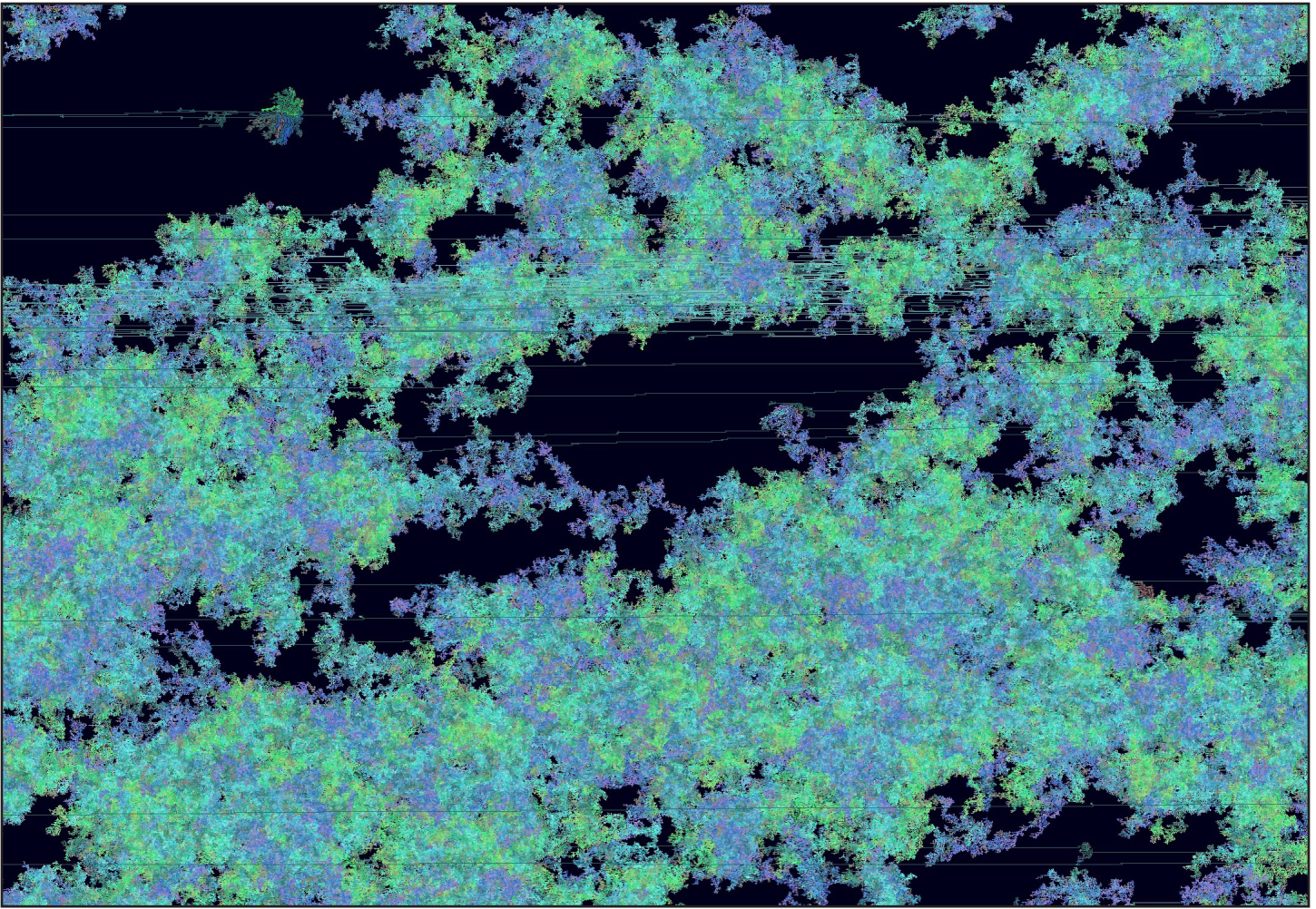


# **ENTER THE MACHINE**

A series of programatically generated Duratrans prints in handmade light boxes  
by Eric Corriel







*Enter the Machine 1.3 A.K.A. iTunes Compilations, A–E, detail*

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*Enter The Machine effectively turns hard drives inside out, putting their contents, in raw form, on display*

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Culturally speaking, it seems that we have two different conceptions of a digital file: 1) a combination of “0s and 1s,” whatever that means, and 2) an icon with a label, as portrayed on our desktop, or in Finder, or Windows Explorer. The driving question behind this project is: are there other ways of conceiving of the digital nature of our files and folders?

Imagine you could shrink yourself down, swim around your hard drive, and meet your files face to face—what would they look like? *Enter The Machine* aims to provide a new way of seeing our digital files, one that does justice to their uniqueness, the diversity of the data they contain, and the complexity by which they are structured.



**PRESS**



Rendering the Anatomy of Our Hard Drives

hyperallergic.com/273644/rendering-the-anatomy-of-our-hard-drives/

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Rendering the Anatomy of Our Hard Drives

Claire Voon

February 8, 2016

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Eric Corriel, "Enter the Machine 1.4 A.K.A. My Dropbox" (2015) (all images courtesy the artist unless otherwise noted)

For many of us, although a decent chunk of our digital lives exists on our hard drives, it's easy to not give the unremarkable metal boxes that quietly sit on our desks or shelves much thought. Artist and programmer Eric Corriel has been contemplating the architecture and innards of these machines and has imagined what their small spaces would look like if one could shrink and enter their casings, making visible the data hidden in those protective metal shells. In his solo exhibition *Enter the Machine* at Garis & Hahn, Corriel visualizes the various contents of his hard drive by expanding what condenses our data into the palms of our hands, constructing a physical experience of an electronic world that translates coded data into vivid works.

Situated in the gallery's basement level, *Enter the Machine* is meant to completely immerse visitors — keeping in line with the types of large-scale, transformative environments Corriel often creates. At the center of the dark room, a hard drive rests on a pedestal, with a network of wires radiating from its base towards the four walls. Each tape-sheathed wire connects to nine light boxes that show a stream of colors against a black background, representing certain files on his personal hard drive. A looping soundscape of glitchy beeps and droning tones, composed by Krista Dragomer, fills the room.

Although titled "Digital Matter," it sounds at times like human matter — specifically, the pulsing of a human heart. Similarly, each lightbox blinks slowly, its screen dimming and illuminating to introduce subtle but palpable shifts in the enclosed environment. The overall effect is oddly organic for a world inspired by the anatomy of technology: descending the gallery stairs feels like entering a womb-like space with sounds and movements reminiscent of our own bodily functions.

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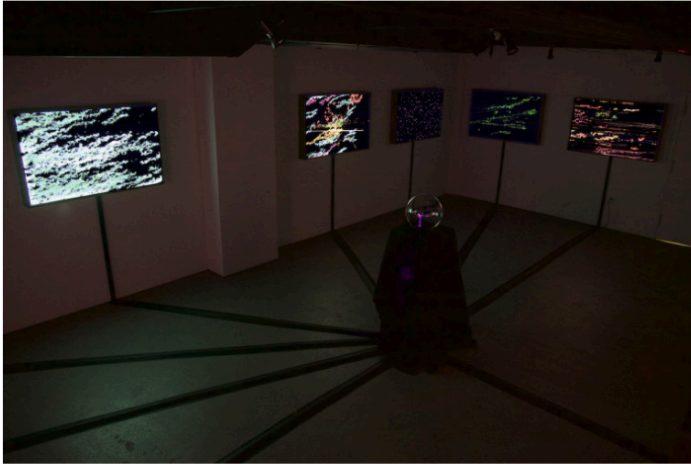
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Installation view of 'Enter the Machine' at Garis & Hahn



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Heightening the expressive setting, the lightboxes, with their colors corresponding to files such as Corriel's iTunes compilations, downloads, and all his passwords, somewhat resemble scenes from our natural world. From afar, they seem like maps of fantasyscapes, coral branches, or patches of fluorescent flowers — the visualization of his passwords, in particular, resembles a field of purple poppies. Upon closer observation, they can also suggest a curious organism pinned under a microscope.

To create these works, Corriel produced an algorithm that crawled through his hard drive and extracted the data, translating the code of files into pixels colored according to his own arbitrary assignments. Orange, for instance, represents PNGs; green stands for text files. The stream of data forms usually elongated shapes that seem to splatter or blossom across the screen. The nine works are like abstract portraits of Corriel's digital life, compositions that literally illuminate some of his computer habits and online behaviors, from the types of files that he tends to allow dominate his desktop (screenshots and PNGs) to how much email he stores in a three-month span. They are really quite beautiful and mesmerizing, drawing in the eye to roam across each little island of splotches.

Corriel's algorithm, of course, is entirely subjective. Like a painter, sculptor, or artist working in a more conventional medium, he went through various versions of an algorithm, editing lines of code until he attained a result he liked. Yet, while we're offered a voyeuristic view of Corriel's own data through his particular aesthetic, the lightboxes lead you to consider your own relationship to the computer, namely just how much of our lives are now digital. *Enter the Machine* introduces an unexpected view of something that has become a fundamental part of our lives. A machine brings to mind an assemblage of mechanisms, a utilitarian object that follows a set of instructions; stepping into the basement, we are not confronted by streams of zeroes and ones but colorful and painterly works. Standing in the gallery, you feel less compelled to read and decipher the images with your eyes but rather appreciate them as an intuitive and emotional manifestation of our personal lives and information — they render the data of our work, correspondence, and play into blooming fields that almost take on a life of their own.

Computer Data Grows Like Vines in 'Enter the Machine'

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Computer Data Grows Like Vines in 'Enter the Machine'

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Images courtesy the artist

What if one could shrink to see the guts, the innards of a computer hard drive or the data stored on mobile devices or on social media accounts—not as endless strings of code, but as physical manifestations? Artist and programmer [Eric Corriel](#) imagines what this might be like in his latest exhibition at [Garis & Hahn](#), *Enter the Machine*. Corriel imagines himself a photographer of this microscopic landscape. With custom C++ software, he creates nine styrene-printed works displayed in synchronized, pulsating light boxes.

In *Enter the Machine 1.0 AKA My Desktop*, Corriel renders his digital data as a multicolored abstraction, remaking the inorganic data as organic forms like neurons, novas, flora, and so on. These and the eight other works in *Enter the Machine* make the flat data into painterly and even sculptural forms.

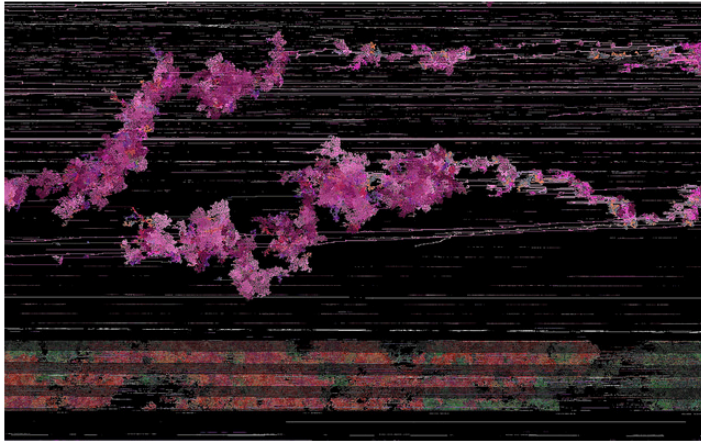
Enter the Machine 1.0 A.K.A. My Desktop

"As a programmer I've always had a sneaking suspicion that the digital diversity of our files and folders is kept completely hidden from us by our operating systems—kind of like an overprotective parent bundling up their child for a snowy day," Corriel tells The Creators Project. "Most of us think of digital files as we see them on our desktop, or in Finder, or Windows Explorer as a simple icon with a label. But I always thought this conception didn't do justice to the digital diversity contained therein. So I set out to



explore how to bring the idiosyncratic nature of our files to light.”

