

# Filtering Failure

## PLANETART

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Filtering Failure Exhibition 28th of February – 1st of April

[www.planetart.nl](http://www.planetart.nl)

Filtering Failure is an initiative of PLANETART and GOGBOT

Powered by gem. Enschede, Blacklabel Records & Eurotrash Brewery

Curated by Rosa Menkman and Julian van Aalderen.



PNG

Filtering Failure Exhibition: 28th of February – 1st of April

Location:

(Volkskrant building)

Wibautstraat 150,

Amsterdam.

[www.planetart.nl](http://www.planetart.nl)

Filtering Failure is an initiative of PLANETART and GOGBOT

in collaboration with Rosa Menkman and Julian van Aalderen.

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Opening: 25th of February with live visuals by:

vj the c-men (Enschede):

Julian van Aalderen

Sjors Trimbach

Edwin van Aalderen

Kees de Groot (Enschede)

Curated by Rosa Menkman and Julian van Aalderen.

Design: with the use of Monglot 2010/2011

(a glitch software by Rosa Menkman and Johan Larsby)

Join our flickr pool:

<http://www.flickr.com/groups/filteringfailure>

Also: Keep track of <http://GLITCH/H>



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# Filtering Failure

## Why Study failure?

Modern digital cultures are inseparable from keywords like functionality, smoothness, order and progress. Interaction designers, programmers and interface developers all work together to understand and execute these mantras. But to really understand these keywords, they have to be defined in relation to what they are not. A successful product designer does not design for the average customer, but instead for the marginal, extreme customer; because when taking the margins as the rule, the middle will take care of itself. This is why studying the qualities of dysfunction, irregularities, breaks, disorder, damage or even demolition are as important in the development of a new technological product as the researching of its perfect flows. And this is also one of the reasons why it is important to study failure. I perceive the concepts of perfection and failure as a tradeoff of each other. If we want to understand and pursue perfection — we can do this successfully in the pursuit of failure.

## About failure

In wikipedia I read that "Failure refers to the state or condition of not meeting a desirable or intended objective and may be viewed as the opposite of success". I know that glossary-wise this is true. Personally however, I believe there is also space for successful failure. Whether failure should be defined in contradiction to success or not, depends on the context in which the term 'failure' is used. I realize that this is a complex problem — maybe as complex as the problem of trying to define glitch art (in which case glitch refers to an unexpected break from a flow in a process and art to the purposeful exploitation thereof). This is why I am interested in thinking about failure (art) in relation to glitch (art).

After the momentum of failure there are a couple of possible ways the collapse can 'tip'. First of all, if the cause of the computers erratic behavior comes to the light, the failure disappears and what is left is the effect of a bug that (often) has a certain debugging method. On the other hand, if the cause of the failure stays unknown, the momentum, (which is now often referred to as glitch) transforms into a phenomenon (or the memory thereof) that gains meaning from its context; the person who experiences the glitch, the technology that is malfunctioning and other perspectives that are at stake. In any case, the uncanny momentum of glitch is open to symbolical or metaphorical connotations — that take the interruption away from its strictly technological being. This openness of glitch is what glitch artists play with and this is what makes glitch art so hard to define, but also what keeps me fascinated with the genre.

In my opinion failure can be considered as a primary state of glitch, from which it will inevitably (and fast) tip away. Failure can be a static point of glitch, frozen in time, yet only nano seconds long, while its tipping point marks the active flow in which the glitch moves away from failure, into and through its many new possible conceptions and understandings. The tipping point of failure thus marks the inclusion of a certain failure into the conception of the glitch paradigm, which can but does not need to demystify it.

Realize that the gospel of Glitch Art also tells about new standards implemented by corruption — and about Hot and Cool Glitches.

Not all Glitch Art is progressive or something new. The popularization and cultivation of the avant-garde of mishaps has become predestined and unavoidable. Be aware of easily reproducible glitch effects, automated by softwares and plug-ins. What is now a glitch will become a fashion.

The procedural essence of glitch art is opposed to conservation; the shocking experience, perception and understanding of what a glitch is at one point in time, cannot be preserved for a future time. The beautiful creation of a 'cool' glitch is uncanny and sublime; as an artist I try to catch something that is the result of an uncertain balance, a shifting, ungraspable, unrealized utopia connected to randomness and idyllic disintegrations. The essence of glitch art is therefore in my opinion best understood as a history of movement and as an attitude of destructive generativity; it is the procedural art of non con-formative, ambiguous reformations.

But glitch art is not always an art of the momentum; many works have already passed their tipping point, or never pass one at all. Glitch art exists within different systems; for instance the system of production and the system of reception. It is not only the artist who creates the work of glitch art who is responsible for the glitch. The 'foreign' input (wrongly encoded syntaxes that lead to forbidden leakages and data promiscuity), the hardware and the software (the 'channel' that shows functional collisions) and the audience (who are in charge of the reception, the decoding) can also be responsible. All these actors and their perspectives are positioned within different but sometimes overlapping flows in which the final product can be described or recognized as glitch art. This is why an intended error can still rightfully be called glitch art from another perspective and why glitch art is not always just a personal experience of shock, but also, as a genre, a metaphorical way of expression, that depends on multiple actors. Works from the genre 'glitch art' thus consist as an assemblage of perceptions and the understanding of multiple actors. Therefore, the products of these new filters that come to existence after or indeed without the momentum of a glitch cannot be excluded from the realm of glitch art.

