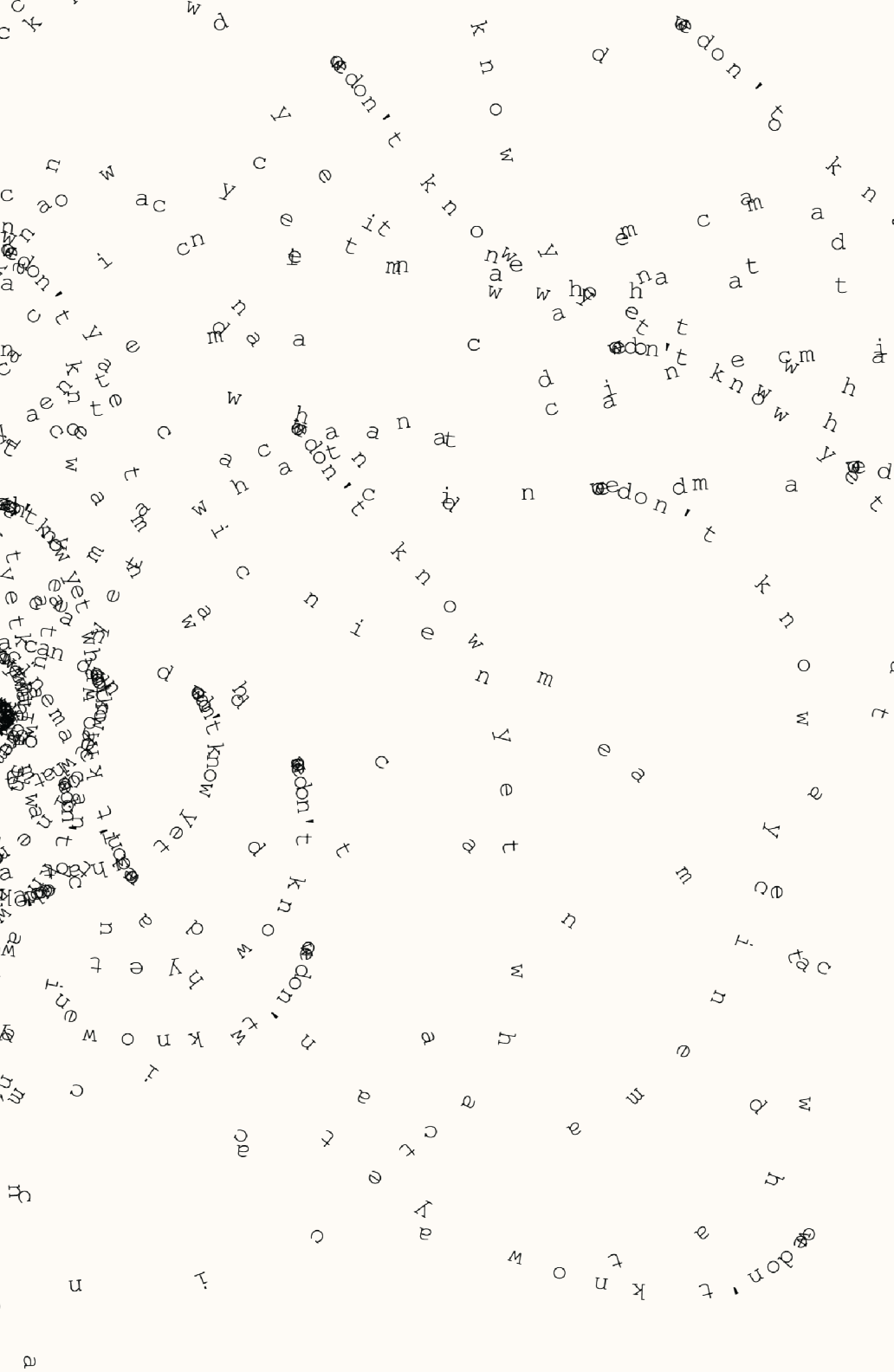


we don't
know yet
what a
cinema
can do

iii. disintegrating
archives

4.10.26

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we don't know yet what a cinema can do

iii. disintegrating
archives

WDKYIII explores the resonances of “expanded cinema” today, putting cinematic art to the tasks of resistance, rupture, and reconfiguration of mediatic experience. We ask: how can experimental modes of animating sound and moving images reconfigure the possibility of our relating to one another anew? Re.: mix; vision; mediate; compile; concile; wire; work; enact.

