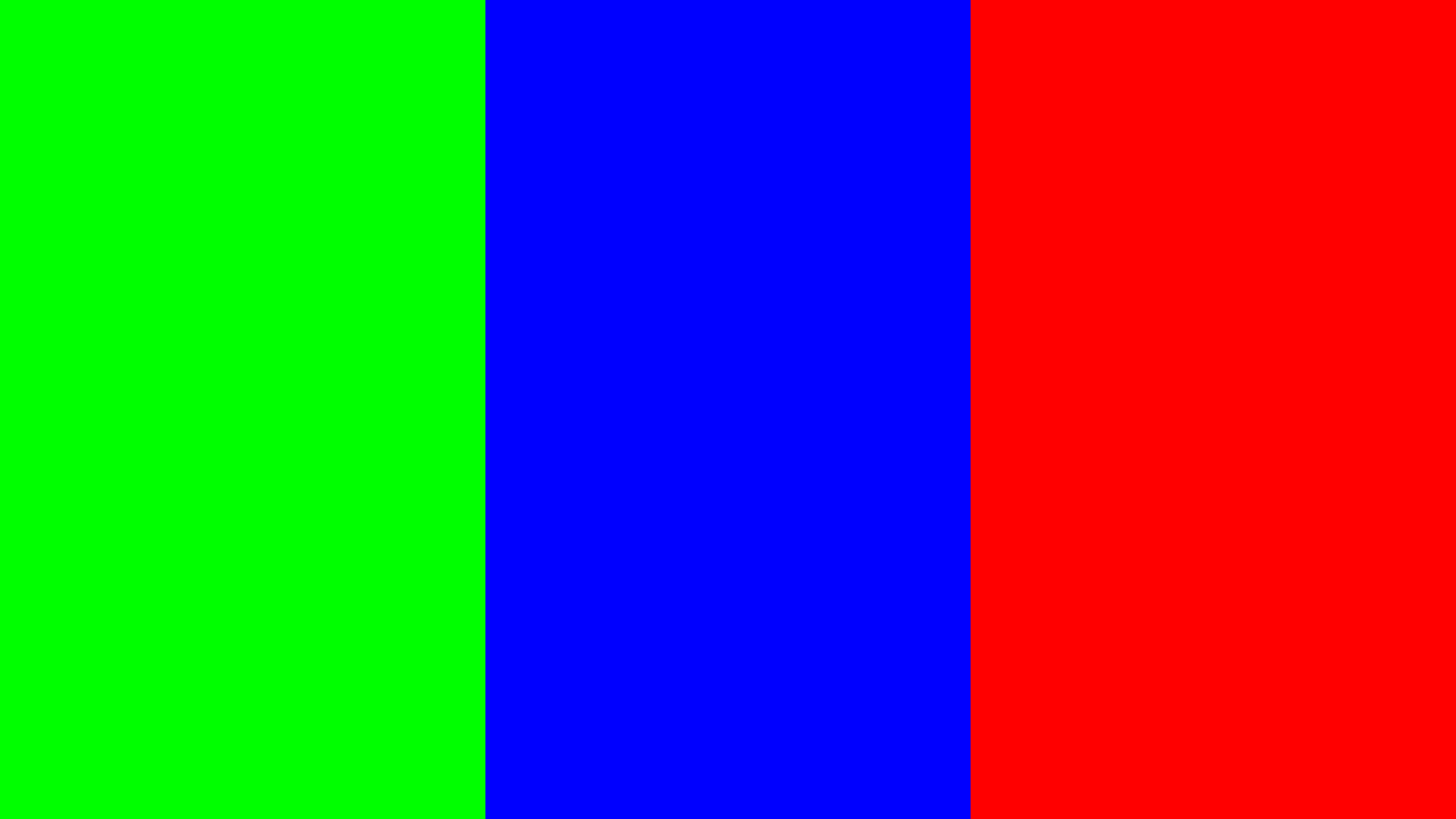
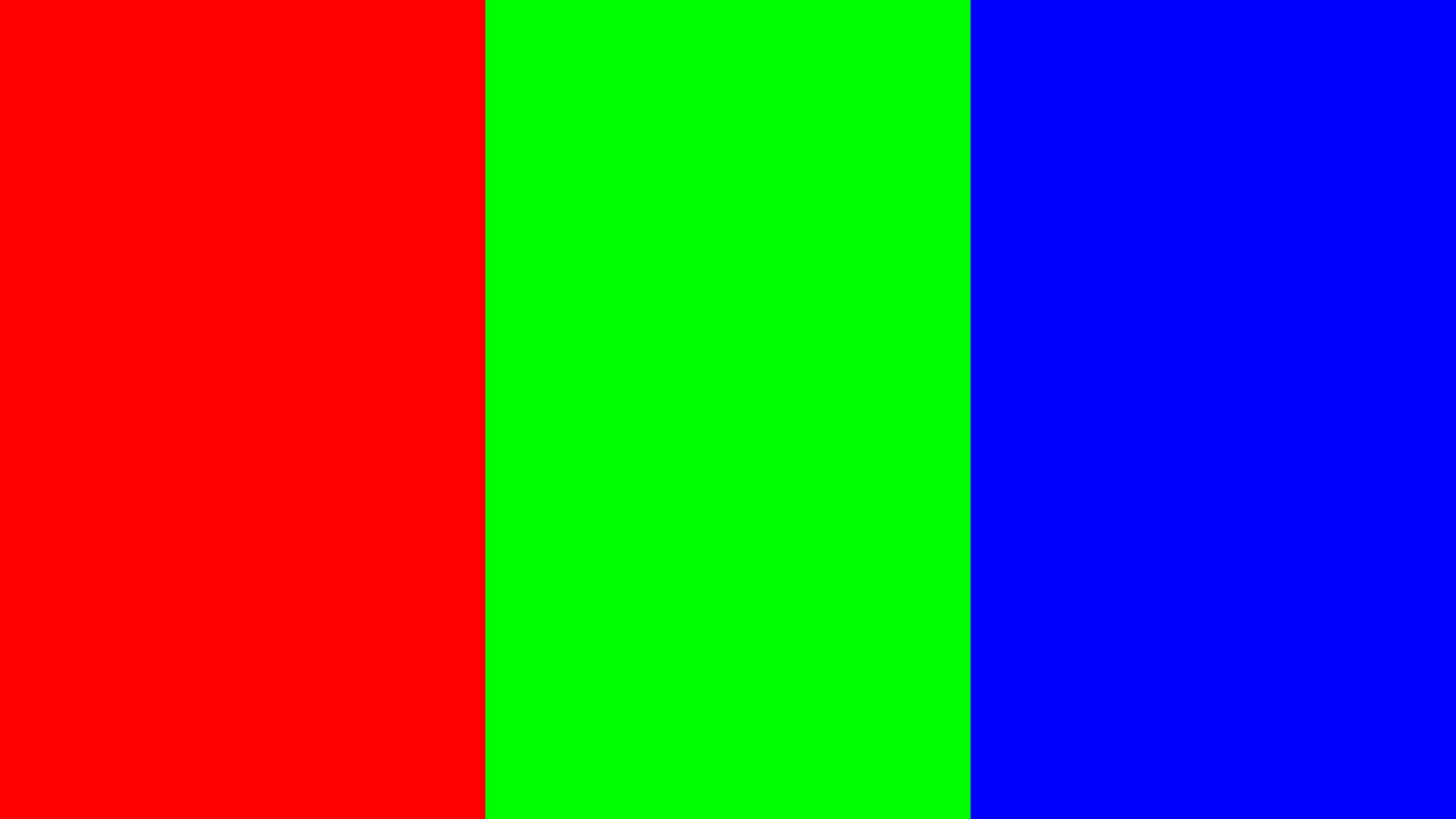


