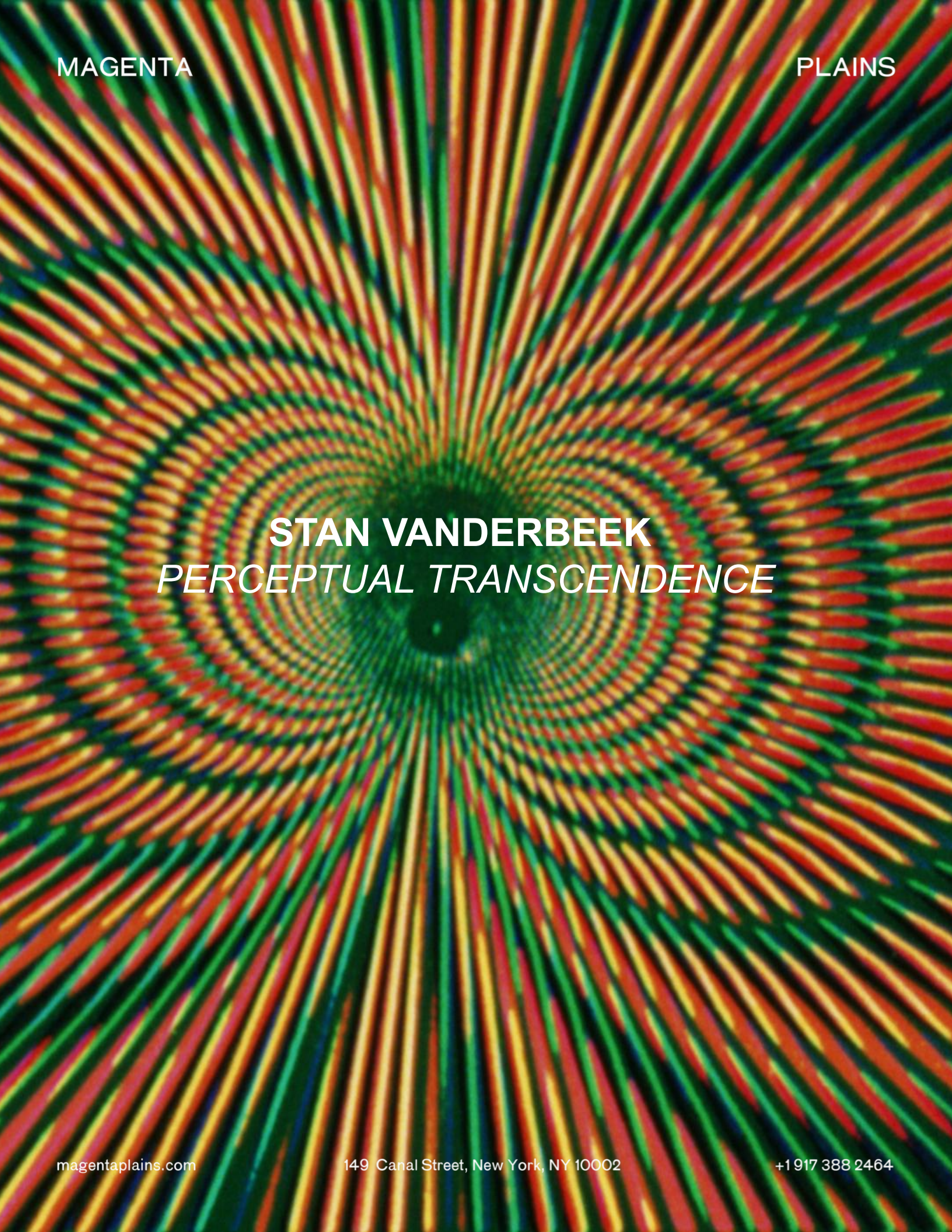
MAGENTA
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STAN VANDERBEEK
PERCEPTUAL TRANSCENDENCE
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Art Basel Miami Beach 2023 | Booth S17

Stan VanDerBeek: *Perceptual Transcendence*

Wed, Dec 6, 2023 – Sun, Dec 10, 2023

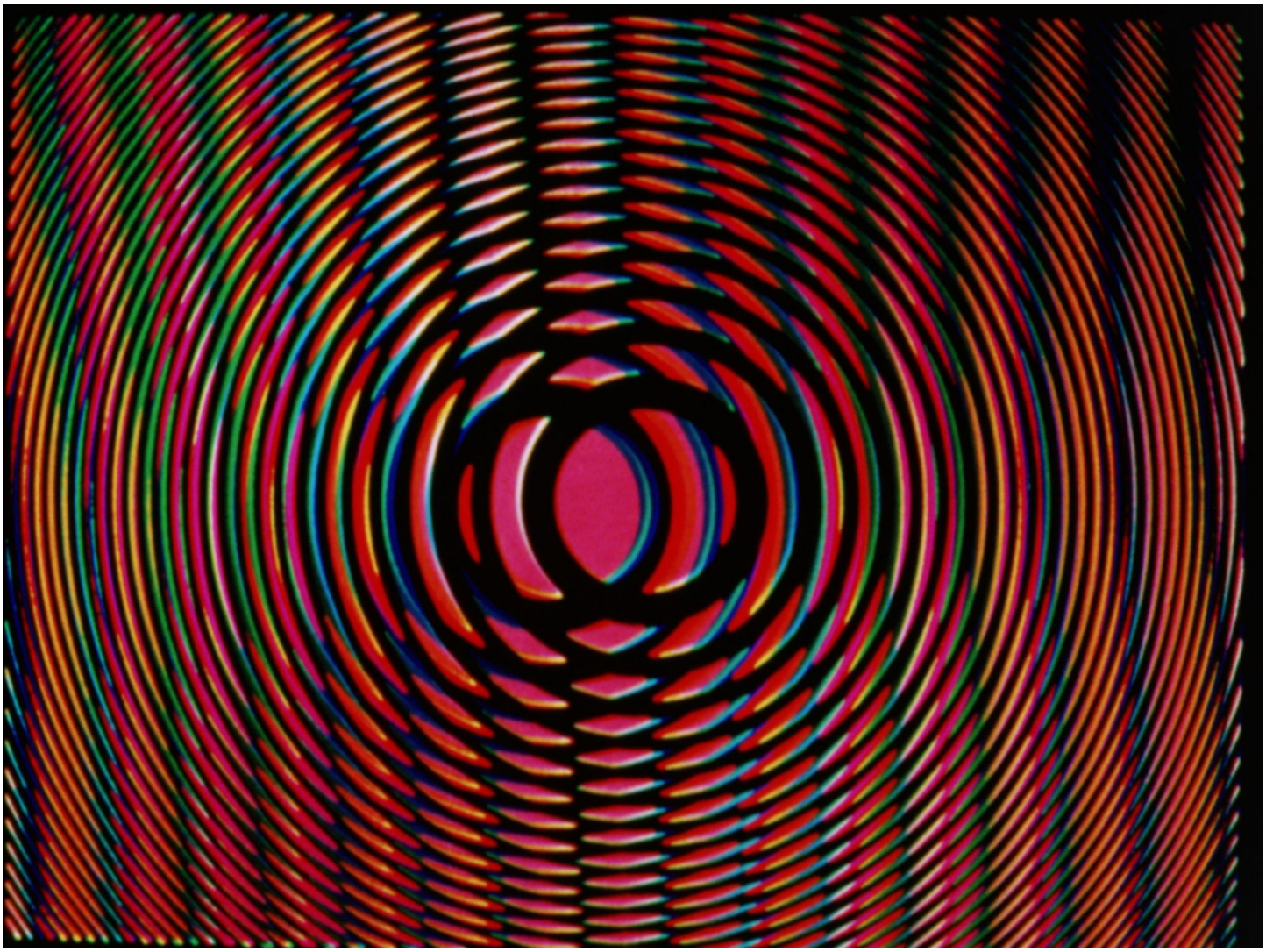
Magenta Plains is pleased to present *Perceptual Transcendence,* a solo exhibition of historical works from the late 1960s and 1970s by the revered experimental artist and filmmaker Stan VanDerBeek. Centered around VanDerBeek's recently preserved film, *Moirage* (1967), shown alongside computer generated works on paper, this presentation speaks to the artist's relationship with contemporaneous cultural phenomena of Op Art and Psychedelia.

Stan VanDerBeek (1927–1984) was a prolific multimedia artist known for his pioneering work in experimental film, expanded cinema and computer art. VanDerBeek believed in technology as a tool to further the human experience. In his words, "new technologies will open higher levels of psychic communication and neurological referencing."

Throughout his career, VanDerBeek was deeply invested in how technology had the potential to build new cultural spaces, calling for a broader understanding in the ways accelerated media impacts our experience of the world, and ultimately each other. During his tenure at Bell Labs (1964–71) and as the first artist in residence at CAVS at MIT (1970), VanDerBeek developed new-media works in collaboration with other multidisciplinary researchers and artists interested in expanding and advancing an audience's experience. Visually seductive, this succinct display encapsulates not only VanDerBeek's technological prescience but also a humanist idealism and curiosity expressed to stunning, poetic effect.

Moirage, 1967

WATCH FILM EXCERPT HERE



16mm film and Digital transfer, color, sound
9:21 min
Edition of 6 plus 2 artist's proofs (#2/6)

Moirage, 1967

Moirage is an abstract film study in optical illusions and pattern-superimpositions which built on VanDerBeek's longstanding interest in visual phenomena. Made with a moiré pattern kit consisting of transparencies with concentric circles, parallel lines, and arrays of dots, the resulting effect (generally curved, radiating and sometimes very complex rippled or "watered" appearance), demonstrates wave interference and can be said to be a psychological experience due to how any imperfect alignment forms a pattern in one's own eye. Moiré was one of the key motifs of the 1960s as seen in avant-garde films by peers of VanDerBeek such as John Whitney and Jordan Belson, following progenitors of the form, Oskar Fischinger and Len Lye.

The result of a moiré effect is a visual trick akin to a moving animation, despite it being only an intersection of forms. The patterns in *Moirage* were created by Gerald Oster, a biophysicist with whom VanDerBeek shared many interests. Paul Motian, one of the most influential jazz musicians of the second half of the 20th Century, provided a backing track including xylophone, upright bass, tom-toms, drums, cymbals, and chimes. The vibrant colors in the film were added by artists Robert Brown and Frank Olvey, who along with Motian, were frequent collaborators on VanDerBeek's films. The combination of intense visual phenomenon with an arrhythmic auditory experience enraptures the viewer in a near hallucinogenic state; indeed, VanDerBeek stated that he was "seeking a new type of visual music."

Moirage, 1967: Select Exhibition History

A detailed view of *Moirage,* 1967

In 1969, *Moriage,* VanDerBeek's multiscreen installation*,* was featured in *Found Forms,* at Crosstalk Intermedia Festival in Japan.

In 1971 it was included in a retrospective of VanDerBeek's films that was presented at the American Embassy Auditorium, London, United Kingdom; The John F. Kennedy Center, Washington D.C.; and U.S. Cultural Center, Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, Israel.

In 2019, it was on view at Black Mountain College Museum + Art Center, Asheville, North Carolina.

In 2020, it was included in *Immortality*: 5th Ural Industrial Biennial of Contemporary Art, Ekaterinburg, Russia

In 2023 it was presented on 16mm film inside Movie-Drome for Signals at the Museum of Modern Art, New York and in... and in *Magic Moirés,* Centre Pompidou, Paris France.

In 2024 / 2025, Moirage will be included in *Op Art,* Albright Knox Gallery and Museé d’arts de Nantes.

Art and Science Meet in Gallery

Physicist Explains His 'Geometry' of Moire Patterns

By JOHN A. OSMUNDSEN

A Brooklyn scientist is spending part of his time these days telling artists how a new thing he has invented, which might be called a geometry, could be useful to them.

