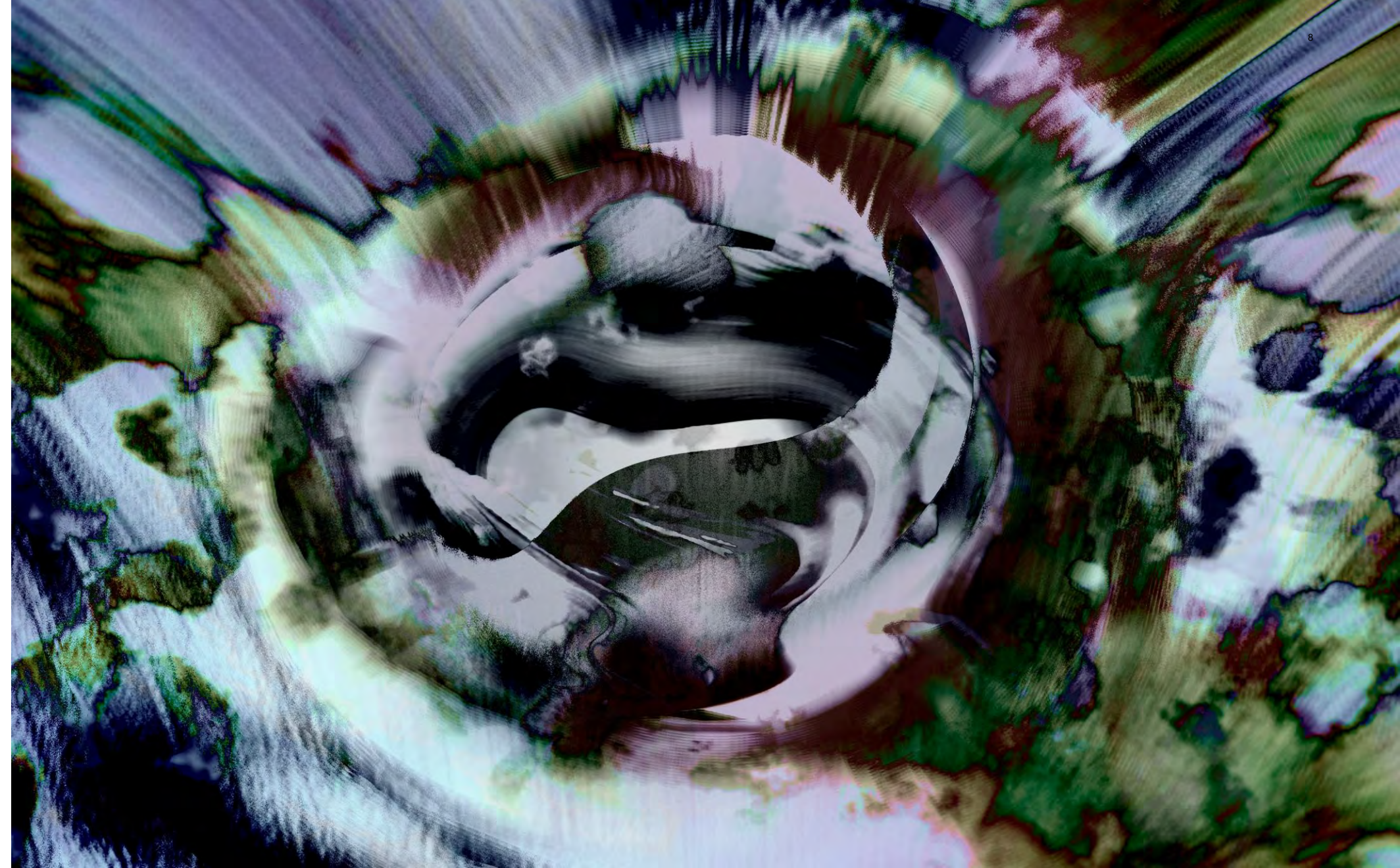


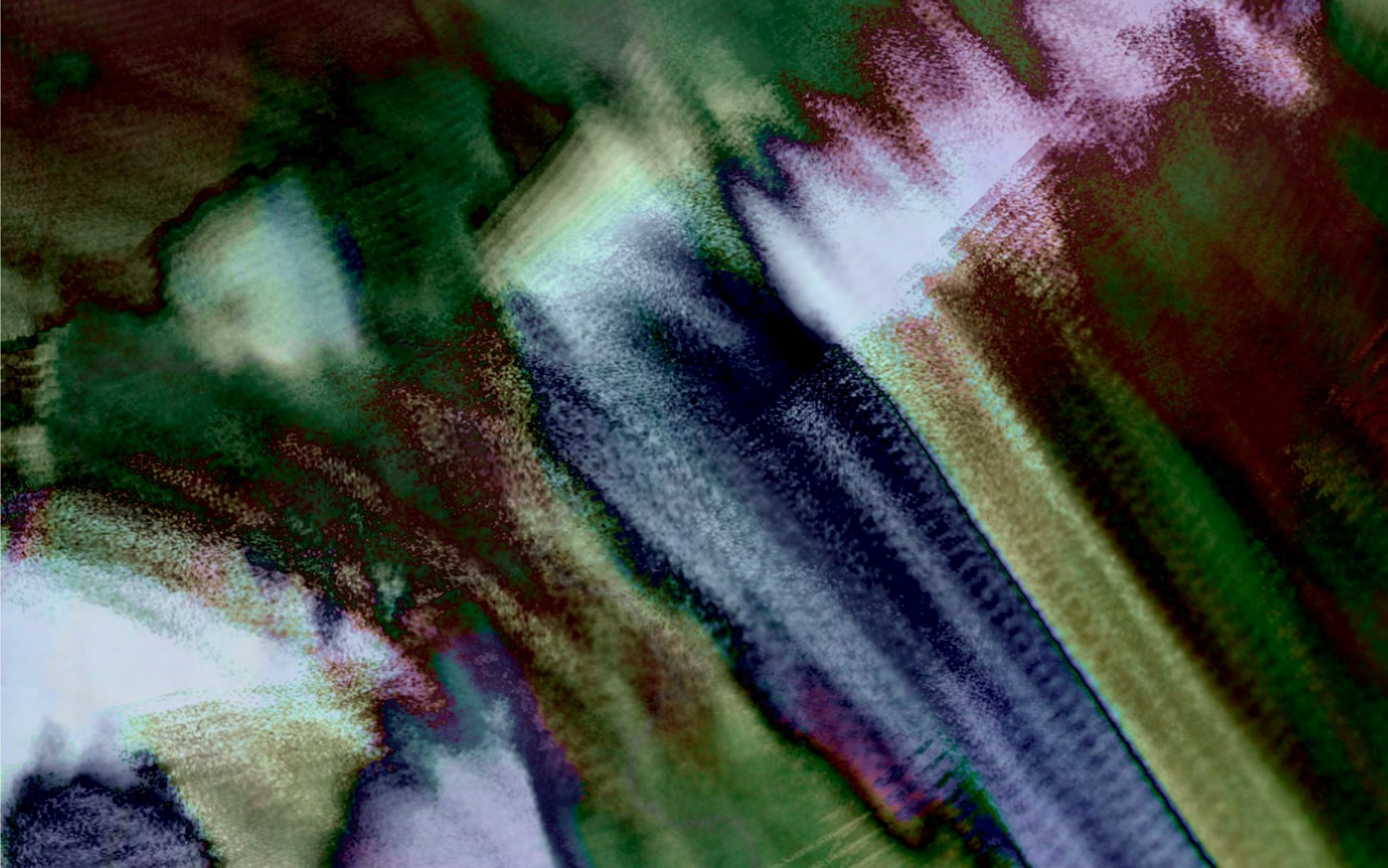
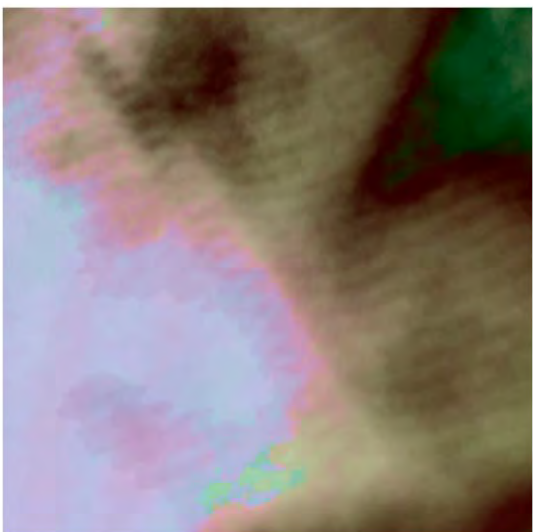
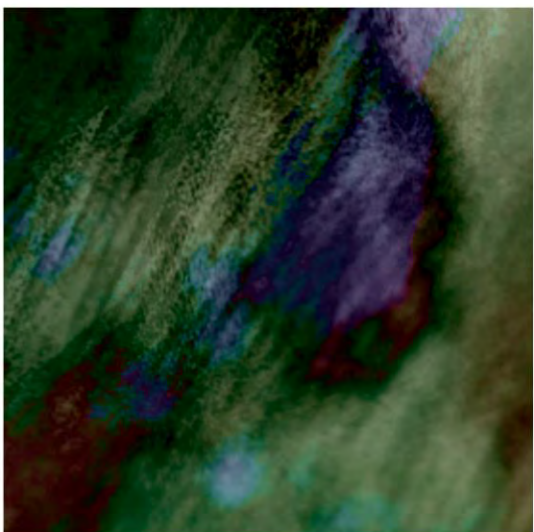
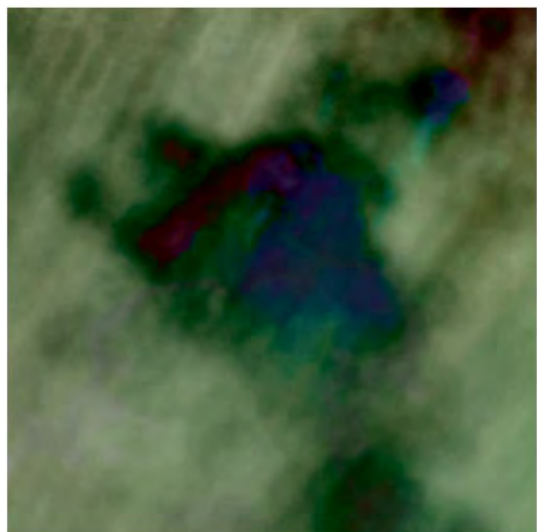
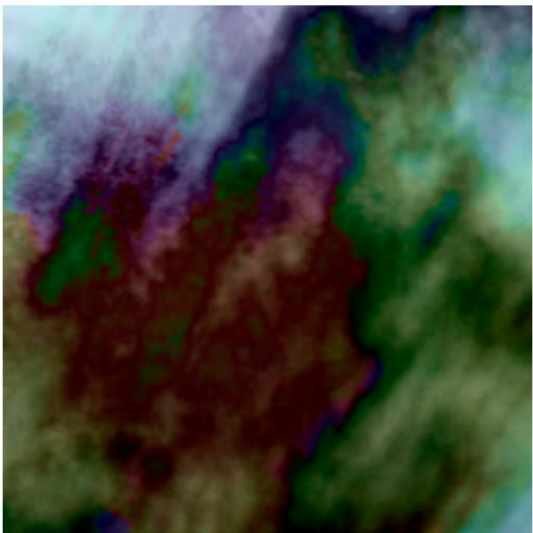
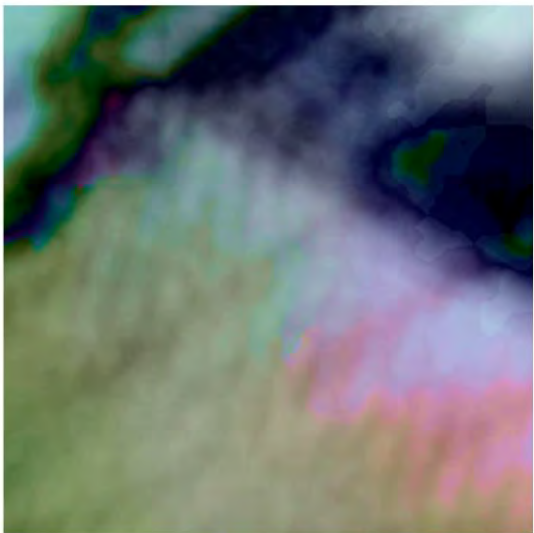
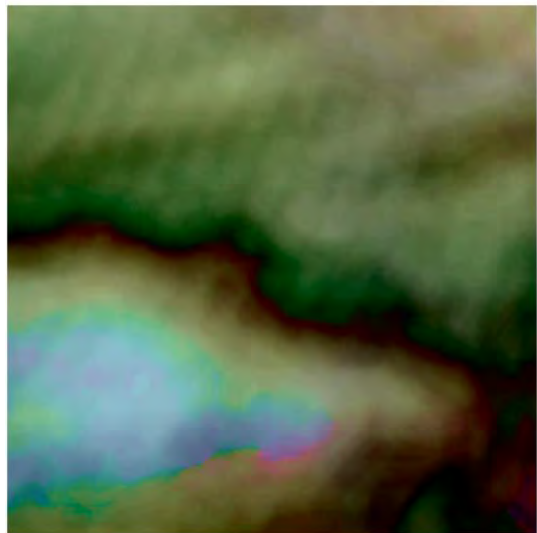


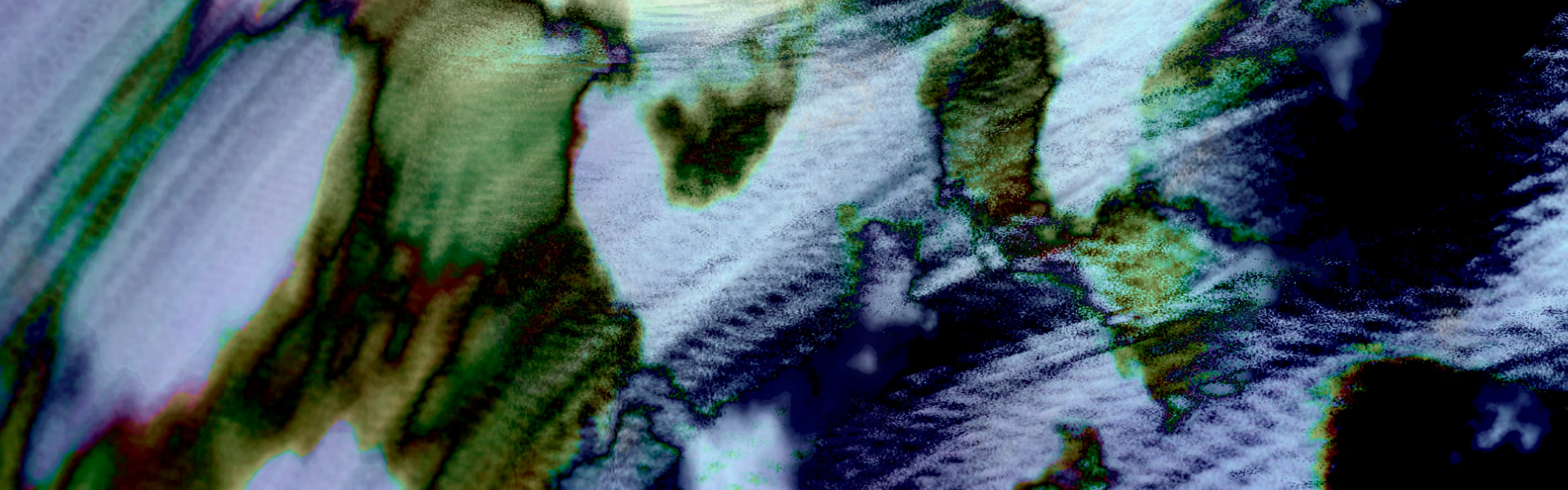


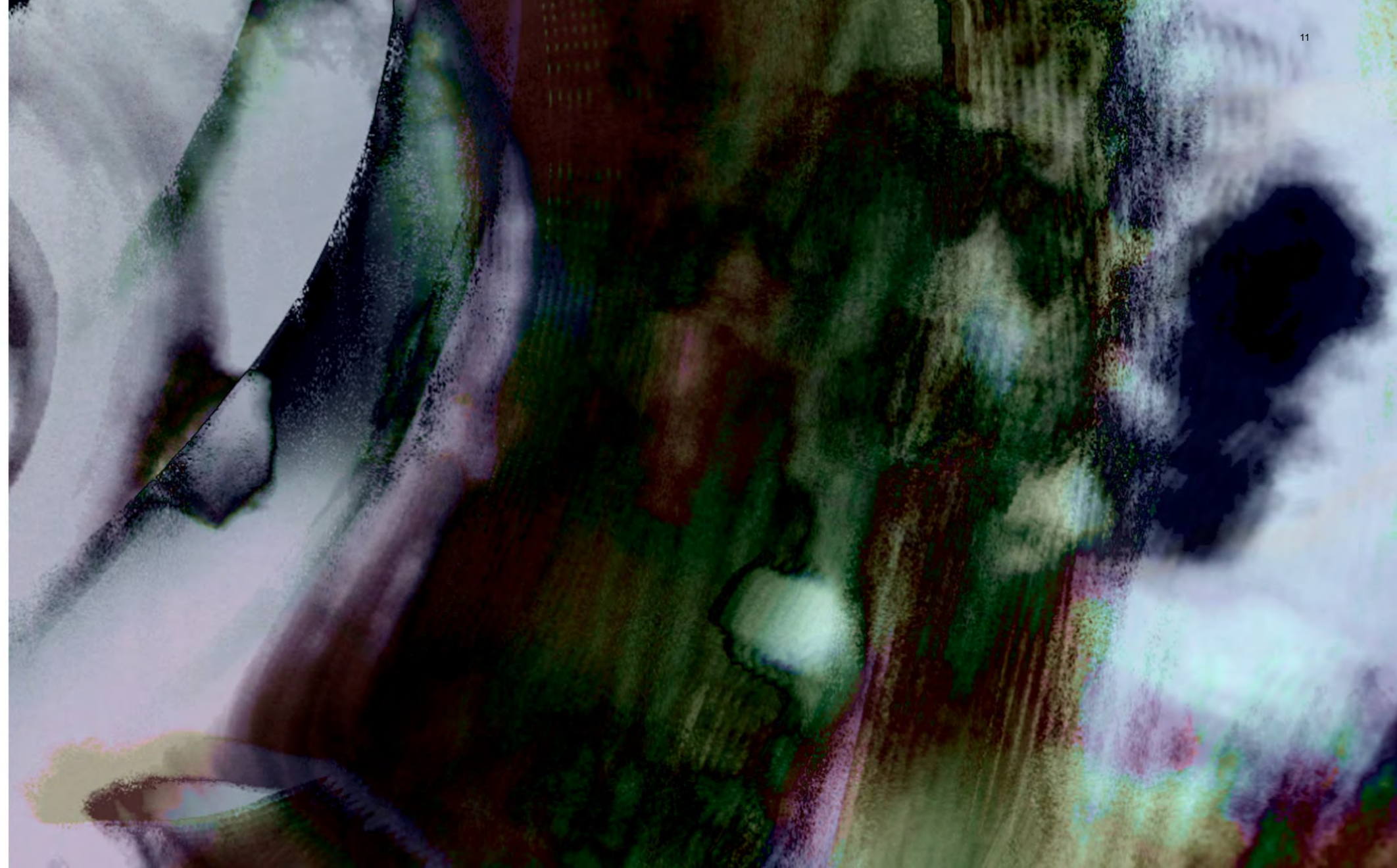
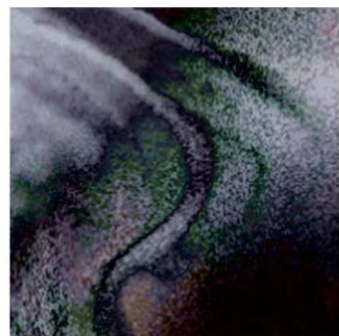
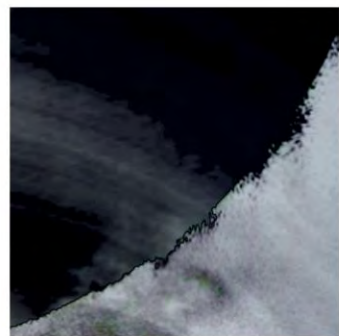
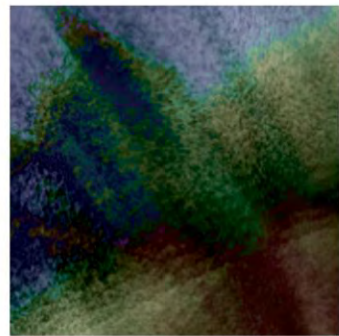
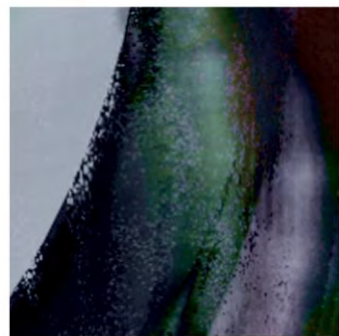
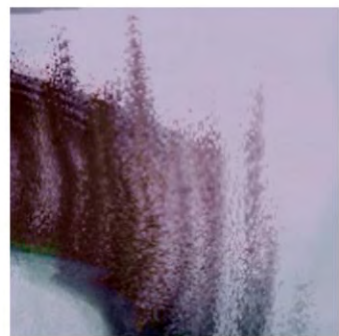
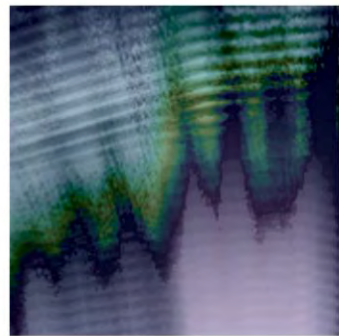
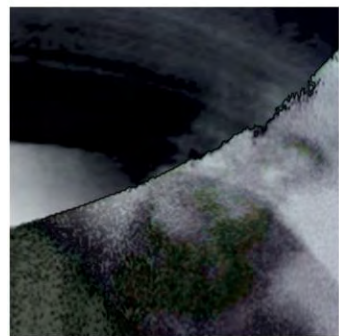
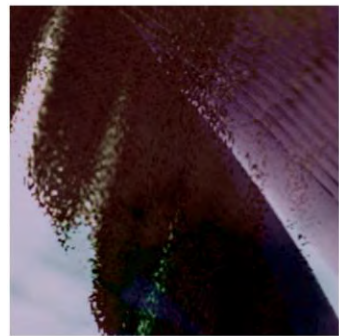
The Result // 44" × 64"

