Vanitas: The imprisoner be remained silent. , 2024.6, CaiyunChen

Structure Film and Moving Dust in Post-Iconography: Hyperimage and Hypersound

Critical Overview Report in Art Practice

07.07.2024

Master of Letters in Fine Art

Essay and Critical Evaluation

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1. Abstract

My reflection on the evolution of my work through the three phases, intertwined with the continuous theme of mirror reflection, is profound and multifaceted:

Stage 1: Research into the Dilemmas of Identity

In the first stage, I focus on identity, particularly through the lens of Cindy Sherman's work, sets the stage for exploring how individuals perceive and construct their identities. Sherman's use of self-portraits to assume various personas underscores the mutable nature of identity and the role of external perceptions in shaping self-understanding. I emphasis on mirror reflection highlights the idea that our self-image is often shaped by how others see us, which can be both clarifying and distorting.

Stage 2: Illusion and Memory – Excavation and Dissection of Self

The transition to exploring illusion and memory signifies a deeper dive into the internal processes that contribute to identity formation. This phase involves dissecting past experiences and the illusions that memory creates. The concept of mirror reflection here evolves to examine how memories and subjective experiences can distort self-perception, much like a mirror can reflect a skewed image depending on its shape and condition.

Stage 3: Post-Image Symbolic Theory

In the third stage, the practice of post-image symbolic theory suggests a move towards abstraction and symbolism in understanding identity. This stage likely involves interpreting and representing identity through symbols rather than direct representations. Mirror reflection in this context could symbolize the ways in which identity is constructed through cultural and societal symbols, which are inherently interpretive and subject to distortion.

Throughout all phases, mirror reflection serves as a metaphor for self-perception and the interplay between internal and external viewpoints. My observation that mirrors can both clarify and distort our self-view aligns with the broader theme of identity being fluid and multifaceted. This reminds me of the fact that everyone actually sees a more complete self through the feedback of others from the outside world. Yet sometimes these reflections are also blurred and distorted, which

leads to a degree of illusion and misunderstanding. Just as we can't be sure if the reflected landscape illuminated by a light source is as seen?

I think one of the most important turning points that influenced me was the Situational Internationalist-Drift Theory that I learnt from my elective course Mapping the city, which inspired the way I created my work later on. Drifting theory is a way of exploring the city without the influence of hierarchies, gazes, subjectivities and external tools. Through an equal and objective point of view, we can feel and freely follow the path of inner mapping and reflecting on city walking. In the course of our urban exploration practice, we have discovered the concept of informal space: its boundaries are not determined by static dimensions, but by continuous change. It can have a permanent, temporary or recurring character, like a temporary state, a fluctuating boundary.

I feel that the displacements and deviations found in Drifting are somewhat similar to the concepts of Queer Ephemera Theory: 1. Neither has a fixed shape or planned rule. 2. Both are transient and improvised. The temporary and improvisational nature of both theories aligns with my understanding of identity as an ever-changing construct. 3. Both are constantly moving and changing. 4. Both approaches value spontaneity and the organic development of paths and boundaries, akin to how identity forms through unplanned experiences and interactions.

Keywords: Movement, Drifting, Reflection, Dragging

2. Images and Visual Power

WJT Mitchell's Imagery advances the interdisciplinary study of visual media. For Mitchell, an image (image) was once a copy of an object, a mirrored other, or a reproduction of a concept. What is an image? Nowadays, however, the image no longer opens itself up to people as it used to do, but instead establishes ‘an opaque, distorted and arbitrary mechanism of reproduction’. The technological revolution in the media, while offering the possibility of ‘virtual imitation’, is also expanding its own culture by simulating reality. Why do we react so strongly to the images and pictures we see in our daily lives? Why do we act as if pictures are alive, with the power to

influence us, to demand things from us, to persuade us, to seduce us, and even to mislead us? How do the ‘image turn’, meta-images, graphic relations, and visual power stimulate and influence us as human beings? The author also emphasises that the image is also ‘alive’ and ‘loving’, not in the sense that the image moves, but in the sense that there is an interaction between the readability and the visuality of the image, and that it affects us (human beings) deeply.

‘First we shape the tools, then the tools shape us.’ So, I followed Drifting in the image experiments and tried to combine the analytical approach with haptics. I experimented with replacing more reflective materials that were moved and scanned at different amplitudes and speeds, and these images would be of real objects interspersed with a datamined virtual web. The effect of multiple superimpositions is also that each individual image capture loses its own pictoriality, thus creating an ambiguous symbolic body dominated by the screen. The light source leaking from the black frame of the screen rules the cultural transmission, and the more subtle pixel points become the spread of a contemporary flu. I argue that the squeezed image, an alienated patriarchy, remains an object gaze.