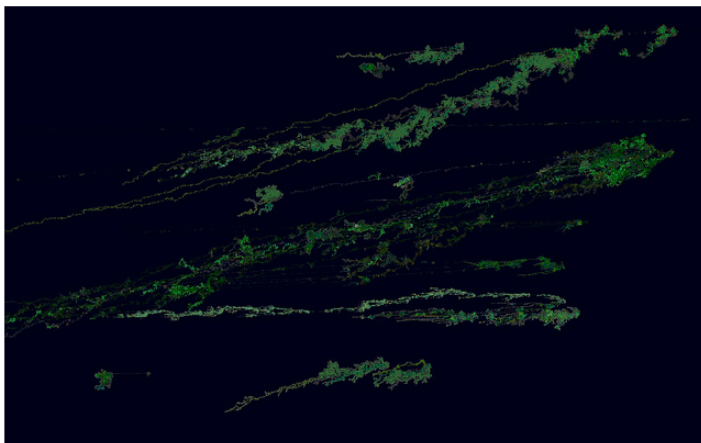
Corriel quickly discovered that each file, as lame as he says it sounds, is its own “special snowflake,” because each contains numerous bits of data in a very specific order. The process of “unearthing” each file’s inherent uniqueness and then rendering it visible required the creation of several custom algorithms. Corriel wrote all of these algorithms in C++ with OpenFrameworks.



*Enter the Machine 1.7 A.K.A. Work I Did for the School of Visual Arts in 2015 (detail)*

“I targeted nine different stops along my hard drive to put on display: my desktop, downloads folder, dropbox, email folder, work I did for the School of Visual Arts,” he says. “At each stop, the software I wrote crawled my hard drive and created a ‘file portrait’ of each and every file. Once I created a file portrait for every single file (which in most cases amounted to thousands of individual ‘portraits’), I then wrote another script in Javascript to place each individual portrait into a Photoshop document, which then became the final print.”

Each print is thus something of a “group portrait” of all files in a particular order. The print of Corriel’s Dropbox folder, for example, contains over 5,000 files totaling 2.3GB of data, which he says took roughly 350 computer hours to produce.



*Enter the Machine 1.6 A.K.A. Mac OS X 10.10 (excerpt)*

“Each print is housed in a handmade light box made by Chris Miano and controlled by a custom-built circuit powered by a Teensy microcontroller, which controls the rate at which the light behind the print pulses,” Corriel says. “I can’t tell you how many people think these prints are either animated or being dynamically generated, but they’re completely static and it’s just the light that changes.”

At the exhibition, visitors will encounter the nine illuminated boxes, which are accompanied by a commissioned sound composition by Krista Dragomer called “Digital Matter.”

# THE LIGHT BOXES

Nine 48" x 30" programatically generated prints in handmade walnut light boxes



***Enter The Machine 1.0 A.K.A. My Desktop***

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***Enter the Machine 1.1 A.K.A. Downloads (stock photos, bank statements, open source code libraries, etc)***

---

***Enter the Machine 1.2 A.K.A. Three Months of Email***

---

***Enter the Machine 1.3 A.K.A. iTunes Compilations, A–E***

---

***Enter the Machine 1.4 A.K.A. My Dropbox***

---

***Enter the Machine 1.5 A.K.A. All My Passwords***

---

***Enter the Machine 1.6 A.K.A. Mac OS X 10.10 (excerpt)***

---

***Enter the Machine 1.7 A.K.A. Work I Did for the School of Visual Arts in 2015***

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***Enter the Machine 1.8 A.K.A. Websites I Created for Friends and Family, Namely [lustforart.com](http://lustforart.com), [mattcorriel.com](http://mattcorriel.com), [reidblackman.com](http://reidblackman.com), [seancorriel.com](http://seancorriel.com)***

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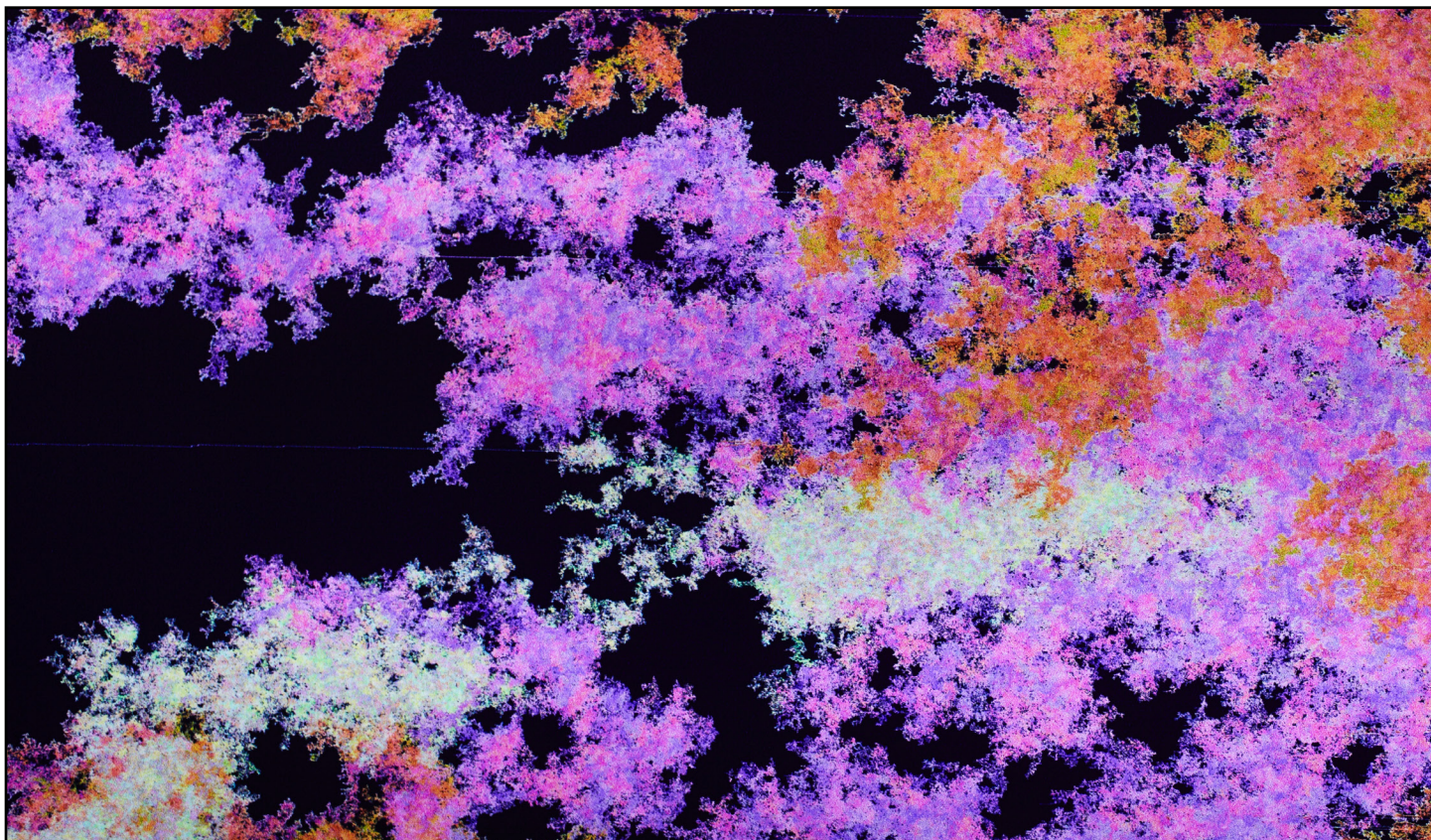
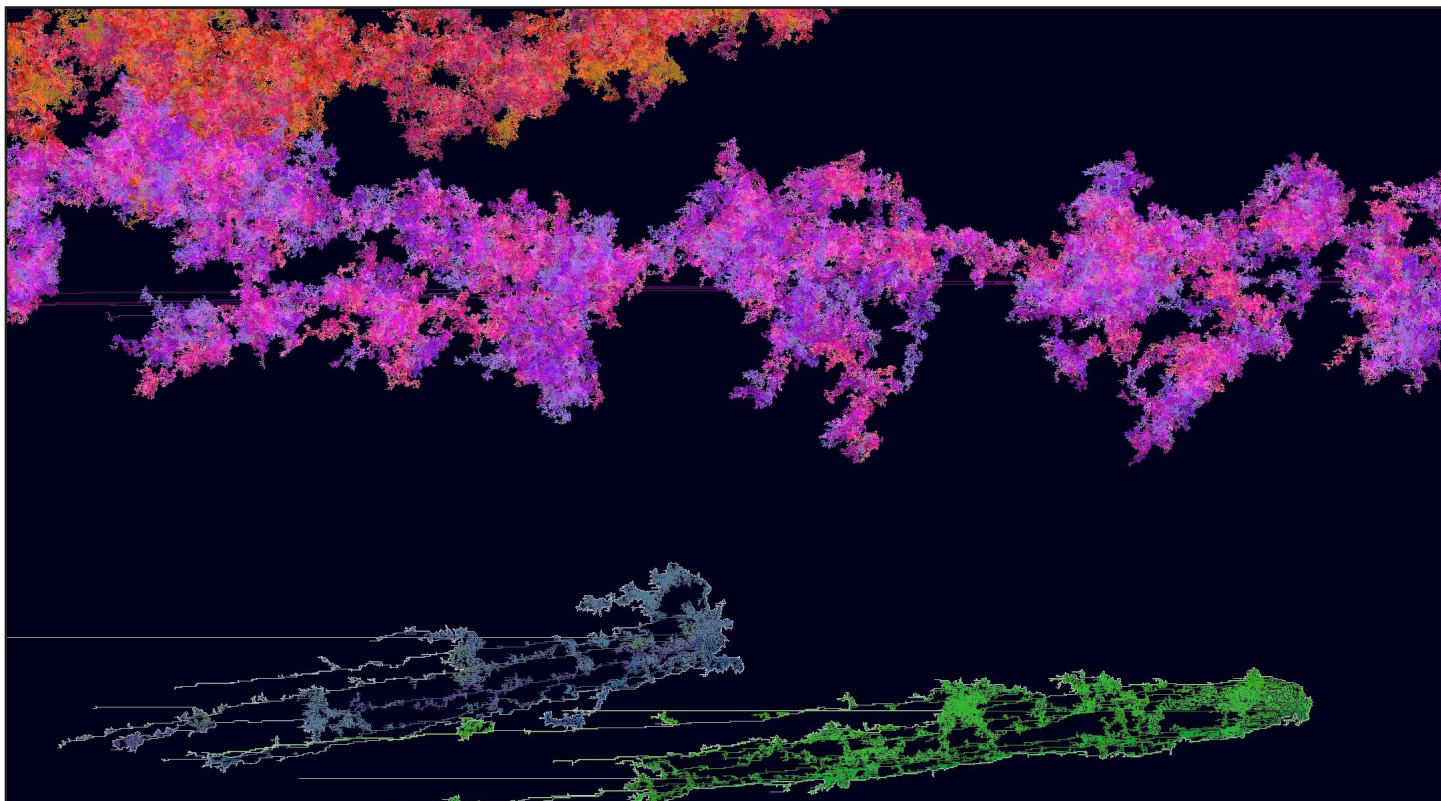


## ***Enter the Machine 1.0 A.K.A. My Desktop***

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Consists of 218 distinct files from taken from the artist's desktop totaling 1.4GB of data. The dataset contains mostly jpg and png files (orange/red), with occasional mov files (pink), zip files (white), and Microsoft Office files (green and blue).