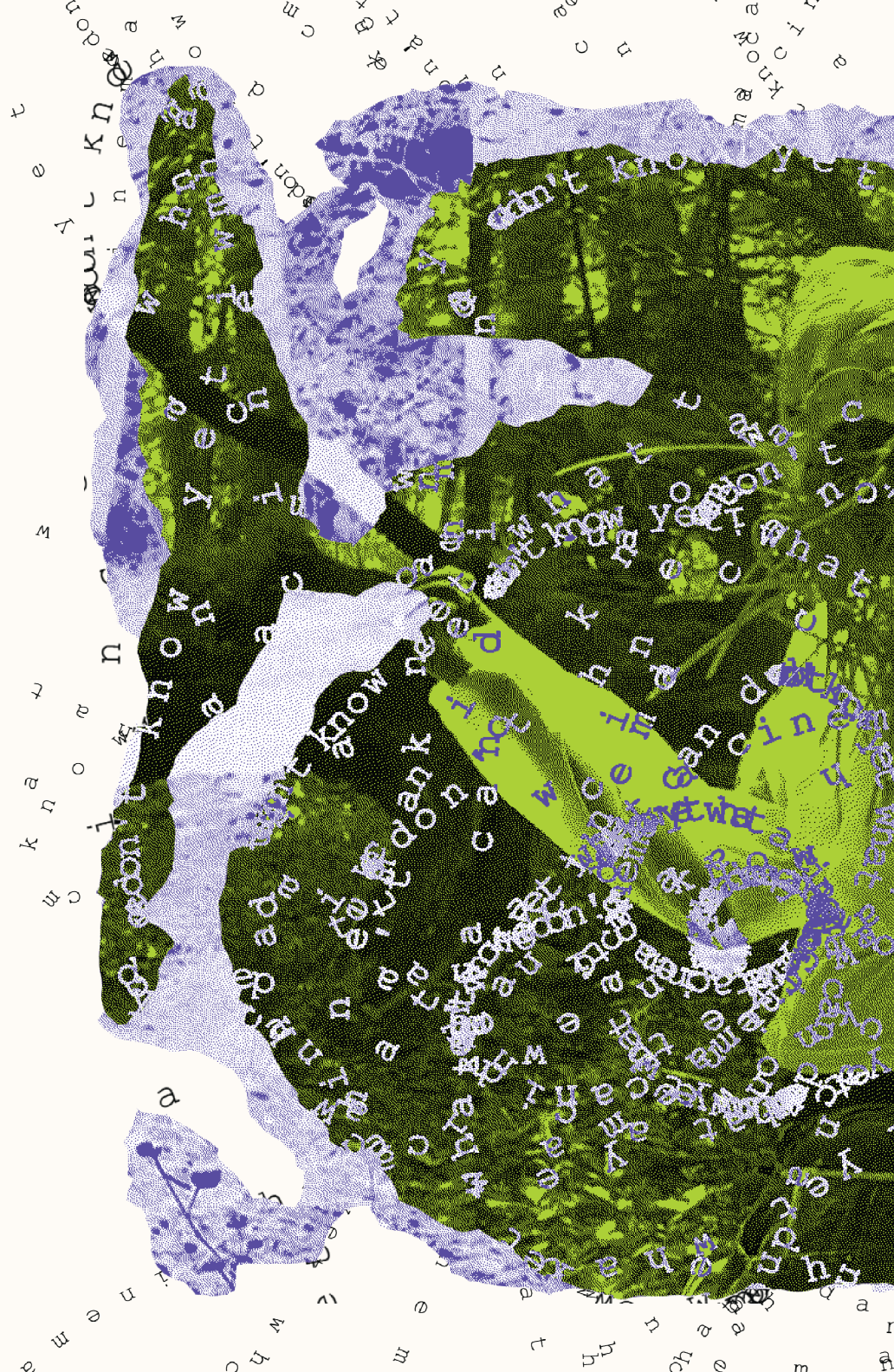
This year WDKY features new works or reworkings by three artists developing distinct technical, aesthetic, and cultural niches: A.J. McClenon's reclaimed materials, moving and still images,