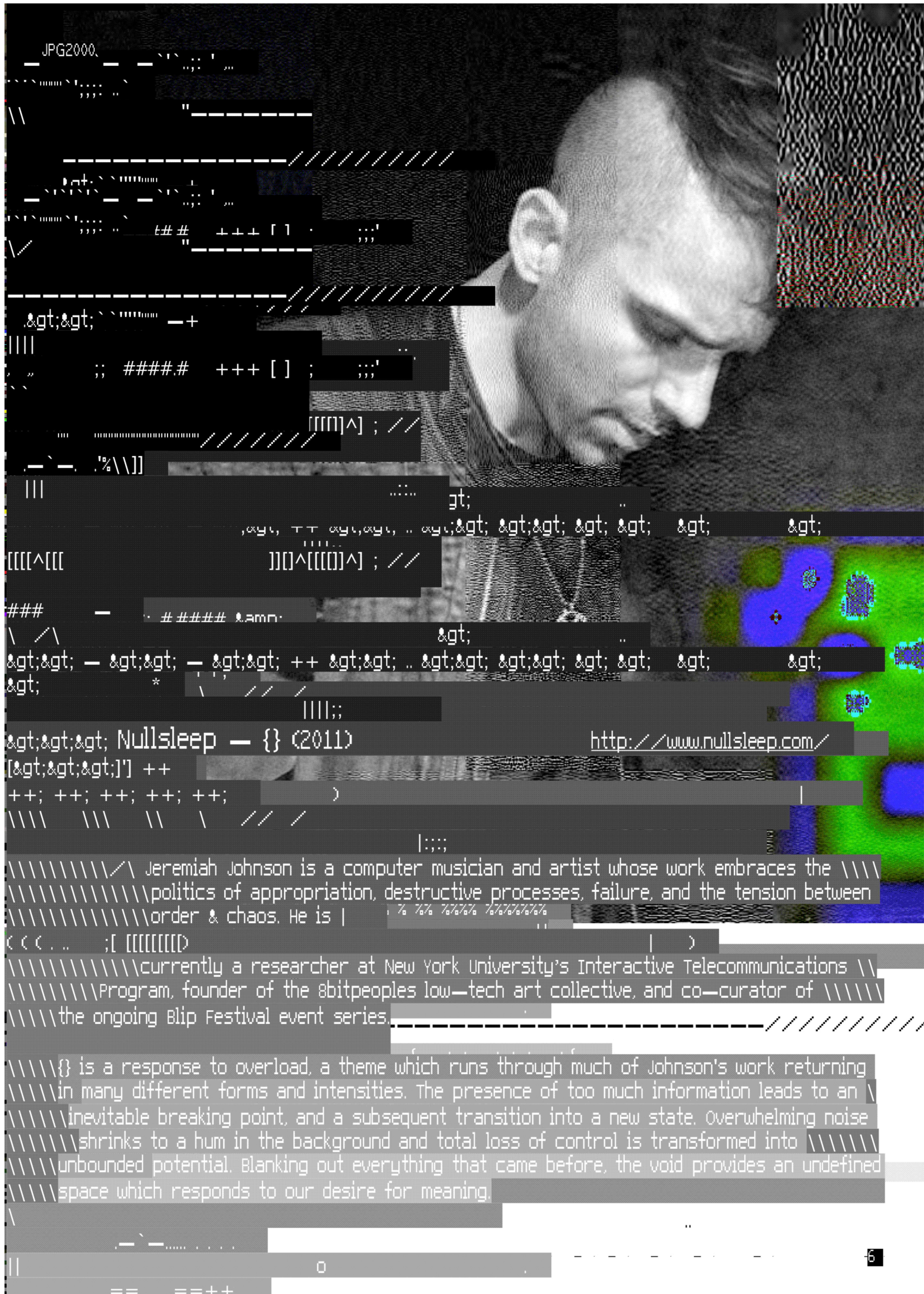
At GLITCH, Anton Marini stated that: "Overcoming failure is to accept it. Overcoming glitch is to incorporate it."

