

David Finkelstein

Balancing on a Molecule

(Dirt: Part Three)

Booklet





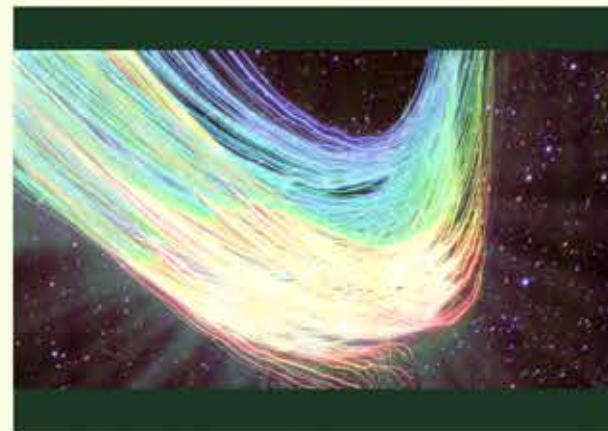
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## Synopsis

*Balancing on a Molecule* uses animation, music, and incantations to enact a series of video rituals, trying to strike a balance between rapture and vulnerability. In order for rituals to be effective, we need to place our trust in them, which can open the door to revelation, but also leave us open to manipulation and madness.

A collage of poetic imagery, music, and invocatory language, the film follows two men in a series of esoteric experiments. Their words gives rise to desert landscapes, populated by sweat lodges, snakes, and an unusual game of tennis. A postmodern video opera, *Balancing on a Molecule* bathes the viewer in music, language, and visual spectacle.



## Information

Original title:  
Balancing on a Molecule (Dirt: Part Three)

Production country:  
USA

Year of production:  
2023

Total running time:  
16 and a half minutes

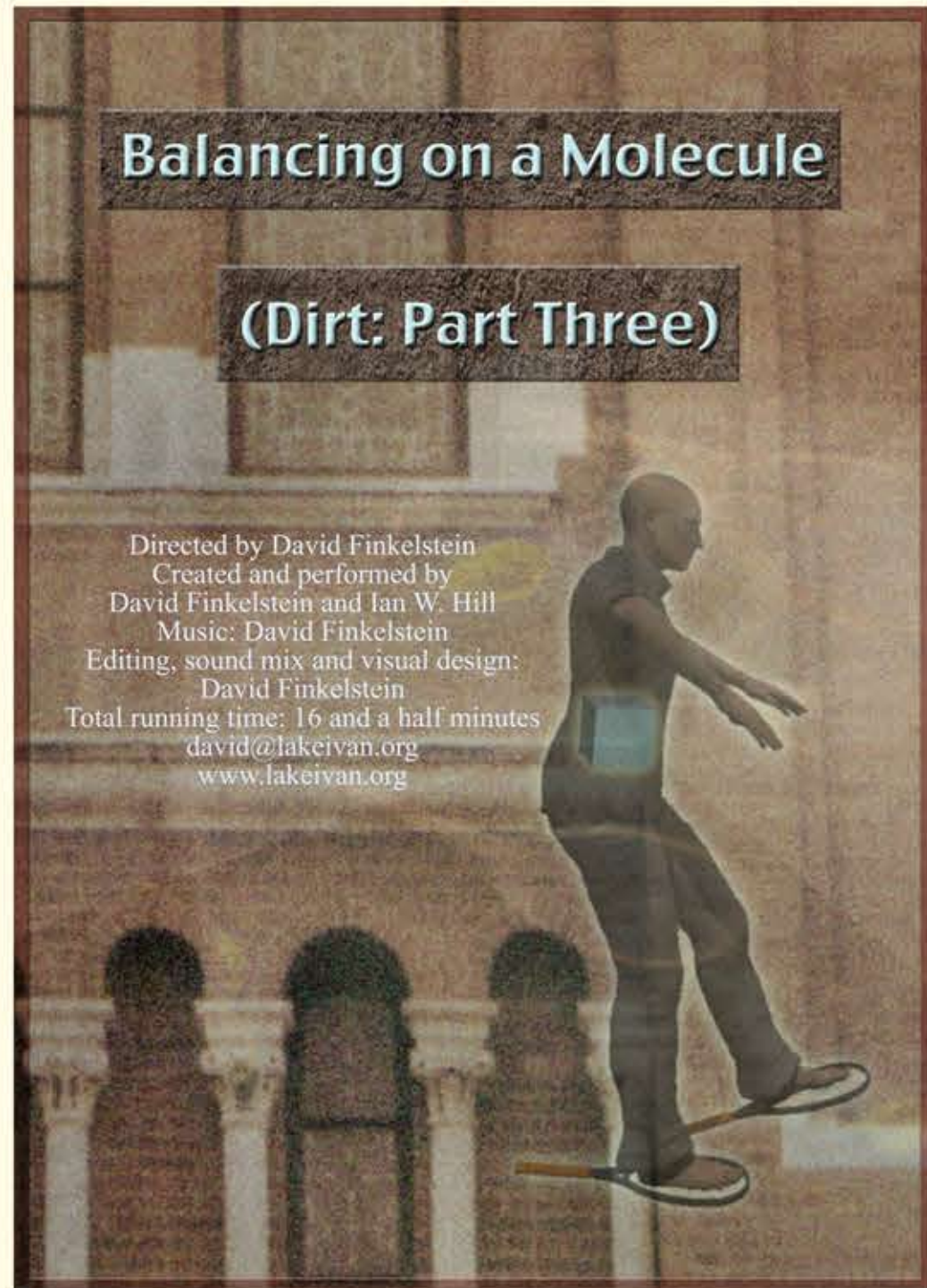
Trailer URL:  
<https://vimeo.com/728888843>