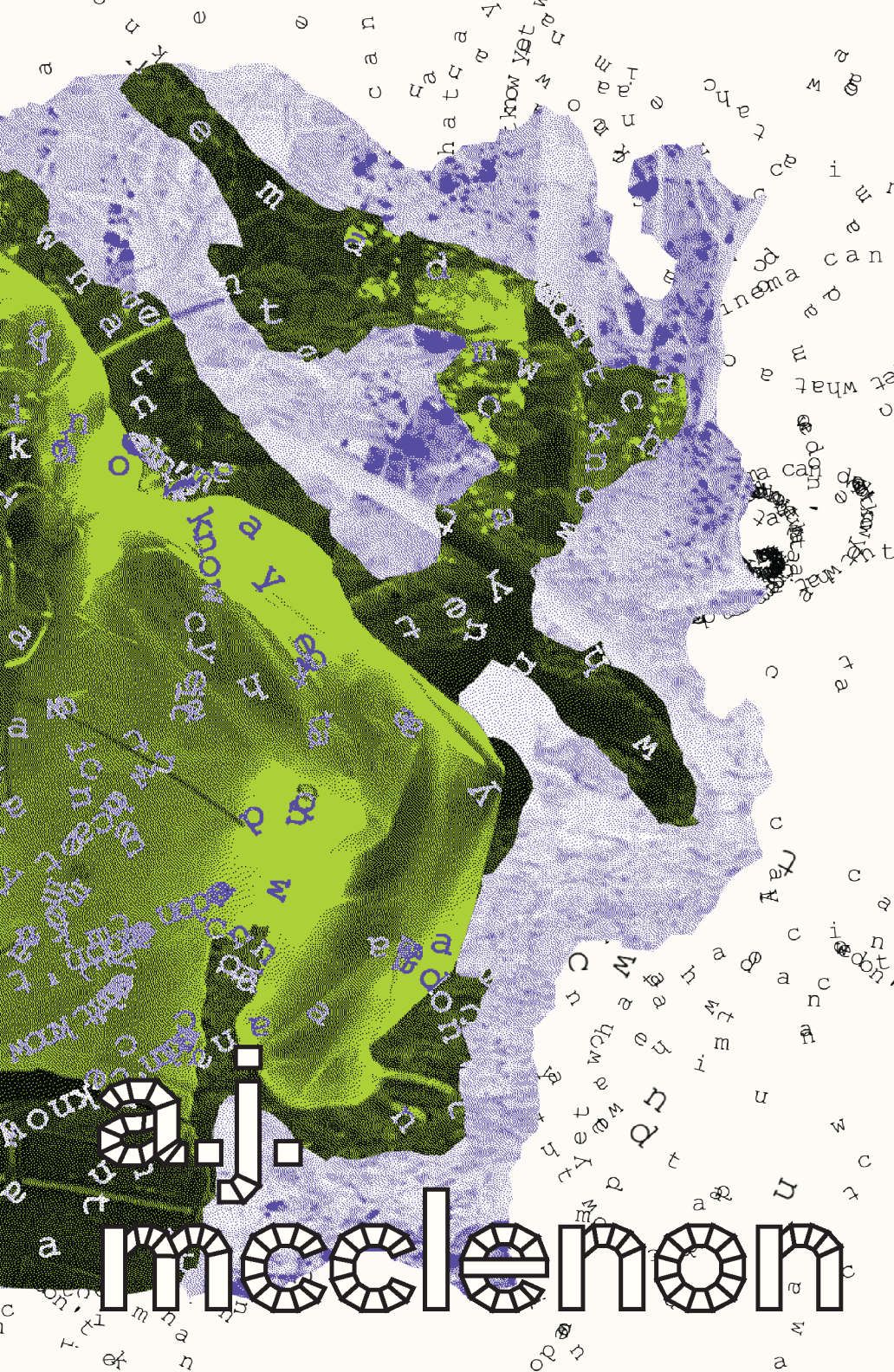
performance, and sound work is driven by familial and collective grief, water, Blackness, geomorphology, abolitionist thought, and the global future. The arts collective Alterotics' moving-image art, archival research, and event hosting activates public life for trans/queer people. James Connolly's real-time sound and media performance activates expressive potentials of technical systems sequestered behind consumer interfaces.

These three artists are also joined by special guest Aria Pedraza, who will introduce the Midwest Rave Culture Archive.

To our audience: thank you for being a part of this event. We are ecstatic to share these artists' work with you.

