

WE ARE **VISUAL** ANIMALS



The way that we visualize the world for ourselves
is of the utmost importance
in how we understand it, learn from it, grow in it.


Here's my first warning

I'm going to cover some things that you might be
familiar with. I simply ask that you bear with me...
soon enough, we will be in unfamiliar territory.

I need you with me when we get there.

IMAGE | JAMES N. SEARS & JONATHAN COUSINS



A surreal landscape featuring a large, bright orange and yellow fireball or explosion in the foreground. In the background, a person is walking on a path through a green field towards a row of houses. The sky is blue with scattered white stars and several vertical rainbow-colored beams of light. A large, glowing orange and yellow sphere is visible in the sky, surrounded by smaller, bright particles.

We could think
of our senses as receptors.
But we can better think
of them as funnels
or reducers.
Holes in a dike,
letting small streams
of that we can deal with

through
while holding back
the inconceivably
vast ocean
of information
that would otherwise
drown us.
Like a tsunami.

How many of you have ever seen a Sun-rise?

Can I see a show of hands?

Wow.

It is dark out there.

Can't see a thing.

Could you do me a favor, pull out your cell phone
and illuminate your hand if it's raised.

Sun-rise.

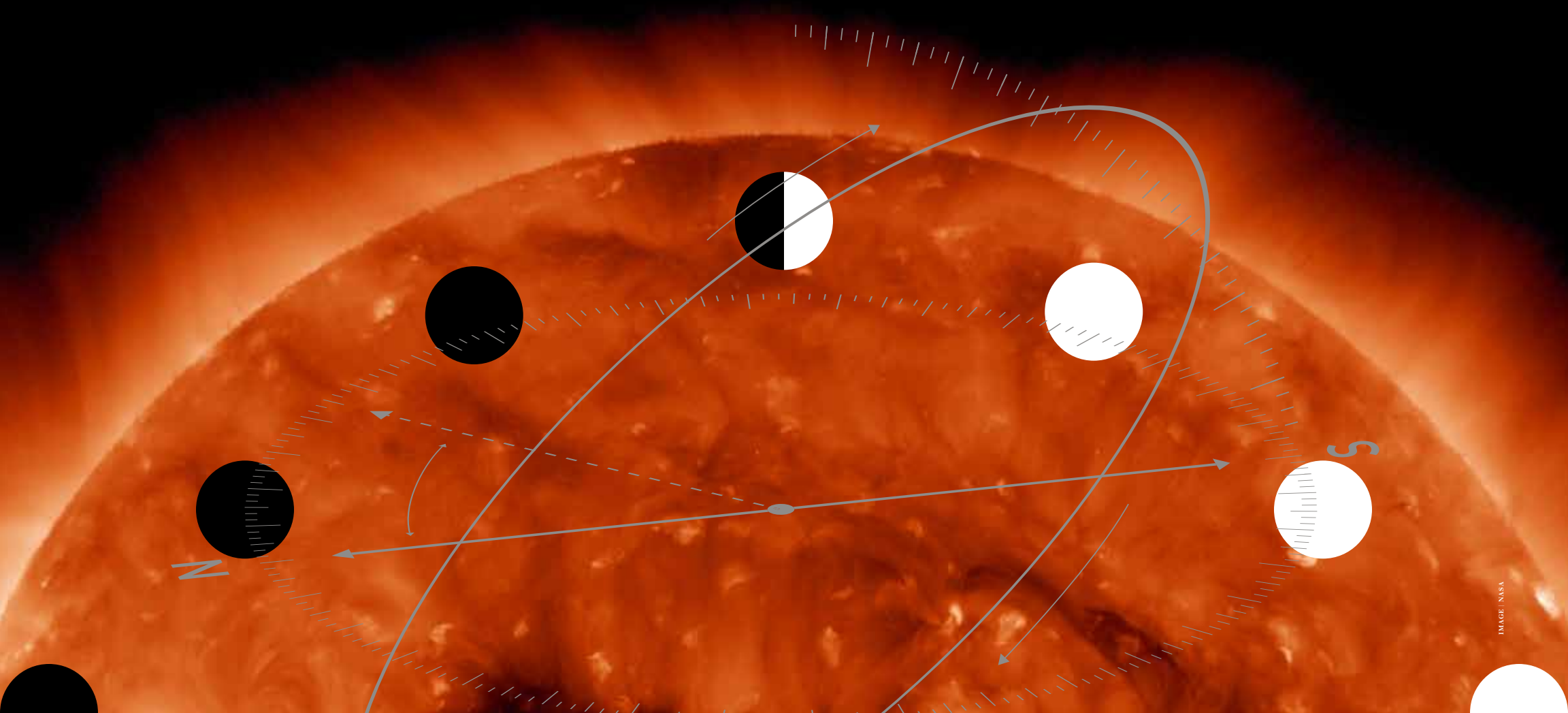
The sun goes up, the sun goes down.