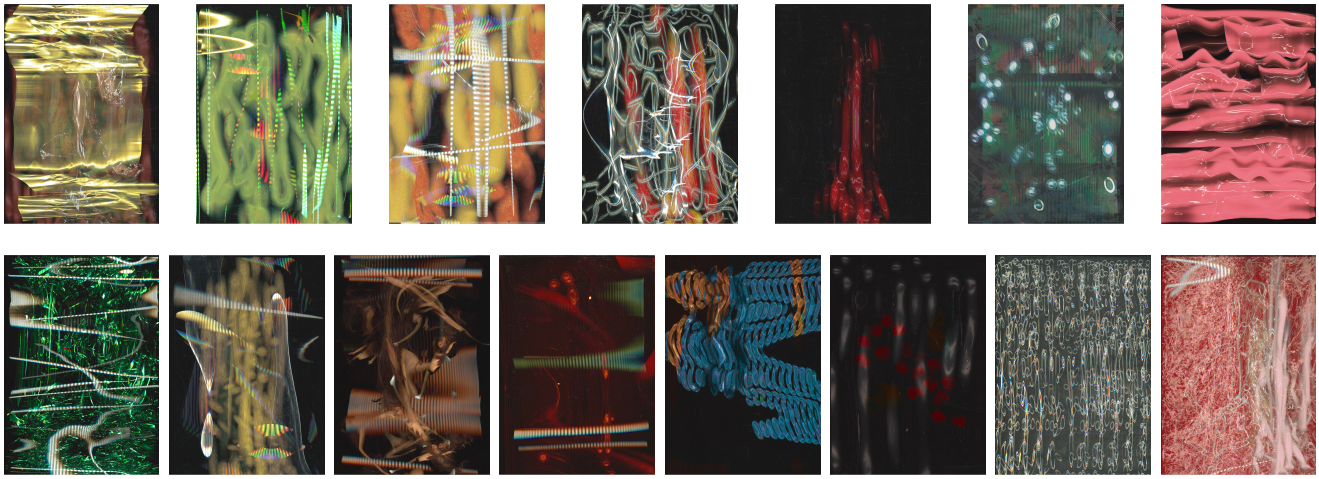


Fig.1 Collages and Drifting tests, Artist's photograph

Keywords: image denoising, low-level vision, additive Gaussian white noise, image priorism

3. The digital experience and communication

In Windows and Mirrors: interaction design, digital art and the myth of transparency, Jay David Bolt and Diane Gromara argue that the computer is not like a toaster or a hoover; it is more like a

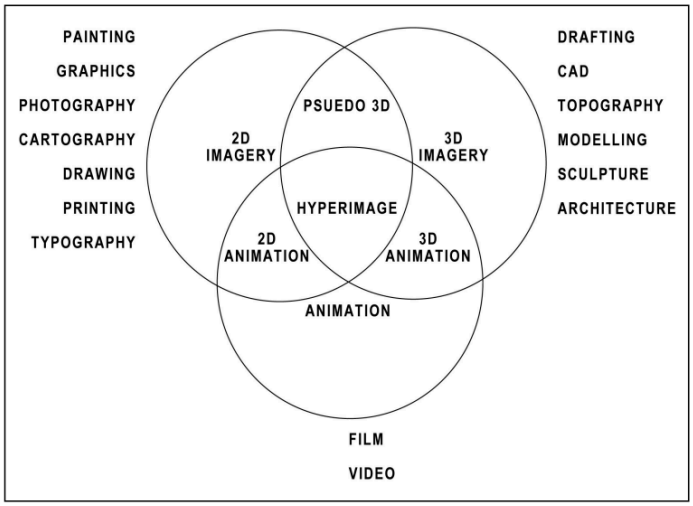


Fig.5 Hyperimage and antesedents

medium that is replacing other media such as print, film, radio and television. With computers as a medium for creating new forms and genres for artists and designers, what can digital art offer in terms of the cultural impact of the digital revolution? The city of the future will be overcrowded with visible ‘empirical content’ on the one hand, and a latent, invisible digital order that calculates and controls everything on the other. The subject is caught between the two poles, with no place to belong and no place to go. It is certainly possible to make a Deleuzian understanding of the ambiguous zone situated between these two poles as a creative process of death and rebirth, a meeting of the living and the dead, but it is also worthwhile to see it in Zizek's sense as an extreme, radical negation and rupture.

