



Derivations and Deviations 1

Digital interpretations of bark
dendrogyphs in Istanbul

Shape • Form • Colour • Texture • Pattern

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Digital interpretations of bark dendroglyphs in
Istanbul

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March 2014

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Introduction

*“The hardest thing to see is what is in front of
your eyes”*

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe 1749-1832

Sometimes, what appears at first sight to be the mundane
can offer unusual creative opportunities.

This book investigates how digital image manipulation
might trigger ideas and possibilities.

You will find on the following pages original photographic
images and derivative images made from them. Some of
them are made using simple alterations, some are more
complex but both serve to show how the imagination can
come into play and provide visual stimulation that can be
taken into the making process.

Dendroglyphs in Istanbul

“If one had but a single glance to give the world, one should gaze on Istanbul”

Alphonse de Lamartine 1790-1869

Introduction to bark incisions

Research will show that tree bark has been used by man across continents and cultures for practical purposes since ancient times. Traditionally bark has been used for containers, clothing, shelter, making boats, decoration in masks, headdresses and more recently for extracting useful drugs. Google images searches will show many examples of the way in which bark has been and can still be utilised in making. The Japanese kabazaiku tradition of using cherry bark and the Eastern European birch bark ware or beresta are two examples of a continuing traditional approach to bark craft.

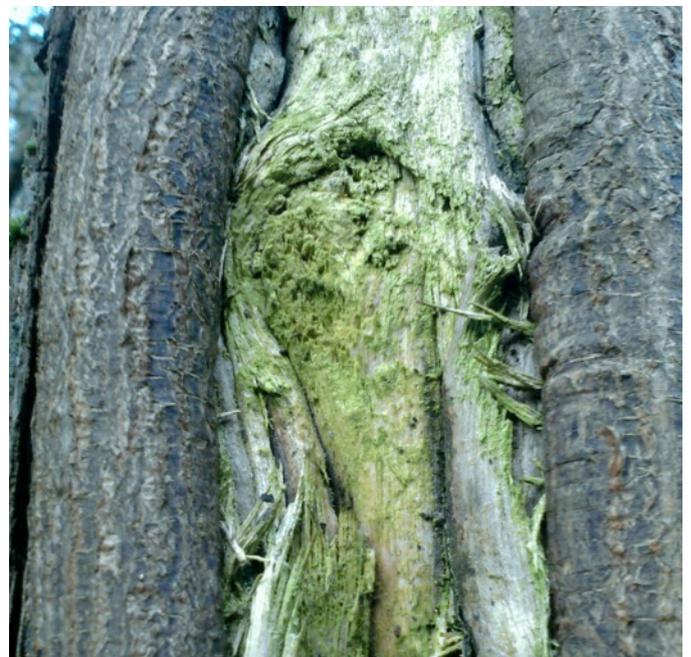
My interest, being expressed in bark incision, was generated some years ago by Dorothy Gill Barnes whom I was fortunate to engage in conversation during a visit to the UK where some of her work was being exhibited at the Barbican in London. She was staying locally to me at that time, for a few days, at a friend's house. She explained how she used an interpretation of the dendroglyph utilising both the marked bark (created by her) and the underlying healing growth of the wood, in the construction of some of her pieces.

A dendroglyph is a symbol or pictograph carved into the bark of a tree, sometimes sacred they are linked in archaeological or historical descriptions to the trees on the Chatham Islands of New Zealand. Sometimes marks or symbols on trees are described by the terms silvaglyph, arbourglyph and more commonly tree graffiti.

Most of the tree bark photographs and works I am showing here might best be described as tree graffiti and come from Gulhane Park in Istanbul. Some tend to drift towards the dendroglyph as the ageing process causes the loss of literal

interpretation and they become more symbolic.

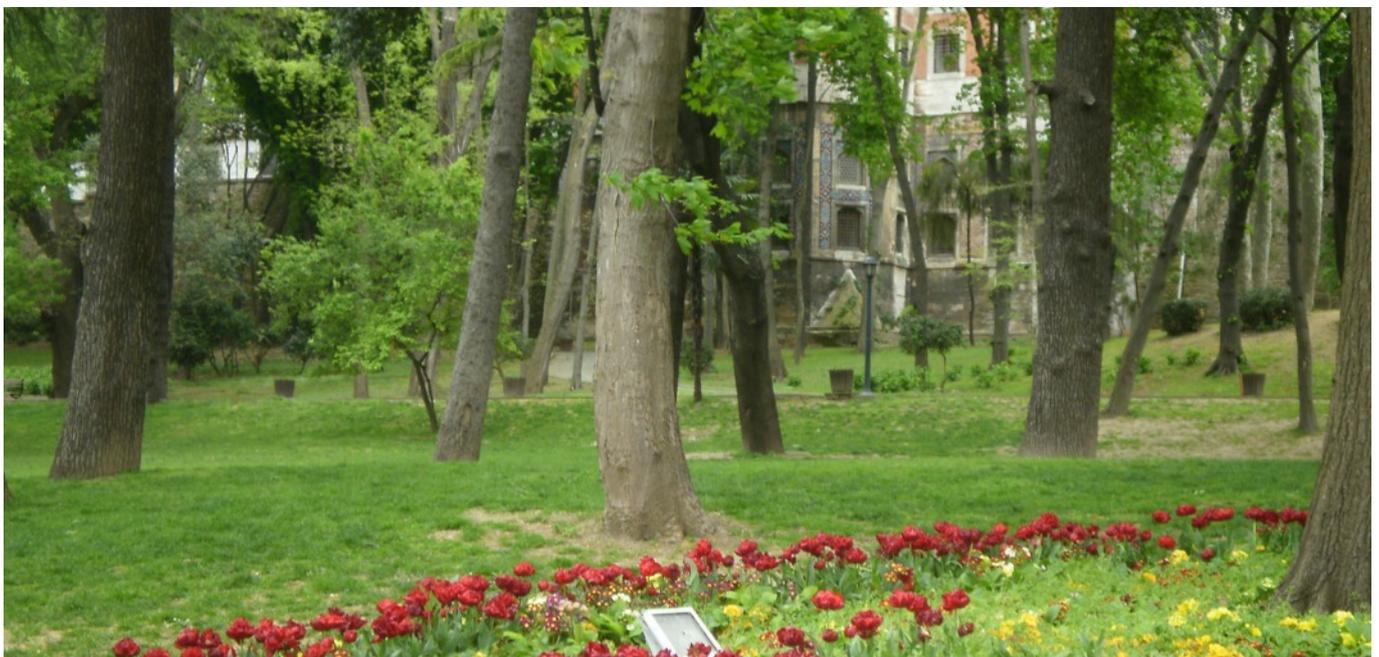
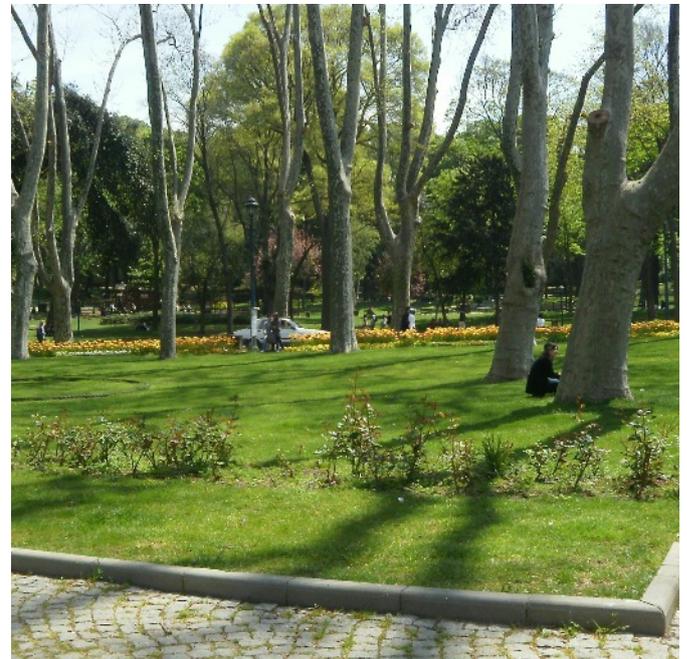
Below you will find some examples of damage to bark that has regrown or healed and one example of recent tree damage caused by animals and in this example, probably deer.



Gulhane Park

The park is situated in the Eminonu District of Istanbul, Turkey adjacent to and formerly part of the Topkapi Palace. The Museum of the History of Science and Technology of Islam is in the grounds and the Archaeological Museums are close by. As in most parks in cities, trees and flowers form the backdrop to this open space. In this case the most popular tree used in the planting is the *Platanus orientalis* or Oriental Plane known for its great height, large crown and long life. A feature of this tree is the shedding of its bark during growth. The timber is usually known as Lacewood.

The park is well used by the local population and is a popular visitor attraction. Young couples feature large and are probably responsible for much of the graffiti on the trees but there are also political and protest messages evident too. The following pictures show marks and incisions of unknown content and age. The flaking bark adds to the air of mystery that surrounds some of the imagery and this encourages the digital interpretations I have made in the latter pages of this publication.



Dendroglyph Pictures

The following images show signs, symbols and words carved into the bark of the plane trees. Some are old some are newish. The bark colours ranged from light green to dark green background with lighter areas of brown and cream colours. Most of the darker brown bark pieces show signs of shedding away from the main trunk. These are a selection from some 100 dendroglyph/graffiti images taken in Istanbul, Spring 2010.



















































Digital interpretations and derivative images

Looking at the preceding images I saw the opportunity to exploit the image potential while reflecting back on the nuances of sights in and around Istanbul and in particular the objects and artefacts in the various museums and historic buildings visited. The images in the second part of this section are manipulations of the bark patterns and symbols. Some are simple colour changes other are more complex.

I begin this section by showing some images from museums, mosques and other locations giving a flavour of the history and surroundings observed during the visit. The first set of pictures in this section show how the altered or constructed images were influenced by these artefacts, sights and art experiences in Istanbul.

Influencing sources include:

Topkapi Palace

Museum of the History of Science and Technology Istanbul

Istanbul Archaeological Museums

Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum

Roman remains including the Mosaic Museum

The Blue Mosque

Hagia Sophia

Basilica Cistern

Grand bazaar

Spice Market

Mosaic Museum

Exhibition of Contemporary Prints - Collection of the
University of Istanbul

Islamic calligraphy, art and decorative symbolism

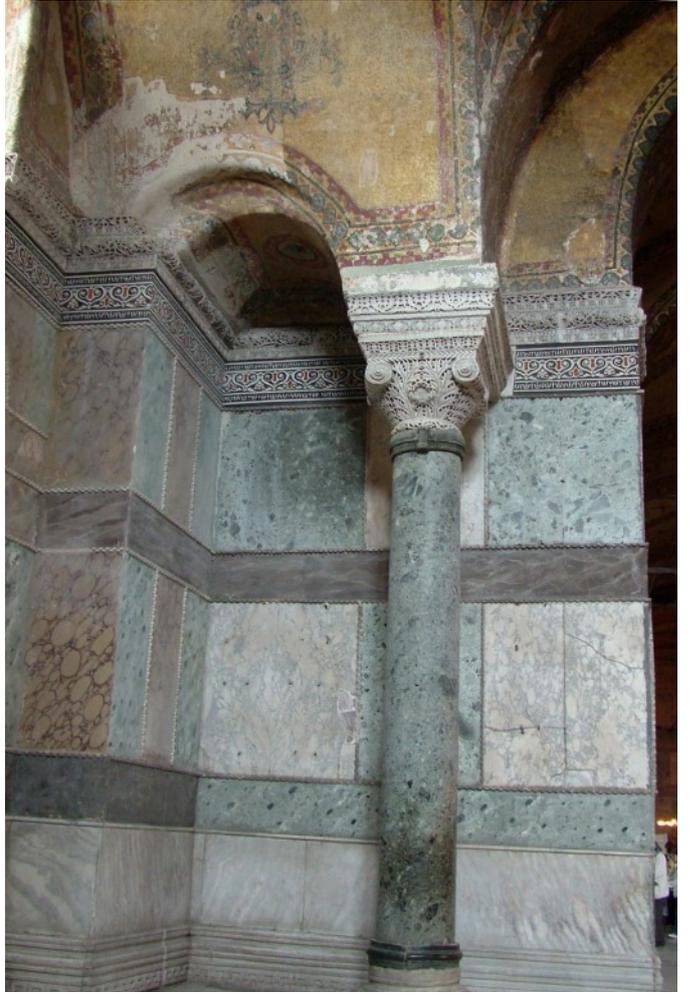
Graffiti, street art, general surroundings and historical
buildings





