



Alessandro Mazzone

**The long journey**  
*from my couch*

*Watercolor impressions of digital landscapes*



# The long journey

## *from my couch*

### *Watercolor impressions of digital landscapes*

In our past, landscape has been a mainstay of artistic expression; but in our fragmented present, its importance is further magnified. Traditionally, the inspiration for landscapes has been scenes of nature, but today, with the huge impact of images seen through a screen, the scope of the landscape genre may have grown even wider.

Since I was a teenager, I was fascinated by artificial images of video games that tried to reproduce natural environments with the simple 3-dimensional polygons of 1990s technology. I actually started painting when I was 15 years old using pictures from my Nintendo 64 games as a source.

Video game scenarios greatly influenced the imagination of artists of my generation and those following. I can see this in the works of my students at CSIA Lugano, who are born in the 21st century and grew up completely surrounded by screens and digital images.



*Above: a science fiction picture from the 1970s with brilliant colors and interesting complementary colors contrast.*

No Man's Sky is a game created in 2016 about space exploration. It uses a procedural system to build infinite numbers of unique planets with infinite numbers of variable scenarios. This game is an example of great graphical detail, and it is clear that the game's developers were not interested in creating a realistic world, as other video games have, but instead realizing an alternative dimension containing surreal flora and fauna with stunning, brilliant colors. The colors in fact are very peculiar and immediately caught my attention; hyper-saturated and bright, with strong contrasts of complementary color. To me they recall the imagery of 20th century science fiction comics.

When I first played the game 3 years ago, I was amazed by the experience of landing on mysterious planets, exploring the environment, and then flying away on my spaceship to discover another world. Flying through the universe, even in a false one, at times gave me a sensation of vertigo. This reminds me of the Kantian concept of sublime beauty that was ever-present in 19th century romanticism, where the forces of nature were translated onto canvas as suggestive landscapes, where the viewer could watch tremendous natural phenomena at a reassuring and comfortable distance. I am trying to respond to this aesthetic game experience by introducing it using my pictorial language, as the romanticists did.

The game itself actually encourages the player to use it for "artistic" purposes with an integrated "camera mode". This allows the player to pause the game during a session and take a picture, with several options available that a real camera might have (depth of field, light, framing, etc.). I used to collect such photos and examine them in the studio as a source to start a watercolor painting. As I always do in this process, I am not interested in copying the exact image, but rather just grasp the main structures and colors. From this I can just follow the watercolor's willingness to create its path, starting from free spots on the wet surface that I then follow.

In the end, the game itself can simply be an excuse to fly with my imagination rather than copy the "reality" of the screen, but I still believe that the visual impact of images in the digital world will be more and more prevalent in our future.

Artists reflect the spirit of the time, as always.