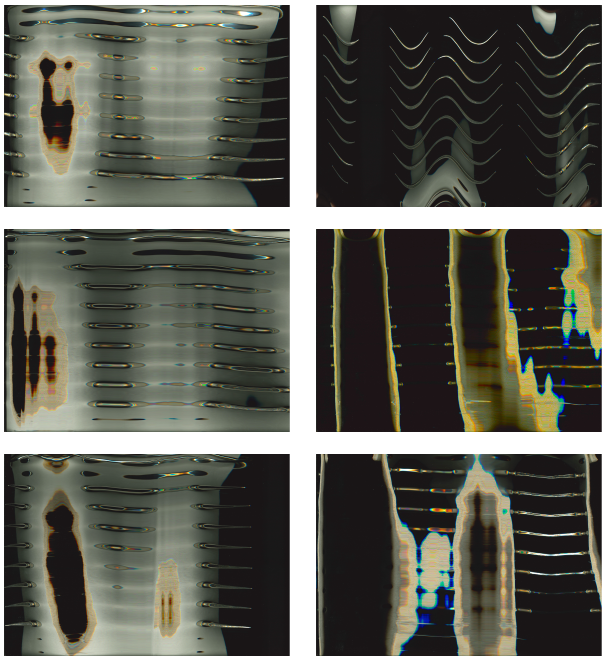


Fig.2 Drifting tests(Original version), Artist's photograph

As a result, digital technologies are at the forefront of my practice, employed in constructing threshold ecosystems through physical production. I make on-site interventions within and beyond the digital realm, transforming spaces into alternative narratives or situations. These works form non-linear narratives determined by the pre-existing landscape symbols and contextual properties of each space. Seventy-five percent of human information comes from the visual system, specifically images. In the case of digital images, the blurring, motion, noise, and other factors in the process of image acquisition make the image lose some of its information, affecting the quality of the image initially obtained. If our selves and our perception of reality are rooted in the encounter with the images we reflect, the boundaries between the real self and the

idealised self (the self we design and curate in the digital realm) become blurred when the 'I' is no longer a literal reflection in a mirror, but a representation on a screen.

Even though the invisible digital space is always lurking behind the visible physical space, this does not mean that human beings thereby lose their corporeal contact with it. On the contrary, in an increasingly virtualised, networked, and digitised urban space, a different kind of embodied relationship is being formed between the human body and the digital space; secondly, the digital can also be 'touched', only that it is a touch that is increasingly being fully mediated and mediatised. In the past, we could see the landscape with our eyes open and reach out to touch objects, but today, all our perceptions can only be realised and carried out through the screen, the network, and the digital.

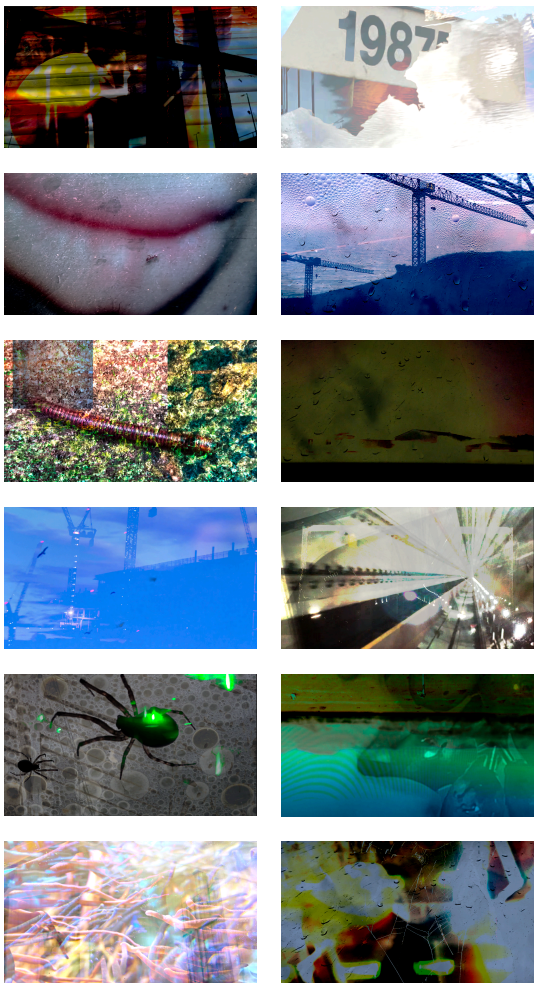


Fig.3 新家园，热土 (New Homeland, Wonderland), 2024.7, Artist's work

Husserl puts it this way in Idea I, § 27: I am conscious of the world endlessly spread out in space, endlessly becoming in time. I am conscious of it: that signifies, above all, that intuitively I am conscious of it. above all, that intuitively I find it immediately, that I experience it.

4. Juxtaposing images of present and past

I have been influenced by the work of Peter Gidal, known for his structural films. This form of experimental cinema focuses on non-linear temporal structures, minimalist visual elements, and repetitive, anamorphic image manipulation. By avoiding traditional plot development and characterisation, structural films emphasize the formal construction of cinematic language. They explore how image, sound, time, and space interact to create meaning, challenging conventional cinematic expectations.