Watching the sun go down.

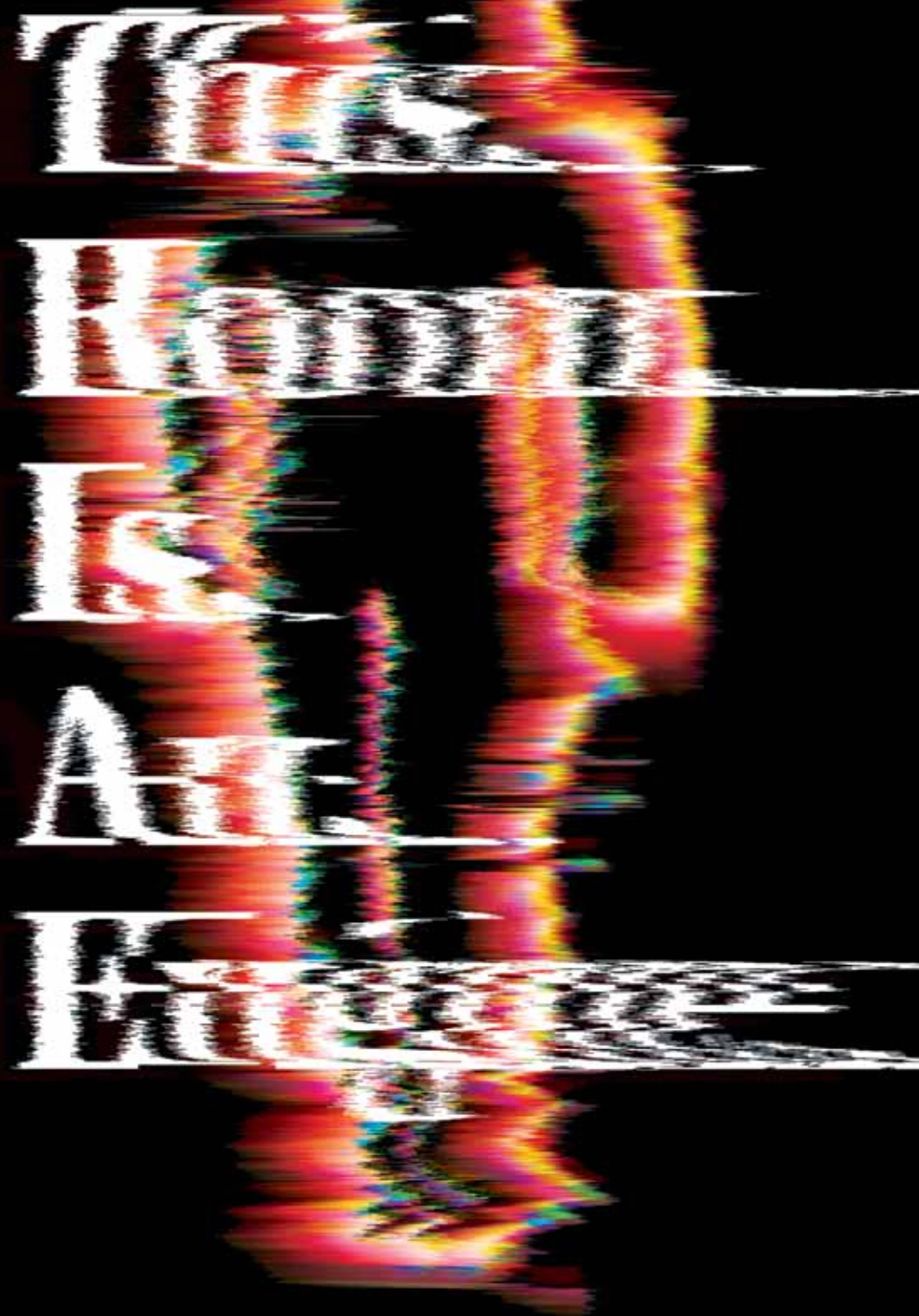
That's knight armor in a glass case in a musty room somewhere.