The rest of his time, when he is not working at the Polytechnic Institute of Brooklyn as a professor of polymer chemistry, he is explaining it to biologists, astronomers, mathematicians, physicists (and physics teachers), aerodynamicists and so on.

The scientist is Gerald Oster. The geometry—or whatever one would call it—has to do with something called "moiré patterns."

Moiré patters are, essentially, optical illusions that are created when two repetitive figures are overlapped and looked through.

Examples are grids and series of parallel lines, concentric circles and radial lines—such as window screens, picket fences, sliced onions and the spokes of wheels.

The name, "moiré," comes from the French for "watered" and is probably most familiar as the name of moiré, or watered, silk.

This fabric is woven of parallel cords, folded so that the cords in the two layers are not quit aligned, pressed to engrave this slightly misaligned pattern and unfolded. Light reflected off this superimposed repetitive pattern, the human eye and the brain create the shimmering appearance characteristic of the material.

But, as Professor Oster told reporters yesterday at the Howard Wise Gallery, 50 West 57th Street, a person can see moiré patterns all over the place: as "beats" in double railings on bridges, as huge diamonds seen by looking horizontally through a city trash basket, as swirls

The New York Times

Dr. Gerald Oster explains moire patterns at Wise Gallery

effects in the current exhibit, entitled "On the Move," by Gunter Uecker, Len Lye, Vvarel and John Goodyear.

Because moiré patterns change when the two repetitive figures that create them move—or the viewer does—the art works were either mobile themselves or relied on the observer's movment for their effects, which were sometimes dizzying.

Dr. Oster created several moiré effects of his own with basic designs projected on a screen. The patterns he produced, he said, represented the lines that the eye selects to see as connecting the intersections of the two repetitive figures, which, superimposed, produce

techniques with only elementary knowledge of algebra and geometry, he continued, moiré theory might be used to teach theoretical physics to high school students, accelerating their progress in this field by six or seven years.

The scientist said that he and Dr. Yasunori Nishijima of Kyoto University in Japan, about two years ago, added circles and curves to moiré theory, which up to that time had dealt only with straight lines.

They had hoped at first to use moiré techniques in the study of the diffusion of minute particles in liquids. Only gradually did the possibility of using moiré patterns in a wide

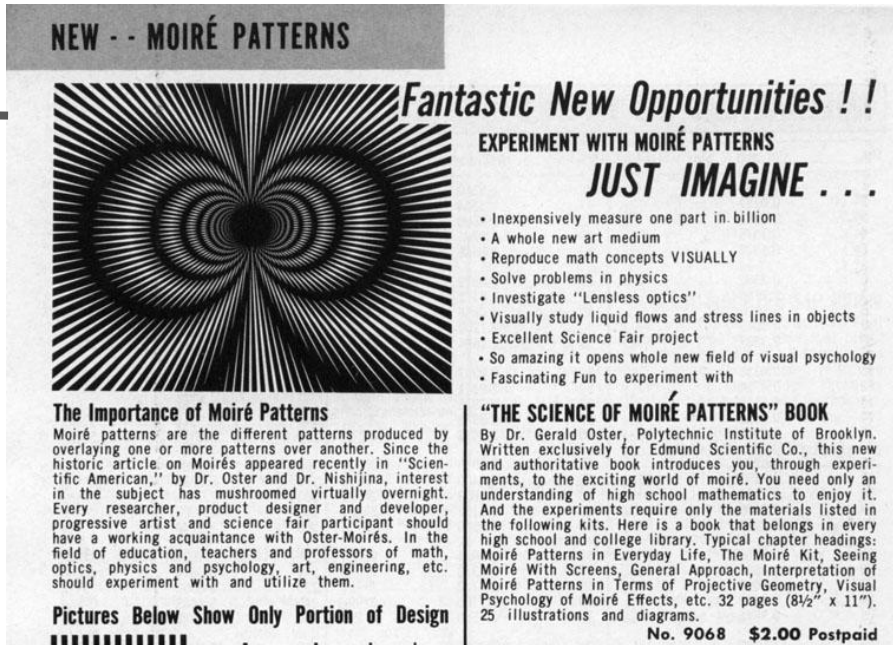
"A Brooklyn scientist is spending part of his time these days telling artists how a new thing he has invented, which might be called a geometry, could be useful to them.

The rest of his time, when he is not working at the Polytechnic Institute of Brooklyn as a professor of polymer chemistry, he is explaining it to biologists, astronomers, mathematicians, physicists (and physics teachers), aerodynamicists and so on. The scientist is Gerald Oster.

The geometry—or whatever one would call it—has to do with something called "moiré patterns."

Moiré patterns are, essentially, optical illusions that are created when two repetitive figures are overlapped and looked through"
–*The New York Times*, 1964

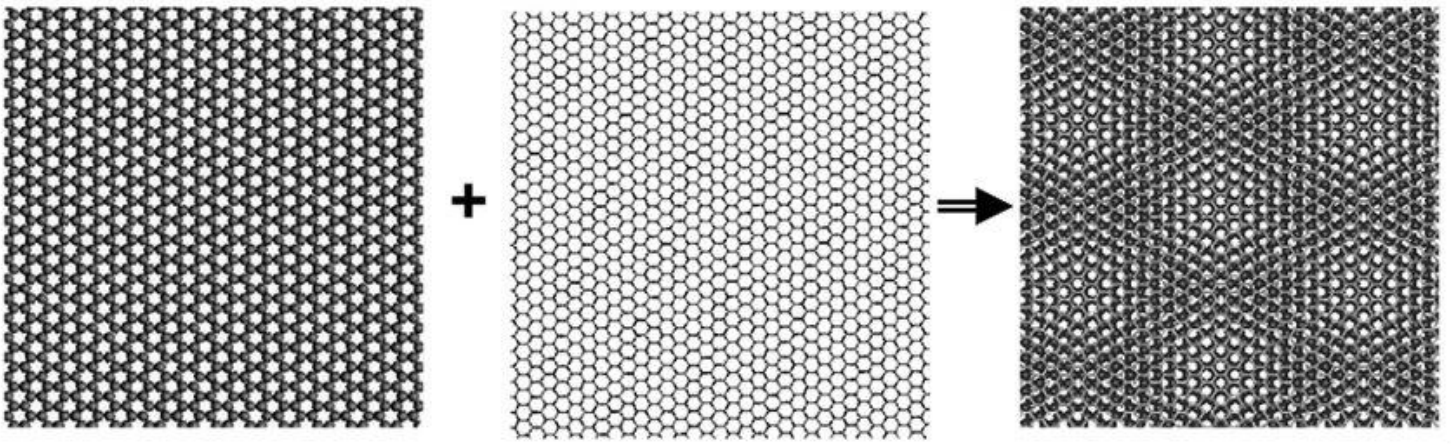
Since the historic article on Moirés appeared recently in "Scientific American" by Dr Oster and Dr Nishijina, interest in the subject mushroomed virtually overnight.



In the 1960s, VanDerBeek took interest in the Moiré pattern and produced a number of films exploring abstract patterns in motion layered with color and sound, among which was *Moirage*. To make the film, VanDerBeek manually animated black and white transparencies from scientist Gerald Oster's commercially available Moire kit.

Moirage showcased VanDerBeek's ongoing ability to create new visual symbolism for science and technology that lacked broad public integration at the time.

Color was added in the printing process by Frank Brown and Robert Olvey - two filmmakers with a lab in Seattle that colored many of VanDerBeek's films, including his legendary *Poemfields.*

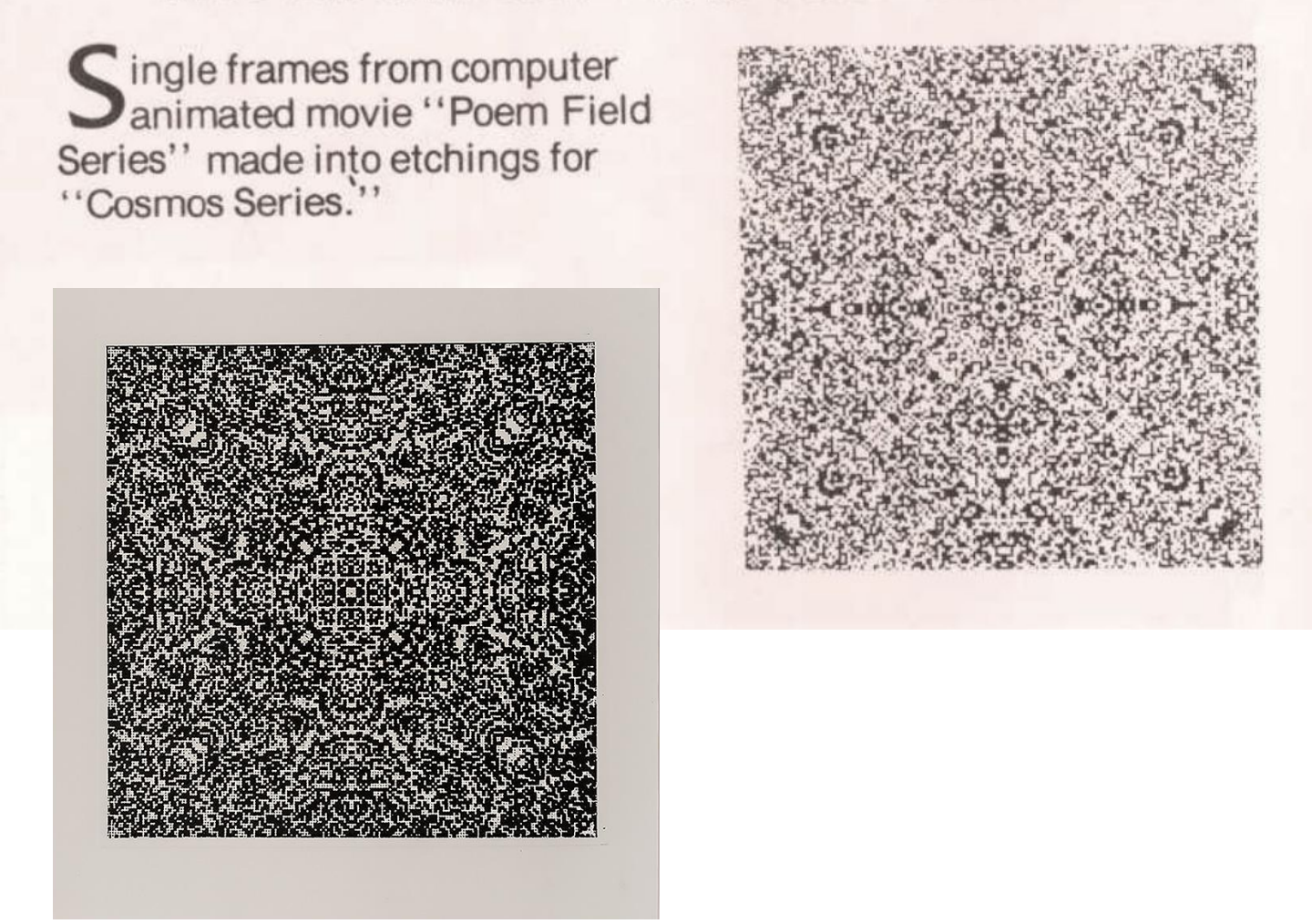


Pattern 1 Pattern 2 Moiré Pattern

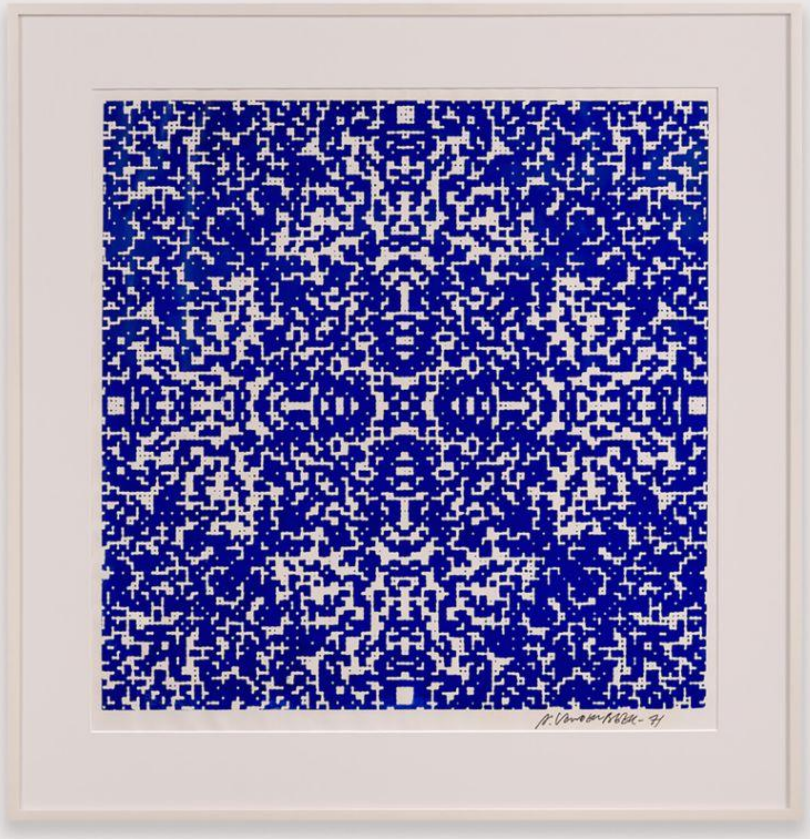
The contents of a 60's Moiré Pattern kit, similar to the commercially sold kit that was utilized by VanDerBeek to create *Moirage*.