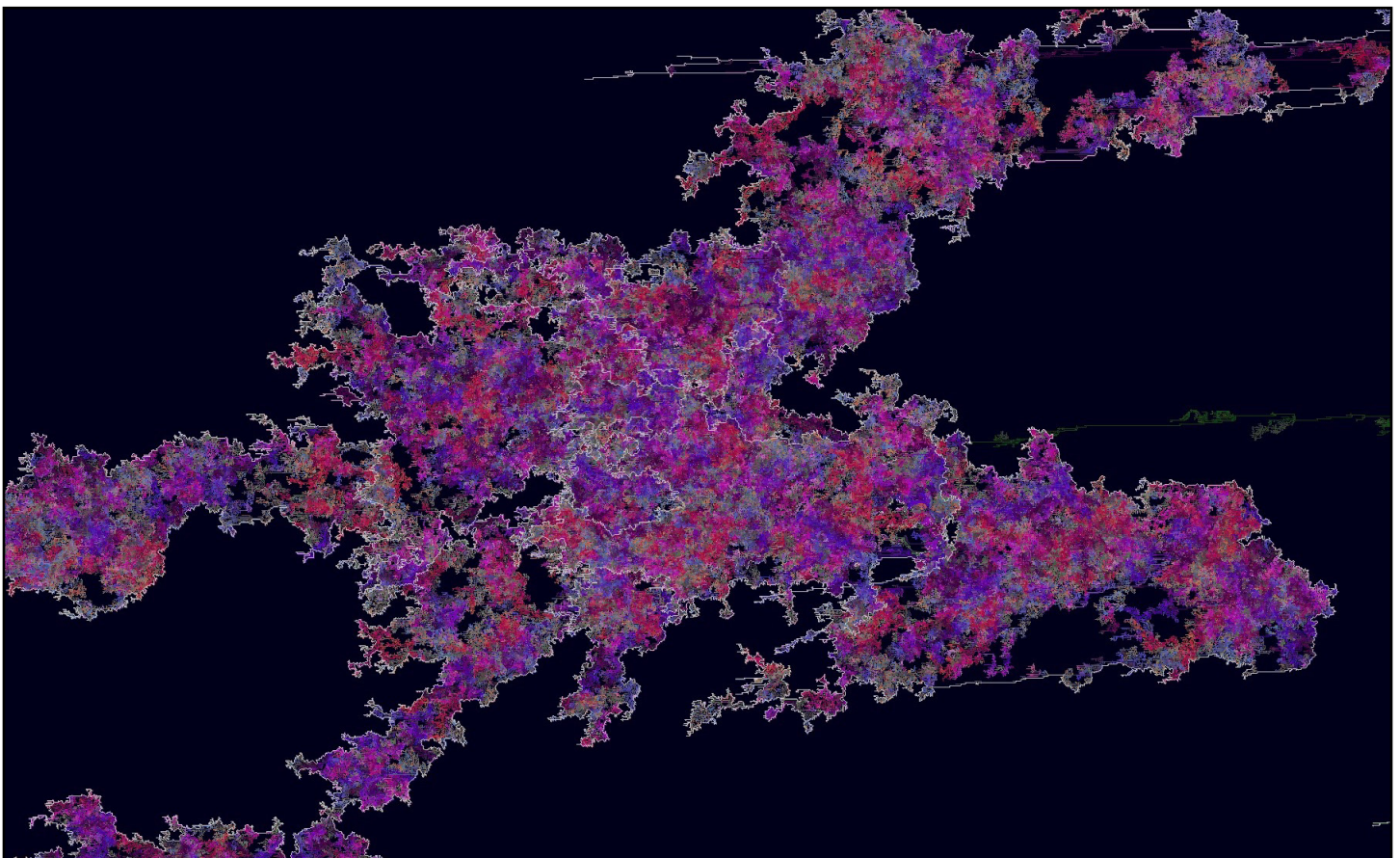
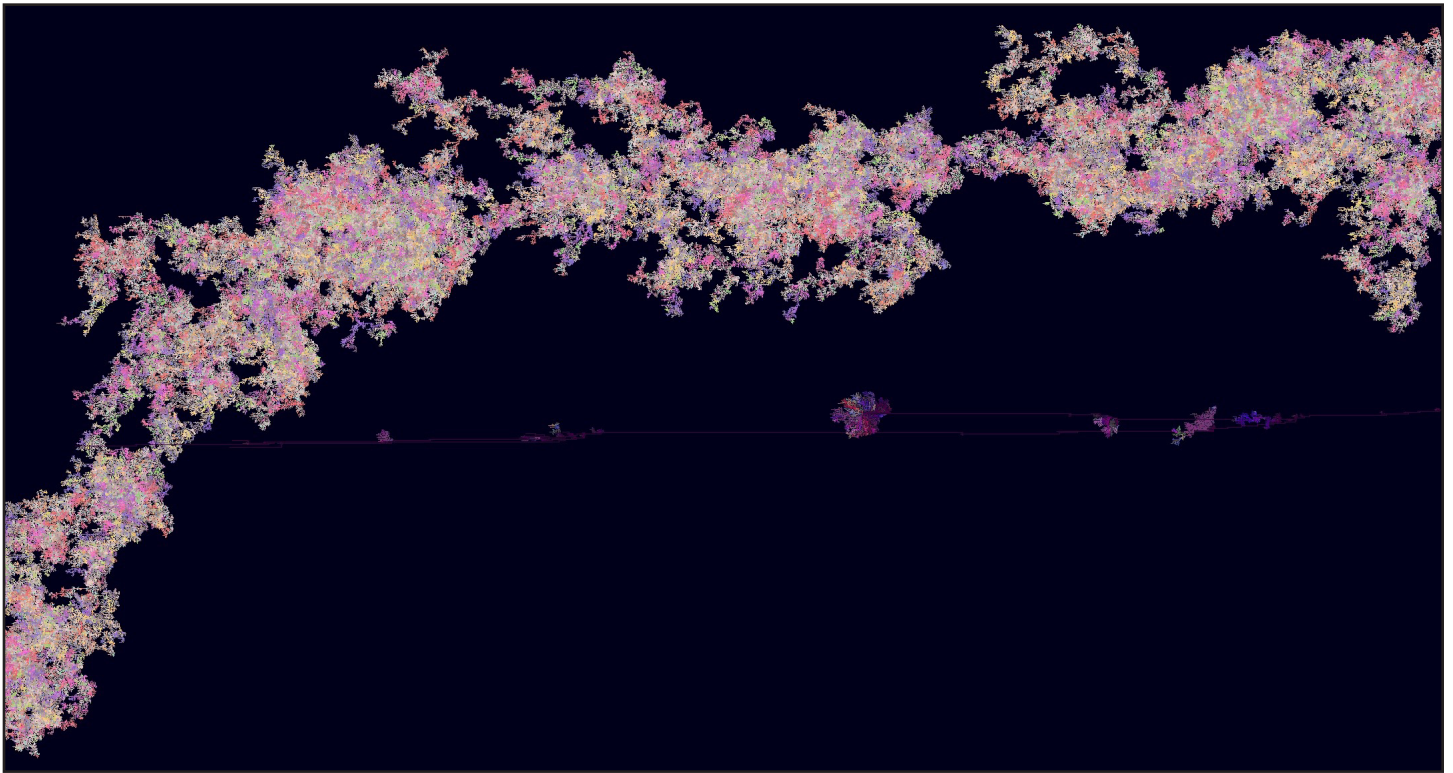




## ***Enter the Machine 1.1 A.K.A. Downloads (stock photos, bank statements, open source code libraries, etc)***

---

The artist's Downloads folder consists mostly of text files in the form of open source programming libraries and frameworks, such as OpenFrameworks, the framework in which he created these works. These coding libraries normally consist of thousands of small text files, which is what forms the very clustered center. Also in his downloads folder are pdfs, images, movies, and zip files.





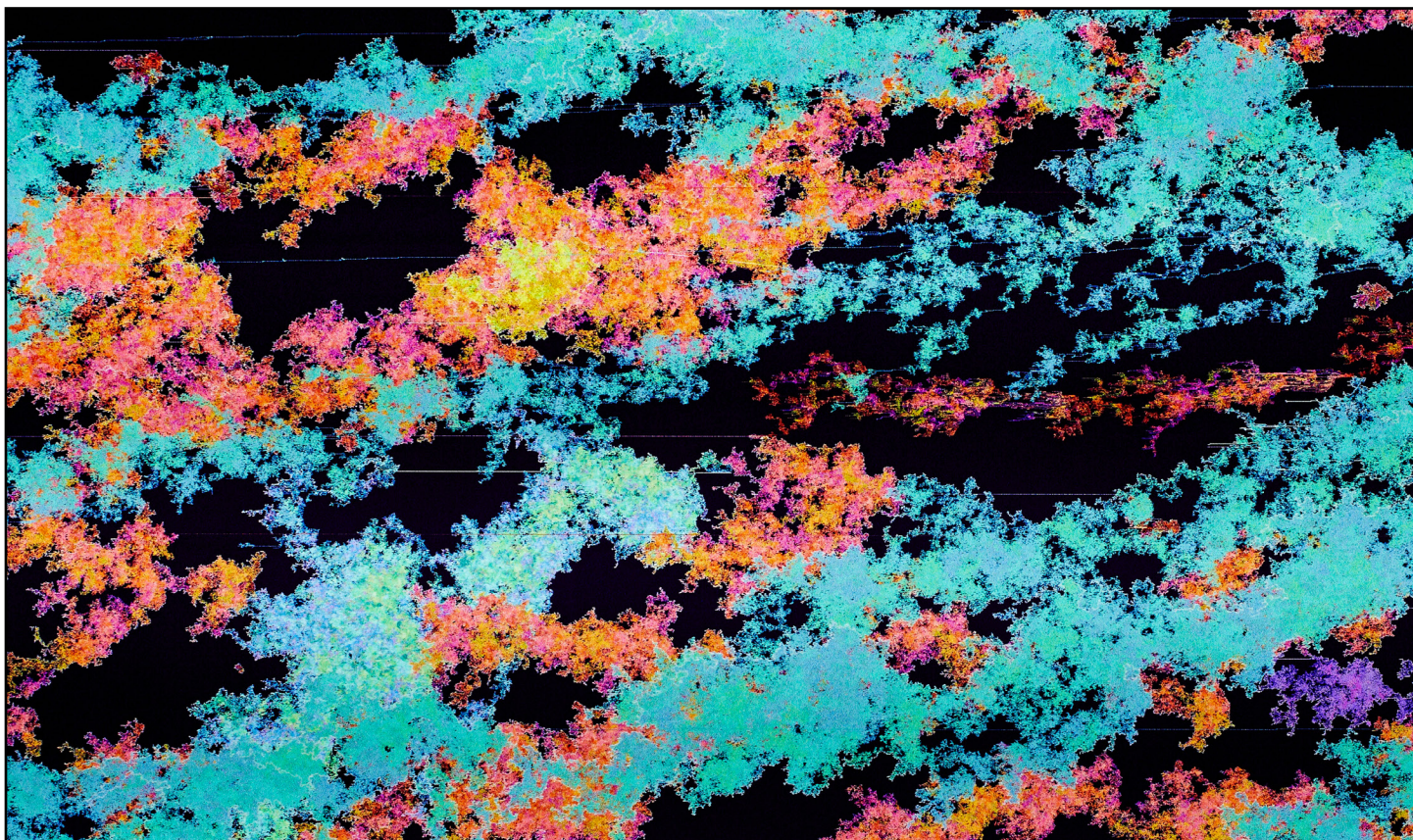
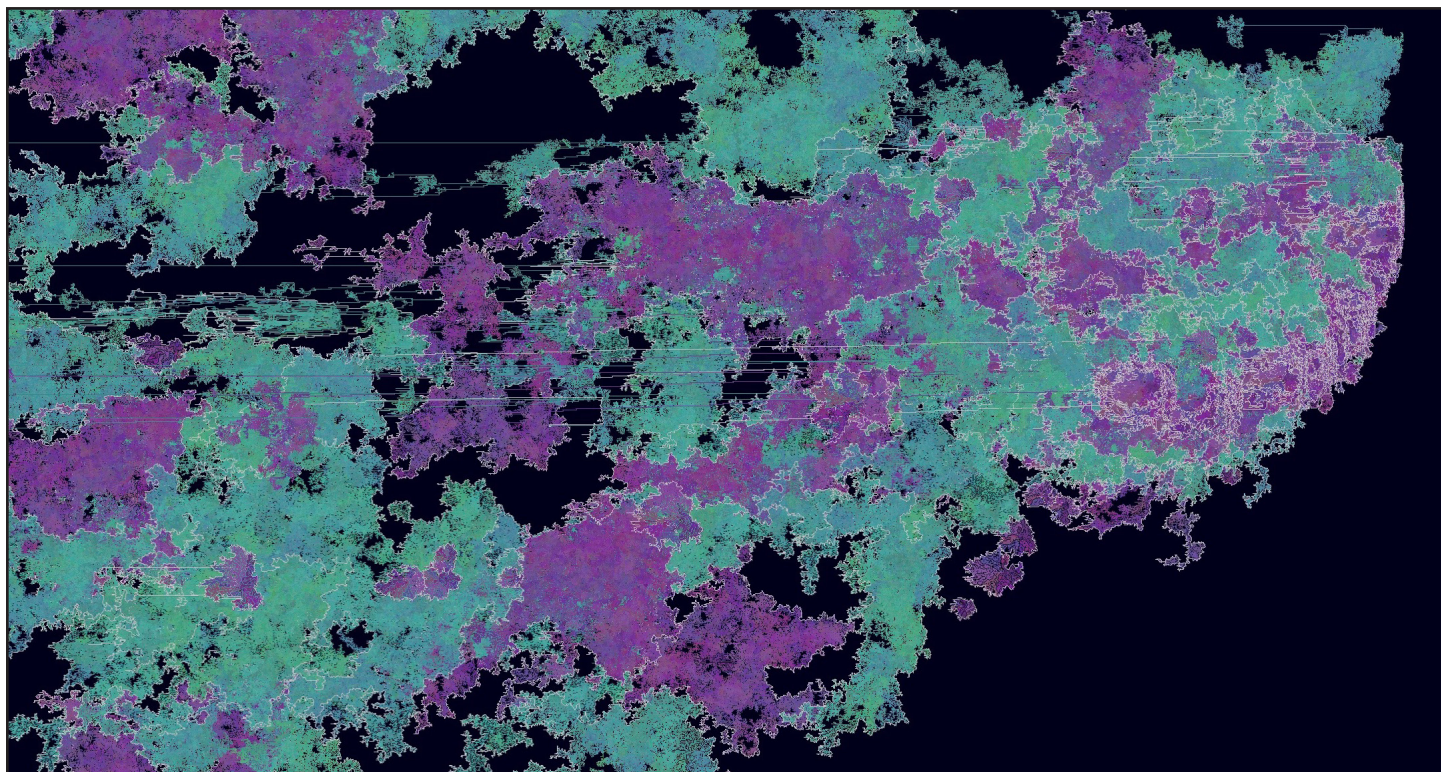


## ***Enter the Machine 1.2 A.K.A. Three Months of Email***

---

Shown here are 580 emails and their respective attachments, received between September 2014 and December 2014. The purple elements are the text component of each email while attachments are either represented in teal, orange for pdf files, and red for jpgs and pngs.