Sun-rise is an antique and we know it.

A hold-over from the flat view of the world.



This room
is an
engine room.



We are orbiting the Sun.

At about 60,000 miles/hour at this very moment actually.

That way.

And spinning at the same time.

Can you feel it?

To be honest,
I don't really understand
how we ever stopped
worshipping the sun.



How about a new, New World?

But, why the new? As a promise of the yet to be discovered palliative that quells the perpetual discomfort of being. The new satisfies and enables the possibility of expectation, which is itself the location of the most promise in life. Hence, the new is much like the... a... second coming — though ostensibly a ‘repeat’, this episode promises to be unlike any previous, a window into the next, better, experience.

Have you ever heard of the Overview Effect?

It’s a phenomenon described by many astronauts — and cosmonauts too. Their statements generally read like sacral testimony by St. Teresa of Avila, pierced by shards of light emanating from a holy vision, inducing an ecstasy of perceived unity, but in their case they are out in orbit, looking at our little blue planet instead of some seraph. Their holy vision wasn’t an ephemeral apparition but was literally physiological vision, meaning light reflecting off a real object flying through space focusing through the retina interpreted by the brain and it was wholly, with a W, Earth.

This is **The Screen Age**. The cathedral was the previous pinnacle of persuasion. The subtext of that experience was scale, visual and auditory beauty. These framed the verbal message, and perhaps did more to deliver it than the meaning of the words themselves. This is not a new idea of course. Where the Vatican fell out of fashion, neo-materialists stepped in with visually driven, screen-based messages to fill the gap. Screens now do what flying buttresses, stain glass masterpieces, multi-ton organs used to. And yet screen space is not necessarily coalesced into a single plane, but rather operates dispersionally. It's as if backlit stain glass fragments have been disseminated throughout our lives, sewn like seeds though all of our public and private spaces. Our pockets. The brain unifies the fragments, creating a massive screen territory within the mental plane, regathering the particles into a unified whole that in fragment-form makes as much sense as a sliver of lead glass representing a branch or Mary's robe might up close in Notre Dame. But at a distance, a temporal, rather than spatial distance, the picture becomes clearer and the portrait of the time does too. These mandalas are tools of hypnosis, they are the new opiate of the people, and as such they too will turn to dust.

We will leave the screens behind just like we have left the eucharist, the psalms, the Sunday gathering.

What follows the screen age?

A period of seismic re-re-restructuring.