Intergraphics

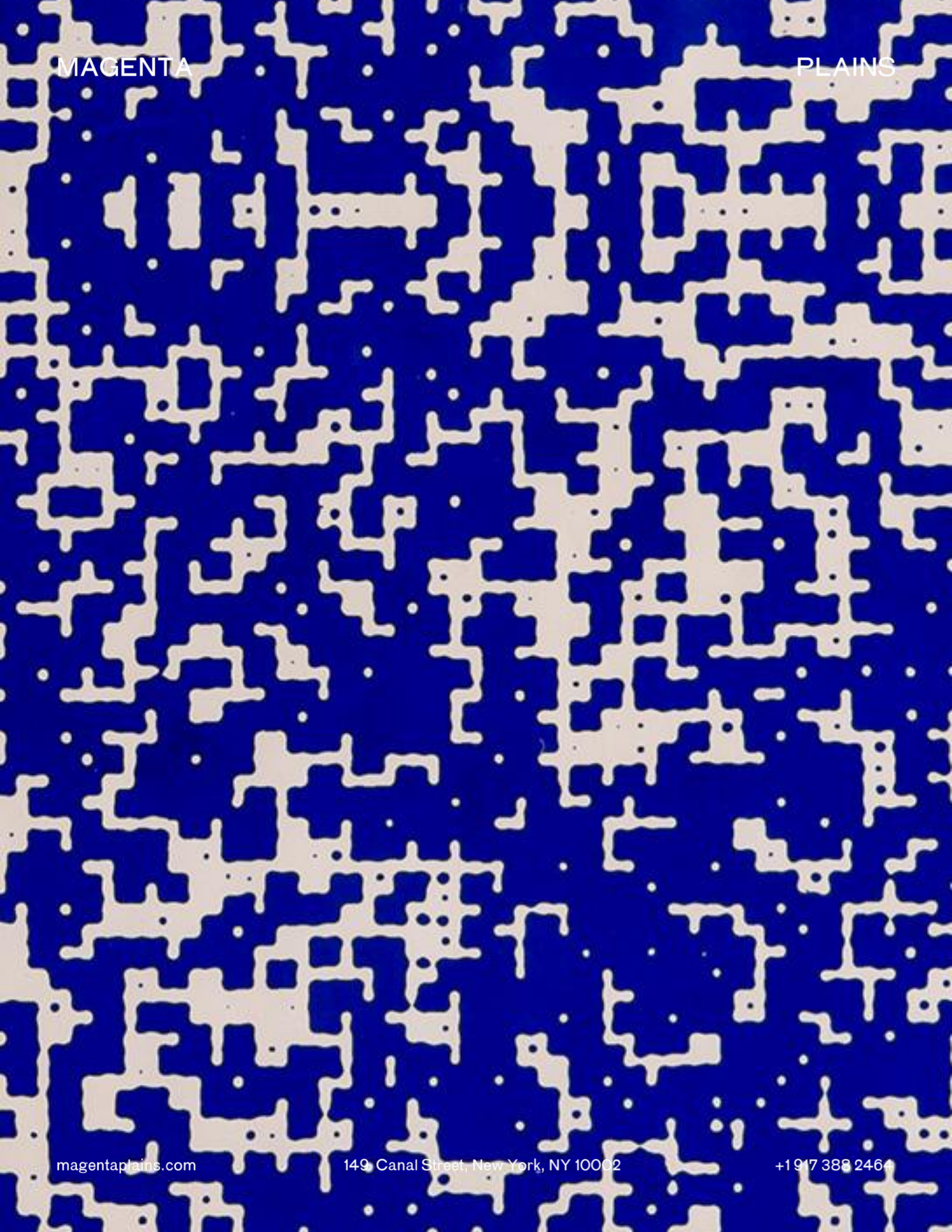
Stan VanDerBeek's "Intergraphics" are unique and editioned framed works on paper called "Intergraphics" by VanDerBeek. Made from his 35mm computer art film stills of mandalas and output as color silkscreens, black and white intaglio prints, and early color Xerox experiments, VanDerBeek's electronic imagery proposed a new matrix for representing a native part of visual culture. His exploration of the mandala, a form also central to his contemporary Bruce Conner, was evidence of VanDerBeek's belief that technology could be used as a means of "expanding consciousness."



Black Micro Kosmos, 1972-1975



Untitled, 1971
Silkscreen Print on Paper
24 x 24 in.



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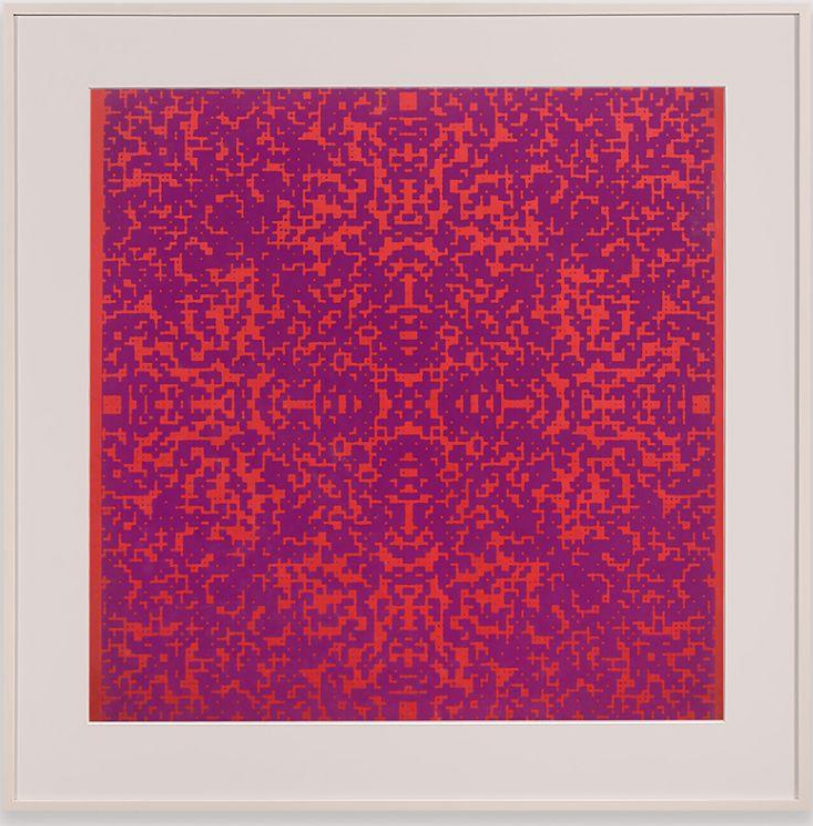
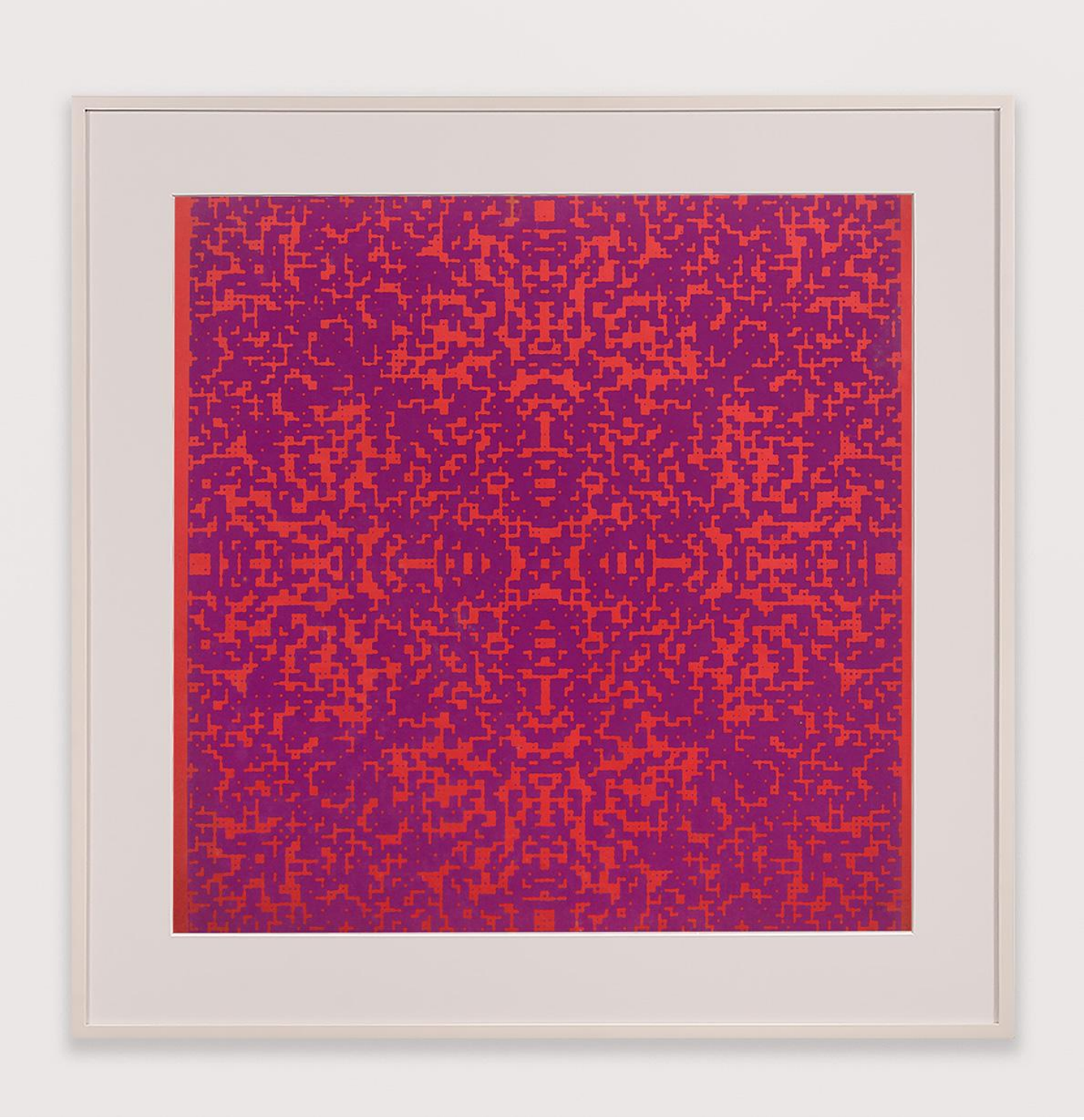


Untitled, 1971
Silkscreen print on paper
27 1/2 x 27 1/2 in.