In my work, video clips act as digital polyps within my consciousness, rendering the presence and characteristics of real people irrelevant or even nonexistent. The collage of fragmented moving images re-simulates the real world, employing floating, liquid, and dust-like distorted image captures. These unrelated real-world images merge to create a playful interplay of imagination, akin to wordplay. The film transforms into a non-chordal personal aftershock, a hallucinogenic experience shaped by subjective consciousness. Time is temporarily erased, and memories and the unknown are fictionalized and simulated through the moving images of the present.

Heraclitus believed the cosmos ‘no god nor man did create, but it ever was and is and will be: ever-living fire’.

Fig.4 Artist's notes

5. Summary and Reflection

Throughout the three phases of my practice, I have felt that my understanding of art-making has improved significantly, in line with my own anticipated programme of study. I have shifted from creating images that subjectify the human figure to de-anthropocentric narratives of object images. I transformed these collected images into symbolic tools. Image reconstruction and image analysis are my main orientations in the latter two phases. For me, creating art is a slow and long process. It all starts outside in the street, where I look for large objects usually found on the road, such as water droplets, wind, metal plates, or reflections, which arrive at my scanning workbench with traces and inscriptions of other times and uses, thus becoming rich in graphics and content, and subsequently spiritually grounded interventions. My visual and video work is often in a grey area between reality and illusion. I try to create a

complex and at the same time sensual visual language, with unstable backgrounds, letters on advertising light boxes, flowing breathing natural objects contrasted with artificial light from man-made structures. I also used different devices to transcribe the images several times, or the effect of using mechanical transcription of the verbal text. This is also a collage and excessive noise in sound and image.

Throughout the three phases of my practice, my understanding of art-making has evolved significantly, aligning with my anticipated program of study. I have shifted from creating images that focus on the human figure to developing de-anthropocentric narratives centered on object images. I now transform these collected images into symbolic tools, with image reconstruction and analysis becoming central to my approach in the latter two phases.

For me, creating art is a slow and deliberate process. It begins outside, in the streets, where I gather large objects typically found in public spaces—such as water droplets, wind patterns, metal plates, or reflections. These elements, with their traces and inscriptions from different times and uses, arrive at my scanning workbench rich in graphic and content potential, setting the stage for spiritually grounded interventions.

My visual and video work often navigates the grey area between reality and illusion. I strive to create a complex and sensual visual language by combining unstable backgrounds, letters from advertising light boxes, and natural elements interacting with artificial light from man-made structures. I also use various devices to repeatedly transcribe images or employ mechanical methods to transcribe verbal text. This process results in a collage of visual and auditory noise, amplifying the interplay between the real and the abstract.