- CCAM x OCFF





A.J. MCCLENON

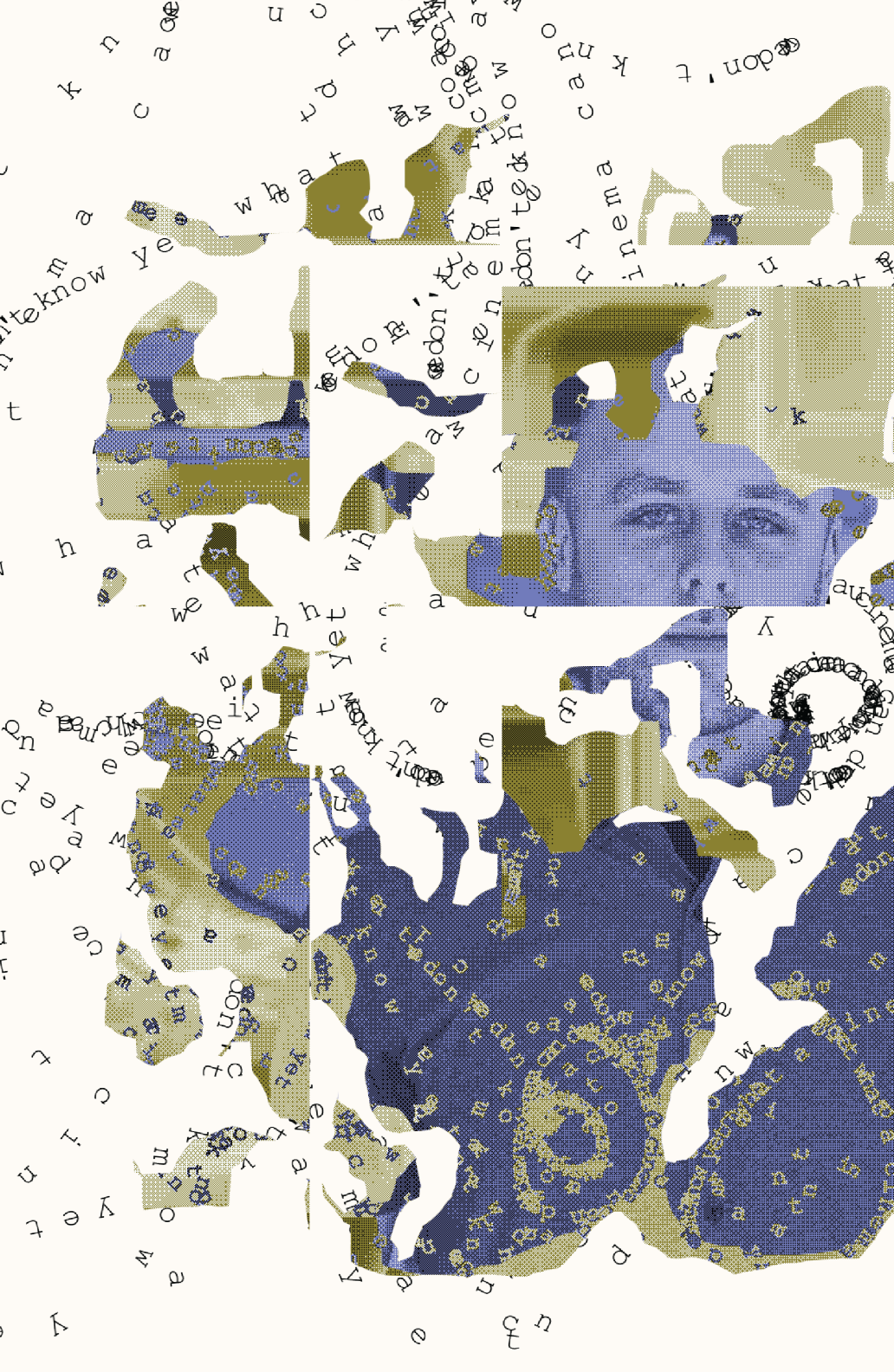
is an interdisciplinary artist and educator whose work is driven by familial and collective grief, water, Blackness, geomorphology, global future, and abolitionist thought. How do systems of carceral and psychic confinement shape lived experiences? How does understanding these systems more deeply reimagine ecological pathways toward liberation?

Below: Documentation still from VEGA performance [03-01-2025]



Drawing from physics, psychology, and language, A.J. explores how time, ecology, and the decentering of humanness overlap, examining the earth as a living archive and sonic instrument. Through transmasculine embodiment and performance, the work navigates shifting relations to the body, the land, and time.

A.J. brings a live sound performance staged within the dimensions of a solitary confinement cell, using acoustic instruments and electronic processing. A.J. plans to incorporate readings from *The New Jim Crow* that examine how Bill Clinton's "tough on crime" policies produced one of the largest expansions of the U.S. prison population. Video projections like Clinton playing the saxophone, alongside videos from A.J.'s family home, will be filtered through a translucent, cell-shaped scrim. The work will layer state spectacle with lived experience, and holds the interiority of isolation in tension with the interiority of home.





ijames
onolly

JAMES CONNOLLY

is a Chicago-based artist, educator, archivist, and developer. His videos, open-source tools, and real-time audio/video performances undermine the interfaces and break through the algorithms of digital and analog systems, examining hidden power structures and liberating latent aesthetic materialities in cathartic and captivating compositions. He is faculty in the Film, Video, New Media, and Animation department at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

