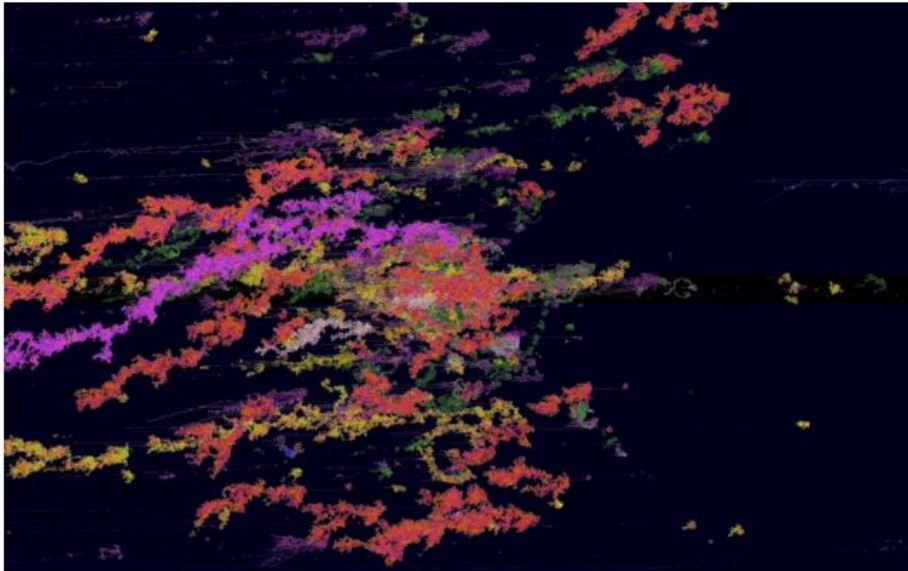


GALLERIES

Rendering the Anatomy of Our Hard Drives

by **Claire Voon** on 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.

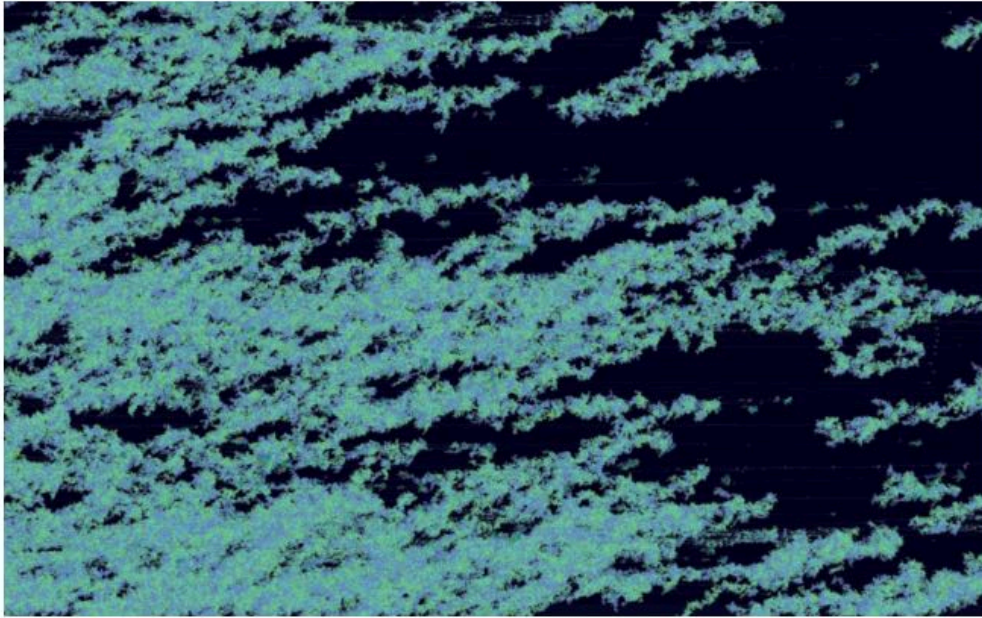
Heightening the expressive setting, the lightboxes, with their colors corresponding to files such as Corriel's iTunes compilations, downloads, and all his passwords, somewhat resemble scenes from our natural world. From afar, they seem like maps of fantasyscapes, coral branches, or patches of fluorescent 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.

