

# TWELVE AMERICAN CITIES

Nico Vassilakis

Activity and decay and templates of activity and decay overlapping is the obvious click. Neither of them ever stops. One eats the other. Another is leaving a place and the haunt of remains. Another is how people inhabit a space and what they do to it. Also, being totally wired. Or the slime of traveling slugs left behind in the universe. It'd be a good sociological ecologic impact study on cities and environments had I sampled rust from each of those cities like a proper researcher, but it's not and I'm not as rigorous as I could be. So, that said, I've been to most of these cities. The rust comes from a pile I salvaged near an old fire pit at the new place I moved while fleeing the virus. It's about covid and the collapse of empire and what might remain, that in fact, doesn't sleep. And lastly, it's about leaving the planet. Maps, the population and their demise. American implosion. Orange trumpian rust and the survivors

Nico Vassilakis  
Pandemic 2020

The work in twelve parts is an explanation of layers in the context of human churn:

1. the physical being that is the city performed as a piece of earth representing the dehumanized view of a city as viewed from space;
2. the physical space of the city inhabited by humanity as represented by the viral off-circles of "never sleeps" (thus, the conjoining of the physical--the landscape of a city as it is--with the human--their processes of moving of constant wakefulness of at least some all the time); and
3. the slicing away of the city, that physical space, and the representation of humanity as unmoored, afloat in the darkness of space, without grounding or purpose but operating as if the ground that bore them, supported them, was actually meaningless to their sense as human beings in the active process of being alive.

Geof Huth  
June 2020

## Rust in Twelve American Cities

Cities are inorganic structures plonked onto the landscape, much as an old car is sunk into the sea to form an artificial reef. All materials decay. Iron is an important material used widely by humans. Iron decays into iron oxide, commonly known as rust. Nico's photos of rust could be taken to be portraits of the inorganic components of the city.

Rust forms colonies, reminiscent of John Conway's Life computer simulation, in which adjacent cells become infected and alive. Once rust has a foothold, it spreads contiguously. Rust also resembles scabs, the signs of human skin healing. Unlike scabs, which signal the rebirth of the skin underneath, rust is the permanent conversion of metal into oxide. Wounded humans regenerate, but the city flakes away.

Each of the twelve cities in this book has three components. The first component is a portrait of metal infected with rust. In the second component, each colony of rust is surrounded with the phrase "never sleeps", demarcating the most intensely rusted area as a plastic surgeon marks a feature on the human skin. These shapes resemble the forms of mould or moss. The colours of each instance of the phrase blend into the rusty colouration, blurring the distinction between background and foreground. The third component is the same text on a black background. In this case, the text clearly sits in the foreground. The effect of these three components is to show you an example of metal which is partly converted into rust, point out the epicentres of rust, and present them as ideal forms, in which text is used as a kind of drawing of the outline. Rust is speaking to us, demonstrating its extent in each city.

