

PHOTOGRAPHY AS ART

L113 Session 2

Finding Photographic ART in Ordinary Every Day Things

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute
Loudoun Campus

By
Dan Feighery

25 September 2013

General Course topics

Sep 18: Shooting the Light

Sep 25: Finding Photographic Art in Ordinary Every Day Things

Oct 2: Shooting Landscapes

Oct 9: Developing Your Personal Vision

First, lets consider two basic questions

#1 What is Photography

#2 What is Art

What is Photography ?

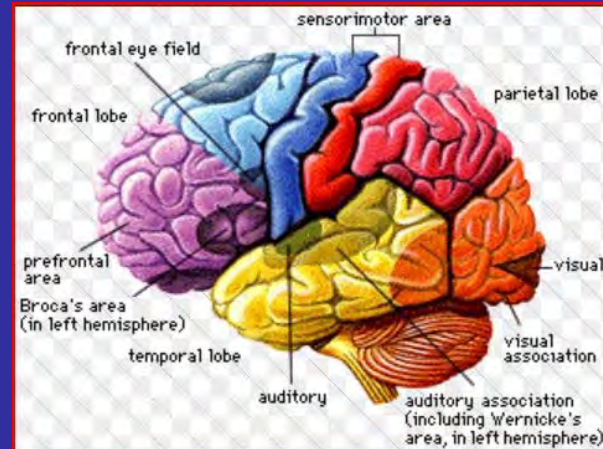
The art, science, and practice of creating durable images by recording light or other electromagnetic radiation, either chemically by means of a light-sensitive material such as photographic film or electronically by means of an image sensor.

(Ref: Wikipedia)

It is much more than that.



+



Quotes on Photography

Photography is more than a medium for factual communication of ideas. It is a creative art. ([Ansel Adams](#))

It takes a lot of imagination to be a good photographer. You need less imagination to be a painter because you can invent things. But in photography everything is so ordinary; it takes a lot of looking before you learn to see the extraordinary. ([David Bailey](#))

One of the joys of photography is that you never know what will come at you from around the next corner. ([Tom Ang](#))

Whether working or not, photographers are looking, seeing, and thinking about what they see, a habit that is both a pleasure and a problem, for we seldom capture in a single photograph the full expression of what we see and feel. ([Sam Abell](#))

(Ref: <http://quote.robertgenn.com/getquotes.php?catid=227#.UgJXdG0RPOM>)

So What is Art?

The expression or application of human creative skill and imagination, typically in a visual form such as painting or sculpture,...:

(Ref: Google)

Art is use of indirect means to communicate from one person to another.

(Ref: Leo Tolstoy)

Art is a discovery and development of elementary principles of nature into beautiful forms suitable for human use.

(Ref: Frank Lloyd Wright)

“A selective re-creation of reality according to an artist's metaphysical value-judgments

(Ref: Ayn Rand)

So What is Art?



Quotes on Photographic Art

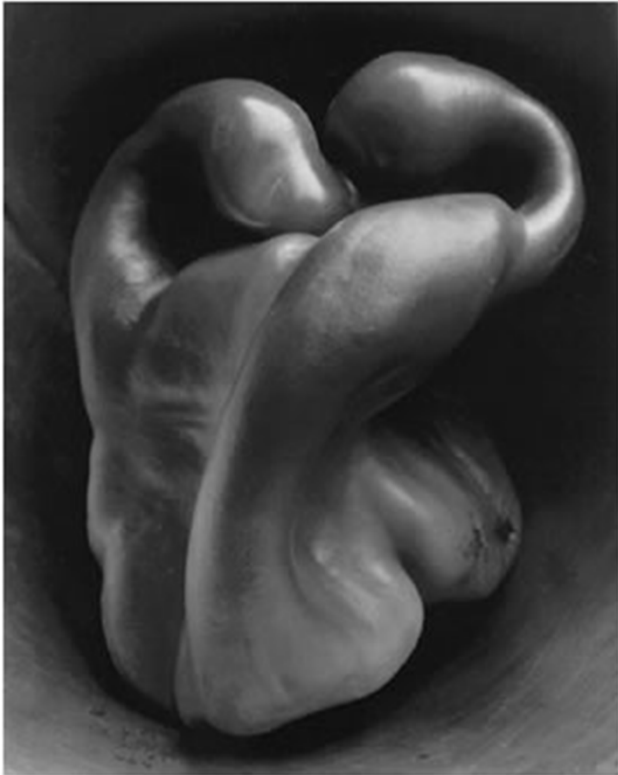
"Art photography": "Photography that is, done to express the artist's perceptions and emotions and to share them with others".

"Fine art photography": "The production of images to fulfill the creative vision of a photographer. .

"Artistic photography": "A frequently used but somewhat vague term. The idea underlying it is that the producer of a given picture has aimed at something more than a merely realistic rendering of the subject, and has attempted to convey a personal impression"

“Seeing Plus”

In a letter to Ansel Adams (1/28/33), the photographer Edward Weston said, "photography as a creative expression -- or what you will -- must be 'seeing' plus: seeing alone would mean factual recording -- the illustrator of catalogues does that.



The ‘plus’ is the basis of all arguments on ‘what is art’

Seeing the object is easy --even natural

But seeing in a specific way is the work of artistry

Pepper, 1930 by Edward Weston

"Photography is an instantaneous operation, both sensory and intellectual--an expression of the world in visual terms, and also a perpetual quest and interrogation. It is at one and the same time the recognition of a fact in a fraction of a second and the rigorous arrangement of the forms visually perceived which give to that fact expression and significance."

Henri Cartier-Bresson

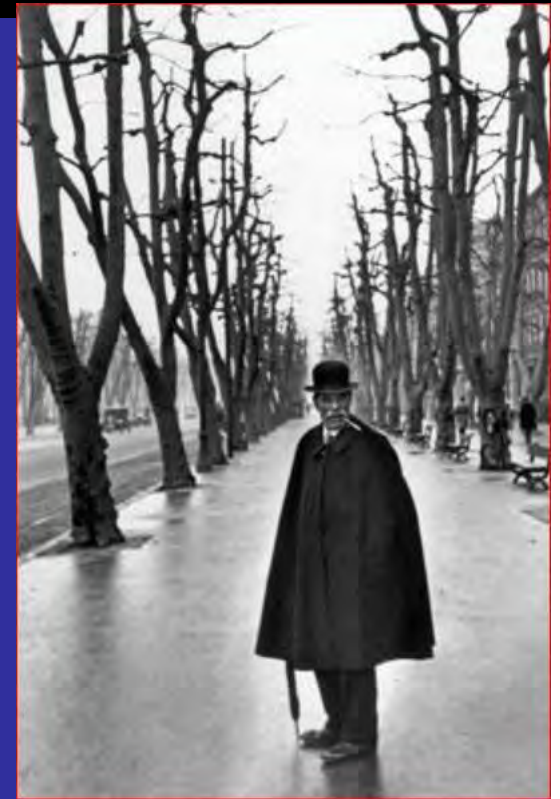
Henri Cartier Bresson



"Photography is an instantaneous operation, both sensory and intellectual--an expression of the world in visual terms, and also a perpetual quest and interrogation. It is at one and the same time the recognition of a fact in a fraction of a second and the rigorous arrangement of the forms visually perceived which give to that fact expression and significance."

Henri Cartier-Bresson

Henri Cartier Bresson



Catching the Emotion (2)

Painting requires skill. Photography is created by the camera, and one cannot fully control what the camera sees. So people take many photographs because several must always be discarded. ([Igor Babailov](#))



Catching the Emotion (2)

Painting requires skill. Photography is created by the camera, and one cannot fully control what the camera sees. So people take many photographs because several must always be discarded. ([Igor Babailov](#))



But this simply replicates a time and place
Is it something you'd hang on the living room wall?

Painting vs. Photography ⁽¹⁾

- Both render an image in some way



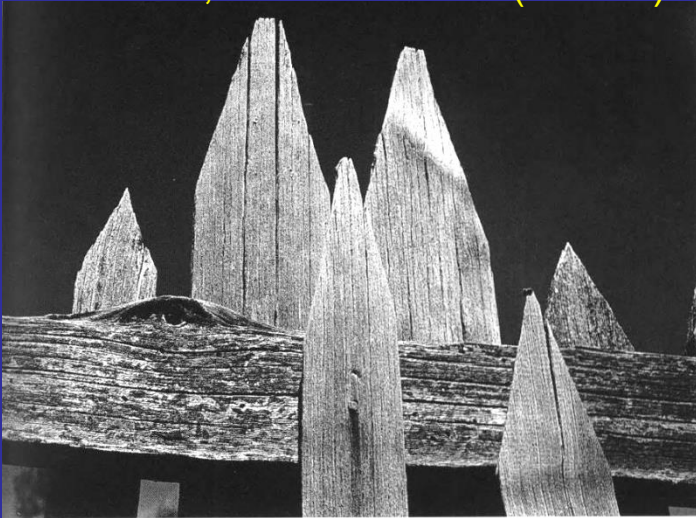
- What do you think makes photography different from painting?
 - ✓ Photographer can only replicate what exists
 - ✓ Painter can vary the scene at will...
 - ✓ ...?
 - ✓ ...?

