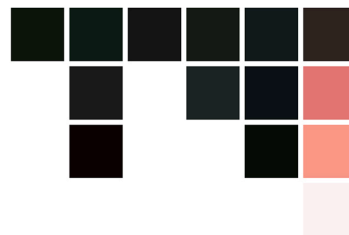
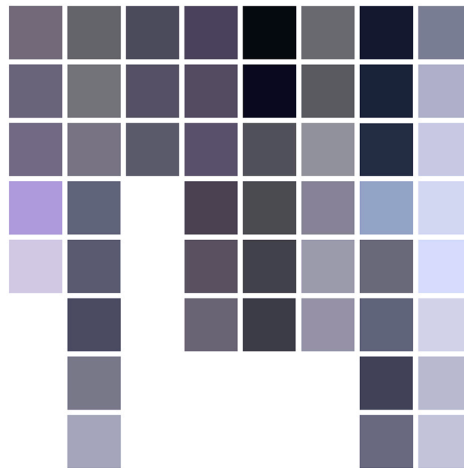
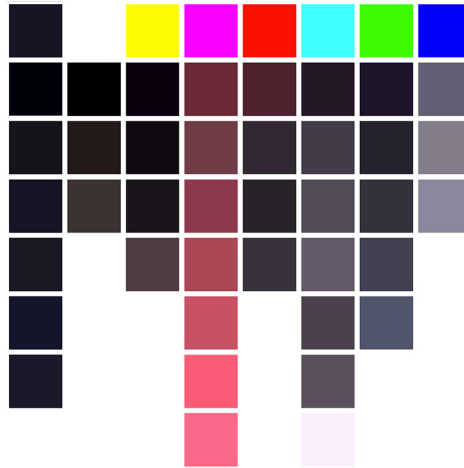
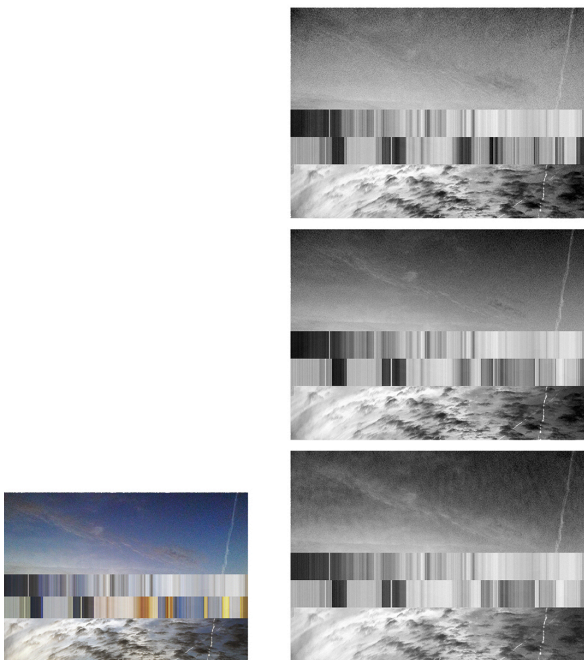


# A.P. Vague *Digital Palimpsests*

January 23 - March 29, 2020



# A.P. Vague

A.P. Vague is a multimedia artist and educator based in Chicago. Vague's work is focused on long-distance communication and working with alternative spaces. In addition to web-based and digital work, he has worked in experimental formats such as programming and live electronics at art spaces in Romania, France, The Netherlands, and elsewhere. Vague earned a BA at Wichita State University and MFA at Rutgers University and has taught at Hussian College, Wichita State University, and Butler Community College. He currently teaches at DePaul University in Chicago.



A.P. Vague, #64, 2019. Silver halide print, video still manipulated using Photoshop. Image courtesy of the artist.

“In this series of experiments, I consider the materials of image-making as aesthetic resources in themselves. Cameras and film are essentially designed to be invisible; they are meant to capture and faithfully reproduce the observable world. But what happens when these tools not only stop functioning as accurate recording devices, but also become entirely disconnected from any observed reality?”

The twelve works made for this exhibition and shown here for the first time were created using a variety of strategies for manipulating photographs toward abstraction. My aim is to build my own lexicon of distortion so the results might evoke an aesthetic of transformation and discovery during the creative process.

Each image was treated according to its formal properties such as color, composition, texture, and density, without regard for what may be depicted. These works exist as image deconstructions: new forms that hold latent remnants of the originals.”

– **A.P. Vague**

Thank you to our exhibition and program sponsors for making our ambitious plans for this year and years to come possible: Derek Adler and Noreen Weiss, Saroj Arab, Clark and Sharon Bastian, Gridley Family Foundation, Sandra M. Langel, Jane McHugh, Dee and Mike Michaelis, Don and Eli Skokan, Lee and Ron Starkel, Georgia and Keith Stevens, and the Wilson Family Foundation.

**Cover:** A.P. Vague, #71 v. 3, 2019. Silver halide prints, digital photographs manipulated using p5.js and Photoshop. Image courtesy of the artist.