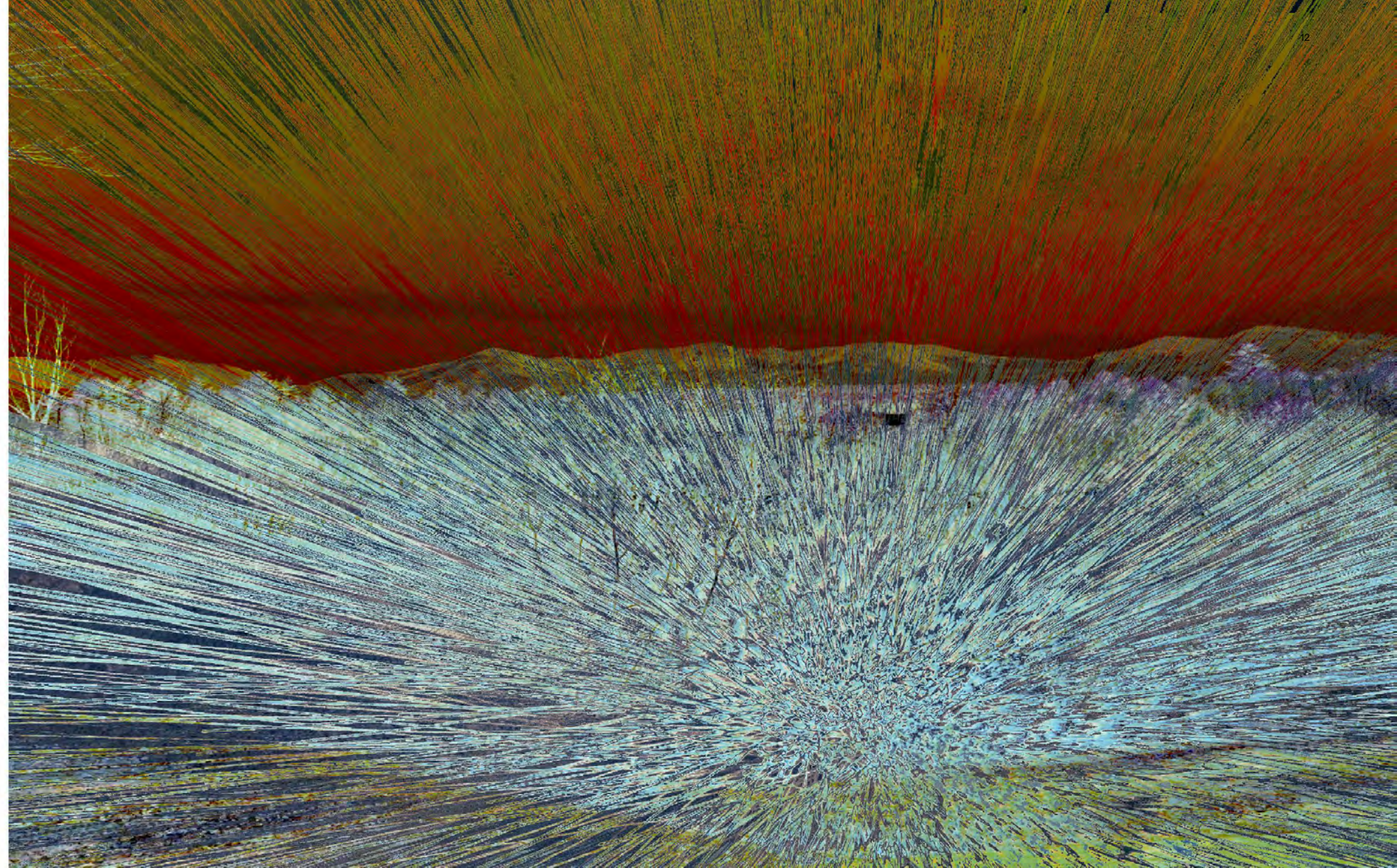
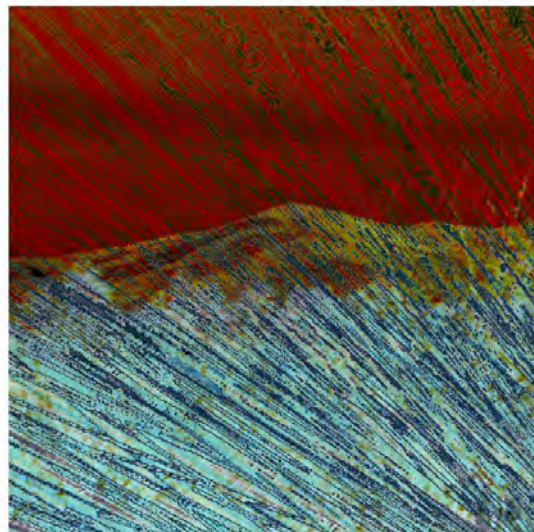
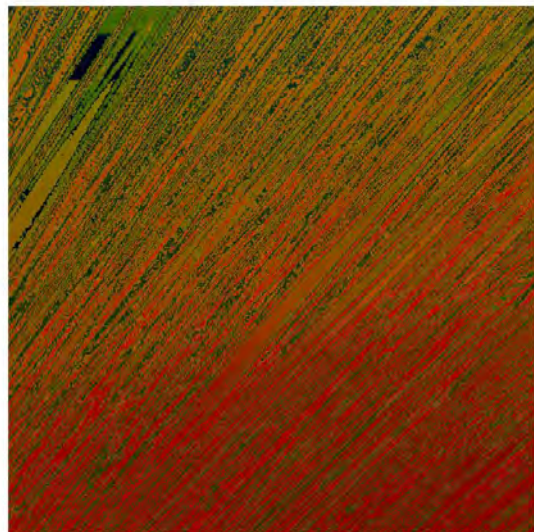
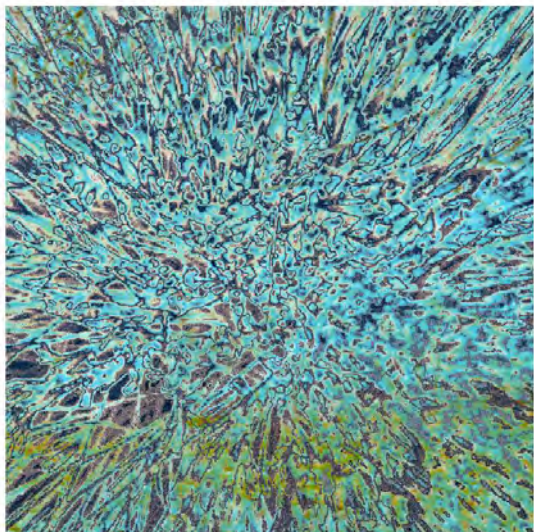
Air pollution has gotten so bad, it's now dangerous to go outside without a specially designed face mask. Unfortunately, this is a luxury only some can afford. You can no longer simply walk outside your front door without checking the air quality first.

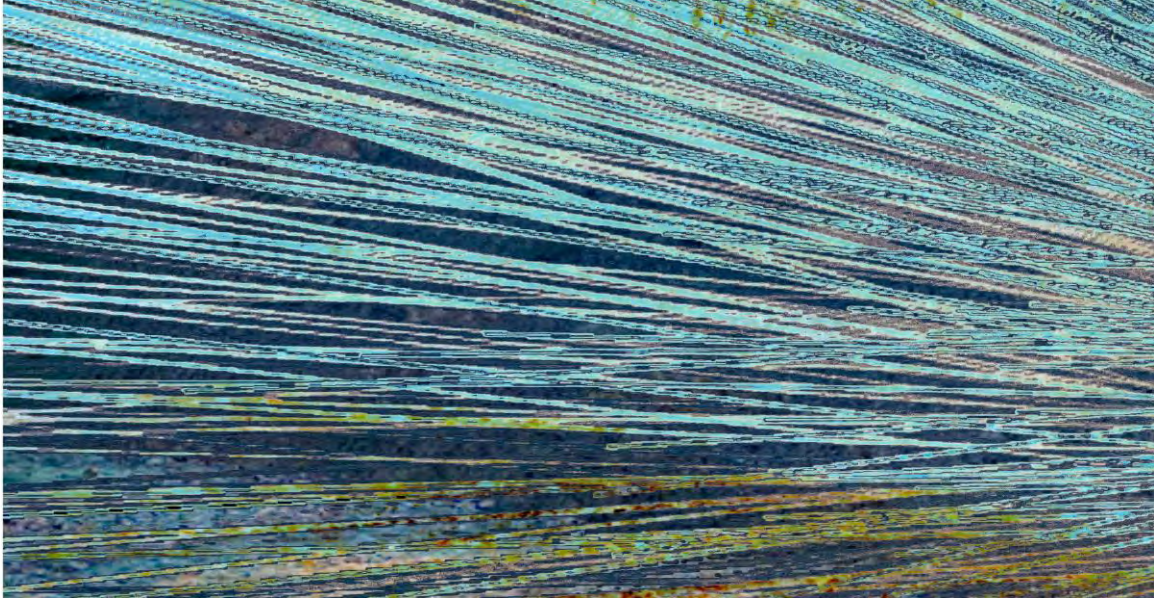
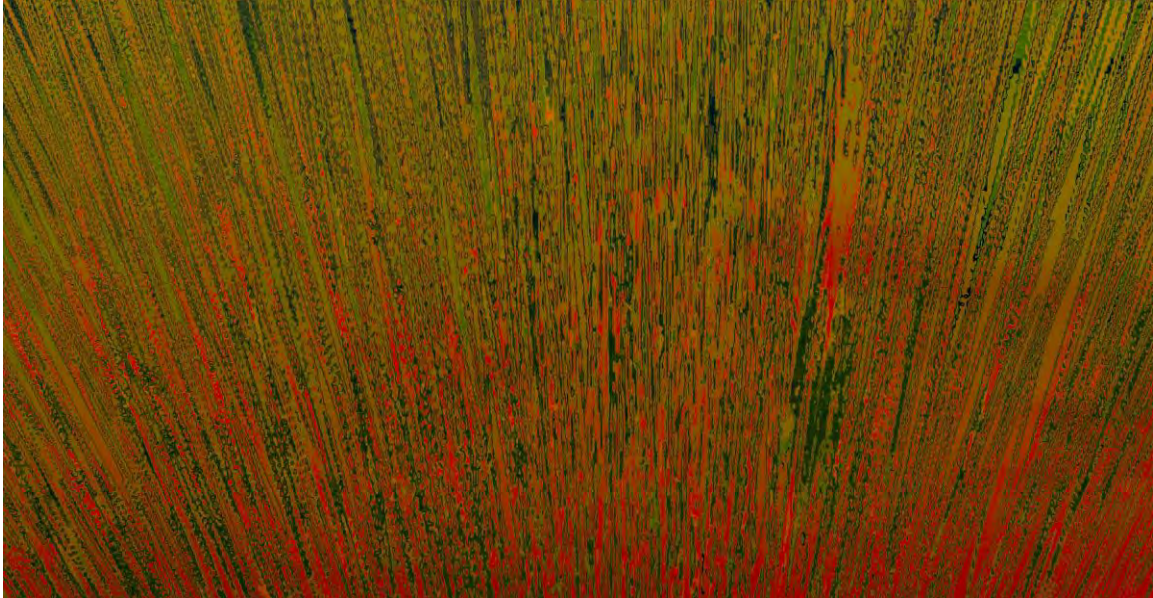


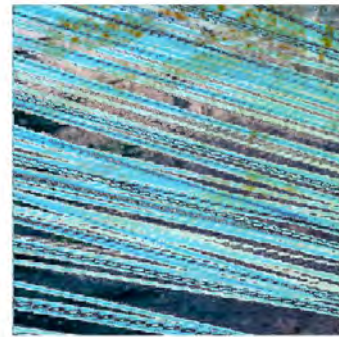
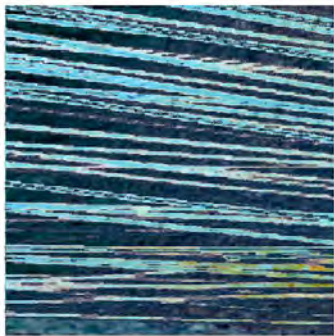
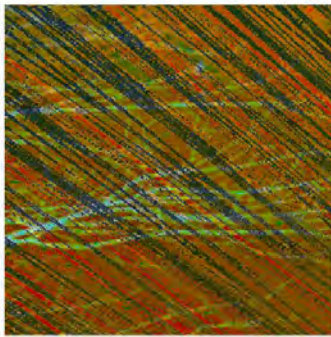
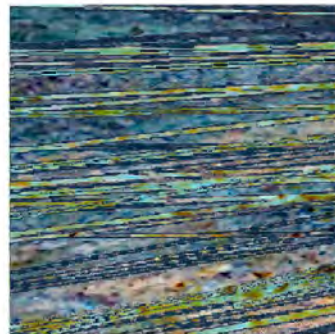
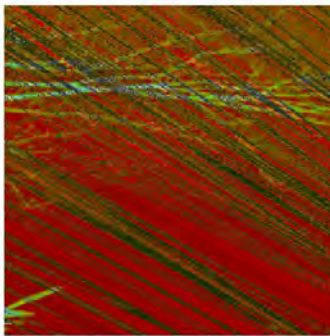
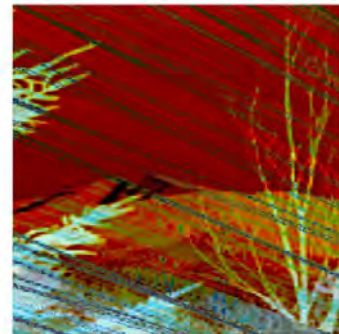
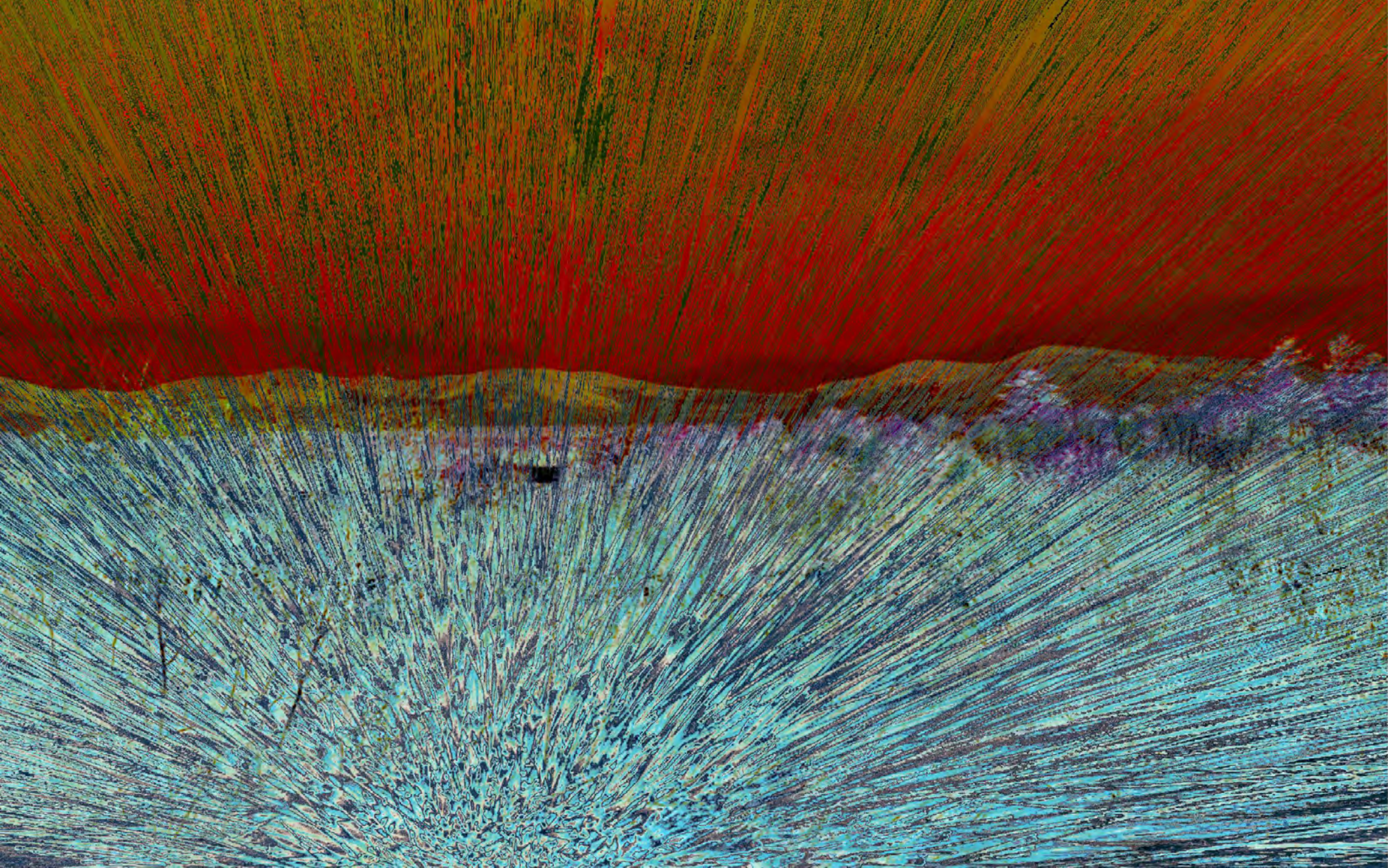