Would you hang what they are producing on a wall?
Is your answer different than image of ball player? Why?

AWARENESS

How high your awareness level is determines how much meaning you get from your world. Photography can teach you to improve your awareness level. (Ansel Adams)

Picket Fence, Sierra Nevada (c 1936)



Tree Detail, Sierra Nevada (c 1936)



- *In sequencing a 45-print Adams exhibit (1938, American Place, NY), Alfred Stieglitz placed these two extreme close-ups side by side.*
- *By placing the hand-made object next to the organic object, Stieglitz made these metaphors doubly metaphorical as micro cosmic equivalents of human and natural scenes
(Ref: Ansel Adams by Ann Hammond 2002 page 83)*

TAKE LOTS OF PICTURES

Take lots of shots

First, try to ignore color

(set camera to give Black & White only)

Forces you to really work on:

Textures, Patterns, Shapes,

Objects, Composition,

Lighting, Contrast,

& Tones,

etc.

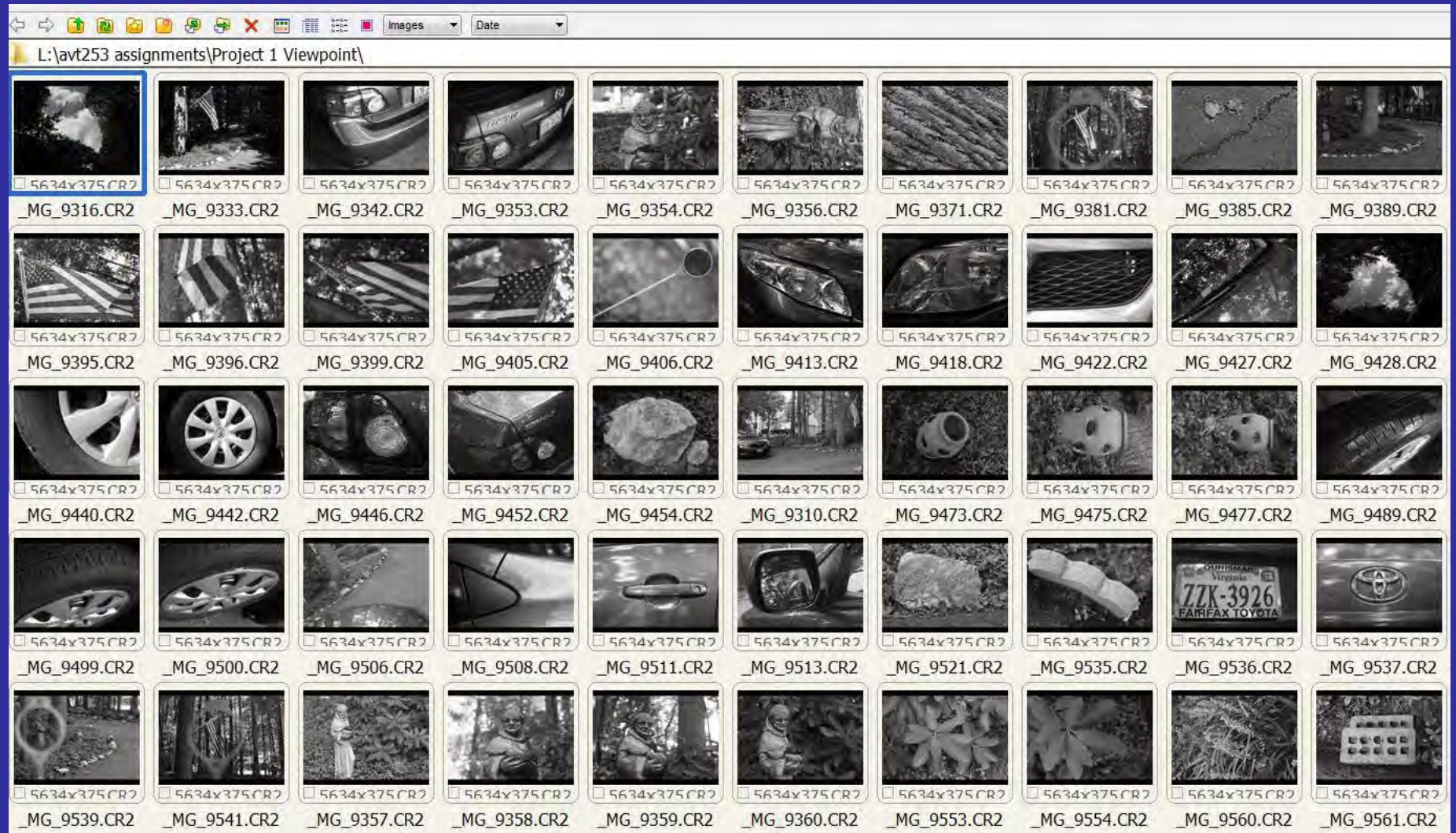
Seeing Without the Color₍₀₎

Stand someplace and find fifty different shots within 20 ft.



Seeing Without the Color⁽¹⁾

Stand someplace and find a fifty different shots within 20 ft.



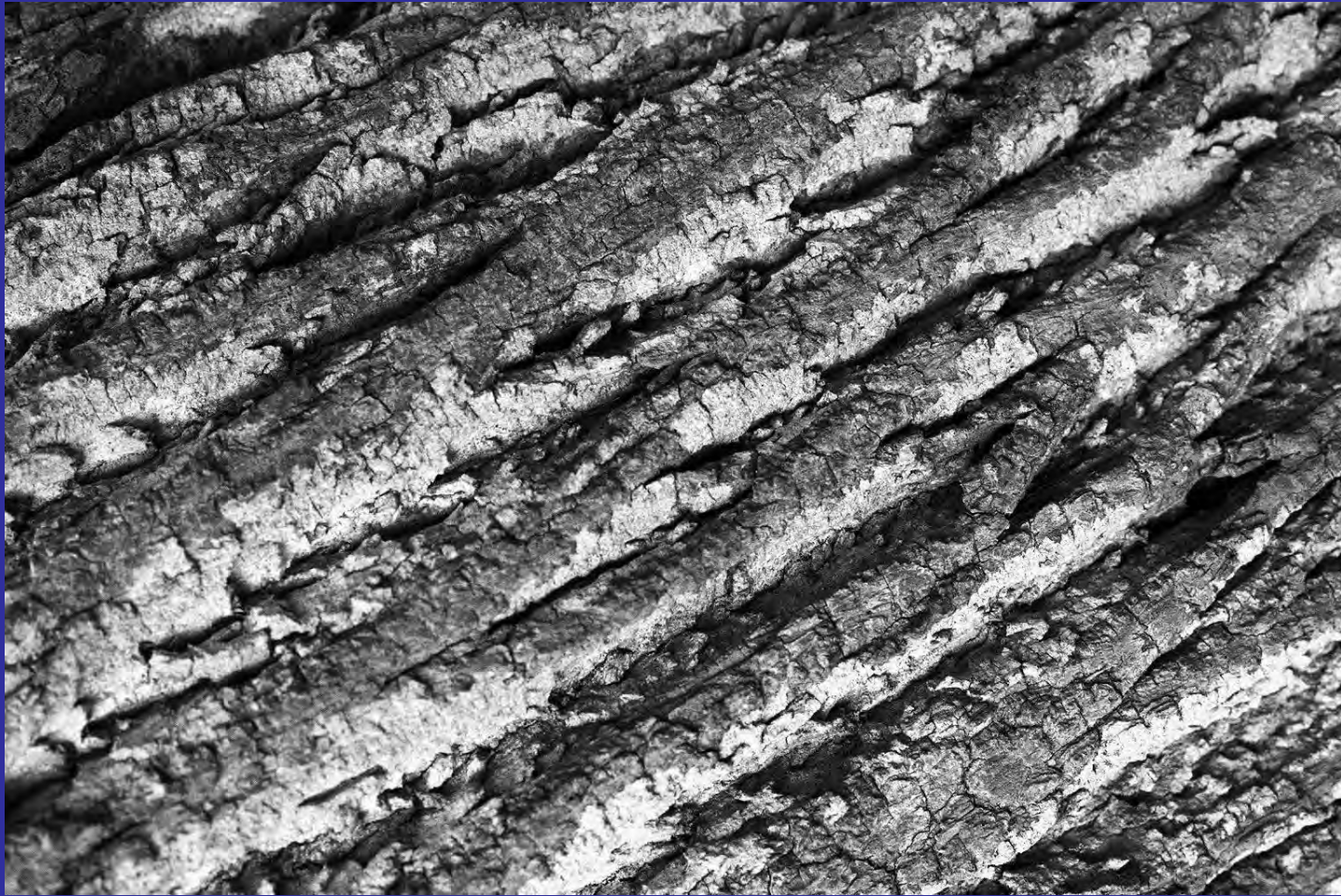
Seeing Without the Color⁽²⁾

Stand someplace and find a fifty different shots within 20 ft.