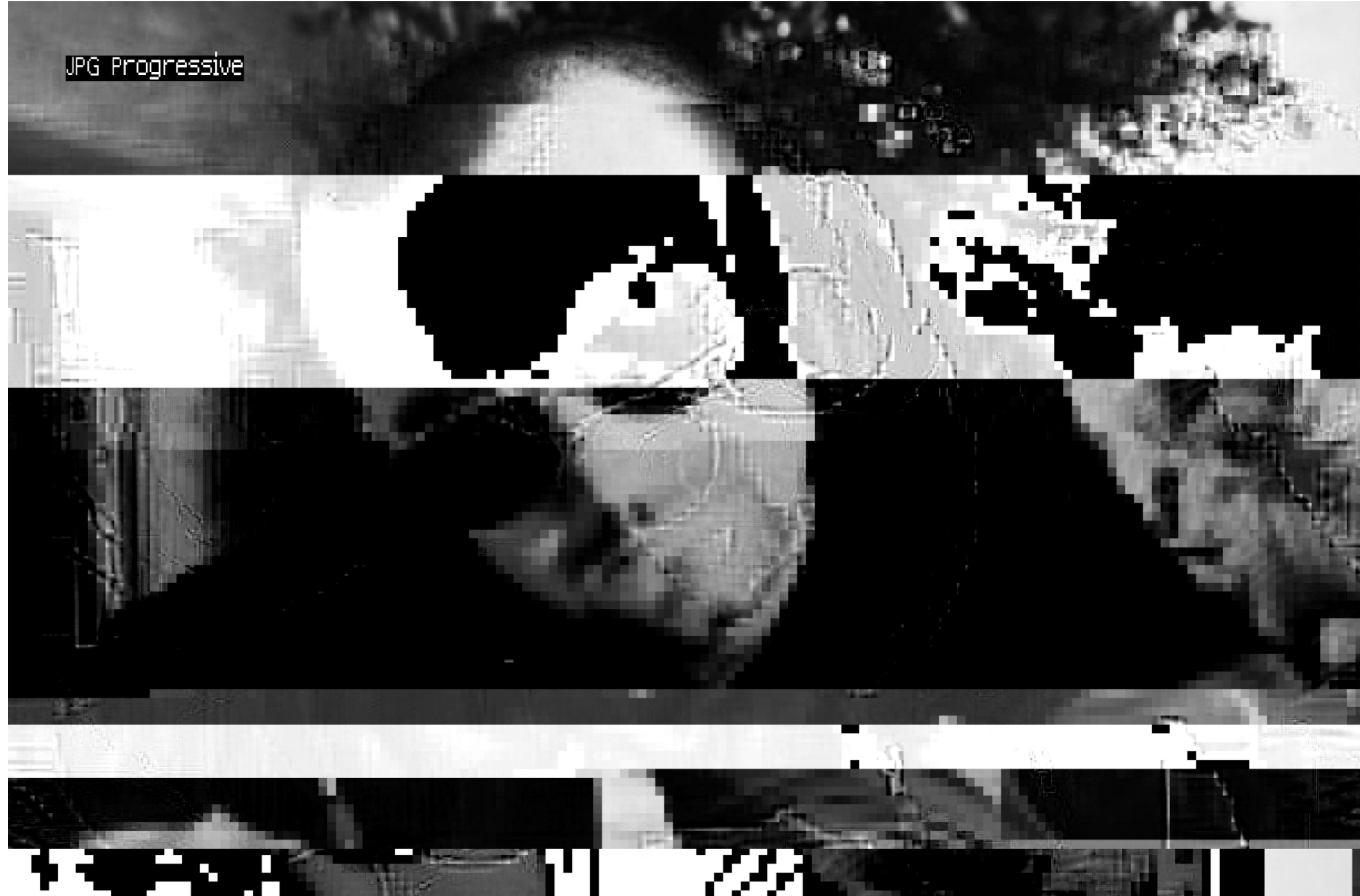
The exhibition 'Filtering Failure' is about the changing roles of failure in (lo-fi glitch) art. It is an ode to everything that can happen after the tipping point of failure — within the realm of pure and unpure, not yet or completely commodified and understood glitch-art. Some of the images generated in the exhibition are ironically standardized by repetition and as such exist as a compromise in-between cool and hot. Filtering Failure aims to show the ambivalence of Failure art.

In Filtering Failure I got the chance to show some of my most favorite glitch-artists. Besides their constant technical play on filtering failure, these artists bring an aesthetic to their work that — even though always surprising — evolved into personal archetypes that not have forced me to reconsider and re-articulate successful filtering of failure over and over, but also inspired many artists in their own failures.

—Rosa Menkman, February 2011.







Benjamin Gaulon. 6 years of Recyclism (2005—2011) <http://www.recyclism.com>

Issues like e-waste, obsolescence and disposable society have been the focus of his practice and theoretical research. Since 2005 he has been leading workshops and giving lectures in Europe about e-waste and hardware Hacking / Recycling. Workshops participants explore the potential of obsolete technologies in a creative way and find new strategies for e-waste recycling.

His research seek to establish an inter-disciplinary practice and collaborations by creating bridges between art, science and activism, and by doing so, shifting the boundaries between art, engineering and sustainable strategies.

#### About Corrupt:

Corrupt™ is a web based Glitch Art software allowing its user to upload and share corrupted images on [www.corrupt.recyclism.com](http://www.corrupt.recyclism.com)

Corrupt™ was first built with Processing (2004). The corruption process starts by reading the binary code of an image file [JPG or GIF]; then arbitrary bytes are swapped [the number of replacements is a random value from 1 to 20]. The file is then "saved as" a new document. Depending on the number of replacements and the original compression, the file will have a completely different and unpredictable image or aesthetic. So from a single image, the program can generate millions of corrupted versions. Because it literally corrupts the binary code of the file, some of the results are so damaged that they are actually rendered unviewable. The project is now available online for anyone who wants to corrupt a JPG image.

This online version is available since 2005. Since then thousands of people have uploaded and corrupted GIF and JPG files. The Source code and instructions to setup your own corrupt website are free and open source and available at [www.recyclism.com](http://www.recyclism.com)

The work that Benjamin will premiere in Filtering Failure will be the entire database of all the glitched images since Corrupt came online.