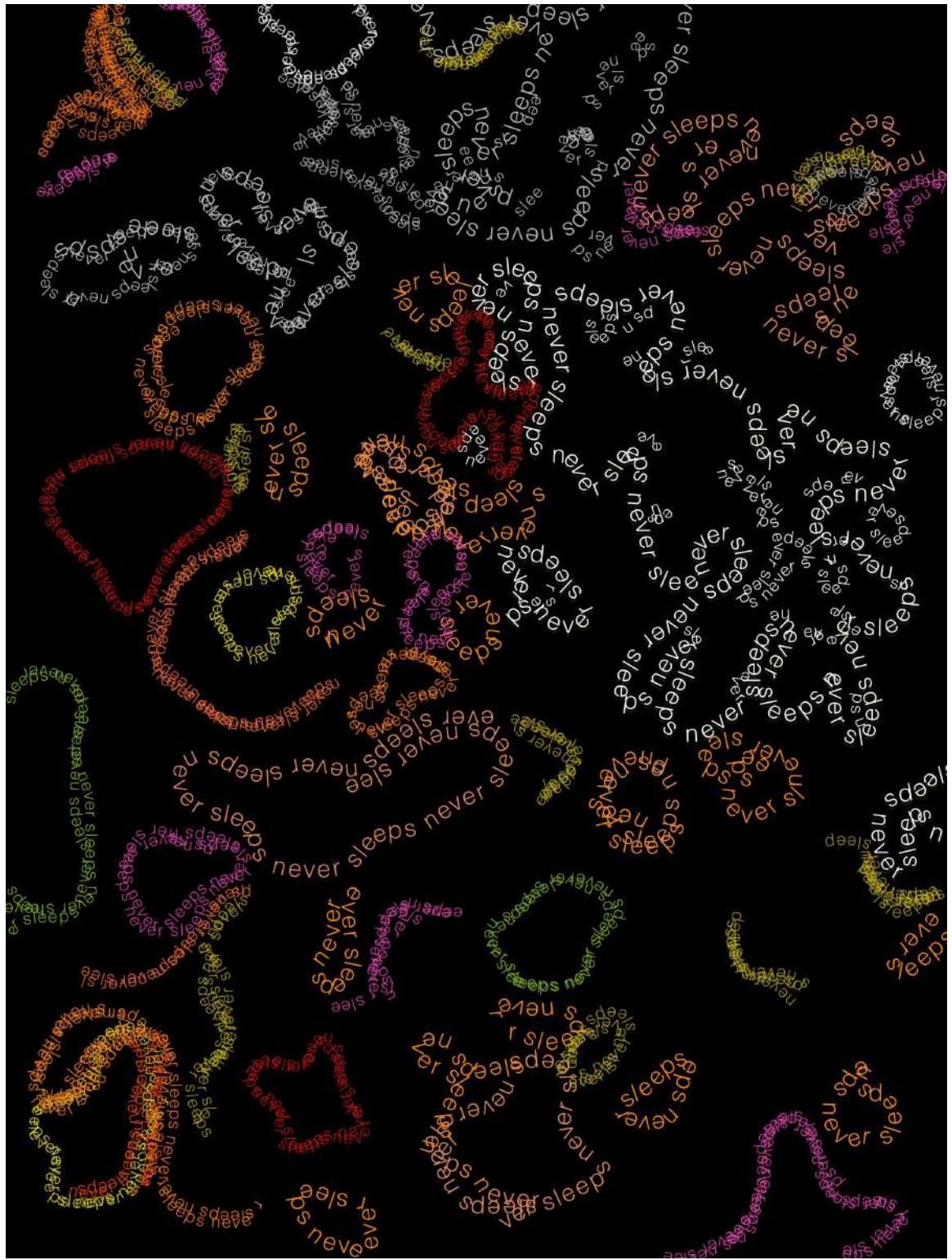
A city needs constant intervention by humans to prevent this natural state of rust from destroying every part of it. Rust, the city that never sleeps.