Black Micro Kosmos, 1972-1975
Copperplate Intaglio Print on Paper
16 x 15 in.

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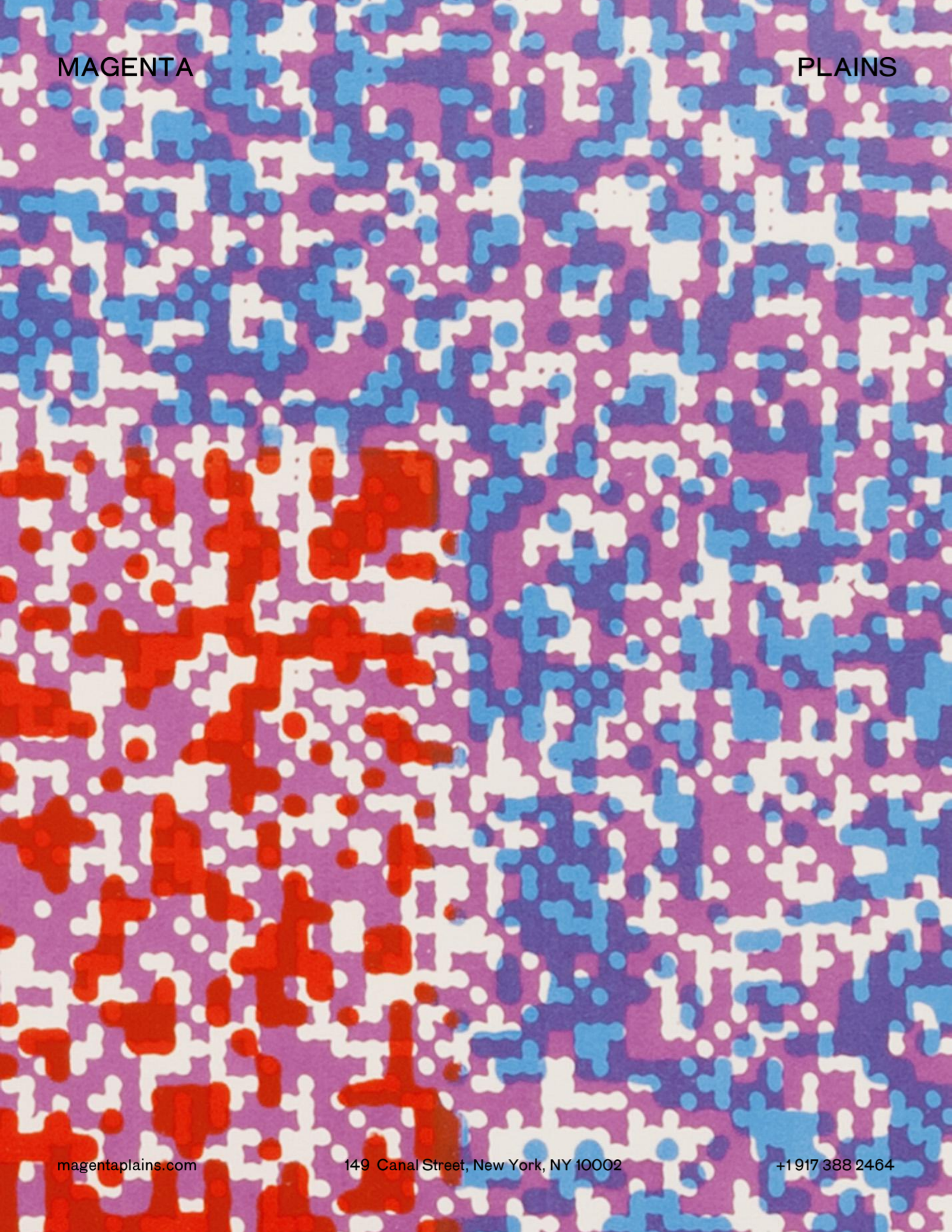
Mandell/as #1, 1973
Computer Graphic Silkscreen Print on Paper
22 x 28 in.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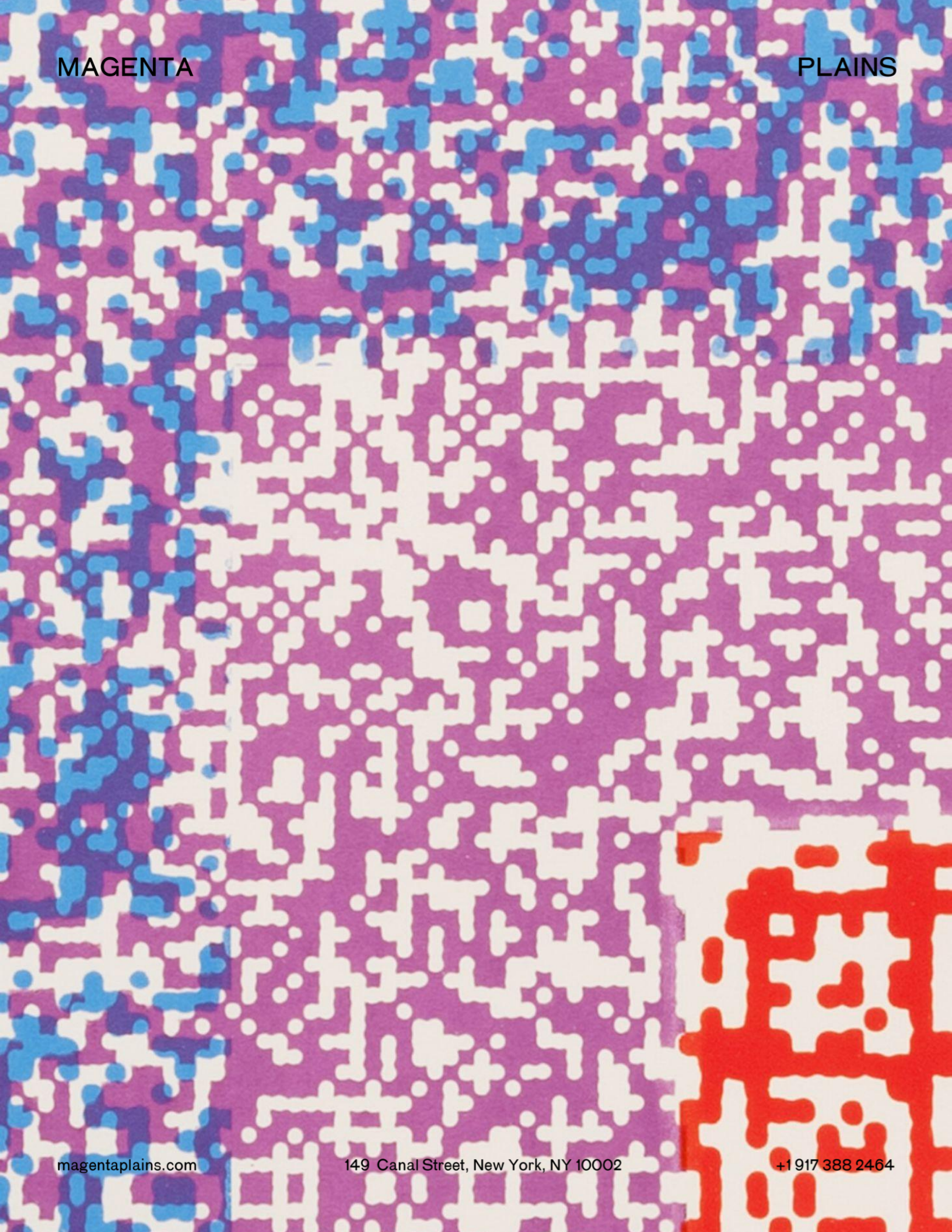
Mandell/as #2, 1973
Computer Graphic Silkscreen Print on Paper
22 x 28 in.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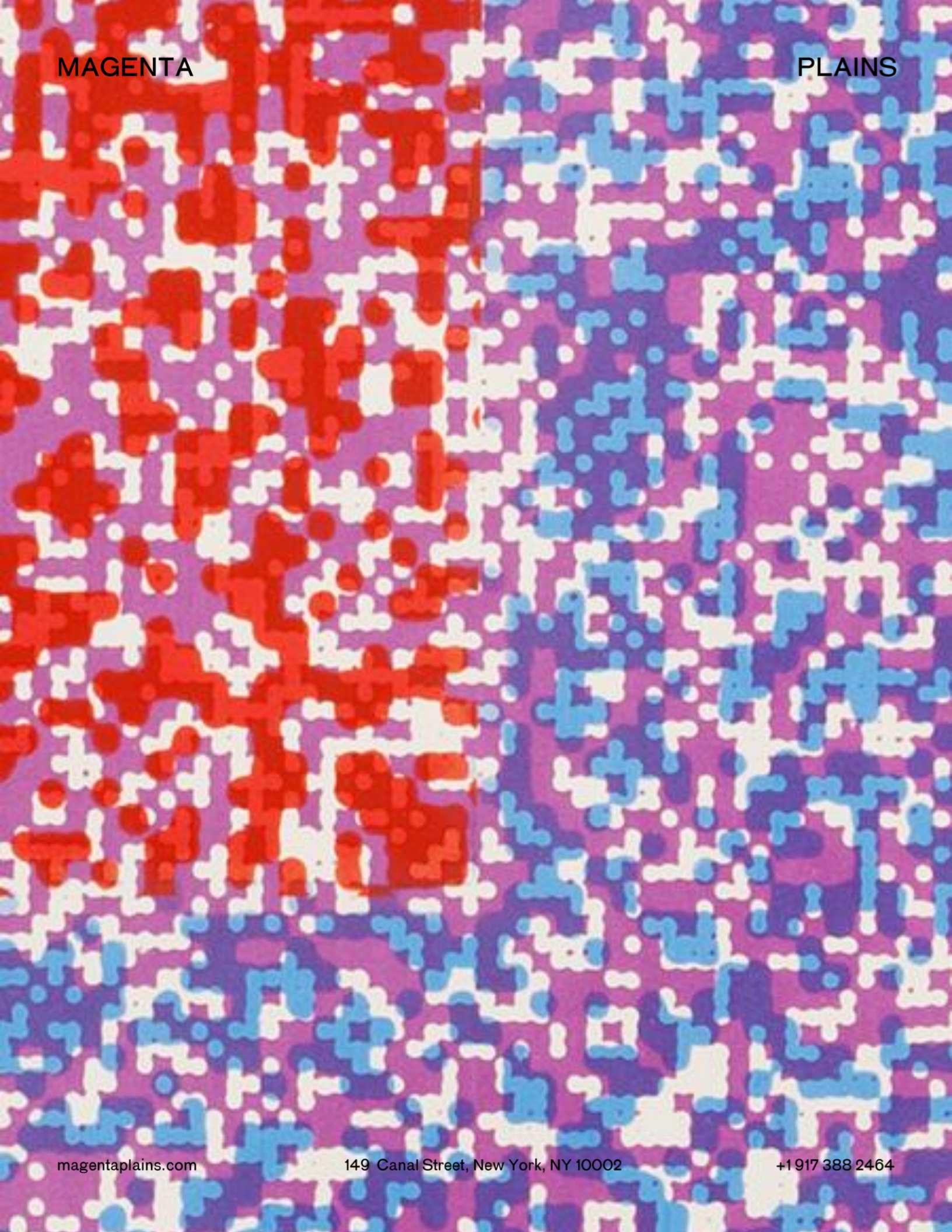
Mandell/as #3, 1973
Computer Graphic Silkscreen Print on Paper
22 x 28 in.