PNG Interlaced



## Notendo, DHseq—0063 (2008)

<http://notendo.com/>

The Correlation Between Textile Art And Glitch Art Representing A New Mode Of Design  
For the past ten years I have been exploring the parallels between computer-generated imagery and textile art. This practice can be traced back to the Jacquard loom (1801) which is the first machine to use punched cards to control sequences of operations. As a classic form of grid based design (think knot as pixel) it is considered to be the precursor to computer programming. This correlation finds its apotheosis in the modern computer controlled loom.

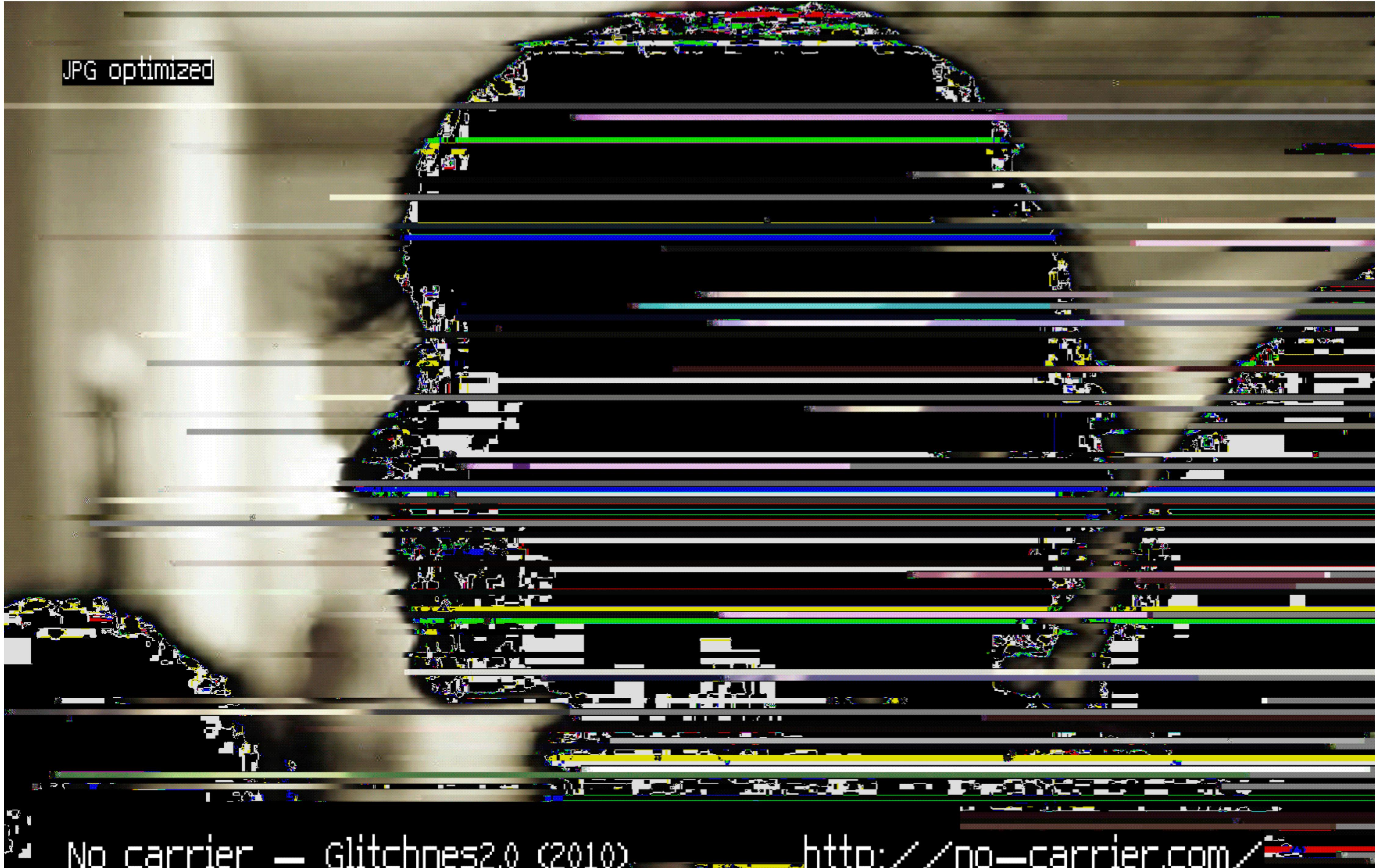
In my work, I am interested in the generative aspect of my prepared computer systems. Specifically, I have prepared a commercially bought 1986 Nintendo Entertainment System to become an abstract pattern generator which uses the program and graphic ROM data from familiar video games to spontaneously generate patterns, or what I refer to as "data collage".

Motion video is captured, exported as an image sequence, and then filtered through a process of aesthetic choice. Hundreds of images are sifted through in order to find particular patterns, which are then rendered as textiles. DHseq\_0063 and DH\_4\_09 have been rendered as scarves using a 1:1 pixel to knot ratio.

During the first international GLITCH event in September 2010, I had the good fortune to meet Melissa Baron who is another artist interested in the parallels between computer and textile art. After presenting to her my work with ATARI ST emulator glitches, we decided to collaborate, the result of which is the DHS Tyranny Glitch weave, which was rendered by Melissa in Chicago, IL.

To me, system glitches are a new paradigm in design. An 8bit glitch can simultaneously echo indigenous textile art (Native American, African, and South American), contemporary design (Anni Albers), as well as point toward future forms of design which, such as in my work, are just now beginning to manifest.