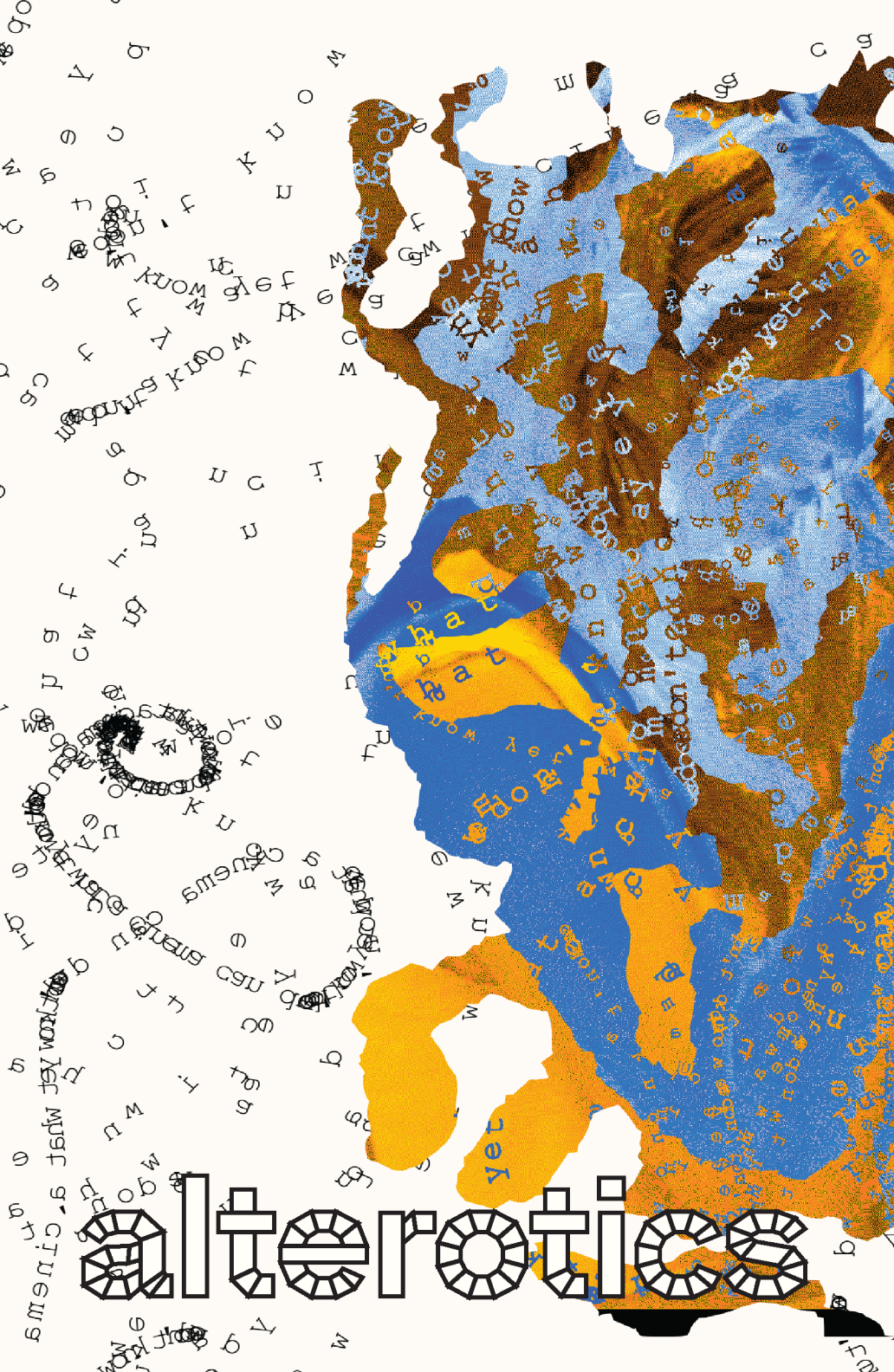
In a real-time audio video performance, custom hybrid analog and digital hardware and software systems will synesthetically explore electronic signals and examine the loss of the personal private archive in the era of digital algorithms, data mining, and surveillance.