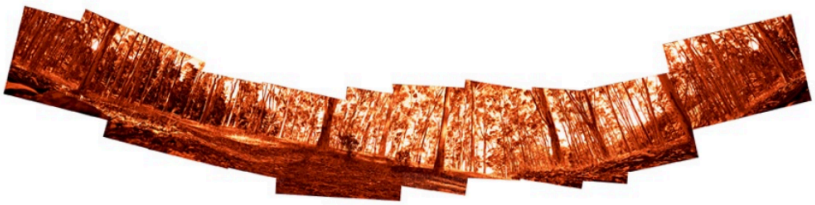
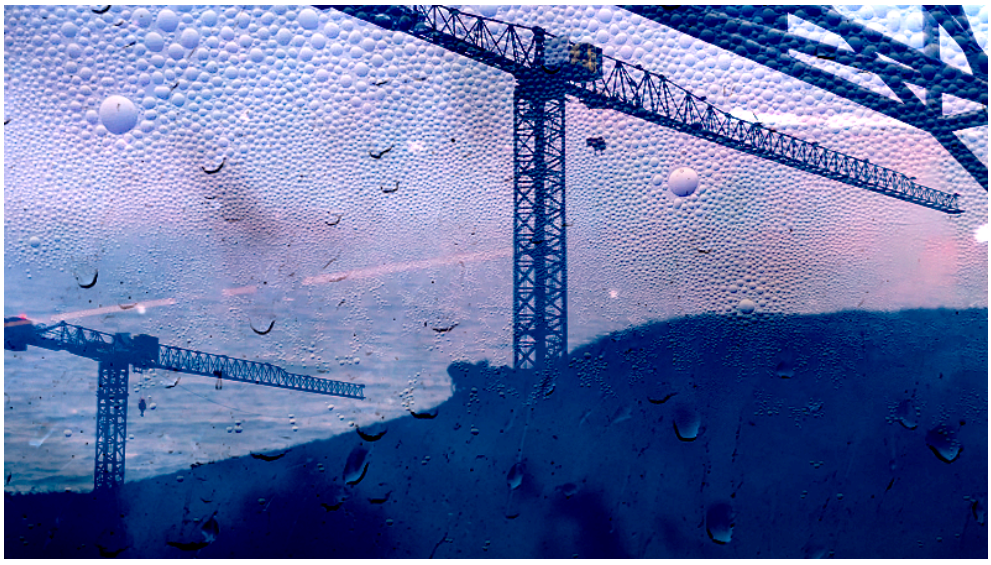
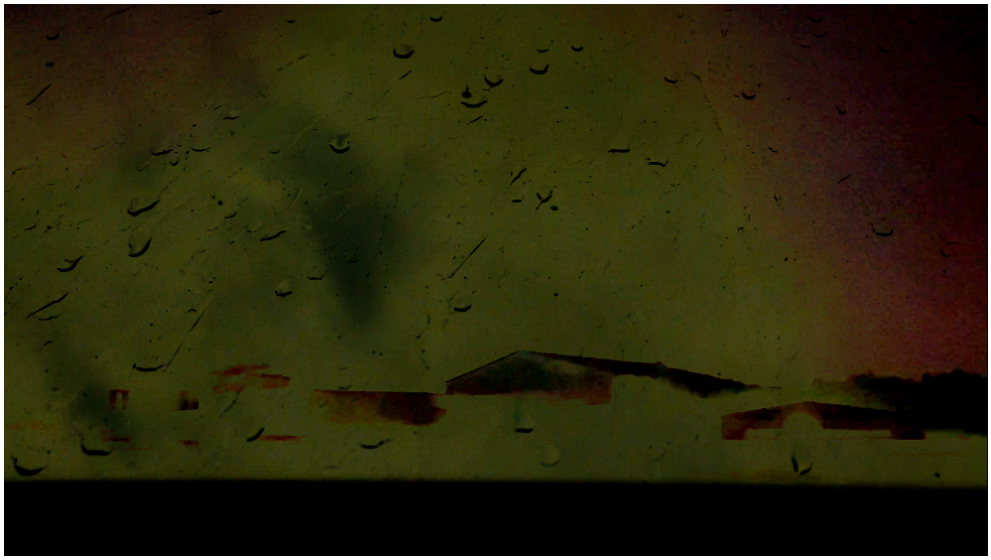


Fig.6 Tree Circumference 2. Digitally reworked from blace and white negatives taken in 1980. A. Holmes 2000





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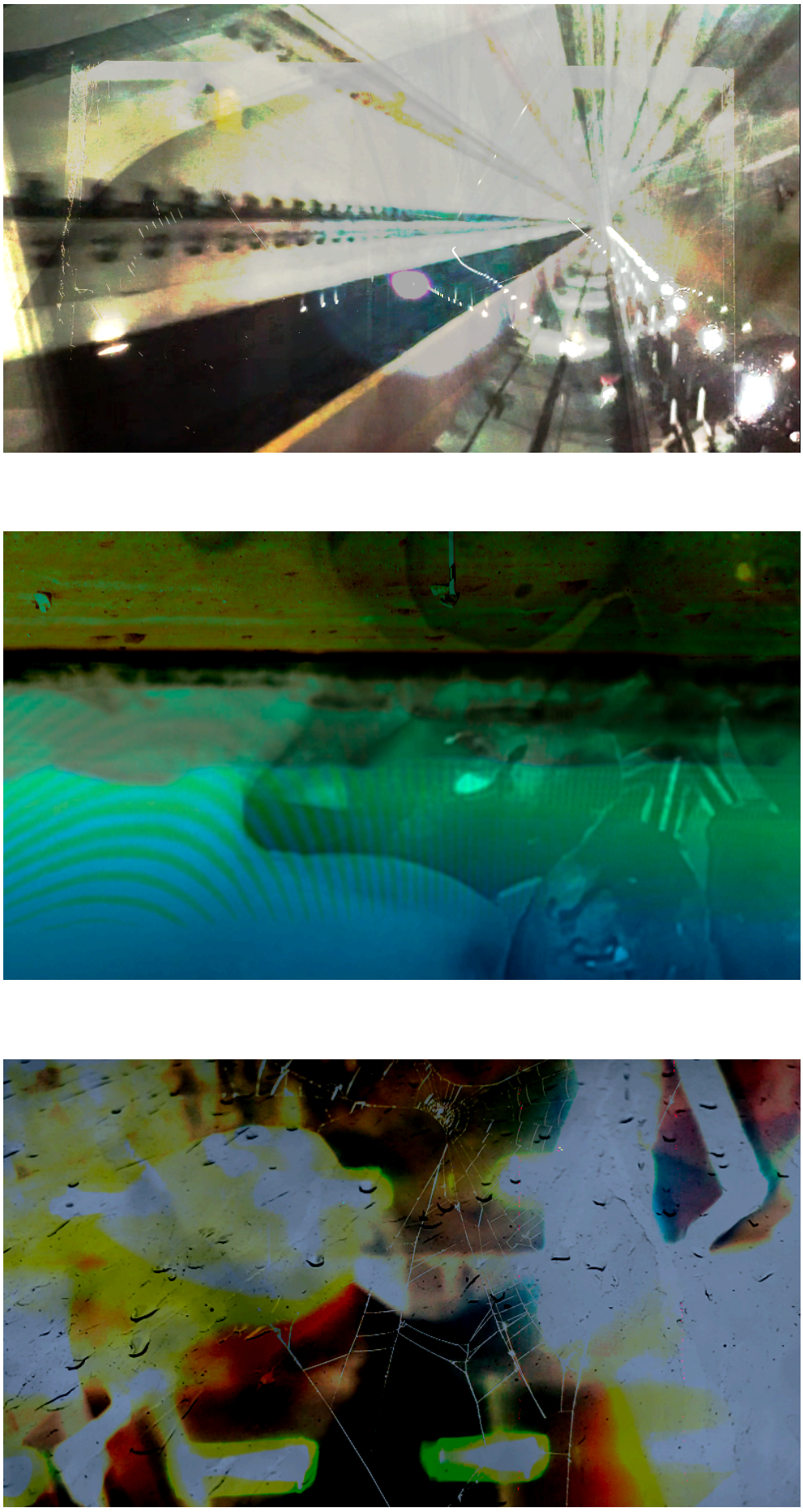