JPG optimized

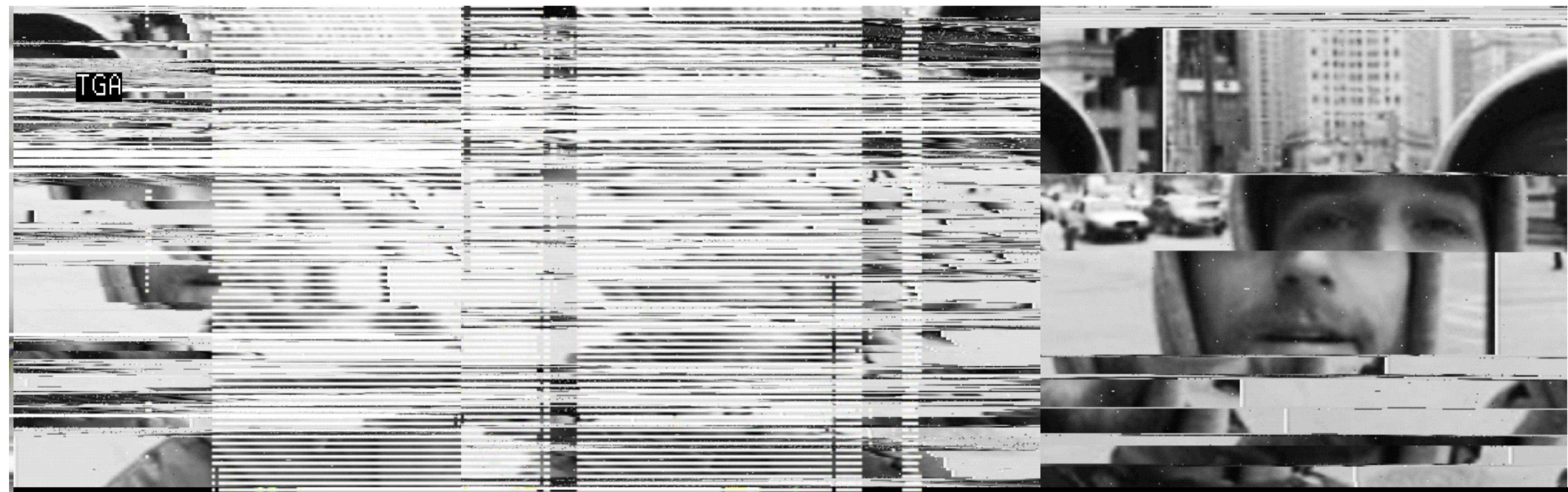


## No carrier – Glitchnes2.0 (2010) <http://no-carrier.com/>

Don Miller is an artist and educator based in Brooklyn, NY. He performs live visuals in real time under the alias NO CARRIER. Miller works with nearly obsolete repurposed electronics to create high energy low resolution abstract video art. Part of the 8bitpeoples artist collective, he performs, exhibits, and lectures worldwide. In his hometown of Philadelphia Miller organizes and curates 8static, a monthly showcase of low-bit music and video. He also serves as the Director of Playpower, a non-profit organization that works to bring low-cost educational games to developing countries.

glitchNES is an open source software project for the Nintendo Entertainment System. This software causes graphical glitches similar to hardware circuit-bending. The current version is 0.1 (initial release).

TGA



## Karl Klomp AVE3 (2007)

<http://www.karlklopp.nl>

Since the computer took over video editing, the 1995 Panasonic AVE3 mixer isn't that useful anymore to video editors. The AVE3 has become an obsolete video mixer. However, with a couple of wires and switches, the AVE3 can be a new device for v'js and editors who like to work with certain types of digital distortions.

The AV3E is a circuit bend digital video mixer. The switches build onto the interface of the machine are all connected to specific distortion-effects, which can, when combined, offer you the "perfect imperfection". Moreover, audio can be fed directly into the v-ram, which offers digital distortions, noise and corrupted images of the incoming video, that react to the sound input.

Obsolete devices can be a useful source in the search for new aesthetics. Within these machines, there is lots of information and opportunities that the original designers didn't want to use. These options were thought of as error or wrong. However, I think that these outputs can provide us with a new level of understanding media and bring artists new opportunities. Besides this, I think it is important to show these options because they are inherent to the machine — and they make us see and understand the machine on another level.

I use obsolete machines to create live visual glitches and glitch stills, often I use these machines in combination with my animations. Throughout the years I have build many different devices that I can combine in my search for the perfect imperfection.

PSD

## Gijs Gieskes — TBF1b (2010–2011)

<http://gieskes.nl/>

Gieskes work exist on the cutting edge between technology and design; he calls himself an artist / designer.

In Filtering Failure Gieskes will show his new machine the TBF1b (Time Base Forcer 1B), which is arduino based and can mix video that would normally not be able to mix — it would simply not show.