Meath County Council  
Cultural Services  
Creative Award 2019

ALAN PHELAN  
& DUNBOYNE  
FLOWER AND  
GARDEN CLUB

Joly  
Screen  
Flower  
Photographs  
2019-2020





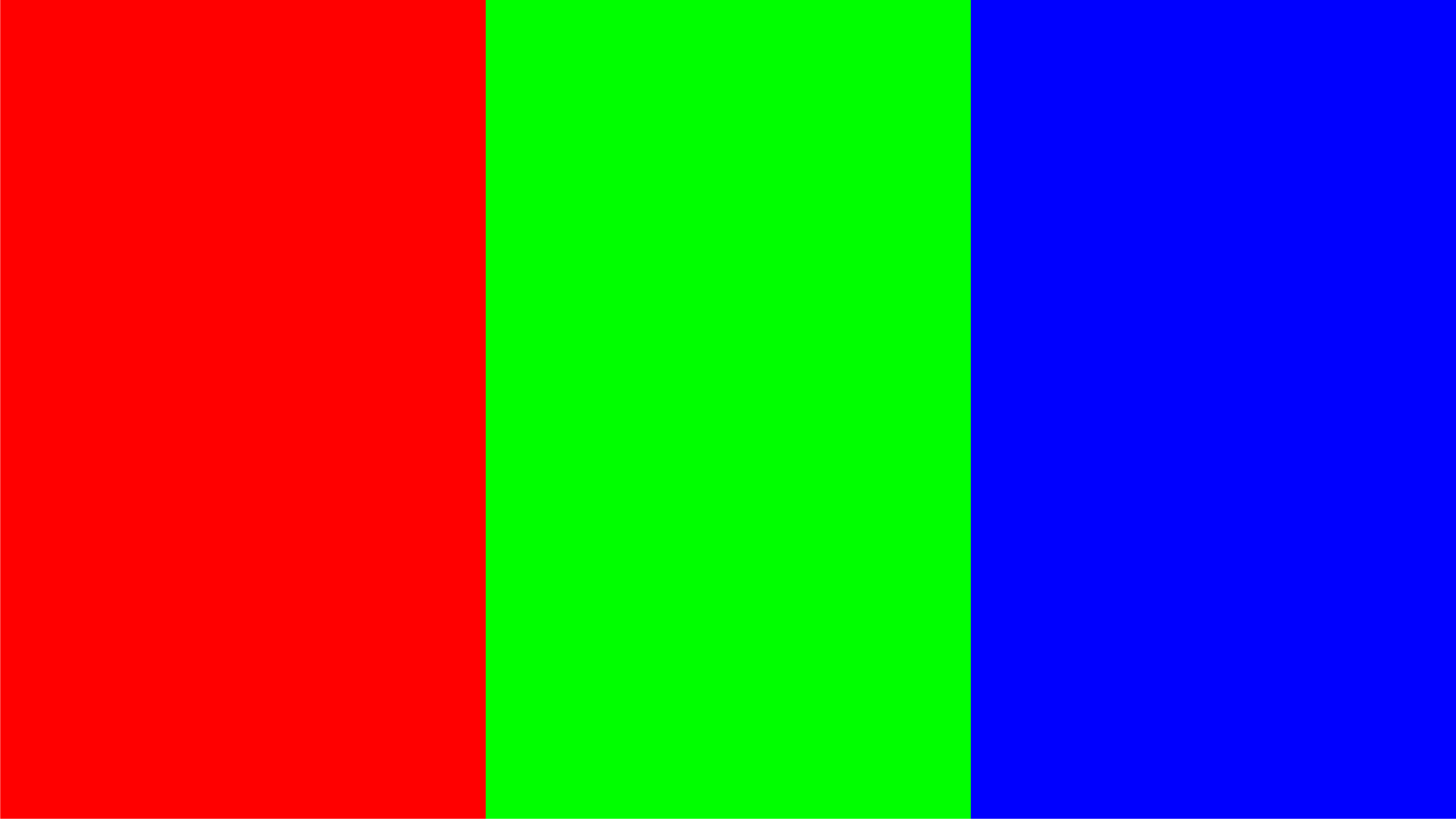
## INTRODUCTION

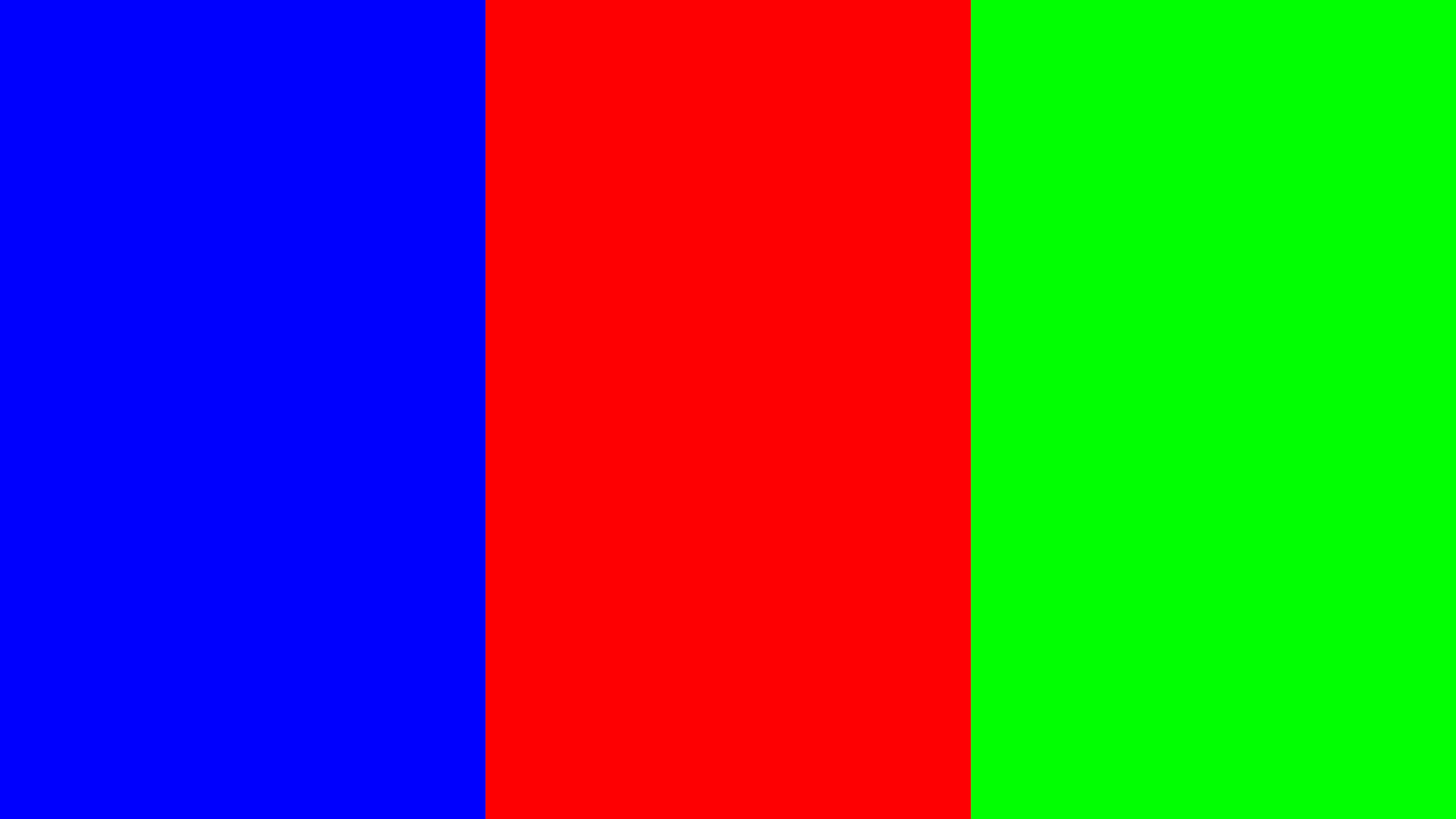
Ciarán Mangan

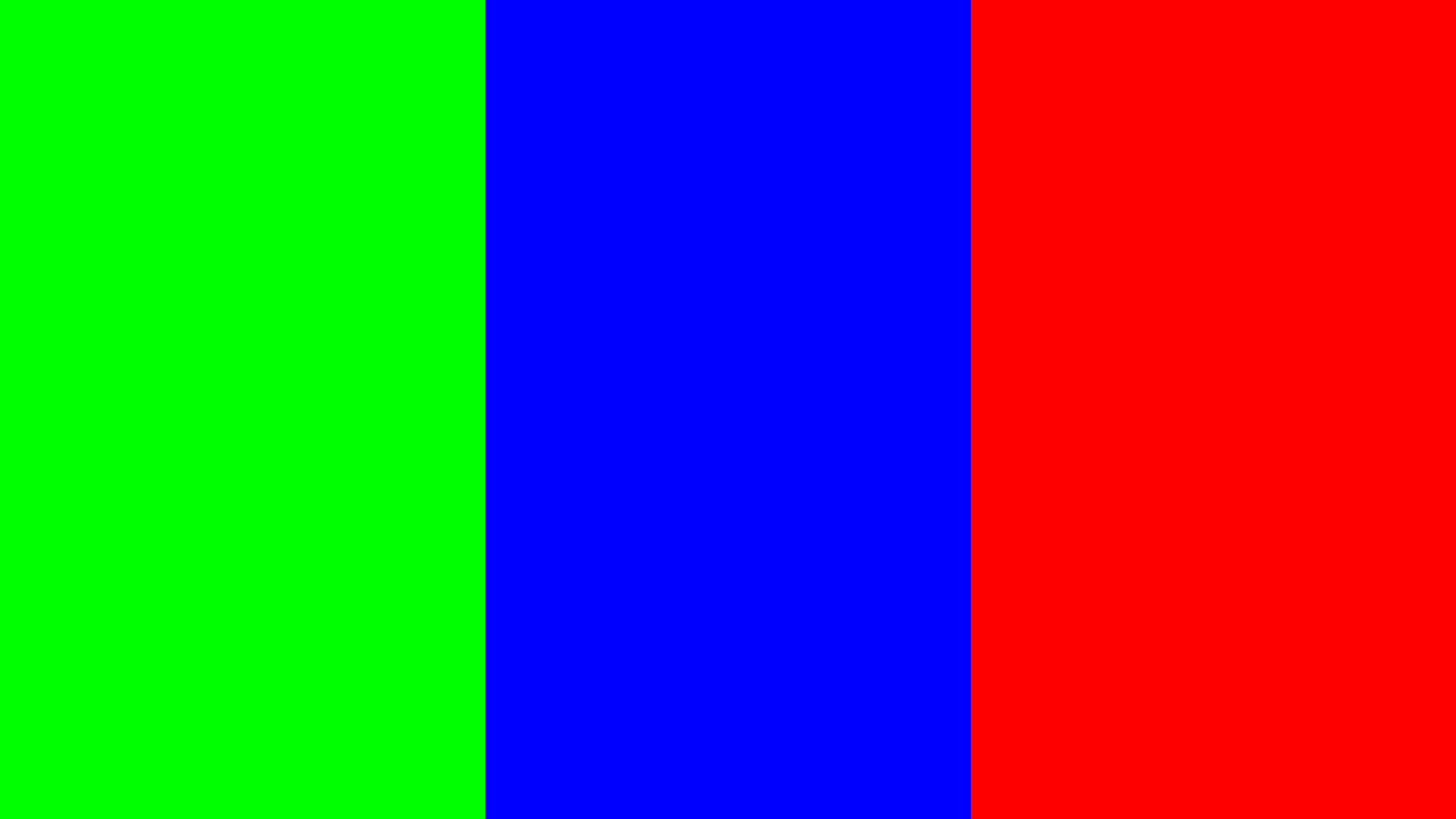
Creative Ireland Coordinator  
Meath County Council

The Meath County Council Cultural Services Creative Award was established in response to Creative Ireland and Meath County Council's Cultural and Creative Strategy. The award enabled us to reach an artistic ambition in how we connect with our communities and support the creative lives of artists. Meath County Council are delighted with collaborative work from Dunboyne Flower and Garden Club and artist Alan Phelan.

I very much like to thank Alan and club members for creating such a multifaceted interesting collaboration through shared floral knowledge, artistic practice, and obvious camaraderie! Unfortunately, due to Covid-19, exhibition of the work in Meath has been postponed, however I acknowledge the further life and success of the project through exhibitions at The Dock, Carrick on Shannon; Royal Hibernian Academy, Dublin; Void, Derry; and Centre Culturel Irlandais, Paris; providing the visibility, recognition and audiences that this unique collaboration thoroughly deserves.