Alessandro Mazzoni,  
July 2020



*Alien landscapes serie #1, watercolor on paper, 35x50 cm, 2020*



*Alien landscapes serie #2*, watercolor on paper, 35x50 cm, 2020



*Alien landscapes serie #3*, watercolor on paper, 35x50 cm, 2020





*Alien landscapes serie #4, watercolor on paper, 35x50 cm, 2020*

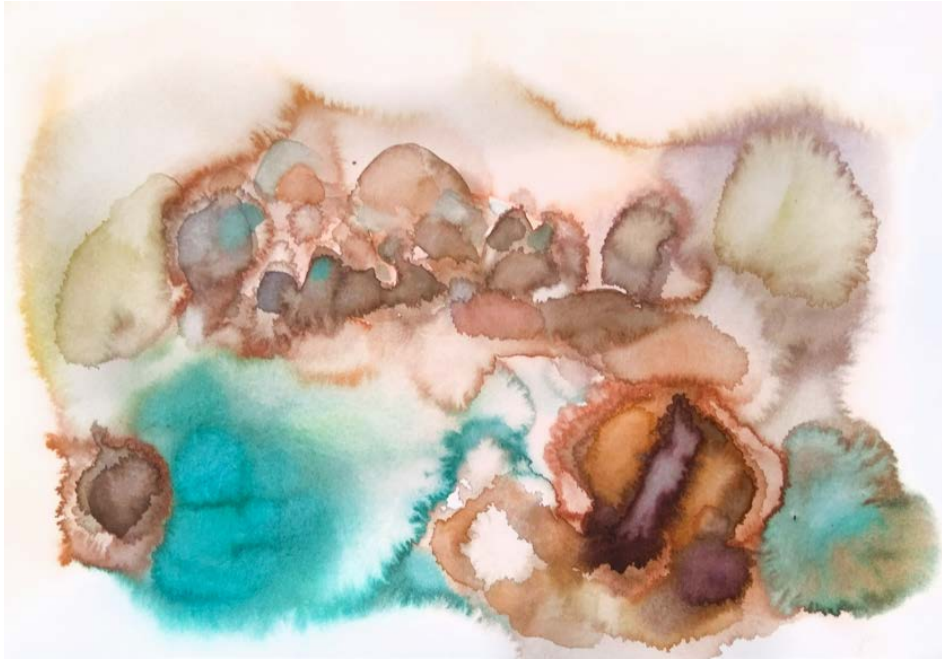


*Alien landscapes serie #13, watercolor on paper, 35x50 cm, 2020*









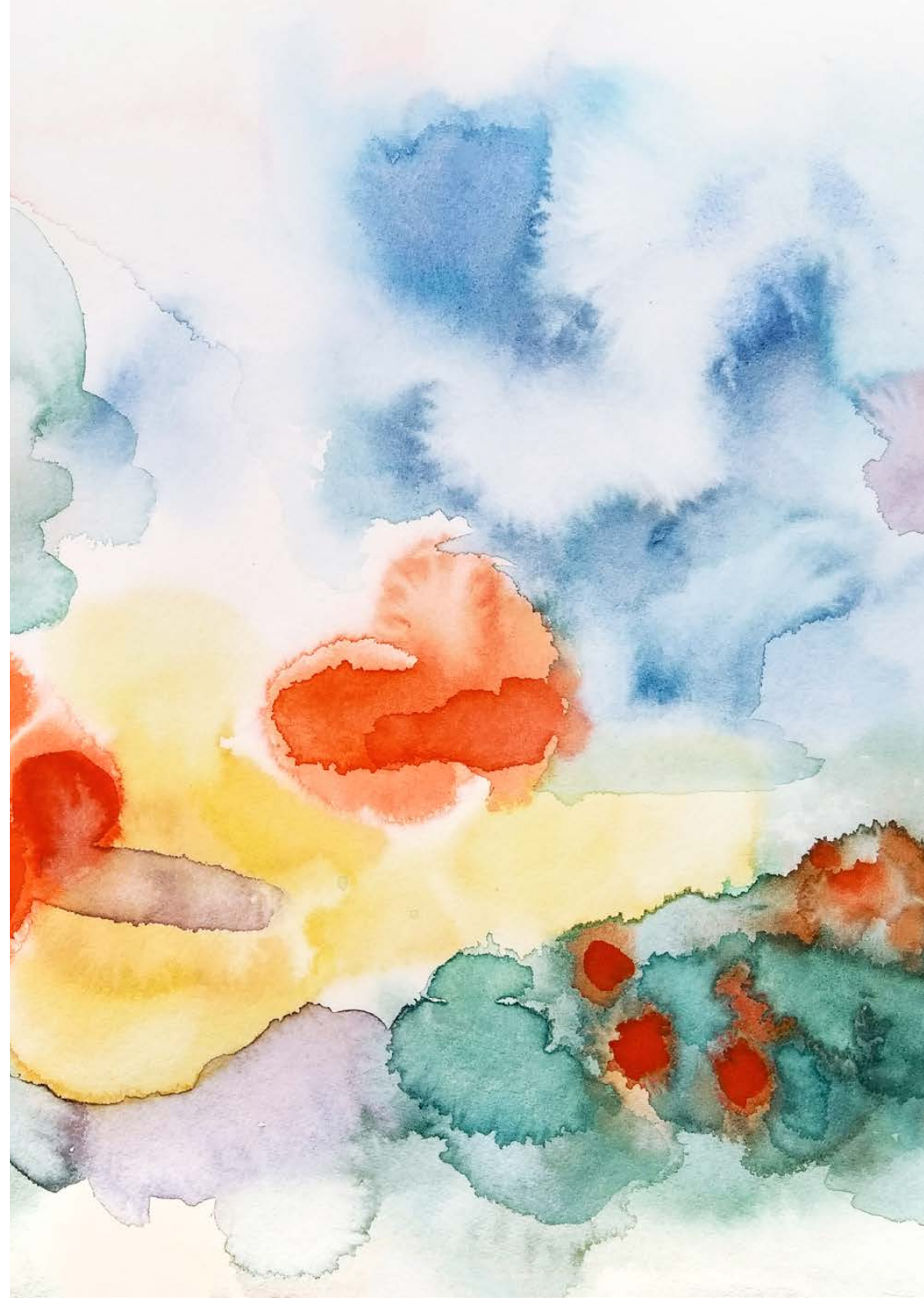
*Alien landscapes serie #11, watercolor on paper, 35x50 cm, 2020*