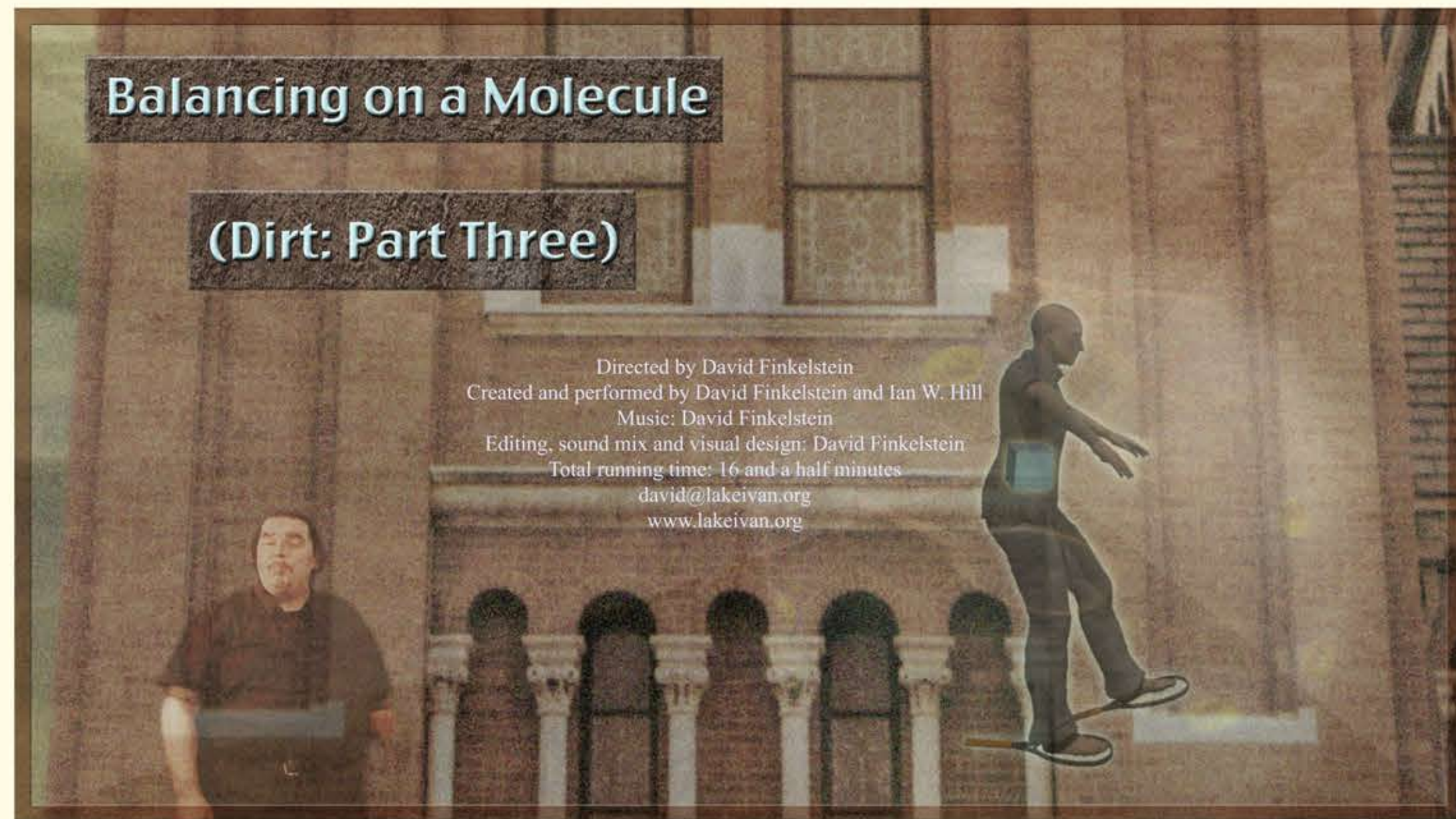
## Credits

Directed by David Finkelstein  
Created and performed by David Finkelstein and Ian W. Hill  
Music: David Finkelstein  
Editing, sound mix and visual design: David Finkelstein  
Total running time: 16 and a half minutes  
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Film Poster





## Biography

DAVID FINKELSTEIN is a 2022 Guggenheim Fellow. His video work has been featured in numerous film festivals around the world and has won awards at 25 of them. In 2013, he was an invited artist at the Traverse Vidéo Festival in Toulouse, France. His two feature films premiered at New Filmmakers in New York. He has had solo screenings of his films in Bilbao, London, Porto, New York, Chicago, Portland, Austin, North Carolina, Minnesota, Los Angeles, New Orleans, Philadelphia, and San Francisco. His work has been funded by The Fund for Creative Communities, The Field, Movement Research, Meet the Composer, The Brooklyn Arts Exchange, BACA, and other sources.

His films have screened at festivals in Mexico, Croatia, Spain, Egypt, Serbia, Argentina, England, Slovakia, Malaysia, Canada, Germany, France, and the United States. In France, his work has screened at Videoformes, Traverse Vidéo, Instants Vidéo, Oodaq, Marseille Underground, Bandits Mage, and Les Inattendus. Awards for his films include the Audience Favorite Award from the Berkeley Video and Film Festival for Recording Device and "Best of Festival: Experimental" from the Brooklyn Arts Council Film Festival for Earth and Moon in Love. He has been commissioned three times to create videos for the Outmusic Awards, and these videos were subsequently shown on the PrideVision cable network and the PBS series "Under the Pink Carpet."



## Artist's Statement

My video work is constructed in layers.