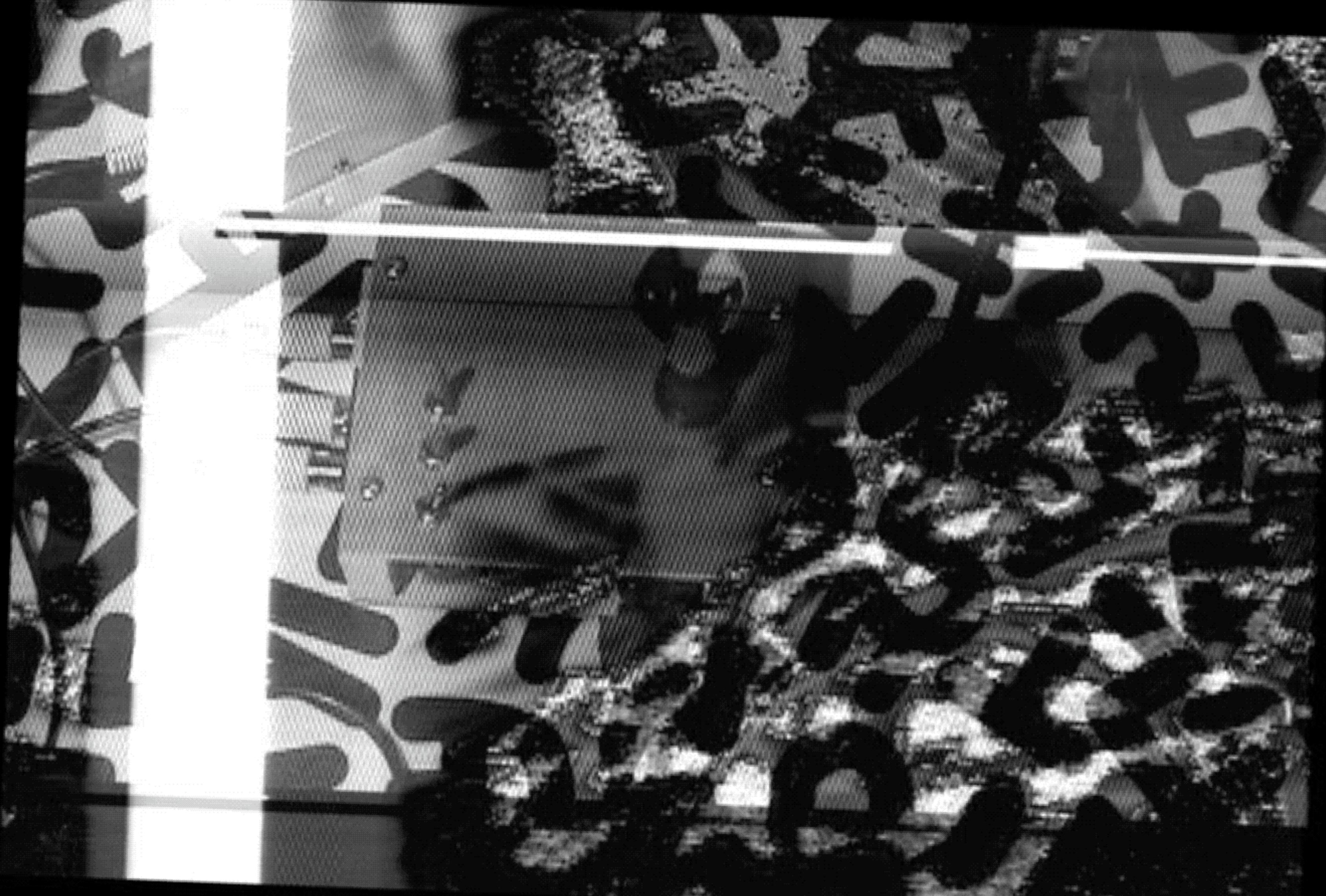
This is because composite video has sync, and when a video signal is out of sync it is usually not displayed. The TBF1b however, ignores this sync issue.

Moreover, the TBF generates its own sync which can be manually adjusted to get closer to the original sync of the video (by adjusting the horizontal scroll and the vertical scroll).

In short, the TBF1B forces a time base on the signals put into it.

The TBF also has patches that react to the line-level-audio. These patches react to audio signals that are send into it. Amongst these patches are some wipe patches and a snowy patch (and some more, other things).

The video that is generated is black and white and has a resolution of 128 by 110.





## Paul Davis — Codec (2009),

<http://www.post-data.org/~paul/>

From [http://www.seventeengallery.com/index.php\\_p=3&id=42](http://www.seventeengallery.com/index.php_p=3&id=42)

Paul B. Davis' probing, contemplative second solo show at SEVENTEEN represented a bold step forward for the artist...though not necessarily one he expected to take. It was instigated by a semi-voluntary rejection of a practice that, until very recently, was central to his creative output and figured prominently in his debut exhibition at the gallery — Intentional Computing (2007). A curious turn of events led to this unforeseen repudiation and redefinition of practice:

'I woke up one morning in March to a flood of emails telling me to look at some video on YouTube. Seconds later saw I [redacted] Kanye West strutting around in a field of digital glitches that looked exactly like my work. It fucked my show up...the very language I was using to critique pop content from the outside was now itself a mainstream cultural reference.'

Contentiously dubbed 'datamoshing', (or 'compression aesthetics', as Davis prefers to describe it), this practice ultimately emerged out of artefacts inherent in the compression algorithms of digitally distributed media. Davis seized upon the glitchy pixellation that is often present while viewing YouTube clips or Digital TV, and repurposed it as a tool of cultural rupture. Alongside other artists such as Paper Rad, Sven Konig and Takeshi Murata, he engaged this effect as a tool for aestheticized intervention, a fresh framework for analysis, and a new visual language.