*Alien landscapes serie #12, watercolor on paper, 35x50 cm, 2020*



*Alien landscapes serie #16, watercolor on paper, 35x50 cm, 2020*

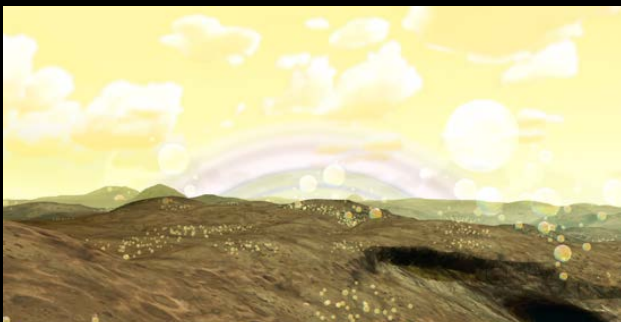
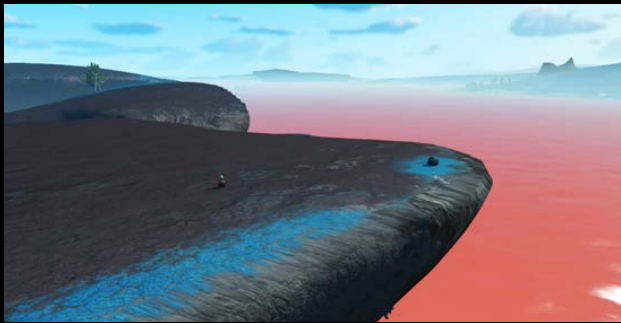
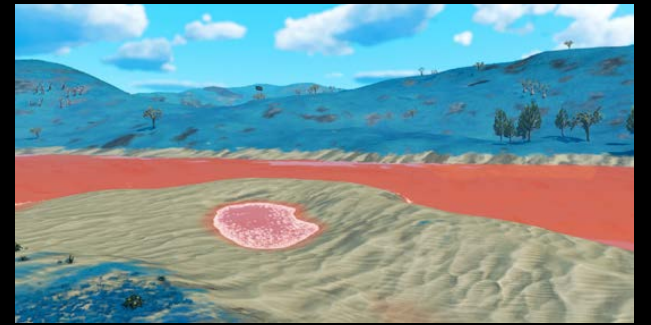