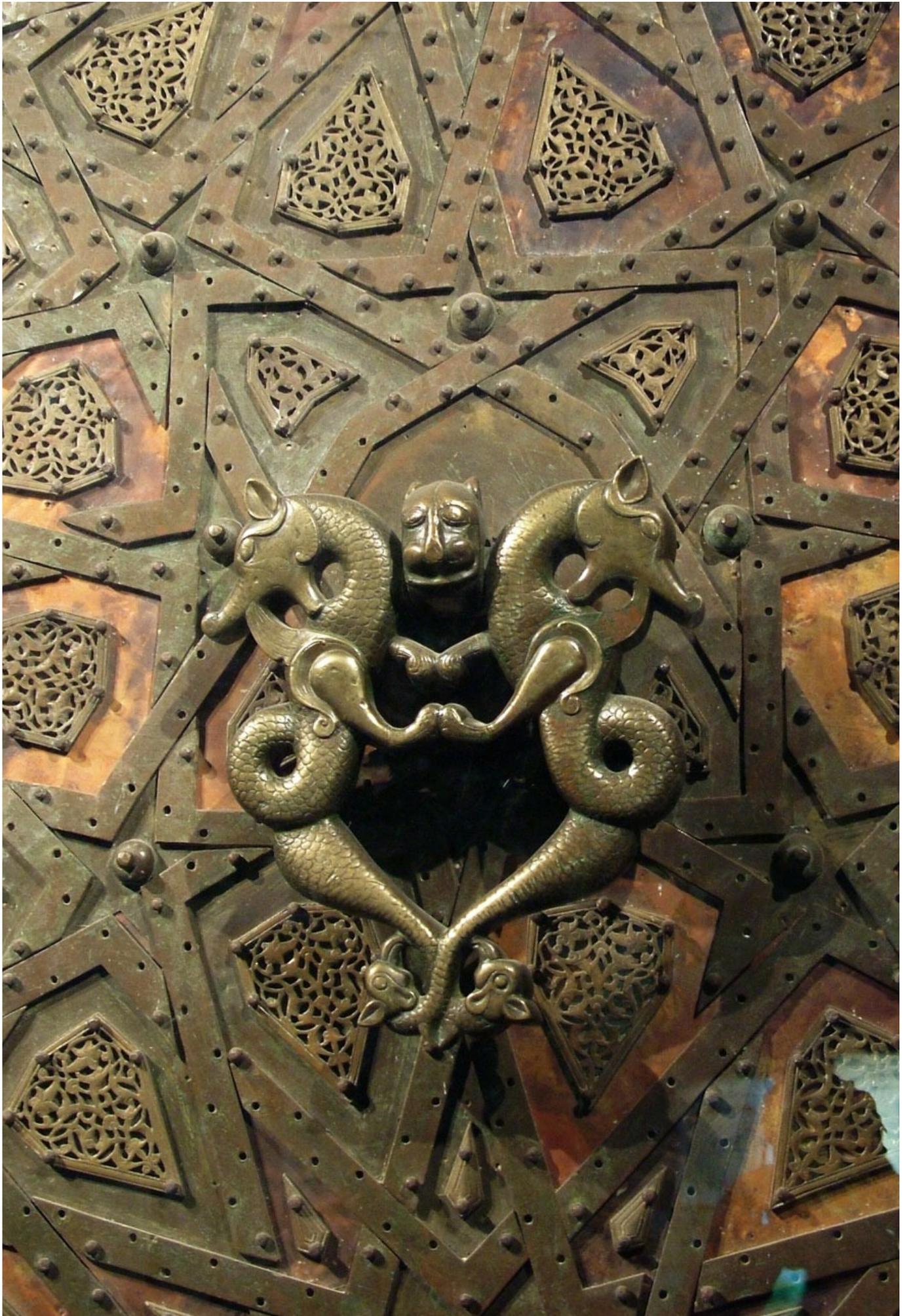










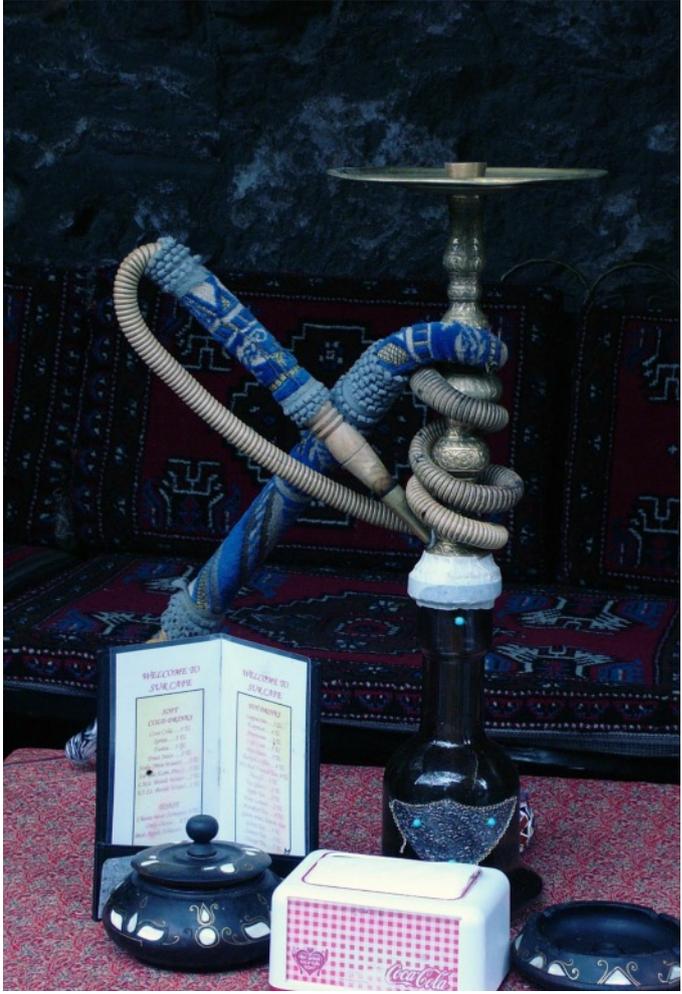


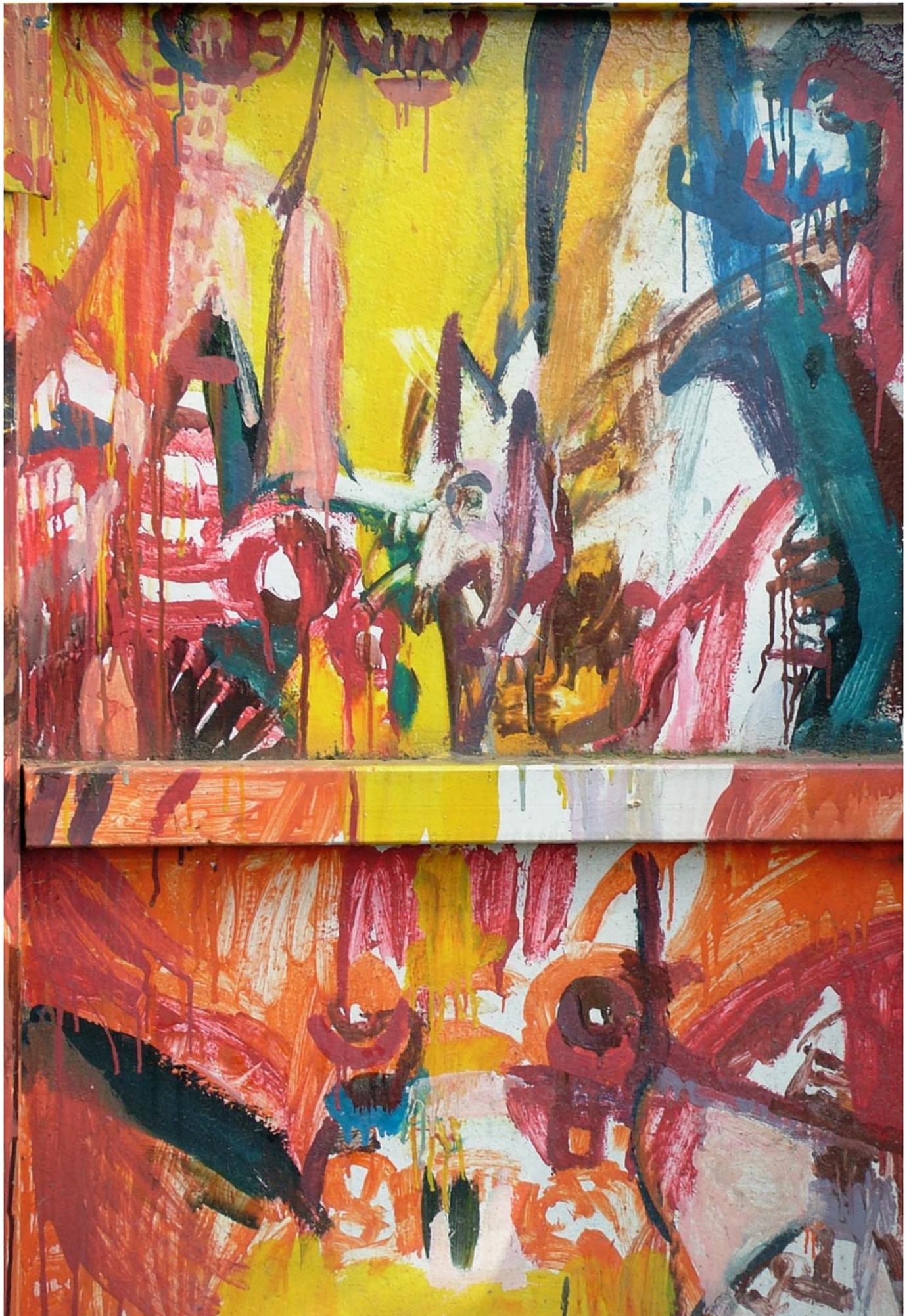


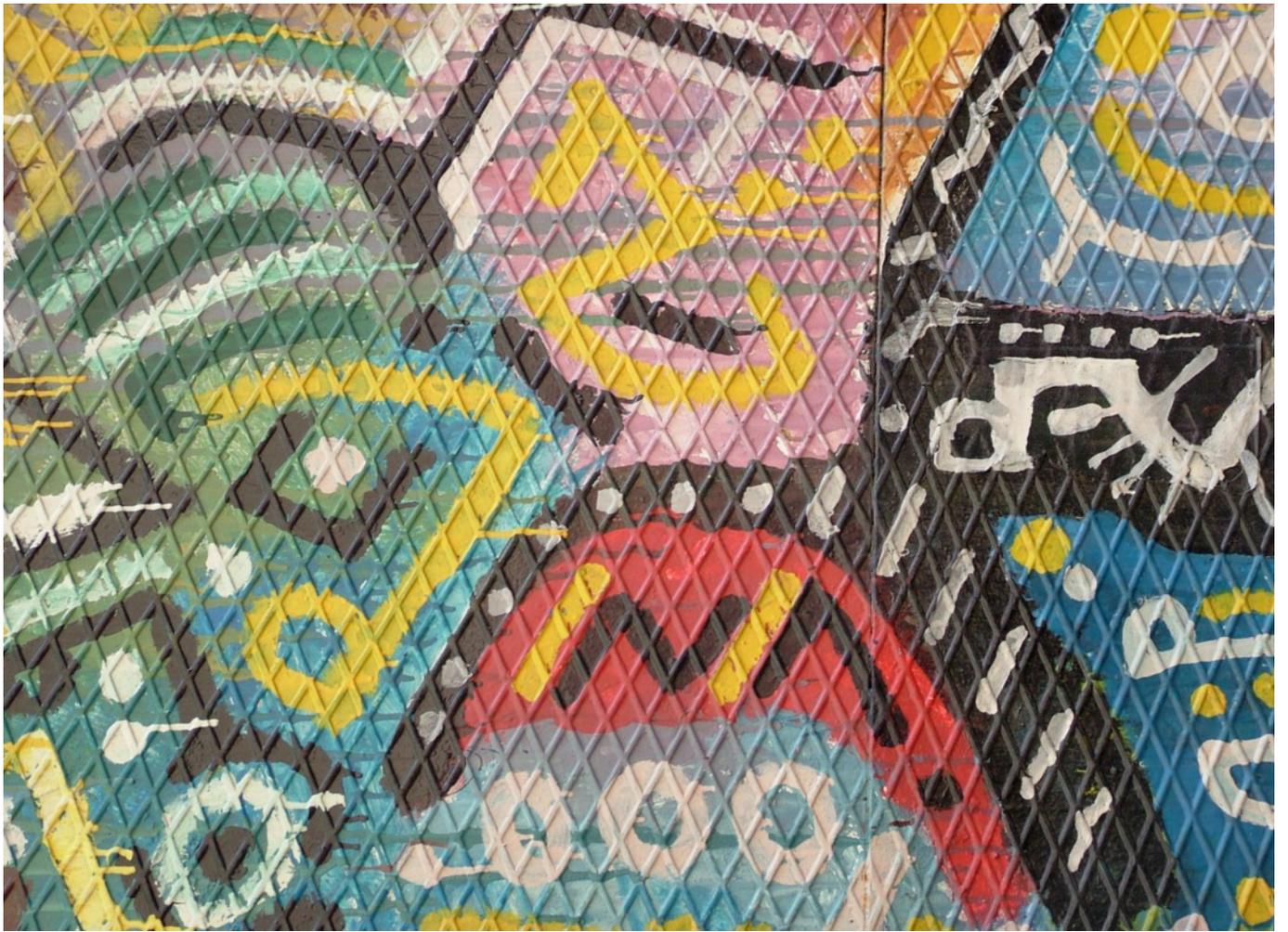


















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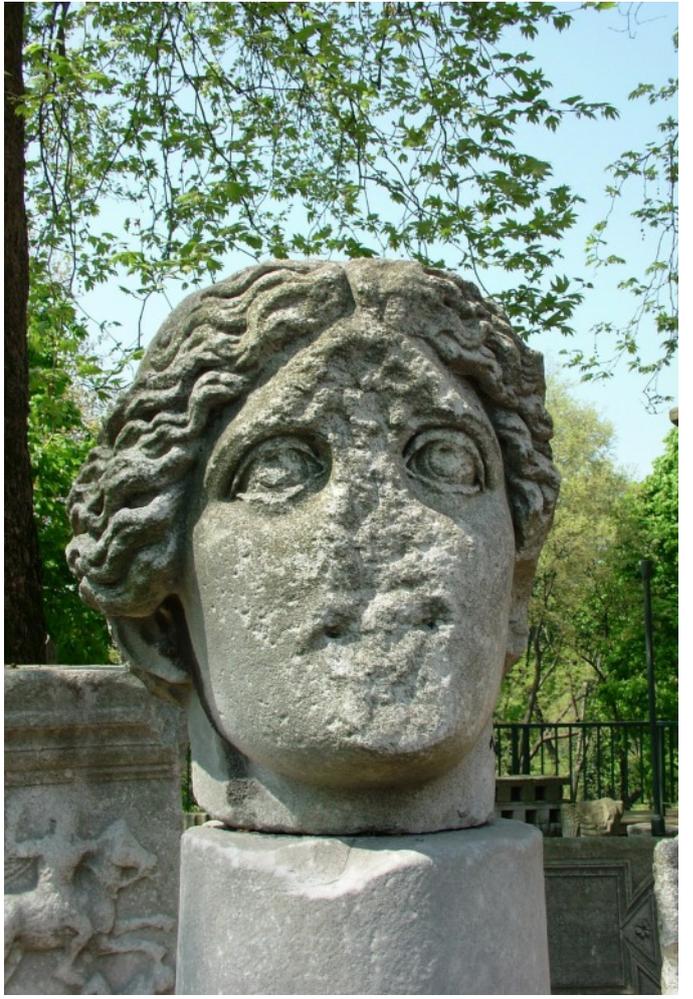