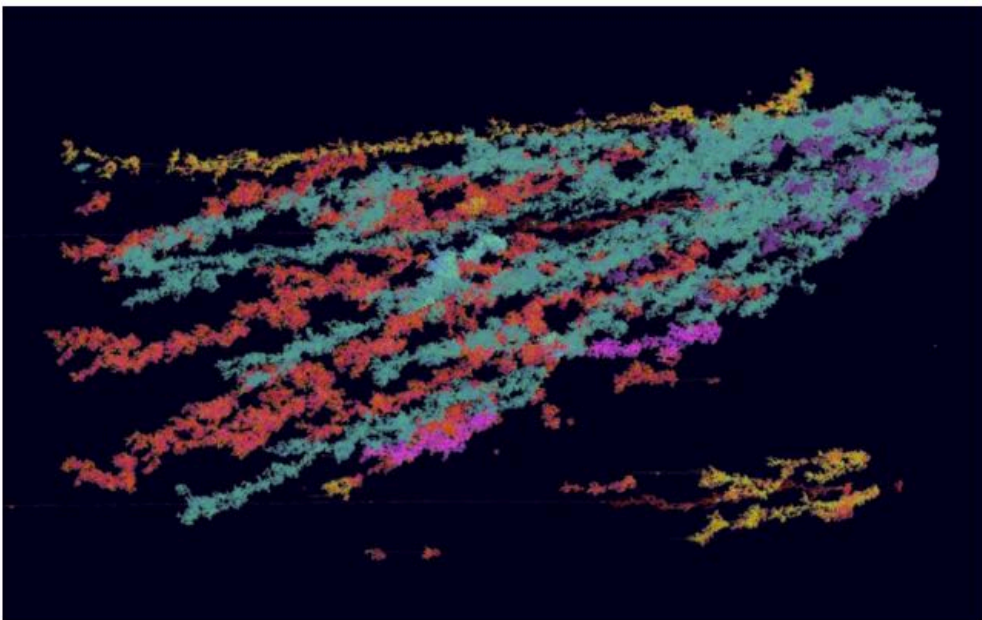


Installation view of 'Enter the Machine' at Garis & Hahn

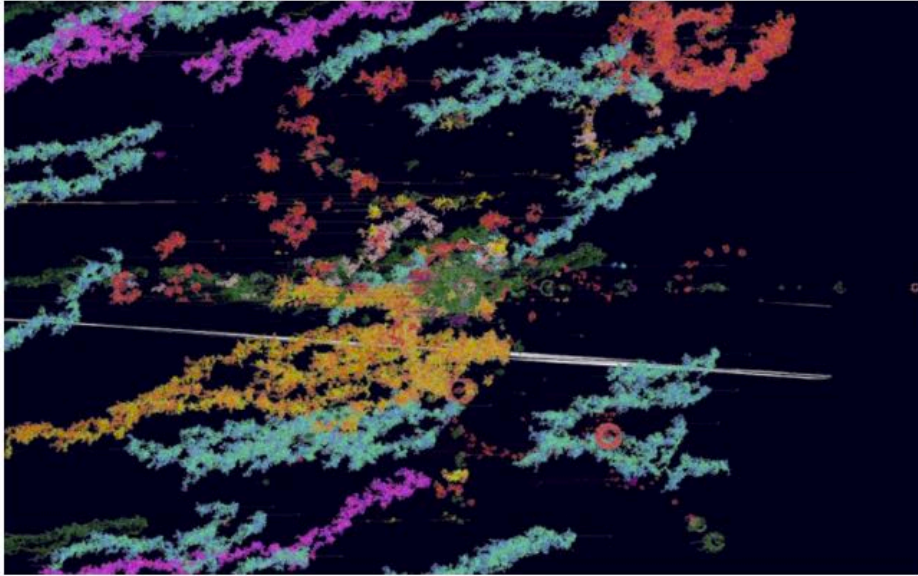
Corriel's algorithm, of course, is entirely subjective. Like a painter, sculptor, or artist working in a more conventional medium, he went through various versions of an algorithm, editing lines of code until he attained a result he liked. Yet, while we're offered a voyeuristic view of Corriel's own 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.



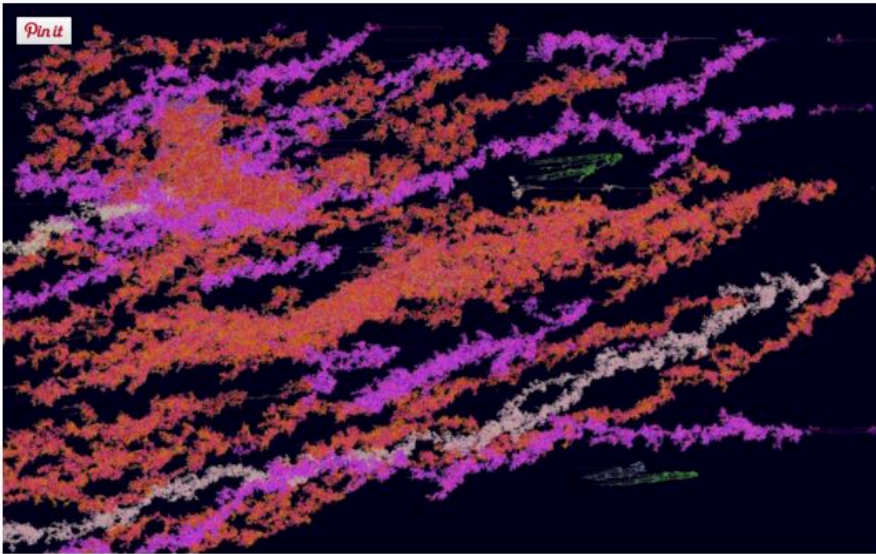
Eric Corriel, "Enter the Machine 1.3 A.K.A. iTunes Compilations, A-E" (2015)