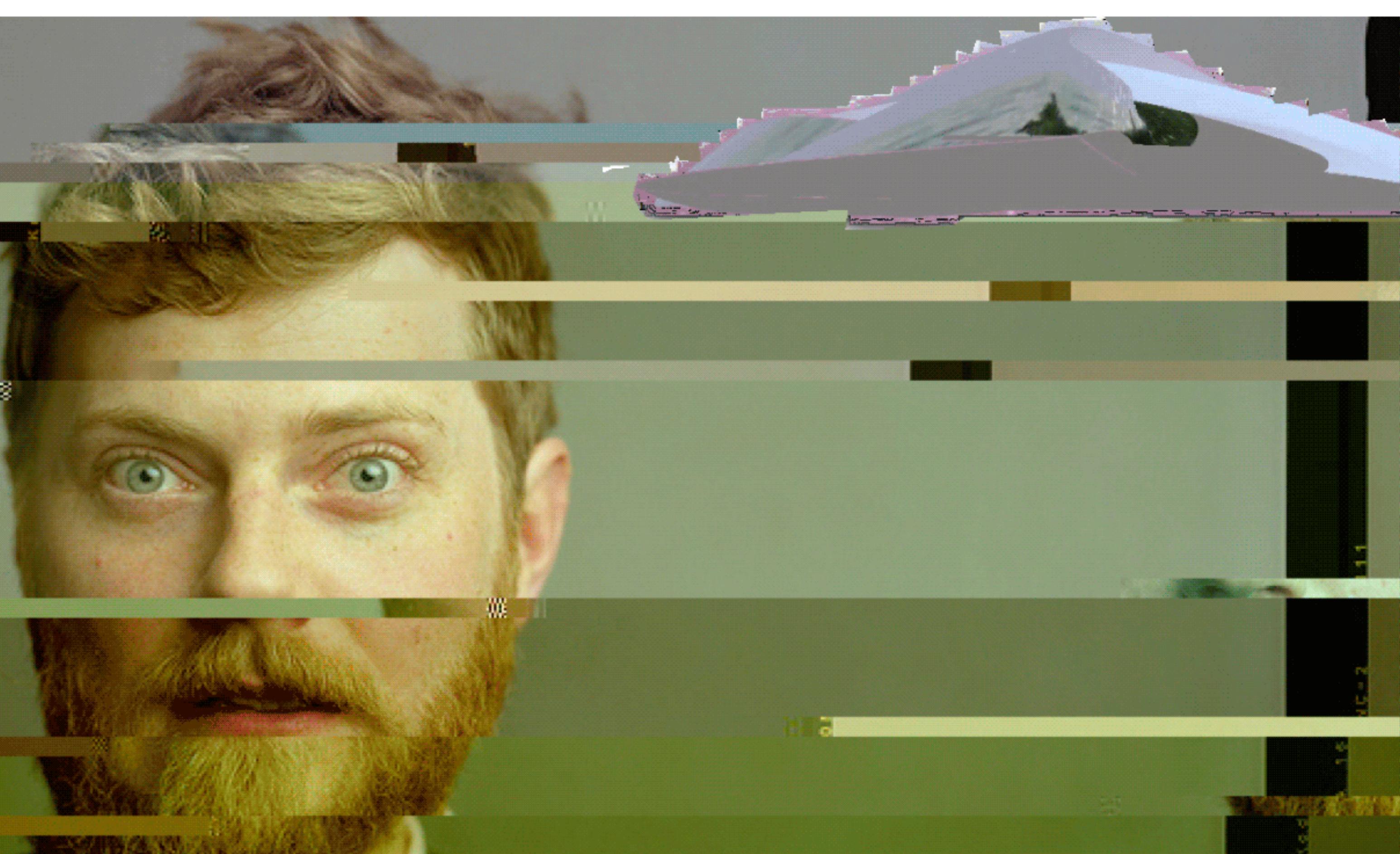
In contemporary culture, mainstream media pilfering of independent artistic production is expected. Moreover, it's a generative force — renegade practice and/or methodology is forced into evolution by the appropriation of its pioneering techniques. But for Davis this perhaps inevitable incorporation by Kanye West, the self proclaimed 'voice of this generation', served as a trigger to directly engage his growing concern that current artistic methods for grappling with digital culture — hacks, remixes, and 'mash-ups' among them — are ill-equipped for sustaining serious and self-reflexive critical examination. As Davis has commented, 'These methods generate riffs...restatements or celebrations of existing cultural behaviours, and artists who use them are seemingly unable to either offer incisive alternatives or generate new cultural forms. I was one of these artists, making these riffs, and I'd come to realize their limitations.'

Define Your Terms (or Kanye West Fucked Up My Show) concerns Davis' attempt to understand, react to, and depart from this crossroads. The works in the exhibition, many of which disavow his previous modes of hacking or mashing-up existing digital artefacts, have all been produced in the past two months, and will instead propose some alternate strategies for provocatively getting under the skin of Civilisation 2.0.