Tim Gaze  
August 2020

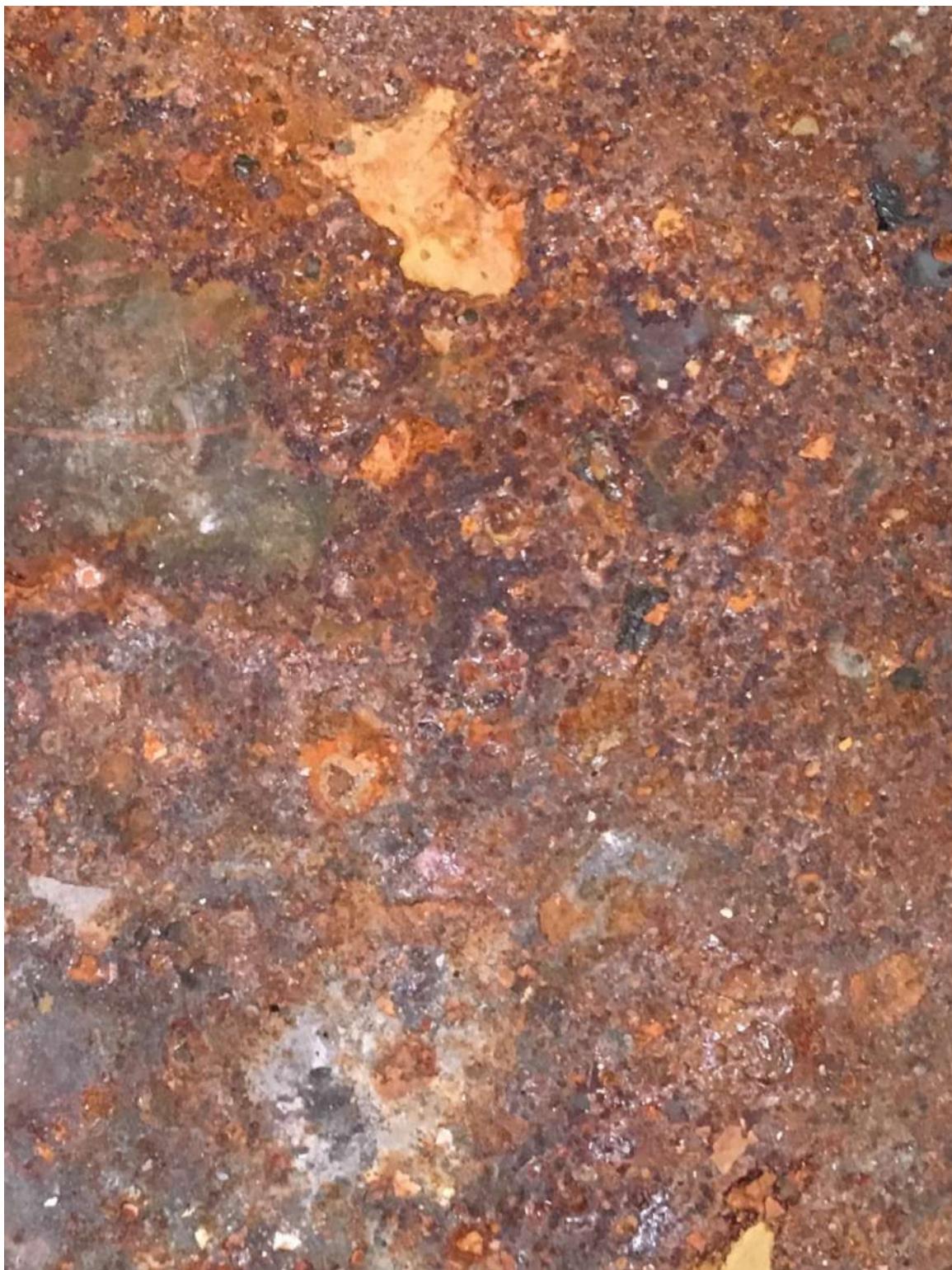