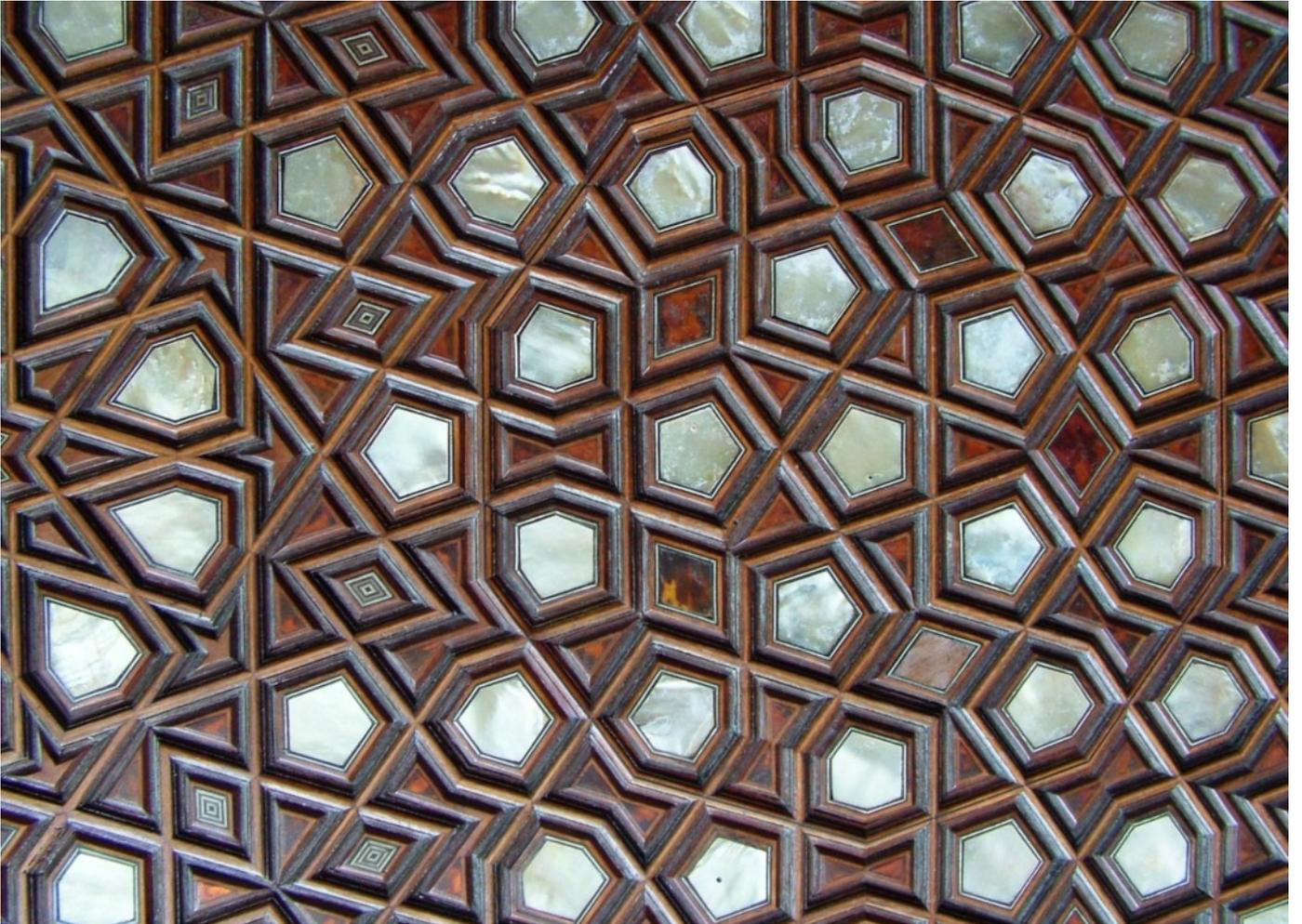






















بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
قوله حَيْكِرْتُمْ أَوْ مَشَدْتُمْ إِذْ أَهْمَلْتُمْ غَيْرِي أَوْلَىٰ مَا



بِرَجَائِي
وَمِنْ كَيْفِيَّةِ

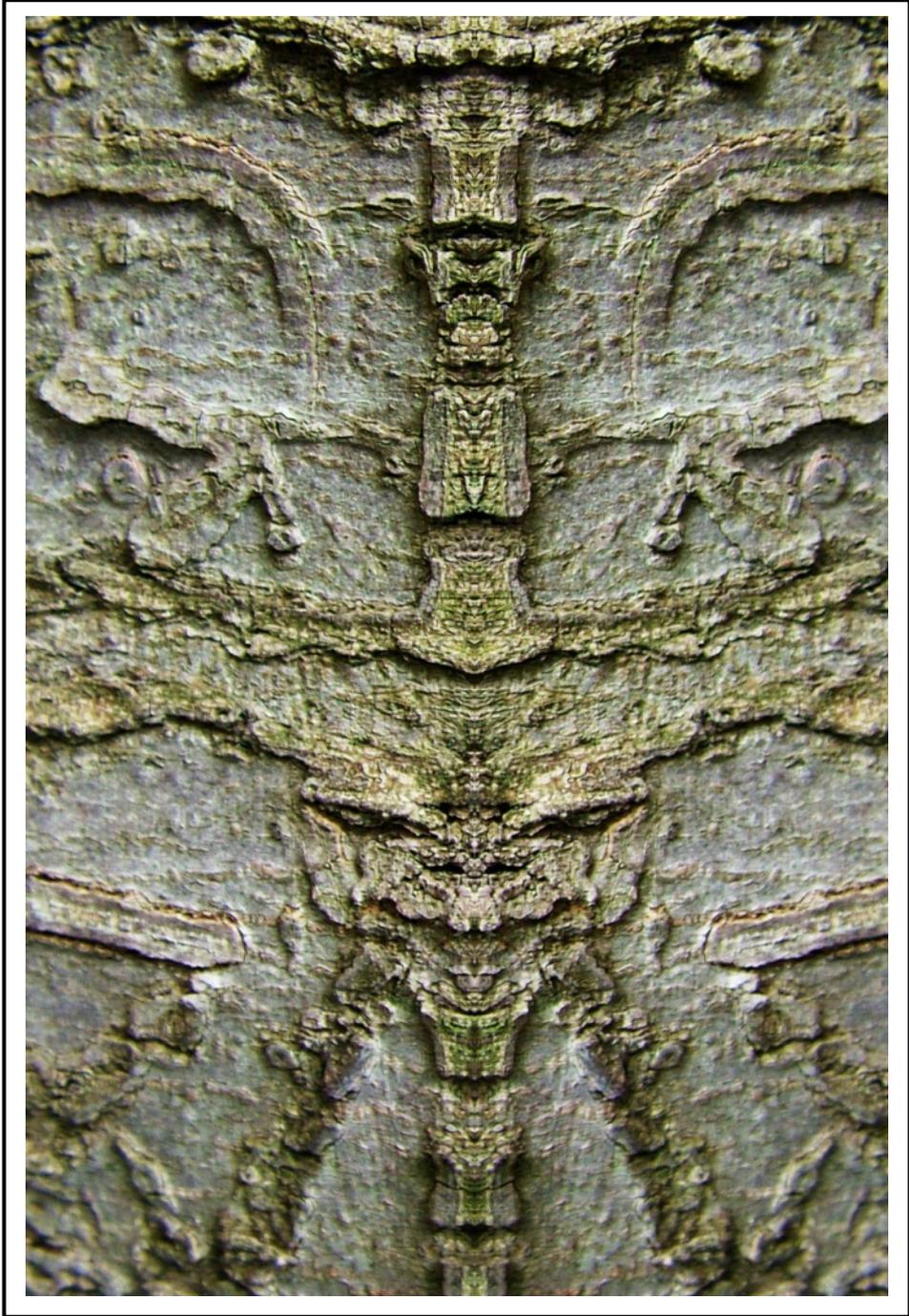


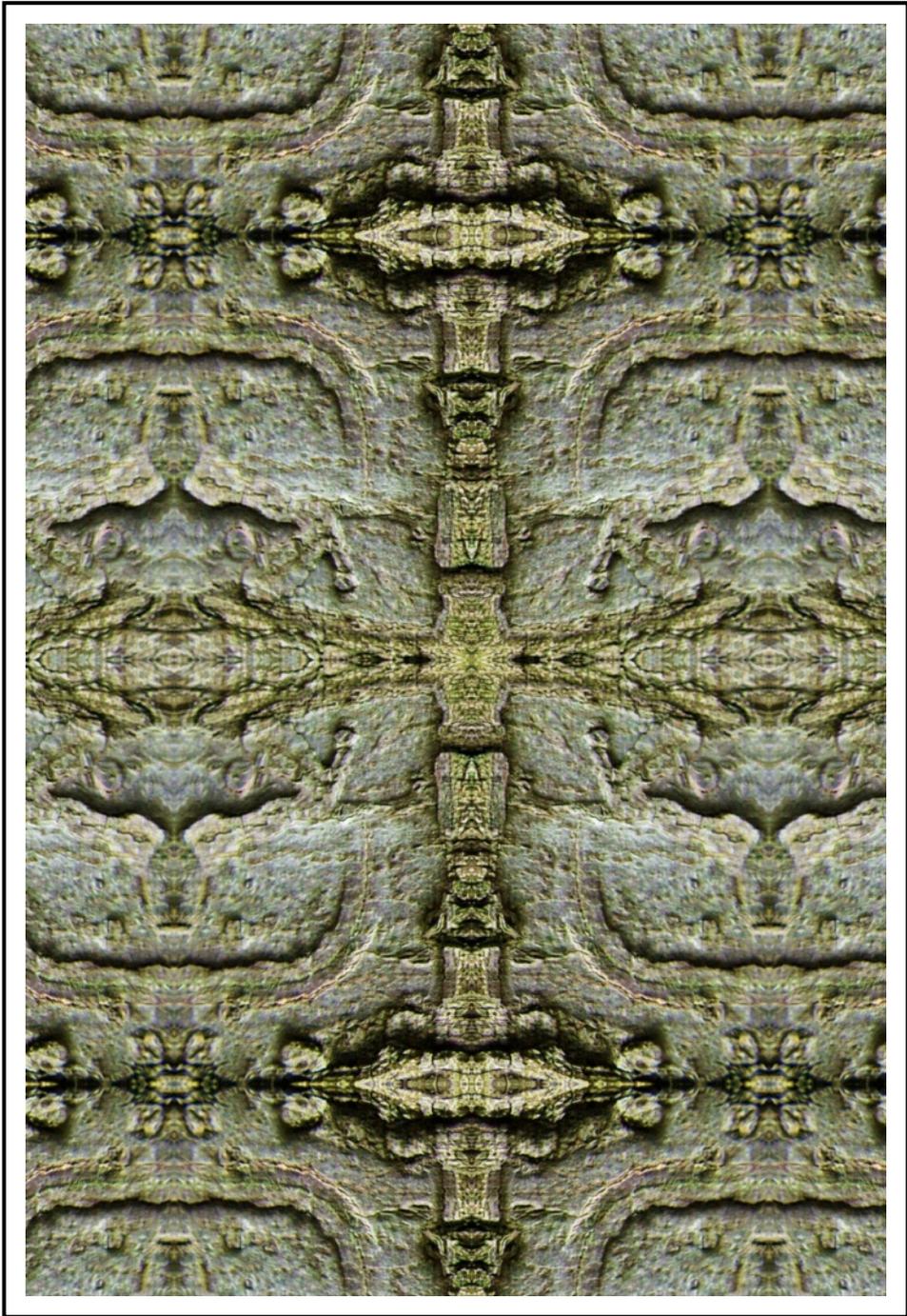
عَظْمٌ طَائِلَةٌ
عَظْمٌ كَسَلٌ
عَظْمٌ دَلِيلٌ
عَظْمٌ حَيْكِرٌ