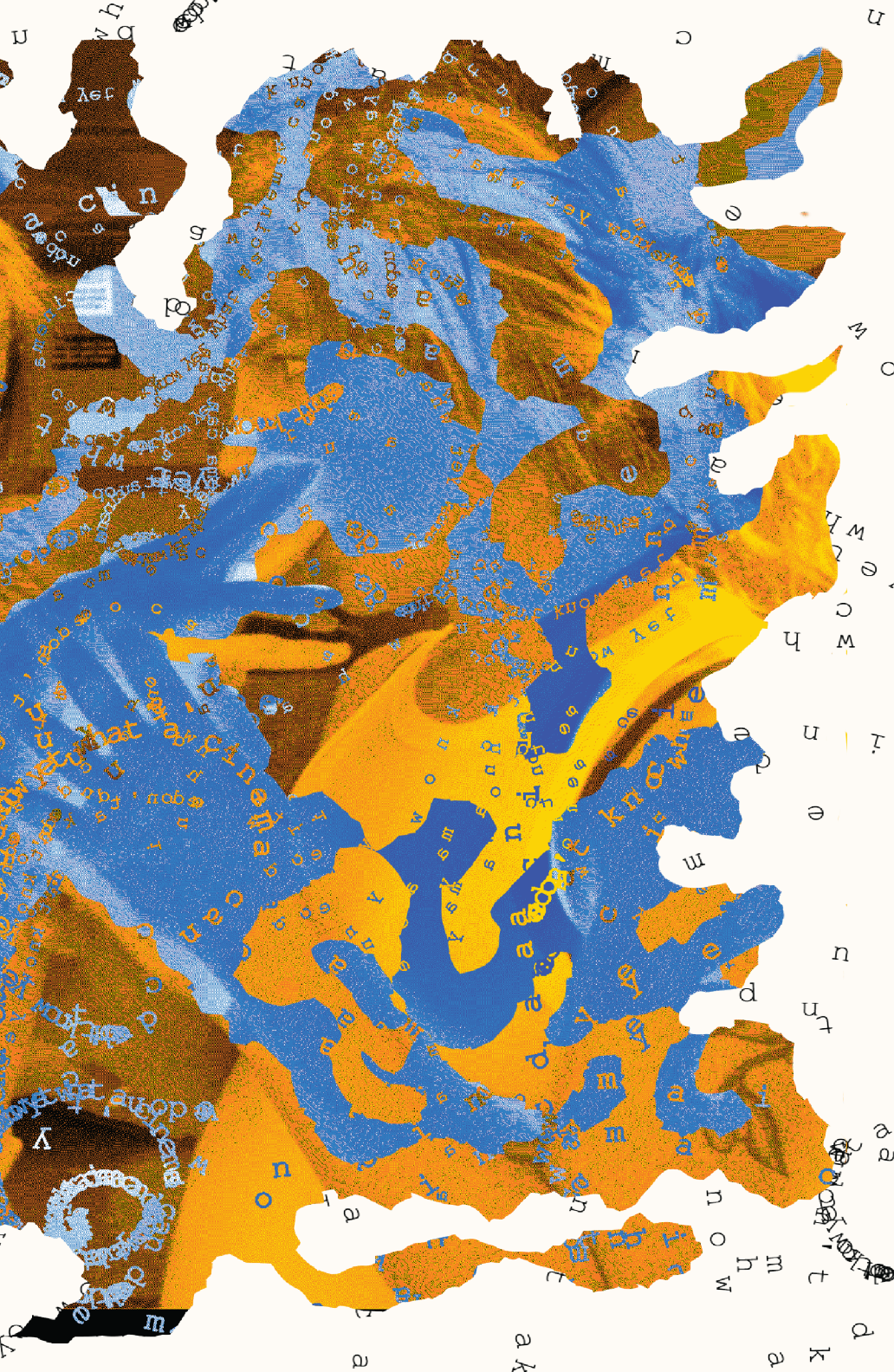
James Connolly brings his custom real-time video processing systems (the CRT



Above: Mark Zuckerberg's face processed by the CRT Flux-Phaser.

Flux Phaser and RGB.VGA.VOLT) to dis- and re-integrate lost privacy of personal archives in times of algorithmic extraction and mass surveillance. Connolly revives and re-purposes techniques of manipulating the electromagnetic spectrum cultivated by Chicago video stalwarts like Daniel Sandin in a post-alphabetic society.





ALTEROTICS

is an arts collective devoted to activating public life for trans/queer people led by Anaïs Alias and Avery Jaye. Moving-image art, archival research, event hosting, and community building make up the broad strokes of their practice.

Artist statement. Anaïs likes the idea of people fucking on the screen of her body.

Below: Still frame from Alterotics film *Superlunacy Clinic* [2023]



through the lens of queer intimacy

She's into becoming a keyhole into the backroom, knowing obscenity will scroll through her interior anyway. Avery likes the idea of orchestrating the scene—giving a sonic body to acts of inflicting pleasure, an exchange of power.

Curatorial note: Alterotics activates and reconfigures media technologies of image capture and sonic production to create windows, filters, scores, portals, and transcodings of feeling. Their assemblages of media signals (sound, video, cameras, sensors) create capacities for exchange between performers, audience, and the subjects of their archival material through gates of intimacy and distance. Anaïs and Avery are joined by collaborative performers Cassie, Clover, and Leah.