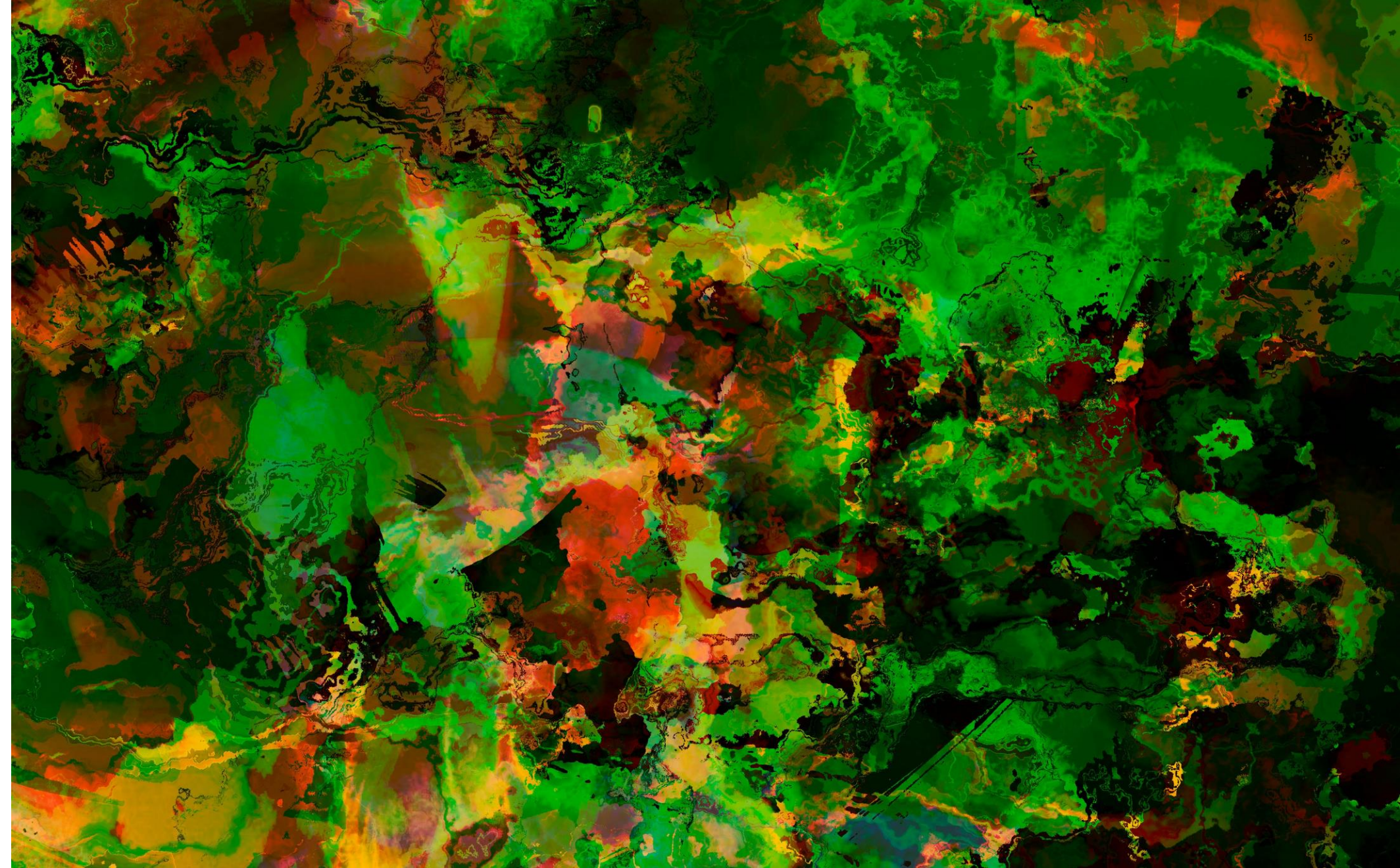


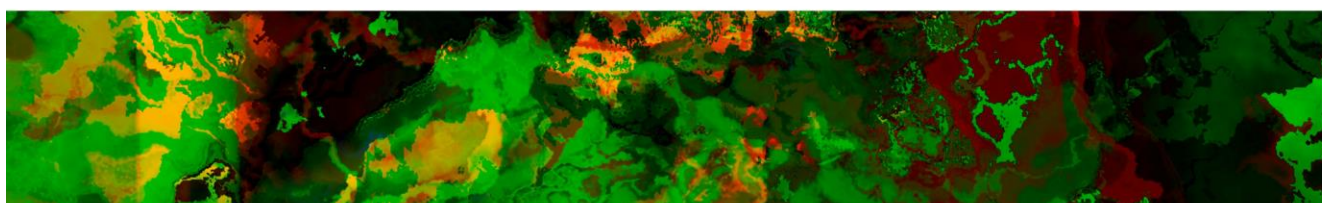
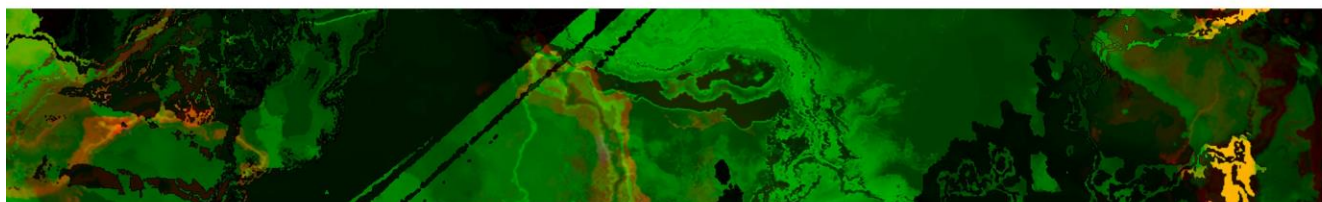
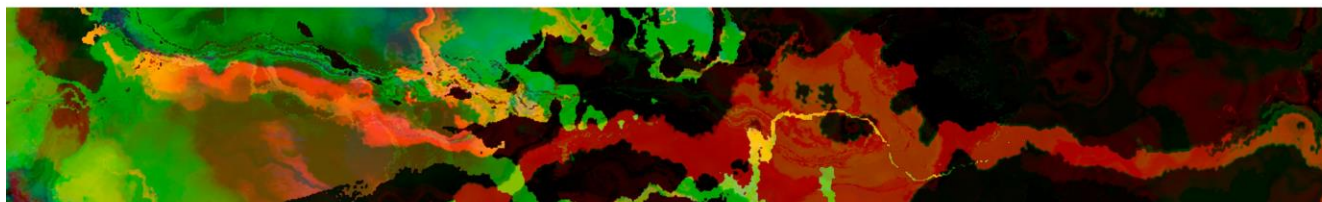
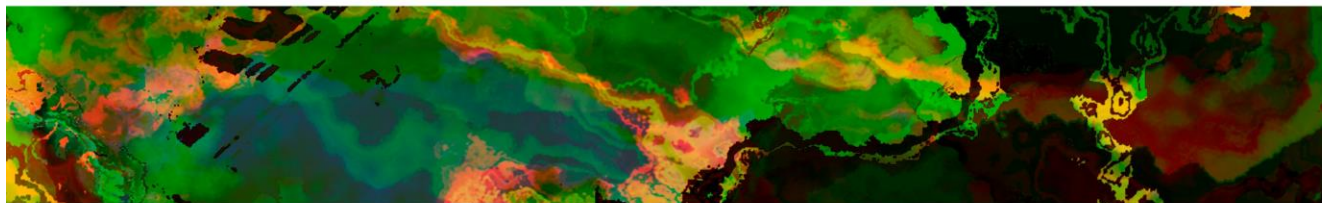




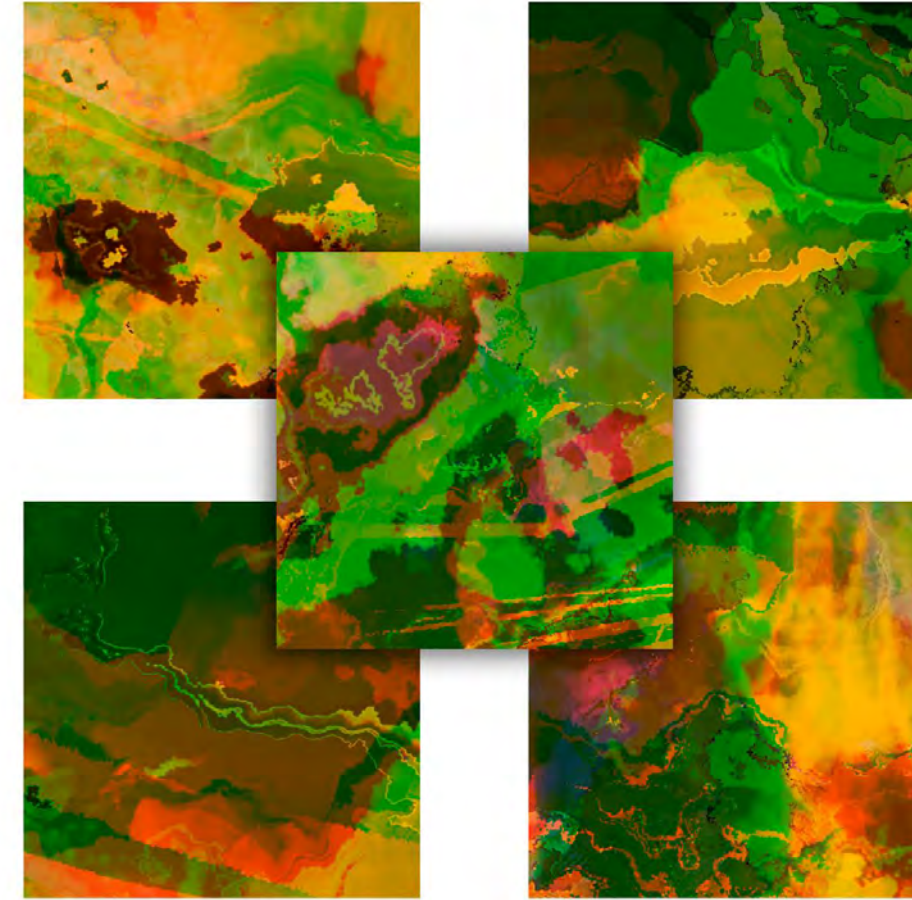
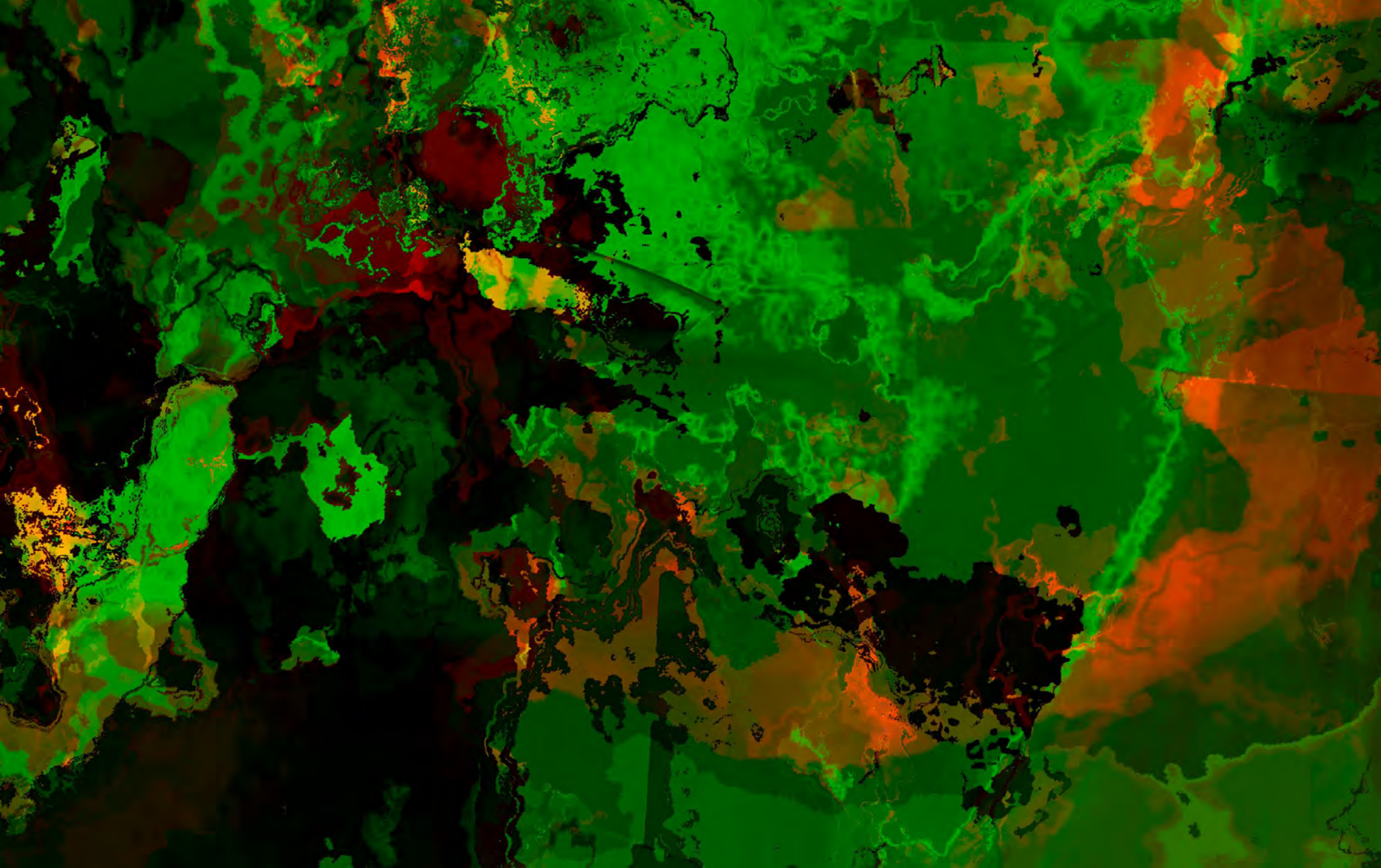
The Big Mess // 24" × 34"

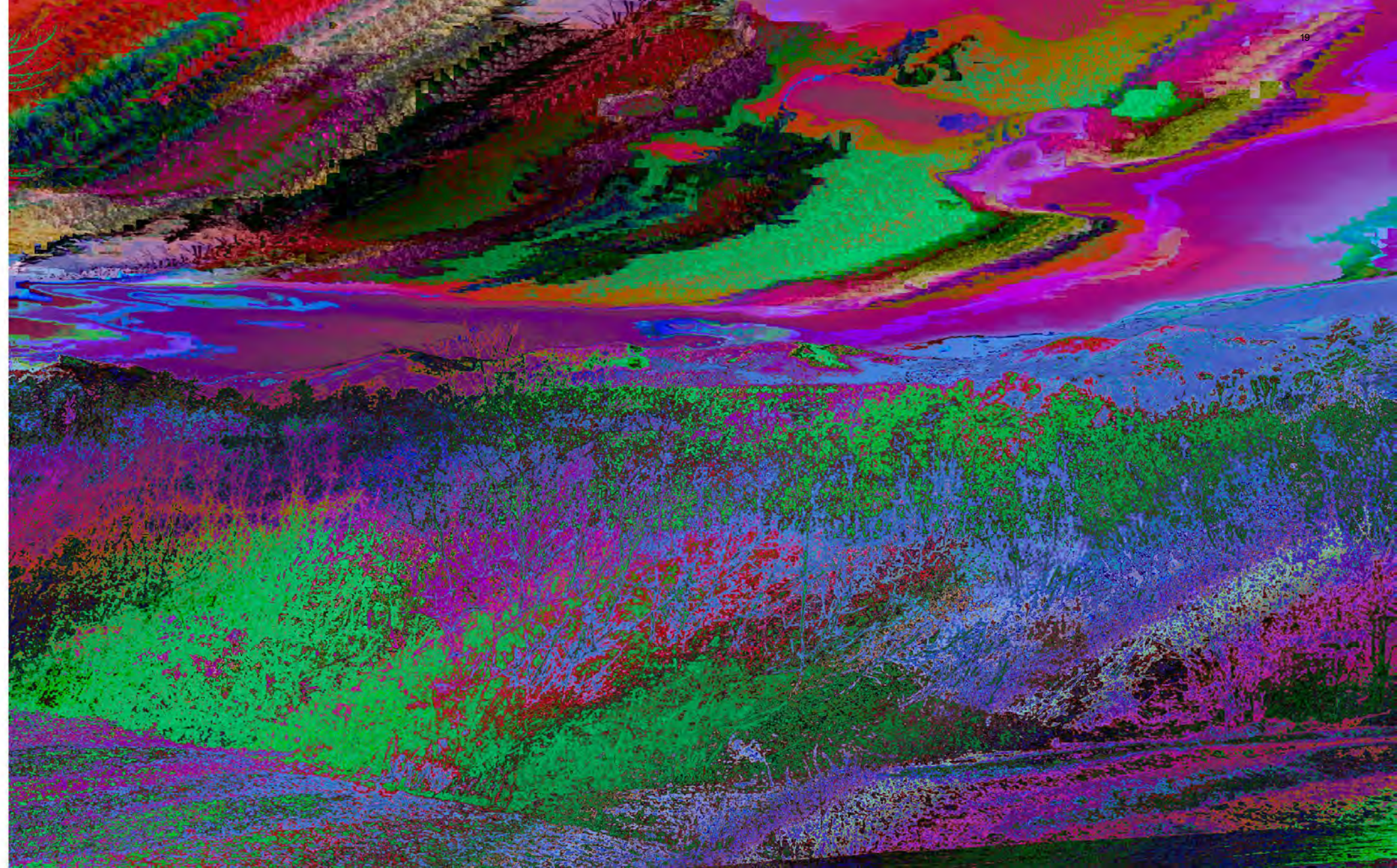
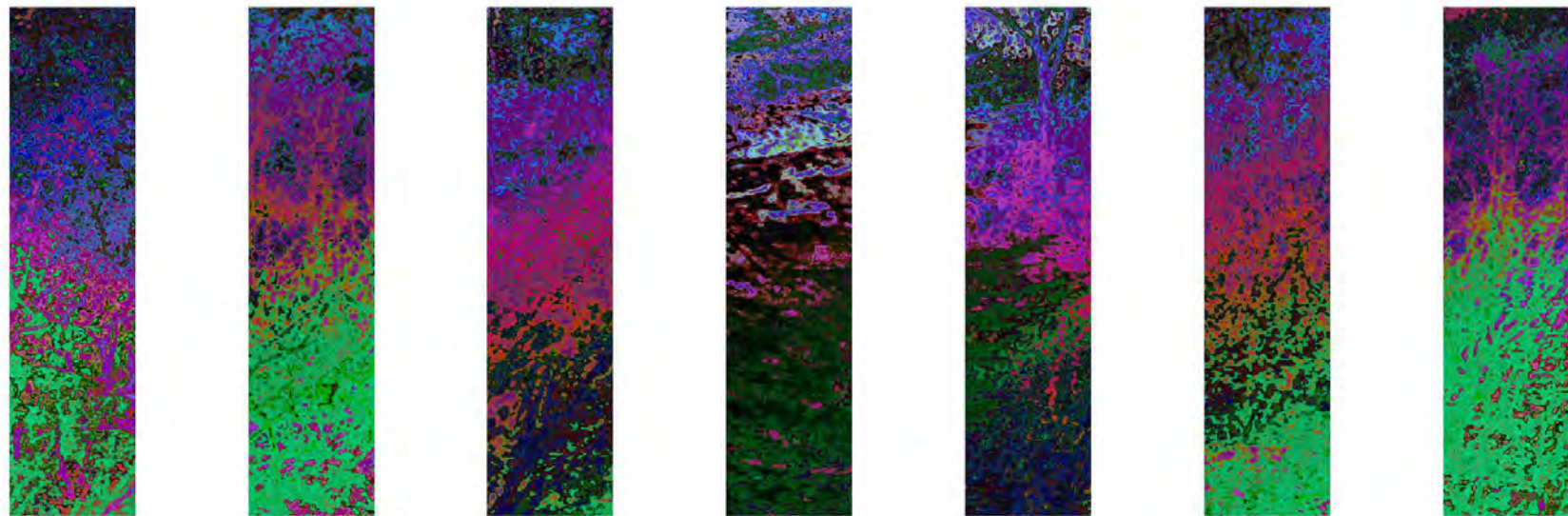
Living on costal cities is no longer viable. Extreme flooding and brutal infustructure destruction cause thousands to die and millions being displaced. With the frequency this occurs, it is near impossible to bring basic food and water relief to these people.