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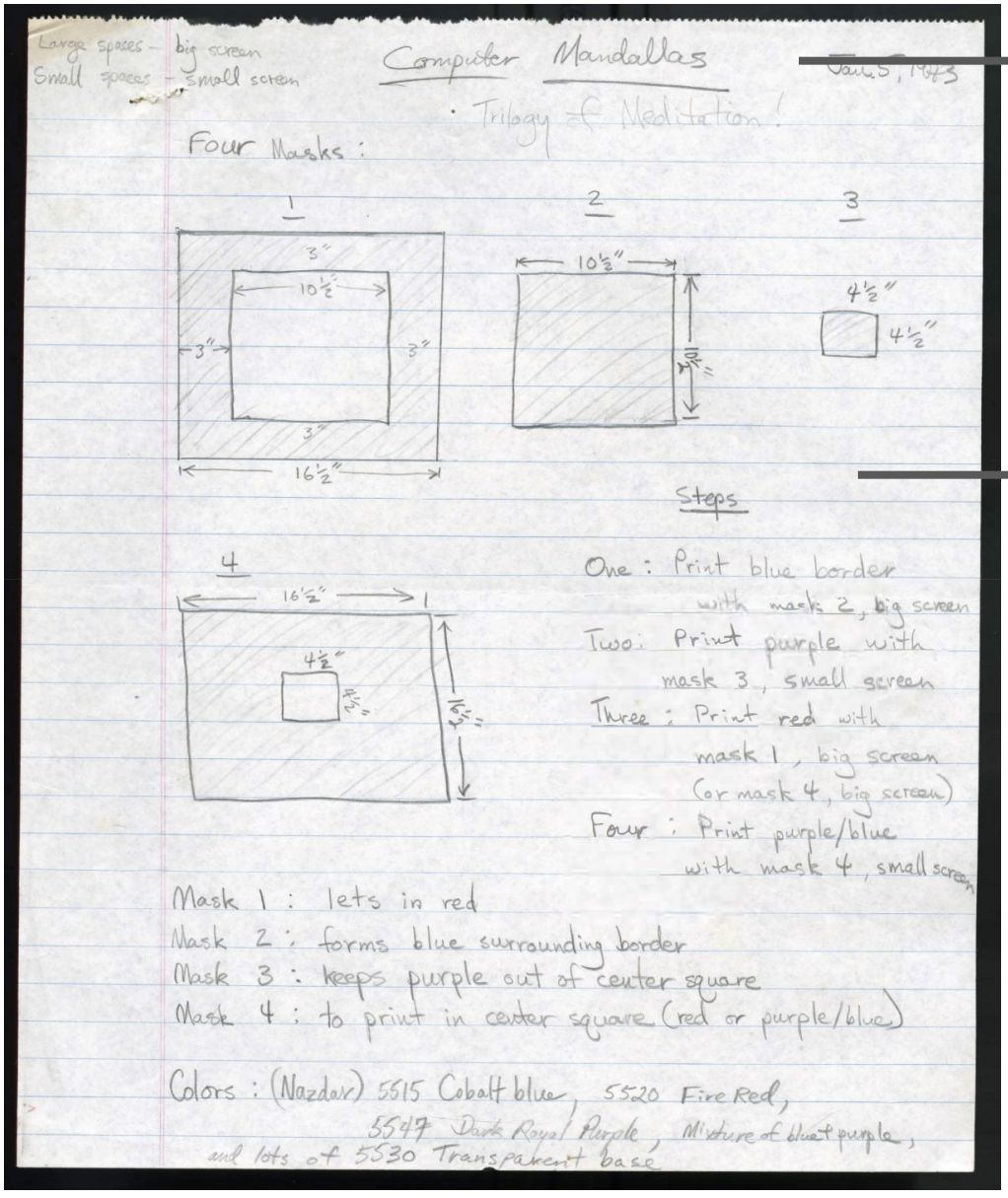
Mandell/as, 1973: Preparatory Drawings



"Trilogy of Meditation!"

One: print blue border with mask 2, big screen

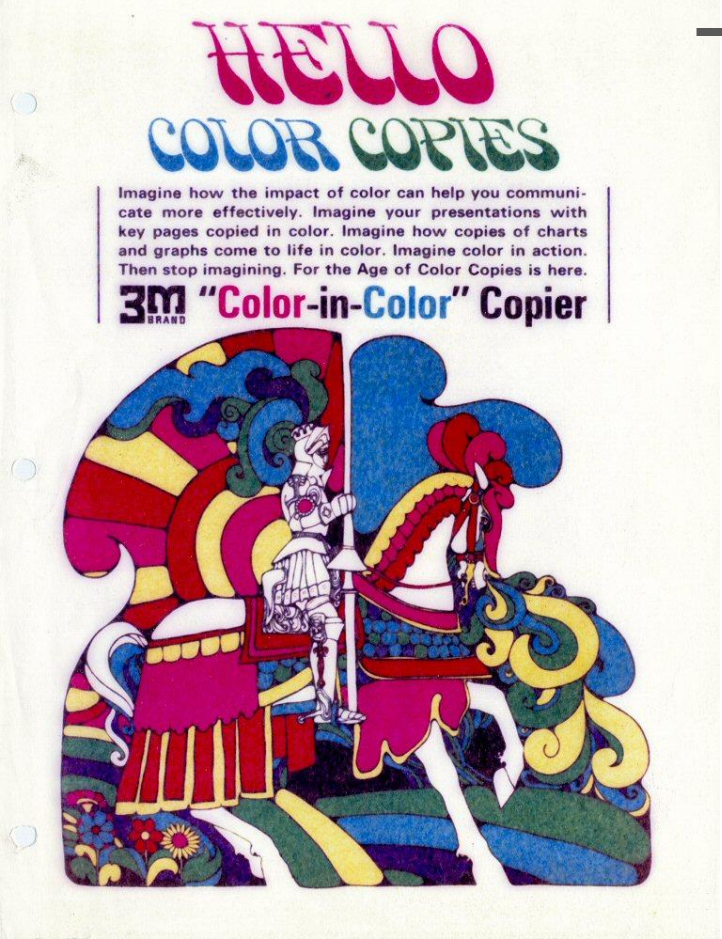
Two: Print purple with mask 3, small screen

Three: print red with mask 1, big screen (or mask 4, big screen)

Four: Print purple/blue with mask 4, small screen

*(Computer Generated Animation Film Frame)*s

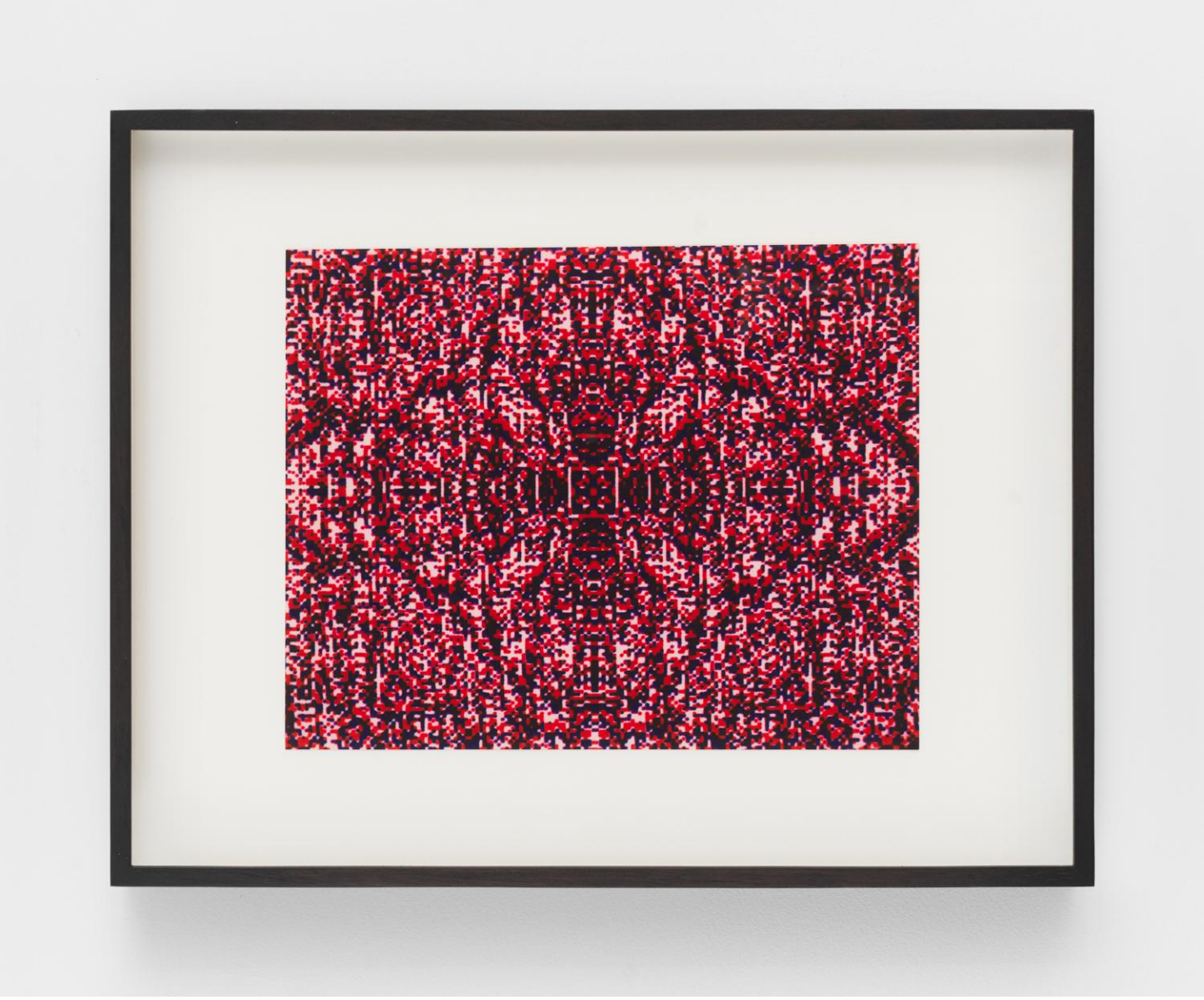
The (*Computer Generated Animation Film Frame)* works evolutionize the tactics utilized to create *Intergraphics*, by trading out classical printing methods such as silkscreens and copper etching in favor of the new technology, color copying. This was made possible through the 1968 release of the Color in Color Printer, the first full color copier introduced by 3M. The (*Computer Generated Animation Film Frame)* works are affected by the glossifying effect of the printer. The overload of ink over the mandela patterns causes the works to hold less obvious connection in content to earlier Intergraphic works.



The printer, designed for office use, was used primarily by artists in the first half of the 1970s, and was featured in the exhibition *Software*, organized by Jack Burnham at the Jewish Museum, New York.

Like chromogenic printing or photography, the C-in-C generated images according to the subtractive colour synthesis theory.

(Computer Generated Animation Film Frame), 1975
3M Color-in-Color System 1 Copy Machine Print from B&W 35mm Film Still
7 1/2 x 7 1/2 in.