WHEN HISTORY  
IS SOMETIMES  
A REHEARSAL  
FOR THE FUTURE  
JOLY COLOUR  
STRIPES, HISTORY,  
AND FLOWERS

Alan Phelan

The Creative Award came at an important time for me. I had been working on a film project about John Joly and the colour photography process he invented in the 1890s. The aim initially was not to re-create the process but highlight instead this forgotten piece of Irish photography history. Research brought me in contact with the actual glass plates in public and private collections and I figured out a way of making images using the process. The Award meant that I could concentrate on the photography, reviving a long-lost piece of photography history.

It also allowed me an opportunity to share and develop this process with a small working group, namely the Dunboyne Flower and Garden Club. I have ties with this group that go back to the late 90s and then making paper cabbages with them for my exhibition at Solstice Arts Centre in 2010. Collaboration and participation are important elements in how I make art, so this was a great chance to develop and re-kindle old friendships.

Long before that however, almost 25 years ago, was when I had first encountered this little-known colour photography method. After my post-graduate in photography at Rochester

Institute of Technology in upstate New York, I had some work experience and further studies at the George Eastman Museum, also located in Rochester, in the former home of the founder of Kodak. The collections are vast and contain many elements from the history of photography. Sure enough there are some examples of Joly screen photography and his experiments in colour. I was thrilled to find this small part of Ireland so far from home.

There was, however, very little material there and I did not investigate further. About 4 years ago, a chance conversation with a botanist brought Joly back to mind and I began looking for evidence of his work in Irish institutions. There is a substantial collection of Joly plates in the National Photographic Archive, but research has never managed to catalogue or identify what is there fully. Access is therefore difficult and I was lucky to be able to see the contents of several boxes which were a jumble of colour plate tests, with dyes and lines, and only a few images of plants. Like all original Joly plates the images have all faded, yielding a dominant pink magenta tone, as the organic dyes disappear over time. I am greatly indebted to Professor Patrick Wyse Jackson at TCD who



works in Geology and is researching into the many scientific achievements of Joly. He lent me some original Joly plates which I used in my first tests.

Seeing the actual objects, the delicate pieces of glass, however faded and misunderstood, made me want to right the wrong that history had dealt John Joly. This meant using Joly screen photography to create new images, giving the process a history it never had. His way of making colour with stripes fell out of use less than twenty years after its invention. Technology continually developed, just like today, and less cumbersome methods with better clarity emerged and overtook his method.

What Joly achieved with the process was to prove a theory on colour that had been postulated in the early days of photography by Louis Ducos du Hauron and later Clerk Maxwell as detailed in a scientific paper Joly published through the Royal Dublin Society in 1896, titled "On a method of photography in natural colours", (June 1896, Vol. 6; 127 — 138) and further discussed by the late Stephen Coonan in Technology Ireland (Oct 1991 Vol.23 No.6). Essentially Joly was able to create a stable

image that used a red, green, and blue filter to create a full colour image. This did not use separations, and was not a paper print but comprised of two glass plates — one used as a filter and the other a black and white negative. The plates could be viewed only if illuminated or placed in a magic lantern slide projector. Joly made a huge technical innovation and this marked a significant moment in the history of photography.

Re-creating the process had to take a different route from the original. Luckily I was able to work with contemporary materials which made my version somewhat easier. Joly had created a machine or guide that was able to lay down very accurate and very thin lines of red, green and blue dye onto a glass plate, sealed in gelatine. Only rough plans of his 'Ruling Machine' exist as the equipment has been lost, so I took to digital printing to make the lined screen. Ironically what I was able to print was much thicker than the lines in the original process which were less than 0.1 mm wide (222 lines per inch). With a pixel being about 0.26mm wide, my 3 pixel width, resulted in a rather blunt 0.78mm stripe in comparison. Widths below this did not remain crisp with the Duraclear digital output I

used, which prints colour on a transparent base. This is a colour print (Type-C) on clear plastic instead of paper like a regular colour photo. The key here was to allow light to pass through, solid colour stripes which cannot be achieved with ink-jet printing and can so act as a filter. This actually worked really well. The lines remain visually strong which marks the images with a unique look.

This vital element in the process filters the light on exposure and display, burning in the colour register onto black and white film, creating colour from light not chemistry. This is why the process is additive, colour is added, not ingrained chemically. What is surprising is that full colour images can be rendered from just three — red, green and blue. It is basic colour theory, the three colours that LED screens comprise of and prior to that the phosphors in cathode ray tubes. There is even an additive movie process, developed by Polaroid called Polavision, where a cartridge contained all instant elements for the Super 8mm domestic movie maker. It shared a similar market failure to the Joly screen being quickly overrun by VHS and Betamax video in the 1970s.

Retracing some steps back in Rochester,

part of my photography education involved using outmoded or little used alternative processes, as they were called. I also studied older processes in the museum as a way of understanding their chemistry for preservation. But these technical interests were outweighed by conceptual art concerns, which privileged ideas over aesthetics and materials. My subsequent art making took many different roots or approaches and contributed to how I have now produced these Joly screen photographs, coming full circle in some respects.

Part of that journey explored several participatory ways of making art. Relational aesthetics emerged in the 90s as a way of making art while discussing it, using social situations to mirror art activities. I took these ideas into workshop scenarios and worked with various groups to make art. Each time was different but the shared experience and collaboration was always key.

Similarly, with this project, the relationship with the club members was two way. Seven monthly workshops were held that had different floral themes, ranging across 500 years of imagery. Working beyond photography references meant

that the history of art could be tackled more broadly, with a conceit that Joly was there all along. Each session involved a maximum of 6 members, working in pairs on two arrangements of the course of the day. Preparations required the identification of flowers in source material like paintings, and sourcing blooms from florists, wholesalers, supermarkets and gardens. The studio sessions presented a different kind of flower arranging as they were only made for the camera and not for subsequent display. This allowed for unorthodox materials to be used and even fusing different bits of flower parts together to get the shape required.

The source paintings and floral art were used as a reference and not slavishly re-created. The different styles are evident in the resulting photographs and not one arrangement was easy to make. Familiar working methods were often turned upside down, as the flowers were clustered differently, and often shapes had very different symmetries to those commonly used today.

In the same way the photography proved more difficult than expected and the temperamental nature of analogue hand-processed black and

white film was extra tricky as the negative had to be turned into a positive. Without the expertise of Louis Haugh none of this would have been possible.

For mounting and exhibiting the photographs I drew on my museum experience and work in sculpture. I used conservation tape to align the two film elements and mounted onto layers of acrylic sheets. Keeping to the imperial size of the sheet film, the passpartout became 10 inches square. But straying from traditional lightbox design I decided to leave the sides open to reveal the layers of the mount and by implication the image. A thin LED panel illuminates each image, held in position by a MDF holder. The resulting light leak from the sides create a dramatic setting for the photographs instead of a dark room filled with tiny images. The overall ambient light also means that there is a calming atmosphere to view the works.

One unexpected result of the exhibitions has been in the interaction with viewers. The bright illuminated image invite close inspection and also reveal a unique colour shift close up. Because there are two parts to the image, this overlay is only in register from the

front. When viewed from the side different lines mismatch and shifts the colour in the photograph. This means that these analogue photographs become interactive, which brings them to life in a unique way.

I was able to test out some exhibition ideas before this project began, working also with self-portraits and architectural elements in gallery buildings to provide RGB settings. This expansion of the work into installation is an important way for me to push beyond photography. The flower images were first shown at The Dock in late 2019 and then there three large exhibitions in 2020 at the RHA, Void and CCI. Plans for an exhibition at Solstice got disrupted by the lockdown and will be re-scheduled. I look forward to being able to exhibit these works in Meath when the time is right.

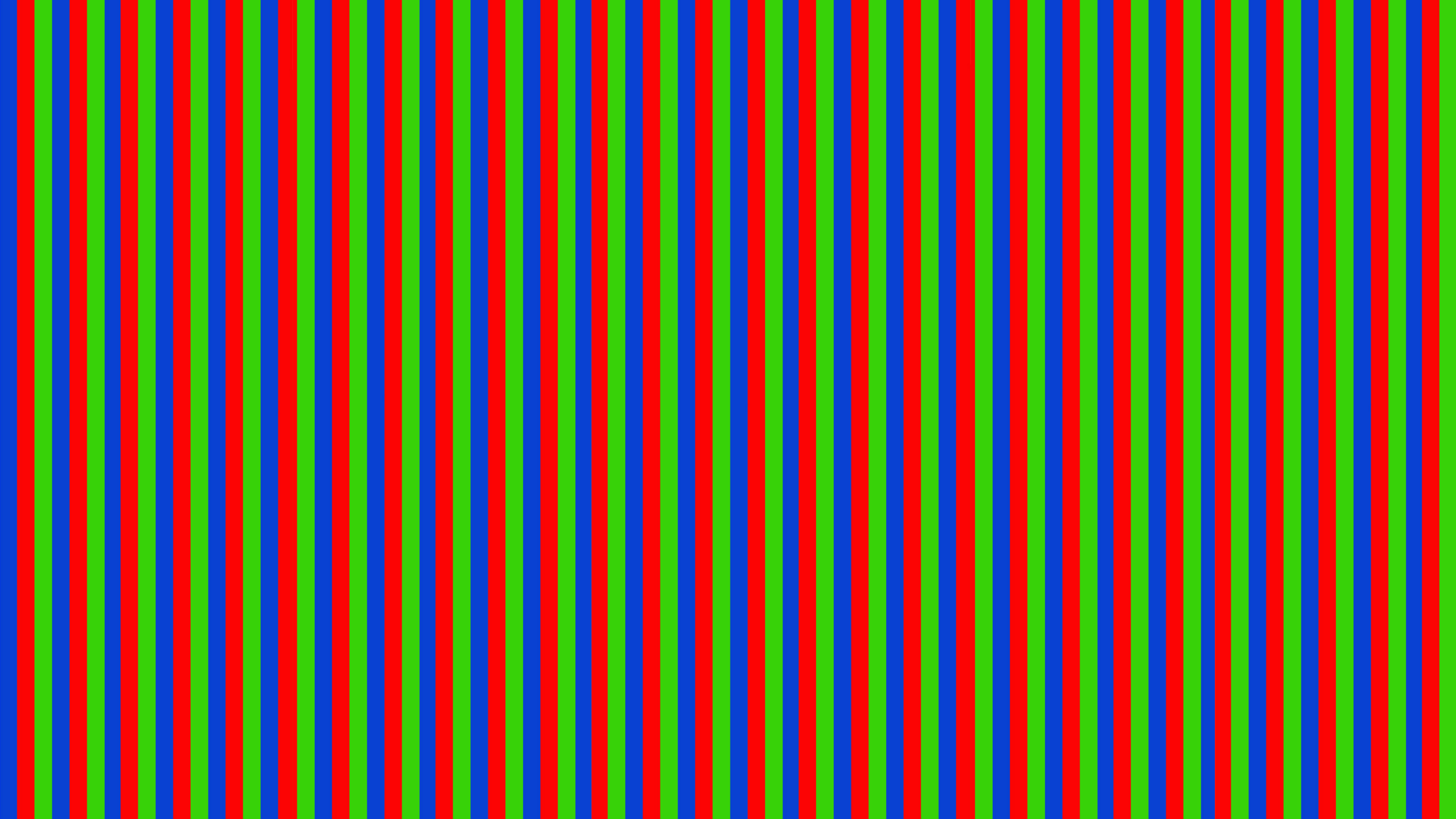
The content of the images is something that warrants a final note. The titles are quite long and add detail, as well as explaining the route taken. Each one cites the source artist or florist and only uses a date not the original artwork title as a reference point. This is then coupled with an event, historical or otherwise, that happened in that same year. This allows for a wide range of