**St Louis**

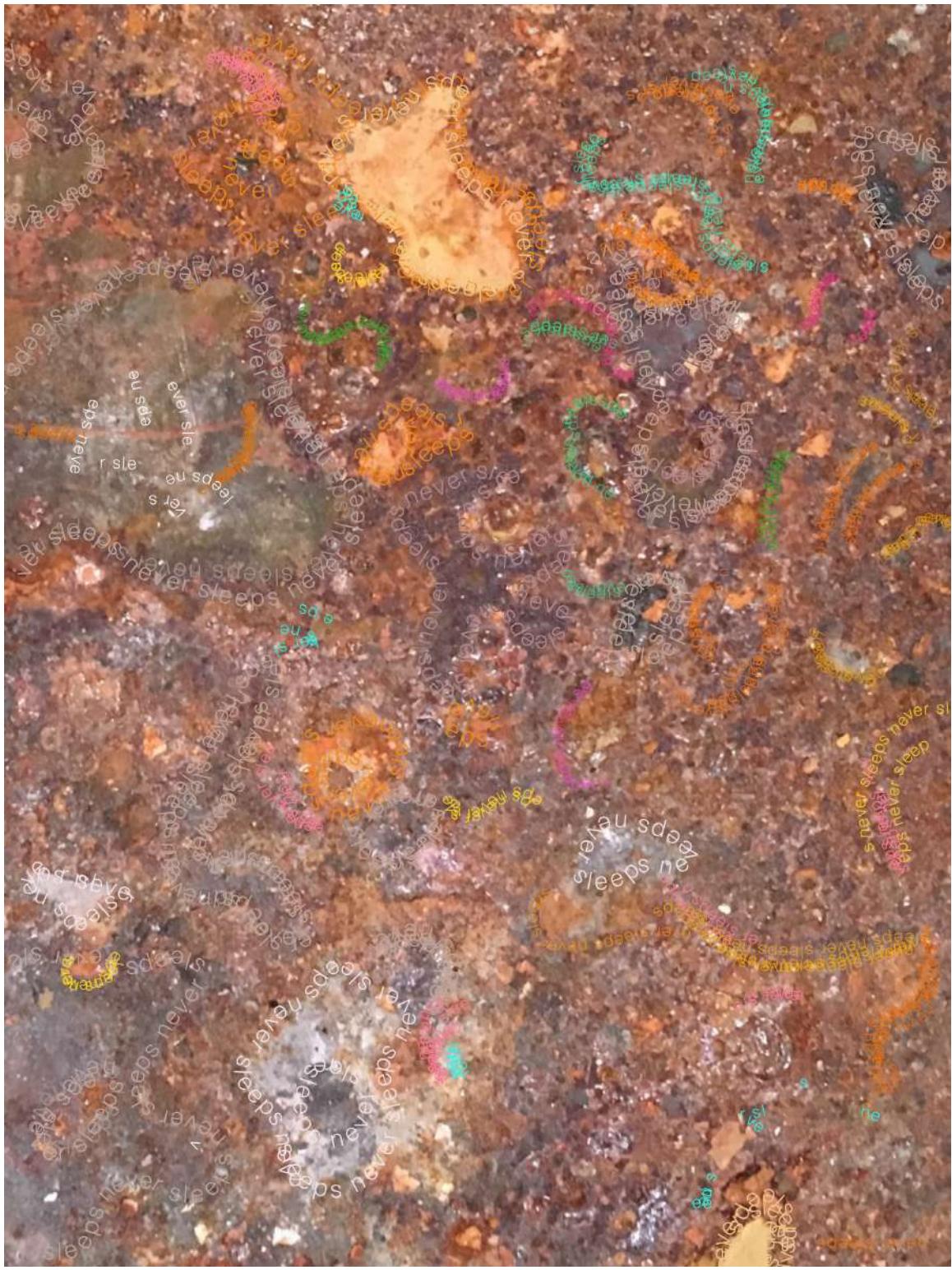


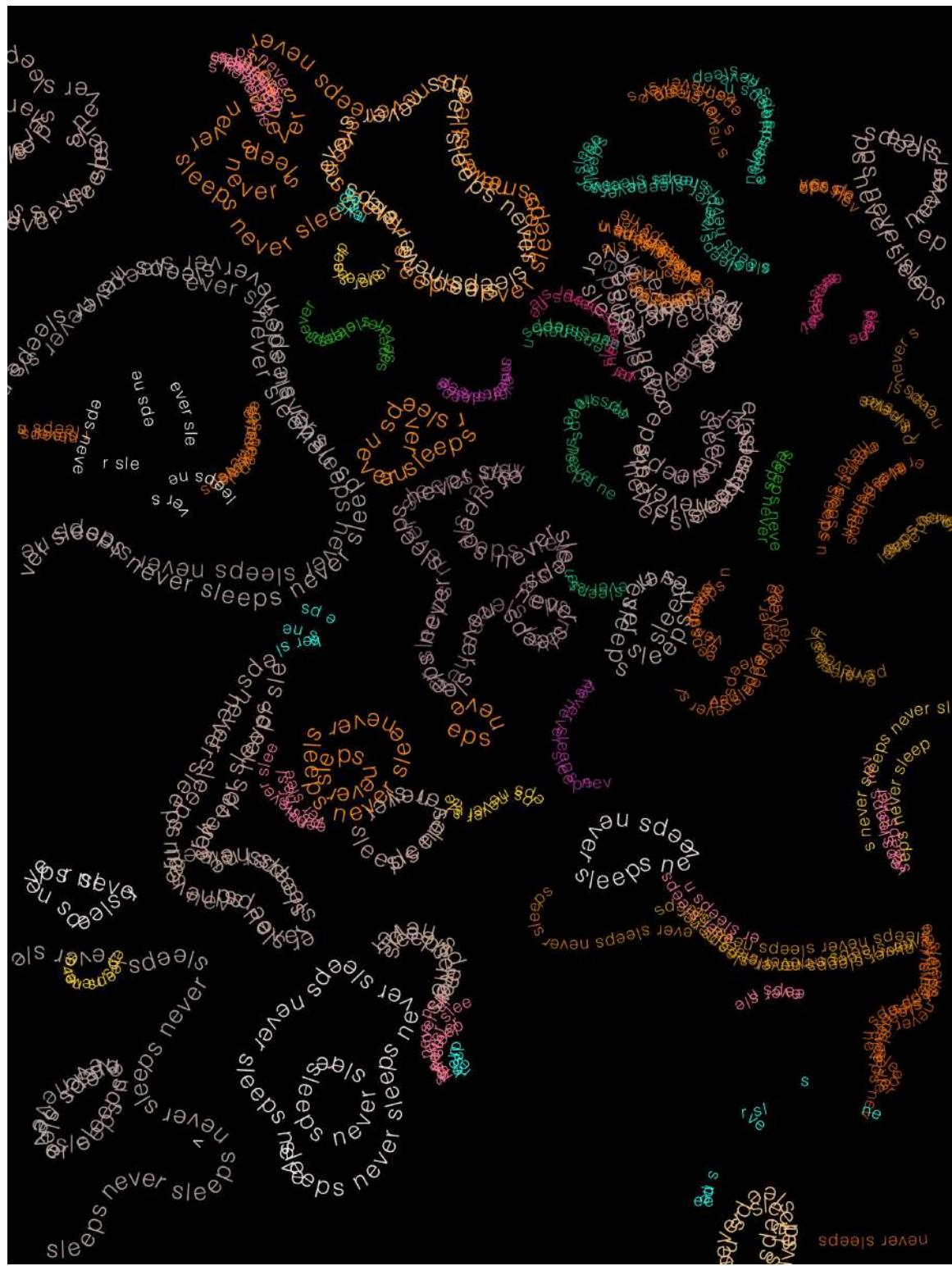