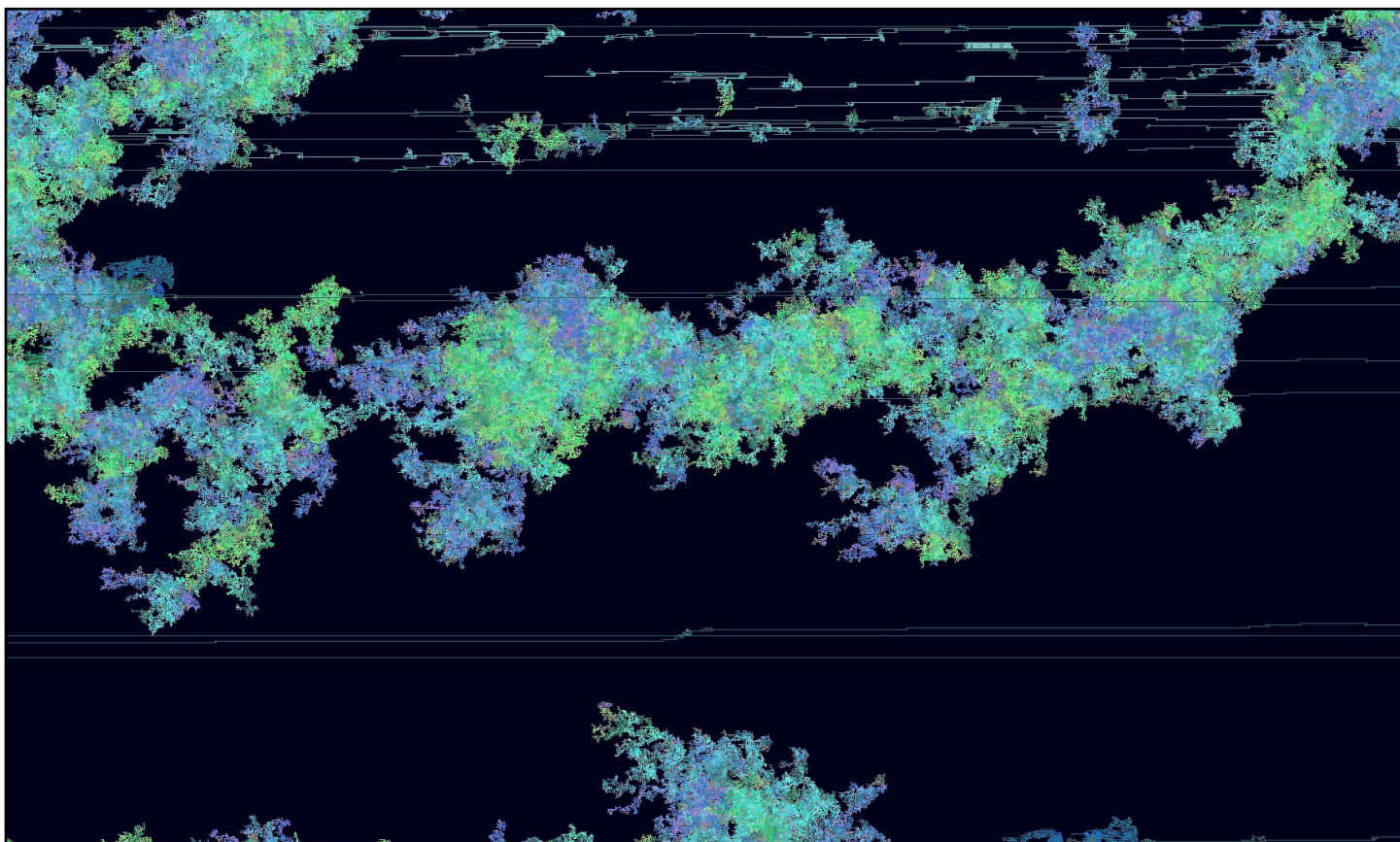
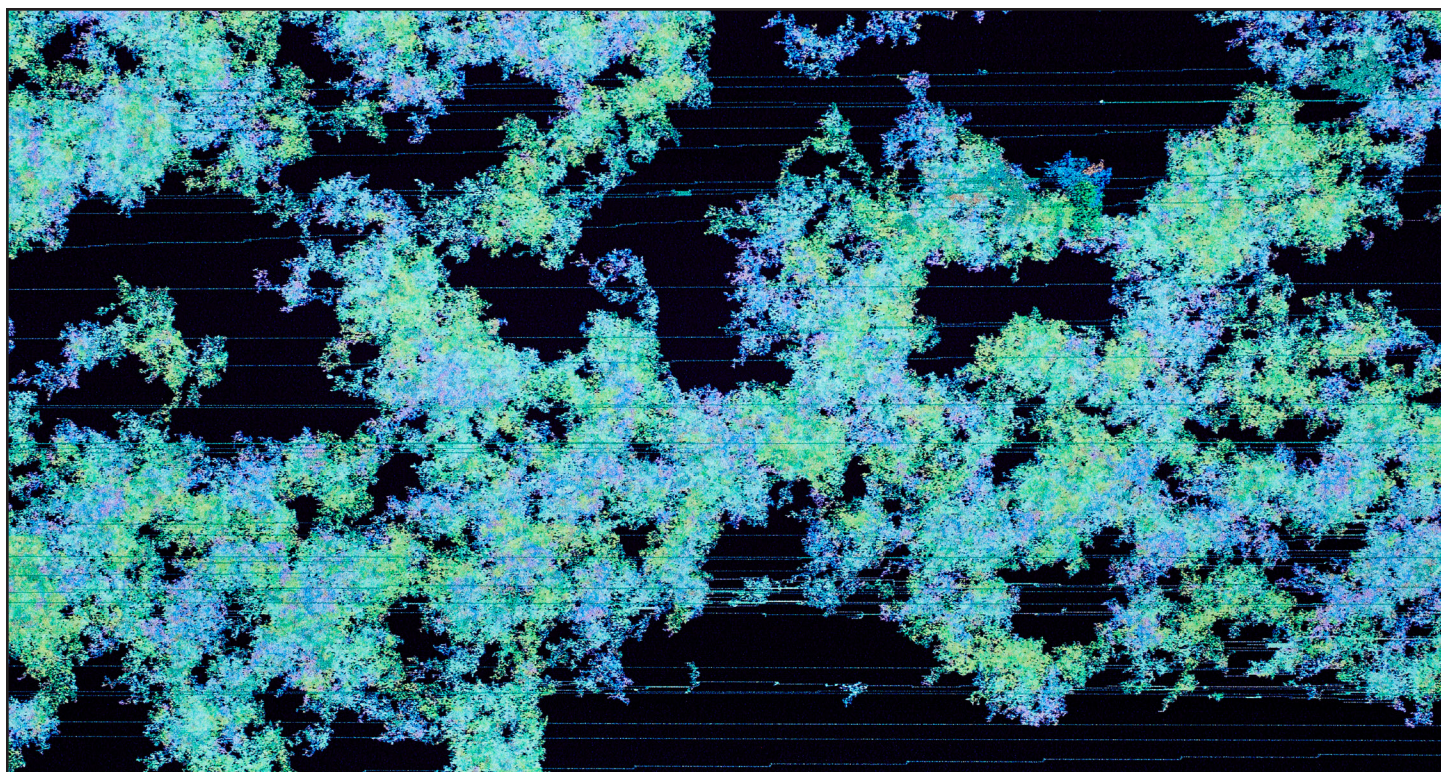


## ***Enter the Machine 1.3 A.K.A. iTunes Compilations, A–E***

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If you use iTunes, there's a good chance you have a Compilations folder. This is an excerpt from the artist's iTunes Compilations folder, artists A-E, which contains 547 mp3 files for a total of 2GB of music.