contextual information to be brought into the photographs, giving a richer experience. While there may be a few notable names or events, most are relatively obscure or as forgotten as the Joly screen process itself. Some are more famous to the history of art including Giuseppe Arcimboldo, Ambrosius Bosschaert, Maria Oosterwijck, and Anna Ruysch through to the very influential Constance Spry and how her work was then interpreted in contemporary flower photography by Steve Meisel for the fashion label JW Anderson. A full survey of flowers in art was impossible but several centuries were dipped into to give a wide range of styles and approaches.

Art is made from the world and I felt it was important not to abstract this flower imagery from the history they came from or were surrounded by. This gesture then includes Joly in that history, a conceit perhaps, but one that tries to give Joly colour a past it was unable to have. Remembering and reviving the process has helped me once again navigate photography, the most pervasive and complex medium of our times. The Joly screen gives me a unique perspective on photography and how it can be used. Hopefully audiences will enjoy it just as much.









Hans Memling 1490, when the prophetic  
extinction occurred, 2019



Installation view of Red Lines,  
The Dock, Carrick-on-Shannon, 2019



Installation view of Red Lines, The Dock, Carrick-on-Shannon, 2019





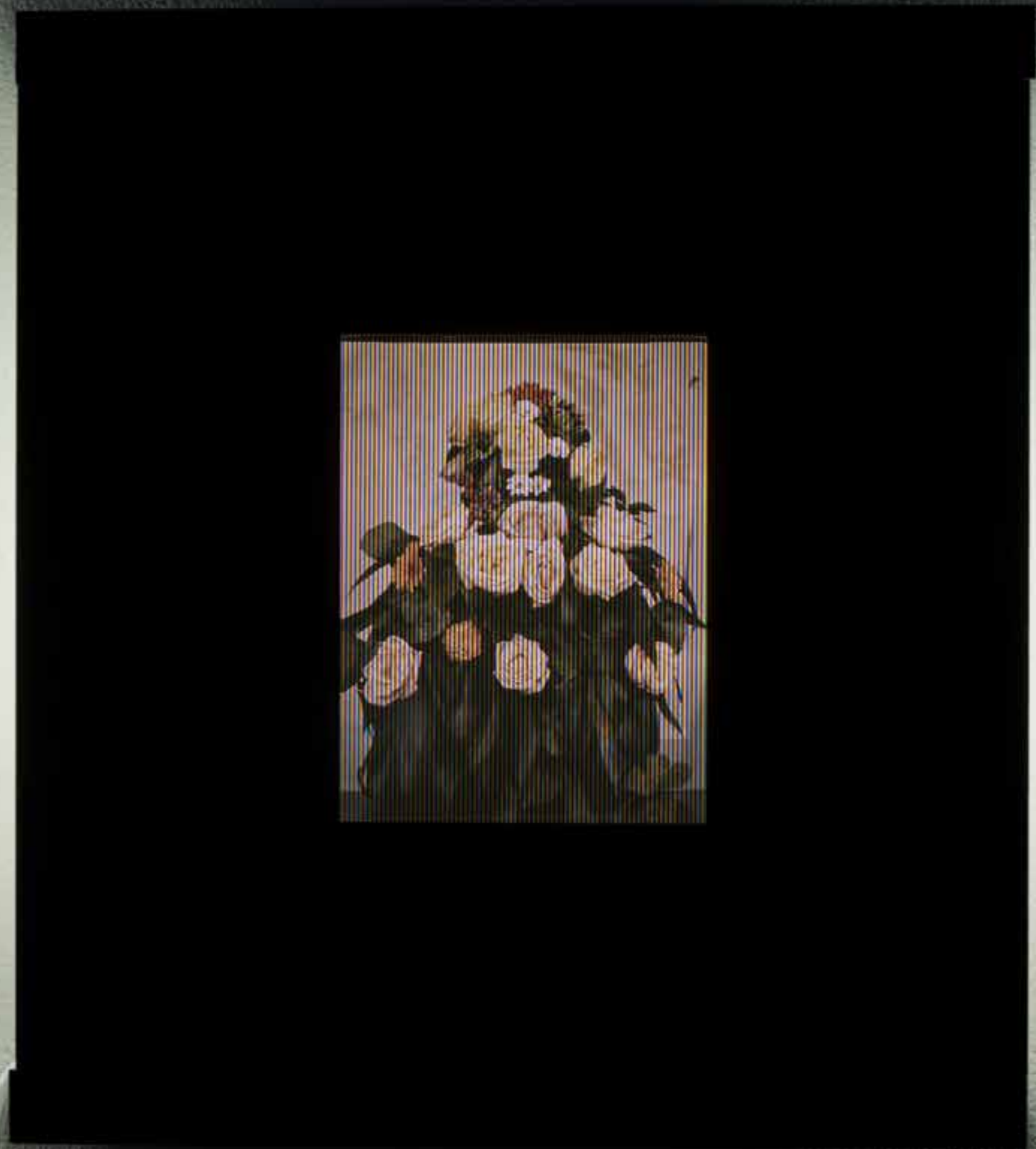
Juan van der Hammen 1627, when  
the last aurochs died, 2019



Giuseppe Arcimboldo 1580, when Drake  
was second to circumnavigate, 2019



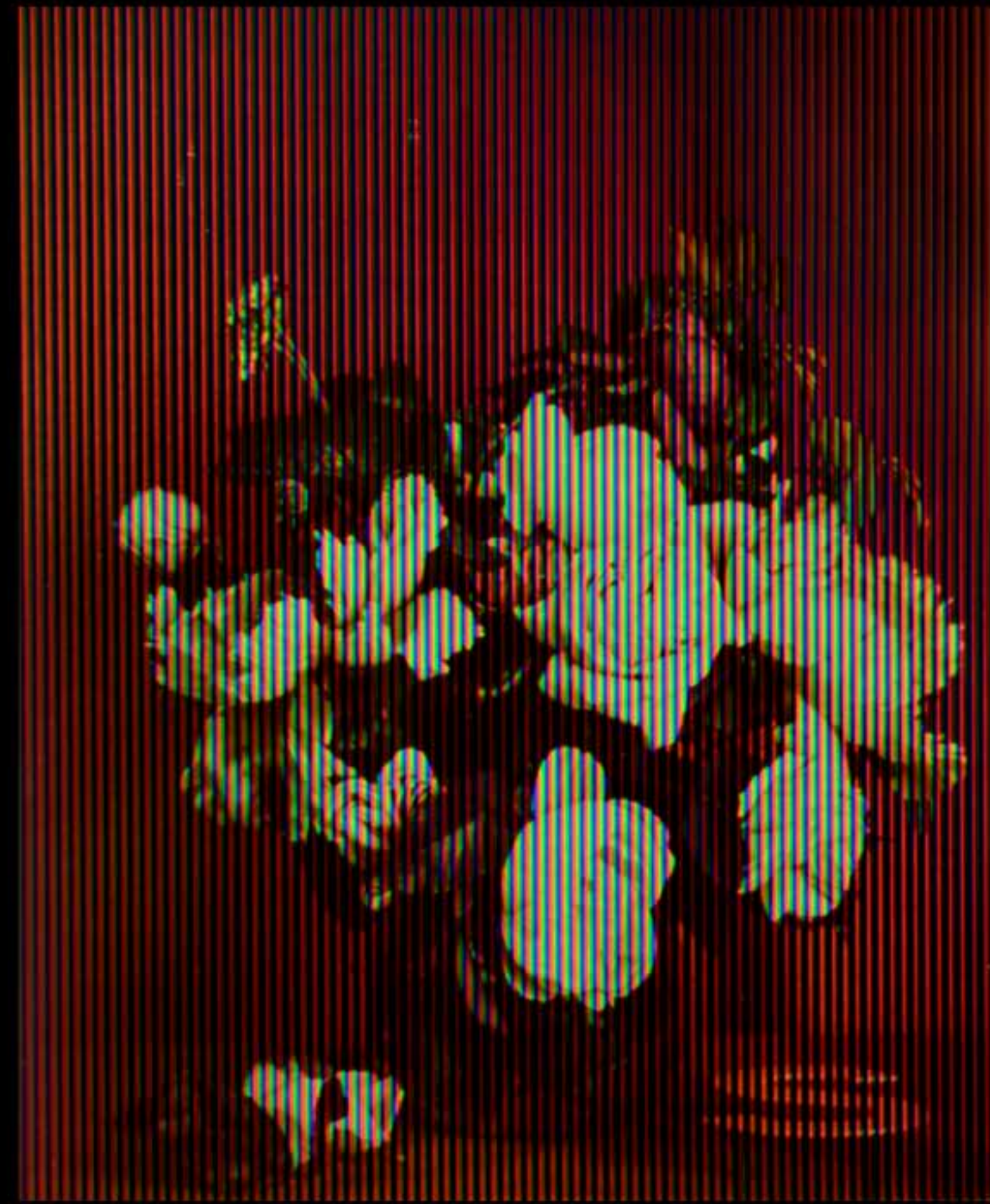
Constance Spry 1957, when post-war austerity  
was ruined by The Treaty of Rome, 2019