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Flyer For Dee Day 2, Chicago, IL [10-28-1995]

Cassette Tape Of (DJ) Giro, "Syntax" recorded mix

Flyer For Top Secret, Chicago, IL [8-17-1996]

Flyer For E Lav, Chicago, IL [12-2-1990]

Flyer For Bubblicious, Minneapolis, MN [6-15-1996] Flyer For

Candyland, Sacramento, CA [12-14-1996]

HARD-DEE ROOM
The Hard-Dee Room is a state-of-the-art recording studio located in the heart of Chicago's Loop. It features a state-of-the-art recording studio located in the heart of Chicago's Loop. It features a state-of-the-art recording studio located in the heart of Chicago's Loop.

SOFT-DEE ROOM
The Soft-Dee Room is a state-of-the-art recording studio located in the heart of Chicago's Loop. It features a state-of-the-art recording studio located in the heart of Chicago's Loop. It features a state-of-the-art recording studio located in the heart of Chicago's Loop.

ALPHIE DEE

LAURENT HO

ROBERT HOOD

FRANCE DETROY

MARILYN FAYRE

JUAN ATKINS

APPS DEE-JAYZ-GOAN to udmarts off shire

MIKE DEARBORN

KEE

DAN EFF

DJ TRANCE vs NEUROMANCER

DEE SCRATCH-OFF

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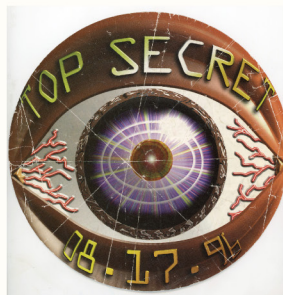
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WE DON'T KNOW YET: WHAT A CINEMA CAN DO

grace grace grace

[2024, revised 2026]

Defining what something “is” or “is not” is always less interesting than talking about what something can do. I feel there’s a finality to “is”, and finality risks fatalism, and fatalisms’ the worst. The most interesting experiences I’ve had start with the abandon of knowing altogether for that lucky dip into pools of potential we call experimentalism. But before we get too far, let me start with a story.

Enter the 1960s. With the proliferation of televised broadcast of art, culture, sport, and advertising, social and mental life itself began to congeal with new mediated forms of spectacle. The effects of cinema, the mass media spectacle par excellence, transformed in turn: the movie theater and cinematic experience became a machine for producing docile bodies and subjects.

The 1960s also gave us “expanded cinema”. Expanded cinema intervenes in this situation to put art to the tasks of resistance, rupture, and reconfiguration of mediatic experience. To meet this moment, artists like Stan VanDerBeek, Carolee Schneemann, Nam June Paik, and Annabel Nicolson leveraged increasingly accessible cinematographic technologies to invent new techniques of aesthetic and social relation.

For Gene Youngblood, a writer who wrote extensively about expanded cinema, video art, digital and computer art, expanded cinema was as much about art forms as it was about expanding consciousness. Described with evocative language like “synaesthetic cinema” and “cosmic consciousness”, Youngblood framed expanded cinema as a call-to-action for artists to explore new spatial and sensory formations. He borrows the language of media theorist Marshall McLuhan (whose influence on art of the 1960s and 70s is difficult to understate) of media as an “extension” of the human nervous system:

“Actually the most descriptive term for the new cinema is personal because it’s only an extension of the film-maker’s central nervous system. The reader should not interpret “synaesthetic” as an attempt to categorize or label a phenomenon that has no definition. There’s no single film that could be called typical of the new cinema because it is defined anew by each individual filmmaker.”

His emphasis on the personal and on the individual filmmaker is emblematic of 1960/70s counterculture. Corporate America has so thoroughly mainstreamed individuality in the last half century that I still find it challenging to imagine that it was once so transgressive.

Of course, this was all very Californian, very LA x SF crossover episode. And of course, looking back in 2026, we see how the cross-over episode first spurred its own spin-off show, then television franchise, then media empire: in places where the sun is always shining, ideologies, dreams and fantasies have a kind of sticky permanence. The sun never sets on Silicon Valley’s data centers.

One of Youngblood’s insights that I feel remains fresh is framing of the cinema as the broadest site of mediatic social

production. Cinema, he says, is an “intermedia environment” that encompasses film, video, and just about everything else:

“The cinema isn’t just something inside the environment; the intermedia network of cinema, television, radio, magazines, books, and newspapers is our environment, a service environment that carries the messages of the social organism”.

In short, cinema is the water we swim in. And what if it still is? We’ve subscribed to this story of print media paving the way for mass-media, only to be reborn and baptized as new media in the 1990s. People still call themselves new media artists as if forty years isn’t enough to age out. New framings help us to think and feel in new ways. What if new media never happened? What if we’ve been at the movies the whole time?

New realities continue to roll out cinema’s domineering march towards totalizing our social and cultural (media) environment: short-form video in our pockets, button-press machine generated images and video. Whatever’s next, it’s new boss, same as the old boss. The most communitarian action of sharing is inextricably entangled with the production of surplus value for the richest people in the world.