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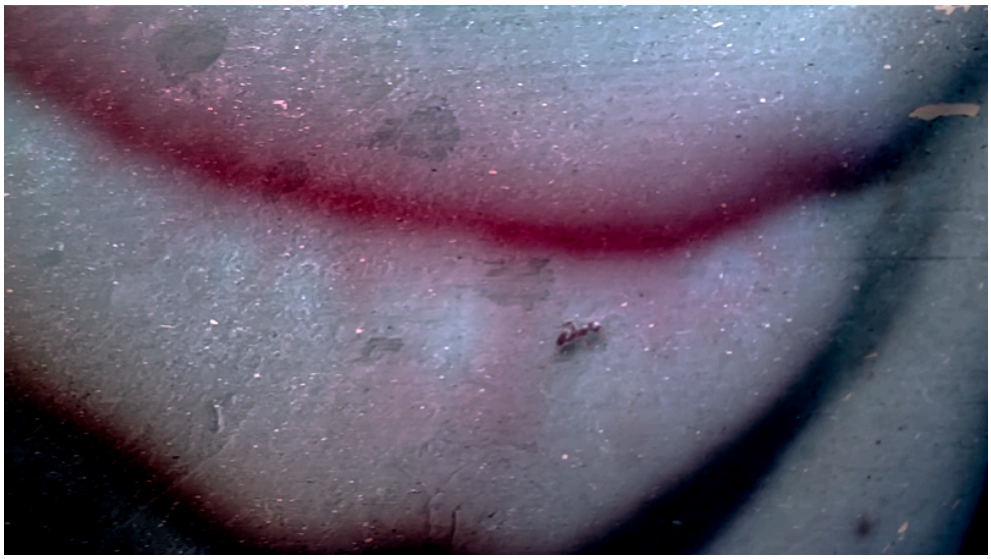

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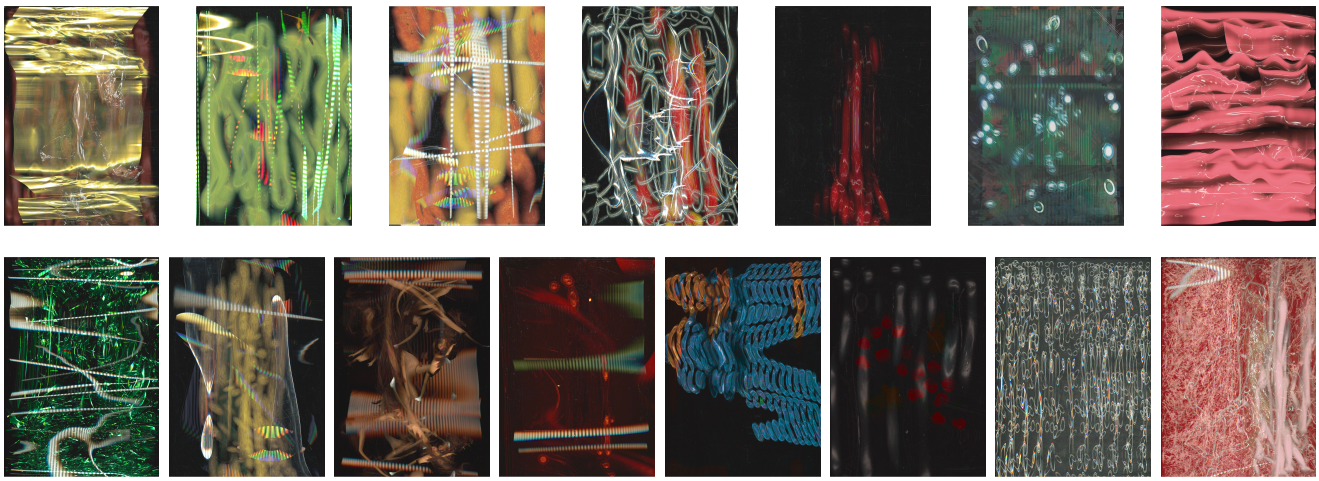