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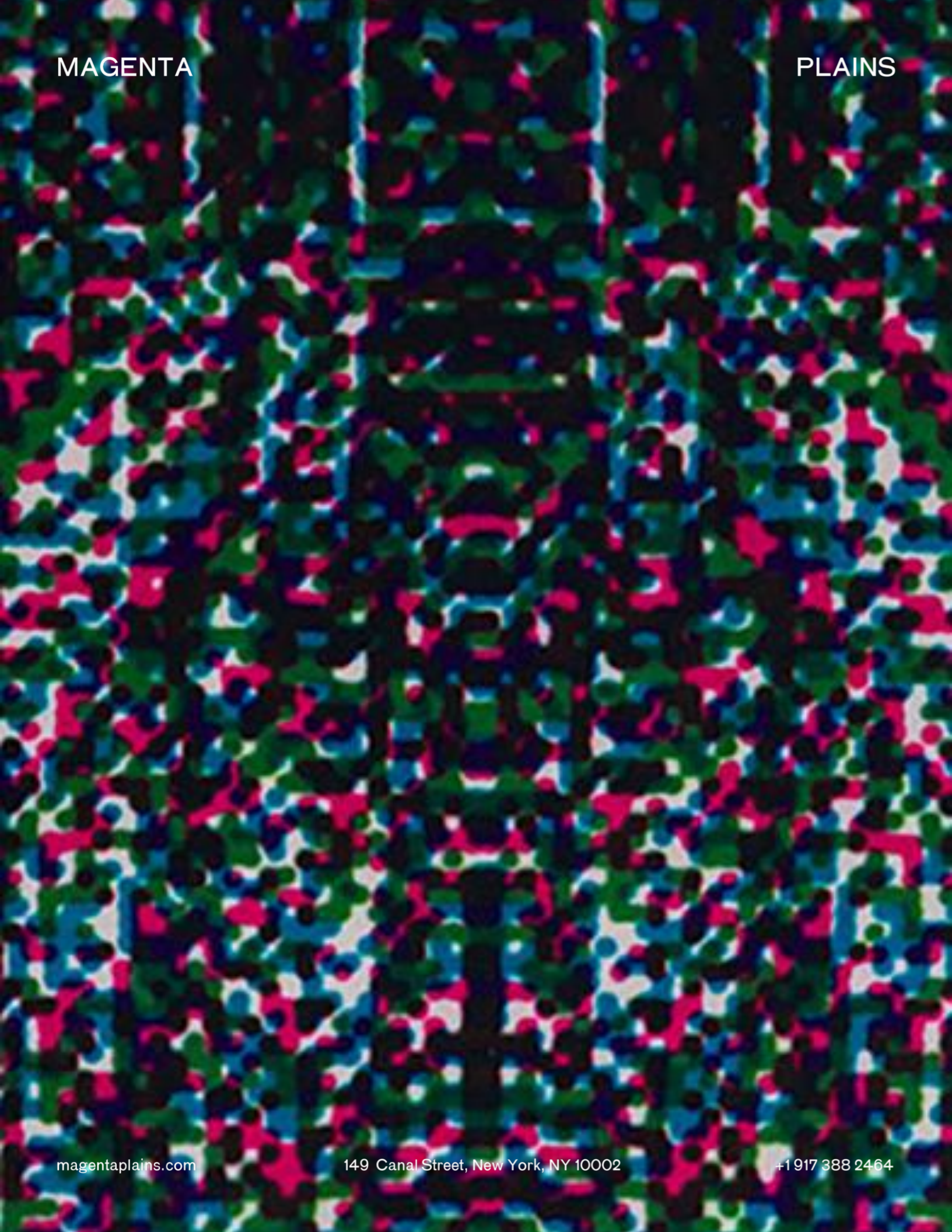
(Computer Generated Animation Film Frame), 1977–78
3M Color-in-Color System 1 Copy Machine Print
from B&W 35mm Film Still
7 1/2 x 9 1/2 in.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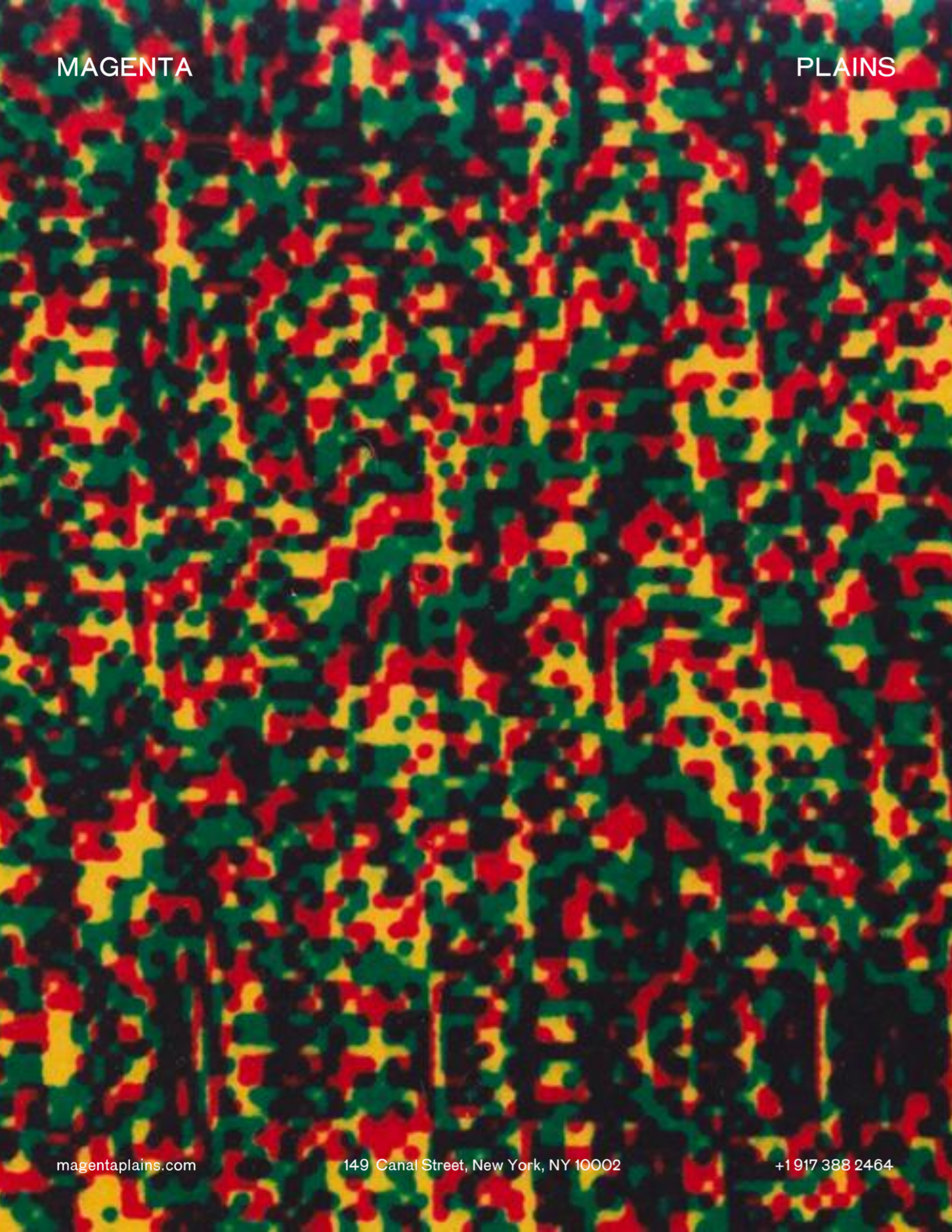
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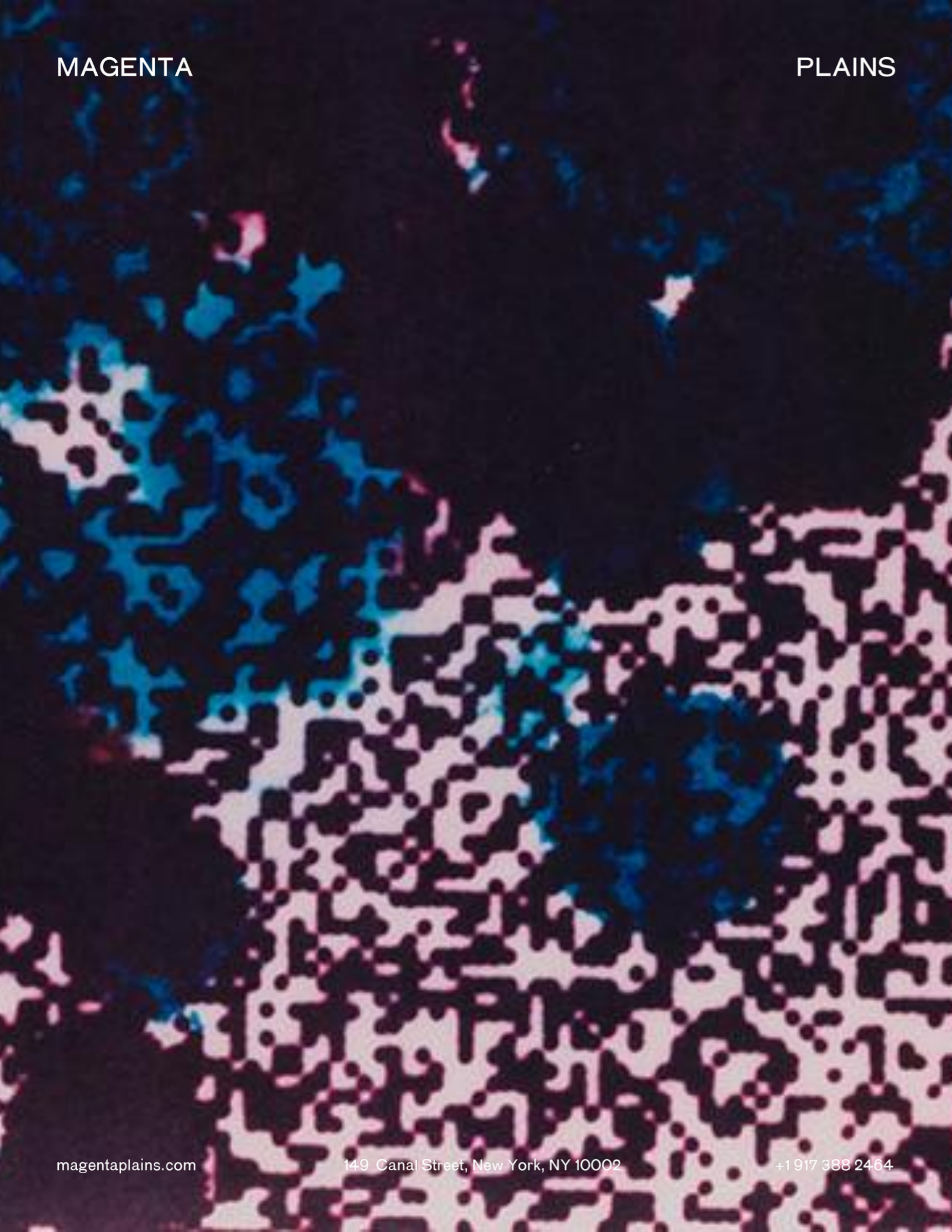

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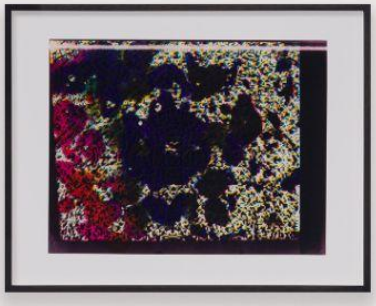