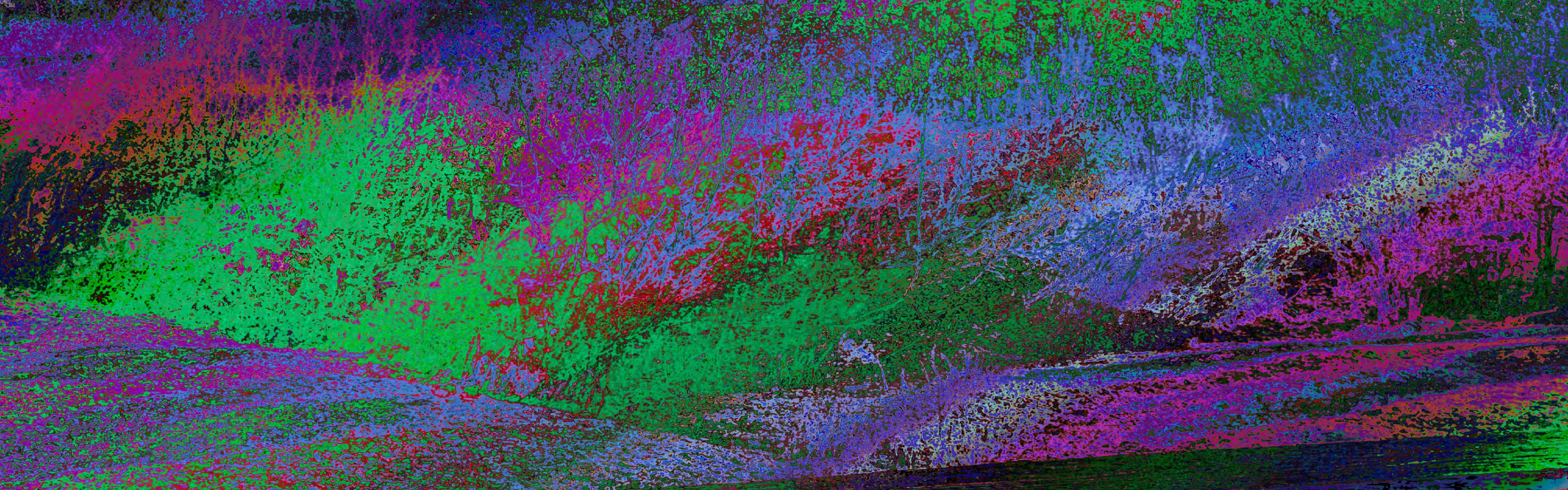


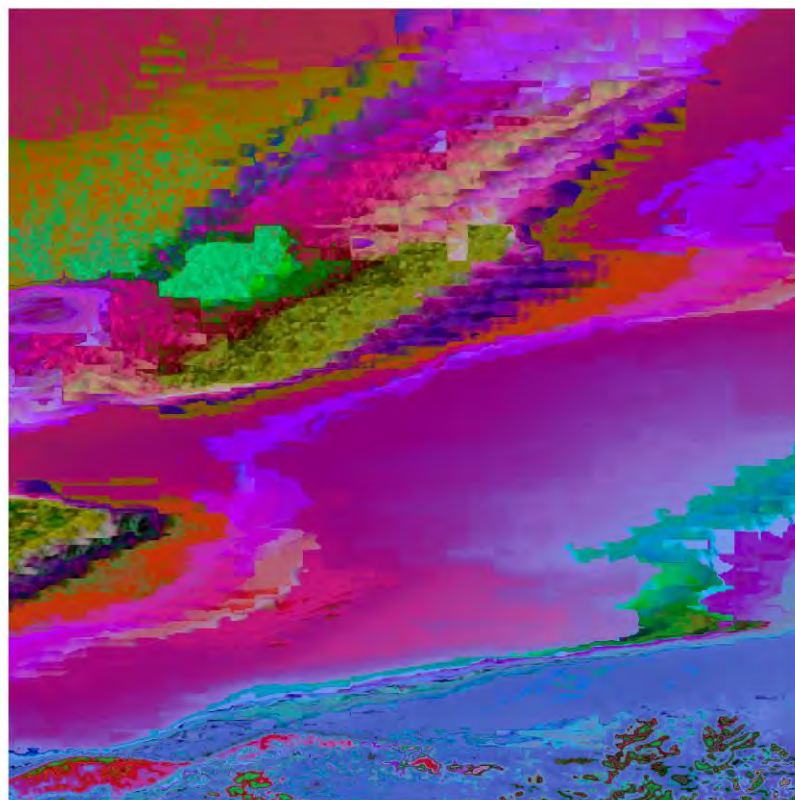
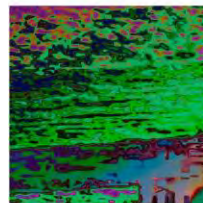
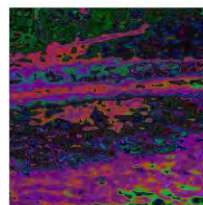
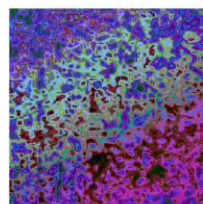








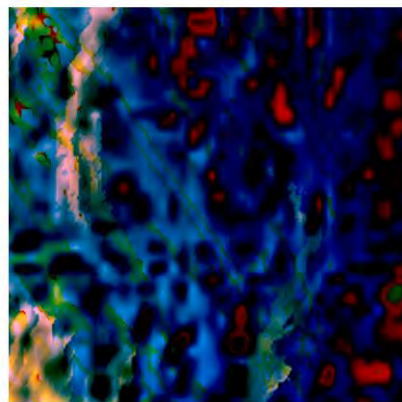
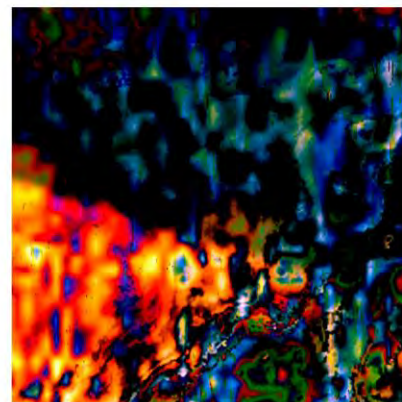
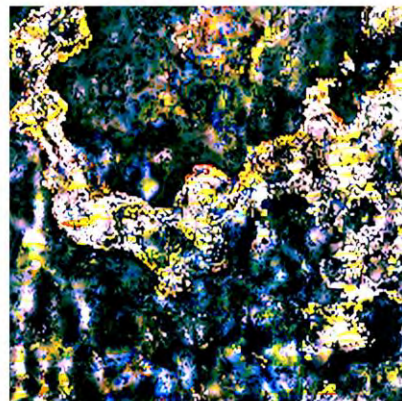
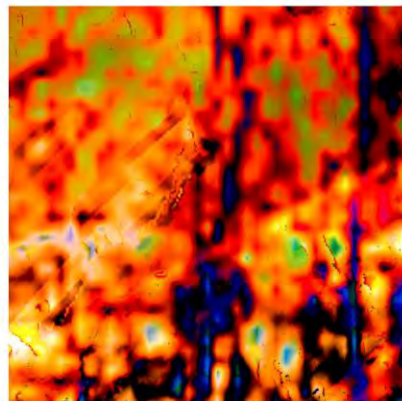
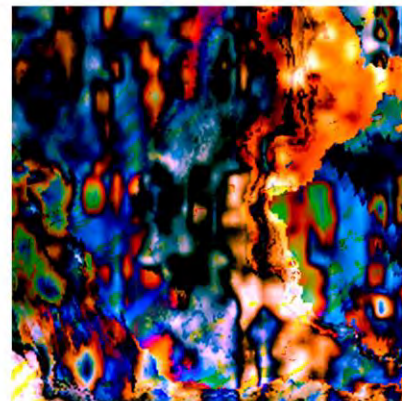
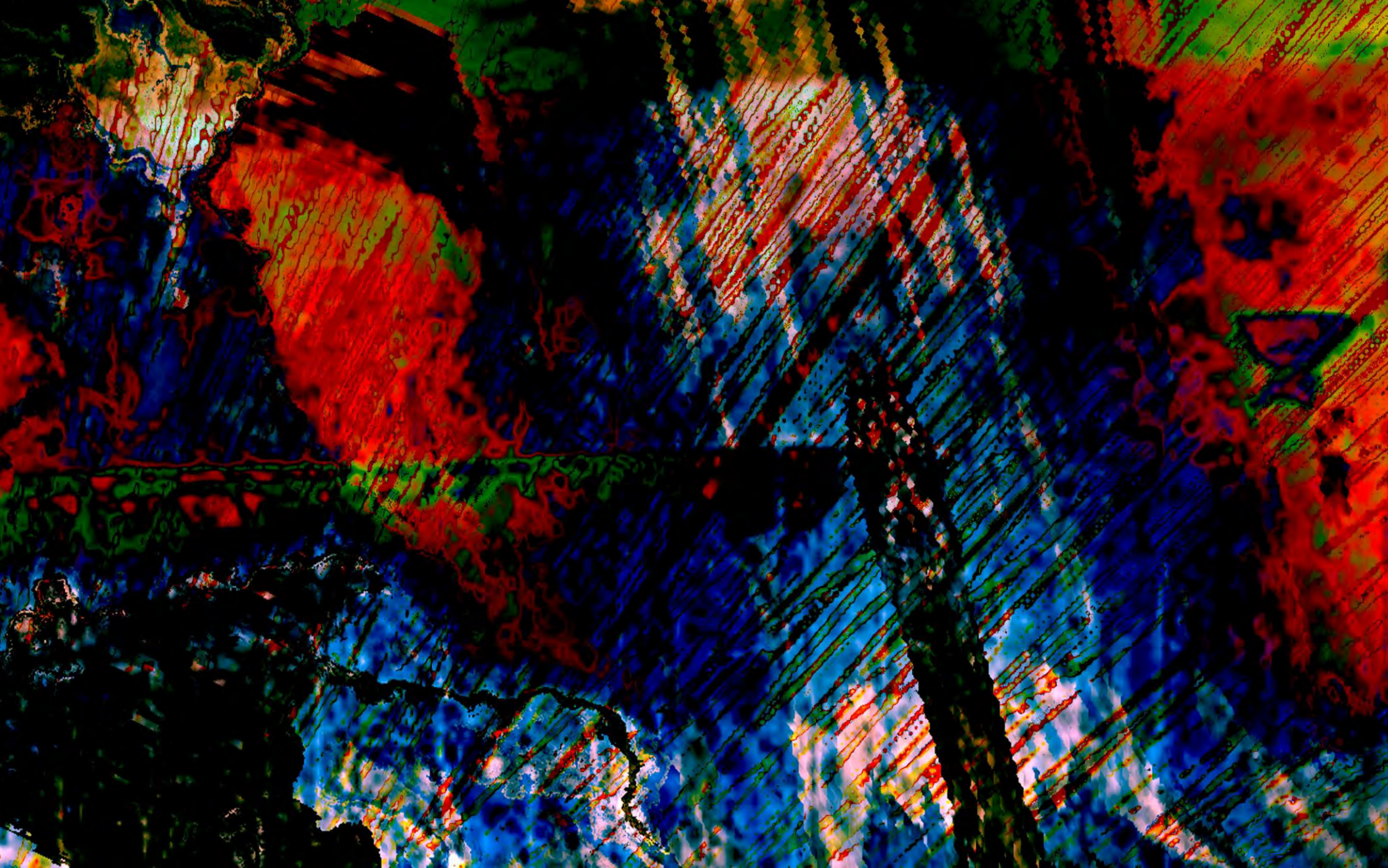




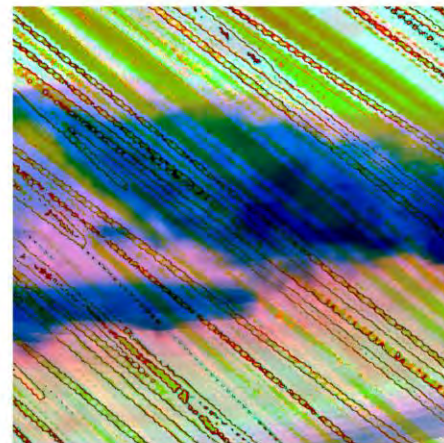
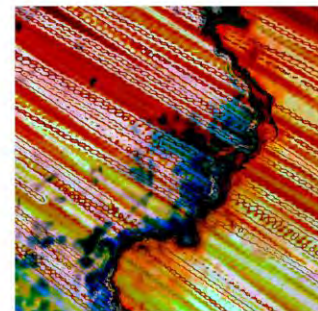
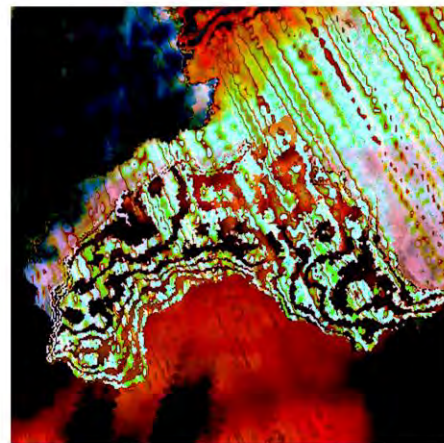
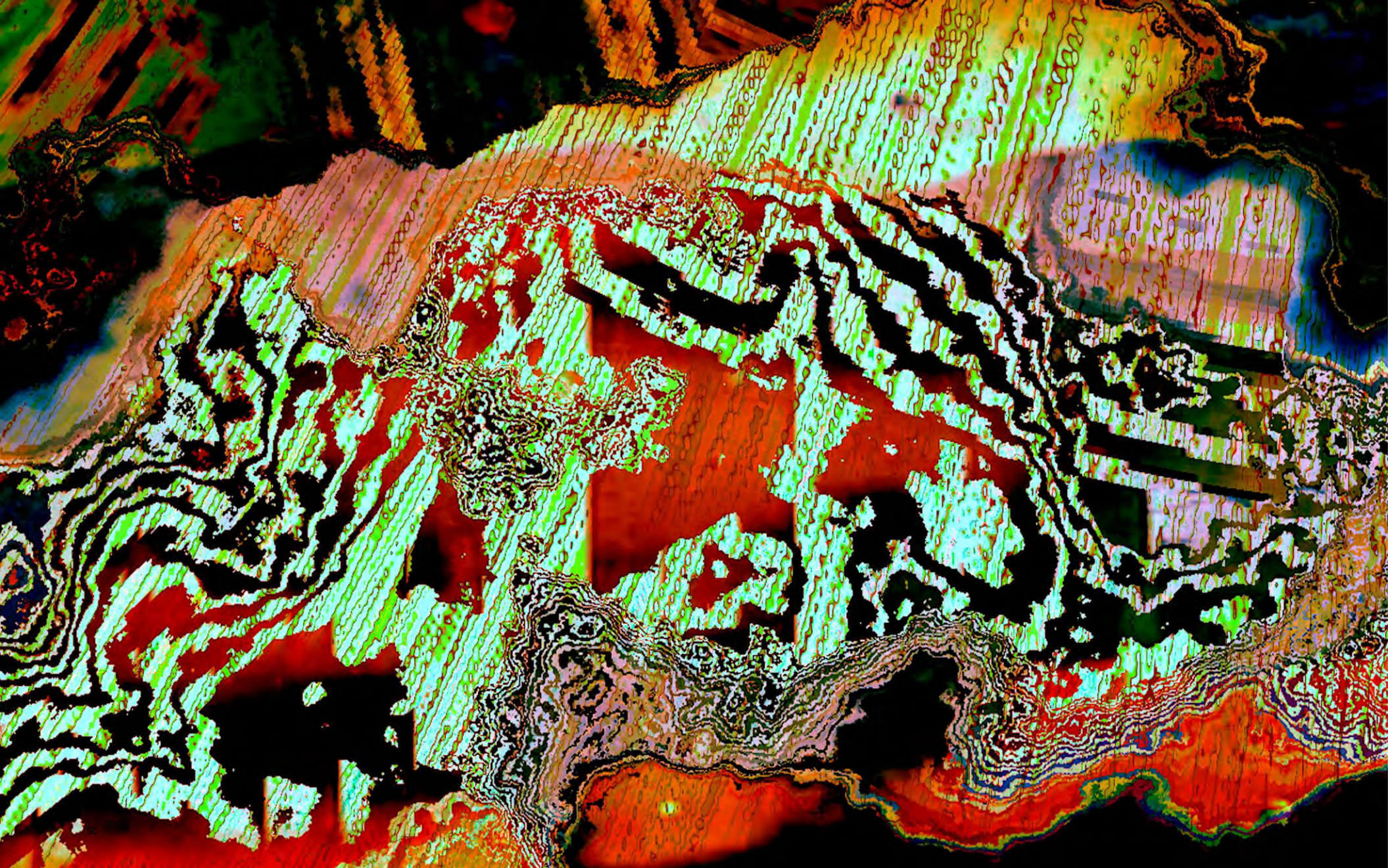
Trying to Hold On // 24" × 30"