In Codec (2009), Davis' created his own proprietary video compression/decompression algorithm, free of now-standardized templating and presets. This algorithm is — defiantly — unavailable for commercial use. With Critical Space Headgear (2009) a head-mounted video camera is fed to a head-mounted display, the resolution of camera output and viewed input being reduced to 320x200 pixels thereby creating a self-mediated 'reality' that's flattened in real-time to the same dimensions as YouTube. In The Symbol Grounding Problem (2009) Davis simultaneously ingests a bacon sandwich while defecating in a perspex box as philosopher Luciano Floridi narrates the viewer through what they see onscreen as the interaction of dynamic informational entities. Floridi asserts that as we move closer towards the singularity — the future point in which human consciousness merges with the consciousness of our machinic progeny — our own experiential trajectory in the physical world will become secondary to the interaction of informationally-modeled simulacrum. This inevitable futurity is reinforced while experiencing the most base, mundane of bodily functions — simply taking a poo.

In this way, the works in this show are built. They are constructed out of whole cloth. There are no naive uses of technology here as they turn away from seemingly arbitrary, uninterrogated appropriation of digi-cultural artefacts and seek to offer alternative strategies for taking on the protocols of new media. In essence, Define Your Terms (or Kanye West Fucked Up My Show) is an exhibition about Davis breaking free from his own creative paradigm and setting forth a revivified agenda. Through radical reevaluation of his process, Davis has offered some new approaches for tackling the hovering questions that are relentlessly generated by this — our age of over-caffinated cultural cycles, empty signifiers, and supreme technological oversaturation.

JPG optimized/progressive



## Jon Satrom — QTzrk (2011)

<http://Jonsatrom.com/>

Jon Satrom performs realtime audio/video, spends time data-bending, makes kludgy work-flows, creates colorful glitch-ware, and enjoys working within collaborative projects and open systems.

He spends his days fixing things, making things work, and teaching. He spends his evenings breaking things, learning, and searching for the unique blips inherent to the systems he explores and exploits.

When creating glitch-art, developing kludgy workflows is key. Softwares and languages with loop-holes, open-ports, and forgotten-functions are integral to constructing situations for glitching. In my mind, no other program embodied this ethic more than QuickTime. It's popularity, and the fact that it's development was to position itself within a multimedia paradigm yet-to-be solidified, makes QuickTime (versions 1.5 – 7.6) a quagmire of failures.

The rewrite of QuickTime as QuickTime X has broken an environment that helped form my ideas of how malleable digital video can be. The drumbeat of “progress” has stripped esoteric codecs and functions in favor of current flavor of standardized media consumption.

Popular computer program releases are similar to code—volcanoes barfing new functions on-top of themselves creating mountains of functionality. Due to the fact that QuickTime was one of the first popular desktop video playback and editing technologies, the program is full of strange utopic abandonware. Aside from the myriad of codecs available, two of my favorite QuickTime features are QTVR and the ability to skin one’s own player. These are once celebrated features are now forgotten on the volcanic crater of QuickTime 7.

I’ve been working and performing with these techniques for years and have only found it necessary to articulate my love and investment as I find my go-to-tool on the chopping-block of our upgrade-culture. For now, I can rest assured; it’s a weird-chopping-block; there’s still time. For now, QuickTime7 has been transformed from a player into a utility. Even now (OSX 10.6.6), there are elements of QuickTime X that rely on the robust functionality of QuickTime 7.

When working against an upgrade culture and hesitant to celebrate a retro-ness within my own work, I’m forced to jump the shark and exploit my favorite functions before they are “legacy features”...

“QTzrk” is powered by QuickTime 7 on Macos and Windows



you are

own work. I’m forced to

Megac13 featu



Videogramo – olympic Games (2010)

<http://www.videogramo.8bitpeoples.com>

I am looking at all your websites, and I am completely confused by all your alter egos! Francoise Gamma on the computers club and Item Videogramo on 8bitpeoples; who is Videogramo and who is Gamma?

ComputersClub asked me to be part of the club, but with a name. I didn't want to use my real name, so I invented Francoise (which is derived from my real name) and Gamma from color correction. I think of Francoise Gamma as a fatal rebirth of Videogramo.

Some of your newer work like "the head on the piano" on Vimeo has become less textured and more 3d, is that new and something you are going to do more? If I would use the textures and patterns like I used in Videogramo ... I would need a whole enterprise to do animation+patterns... Videogramo's working method is crazy... madness, frame by frame ... hhgg, (although sometimes also semi automatic ^\_\_^). Gamma is more and more wirelined, it is an evolution or involution of Videogramo. More "new", less patterns and more animations (more and more) => and mutated movies. In Gamma there are almost no corrupted bodies. I think in this alter ego my mind is changing through other corruptions.

How is failure or glitch part of your work?

I work with glitch in textures and erratic models (sometimes pure glitch from conversion of 3D formats). I also reference errors through the impossible positions of the models. In Gamma the error plays a role in motion overall. I would maybe call this "glitch simulation" or emulation.

Corruption plays a formal role (errors in exporting 3d images), but this "fatal rebirth" of the image also plays a role on a conceptual and narrative level. I think there is not one logics to explain my fascination with error... I think that perhaps I recognize reflexion of myself in the error, or of the universe in general.

TIFF



In a culture that is continuously accelerating, filters have become a primal commodity. We use them both to open and to close ourselves to or from any kind of possible information.

Filters are ubiquitous. However, we only realize their presence when we lack them or when they fail our expectations.

The exhibition Filtering Failure investigates (the connections between) the procedural terms 'filtering' and 'failure' and how in (d-f) digital arts these terms are being re-invented and re-used. The exhibition asks how Filtering and Failure co-exist; and how these processes influence each other.