*Alien landscapes serie #5, watercolor on paper, 35x50 cm, 2020*



*Alien landscapes serie #6, watercolor on paper, 35x50 cm, 2020*

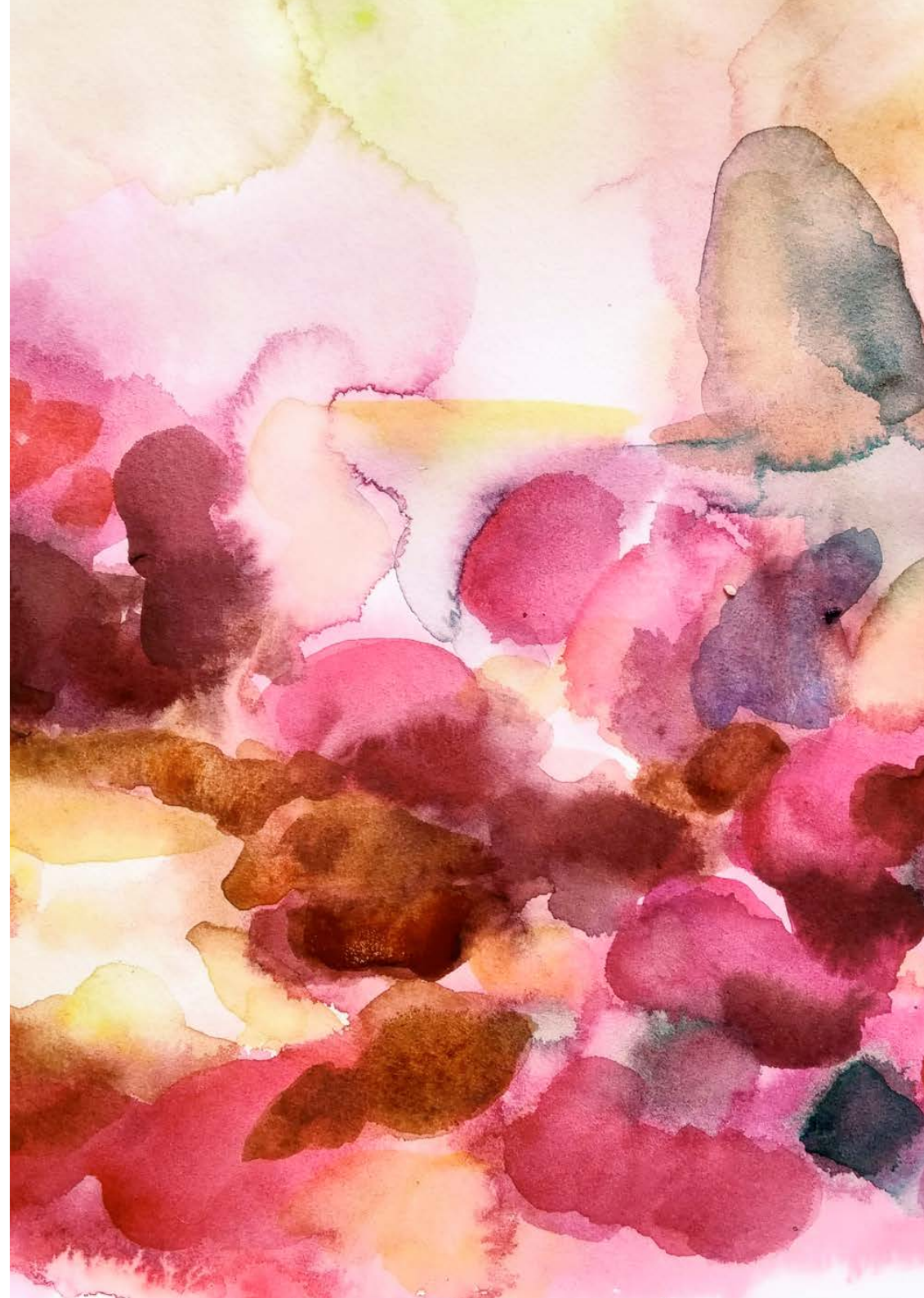




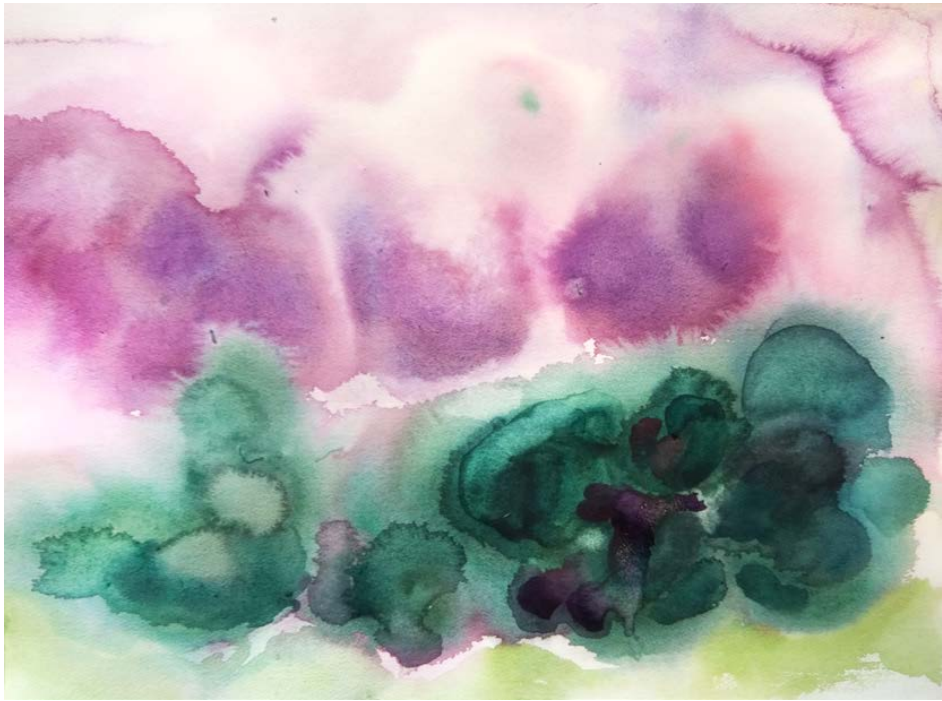
*Alien landscapes serie #10, watercolor on paper, 17x25 cm, 2020*