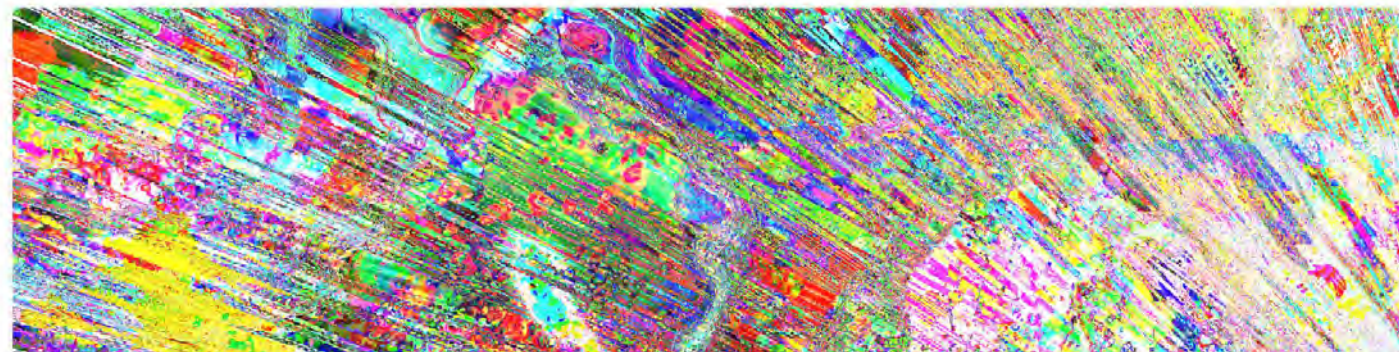
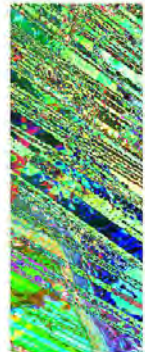
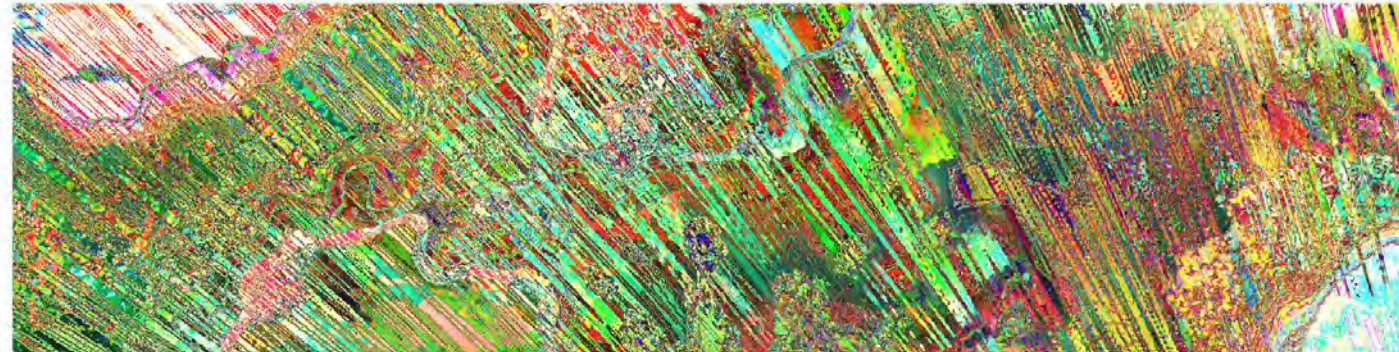
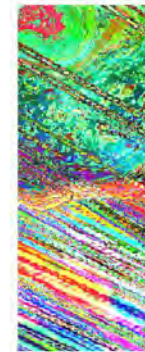
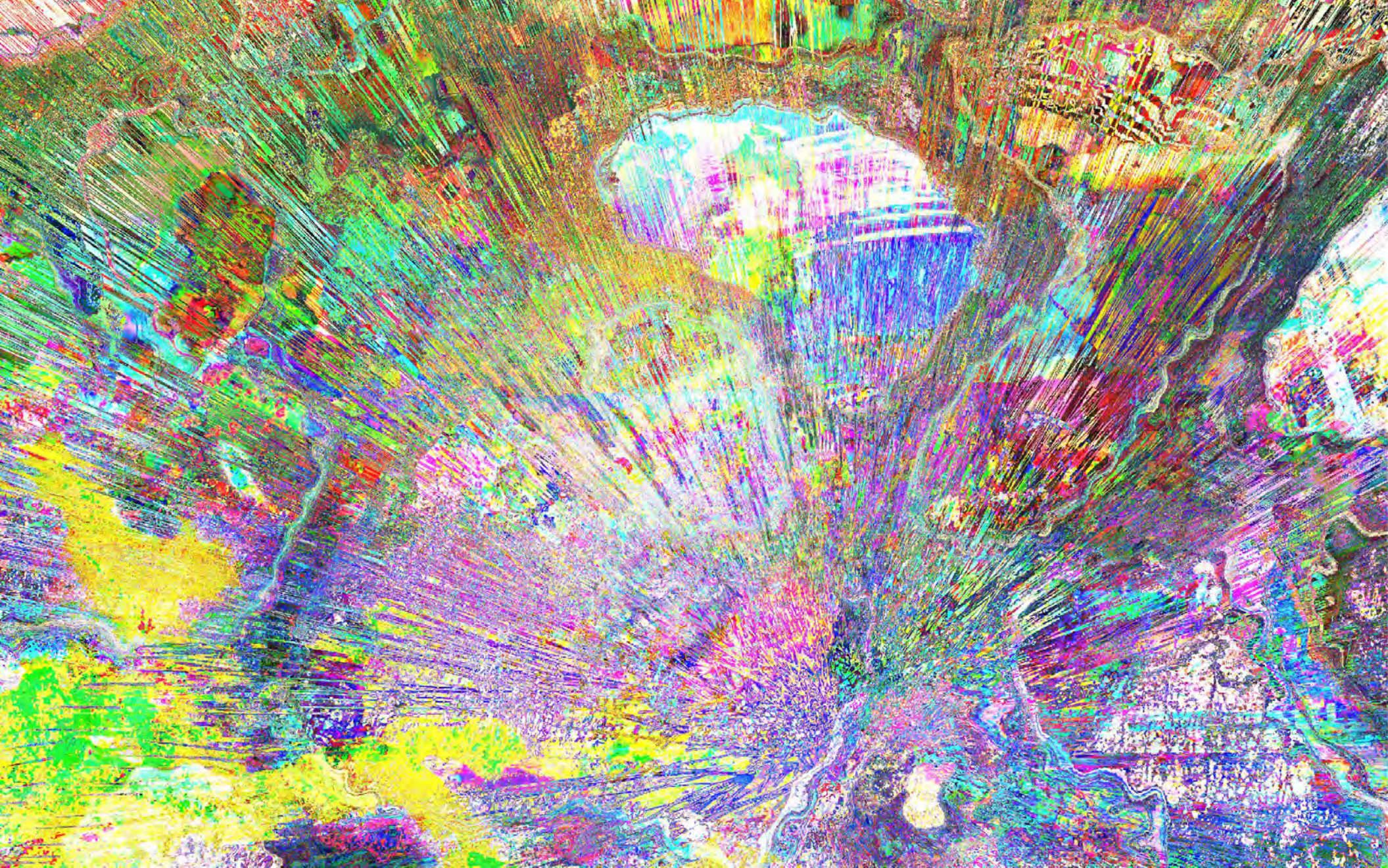
The state of the world is too much for most people to endure. A bottomless sense of loss, unbearable guilt, fierce resentment at previous generations are common among those living in these times.

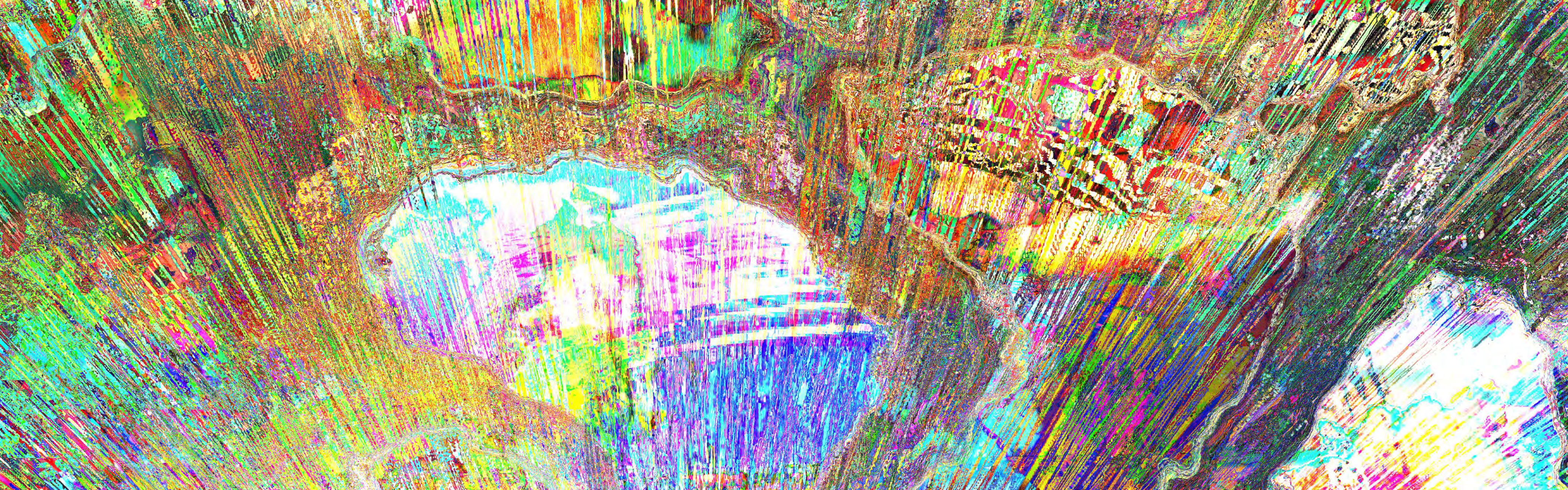


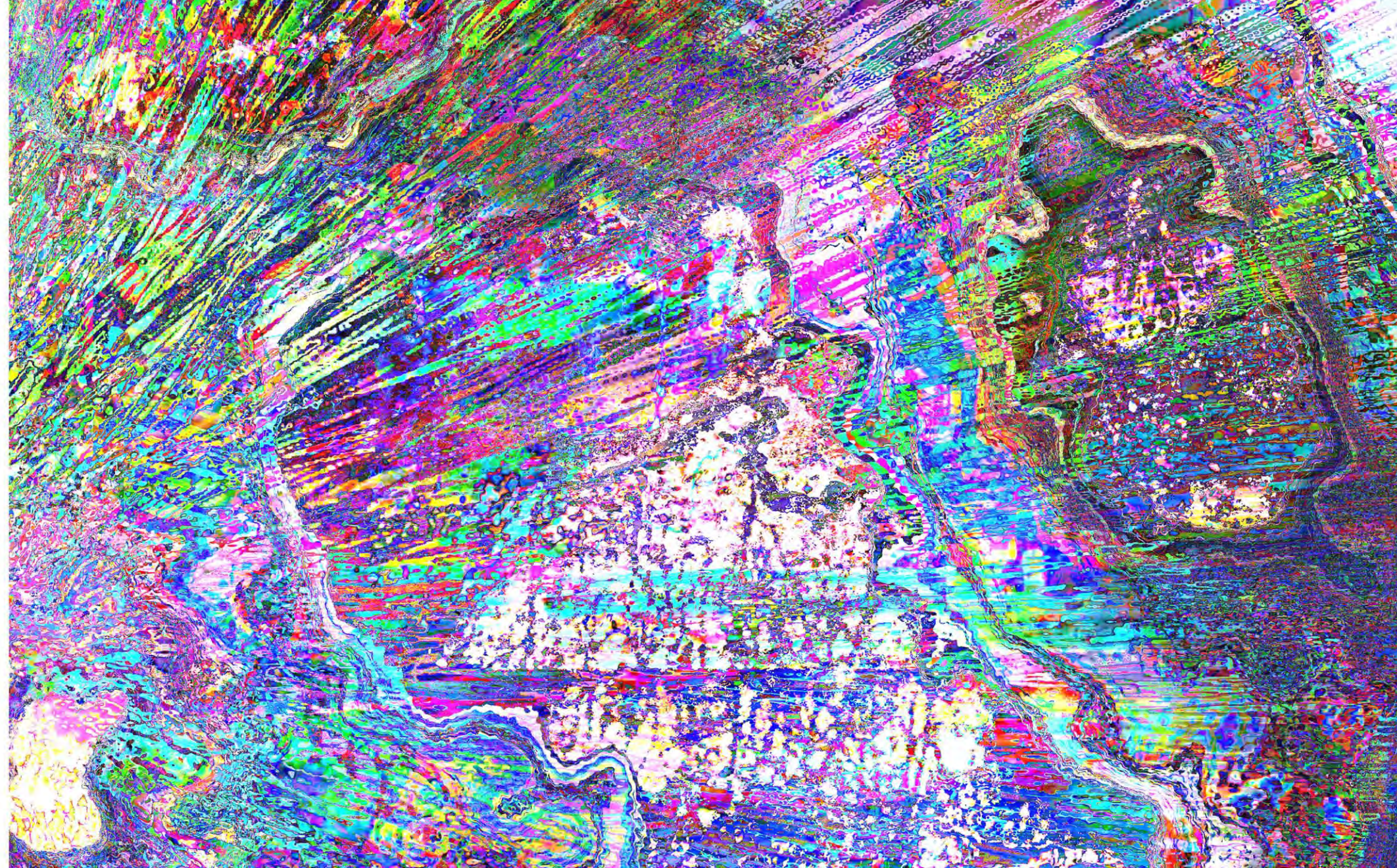
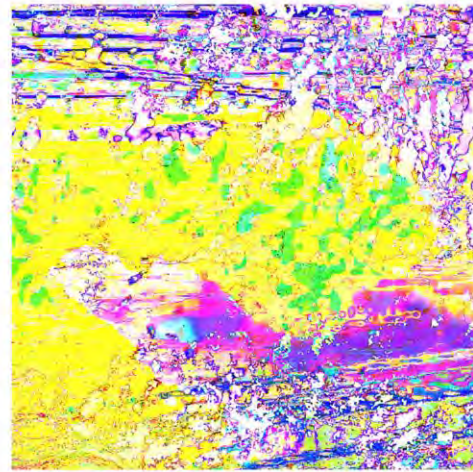
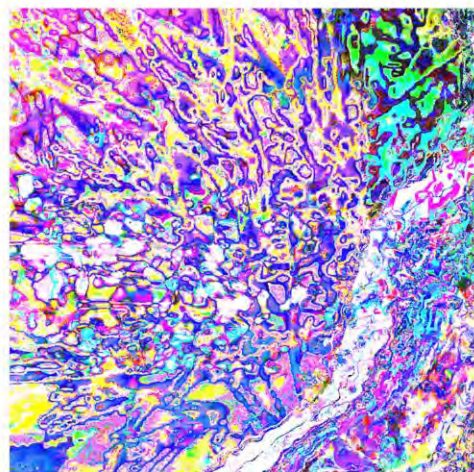
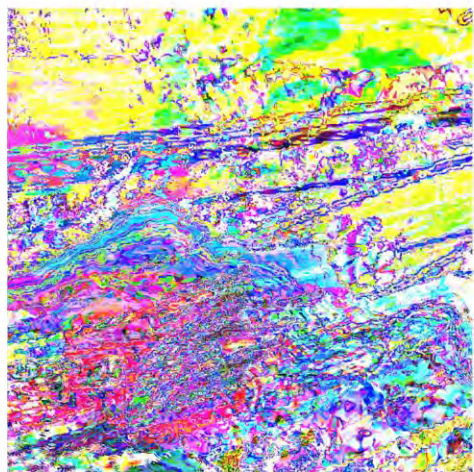