Installation view of Red Lines,  
The Dock, Carrick-on-Shannon, 2019



Anna Ruysch 1690, when Aqua Admirabilis  
could have smelt of Orange (red), 2019



Jacob van Hulsdonck, 1640 when The Proclamation  
of Dungannon was germinating, 2019



Random Roman School on Candelabra 1704,  
with excess worthy of the Tale of a Tub (red), 2019



Hirozumi Sumiyoshi Rikka, 1700, when Francis  
Hauksbee was creating glowing electric balls, 2019



Diptych: Jean-Baptiste Belin de Fontenay  
1705, when Mirabell and Millamant were in  
double abundance, 2019



Jean-Baptiste Belin de Fontenay 1705,  
when Mirabell and Millamant were in  
full Restoration abundance, 2019



Jan van Huysum 1724, when The South Sea Bubble  
inspired unconsolidated debt, 2019



Margaretha Haverman, 1722, when Jacob Roggeveen  
landed on what is now Easter Island, soon after calling  
the Malvinas Belgia Australis, 2019



Jan van Huysum 1720, when a different proposal  
by Swift was of Irish manufacture, 2019

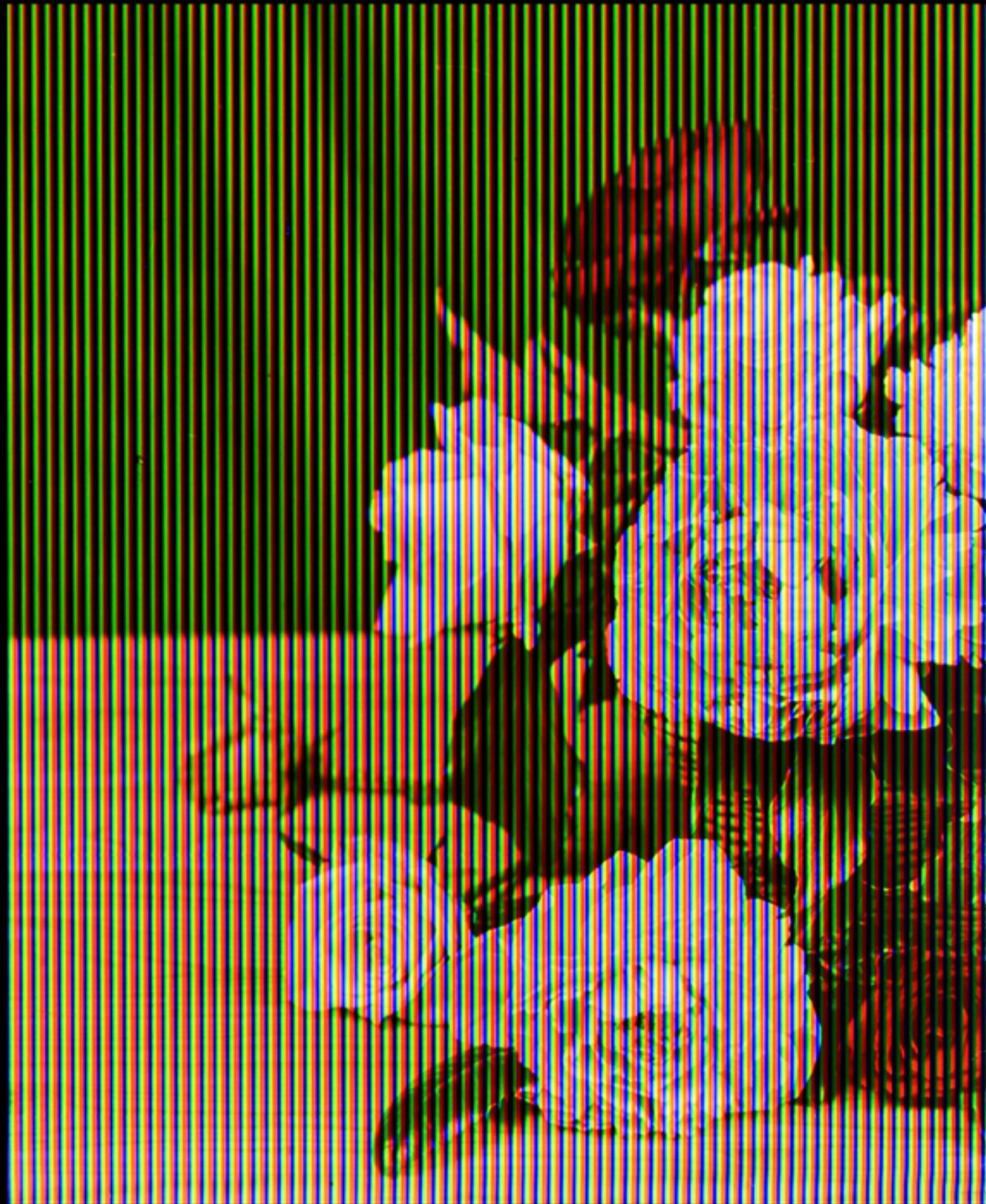




Installation view of Red Lines, The Dock, Carrick-on-Shannon, 2019



Joseph Lauer 1850, when Neanderthal fossils  
were The Origin of Species (green), 2019



When Henri Fantin Latour's basket of roses 1890,  
became power corruption and lies, 2019



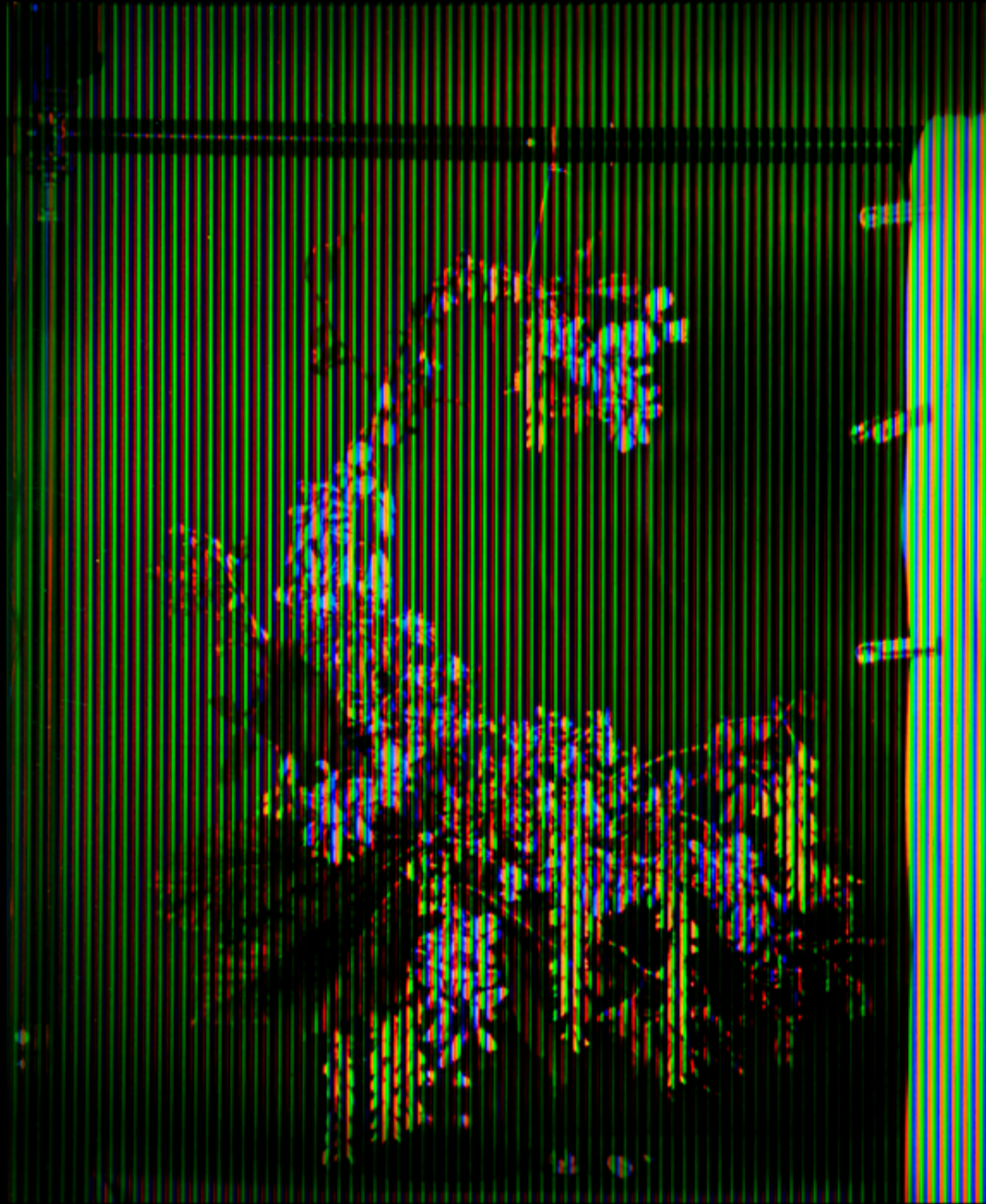
Gerardina Jacoba van de Sande Bakhuyzen, 1880, when  
at the Melbourne International Exhibition she muttered  
colonial gratitude for inclusion, 2019