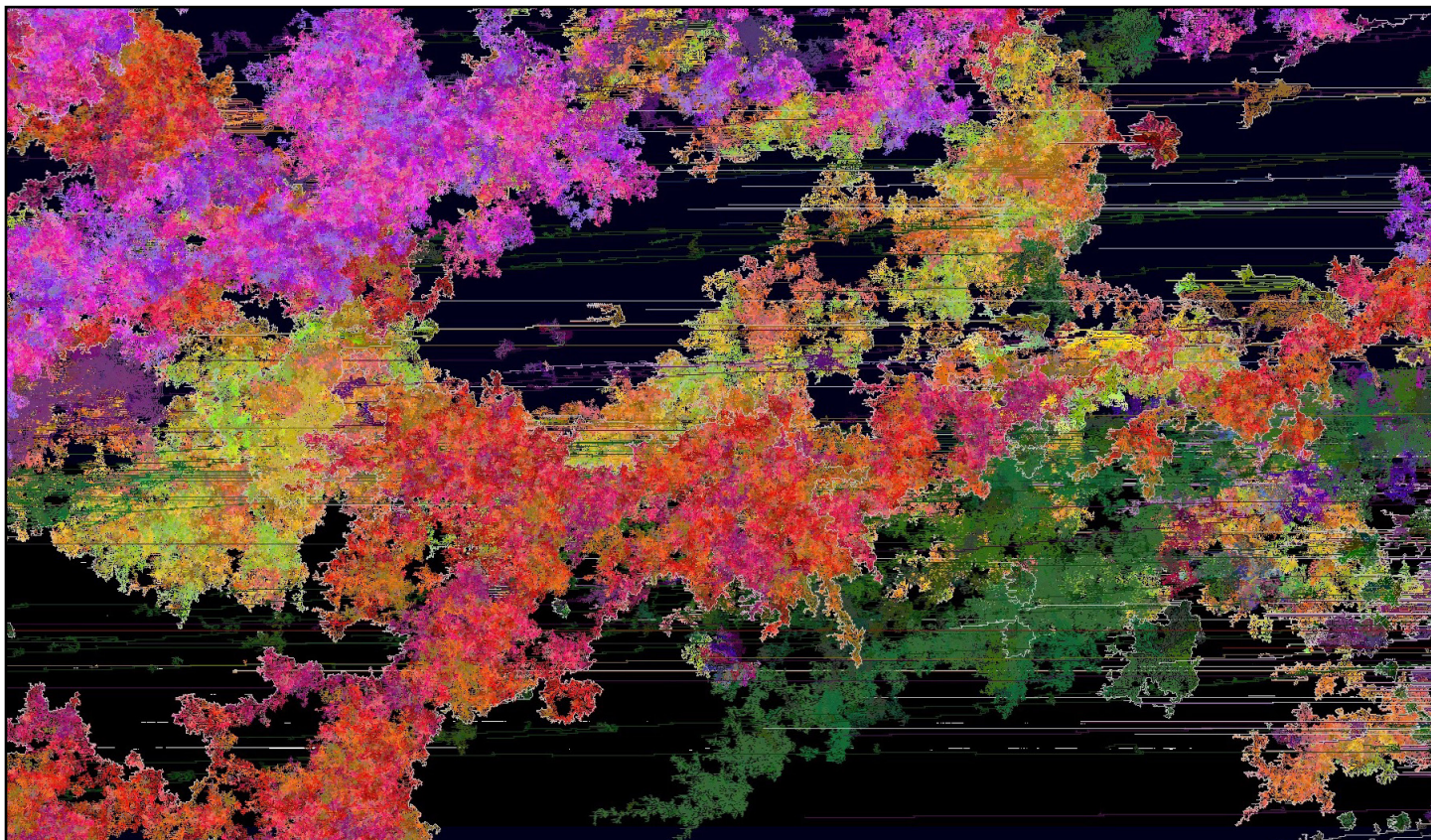
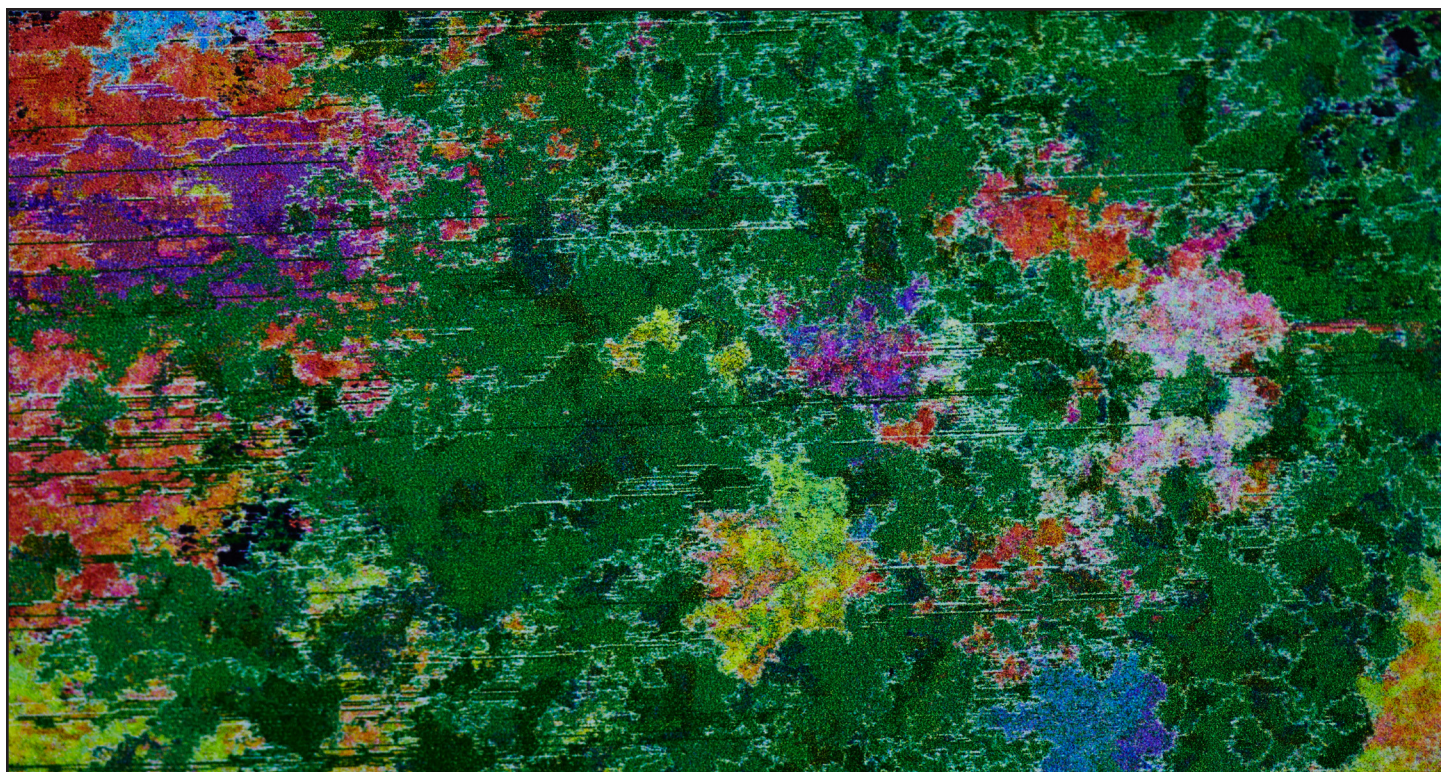


## ***Enter the Machine 1.4 A.K.A. My Dropbox***

---

A Dropbox folder is often the digital equivalent of a biologically diverse ecosystem, teeming with digital diversity. The artist's Dropbox folder contains 2.5GB of data spread over 7,152 different files in over 100 different file types.





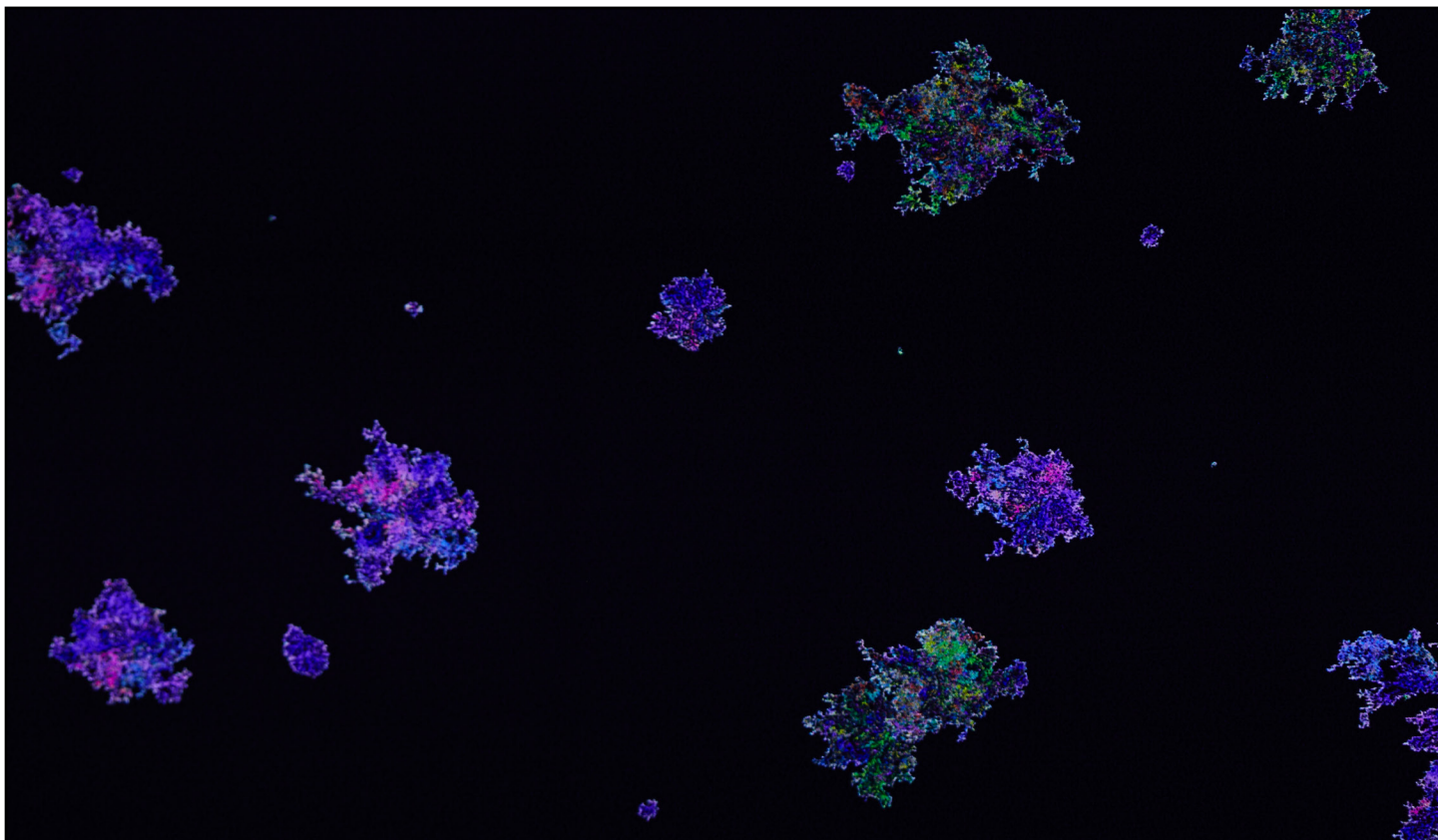
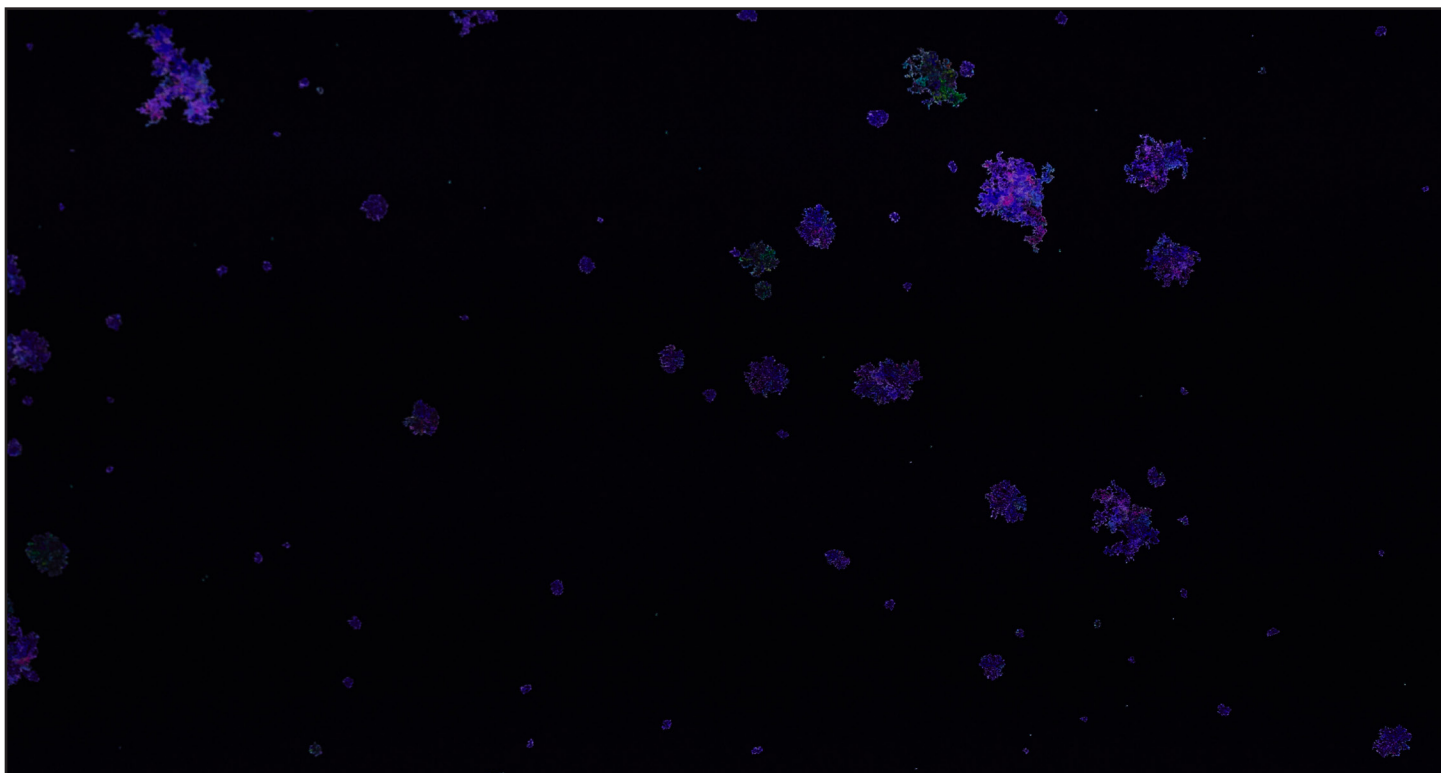




## ***Enter the Machine 1.5 A.K.A. All My Passwords***

---

All 710 of the artist's passwords are rendered here in plain sight for all to see.