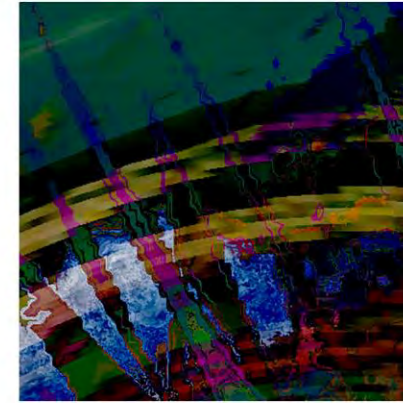
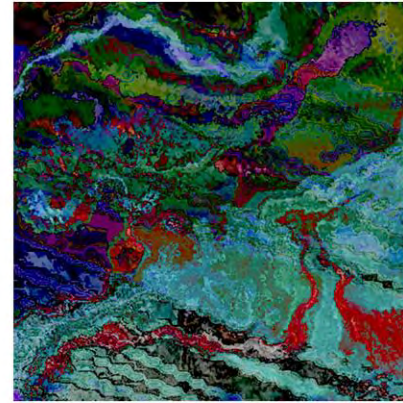
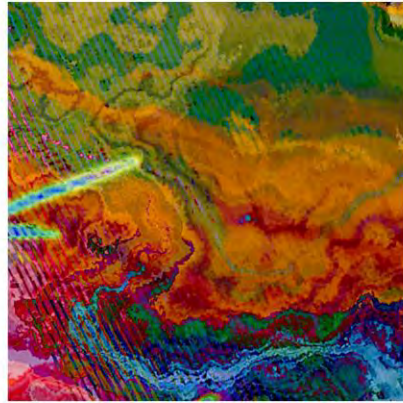
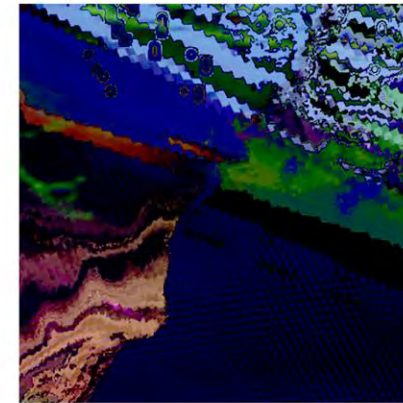
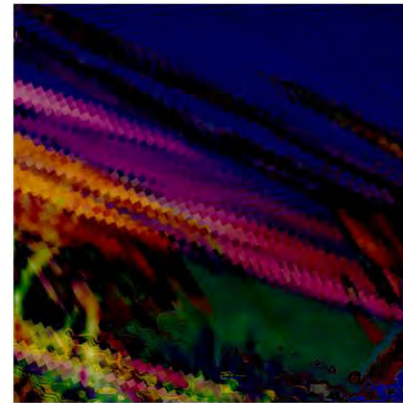
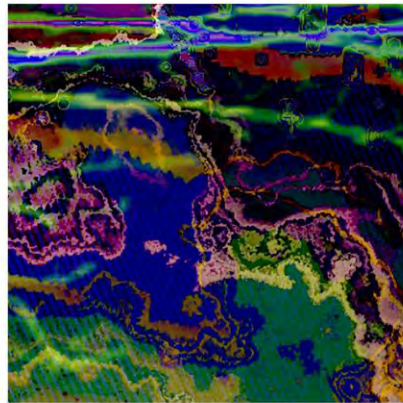
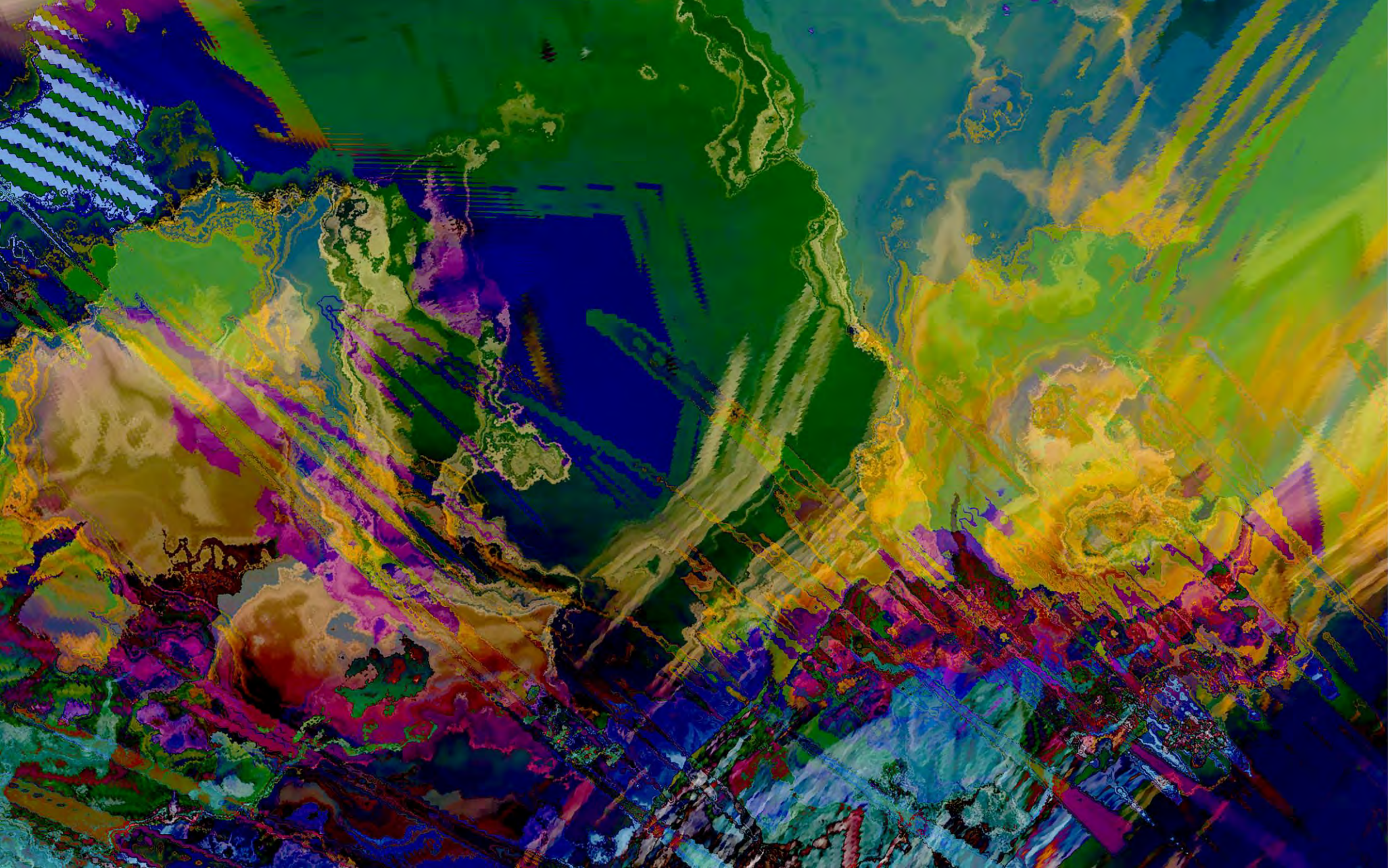


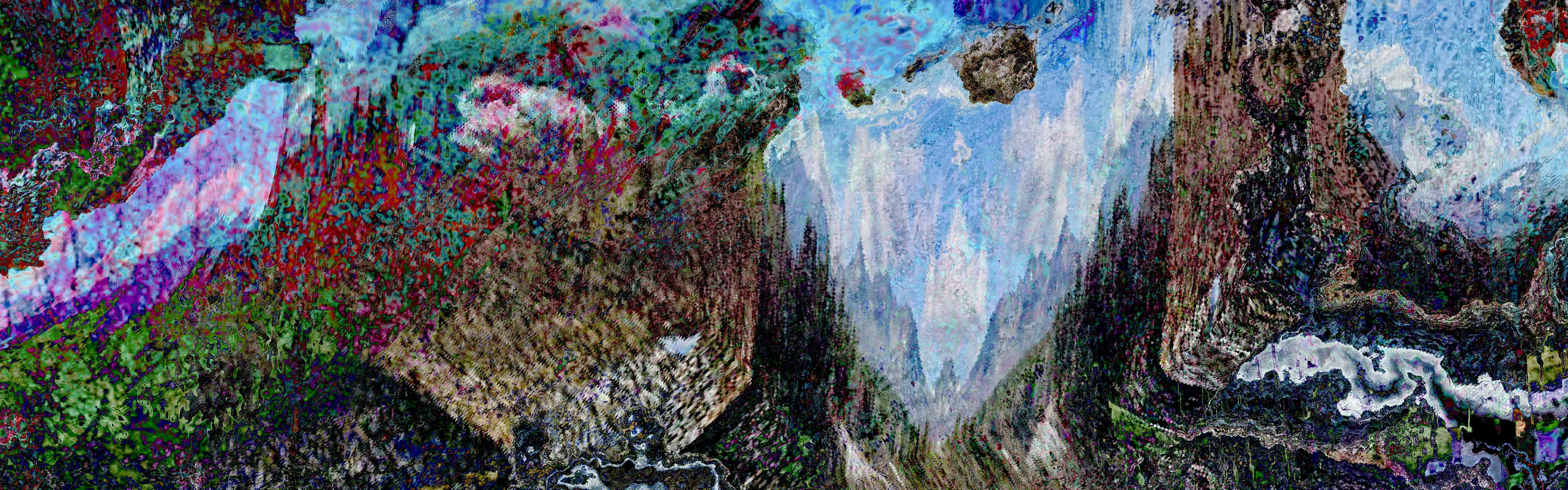


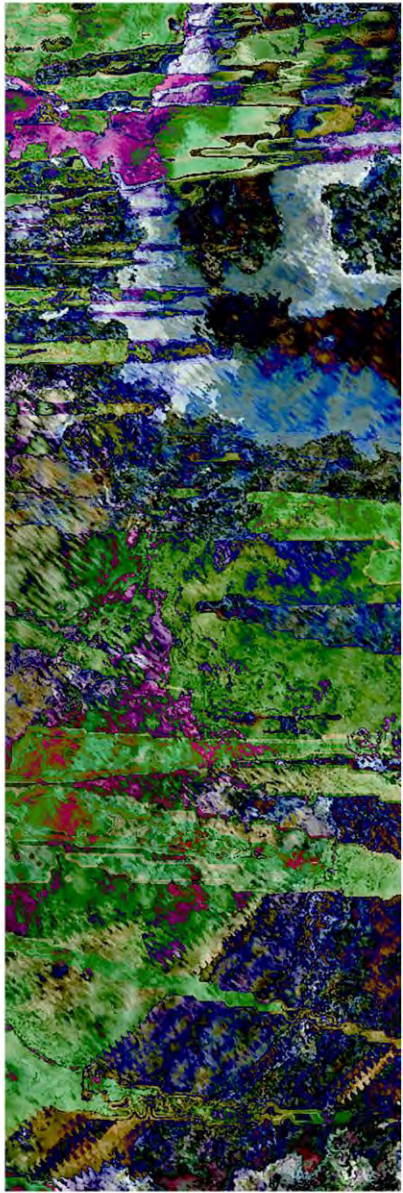
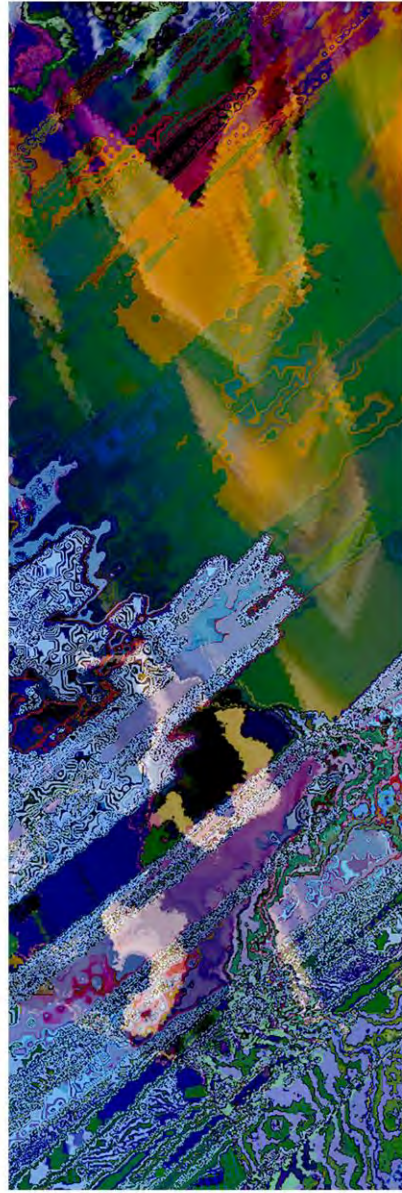
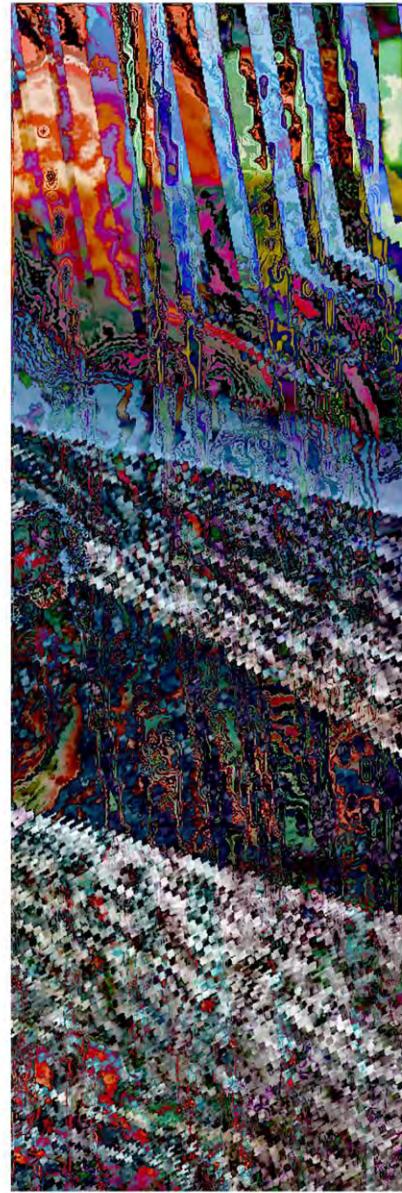
Landscapes of Time // 42" × 74"

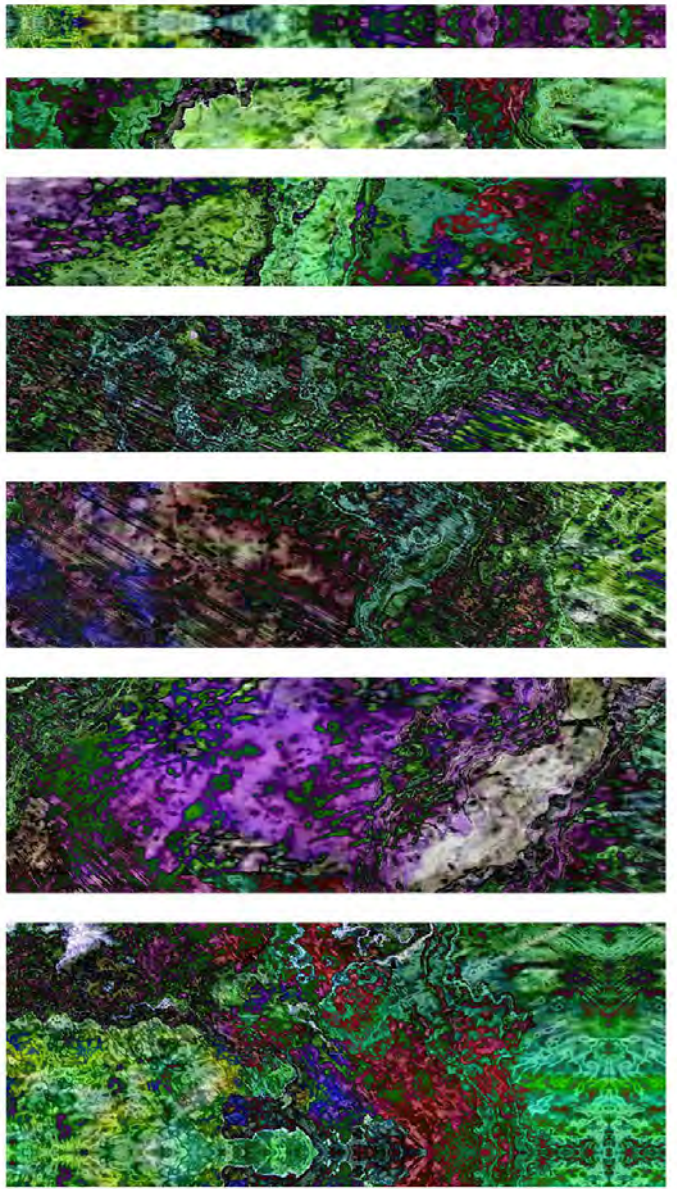
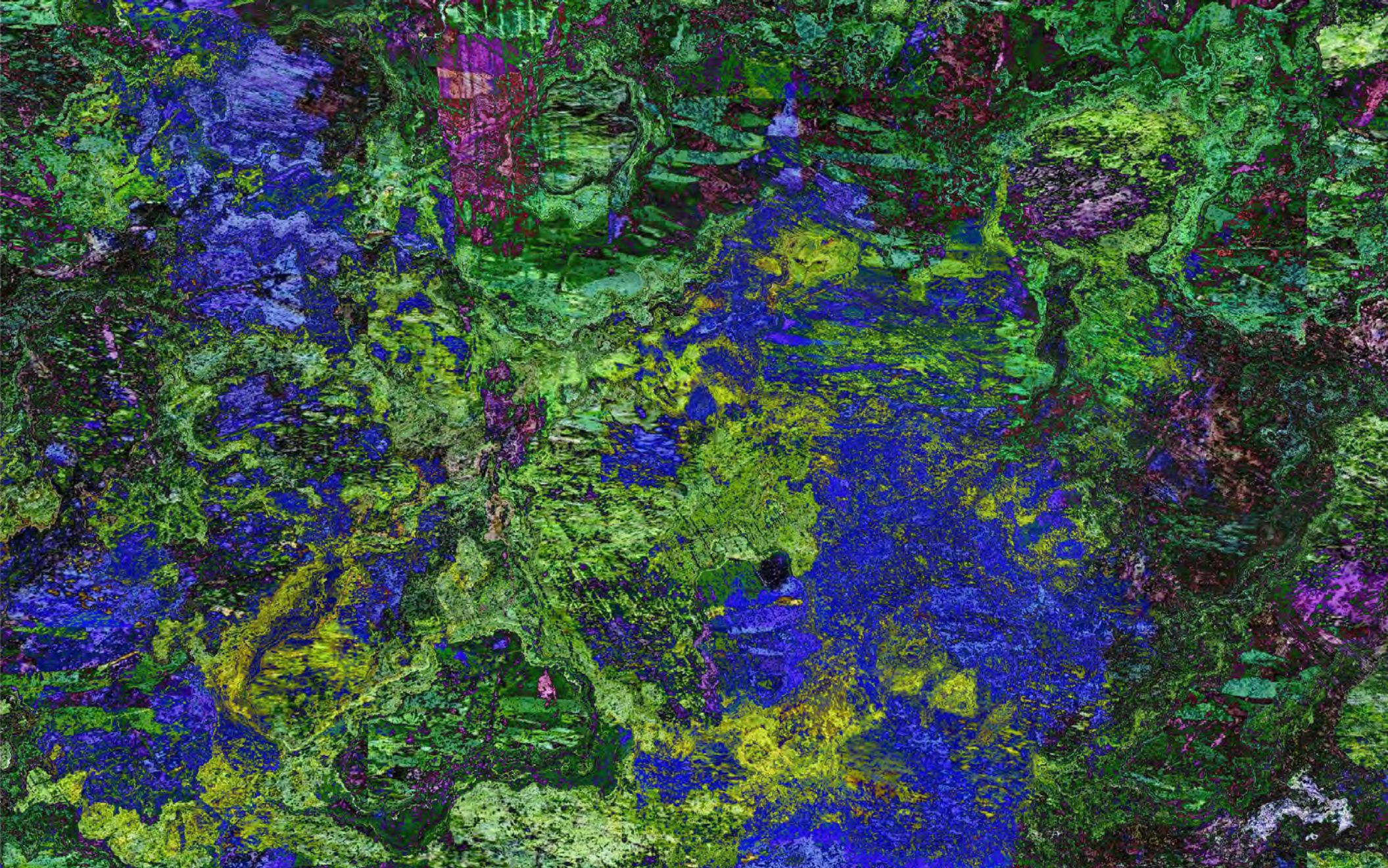
Heat waves, droughts, wildfires, tropical cyclones, severe flooding, and other disasters have lost their ability to shock the public. Famine, poverty, dislocation, disease, and conflict are inescapable.