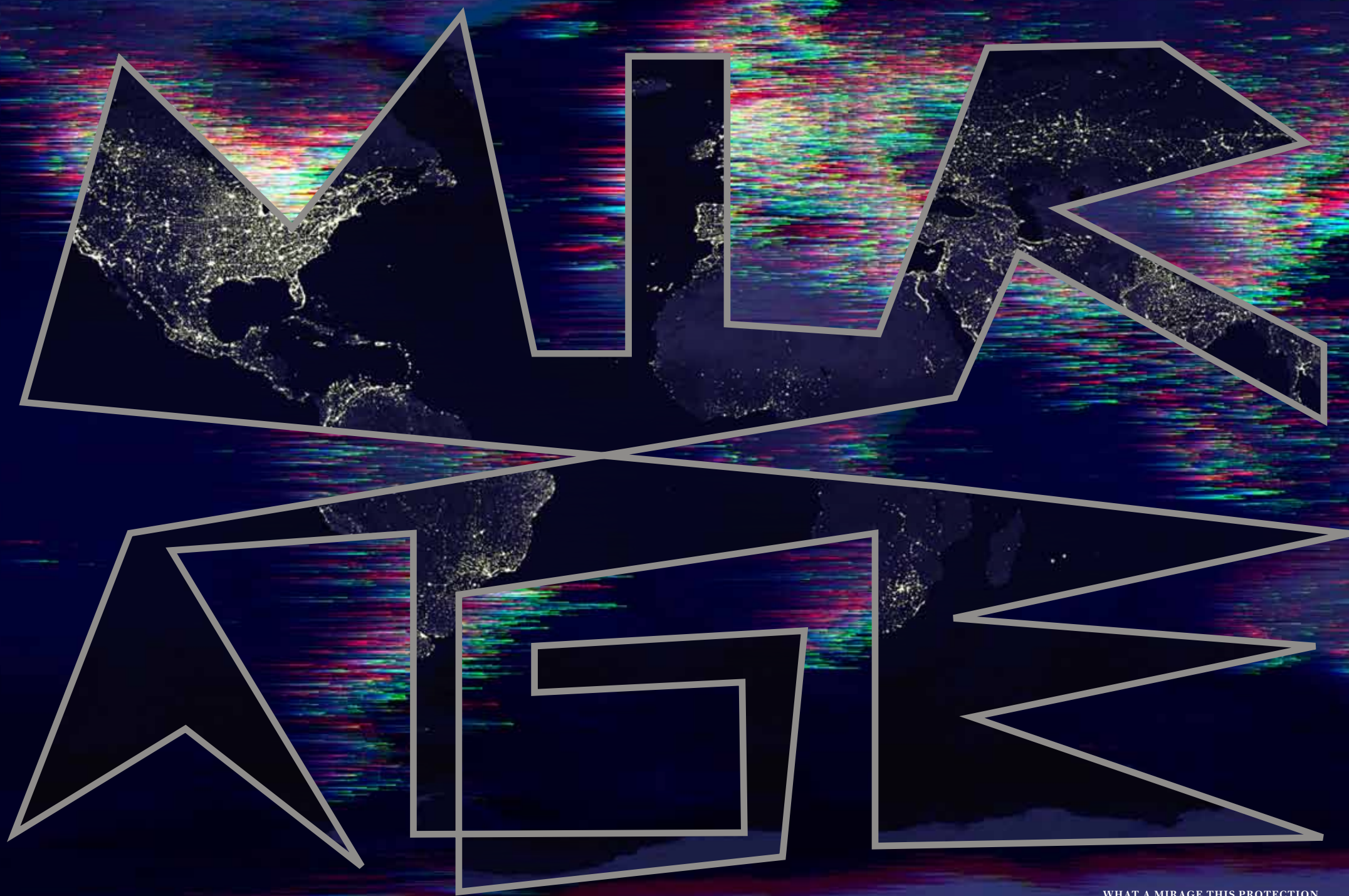
With successful examples of peaceful, orderly, intentional adaptation.

And unsuccessful ones too. Extinction for some.

Beautiful.

“When the Chinese built the Great Wall, when Hadrian and Antoninus Pius and Severus raised the double line of fortification between the Firths of Clyde and Forth, and between the Solway and the mouth of the Tyne, when the Flavian Emperors built the Pfahlgraben and other ramparts or walls between the Rhine and the Danube, when the successors of Alexander raised a similar barrier in the country to the east of the Caspian—one and all were not thinking so much of rounding off the territories of conquests of the Empire as they were of protecting its Frontiers in the best manner against the terrible and ever-swelling menace of the barbarians hammering at the gates.”—Lord George Curzon