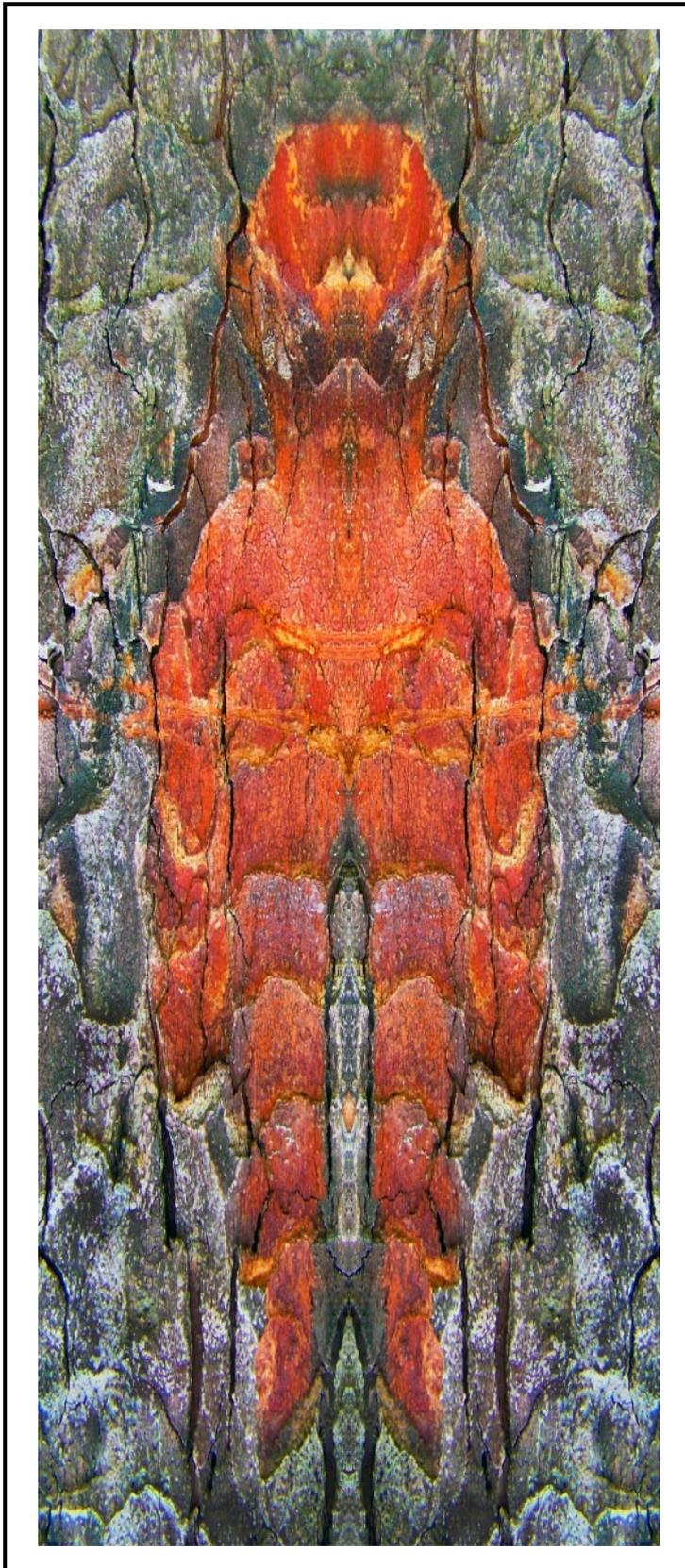
Digital re-interpretations of the plane tree bark dendroglyphs

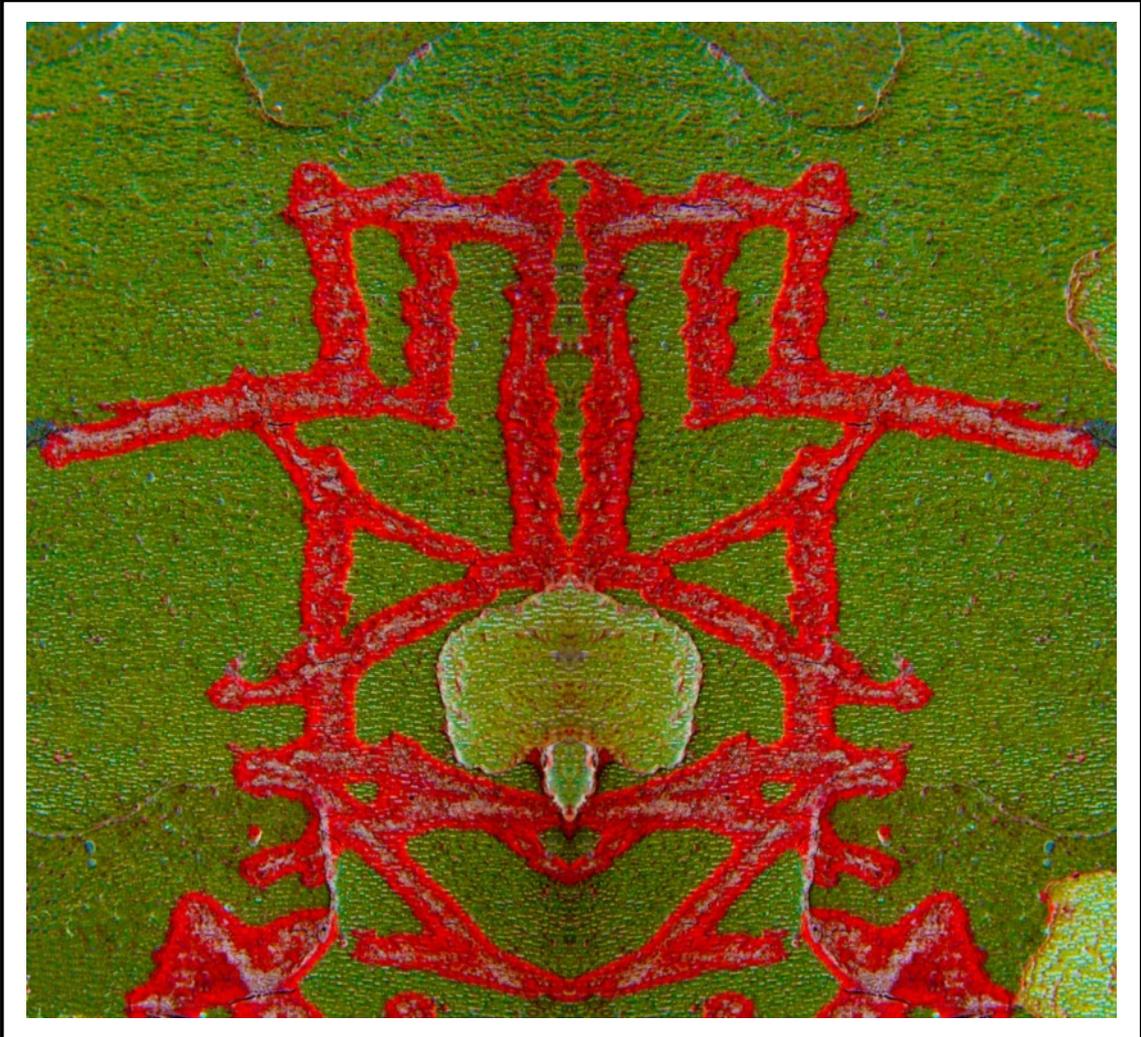
“One eye sees, the other feels”