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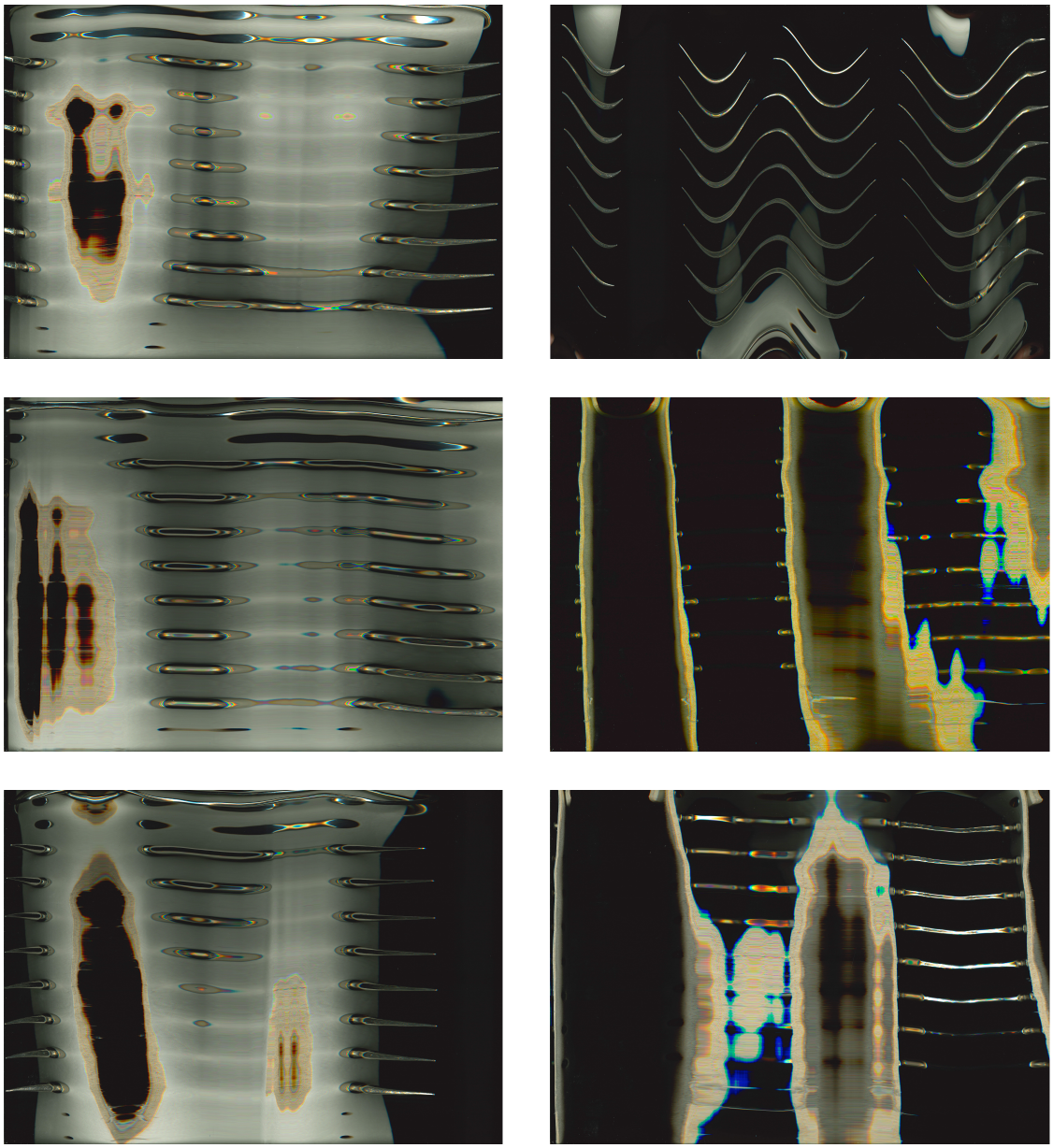