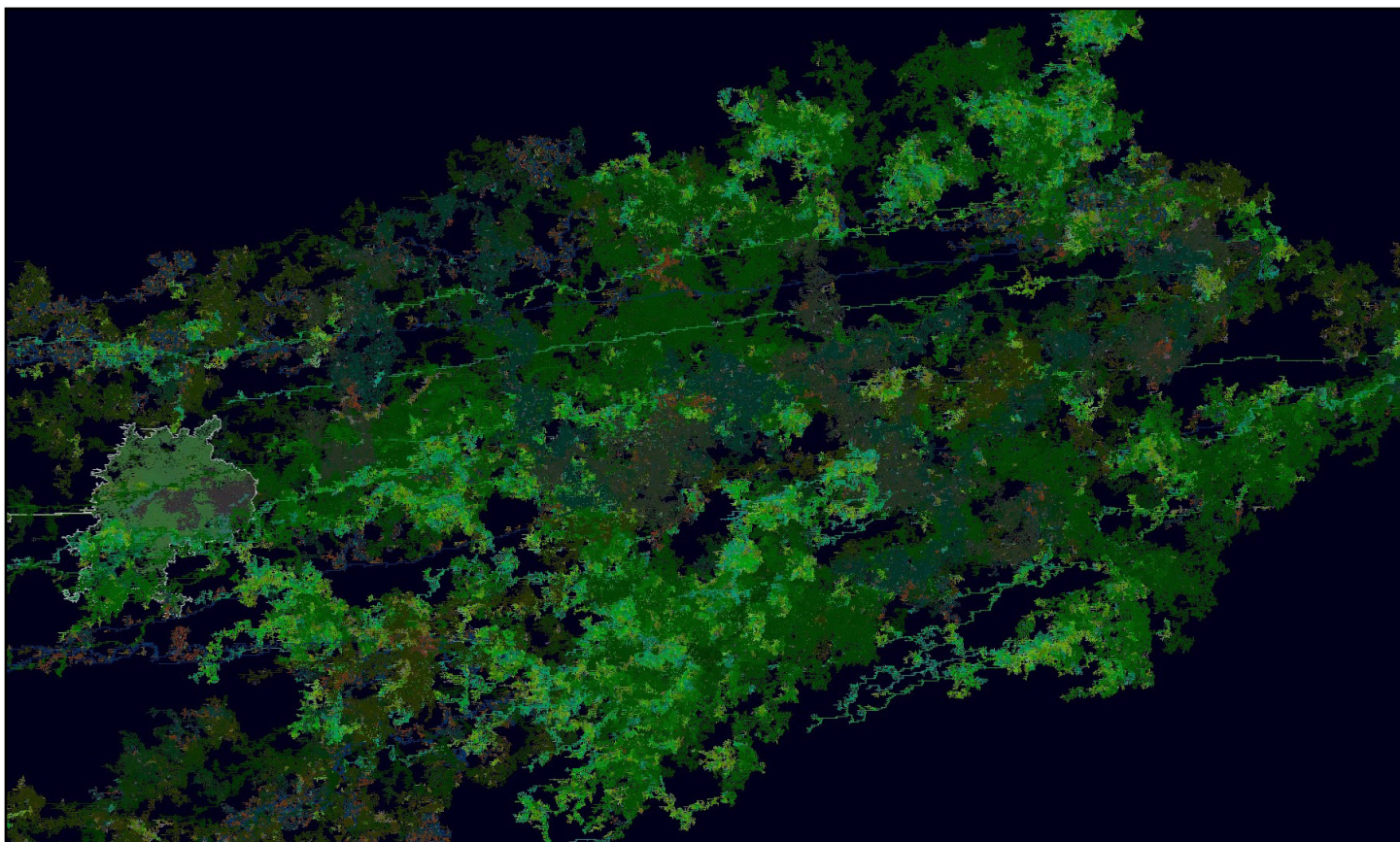
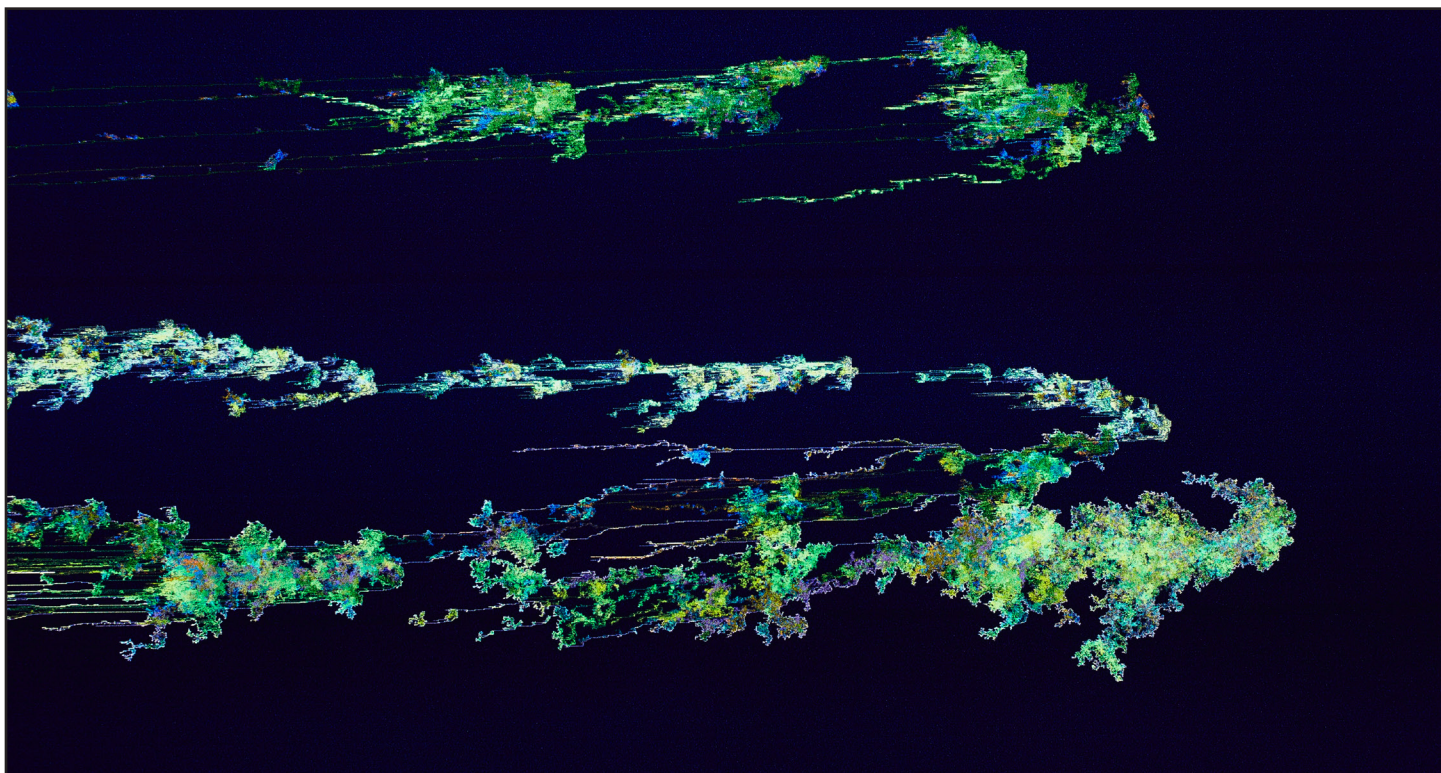


## ***Enter the Machine 1.6 A.K.A. Mac OS X 10.10 (excerpt)***

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Buried in the System folder of Mac OS X is a folder called LinguisticData, which contains the files needed to translate the operating system into Chinese, Danish, Dutch, English, Finnish, French, German, Italian, Korean, Norwegian, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Swedish, Thai, and, Turkish. As of Mac OS X 10.10 these 16 languages weigh 440MB.







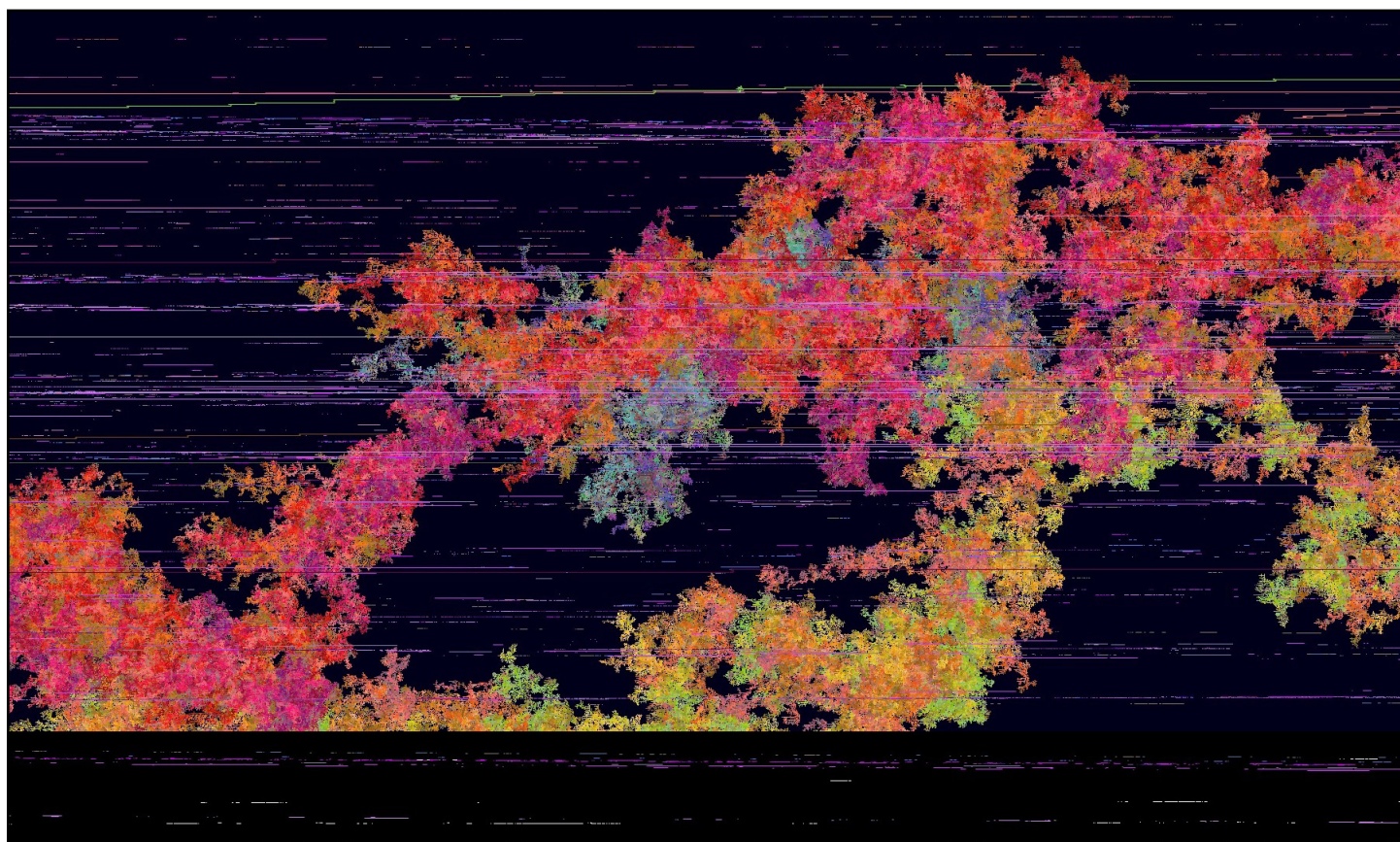
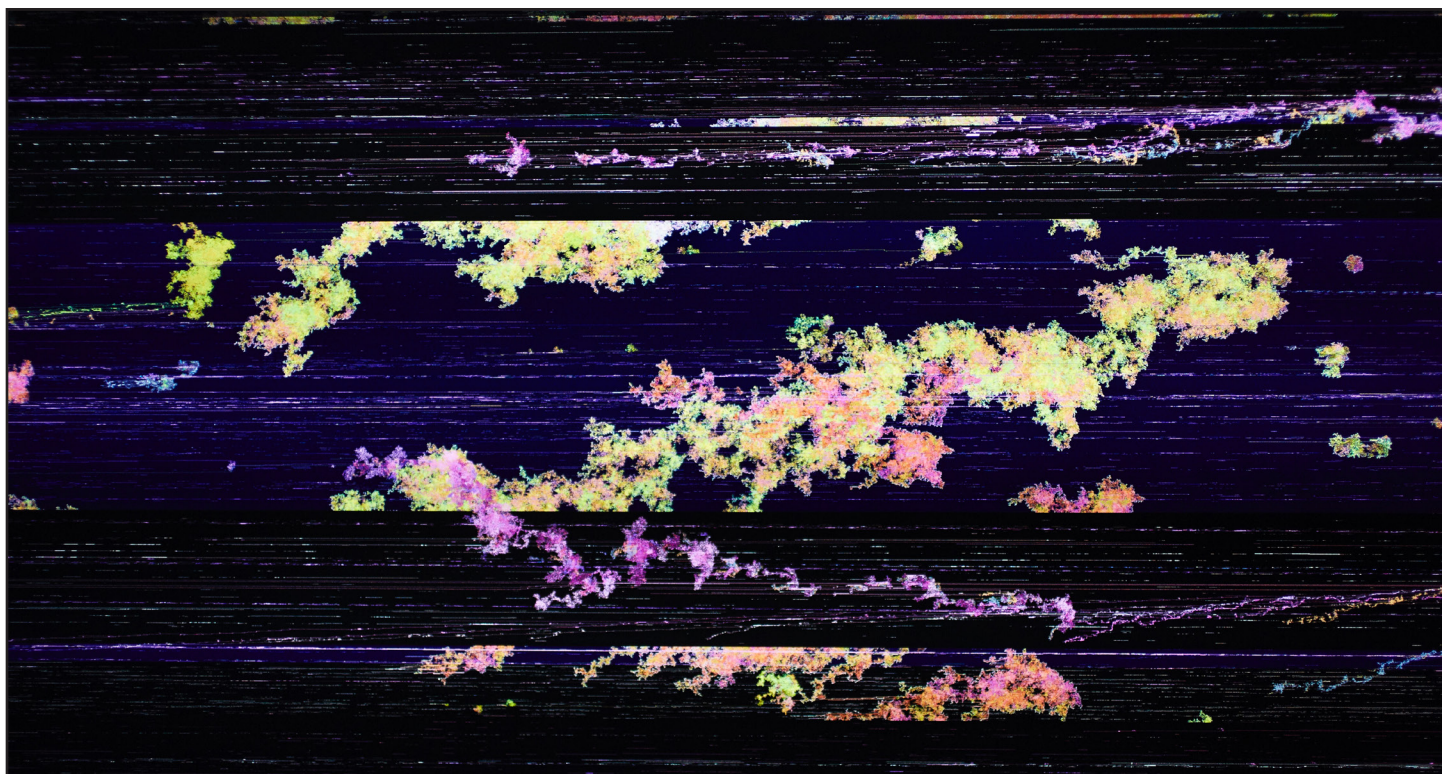