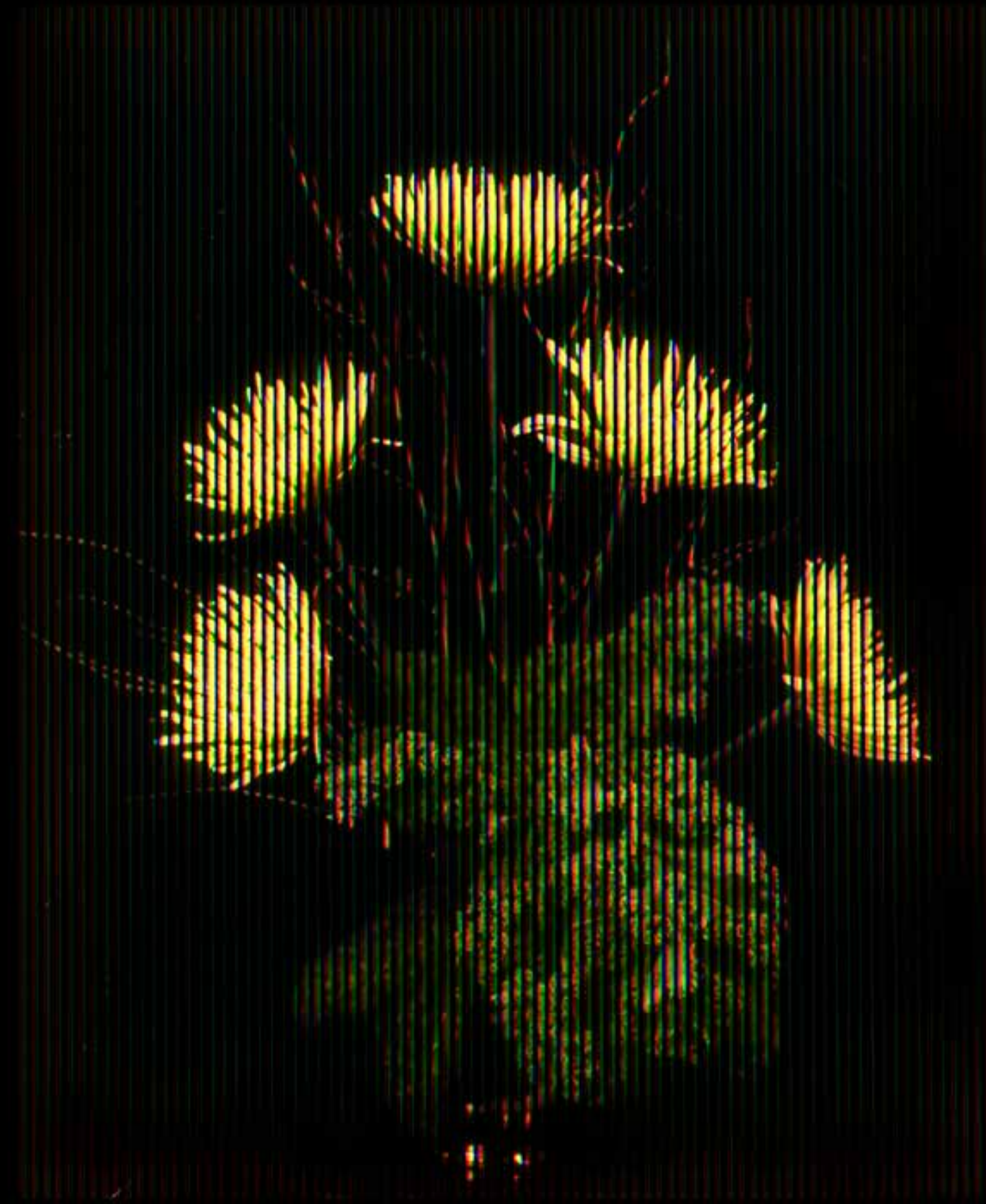
Installation view of Red Lines, The Dock, Carrick-on-Shannon, 2019



Installation view of Fiction & Jolly, The Royal Hibernian Academy, Dublin, 2020



Constance Spry 1935, when Brie Van der Kamp from Wisteria Lane remembered Laburnum Crescent but all she got was Drumcondra, 2019



Constance loved Gluck and Kale, 1936, which these things were wildly wild and more than wishful thinking, 2019



Constance Spry 1938, when the War of the Worlds  
broadcast invented Superman, 2019



Triangle primary form in chrysanthemums  
1919-1933 via Constance, 2019





Constance Spry 1943, when Hamburg burned in a firestorm  
and everyone died, 2019 and Russia beat the Nazis too



Petals propped up as Steve Meisel for Jonathan Anderson  
on Constance Spry 2015-1950, 2019



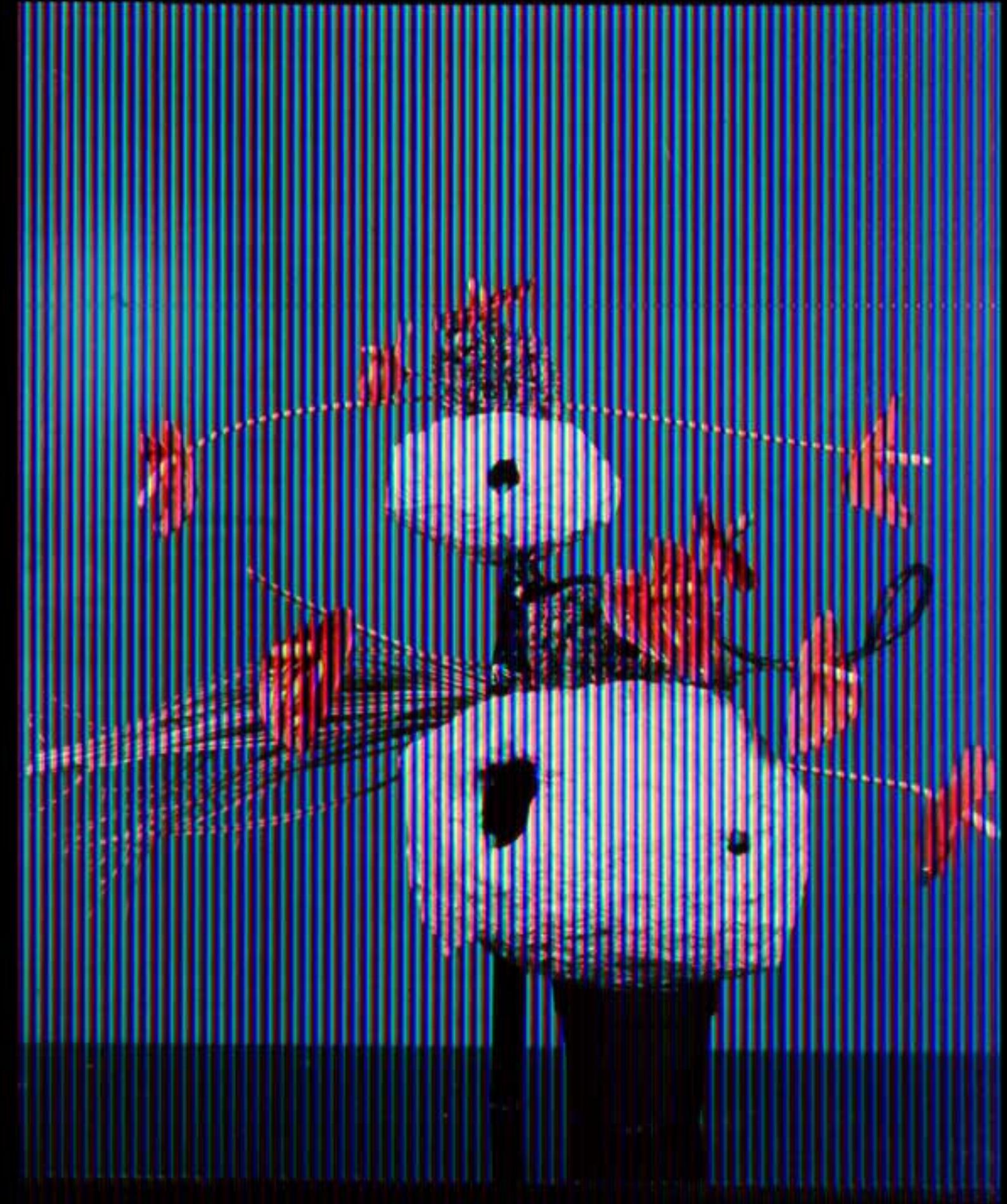
Steve Meisel for Jonathan Anderson on Constance Spry 2015-1950,  
when we got the right to marry, 2019



Steve Meisel for Jonathan Anderson on Constance Spry 2015-1950,  
when Leo revealed all to Marianne, 2019