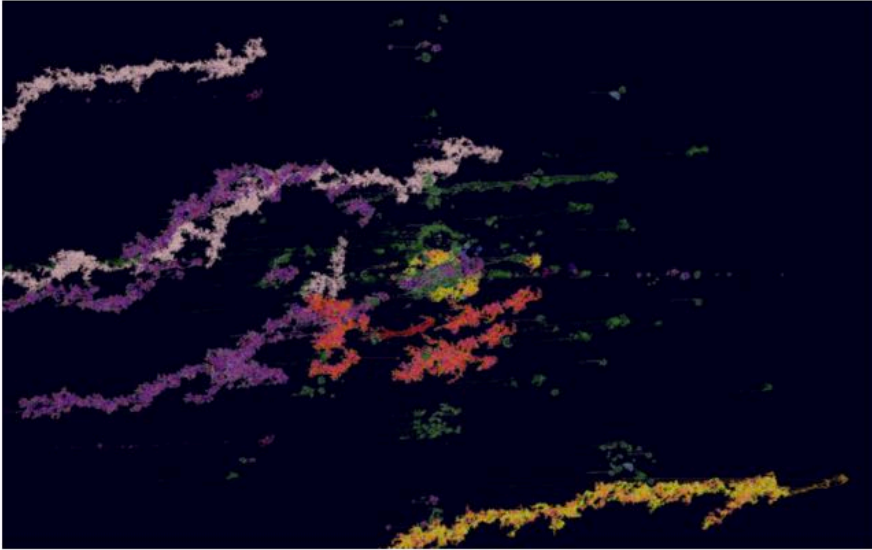
Eric Corriel, "Enter the Machine 1.2 A.K.A. Three Months of Email" (2015)



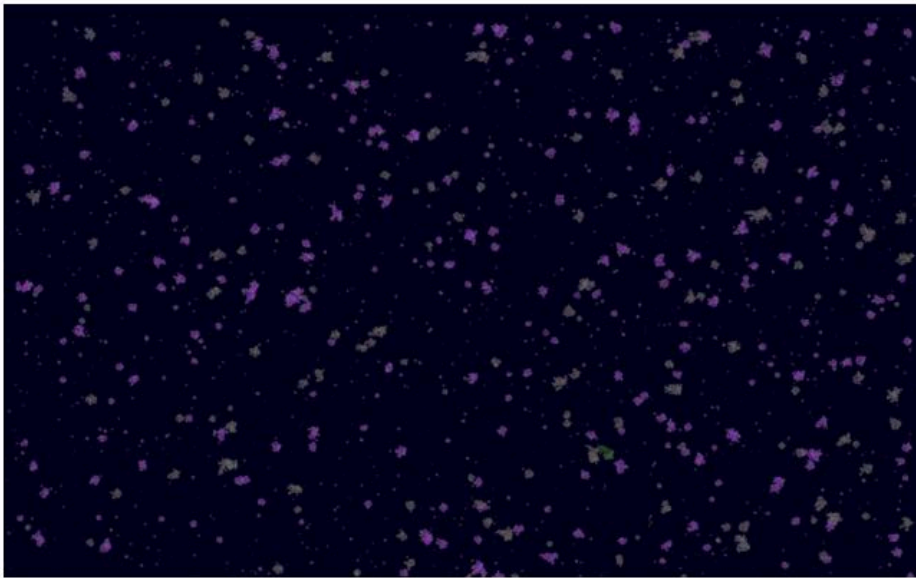
Eric Corriel, "Enter the Machine 1.8 A.K.A. Websites I Created for Friends and Family, Namely lustforart.com, mattcorriel.com, reidblackman.com, seancorriel.com" (2015)



Eric Corriel, "Enter the Machine 1.0 A.K.A. My Desktop" (2015)



Eric Corriel, "Enter the Machine 1.1 A.K.A. Downloads (stock photos, bank statements, open source code libraries, etc)" (2015)



Eric Corriel, "Enter the Machine 1.5 A.K.A. All My Passwords" (2015)



Installation view of 'Enter the Machine' (photo by Brett Wood)

Eric Corriel: [Enter the Machine](#) continues at *Garis & Hahn* (263 Bowery, Lower East Side, Manhattan) through February 25.