## ***Enter the Machine 1.7 A.K.A. Work I Did for the School of Visual Arts in 2015***

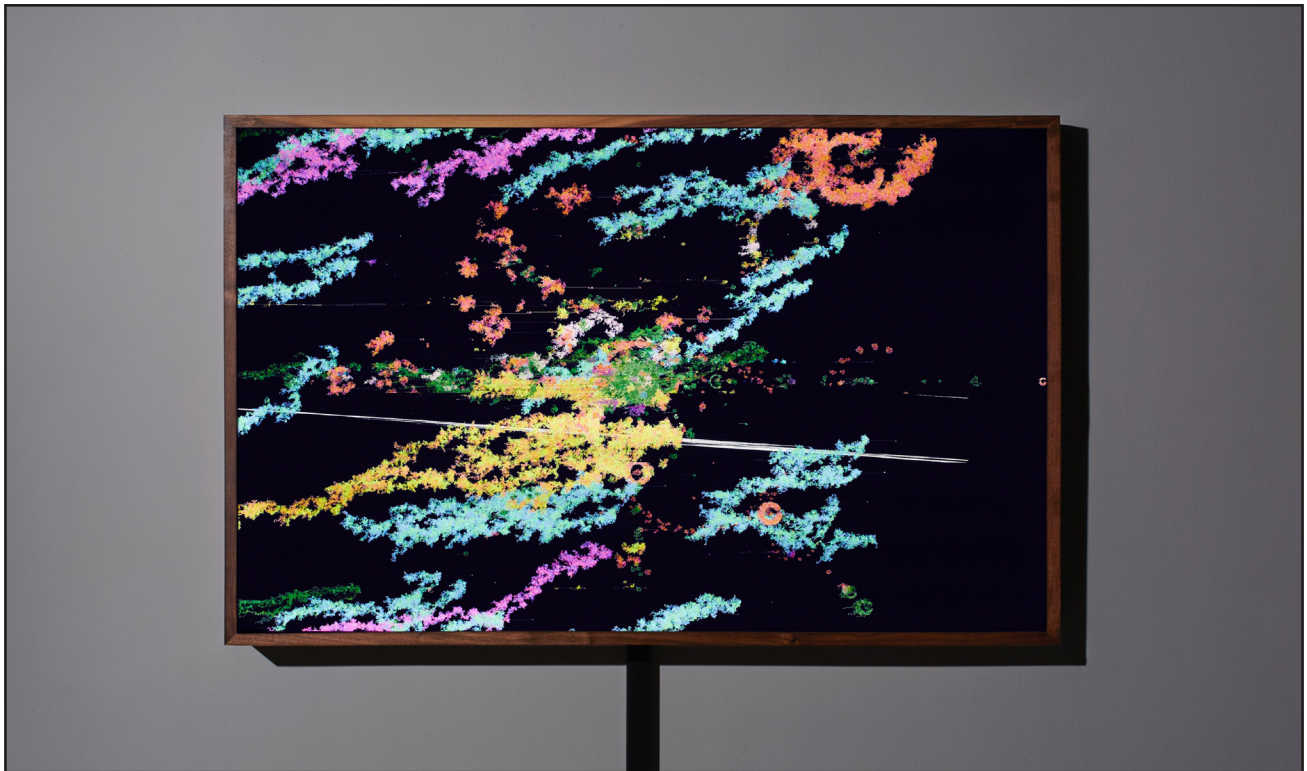
---

The artist works and teaches at the School of Visual Arts in New York City and this piece consists of 1.9GB of data created during his time there. While the algorithm he wrote processed thousands of different file types, there was one file type it didn't process well: iff files (used in 3D rendering), which is what produces the glitch effect.







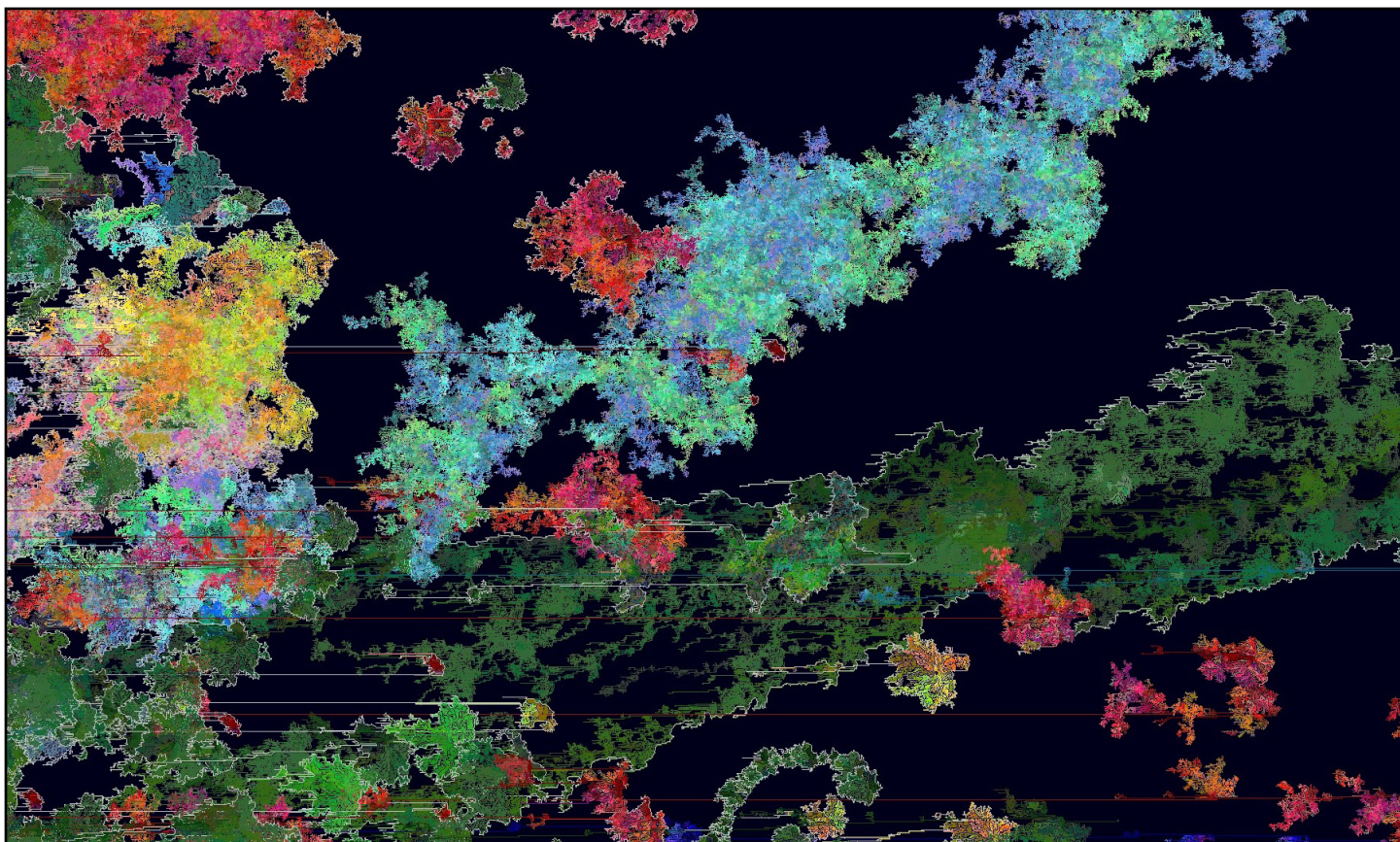
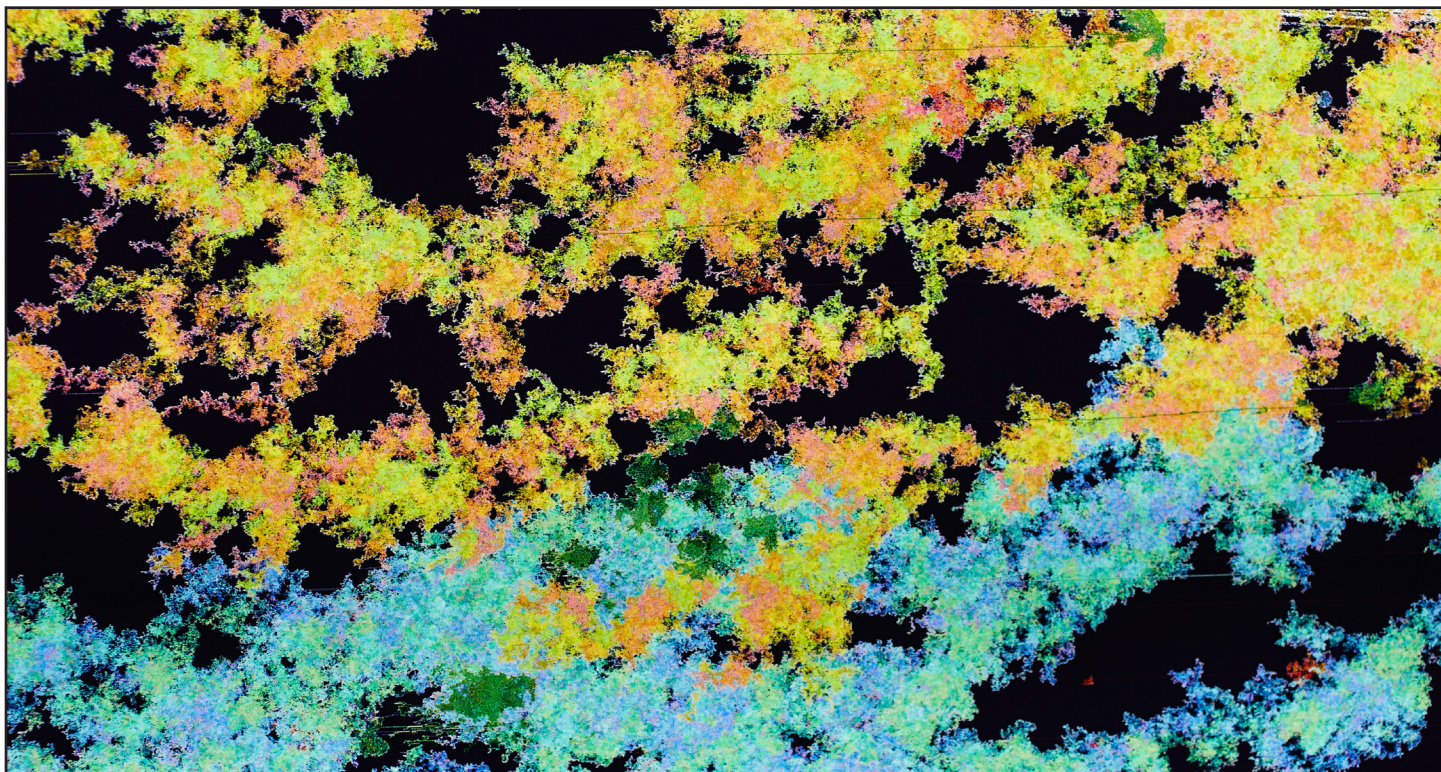


***Enter the Machine 1.8 A.K.A. Websites  
I Created for Friends and Family,  
namely, [lustforart.com](http://lustforart.com), [mattcorriel.com](http://mattcorriel.com),  
[reidblackman.com](http://reidblackman.com), [seancorriel.com](http://seancorriel.com)***

---

Previously working as a freelance web designer/developer, the artist created lots of websites for friends and family. This piece is his way of paying tribute to that part of his life. This work consists 3,608 files over 418MB of data, mostly in the form of php, html, css, jpg, png, html, css, psd, and javascript files.







