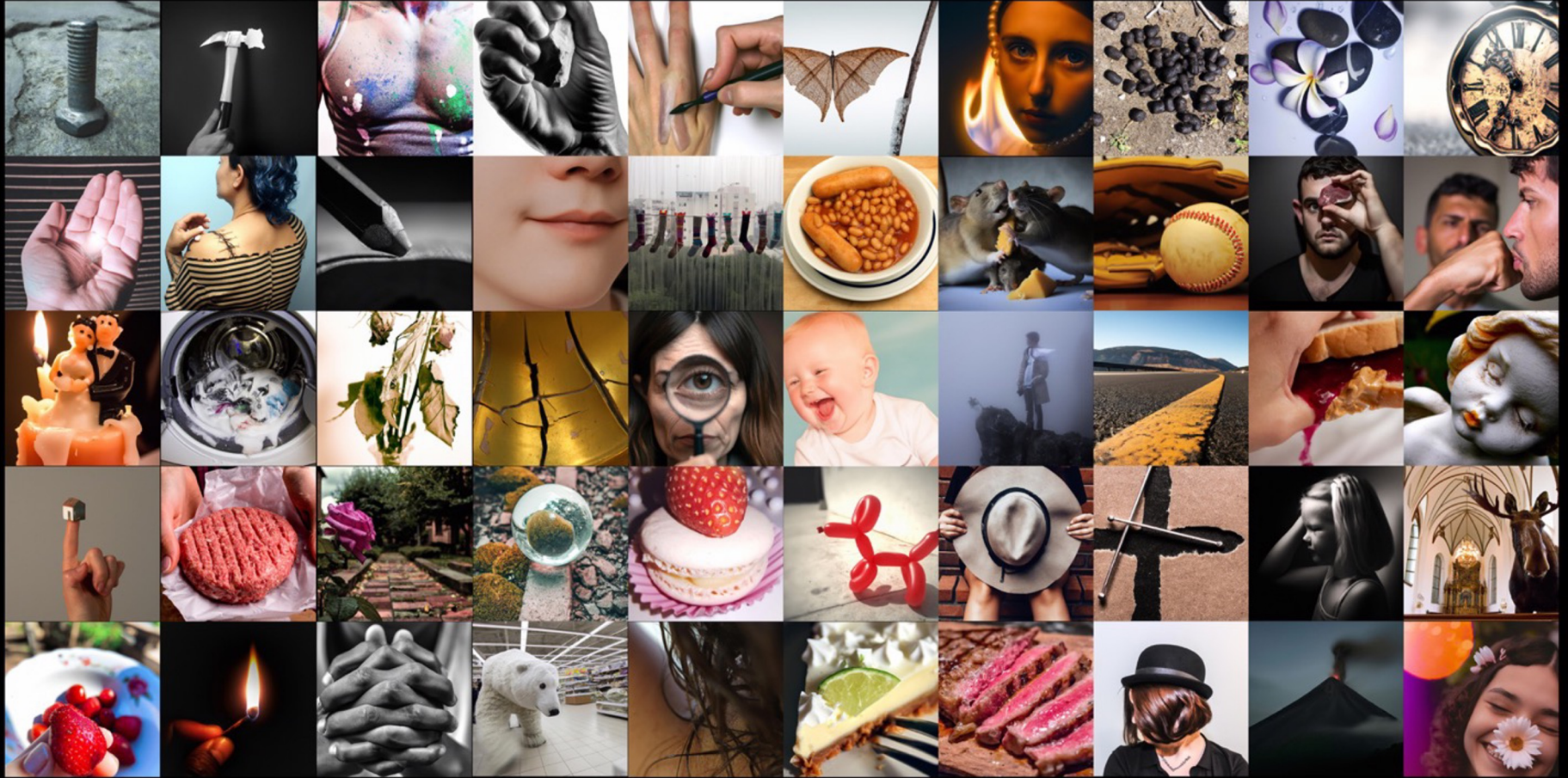


Out of Chaos | Decoding the Obvious



John Sanborn

FOG Gallery 01.19.24 – 02.25.24

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John Sanborn

an AI/AR Platform Project

Most of life is mysterious, as in “why are we alive?” because obvious answers are in short supply. Perhaps that’s the point. If you are not in the answer business, then perplexing questions become much more emotionally profitable. As we are left dangling in suspense, wanting to know more, we must embrace that in-between feeling- as it is key to coherence.

This is a story about what we think we know and what we know that we don’t know.

The tone is intimate, confessional – the thoughts and feelings we keep to ourselves as they reveal doubts, fears and anxieties we’d rather not speak out loud. These are instances shrouded in mystery, obscure yet cloying – as we understand their power to destroy.

What we call “narrative” is an afterthought, as each of us creates our own understanding, order and meaning of the occurrences and their rationale. Our immediate reactions are decided emotionally, so we are driven by apophenia to impose a structure to quantify and repeat “what happened” and serve a particularly human need to have things “make sense” – which we call storytelling.

Out of Chaos is an exploration of this process where we ask ourselves, “What’s going on?” and “What does that mean?” as we innately connect one moment of existence to another – using personal bias based on who we are to understand. The work harnesses the surprising and unnoticeable things that impact us while they happen, and the emotional residue that echoes after the fact.

The ***Out of Chaos*** platform is built on two distinct layers of how to read these “shattered stories”, and obliquely compelling methods of decoding them.

The first layer is a series of still images, generated by a custom AI algorithm, using text drawn from a script of 101 short scenes. Each image is evocative but perplexing, a blend of the everyday and the surreal.; suggestive of contemporary issues but delivered with cryptic import.

The second layer is activated by scanning those individual still images using an AR application on the viewer’s mobile device. This triggers a short video clip on the device, which is a companion to the still. The alignment of the clip and the still with the text is not readily obvious, but invites successive scans to reveal more layers, and shards of the story. The scans can be done in any order - asking the viewer to begin assembling their own “version” of the work by mentally comparing the two layers.

[Play Video of *Out of Chaos | Decoding the Obvious* at the FOG Gallery](#)

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