**Miami**

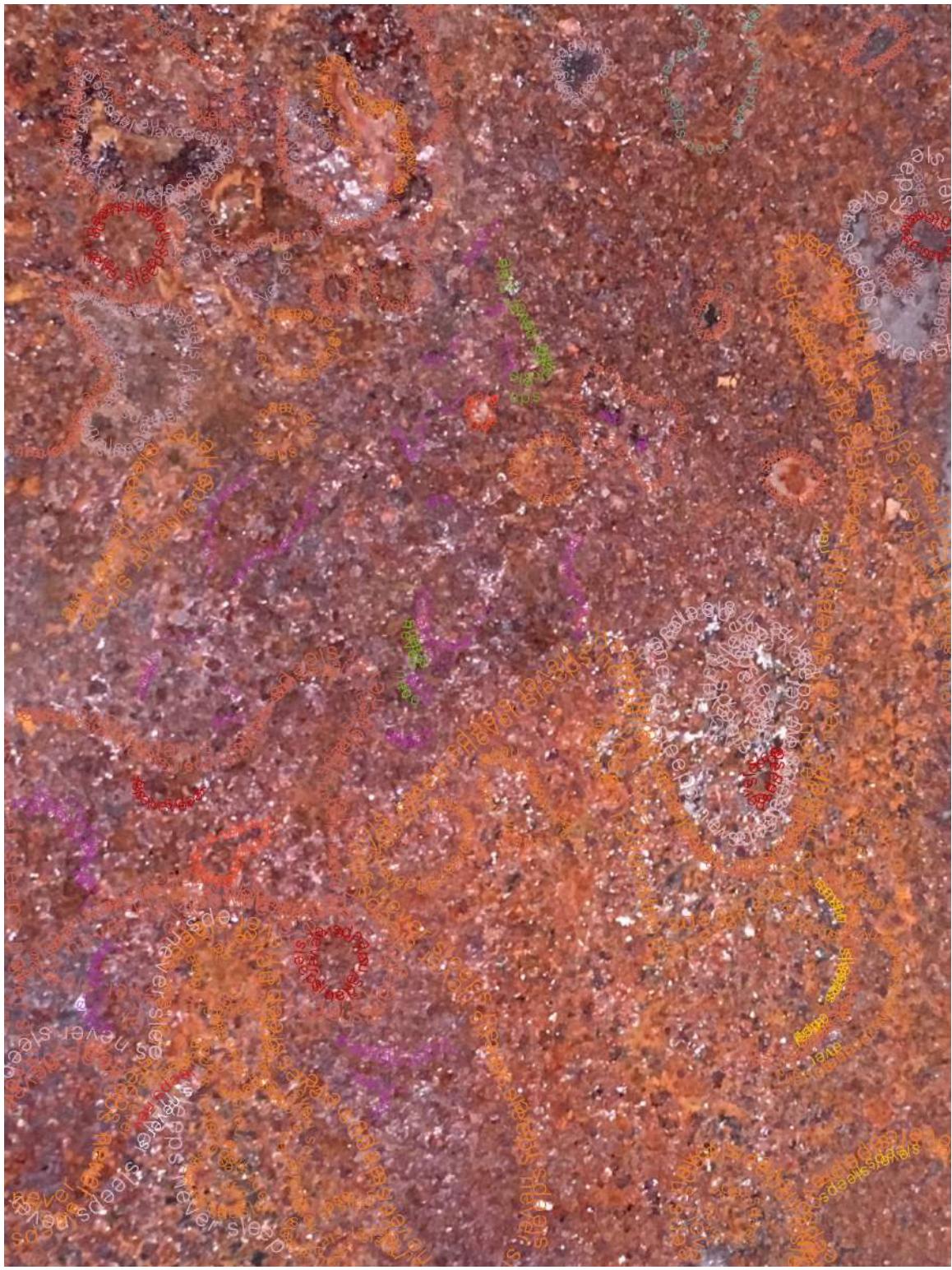