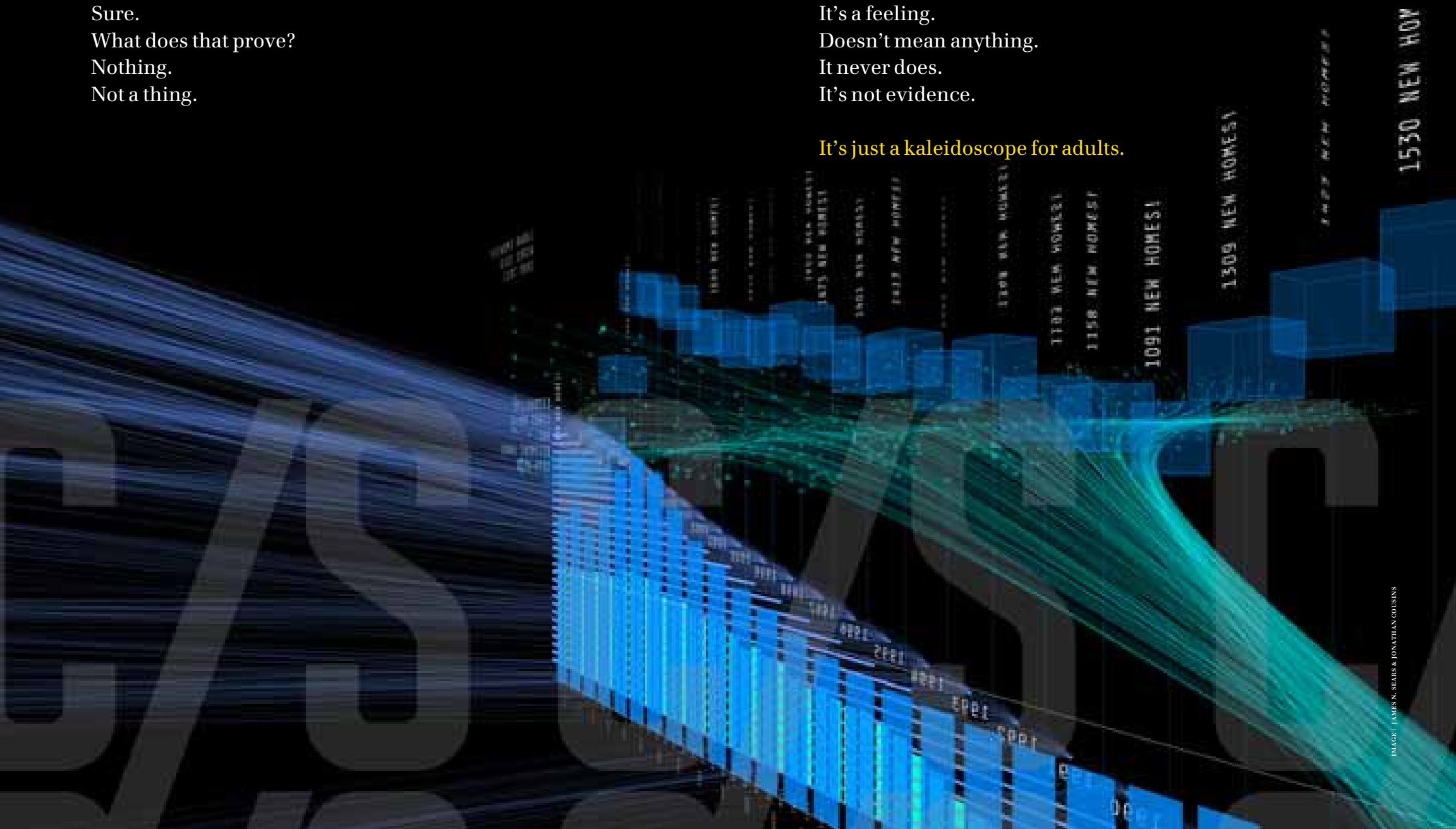




Do you see the pattern?
Sure.
What does that prove?
Nothing.
Not a thing.

But there's an impression none-the-less.
It's a feeling.
Doesn't mean anything.
It never does.
It's not evidence.

It's just a kaleidoscope for adults.



Can we organize ourselves in increasingly better ways to the increasing benefit of all of us. Us is vague. By us I mean every single human on this planet. Every human. I'm not talking about feeding the hungry. I'm not talking about washing machines for women who bring clothes down to wintry rivers.