(Computer Generated Animation Film Frame), 1977–78
3M Color-in-Color System 1 Copy Machine Print from B&W 35mm Film Still
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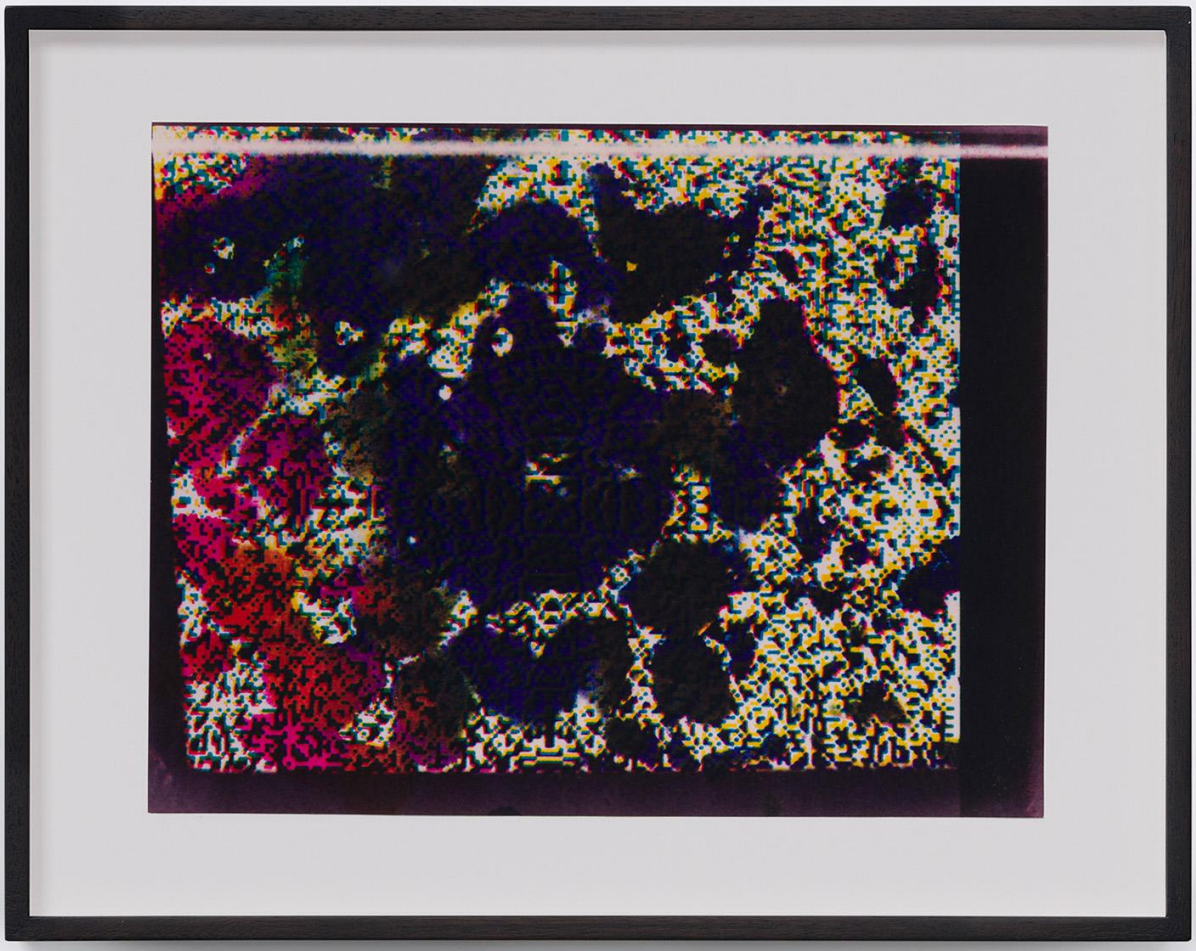


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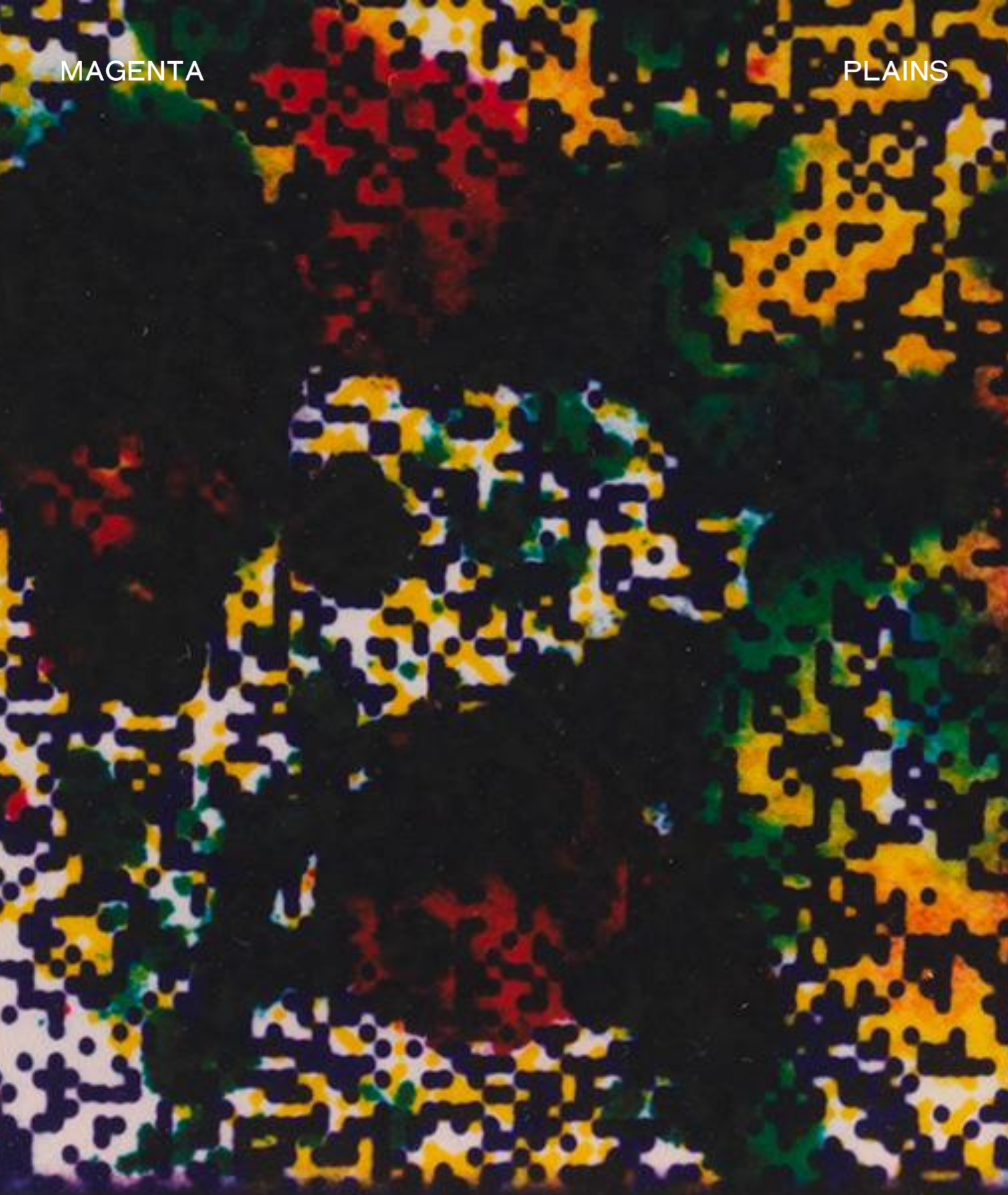

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Timeline 1964–1971

1964

Stan VanDerBeek starts collaborating with computer scientist Ken Knowlton at AT&T's Bell Labs in Murray Hill, New Jersey. Their collaboration coincided with the artist/engineer collective E.A.T. which was co-founded by artist Robert Rauschenberg and Bell Labs engineer Billy Klüver.

Stan VanDerBeek and Ken Knowlton working together at Bell Labs in 1966

1966–69

Stan VanDerBeek and Knowlton use BEFLIX, a computer graphic programming language with an IBM 7094 computer and punch cards to to construct a series of 8 computer – generated animated films titled *Poemfields*.

1967

Stan VanDerBeek produces *Moriage* using the Moiré pattern kit.

1968

The Color in Color Printer is launched, the first full color copier, introduced by 3M. A direct electrostatic process coupled with a thermal dye transfer system to produce bright images on a velvety or glossy surface. Stan VanDerBeek later utilize this printer to create (Computer Generated Animation Film Frame) works.

1970

Stan VanDerBeek is one of the first artists to be invited to be in-residence at MIT's Center for Advanced Visual Studies in Cambridge, where he furthered his interest in the computer.

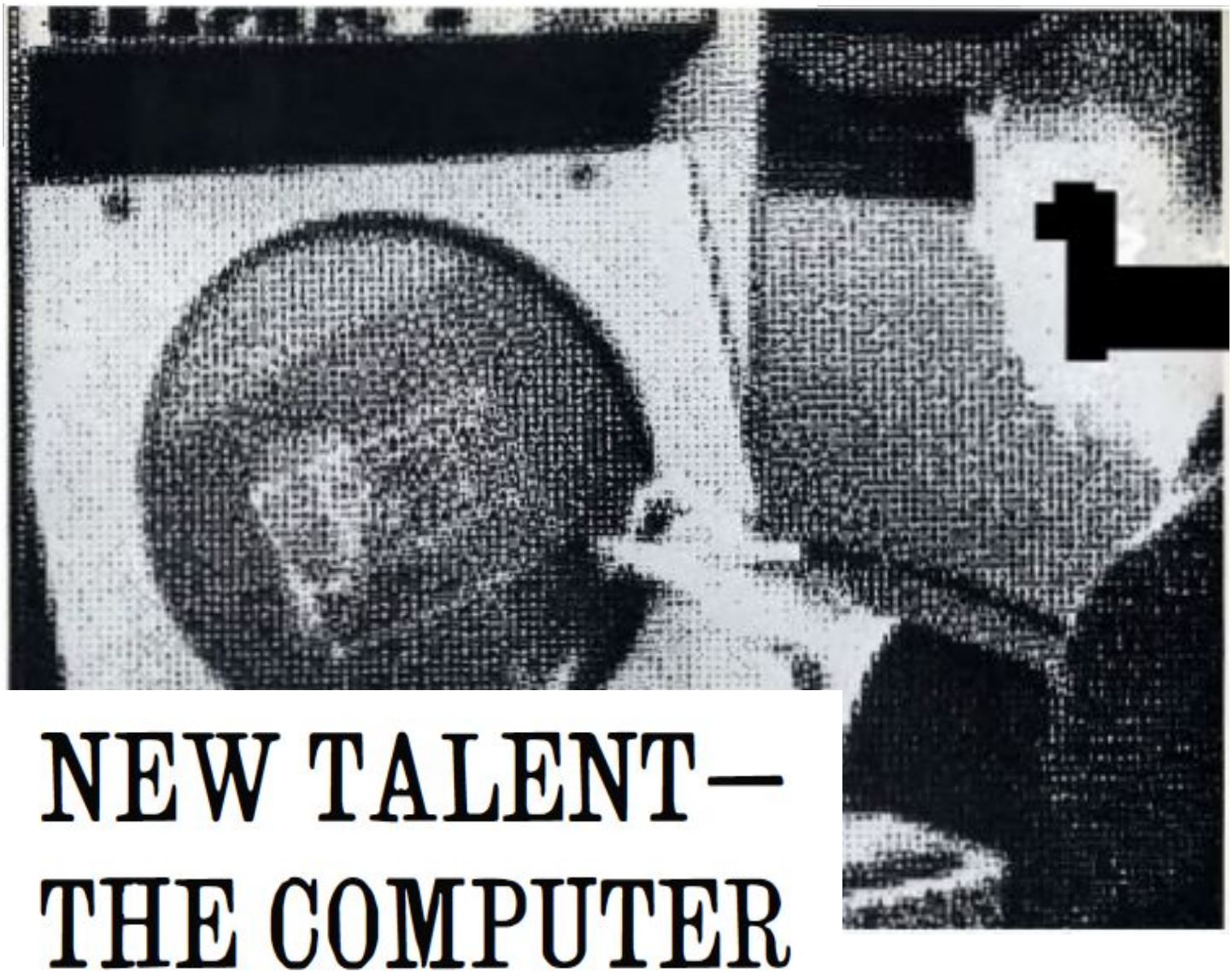
1971

Stan VanDerBeek starts producing his first etchings and silkscreen prints based on his *Poemfield* films.