Seeing Without the Color⁽³⁾

Stand someplace and find a fifty different shots within 20 ft.



Seeing Without the Color_(4a)

Stand someplace and find a fifty different shots within 20 ft.



Seeing Without the Color_(4b)

Stand someplace and find a fifty different shots within 20 ft.



Seeing Without the Color⁽⁵⁾

Stand someplace and find a fifty different shots within 20 ft.



Seeing Without the Color⁽⁶⁾

Stand someplace and find a fifty different shots within 20 ft.



Seeing Without the Color⁽⁷⁾

Stand someplace and find a fifty different shots within 20 ft.



Seeing Without the Color⁽⁸⁾

Stand someplace and find a fifty different shots within 20 ft.





After working your brain a bit in Black & White
Start thinking about color

Composing ⁽¹⁾

Composing is like driving down a foggy road toward a house. Slowly you see more details – the colour of the slates and bricks, the shape of the windows. ([Benjamin Britten](#))



Which side up?

Seeing

People only see what they are prepared to see.

([Ralph Waldo Emerson](#))

We do a lot of looking: we look through lenses, telescopes, television tubes...Our looking is perfected every day, but we see less and less. ([Frederick Franck](#))

'Seeing' is the talent - seeing within, seeing what can be, seeing what is. This 'seeing' could take 2 seconds or 2 years. ([Gail Caduff-Nash](#))

If you look at a thing 999 times, you are perfectly safe; if you look at it for the 1000th time, you are in danger of seeing it for the first time. ([G. K. Chesterton](#))

Seeing

Above all, I craved to seize the whole essence, in the confines of one single photograph, of some situation that was in the process of unrolling itself before my eyes. ([Henri Cartier-Bresson](#))



Unseen San Francisco

Above all, I craved to seize the whole essence, in the confines of one single photograph, of some situation that was in the process of unrolling itself before my eyes. ([Henri Cartier-Bresson](#))



Often Seen San Francisco

Above all, I craved to seize the whole essence, in the confines of one single photograph, of some situation that was in the process of unrolling itself before my eyes. ([Henri Cartier-Bresson](#))



From Near... or Far ⁽¹⁾



Would you hang this on your wall?

From Near... or Far ⁽²⁾



Would you hang this on your wall?

Decide what to include ⁽¹⁾

when taking the picture



Decide what to include ⁽²⁾

and when printing (or showing) the picture



Crop to this?

Decide what to include ⁽³⁾

and when printing (or showing) the picture



Or would you prefer this?

Photographing someone else's Art

Found Art ⁽¹⁾

Seattle Art Museum



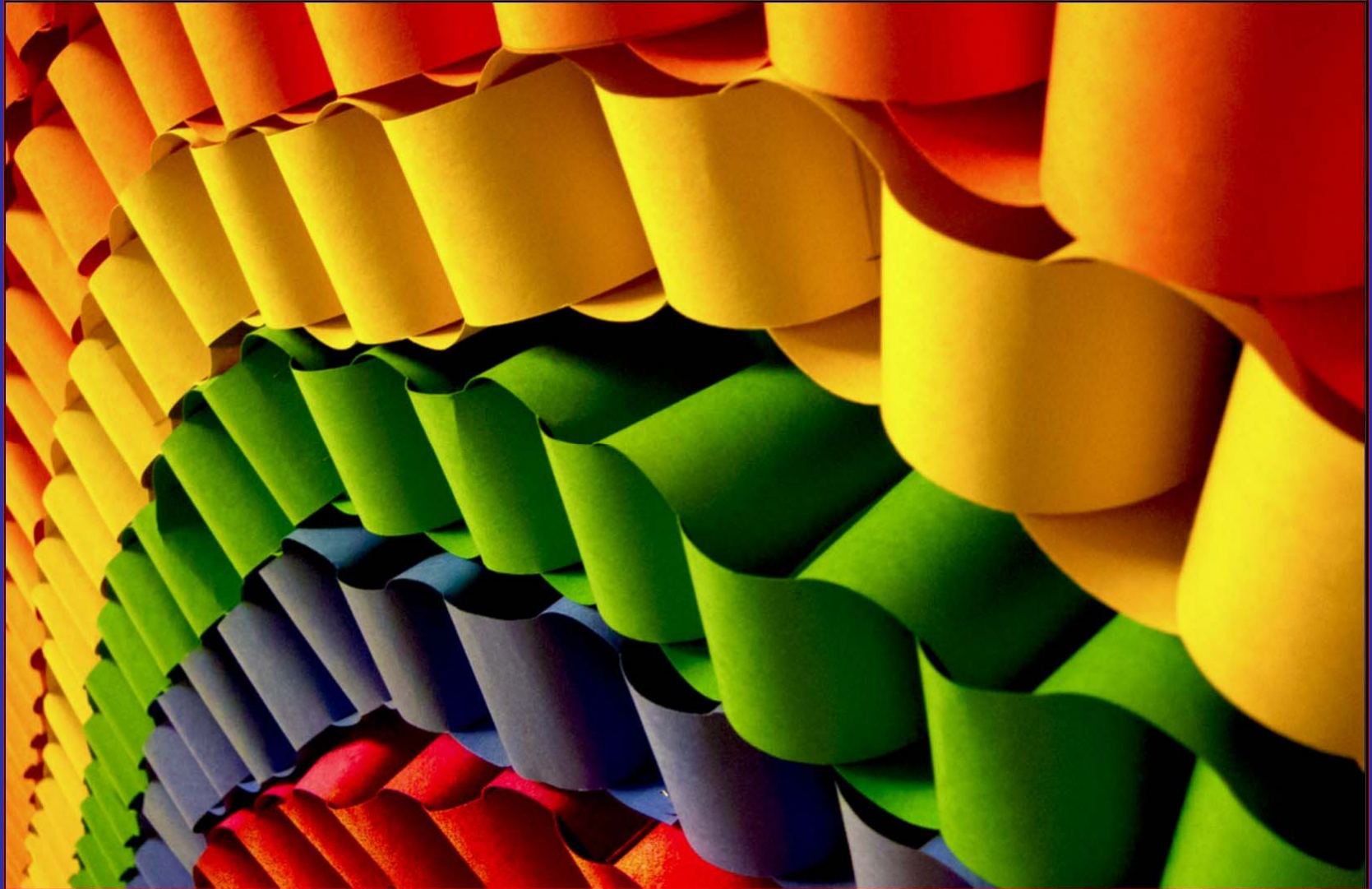
Found Art (2)

Chihuly Garden and Glass - Seattle Center



Found Art ⁽³⁾

New York City Public Library



Everyday Art

Around the house

Seeing everyday things at home (1)

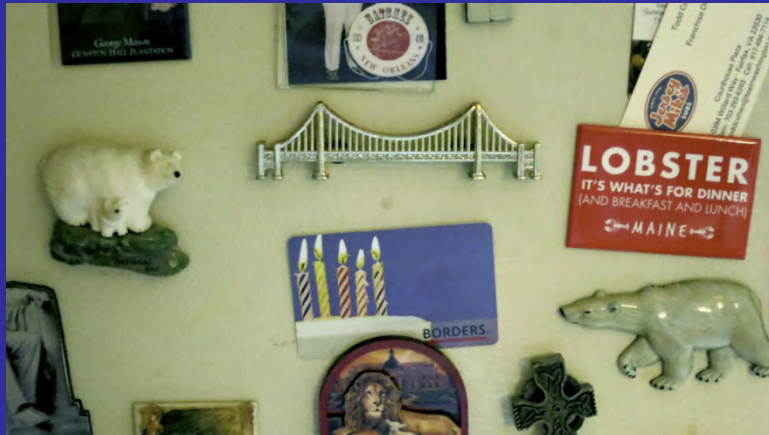
Other than ordinary shots of Ordinary Objects