The system currently in place has a half-life I assure you. Nations and the borders that contain them are the wrong way of thinking about this one continuous system of land masses on which all of us dwell.

Can I tell you something. Can I tell you candidly that I used to worship this country. As a boy, as a young man, as a man. And I stopped not because of any particular trouble I'm having with this nation, but with the idea of a nation at all.

What I am proposing today is the dissolution of all national borders as the next fundamental condition for our continued social evolution as a species. Until that time, we will be in a holding pattern. At best. At worst? Well, for that listen to the news.

I'm not interested in fear.

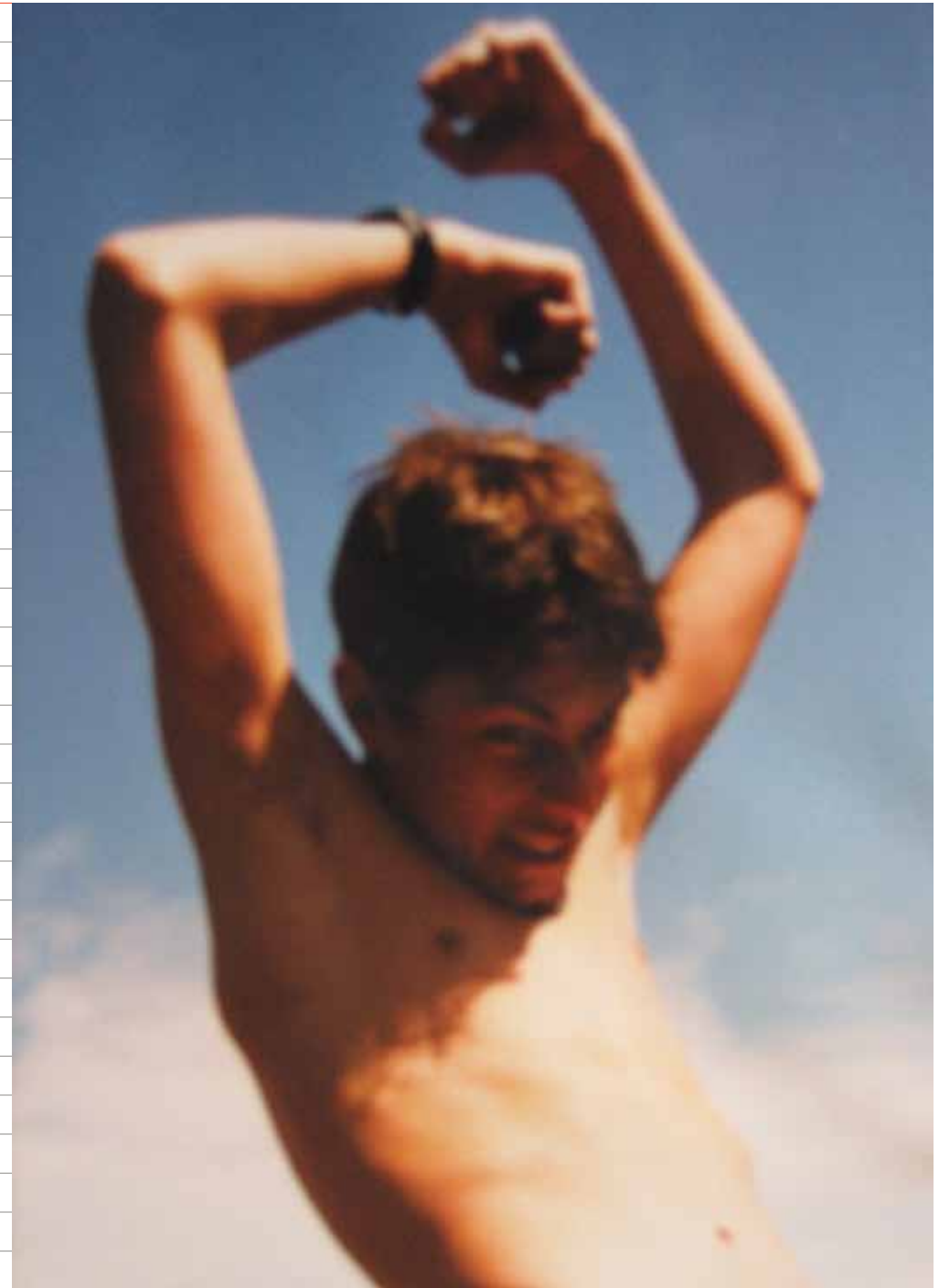


PHOTO OF PAUL, TAKEN BY GIDEON ABACUS, 1993

Why borders?

Three reasons:

1

They are the root of the worst conflicts in our world today,

2

The laws and traditions that govern them are among the most arbitrary and absurd artifacts of human invention, and are only becoming more so, and