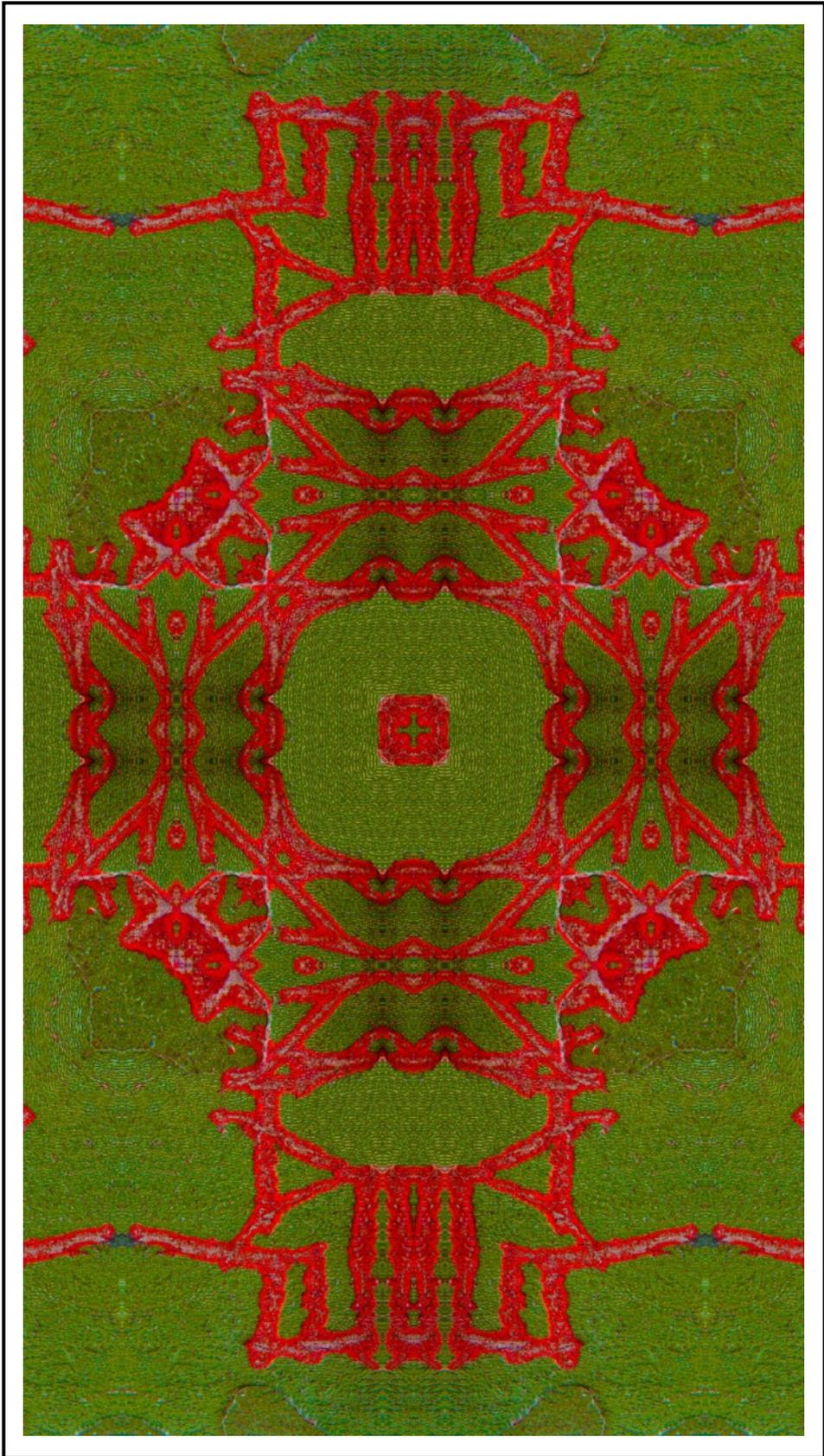
Paul Klee 1879-1940









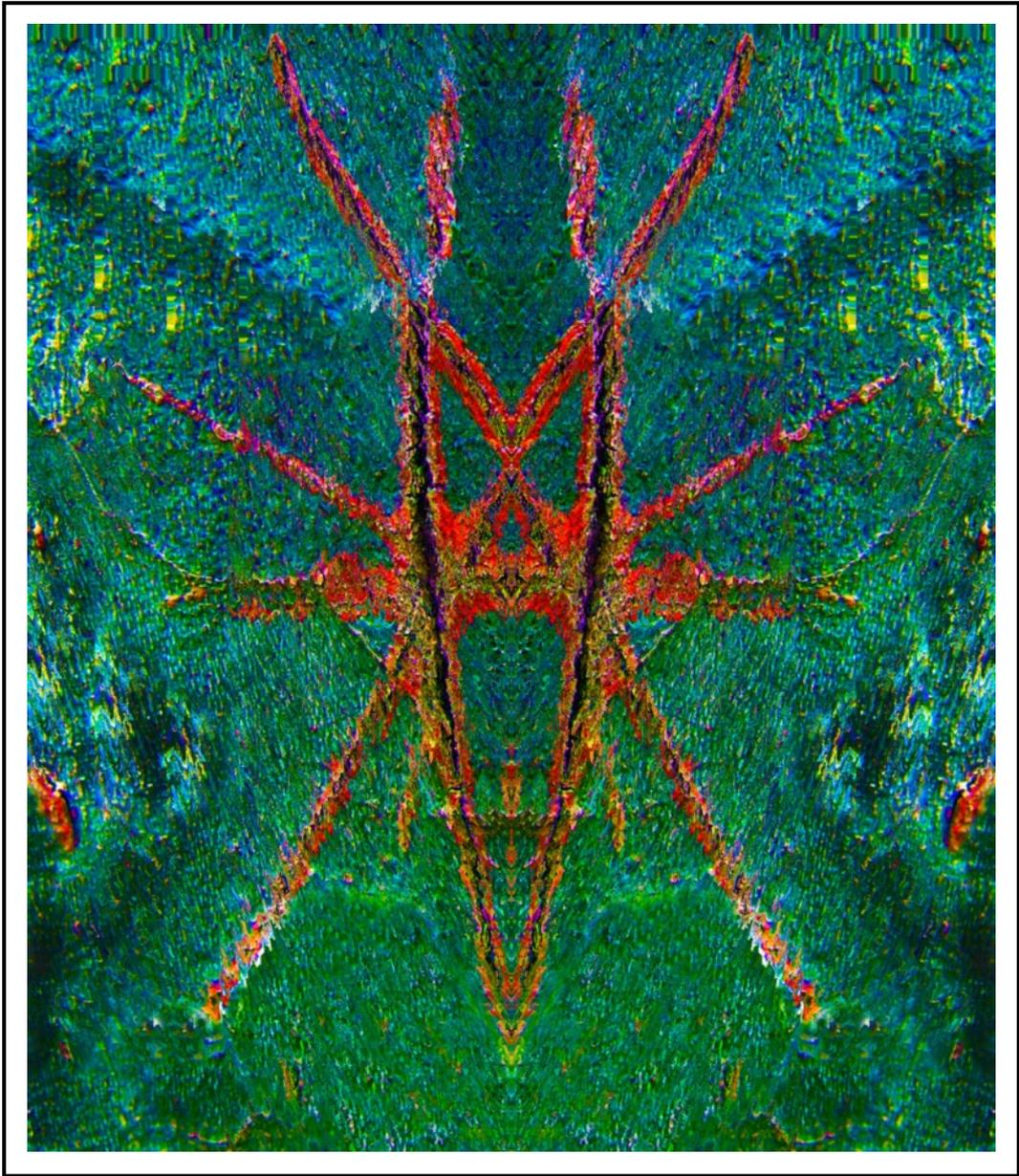


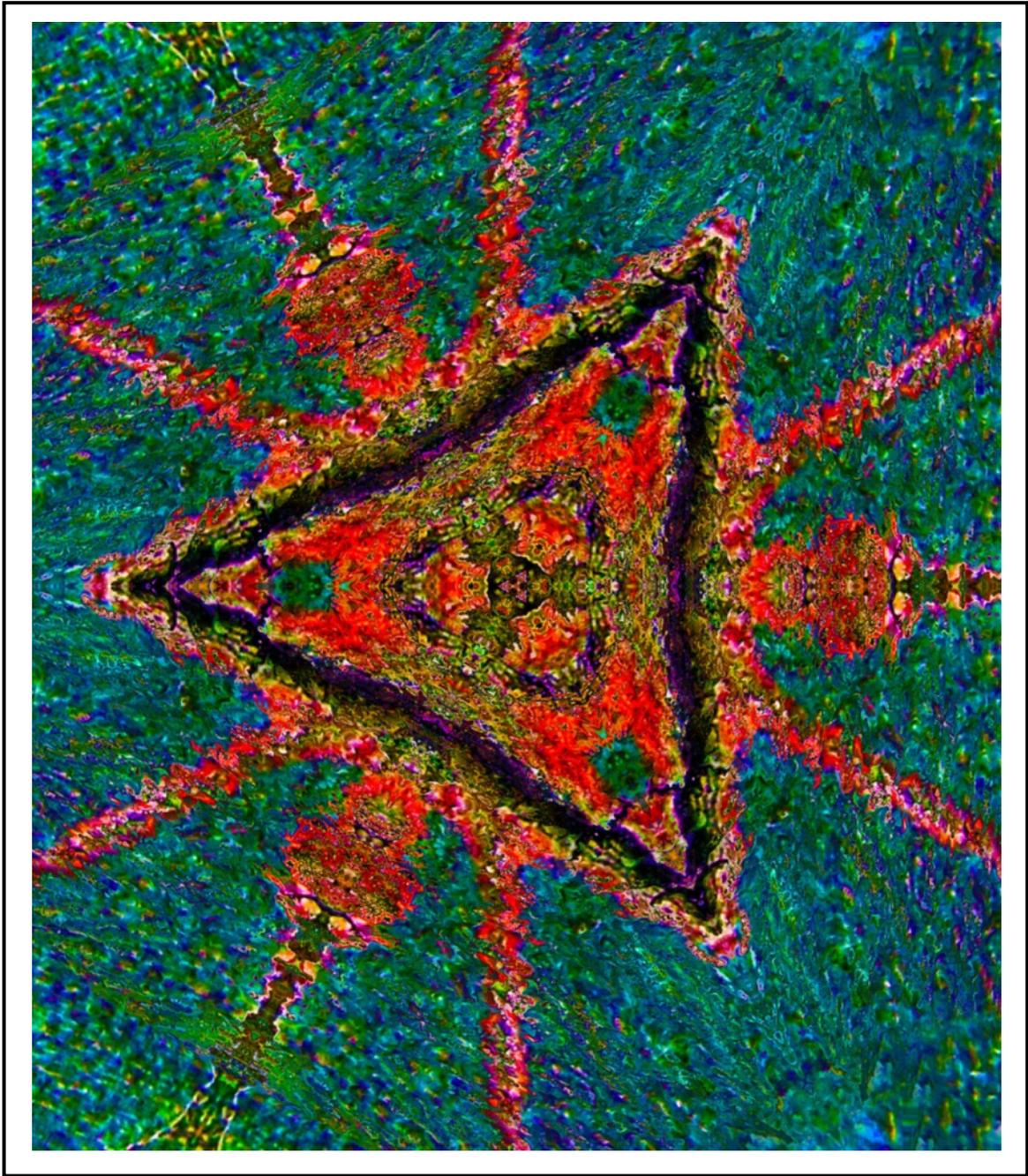


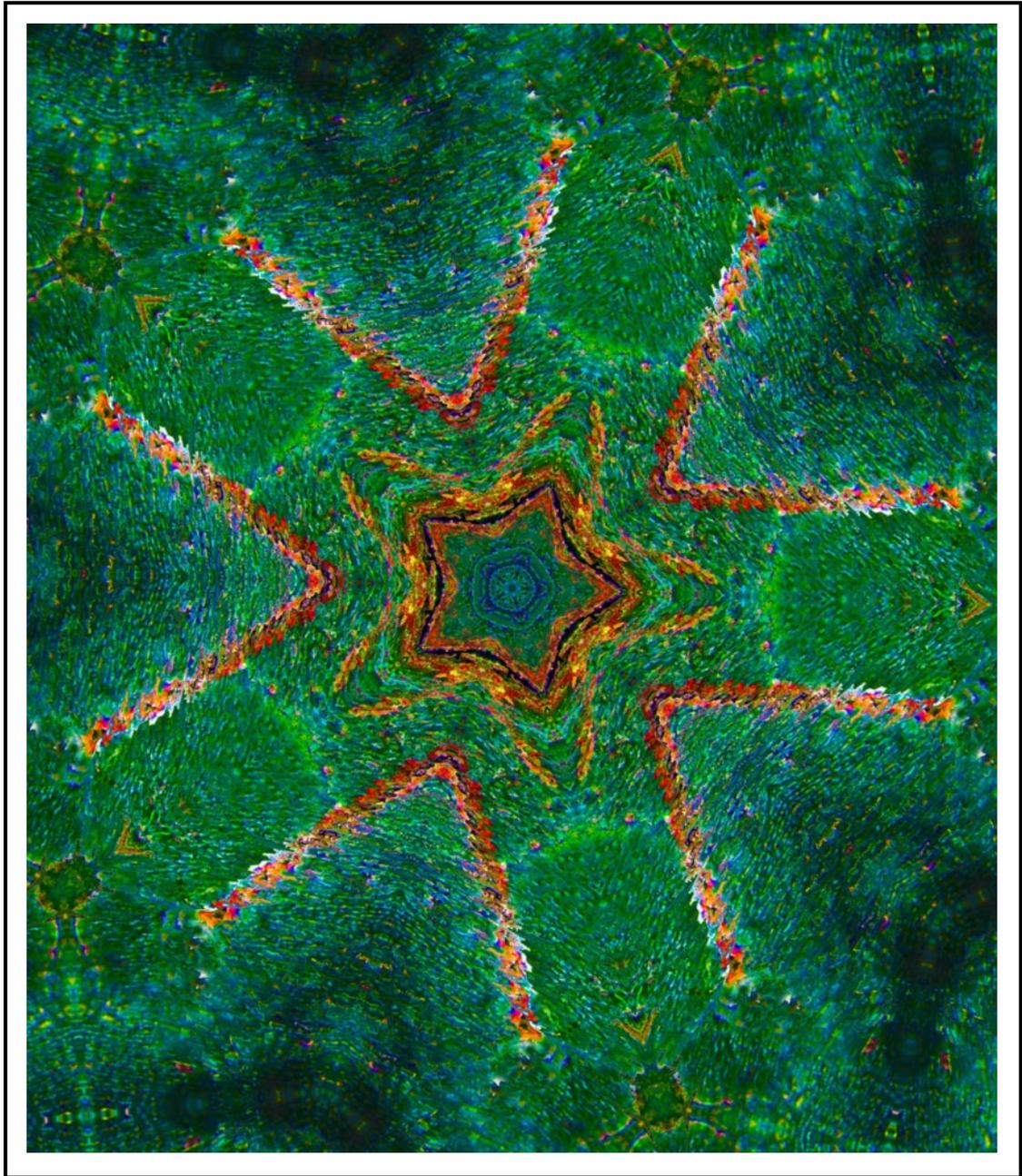








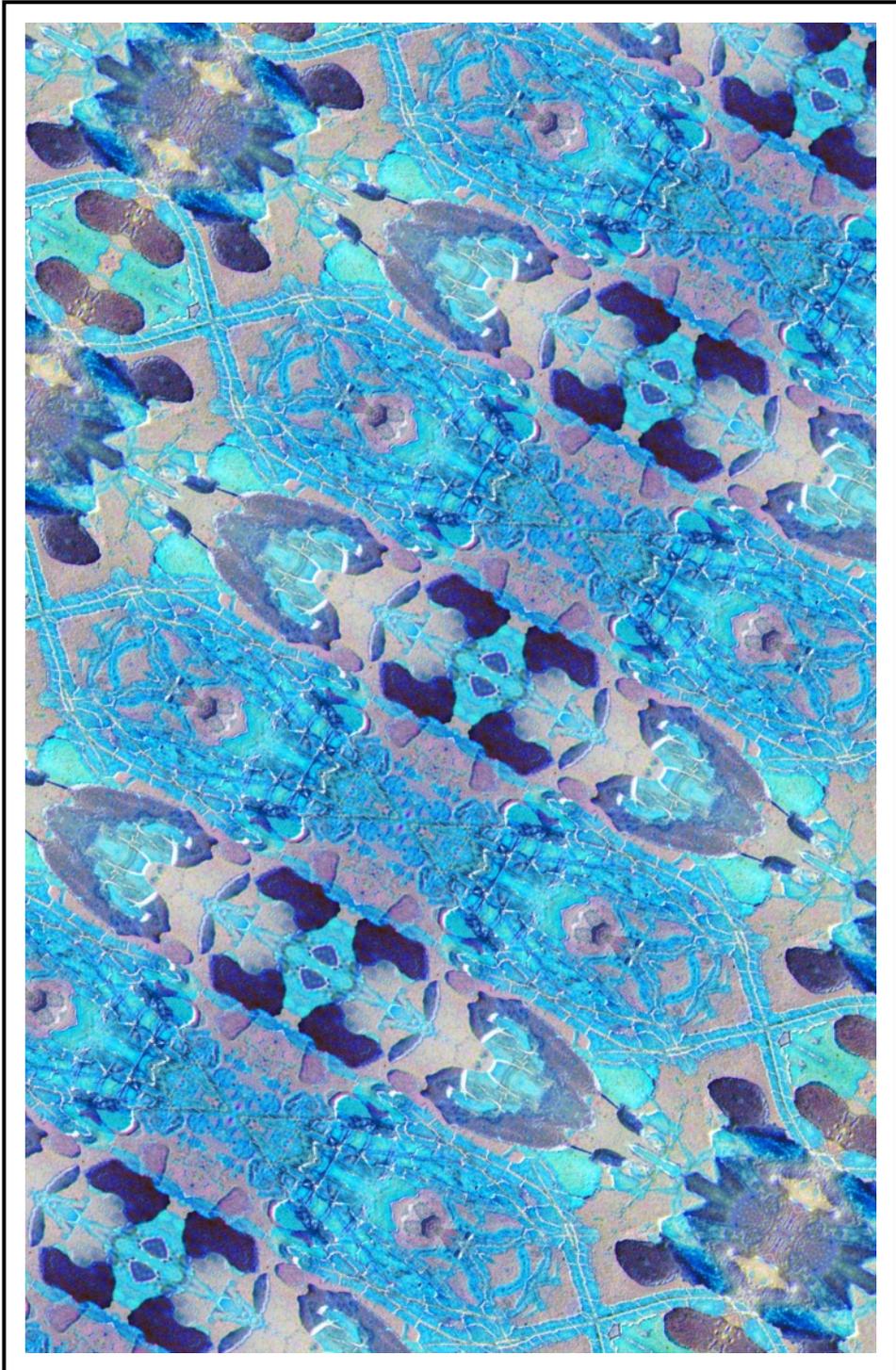


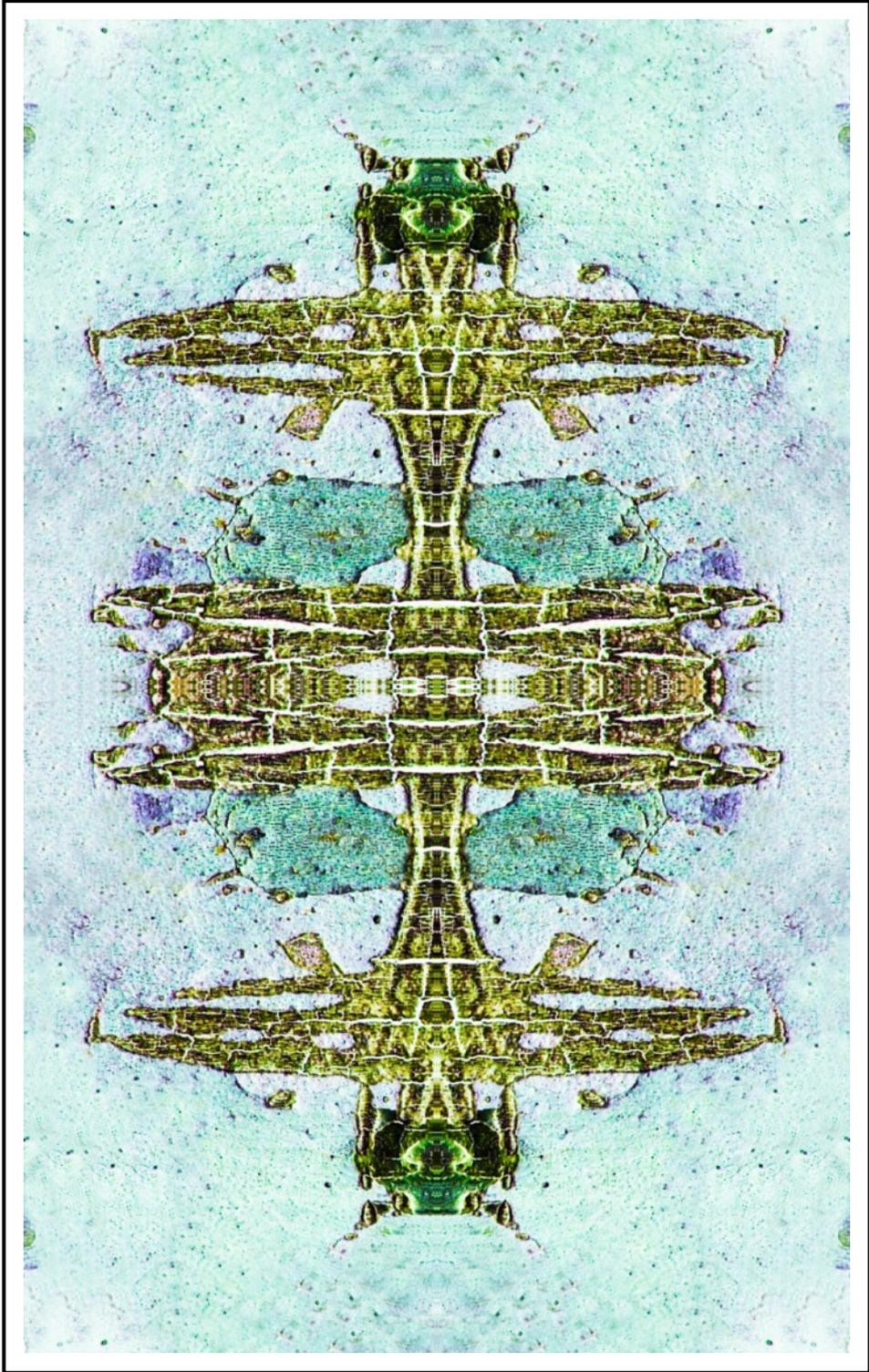




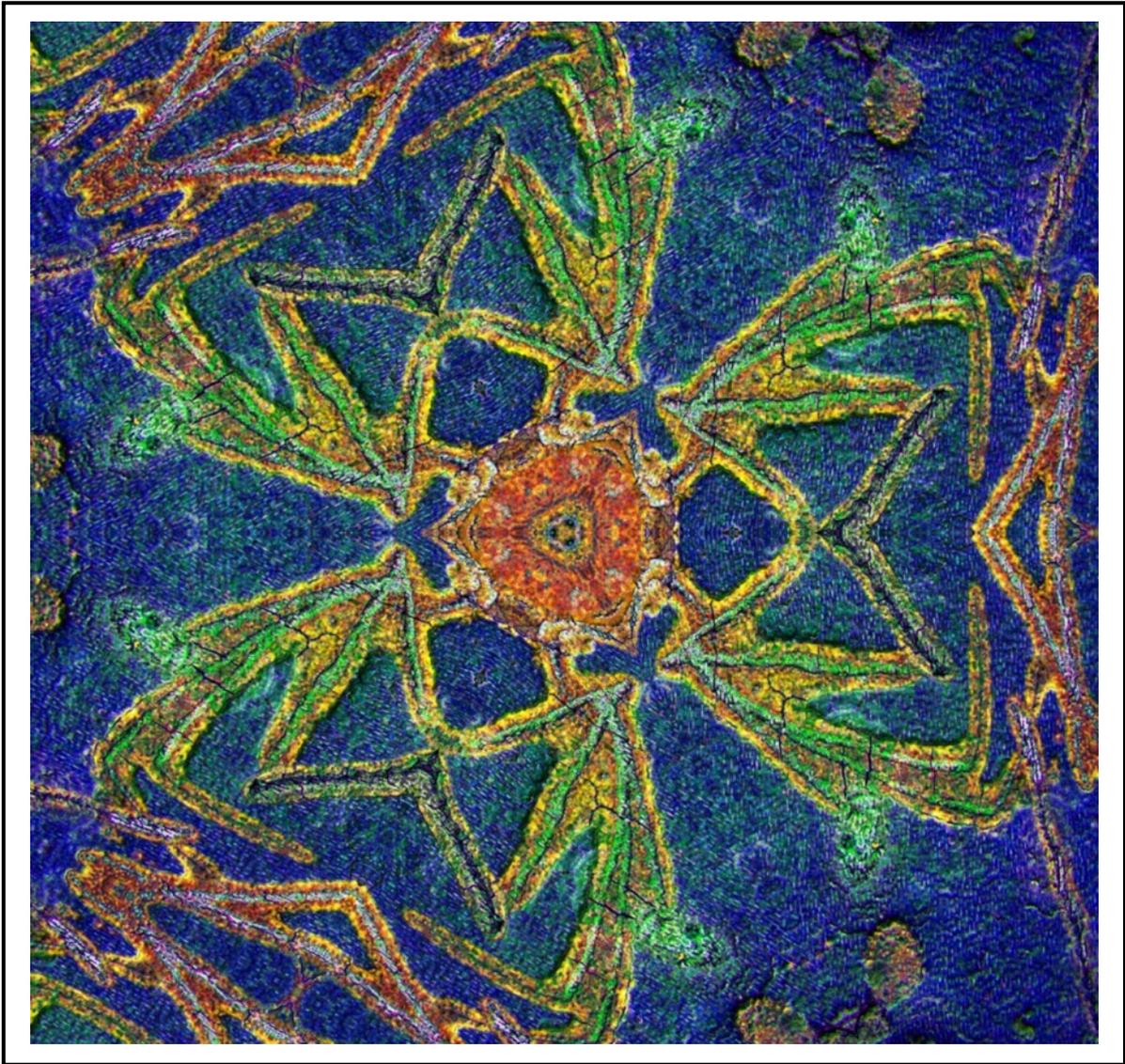




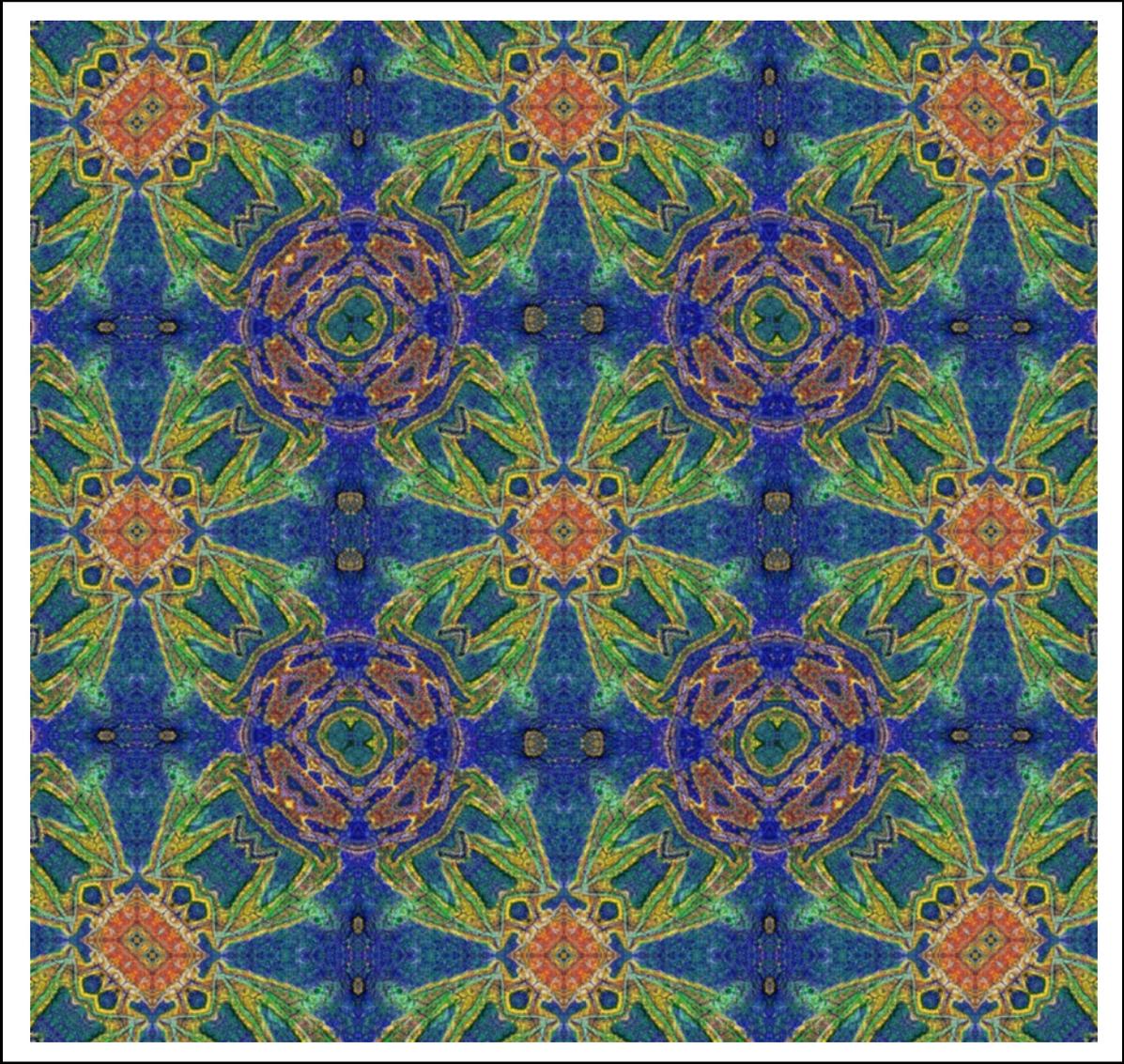


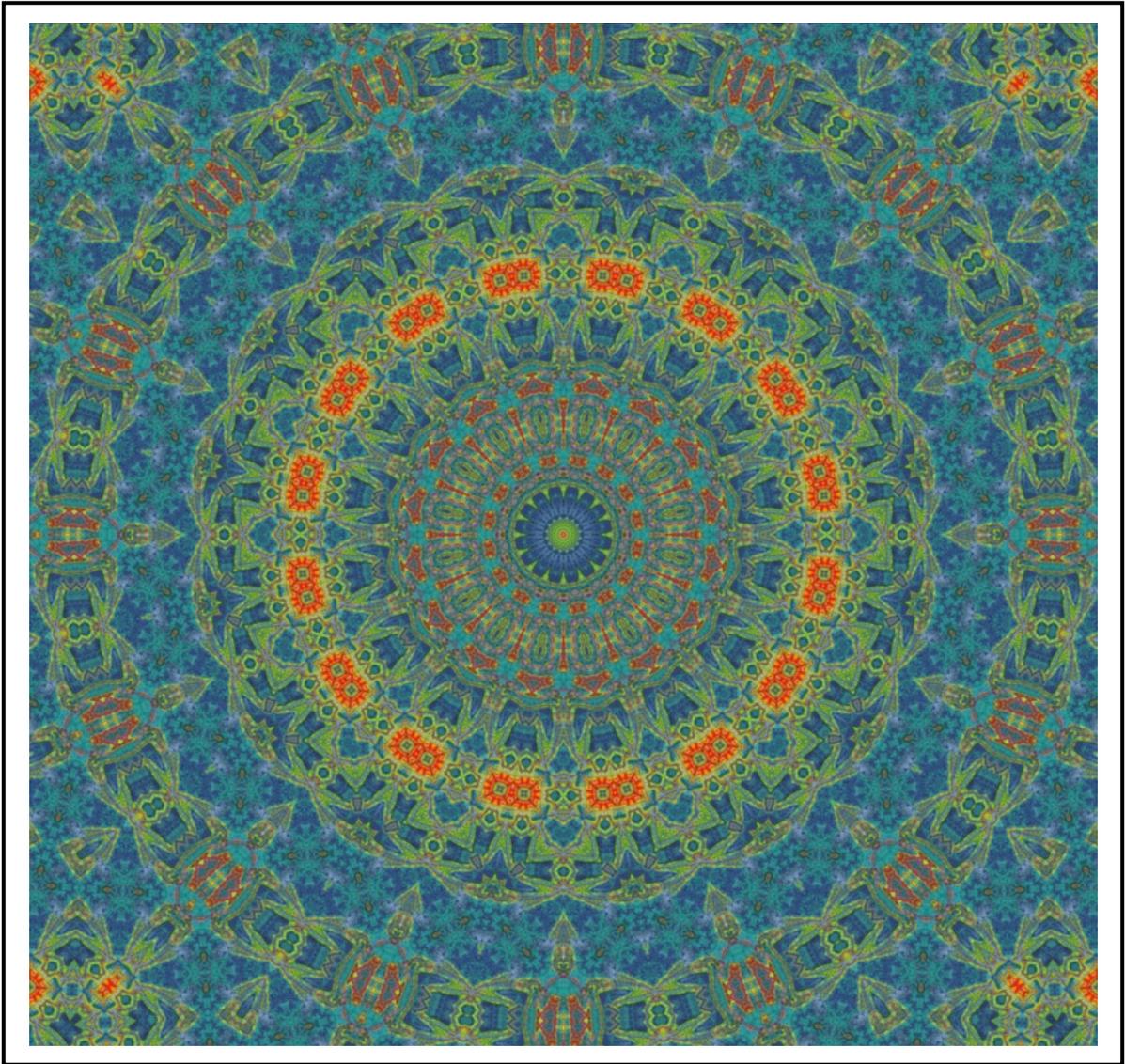


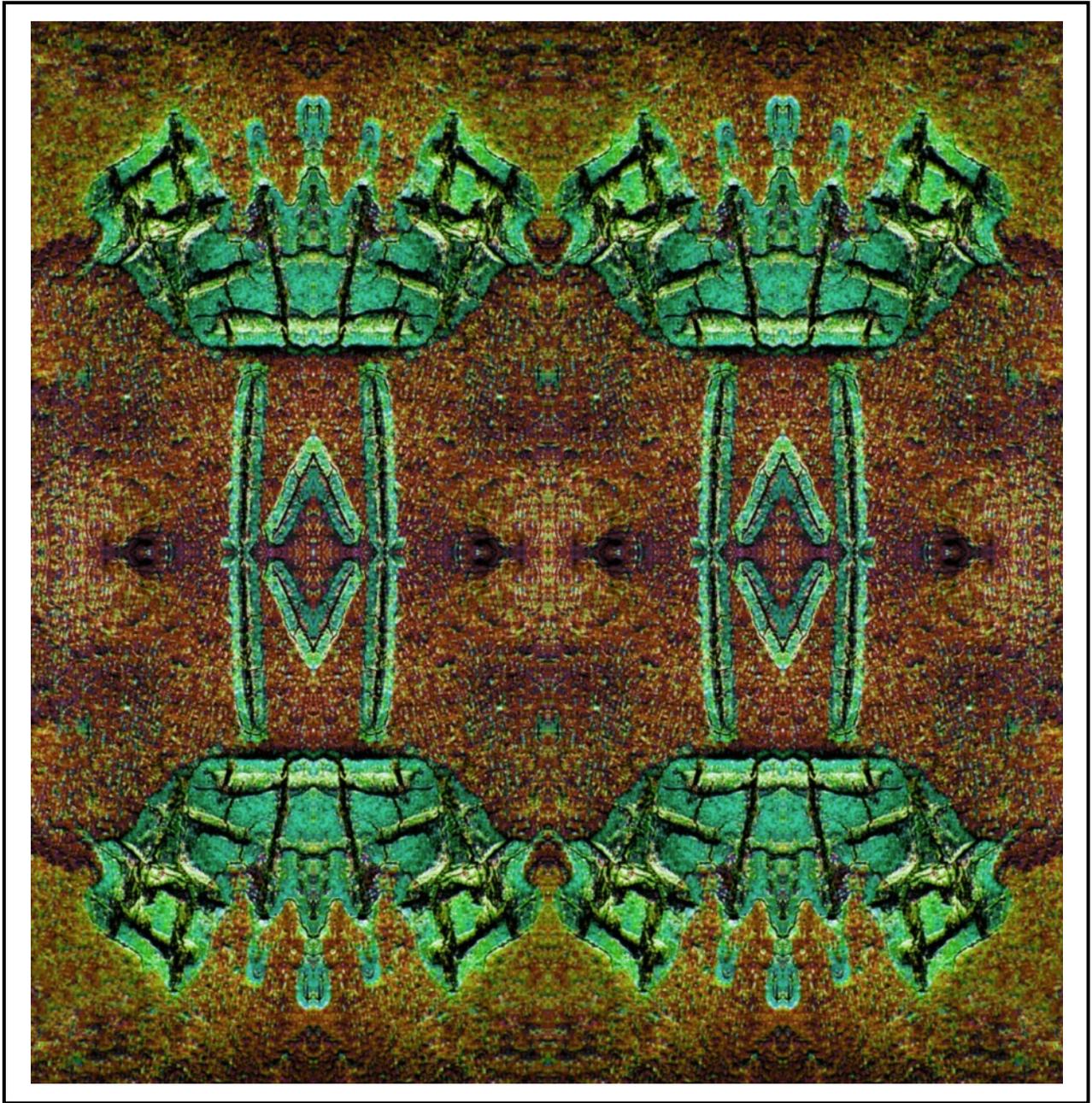


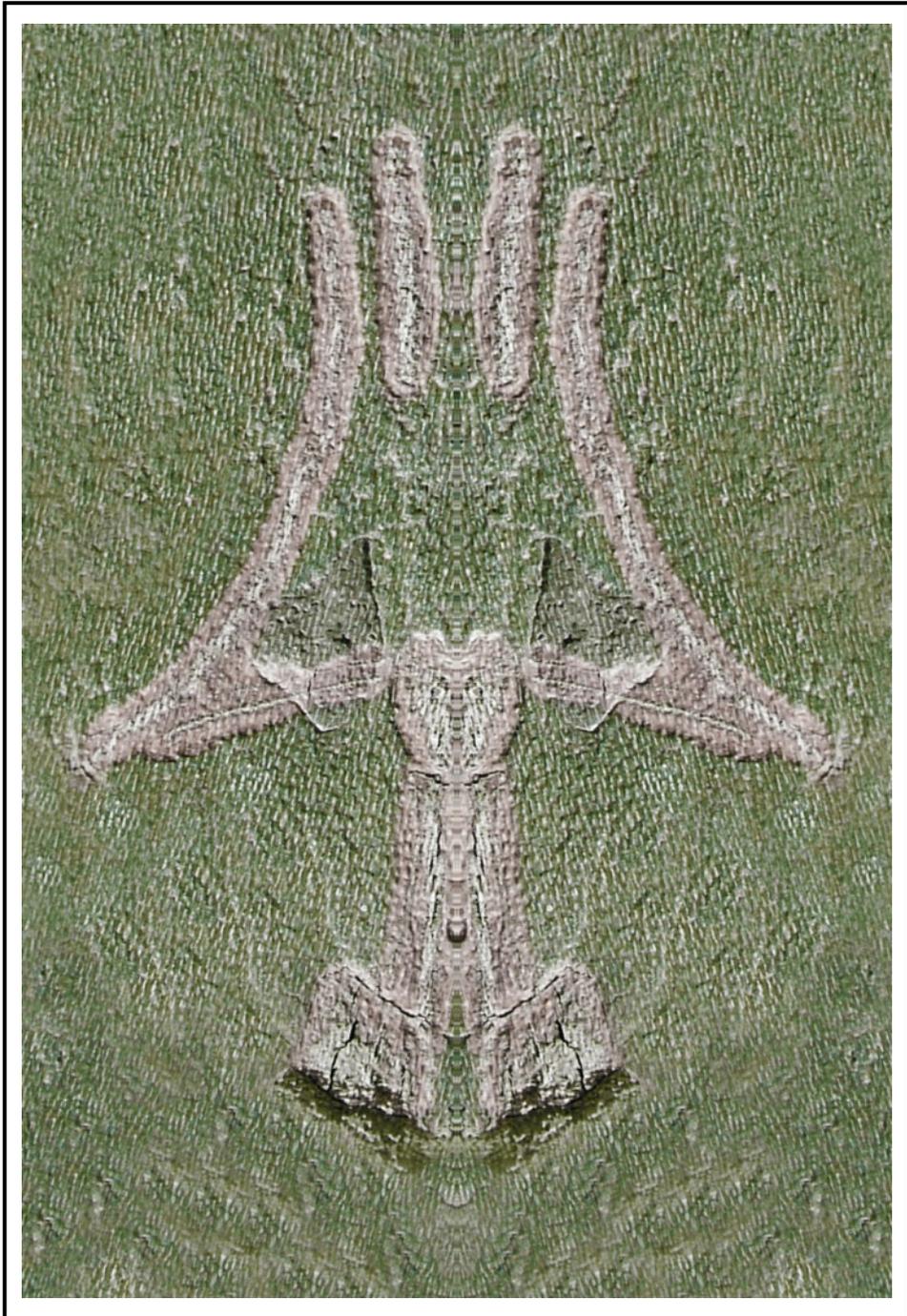


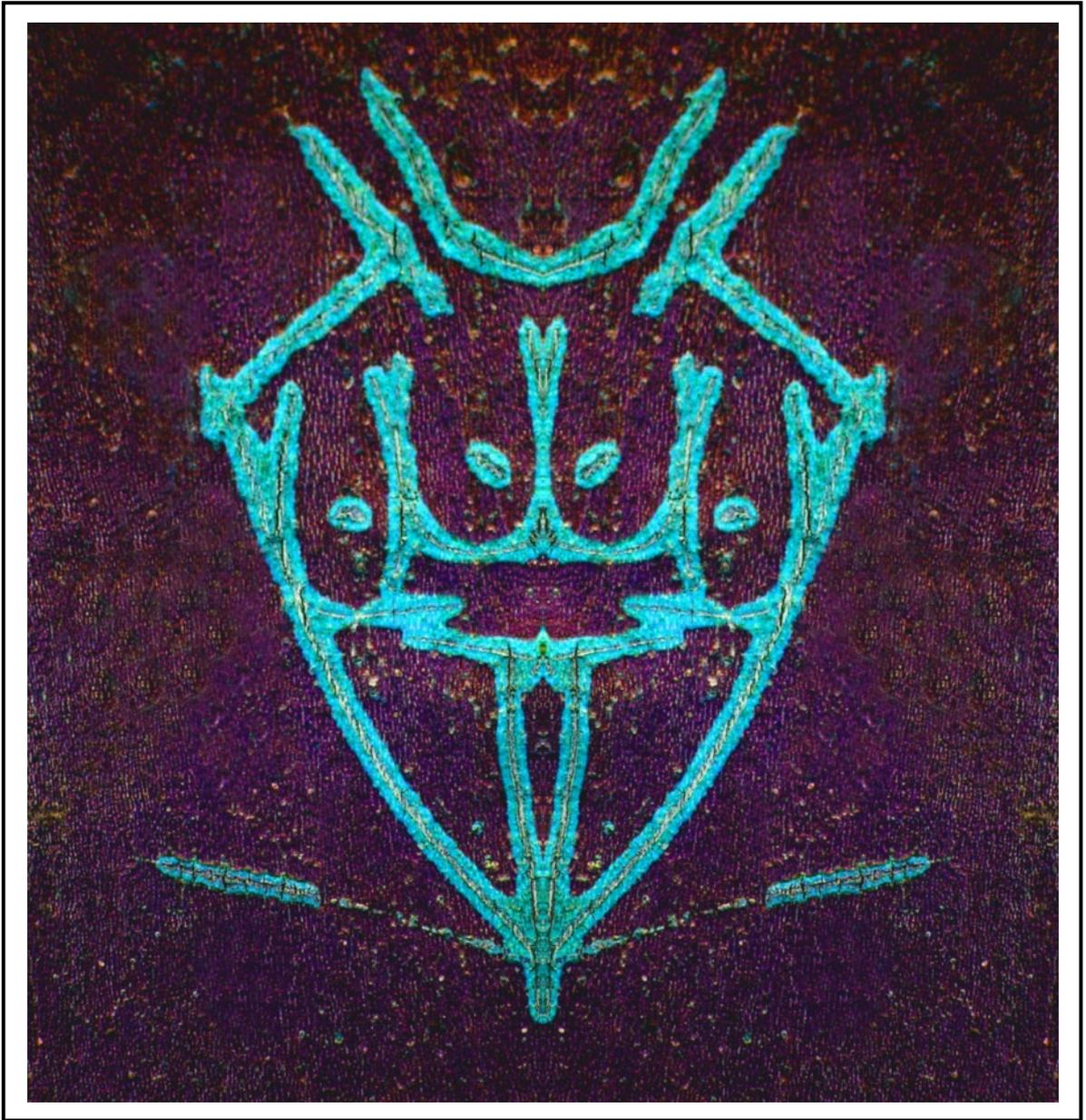












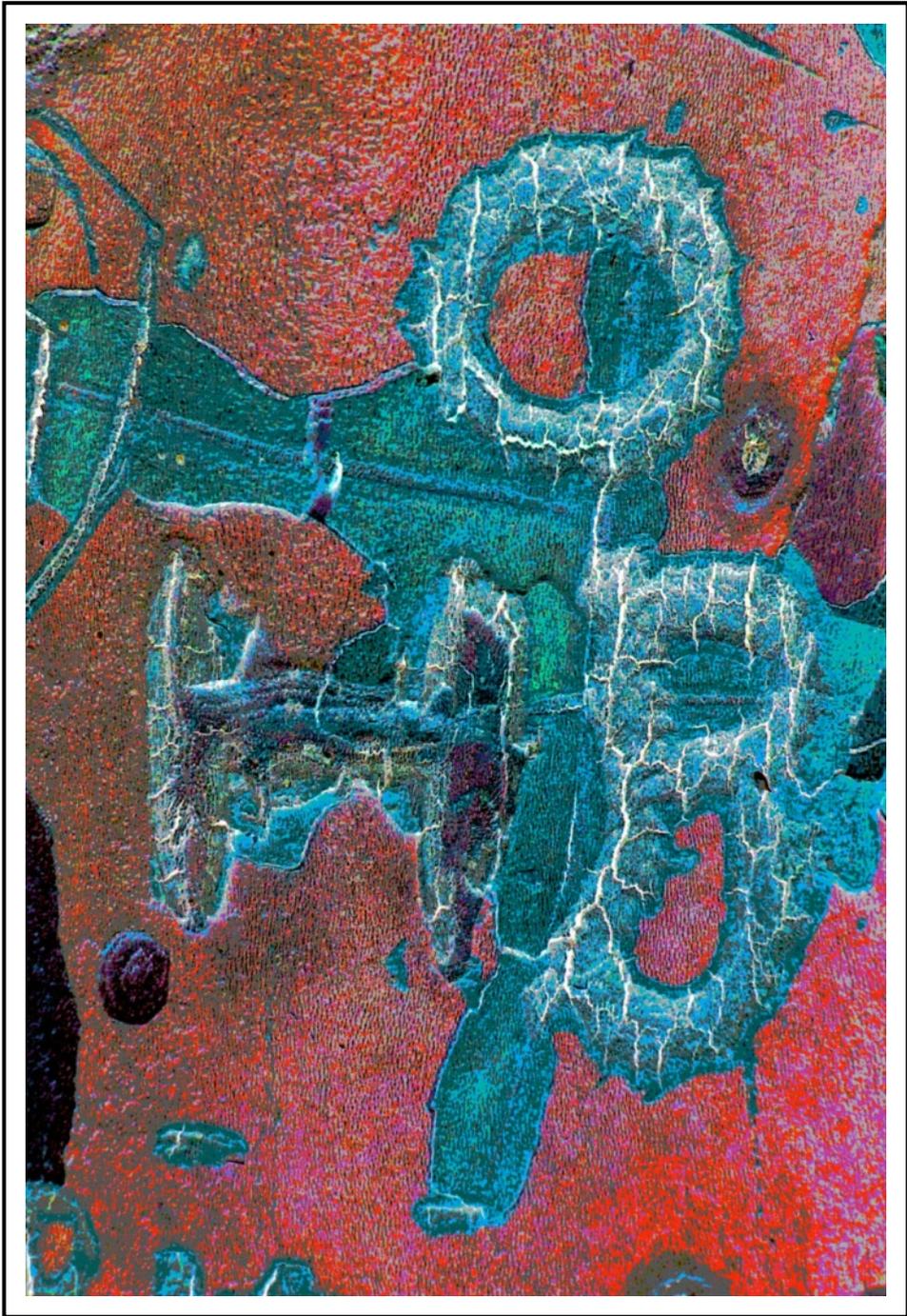