- We do a lot of Looking
But are we really Seeing



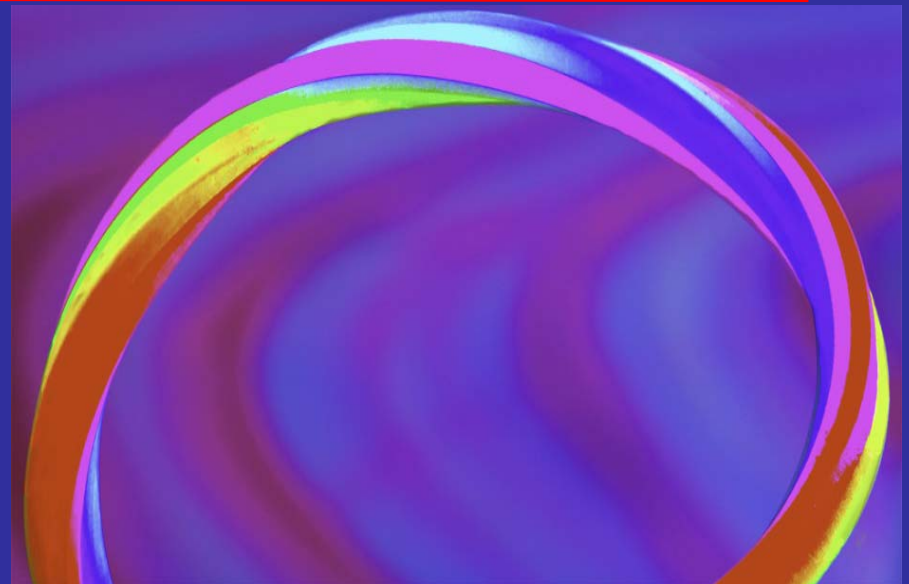
Seeing everyday things at home (3)

Other than ordinary shots of Ordinary Objects



Seeing everyday things at home (4)

Other than ordinary shots of Ordinary Objects



Seeing everyday things at home (2)

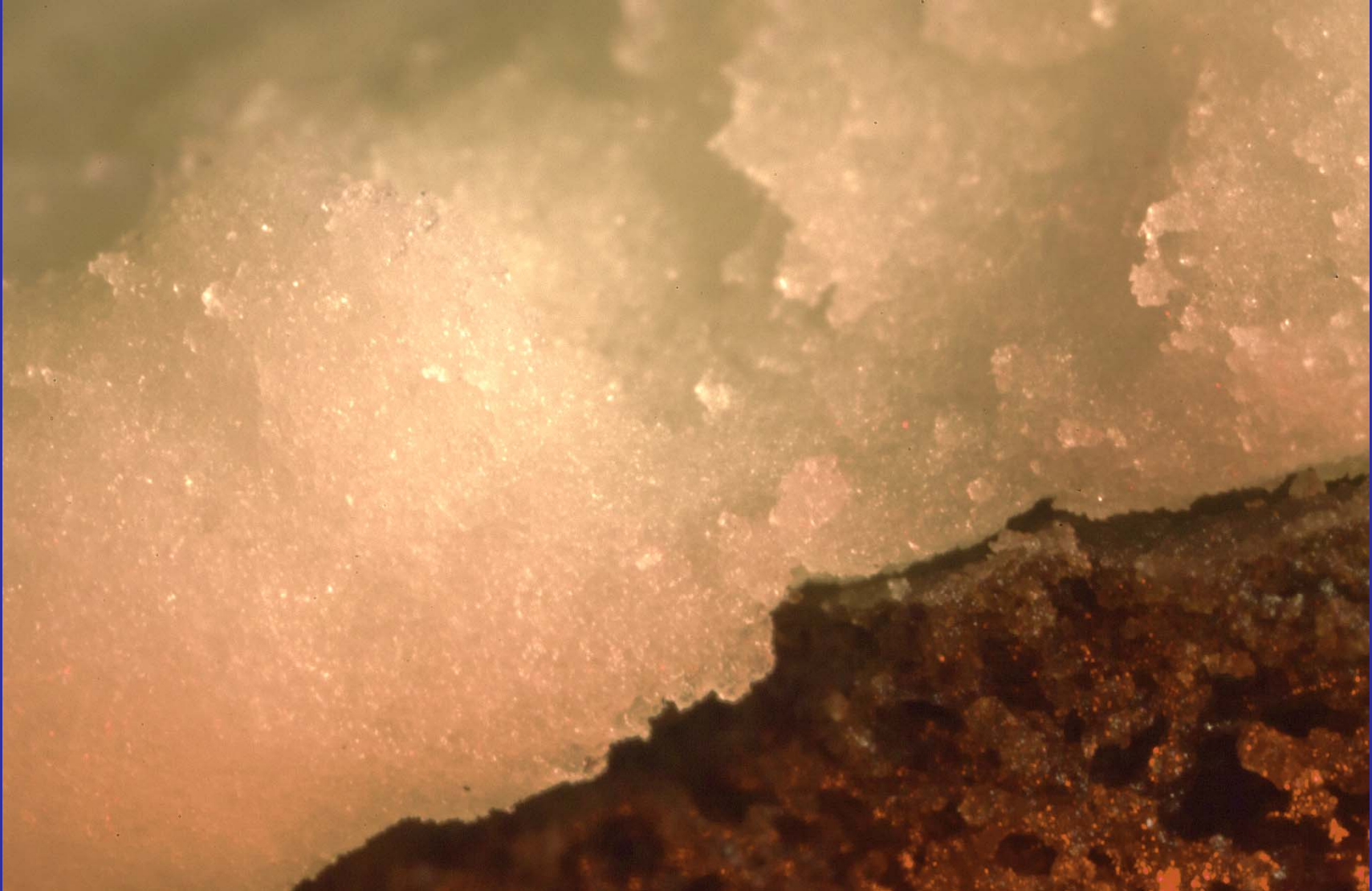
Other than ordinary shots of Ordinary Objects



Very Close in _(1a)



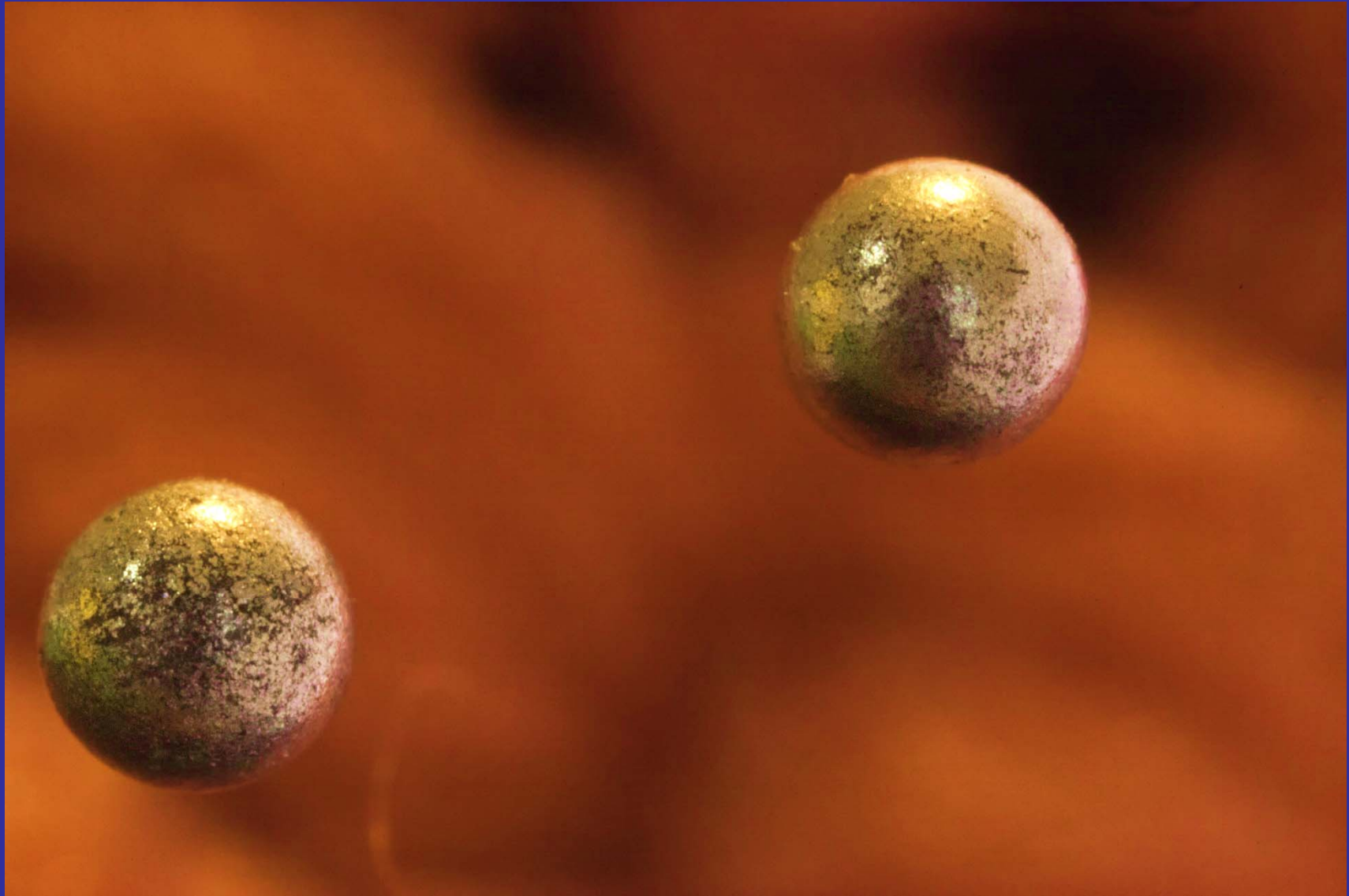
Very Close in _(1b)