3

Well, they just don't do what they're supposed to, not any more.

Who wants another Dark Age?
Can I see a show of hands?
Are we in one now?
Is this what it feels like?

Scream if you feel it



There actually isn't scarcity.

Altruism is not goodness.

Altruism is a human strategy.

Altruism came from war.

Our foraging groups have just grown bigger in size.

These are nations. ++++++

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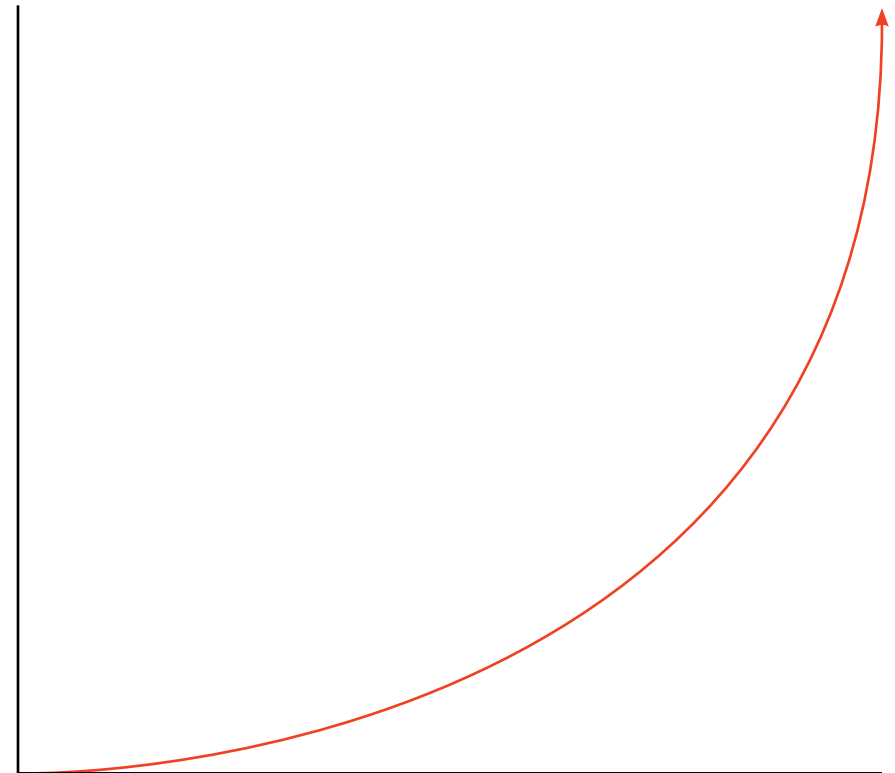
We are each at the center of a series of concentrically expanding orbits, representing our affiliations.

Closest is, well, yourself, then
Family,
Friends,
then maybe Community,
your Alma Mater,
Business,
Interest Groups *(you know, Kayak lovers, Duck hunters, Polka fans),*
maybe your State,
and then,
your Nation.

If we're already in the act of imagining,
I mean, why don't we expand the boundaries
to their logical limit?

CAN EVERYONE IMAGINE THE SAME THING AT ABOUT THE SAME TIME?