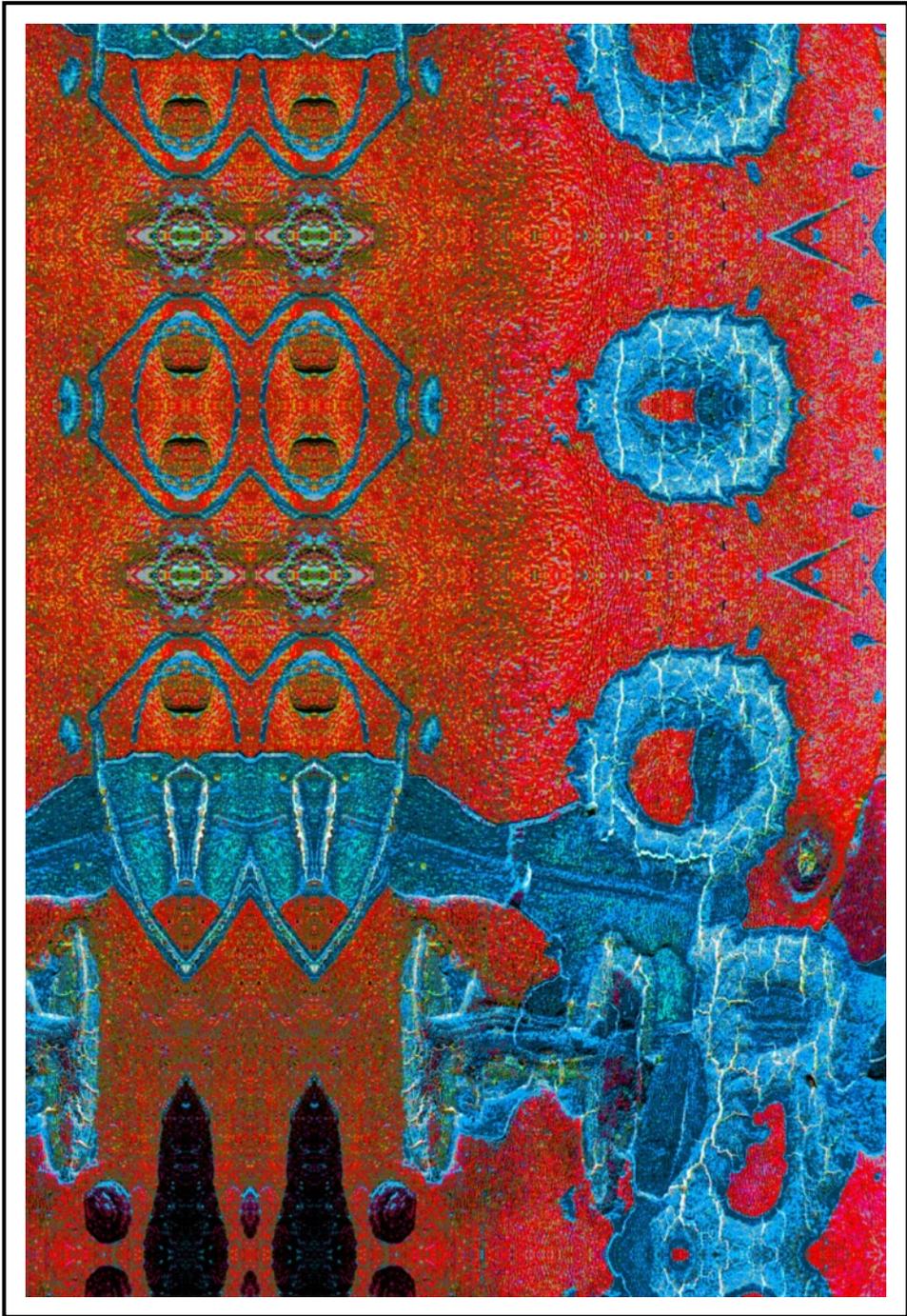


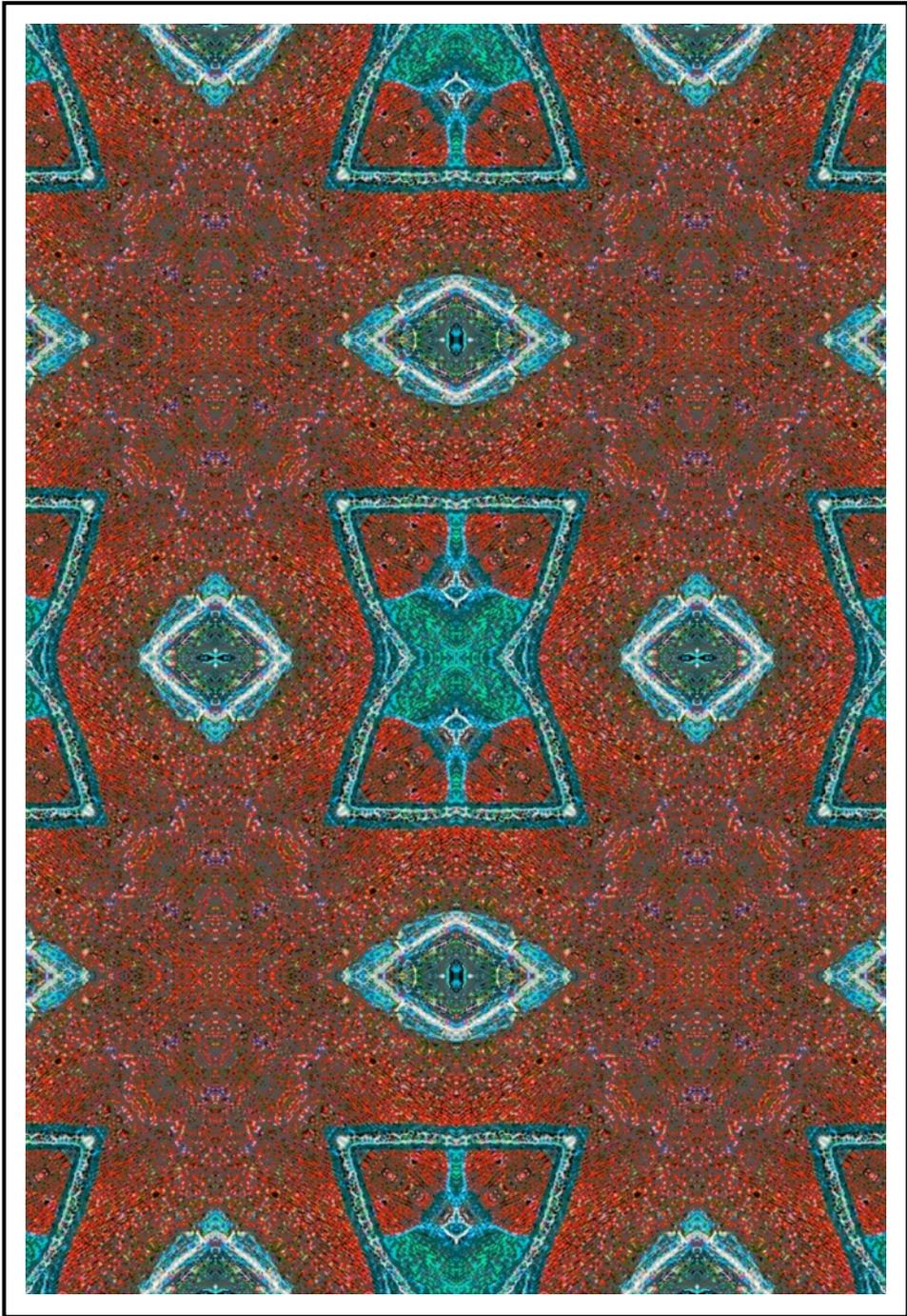








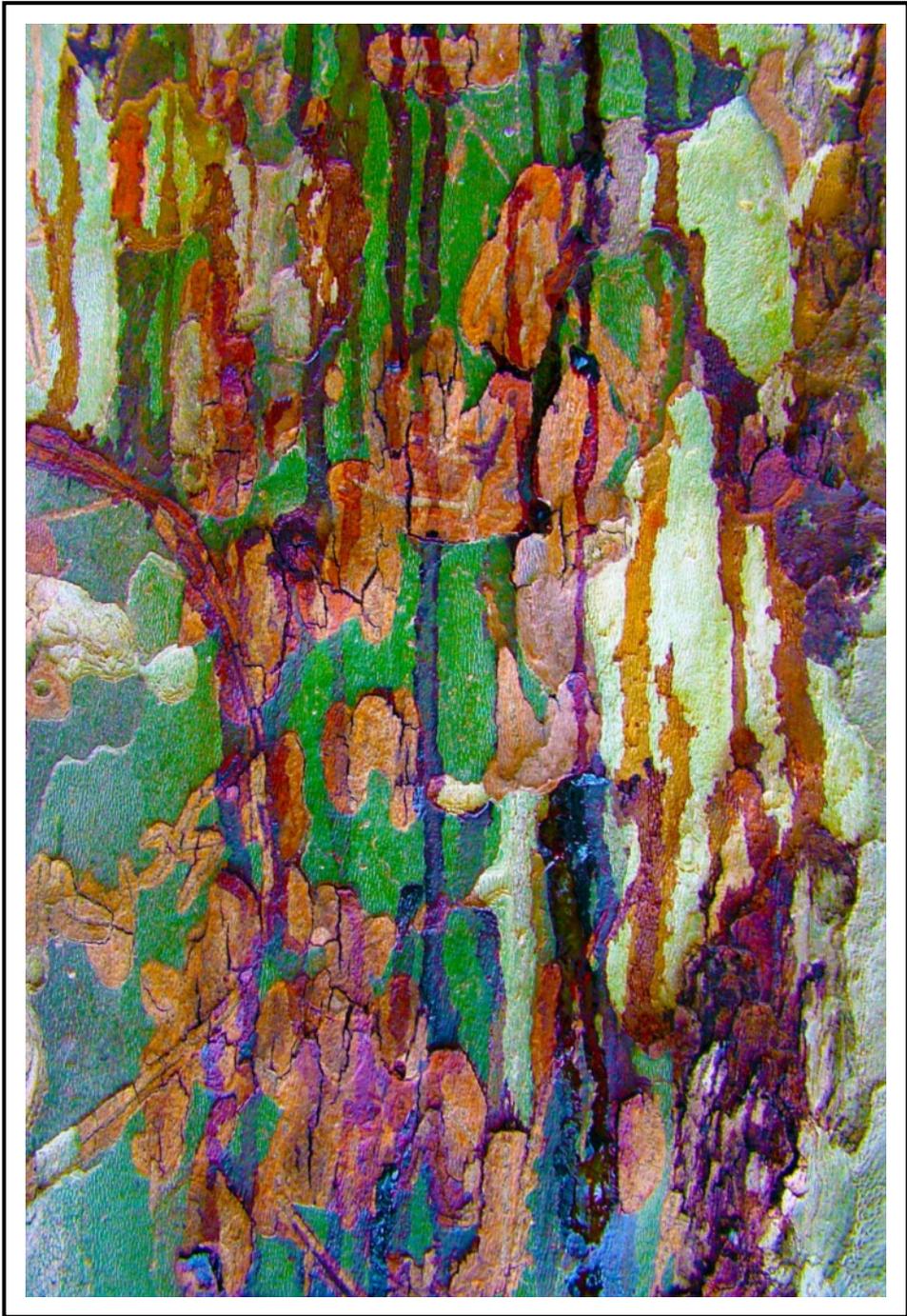
















Links to Internet resources

Istanbul

<http://english.istanbul.com/explore-istanbul>

Dendroglyphs

<http://www.doc.govt.nz/conservation/historic/by-region/chatham-islands/chatham-island-dendroglyphs/>

Google images of Kabazaiku

<https://www.google.co.uk/search?q=kabazaiku&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ei=Zf8UU4CmNM2ShgfPrIGICQ&sqi=2&ved=0CDUQsAQ&biw=1680&bih=925>

Google images of Beresta