Very Close in (2a)



Very Close in _(2b)



More ordinary stuff
around the house

Writing Christmas Cards



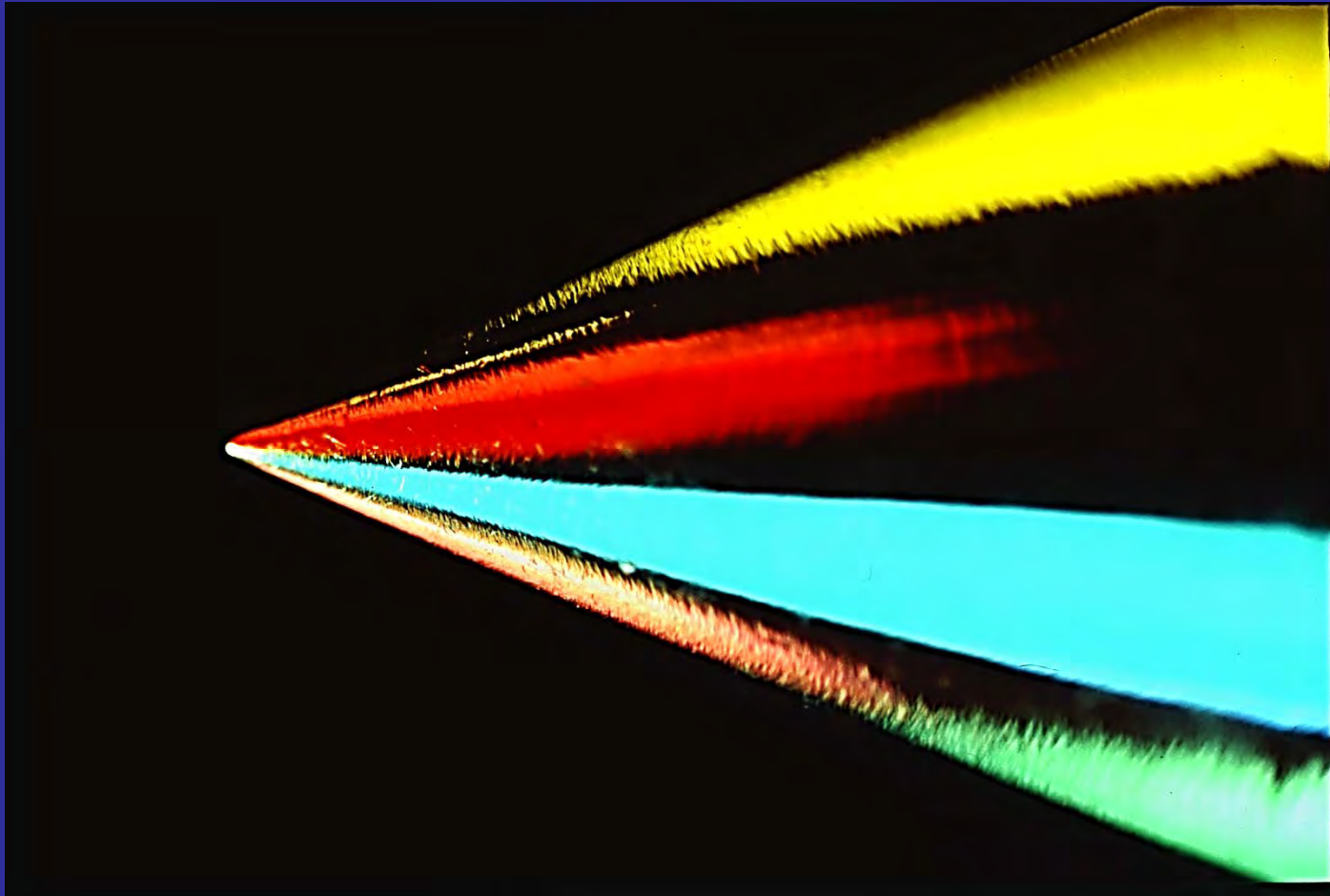
Lamp Shade



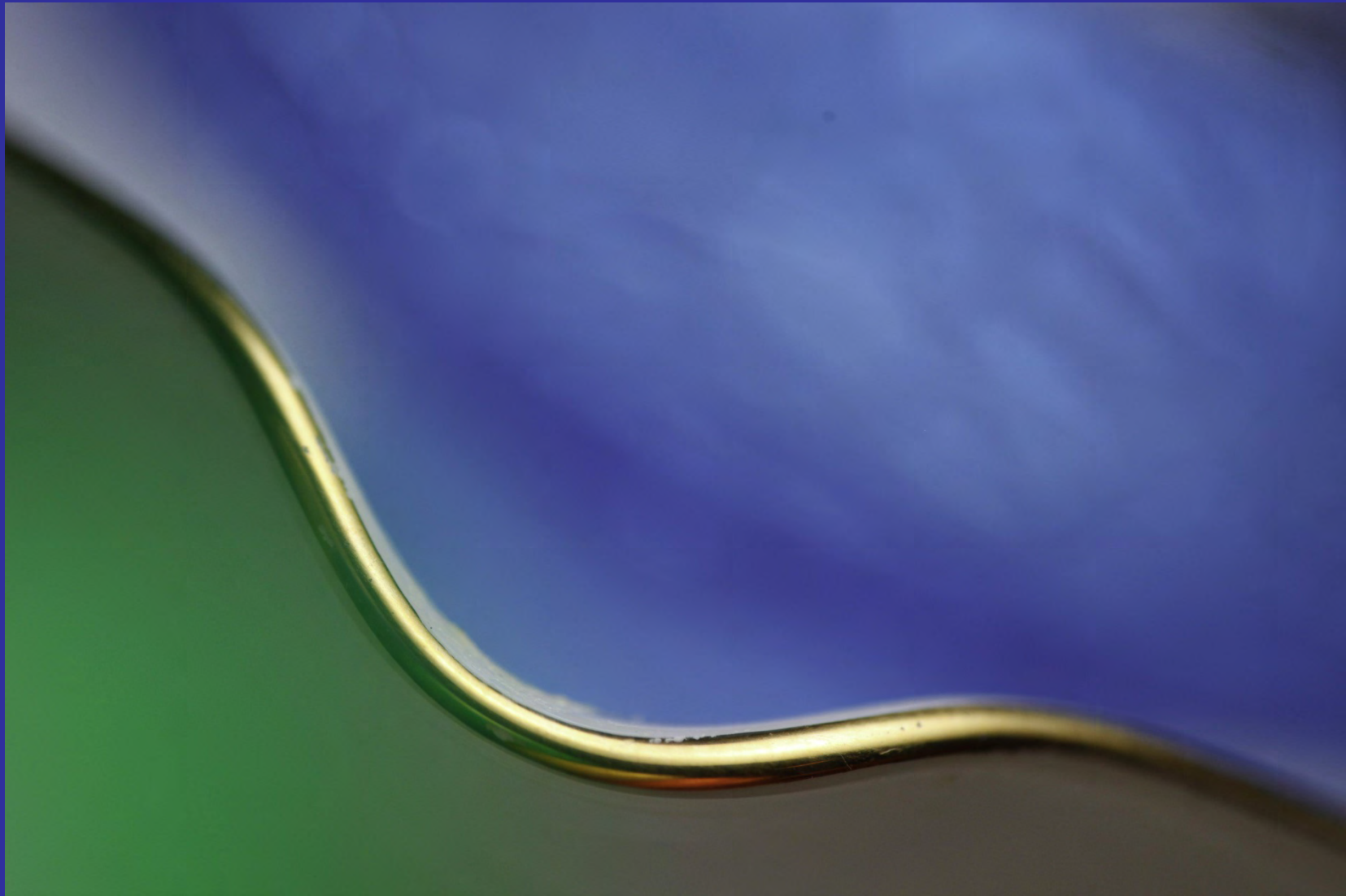
Dinner Plates



Plumb Bob



Gravy Boat



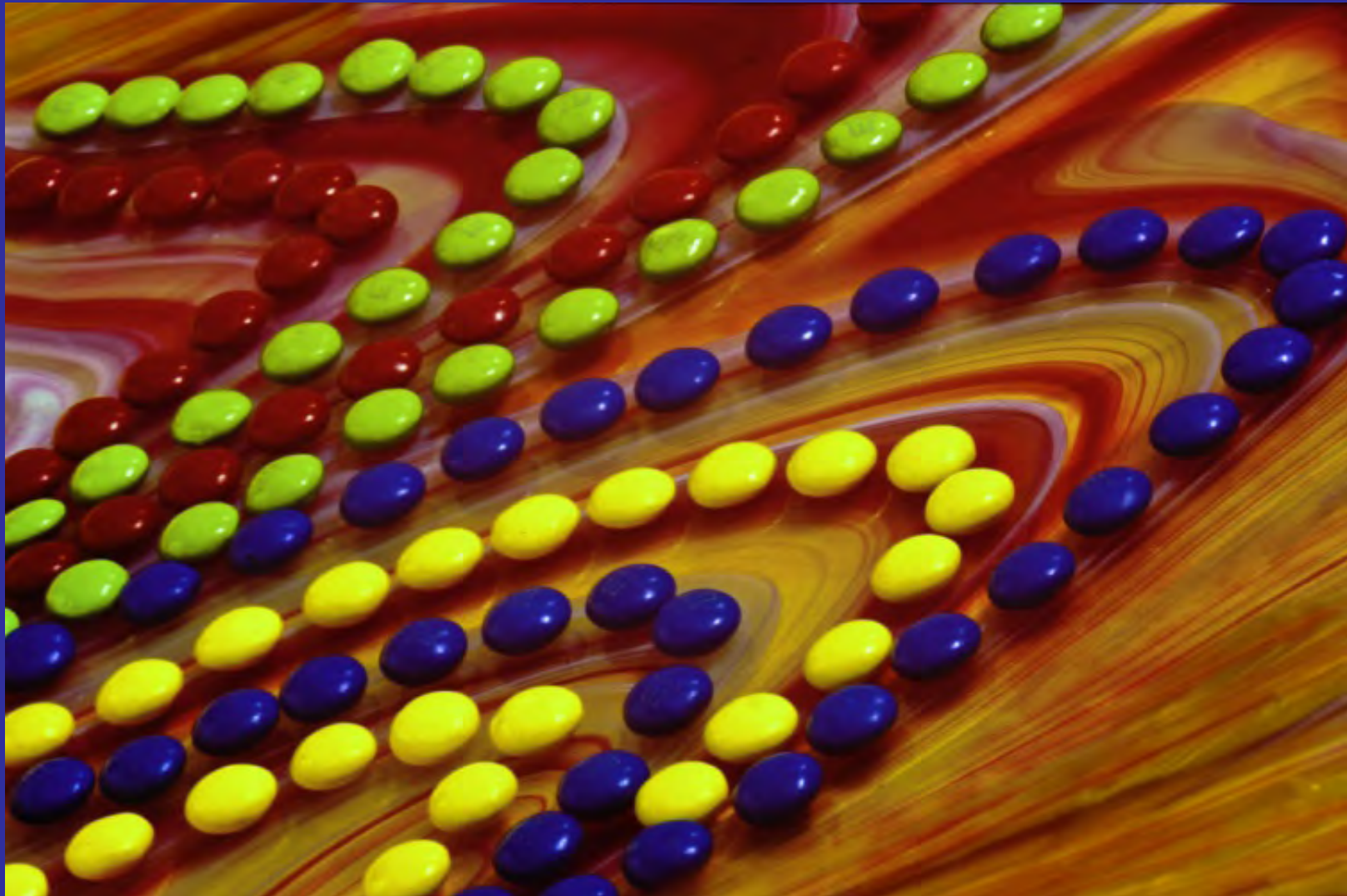
Bulb Auger



Desert



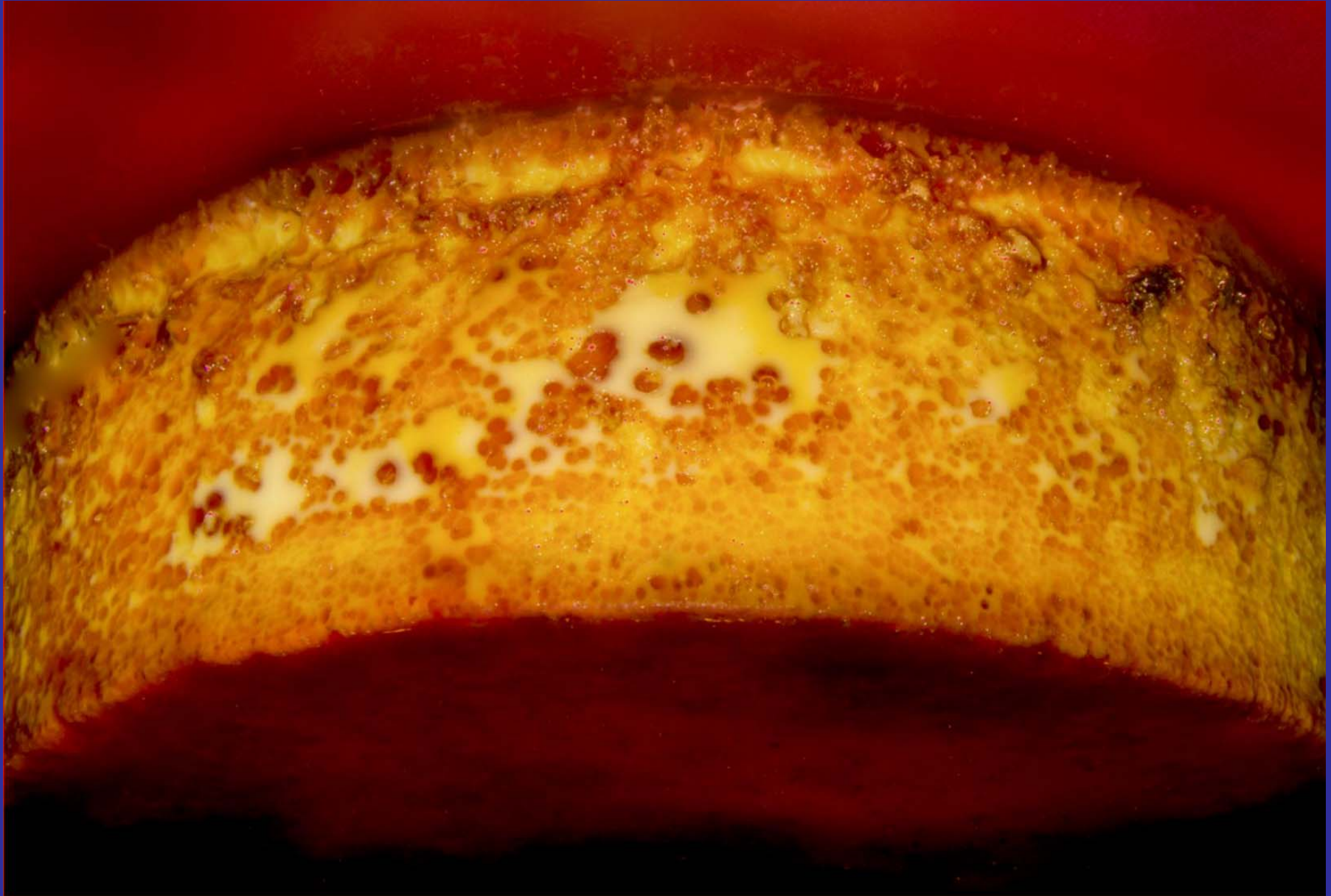
Snacks - M&Ms



3 Shots on Stained Glass