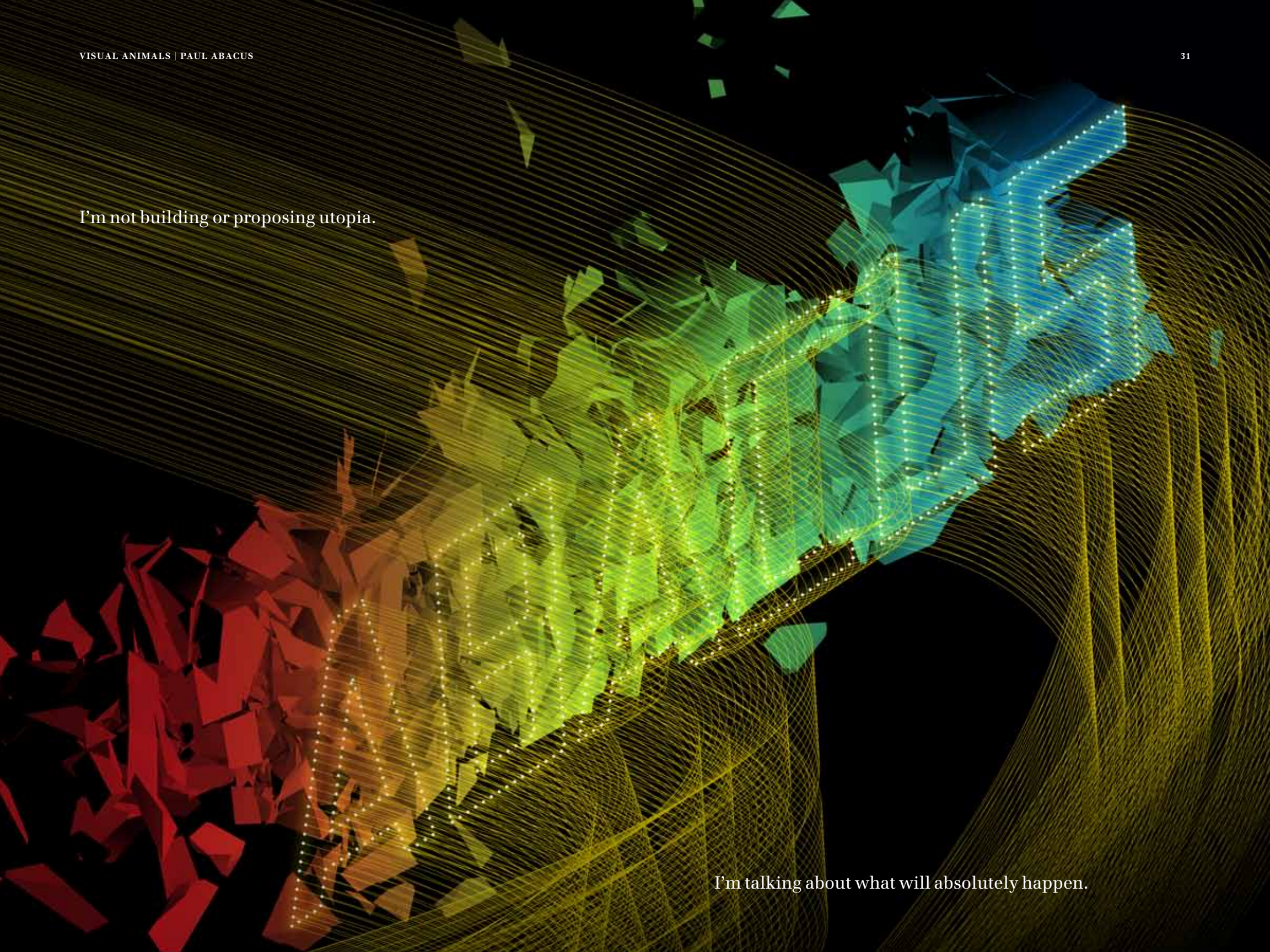
Patience is letting a lie happen
and happen
and happen.



THIS IS A GRAPH OF LIES OVER TIME.

I'm not building or proposing utopia.

I'm talking about what will absolutely happen.



I'M A FREQUENCY.