https://www.google.co.uk/search?q=beresta+birch+bark+crafts&espv=210&es_sm=93&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ei=CAQVU5OVAoqFhQeuwYHABw&ved=0CDQsAQ&biw=1680&bih=925

Beresta craft site

<https://sites.google.com/site/andreilialinart/beresta>

Oriental Plane

<http://www.kew.org/plants-fungi/Platanus-orientalis.htm>

Dorothy Gill Barnes website

<http://dorothygillbarnes.com/>

Google images - Dorothy Gill Barnes works

https://www.google.co.uk/search?q=oriental+plane+tree&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ei=ugAVU5qyNYmBhAfZ14CgBQ&sqi=2&ved=0CAcQ_AUoAQ&biw=1680&bih=925#q=Dorothy+Gill+barnes&tbm=isch

Pattern in Islamic art

<http://patterninislamicart.com/>

Google images - Turkish calligraphy

<https://www.google.co.uk/search?q=turkish+calligraphy&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ei=6QIVU56rB4aRhQeZgoGYCw&ved=0CC0QsAQ&biw=1680&bih=925>

Turkish carpets

https://www.google.co.uk/search?q=turkish+carpets&espv=210&es_sm=93&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ei=vGMVU9WCLM7G7AbegoHQDA&ved=0CAkQ_AUoAQ&biw=1680&bih=925

Google images – Turkish tiles

https://www.google.co.uk/search?q=turkish+tiles&espv=210&es_sm=93&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ei=UfwLU9bLC8ip0QWyy4CwAw&ved=0CFAQsAQ&biw=1680&bih=925