Cheese Cake



Looking at Red Peppers



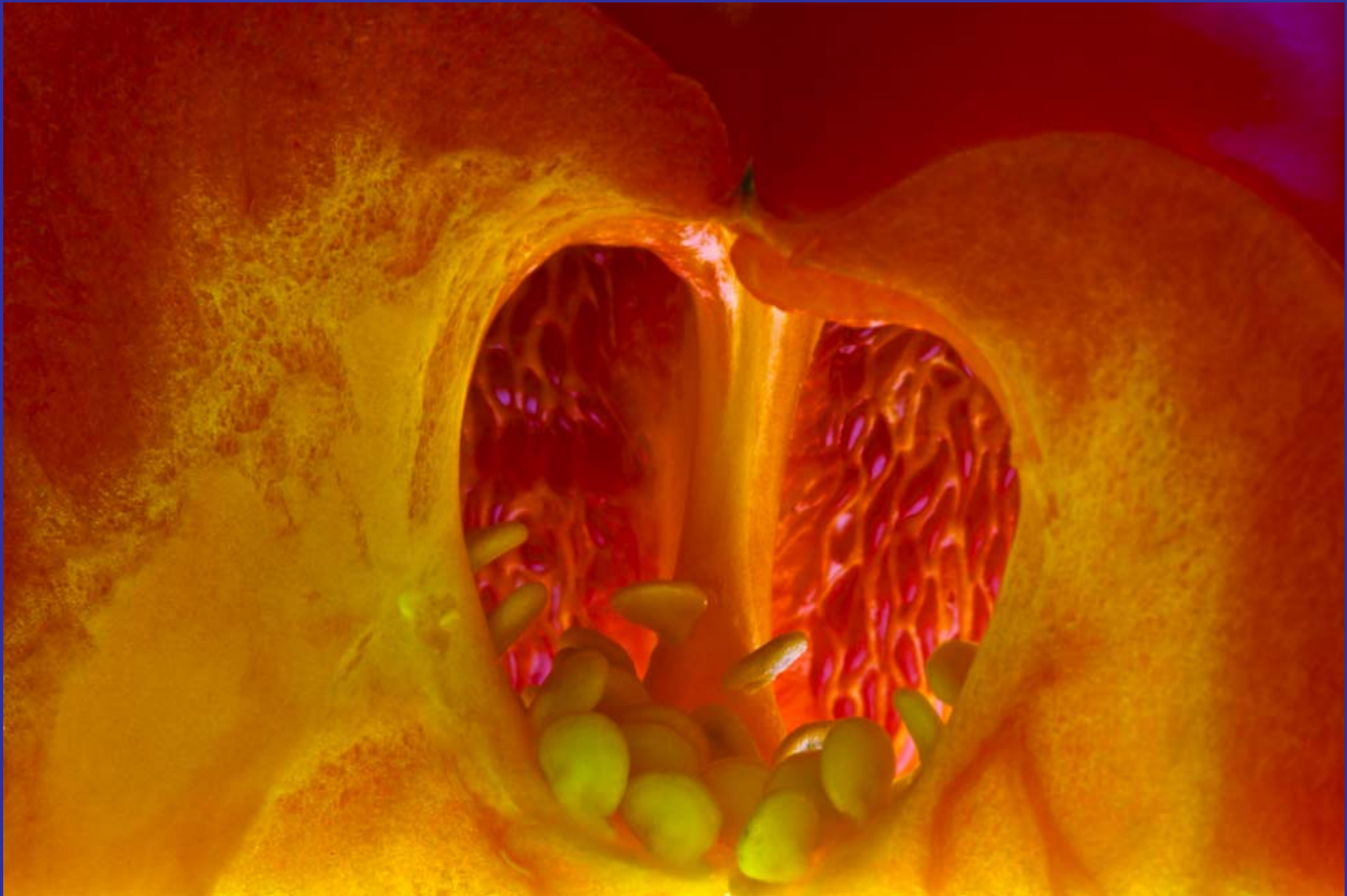
Seeing a Red Pepper⁽¹⁾



Seeing a Red Pepper₍₂₎



Seeing a Red Pepper₍₃₎



Seeing a Red Pepper⁽⁴⁾



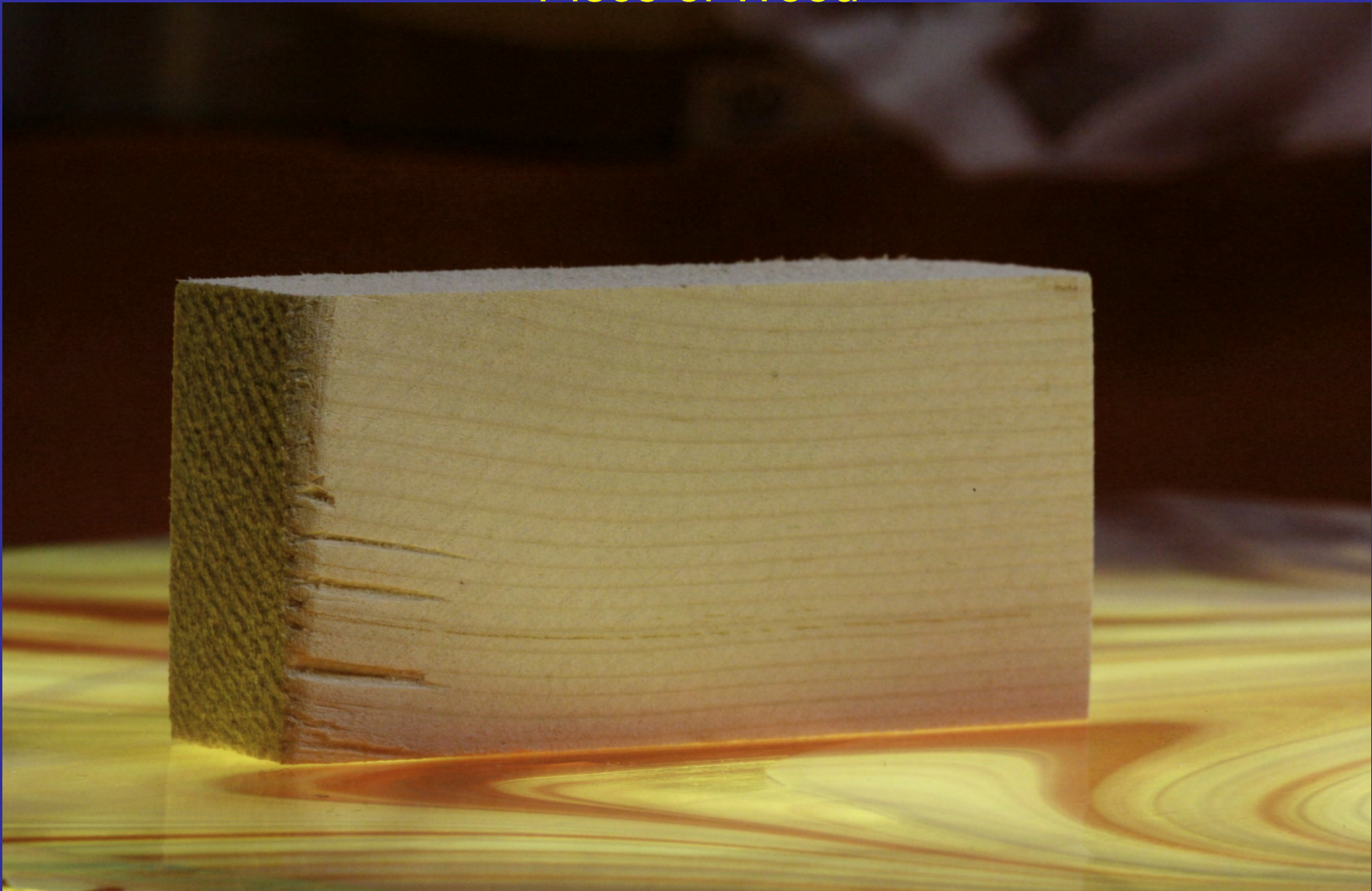
Seeing a Red Pepper⁽⁵⁾



Stained Glass
Might make an interesting
background

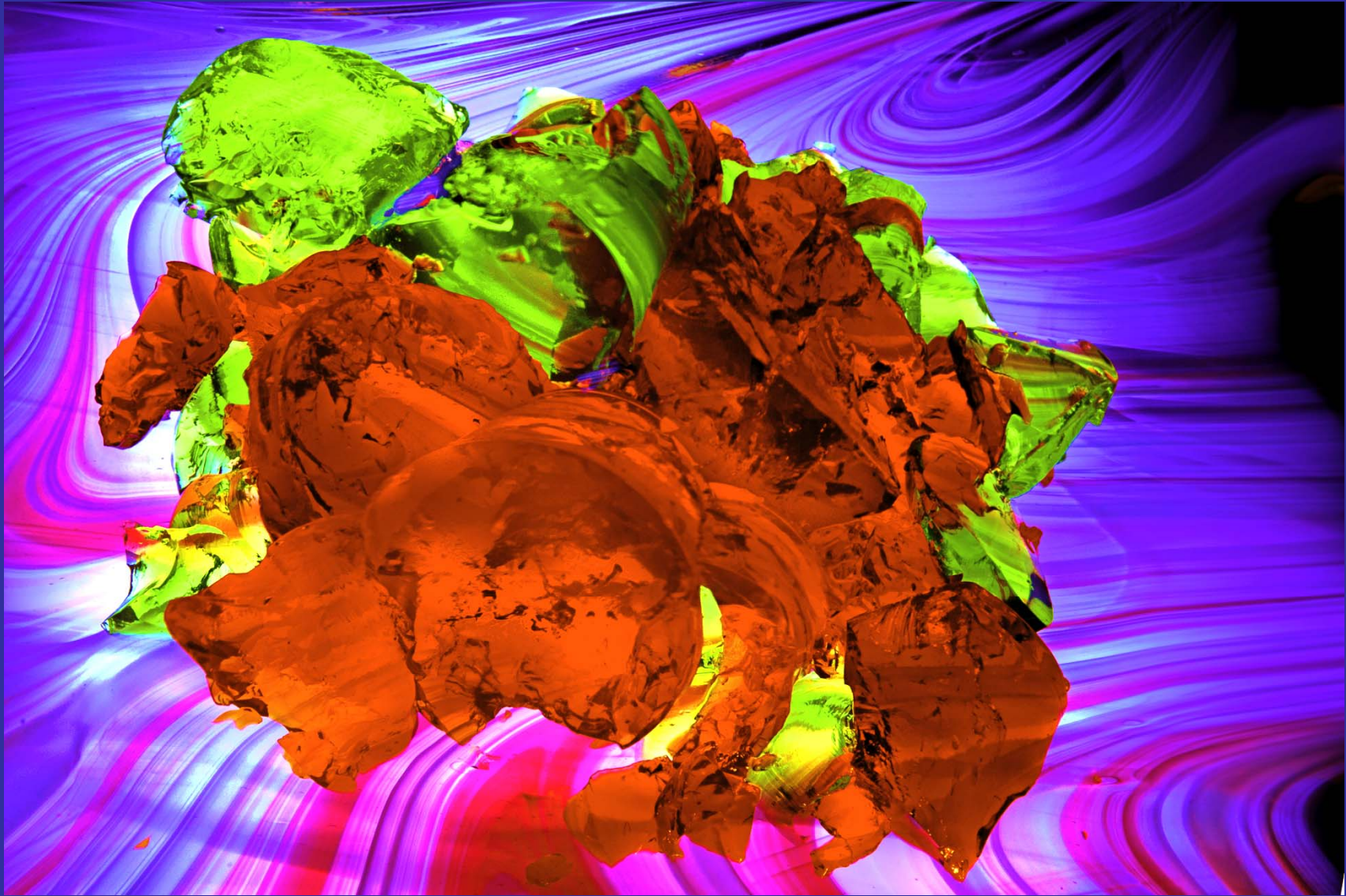
Try Stained Glass Backgrounds (1)