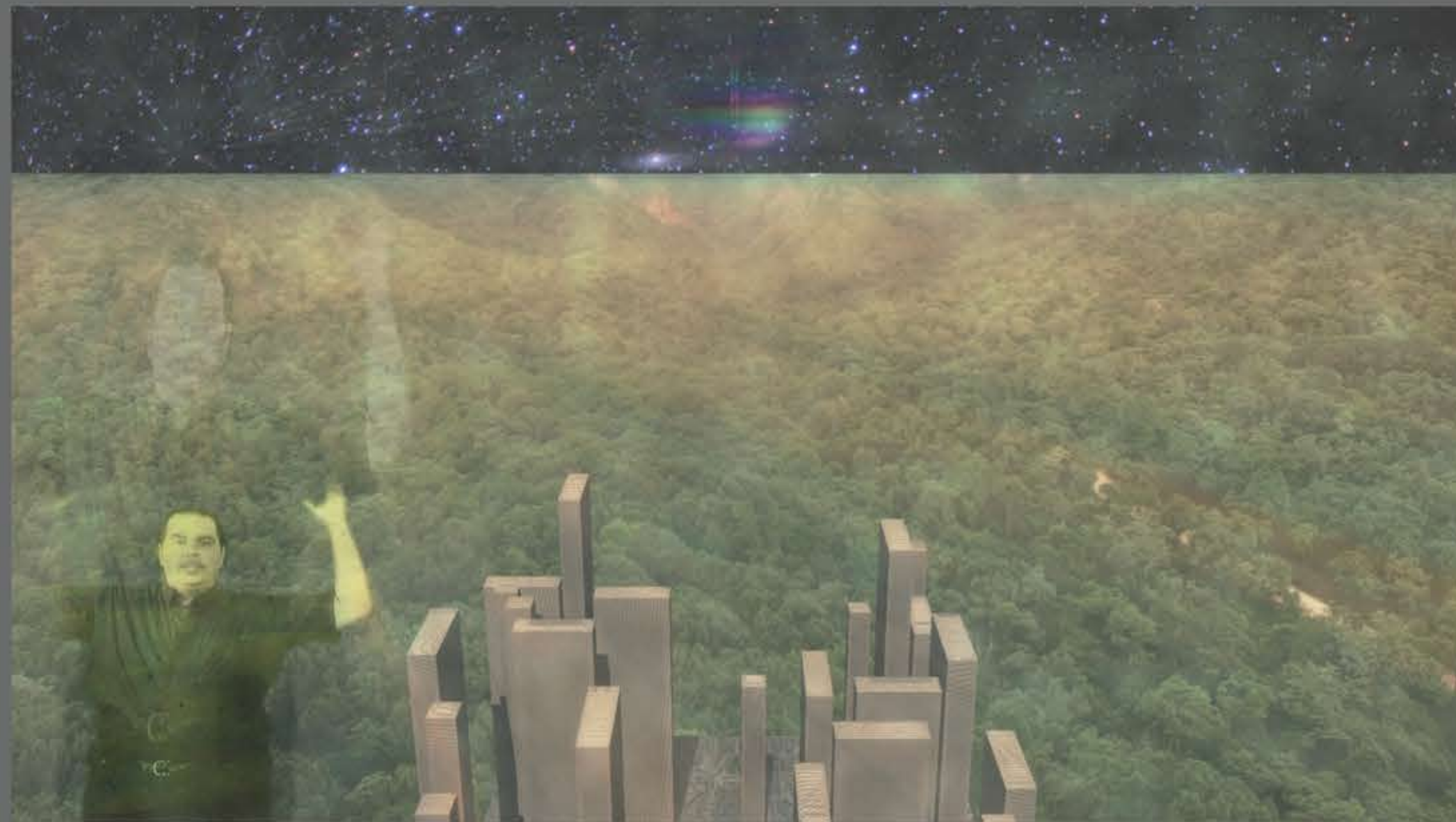
To begin a new piece, I first videotape a completely improvised text, typically using two actors. I have been developing my technique of improvising text since 1993. I am interested in improvisation as a way of generating language directly from an actor's intuitive discovery of what each performance is about, as it unfolds spontaneously. A subtle and intimately physical experience between two people is thus made into audible language.

For the next layer, I listen repeatedly to the text, clarifying for myself the emotional undercurrents and musical flow which formed the underlying structure of the original spontaneous performance. During this phase, I compose a musical score for the video, which clarifies this flow for the listener.