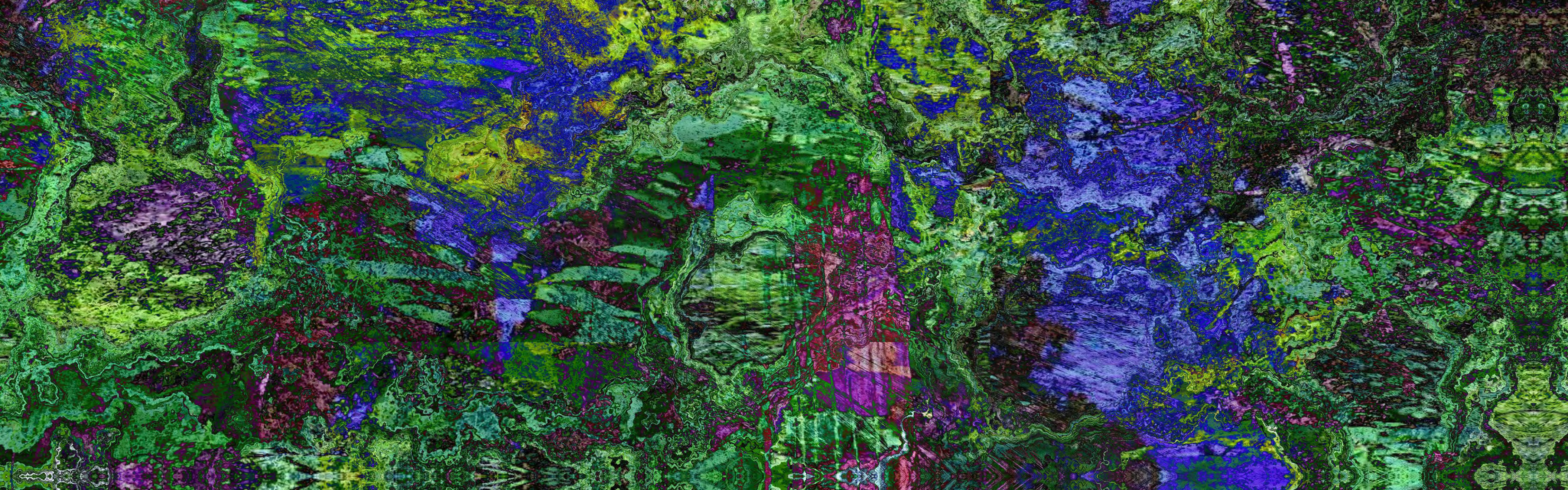


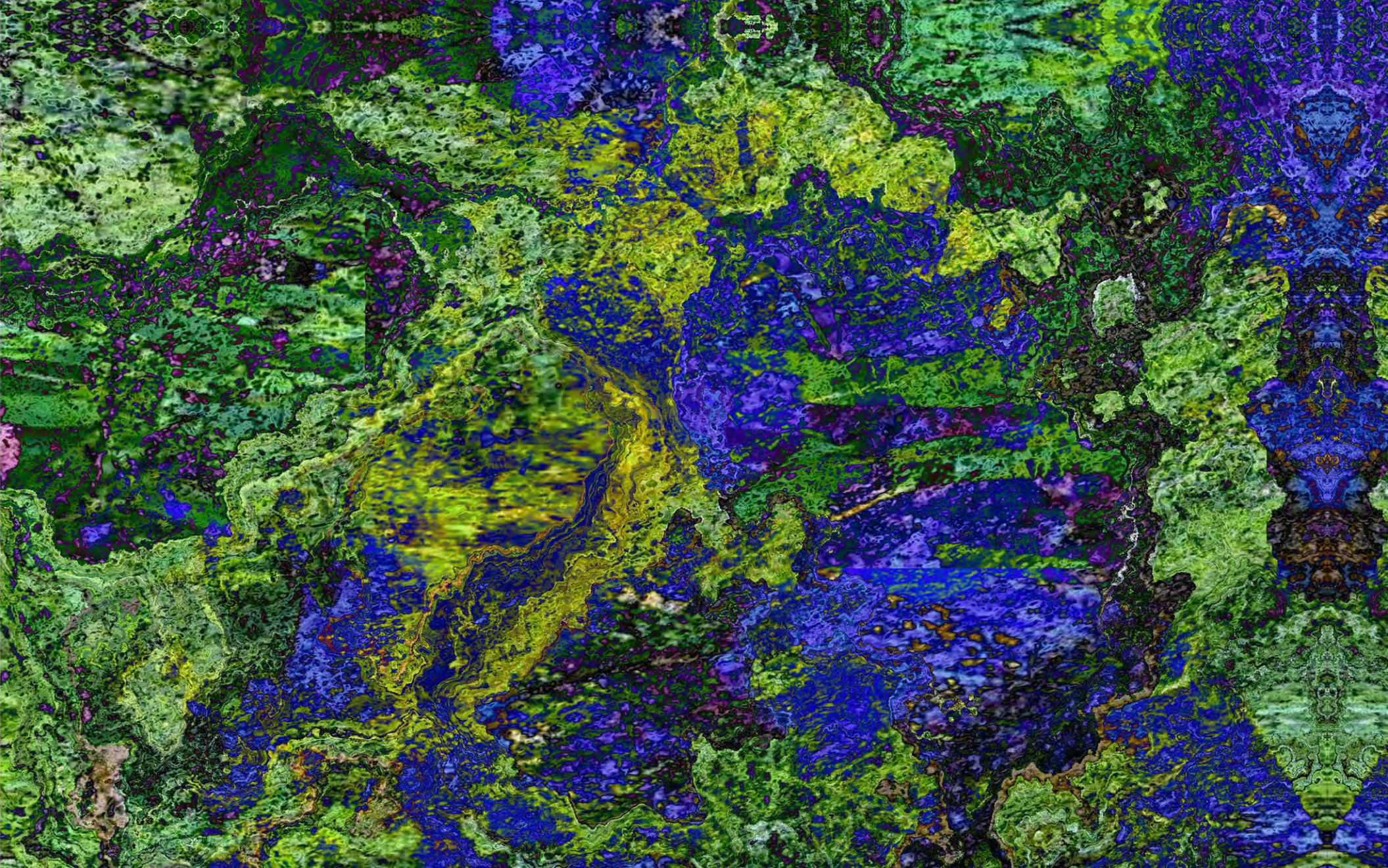
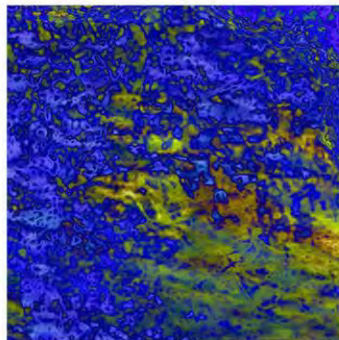
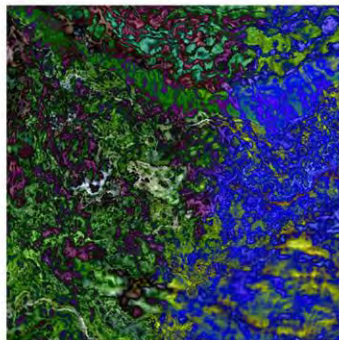
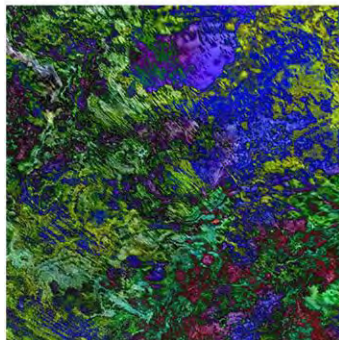
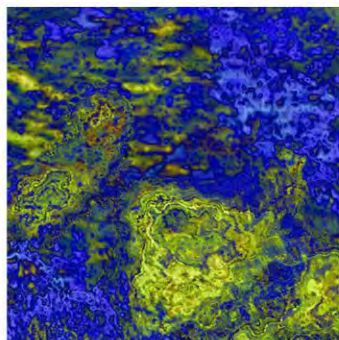
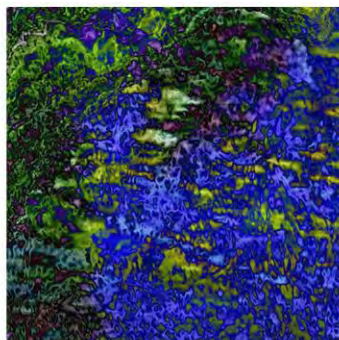
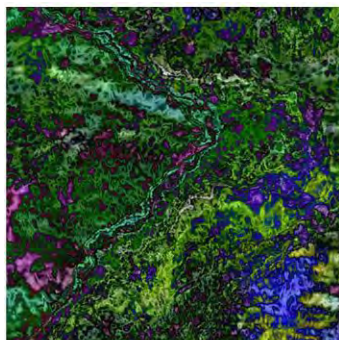






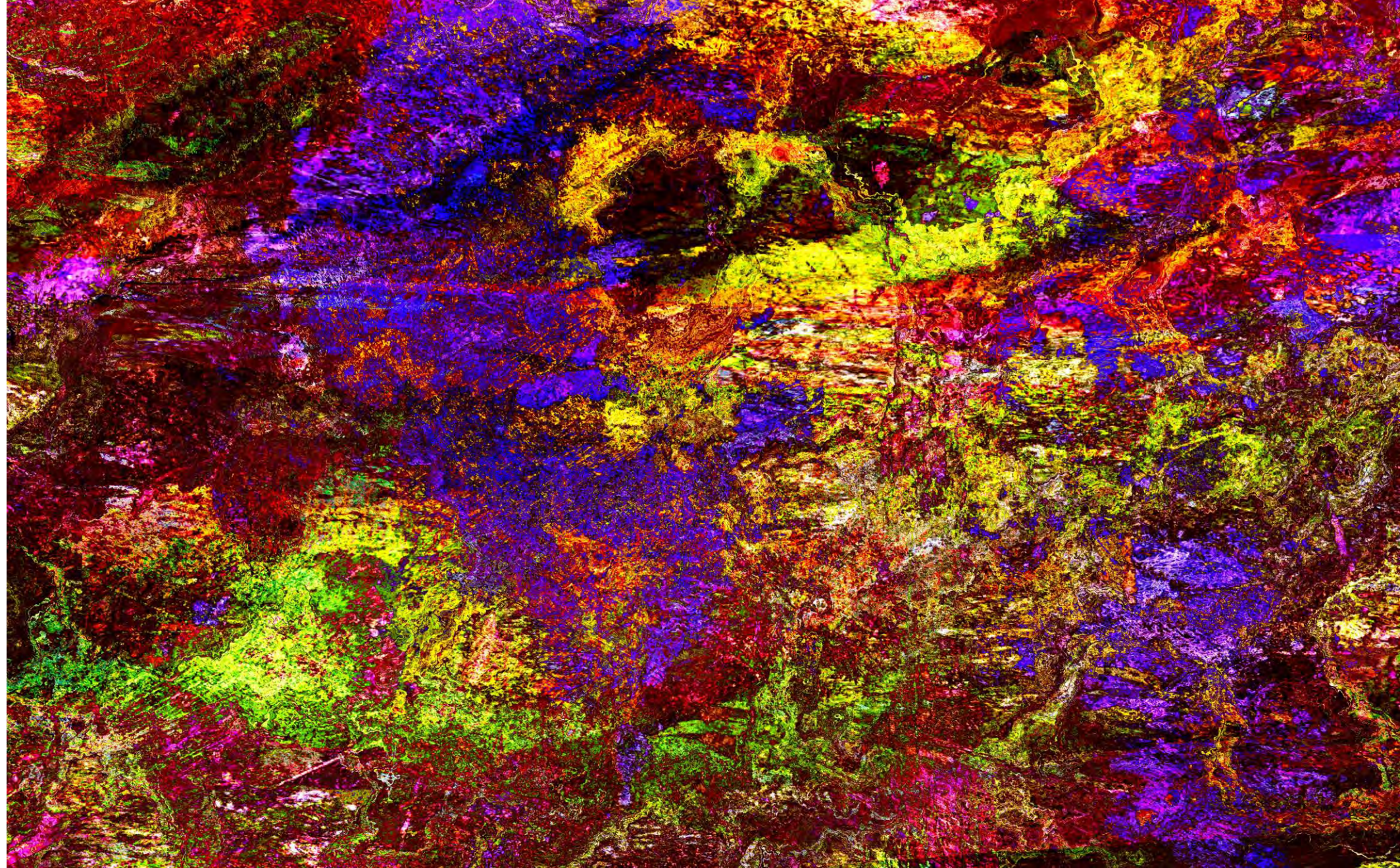


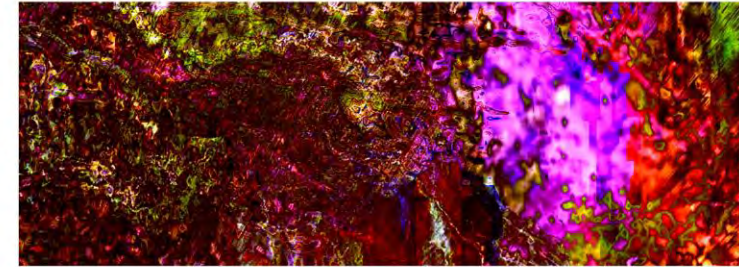
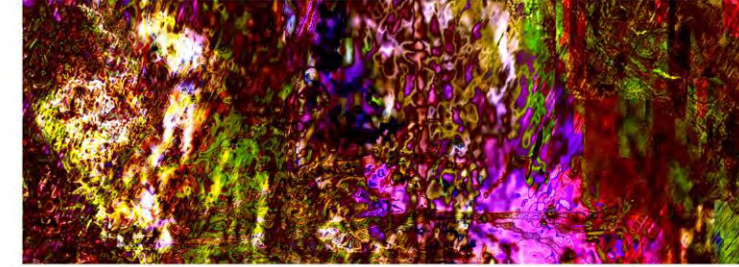
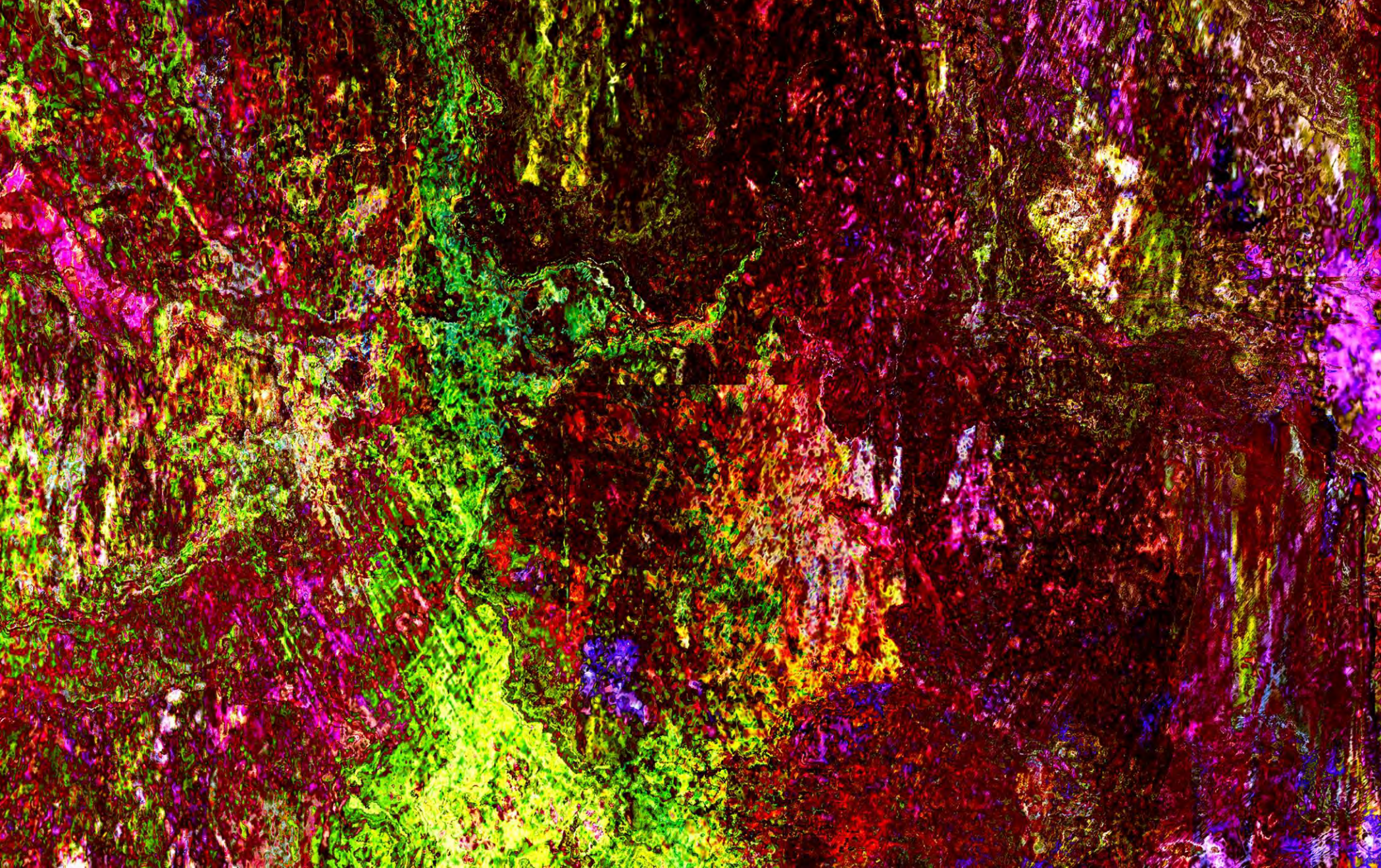




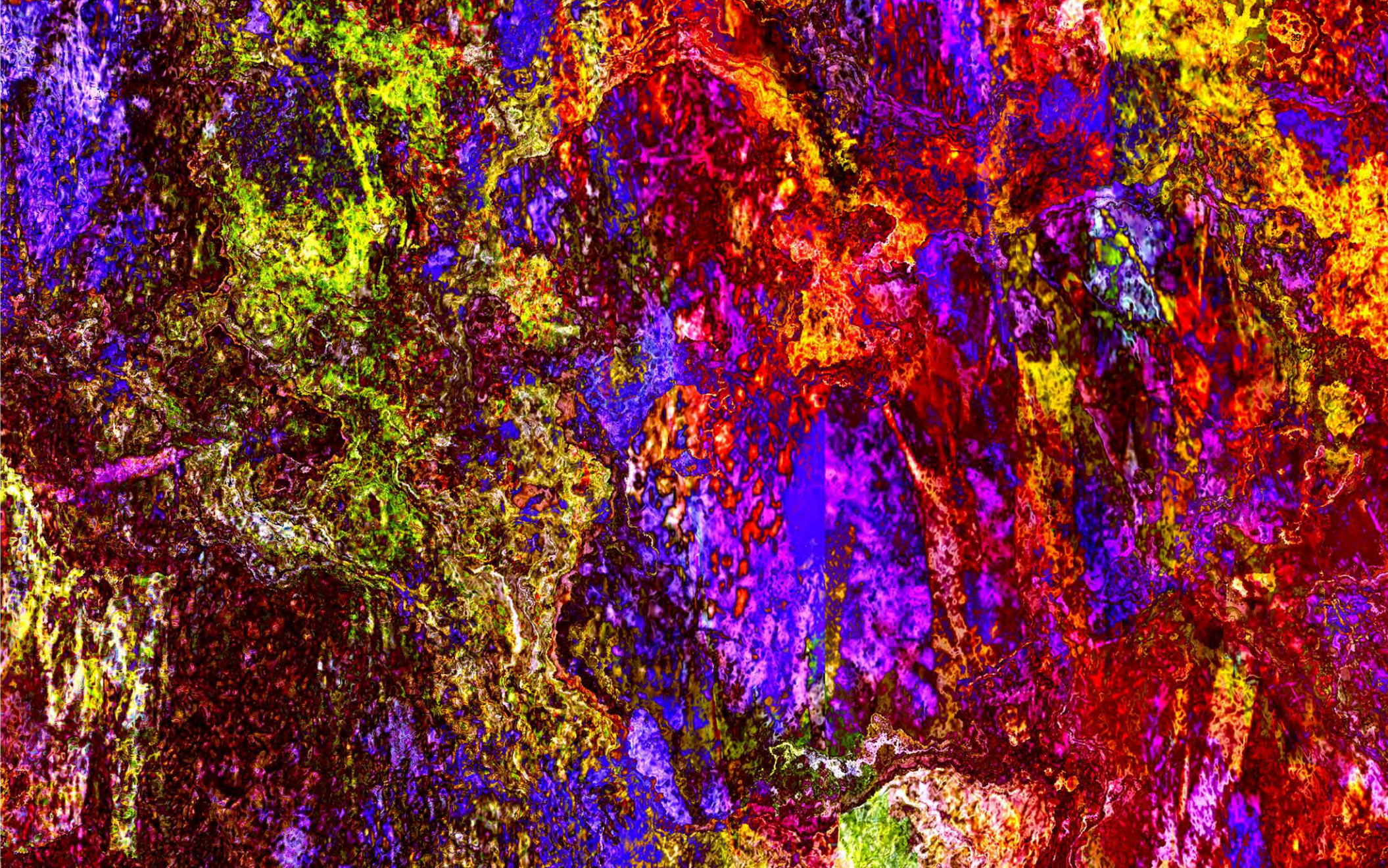
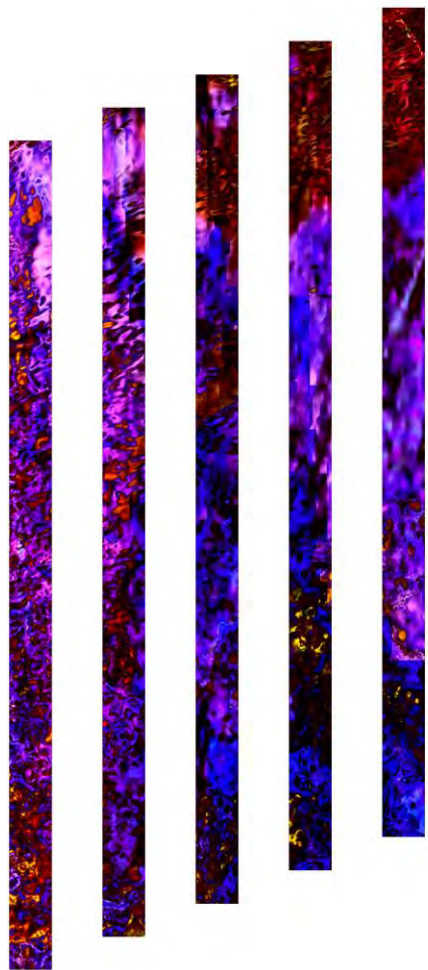
Hot Hot Hot // 24" × 44"