Piece of Wood



Try Stained Glass Backgrounds (1)

Jello



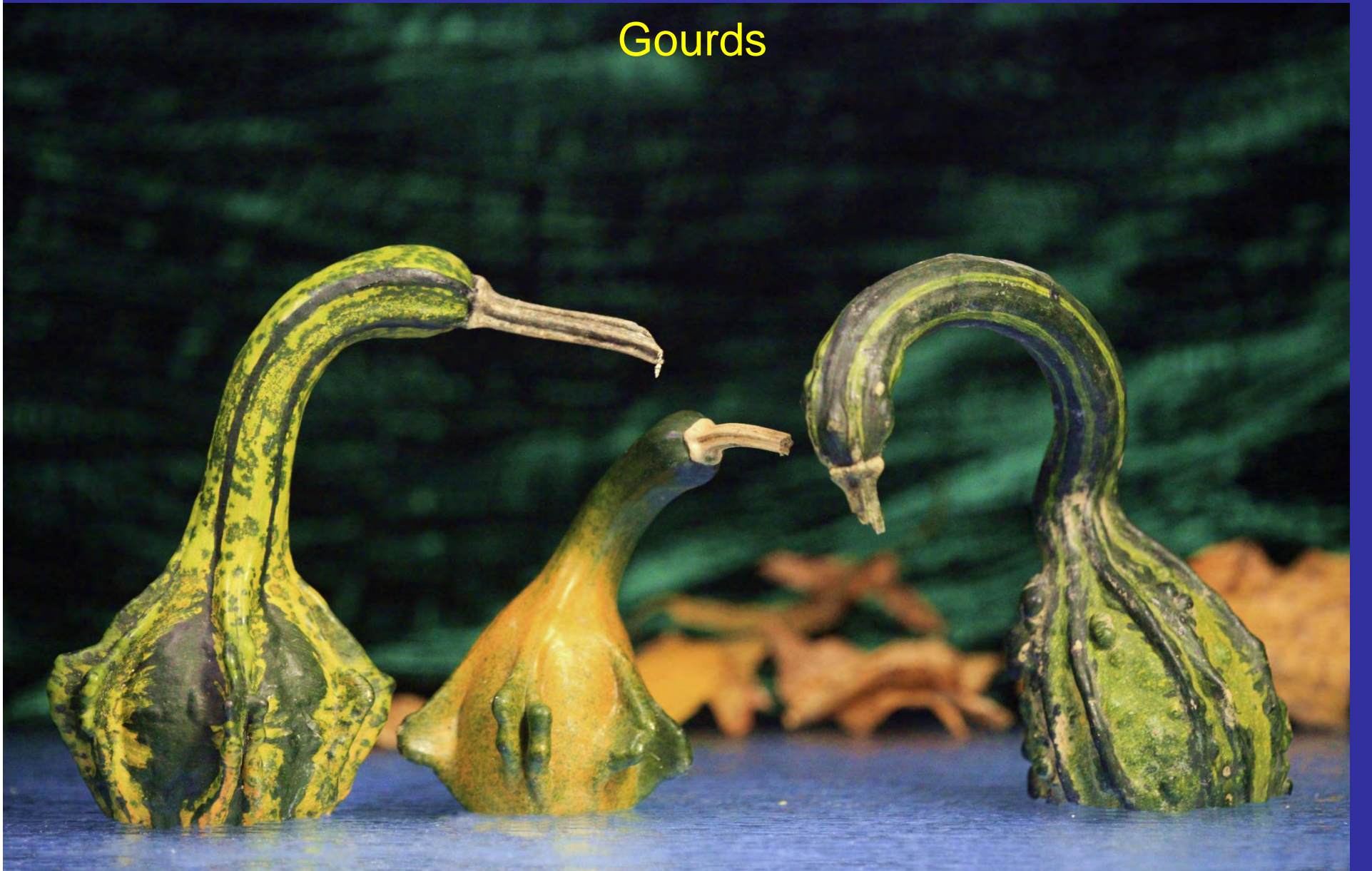
Try Stained Glass Backgrounds (2)

Dandelion



Try Stained Glass Backgrounds (3)

Gourds



Try Stained Glass Backgrounds (3)

Lily



Try Stained Glass Backgrounds (4)

Broken Bulb



Try Stained Glass Backgrounds (1)

- Use a close-up or macro lens
 - Experiment with background materials



Photo Manipulation



What makes it Art

- It is not a “postcard” shot
- It's different – I've not seen it just that way before
- I see something different --the more times I study it
- It speaks to me → An Affective reaction
- It raises questions as I look at it.
- It is not socially offensive
- I like the harmonizing use of colors
- I'd hang it on my wall
- ?
- ?
- ?
- ?

Discussion