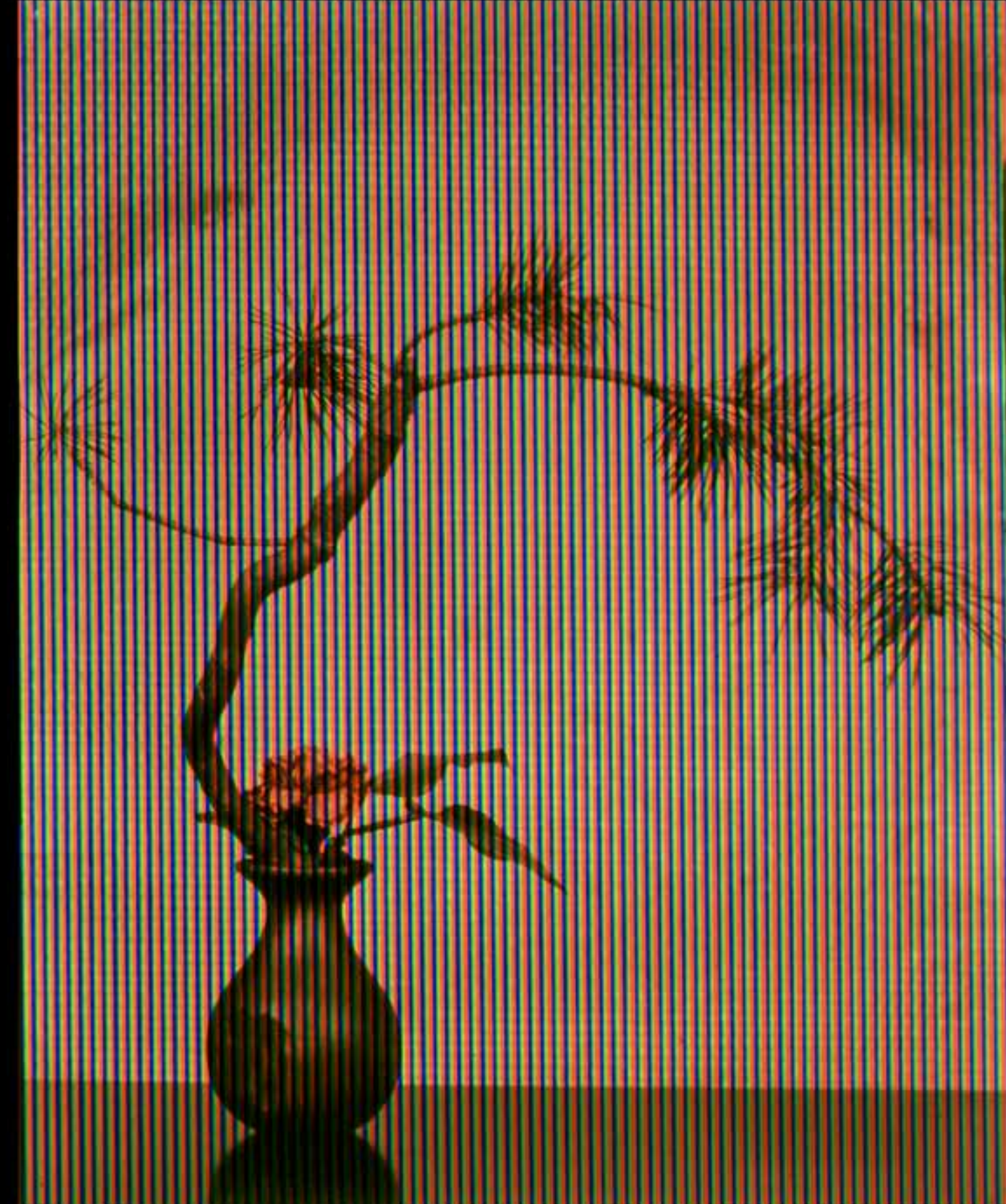
Lime Teshigahara with peppers 1950s, when again things got ugly at the time of the Schuman Declaration, (blue), 2019



Sofu Teshigahara 1950, when things turned ugly for ikebana (blue), 2019



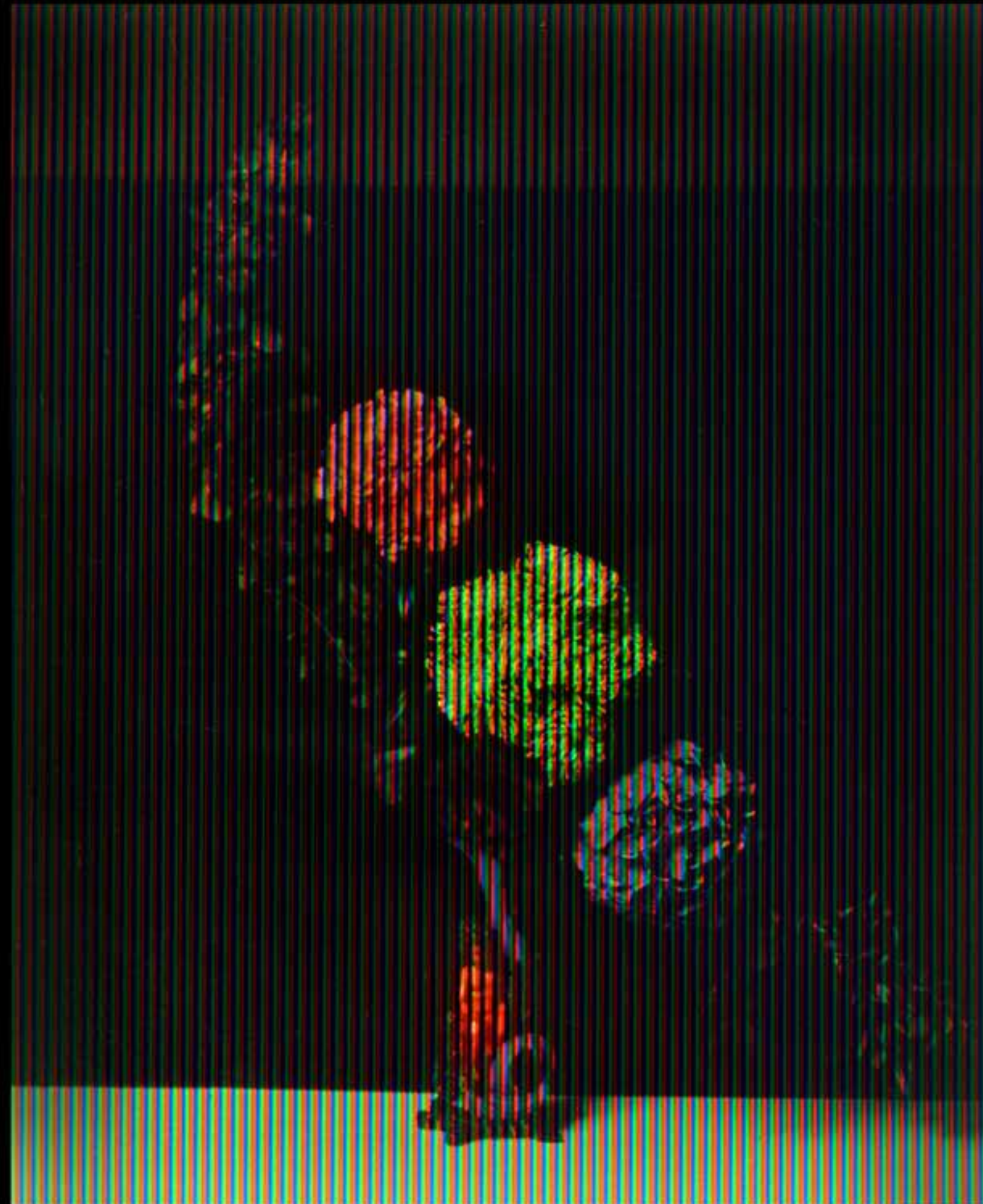
Tsuki Karakuchi Arizona ikebana 2015,  
when lotus is a rose not a hebdo, 2019



Kawase Toshiro after the Great East Japan earthquake 2011,  
well after fake pine clusters, 2019



Haji Shin eggs Ambrosius Bosschaert 1614,  
when logarithms were sadly discovered, 2019



RGB Hogarth Curve as Spheres, on Cherub, 2019





Workshops and flower arrangements with members of the Dunboyne Flower and Garden Club







## COMMENTS FROM CLUB MEMBERS

**Dolores O'Leary** It was exciting to work with Alan again and I knew it would be something different. Joly was fascinating to learn about and getting to understand the process. Ordinary floristry principals went out the door but the end product was amazing. Alan was a perfectionist and knew what he wanted. I was always dying to see what Alan would change in the originals. Not conforming to the normal was great and understanding Alan's take has such an interesting visual impact. Would I do it again? Yes! in a heartbeat.

**Beatrice Hartog** When working for competitions we must have all principles and elements correct. Scale, proportions, and contrast a place for your eye to rest. With the older styles they were very busy, no real focal area and flowers scattered or dotted almost randomly. Now we try for rhythm. Also, plant material in western flowers do not show decaying or damaged flowers and foliage, while in Dutch Golden era they did. Japanese ikebana also like to show plant materials in all forms. Competition work is everything excellent table cloths, accessories, and plant material. With this project we often had the opposite.

**Mary Ronayne** The Joly process was a surprise, we watched with interest while Louis loaded the plates in a large black bag without looking at it. It was a thrill to be allowed view our work through the ground glass and see the upside-down version of our arrangements. Alan had explained about the red, green and blue stripes but until we saw the images lit by the LED panels at the exhibition in Carrick-on-Shannon did we really understand the process. As we walked around the room, we noticed how the colours changed as we approached, stopped, and went past each of the small photographs. We really enjoyed the experience. It's always a challenge collaborating with Alan but that's what makes life interesting.

**Jean Hamilton** The main difference in flower arranging for the camera is that it just needs to be pleasing to the eye and the subject you want to portray. In competition there are several rules to be followed - space, proportion, transition, rhythm plant material must also be in pristine condition. We were able to break a lot of these rules and have a different kind of fun with the arrangements.

**Isabella Molloy** I found the flower arranging very intense and interesting, different skills were used, one had to follow a photograph's design as exactly as possible, we were shattered after the day's work but excited with the end result. Thank you for introducing us to a different way of flower arranging.

**Mary Dalton** It was absolutely fascinating to stop and look at the older designs that I had not thought about or considered before. Trying to put into practice was even more interesting as we are hidebound by present rules and it was difficult to park them and do what was in the pictures. It was great to be challenged.

**Veronica Madden** I really enjoyed the experience and loved the challenge of recreating the flower arrangements and working to replace the flowers in the images we were given. Seeing the photographer shooting the images was so interesting to a novice like me, as I love taking pictures. I also loved the experience of the studio as I seldom go to Dublin, so that was a real treat.

**Harriet Phelan** As the artist's mother I really enjoyed getting the gang together to work on plans and preparations for the workshops. We all contributed as much suitable plant material from our gardens and the studio looked like a well-stocked florist every time. We used up most of everything and it was nice to be able to leave some behind around the studio building. We often work together on arrangements, like for church work, but this was different as we were working with a very different remit. It was a challenge to stay close to the original designs and we had to be very inventive. It was hard work but great fun and a pleasure to be involved with.