Droughts and heatwaves have made living inland a special hell. Wildlife are a distant memory in areas succumbed to desertification



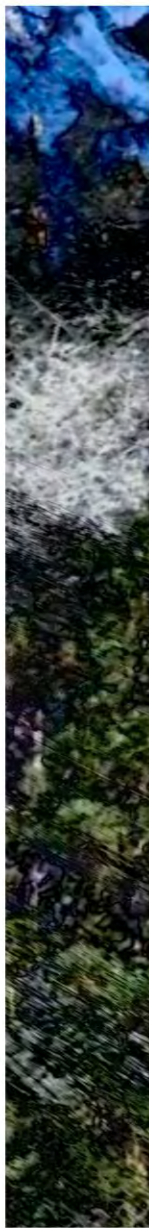






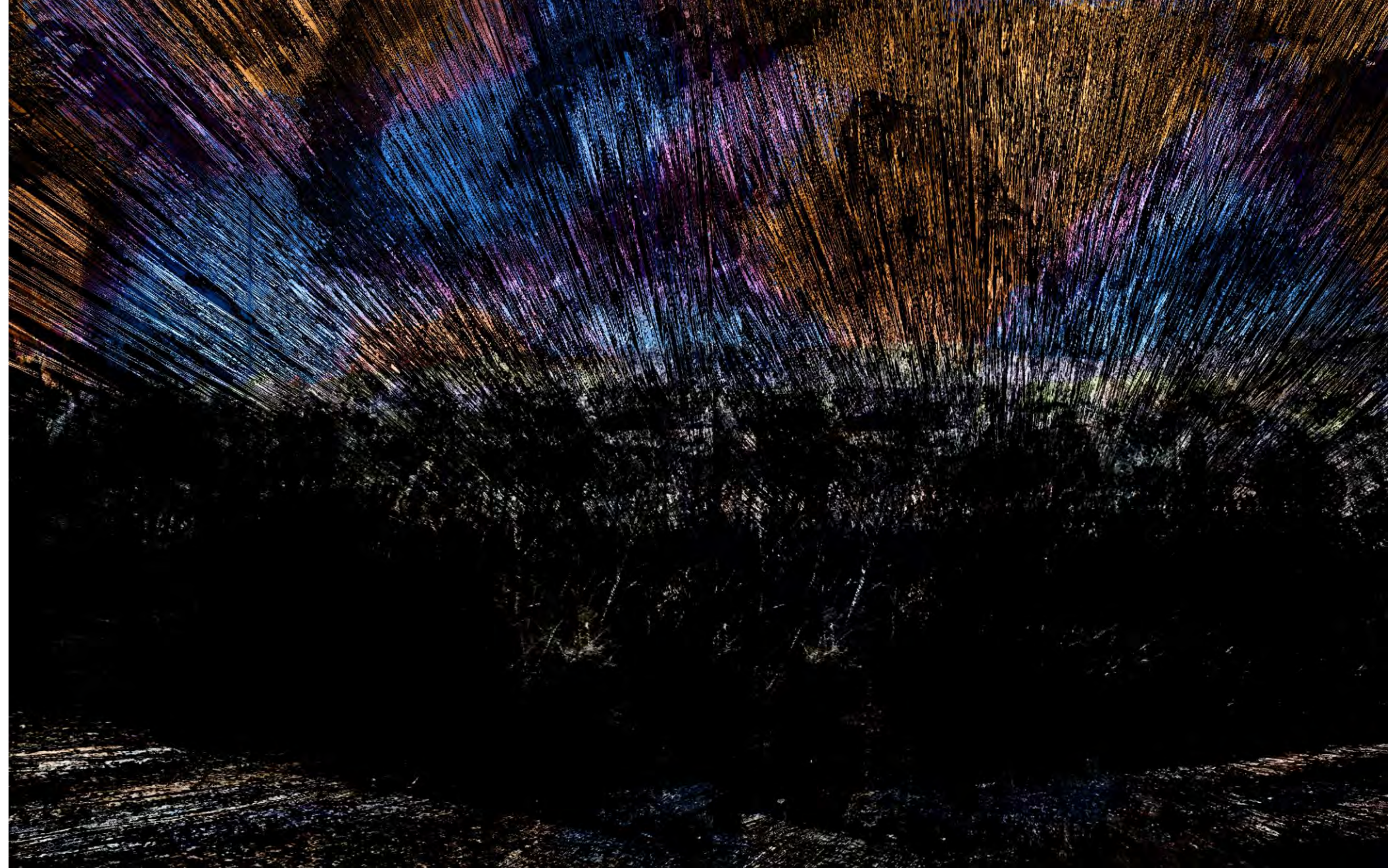




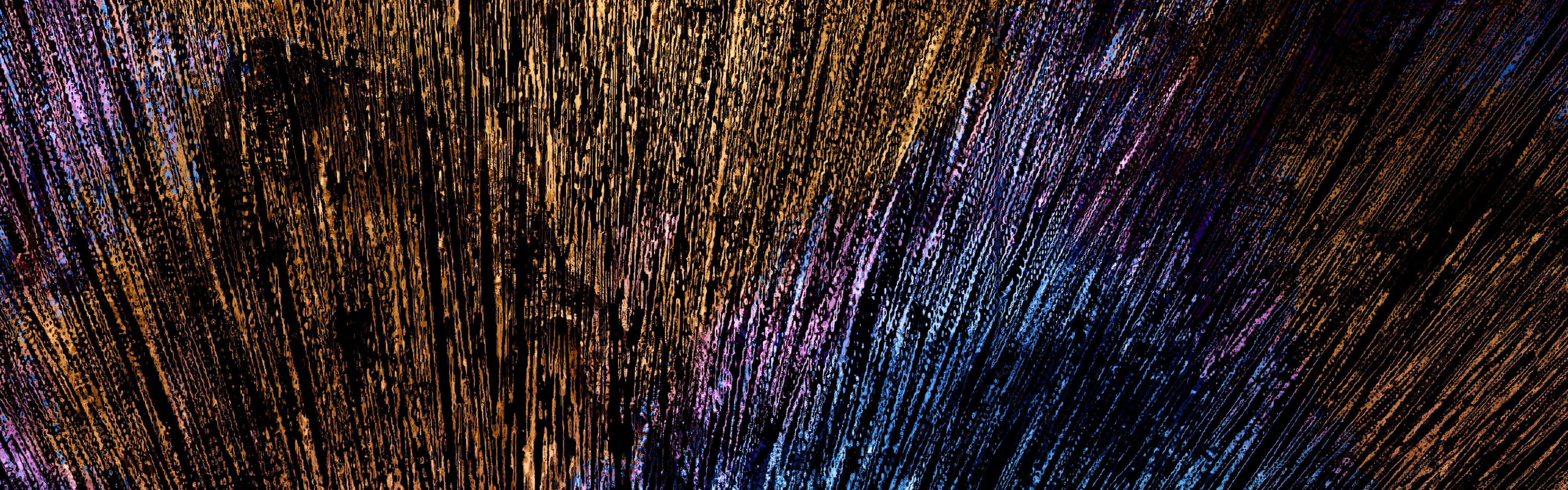


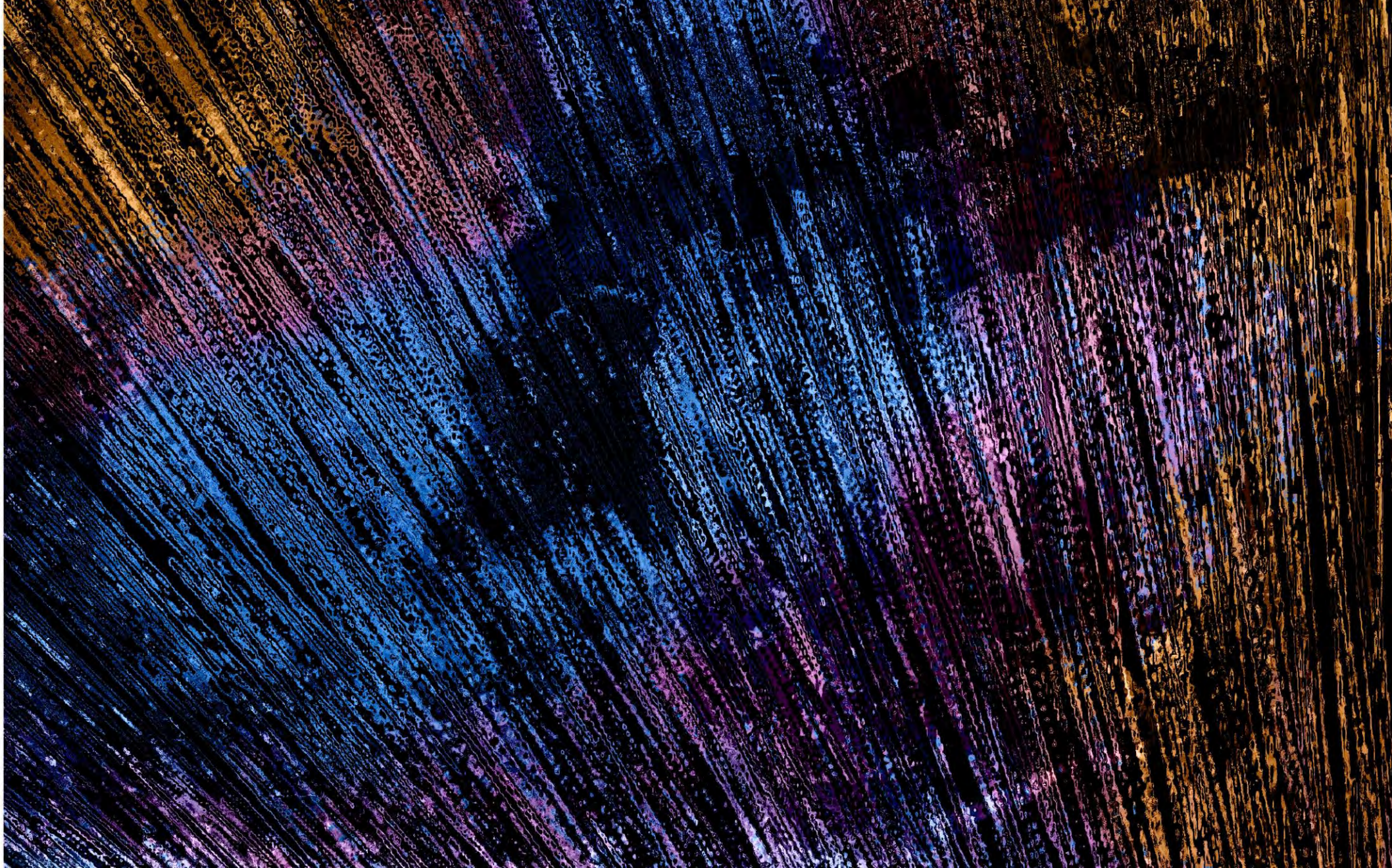
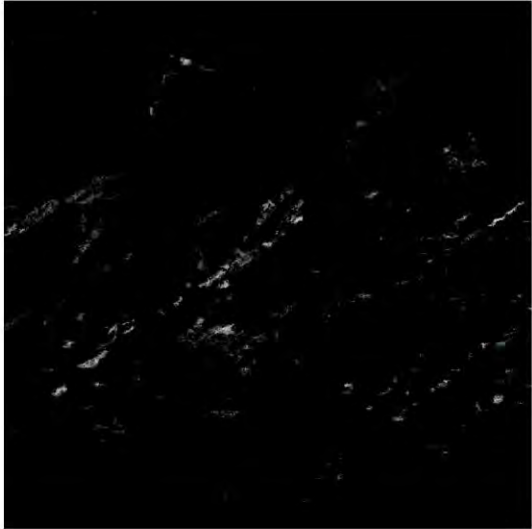
Lighting the Sky // 24" × 34"

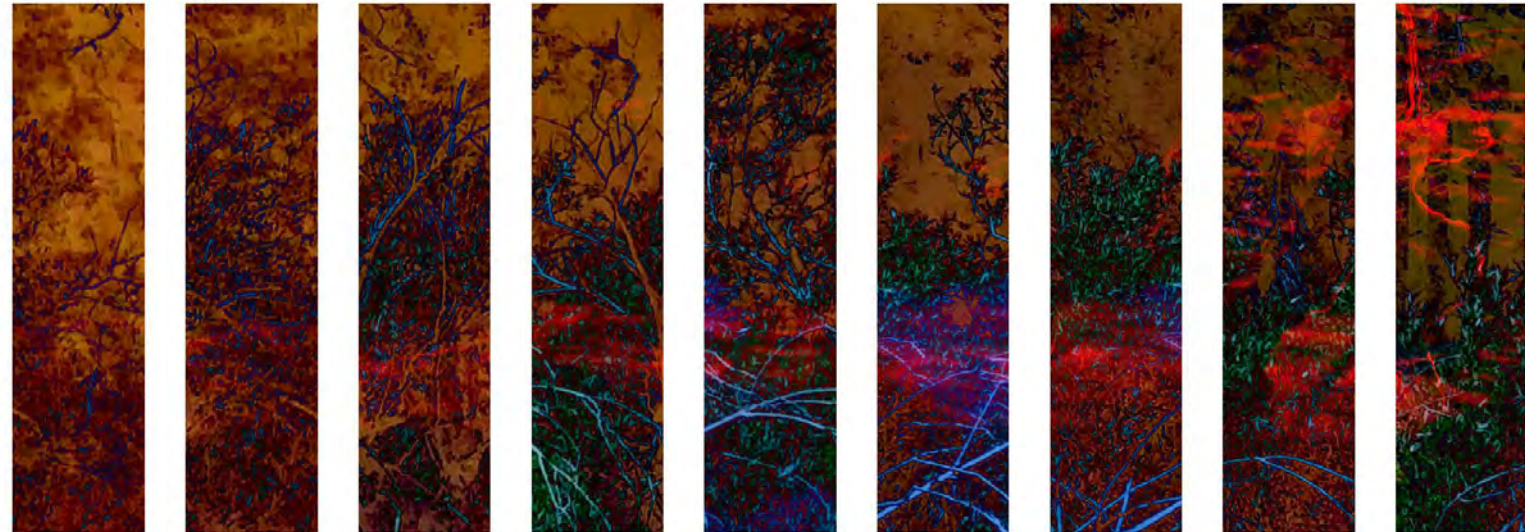
Now is the time to act to reverse the destruction already done to this world. If we can stop the heating of the planet, we will be able to avoid all the horrible things that could lie in our future.

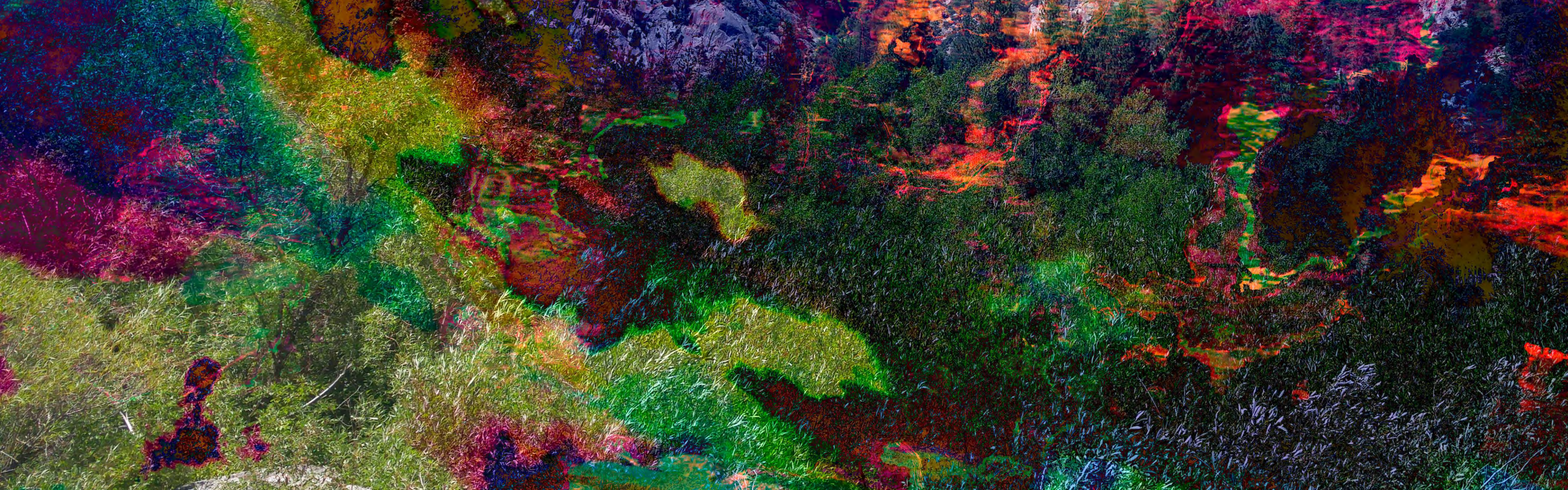














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