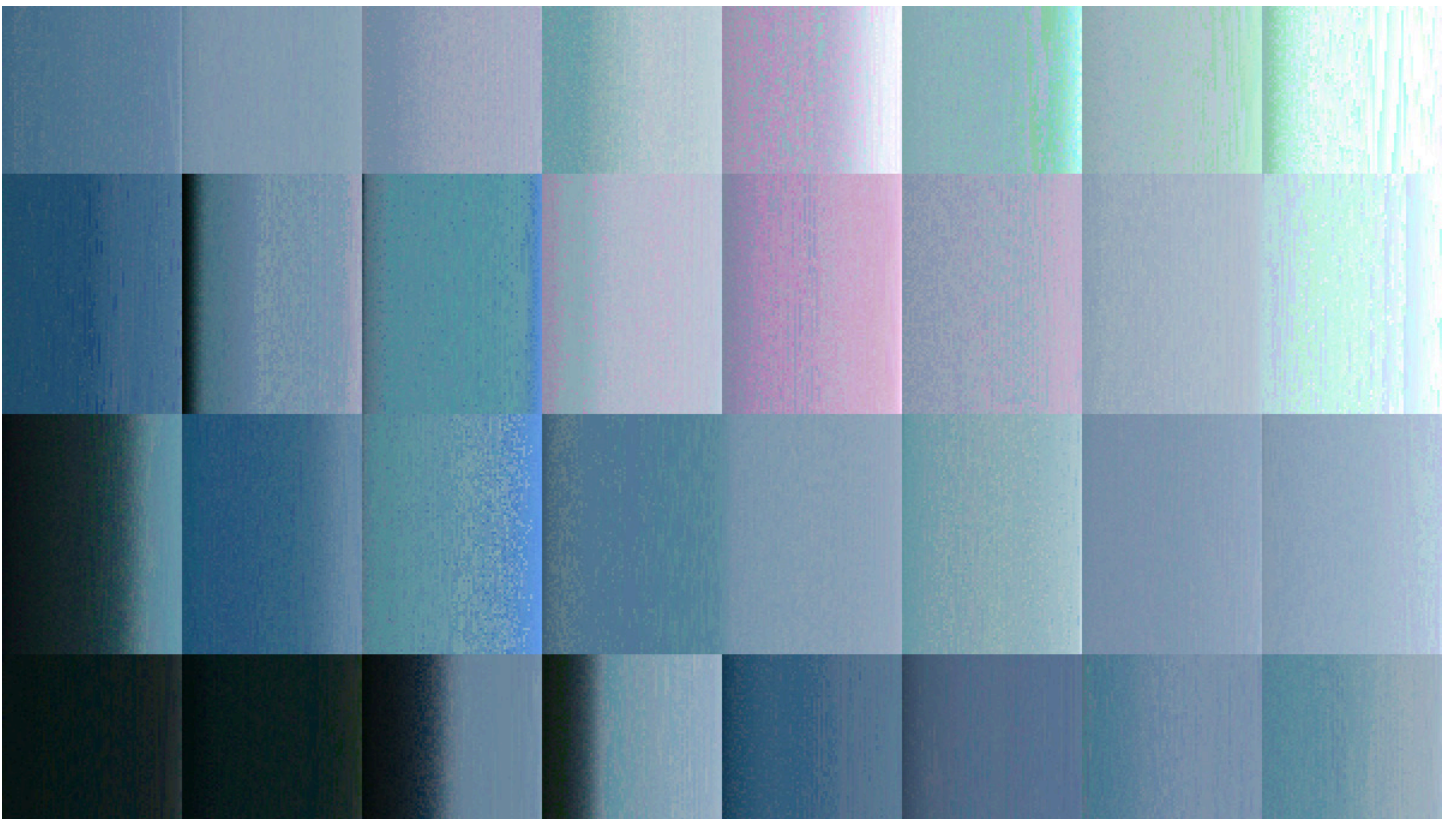
# An Incomplete List of Questions in Response to A.P. Vague's Work

A.P. Vague's work is open-ended and mutable, rooted in processes that allow ideas to iterate over and over, so that every final product is a palimpsest - a layering of conceptual traces and experiments - always liable to become the starting point for the next work.

At the heart of this work are questions about how we trust images, how they communicate their meanings, and how they create a sense of connection to events that are remote in space and time from the person interpreting or manipulating them. These questions don't have easy or definitive answers, nor is Vague interested in finding such answers. In the same spirit, here are a few of the many questions that this work raises in my mind:

- Does a photographic negative still bear the imprint of the moment it was exposed, even if the visual information is blurred beyond recognition?
- In the age of fake news, Photoshop, filters galore, and truthiness, what can we believe about an image? What can we trust it to reveal? And can image-makers be trusted at all?
- How might these images change our thinking about the claims that we humans make about our perceptions of reality?
- In the face of a coming deluge of algorithmically-generated images with no "originals," will we need to evolve a more nuanced language for discussing visual reality, facts, objectivity, and subjectivity?
- What is the relationship between human and artificial intelligence in these works? Who is the creator? Whom do we credit and for what?
- If machines no longer need humans to generate immersive image worlds, does that de-center human perception in radical ways? Does the pinnacle of human ingenuity paradoxically bring to an end the era of anthropocentrism? How do we as humans feel about that?

- **Ksenya Gurshtein**  
**Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art, Ulrich Museum of Art**



A.P. Vague, #33, 2017. Silver halide and giclée print, video still manipulated using p5.js. Image courtesy of the artist.



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