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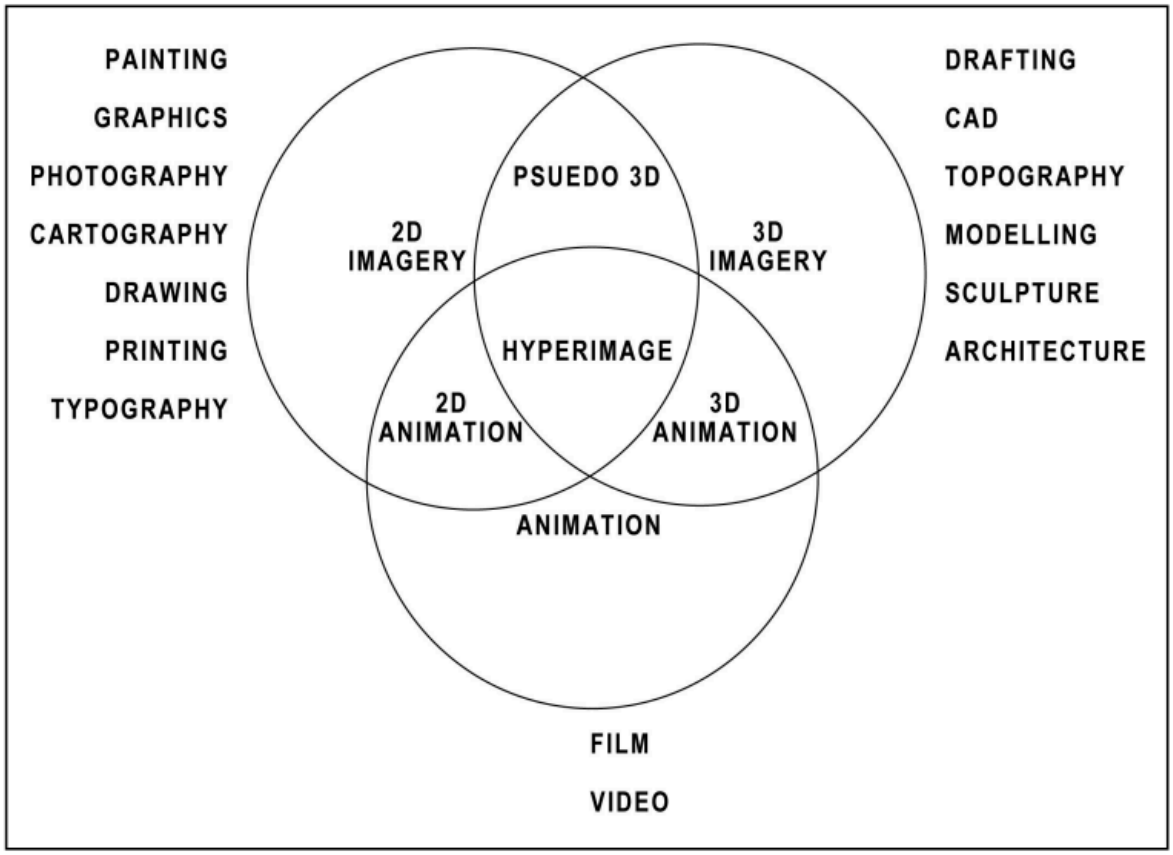

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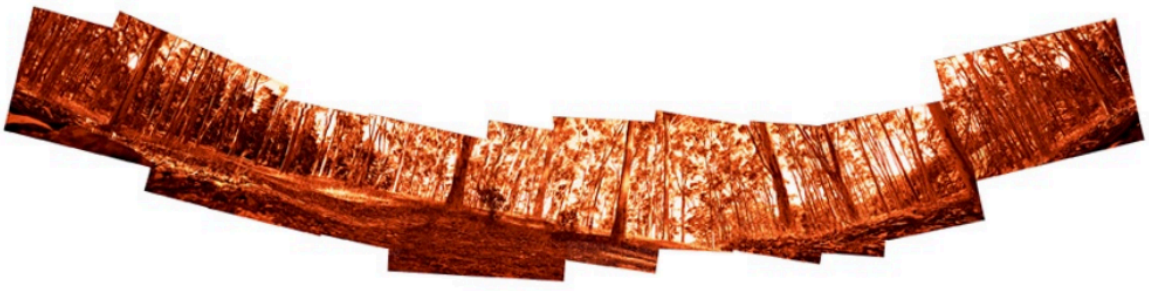

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