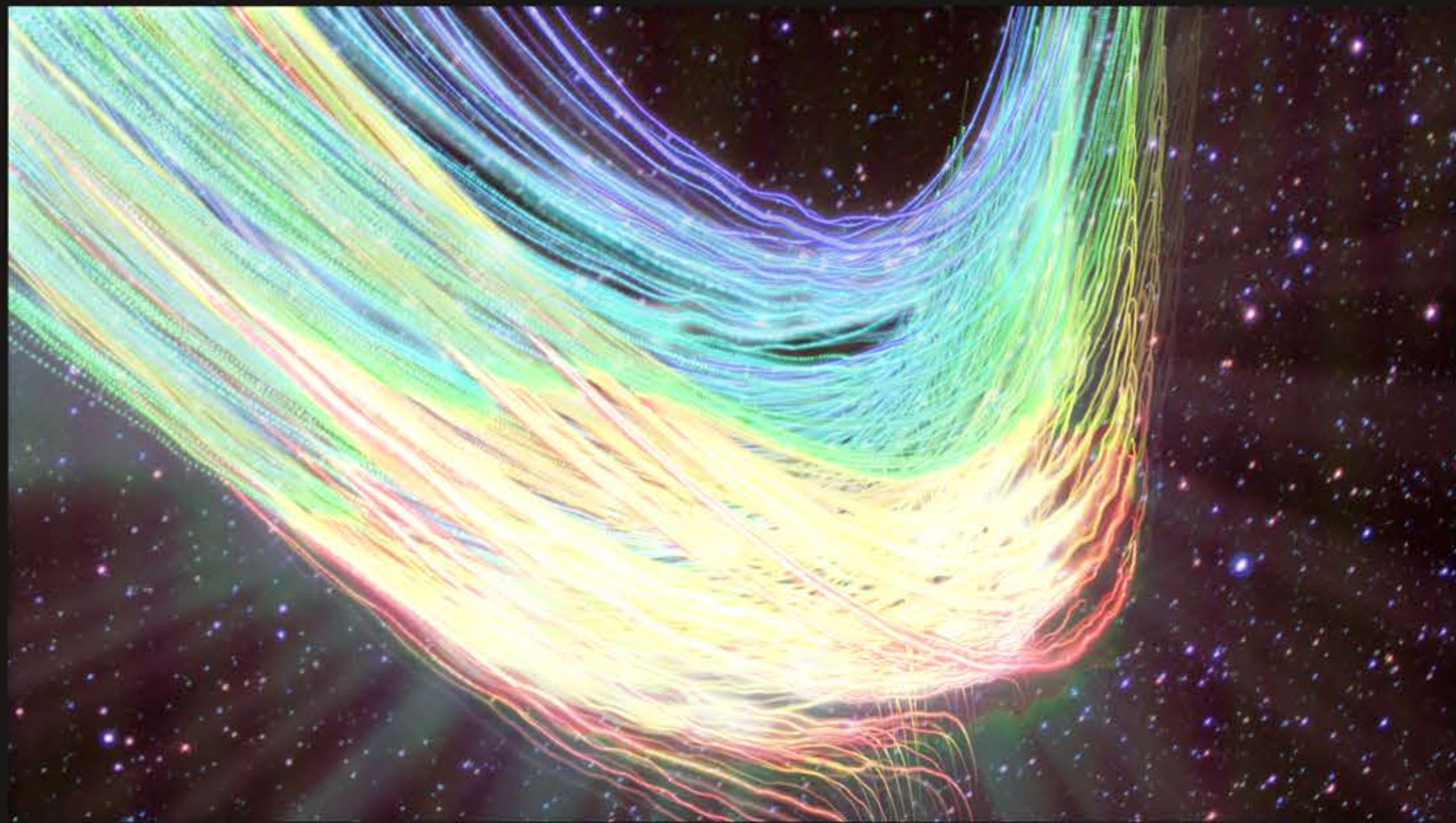
In the final phase, I listen to the text even more (now enhanced with a musical score), and gradually develop many layers of meticulously crafted digital imagery, to further clarify the emotional and musical threads which run through the improvisation. The carefully constructed nature of the images works as a counter-dynamic against the spontaneous, liquid flow of the original improvised material. Like a dream, an improvisation seems on the surface to be full of volatile, unpredictable changes, but it is actually a completely unified form of composition, in which often every line of text can be seen to be simply a new way of looking at a single, unified idea. The images and music thus help the viewer to perceive the tremendous thematic and emotional unity which underlies the seeming changeableness of the improvisation.

The full process of creating the video in three layers (text, music, images) typically takes from six to ten months.











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