*Alien landscapes serie #18, watercolor on paper, 35x50 cm, 2020*







*Alien landscapes serie #7, watercolor on paper, 35x50 cm, 2020*



*Alien landscapes serie #8, watercolor on paper, 35x50 cm, 2020*

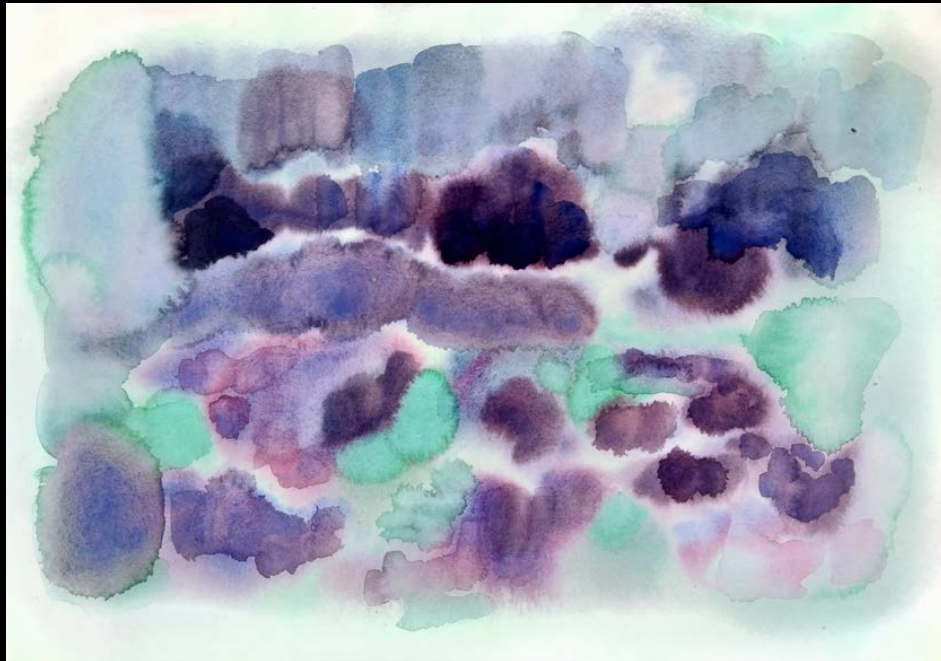




*Alien landscapes serie #17, watercolor on paper, 17x25 cm, 2020*



*Alien landscapes serie #15, watercolor on paper, 35x50 cm, 2020*



*Alien landscapes serie #14, watercolor on paper, 35x50 cm, 2020*



*Alien landscapes serie #9, watercolor on paper, 35x50 cm, 2020*





## Biography

Alessandro Mazzoni is an artist and textile designer based in Mendrisio, Southern Switzerland. He was born in Locarno (Switzerland) in 1987. He attended the CSIA (Centre for Artistic Industries) in Lugano (2002-2007) specializing in textile decoration and in 2012 he graduated in painting at the Academy of Fine Arts of Brera, Milan. From September 2011 to April 2014 he worked for Lisson Gallery Milan as gallery assistant. Since 2008 he has done several personal and collective shows in Switzerland and Northern Italy. He has taught textile design at CSIA since 2017. In his free time plays the celtic harp.

List of recent exhibitions:

- January 2015, Galleria Mosaico, Chiasso, Switzerland.
- April 2017, Galerie Hofstetter, Fribourg, Switzerland.
- November 2018, Ex macello, Lugano, Switzerland
- March 2020, Raiffeisen Bank, Mendrisio, Switzerland.

His artistic research focuses on an imaginary and mysterious world beyond the edges of reality, with a peculiar attention on emotional, romantic and fantastic aspects of art.

He uses different mediums, although his attention is drawn towards painting with a passion for watercolor. On one hand he is deeply connected to the manual gesture of the painting and on the other hand he is eager to do experience with new technologies like video-art.