# **EXHIBITION STATEMENT**

```
// FileExtensionManager.cpp
//
// Created on 1/5/16.
//
//
#include "FileExtensionManager.hpp"
```

```
// TEXT DOCUMENTS
```

```
if(
    fileExtension=="doc"      OR
    fileExtension=="docx"    OR
    fileExtension=="pages"   OR
    fileExtension=="doc"     OR
    fileExtension=="dot"     OR
    fileExtension=="gdoc"    OR
    fileExtension=="txt"     OR
    fileExtension=="rtf"
)
    color = blue;
```

```
// OFFICE DOCUMENTS
```

```
else if(
    fileExtension=="csv"      OR
    fileExtension=="xls"      OR
    fileExtension=="xlsx"    OR
    fileExtension=="xls"     OR
    fileExtension=="xlt"     OR
    fileExtension=="xsl"     OR
    fileExtension=="ics"     OR
    fileExtension=="keynote" OR
    fileExtension=="ppt"
)
    color = green;
```

```
// PDF DOCUMENTS
```

```
else if(
    fileExtension=="pdf"      OR
)
    color = orange;
```

```
// IMAGES
```

```
else if(
    fileExtension=="jpg"      OR
    fileExtension=="jpeg"    OR
    fileExtension=="png"     OR
    fileExtension=="gif"     OR
    fileExtension=="bmp"     OR
    fileExtension=="tif"     OR
    fileExtension=="tiff"    OR
    fileExtension=="svg"
)
    color = red;
```

```
// CREATION FORMATS
```

```
else if(
    fileExtension=="psd"      OR
    fileExtension=="ai"      OR
    fileExtension=="svg"     OR
    fileExtension=="eps"     OR
    fileExtension=="indd"    OR
    fileExtension=="fla"     OR
    fileExtension=="idx"     OR
    fileExtension=="swf"     OR
    fileExtension=="tff"     OR
    fileExtension=="woff"    OR
    fileExtension=="woff2"   OR
    fileExtension=="otf"     OR
    fileExtension=="aep"     OR
    fileExtension=="idml"    OR
    fileExtension=="mel"     OR
    fileExtension=="mb"      OR
    fileExtension=="motn"    OR
    fileExtension=="otf"     OR
    fileExtension=="lst"     OR
    fileExtension=="idlk"    OR
    fileExtension=="swd"     OR
    fileExtension=="ttc"
)
    color = gold;
```

```
// AUDIO
```

```
else if(
    fileExtension=="mp3"      OR
    fileExtension=="wav"      OR
    fileExtension=="aiff"     OR
    fileExtension=="m4a"      OR
    fileExtension=="m4r"      OR
    fileExtension=="wmv"      OR
    fileExtension=="pem"      OR
    fileExtension=="cdm"      OR
    fileExtension=="aif"      OR
    fileExtension=="m4p"      OR
    fileExtension=="aff"
)
    color = turquoise;
```

```
// VIDEO
```

```
else if(
    fileExtension=="mov"      OR
    fileExtension=="mp4"      OR
    fileExtension=="avi"      OR
    fileExtension=="m4v"      OR
    fileExtension=="3gp"
)
    color = magenta;
```

```
// ARCHIVES
```

```
else if(
    fileExtension=="gzip"      OR
    fileExtension=="webloc"    OR
    fileExtension=="zip"       OR
    fileExtension=="dmg"       OR
    fileExtension=="gz"        OR
    fileExtension=="tar"       OR
    fileExtension=="tgz"       OR
    fileExtension=="sit"
)
    color = lightPink;
```

```
// EMAIL
```

```
else if(
    fileExtension=="emlx"      OR
    fileExtension=="gmail"
)
    color = darkOrchid;
```

```
// EMAIL ATTACHMENT
```

```
else if(
    fileExtension=="emlxpart"
)
    color = turquoise;
```

```
// SYSTEM
```

```
else if(
    fileExtension=="icns"      OR
    fileExtension=="priv"      OR
    fileExtension=="clr"       OR
    fileExtension=="exe"       OR
    fileExtension=="dll"       OR
    fileExtension=="inf"       OR
    fileExtension=="so"        OR
    fileExtension=="sys"       OR
    fileExtension=="jar"       OR
    fileExtension=="keys"      OR
    fileExtension=="pot"       OR
    fileExtension=="vbs"       OR
    fileExtension=="po"        OR
    fileExtension=="clr"       OR
    fileExtension=="w32"
)
    color = purple
```

```
// DEVELOPER FILES
```

```
else if(
    fileExtension=="php"      OR
    fileExtension=="js"       OR
    fileExtension=="html"     OR
    fileExtension=="htm"      OR
    fileExtension=="sql"      OR
    fileExtension=="rb"       OR
    fileExtension=="py"       OR
    fileExtension=="cpp"      OR
    fileExtension=="h"        OR
    fileExtension=="m"        OR
    fileExtension=="hpp"      OR
    fileExtension=="sql"      OR
    fileExtension=="pl"       OR
    fileExtension=="as"       OR
    fileExtension=="css"      OR
    fileExtension=="json"     OR
    fileExtension=="jsp"      OR
    fileExtension=="net"      OR
    fileExtension=="nib"      OR
    fileExtension=="pde"      OR
    fileExtension=="less"     OR
    fileExtension=="md"       OR
    fileExtension=="sass"     OR
    fileExtension=="scss"     OR
    fileExtension=="sh"       OR
    fileExtension=="xml"      OR
    fileExtension=="yaml"     OR
    fileExtension=="c"        OR
    fileExtension=="cnf"      OR
    fileExtension=="jade"     OR
    fileExtension=="jsh"      OR
    fileExtension=="json5"    OR
    fileExtension=="lib"      OR
    fileExtension=="log"      OR
    fileExtension=="make"     OR
    fileExtension=="node"     OR
    fileExtension=="plist"    OR
    fileExtension=="project"  OR
    fileExtension=="targets"  OR
    fileExtension=="tmpl"     OR
    fileExtension=="ts"       OR
    fileExtension=="twig"     OR
    fileExtension=="vcxproj"  OR
    fileExtension=="workspace" OR
    fileExtension=="xcconfig" OR
    fileExtension=="xclangspec" OR
    fileExtension=="yaml"     OR
    fileExtension=="dat"      OR
    fileExtension=="strings"  OR
    fileExtension=="aspx"     OR
    fileExtension=="pch"      OR
    fileExtension=="watcher"  OR
    fileExtension=="tpl"      OR
    fileExtension=="sdef"     OR
    fileExtension=="scpt"     OR
    fileExtension=="res"      OR
    fileExtension=="phpt"     OR
    fileExtension=="phar"     OR
    fileExtension=="pbxproj"  OR
    fileExtension=="o"        OR
    fileExtension=="mo"       OR
    fileExtension=="lock"     OR
    fileExtension=="kmlibrary" OR
    fileExtension=="jsx"      OR
    fileExtension=="ini"      OR
    fileExtension=="info"     OR
    fileExtension=="dylib"    OR
    fileExtension=="dist"     OR
    fileExtension=="dev"      OR
    fileExtension=="Makefile" OR
    fileExtension=="cmake"     OR
    fileExtension=="xcscheme"
)
    color = darkGreen
```

# **ABOUT THE ARTIST**



After growing up on Long Island, Eric Corriel graduated from Cornell University where he received a Bachelors of Arts in Philosophy while also studying Fine Art and Computer Science. He later received a Diplôme National d'Arts Plastiques, from the École Régionale Supérieure d'Expression Plastique in Tourcoing, France. Currently living in Brooklyn, Eric takes the urban landscape as a medium in which to create site-specific video installations in the public realm. He teaches interaction design at the School of Visual Arts in New York City.

# ERIC CORRIEL

## EDUCATION

|      |   |   |               |
|------|---|---|---------------|
| 2007 | Diplôme National d'Arts Plastiques      | École Régionale Supérieure d'Expression Plastique | Lille, France |
| 2001 | Bachelor of Arts, Philosophy, Cum Laude | Cornell University                                | Ithaca, NY    |

## TEACHING

|              |                                       |                           |               |
|--------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------|
| 2014–Current | Interaction Content Design & Creation | The School of Visual Arts | Manhattan, NY |
| 2014–Current | Independent Study                     | The School of Visual Arts | Manhattan, NY |

## AWARDS, HONORS, & RESIDENCIES

|      |                                     |                                    |                |
|------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------|
| 2016 | How We Do This Shit panel           | Creative Tech Week                 | Manhattan, NY  |
| 2015 | Residency                           | The Arctic Circle                  | Svalbard       |
| 2012 | Top 50 Public Art Projects          | The Public Art Network             | Washington, DC |
| 2011 | Grant Recipient                     | New York State Council on the Arts | Albany, NY     |
| 2011 | Panelist, Digital/Electronic Art    | New York Foundation for the Arts   | Brooklyn, NY   |
| 2009 | Fellowship, Digital/Electronic Arts | New York Foundation for the Arts   | Brooklyn, NY   |

## SELECT EXHIBITIONS (full listing at [ericcorriel.com/exhibitions](http://ericcorriel.com/exhibitions))

|      |                      |                                   |                        |
|------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|
| 2016 | Group Show           | Van Loon Museum                   | Amsterdam, Netherlands |
| 2016 | Group Show           | Camera Club of New York           | Manhattan, NY          |
| 2016 | Solo Show            | Garis & Hahn                      | Manhattan, NY          |
| 2016 | Festival Participant | Light City                        | Baltimore, MD          |
| 2016 | Group Show           | Portsmouth Arts & Cultural Center | Portsmouth, VA         |
| 2015 | Group Show           | Radiator Arts Gallery             | Queens, NY             |
| 2014 | Solo Show            | Garis & Hahn                      | Manhattan, NY          |
| 2014 | Festival Participant | Dumbo Arts Festival               | Brooklyn, NY           |
| 2014 | Festival Participant | LUMEN                             | Staten Island, NY      |
| 2014 | Solo Show            | Holocenter                        | Governors Island, NY   |
| 2013 | Solo Show            | Window at 125                     | Manhattan, NY          |
| 2013 | Group Show           | Southampton Center                | Southampton, NY        |
| 2013 | Festival Participant | LUMEN                             | Staten Island, NY      |
| 2012 | Festival Participant | Nuit Blanche                      | Toronto, Ontario       |
| 2012 | Solo Show            | Chashama                          | Manhattan, NY          |
| 2011 | Festival Participant | FLUX                              | Atlanta, GA            |
| 2010 | Festival Participant | Dumbo Arts Festival               | Brooklyn, NY           |
| 2009 | Group Show           | Artsummerweek                     | Gueux, France          |

## LANGUAGES

Fluent French

Arduino, C++, CSS, HTML, Javascript, PHP, Processing, Python, OpenFrameworks, Raspberry Pi, SQL, Symfony, Unix