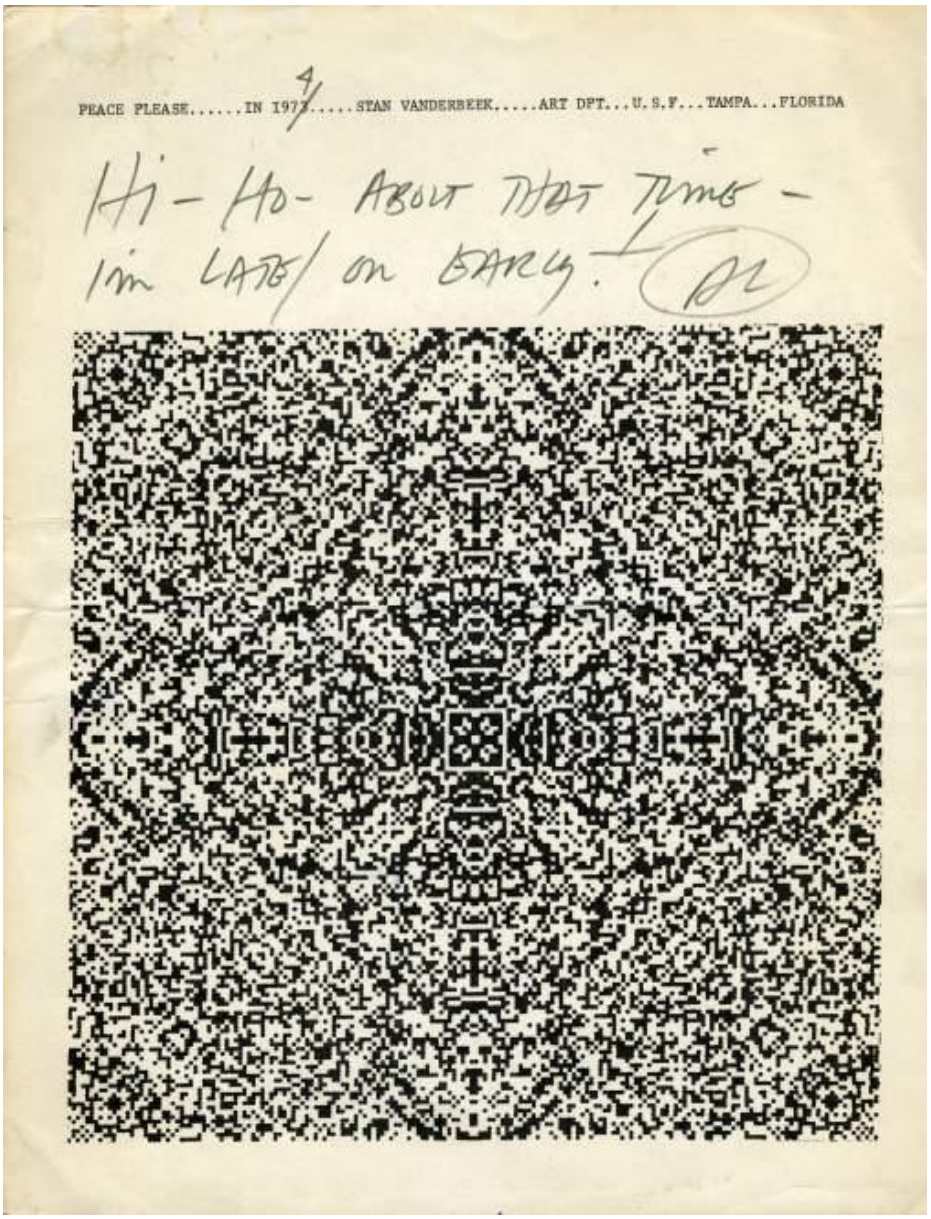
New Talent—The Computer

“In the 1960s the computer, with human as a creative director, has revealed a remarkable talent for the graphic arts. Capable of tremendous speeds combined with total accuracy, it has opened up exciting new fields for esthetic discoveries.”

—-Stan VanDerBeek, “New Talent: The Computer,” *Art in America*, 1970

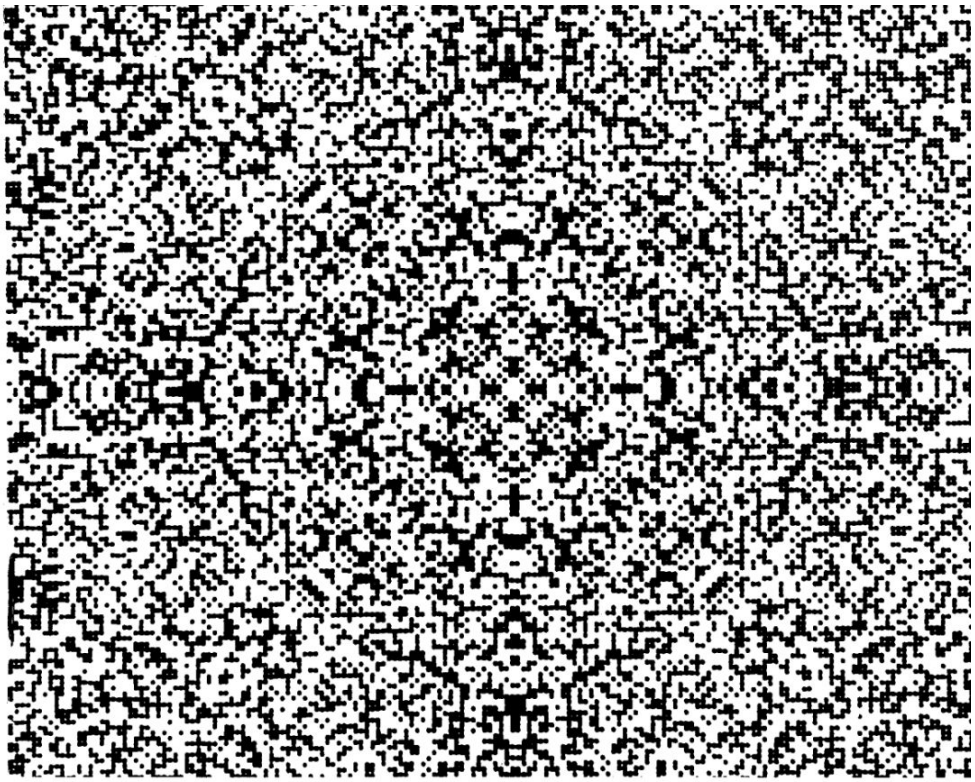


Select exhibition ephemera: 1976



Postcard from *University of South Florida College of Fine Arts,* John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota, FL

Select exhibition ephemera: 1976



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Machine Art

An Exhibit of ''Inter-Graphics''
by Professor Stan VanDerBeek

U.M.B.C. Library Gallery
Opening Friday March 19, 4:30 to 7:30
Exhibition continues through Easter Sunday, April 18
Gallery Open Weekdays 9 to 5, Sat. 10 to 4, Sun. 2 to
For more information phone 455-2232

Press release from: *Machine Art*, U.M.B.C Library Gallery, Baltimore, MD

Select exhibition images: 2015

Stan VanDerBeek, Andrea Rosen Gallery, New York, NY

Select exhibition images: 2018

Stan VanDerBeek: *Poem Field*, Document, Chicago, IL

Select exhibition images: 2019-20

VanDerBeek+VanDerBeek, Black Mountain College Museum+Arts Center, Asheville, NC

Select exhibition images: 2020

Immortality: 5th Ural Industrial Biennial of Contemporary Art, Ekaterinburg, RU

Select exhibition images: 2022

Stan VanDerBeek: *Work with Computers*, RCM Gallery, Paris, FR

“We can go around the world with our messages now. We know for instance that 400 million people simultaneously watched the guy step down on the moon. **Who is starting to think in terms of what will satisfy 400 million people at the same time?** Fantastically difficult idea. And we are going to get closer and closer over time. There have been many shows done by Satellite that go to over 100 million people simultaneously. And every weekend in the football season at least 70 million are watching. We are talking about ideas, referential thinking and complex aesthetics. **It's remarkable to think about the problems we are going to face**.”

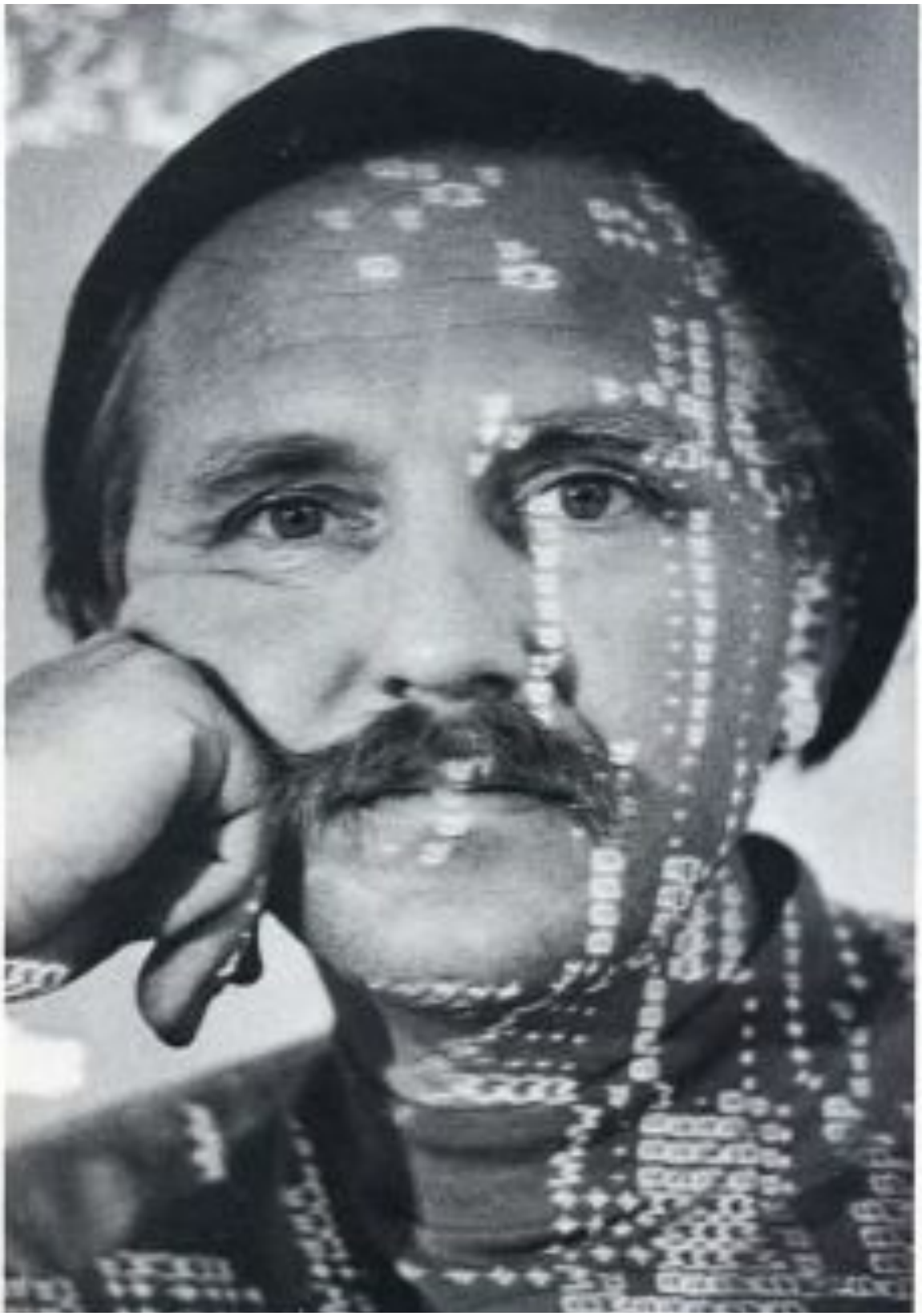
–Stan VanDerBeek in a interview with William Smith, Chair of the UW-Milwaukee Department of Art, 1970

Selected Forthcoming Presentations

Stan VanDerBeek: (Forthcoming Exhibition)
Magenta Plains
March 7 – April 20, 2024

Op Art
(curated by Tina Rivers Ryan)
Albright Knox Gallery
2024

Op Art
Musée d'arts de Nantes
2025



Stan VanDerBeek, “New Talent: The Computer”
Art in America, January–February, 1970