ALAN PHELAN (b.1968) is an artist based in Dublin whose practice began in photography and has extended into many different media and mediums with a focus on interpretation, language and collaboration. He studied at Dublin City University and Rochester Institute of Technology, New York. Recent exhibitions of the Joly screen photographs 2019–2020 include The RHA, Dublin; Void, Derry; CCI, Paris; The Dock, Carrick-on-Shannon; TBG+S Atrium, The LAB, Dublin, and Glucksman Gallery, Cork. Previously, "Our Kind", commissioned by Dublin City Gallery The Hugh Lane for 2016/1916 was also screened in Oslo, Bergen, Derry, Belfast and Carlow where it won the Hotron Éigse Art Prize. Internationally he has shown at CCA, Derry; Dada Post, Berlin; Loop, Barcelona; Videonale.15 Bonn Kunstmuseum; Detroit Stockholm; Bozar, Brussels; Treignac Projet France; Eastlink Gallery, Shanghai; Oksasenkatu 11, Helsinki; Mina Dresden Gallery, San Francisco; Galería Del Infinito Arte, Buenos Aires; ŠKUC, Ljubljana; SKC Gallery, Belgrade; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. His solo exhibition for IMMA in 2009 also had versions at Chapter, Cardiff and LCGA, Limerick. Public art commissions include works for Dublin City Council, Dublin South County Council, St Michael's House Special National School Raheny and the Dept of Communications. For studies in the USA he received a Fulbright Scholarship and John F Kennedy Fund Scholarship and has received several awards from The Arts Council, Culture Ireland, and Creative Ireland. His work is included in the collections of The Arts Council, IMMA, TCD, LCGA, The National Self-Portrait Collection, the OPW, and several private collections. He has undertaken several residencies including URRRA, Argentina; HIAP, Finland; CCI, France and was recently the NCAD School of Fine Art Artist in Residence for 2019–20.

[alanphelan.com](http://alanphelan.com)

## CREDITS

Thank you to funders, participants and supporters of this project.

Photography and processing Louis Haugh.

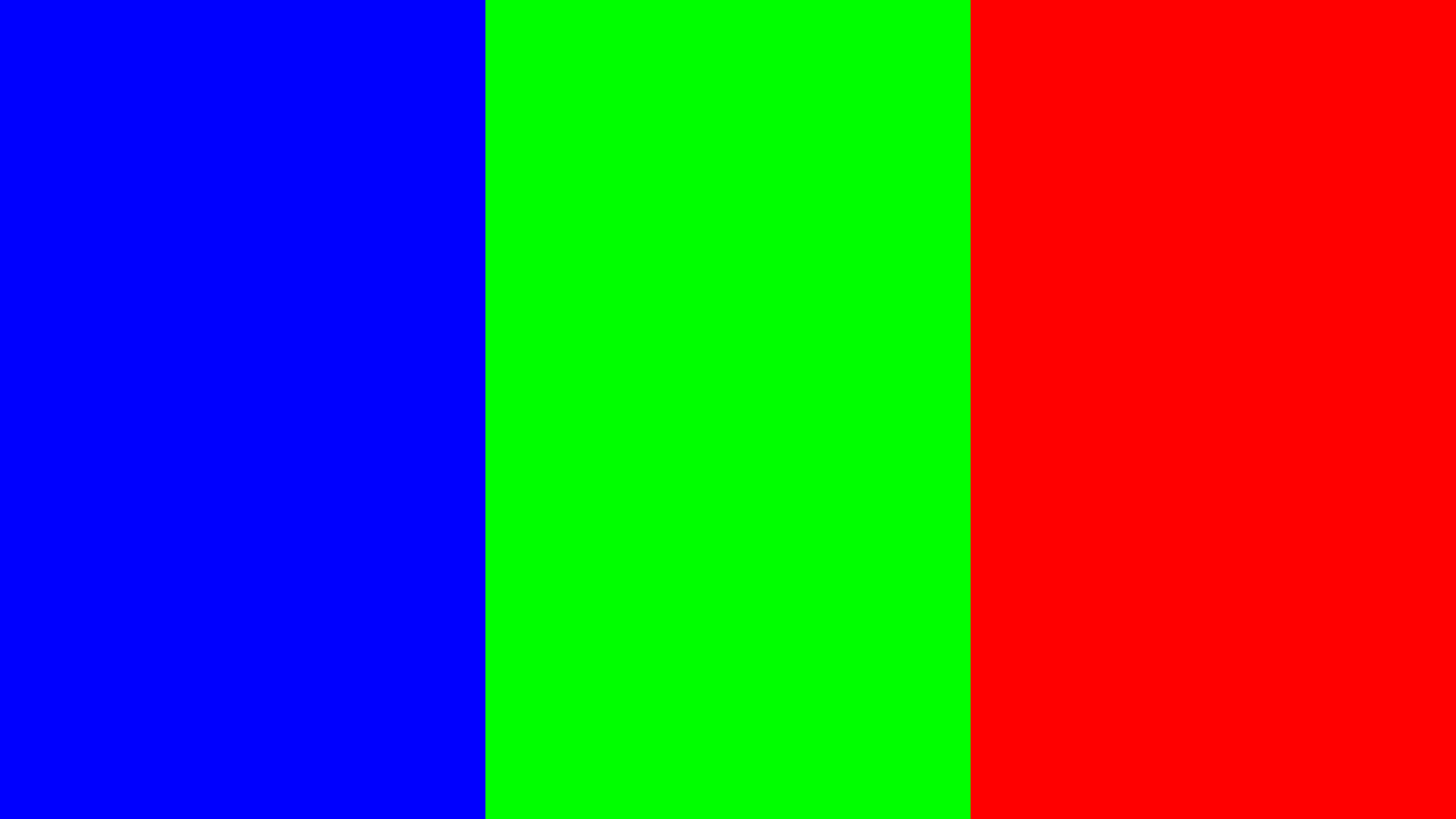
Members of the Dunboyne Flower & Garden Club who participated in workshops: Mary Dalton, Jean Hamilton, Beatrice Hartog, Adrienne Hatch, Geraldine Johnson, Kay Kelly, Veronica Madden, Isabella Molloy, Ciara Murphy, Noreen Ní Chinnéide, Dolores O'Leary, Marie Orr, Harriet Phelan, Margaret Rowan, Angela Sheehy, Mary Ronayne.

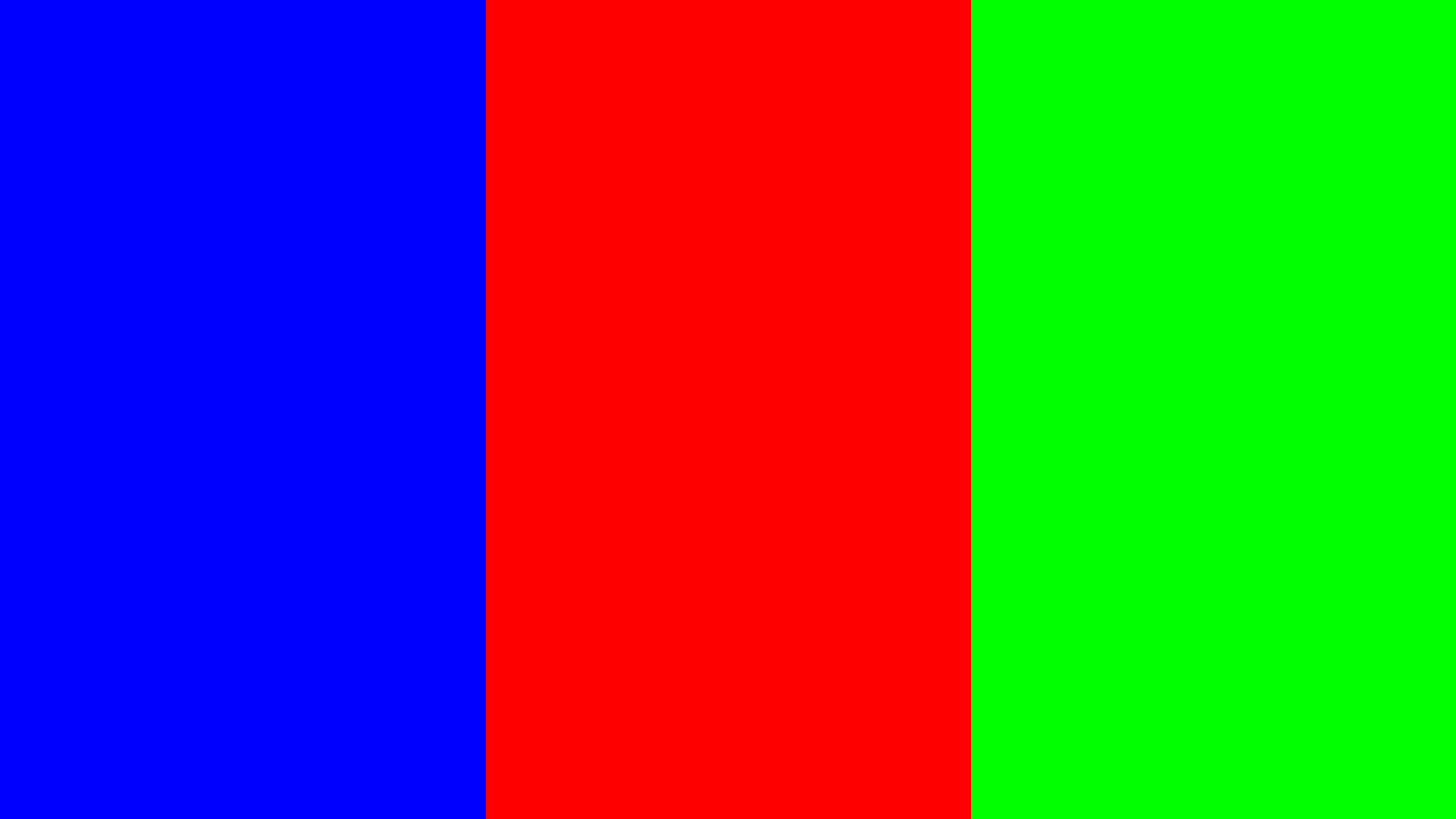
Alan Phelan and Dunboyne Flower and Garden Club were recipients of Meath County Council Cultural Services Creative Award 2019. This award is supported by the Meath County Council Creative Ireland Programme.

Research for this project was thanks to an Arts Council Visual Arts Bursary.

Designed by Oonagh Young, Design HQ, Dublin.

This document is best viewed only on screen please consider before printing as the photographs are not calibrated for paper and will use up a huge amount of ink. The computer screen in part duplicates the way the Joly photographs are shown with rear illumination when displayed.







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Clár Éire Ildánach  
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2017–2022