We’re living in the age of expanded cinema. We’re all sampled, chopped, and screwed in this glitched out Beach Boys remix (“I’d be safe and warm / if I was in L.A.”), an expanse of expanded cinema extending on forever, an unbroken loop of the cybernetic age.

These days technopessimism is mainstreamed too. Netflix documentaries, New Yorker thinkpieces, and the whole tragic chorus laments the devastation of social life at the hands of intermedia networks. I don't think anyone in 2024 really feels any smug humility in keeping the 1970s dream alive. We all know that "retro" technologies and aesthetics don't really ward off technocapital's ever expanding colonization of our lives.

Activist and philosopher Felix Guattari spent his life thinking about groups of people, working closely with anarchists and communists, gay and women's liberation activists, schizophrenics and psychotherapists, artists, and philosophers. He knew the technological art of his time as well as anybody; he introduced telematic art pioneers Sherrie Rabinowitz and Kit Galloway to each other before they became partners in both love and art. In the end of his life Guattari was enlivened by his own experimentations with networks, computers, and pirate radio and video. In the 1990 essay "Towards a Post-Media Era" he wrote:

"we can hope for a transformation of mass-media power that will overcome contemporary subjectivity, and for the beginning of a post-media era of collective-individual reappropriation and an interactive use of machines of information, communication, intelligence, art and culture."

It feels to me like this post-media era is here, for better and for worse (same with post-cinema, if that rings a bell). I think the technical and aesthetic aspirations of Guattari and Youngblood are allied. But I like Guattari's clear-eyed politics better:

"Should one be nostalgic about 'the good old days' when things were as they were, regardless of their mode of representation? ... New technologies foster efficiency and madness in the same flow. The

growing power of software engineering does not necessarily lead to the power of Big Brother. In fact it is way more cracked than it seems. It can blow up like a windshield under the impact of molecular alternative practices.”

If we're still in the theater, there's no use waiting for the credits to roll. So, with the indulgent nostalgia of lost futures or retro futurism out of the way: where are the fucking cracks? If we can manage to sidestep the all-or-nothing thinking of technopessimism and optimism, we might get lucky enough to step on one. Not in the technics or aesthetics itself, but in the potential for social and psychic transformation they engender. It's in such a space that we might inherit from aspirations of the past afresh.

By “molecular”, Guattari means localized, situated, sui generis, and maybe ephemeral. To me, it means that for expanded cinema practices to meet today's predicament and tomorrow's possibility is to dispense with the tired individualism of the singular artist pedaling influence through a hegemonic canon and embrace an emergent heterophonics (-optics; -haptics) of gathering people.

Not towards an insular coherence of “community”, but assembling ensembles of open bodies and minds tending towards mental and social transformation: the cyborgian expanded cinema as transmedia noise show (e.g. MSHR, Angel Bat Dawit, Macula Dog); The Otolitch Group's Pan-African cinematic rhythmanalytic collage of Senegalese filmmakers Ousmane Sembène and Djibril Diop Mambéty (“A Massive Concentration of Black Intersalary Energy”, 2025); or the woman-on-the-street video interviews by Vaginal Davis and Paul Pfeiffer's tiny video screens showing edited footage of NBA games displaying only the basketball (“John

3:16”).

The French philosopher Gilles Deleuze wrote that every philosopher has a “scream”:

“the philosopher is not someone who sings, but someone who screams. Each time that you need to scream, I think that you are not far from a kind of call of philosophy. What would it mean for the concept to be a kind of scream or a kind of form of scream? That’s what it means to need a concept to have something to scream!”

One of his favorite screams was Spinozas: “We don’t know yet what a body can do”.

So, let’s scream: we don’t know yet what a cinema can do! what can the (post-, expanded) cinema do? How can artists disrupt patterns of “engagement” and “impression” that govern corporate media algorithms, and by extension our entire sphere of sociality? How can experimental modes of animating sound and moving image reconfigure the possibility of our relating to one another anew? How can we cultivate and care for new forms of showing up in our (for our, with our, to our) bodies that foment drives and spark desires yet untold?

CCAM team

Kim Nucci

AJ Mendelsohn

Ruby Que

Muindi Fanuel Muindi

Grace Grace Grace

OCFF team

Nicky Ni

Elise Schierbeek

Thank you

To this year's artists AJ McClenon, Alterotics, James Connolly, our past WDKY artists, the Midwest Rave Culture Archive, Chicago Filmmakers, Chris Eichenseer, Someoddpilot, everyone @ Public Works, Marz Brewing, Watershed Art & Ecology, David Whitehouse, Odette Stout, Eva Davidova, OCFF volunteers, AVS, Devin Dass, and the entire CCAM + OCFF community.

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