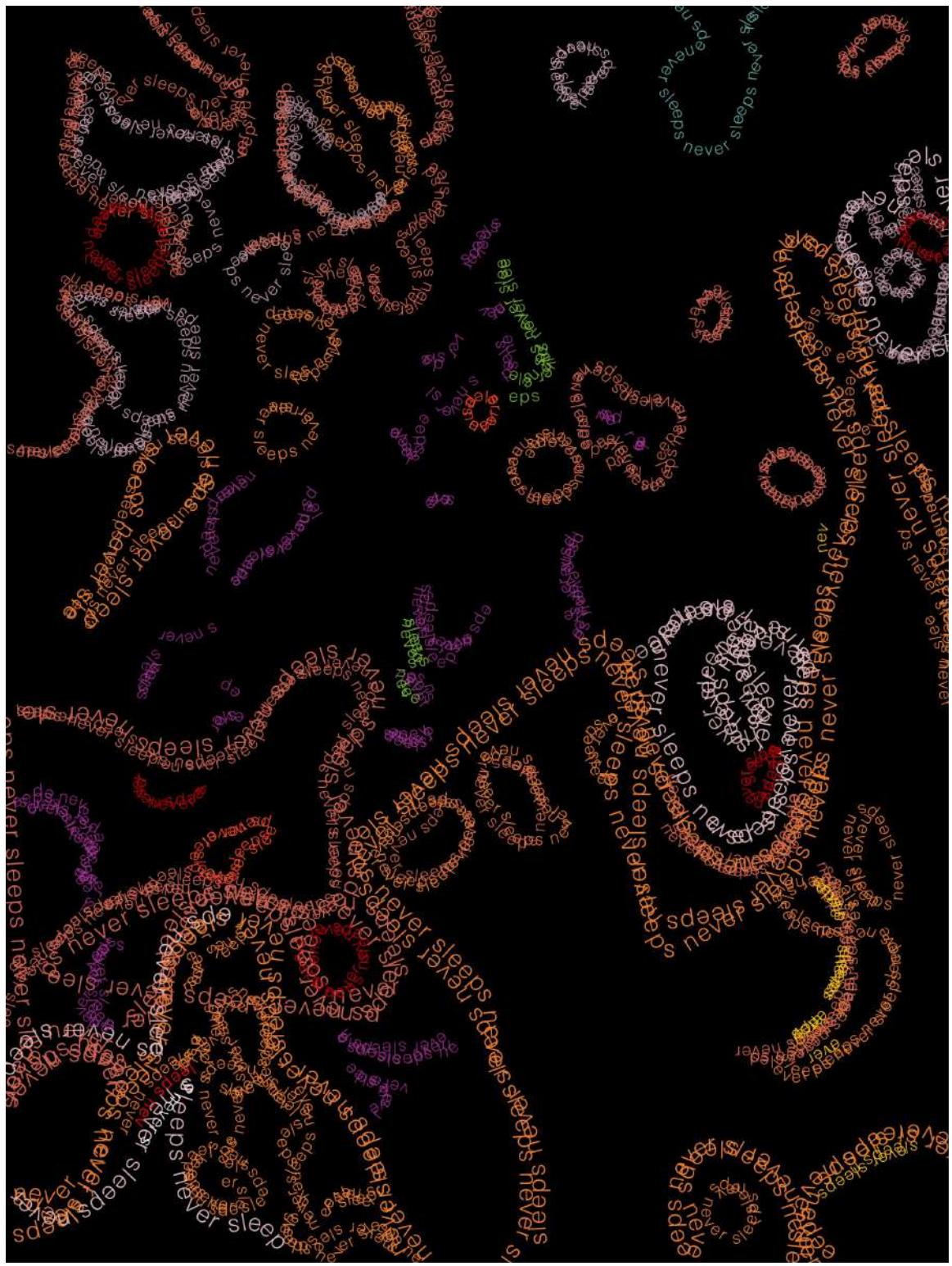




## San Francisco



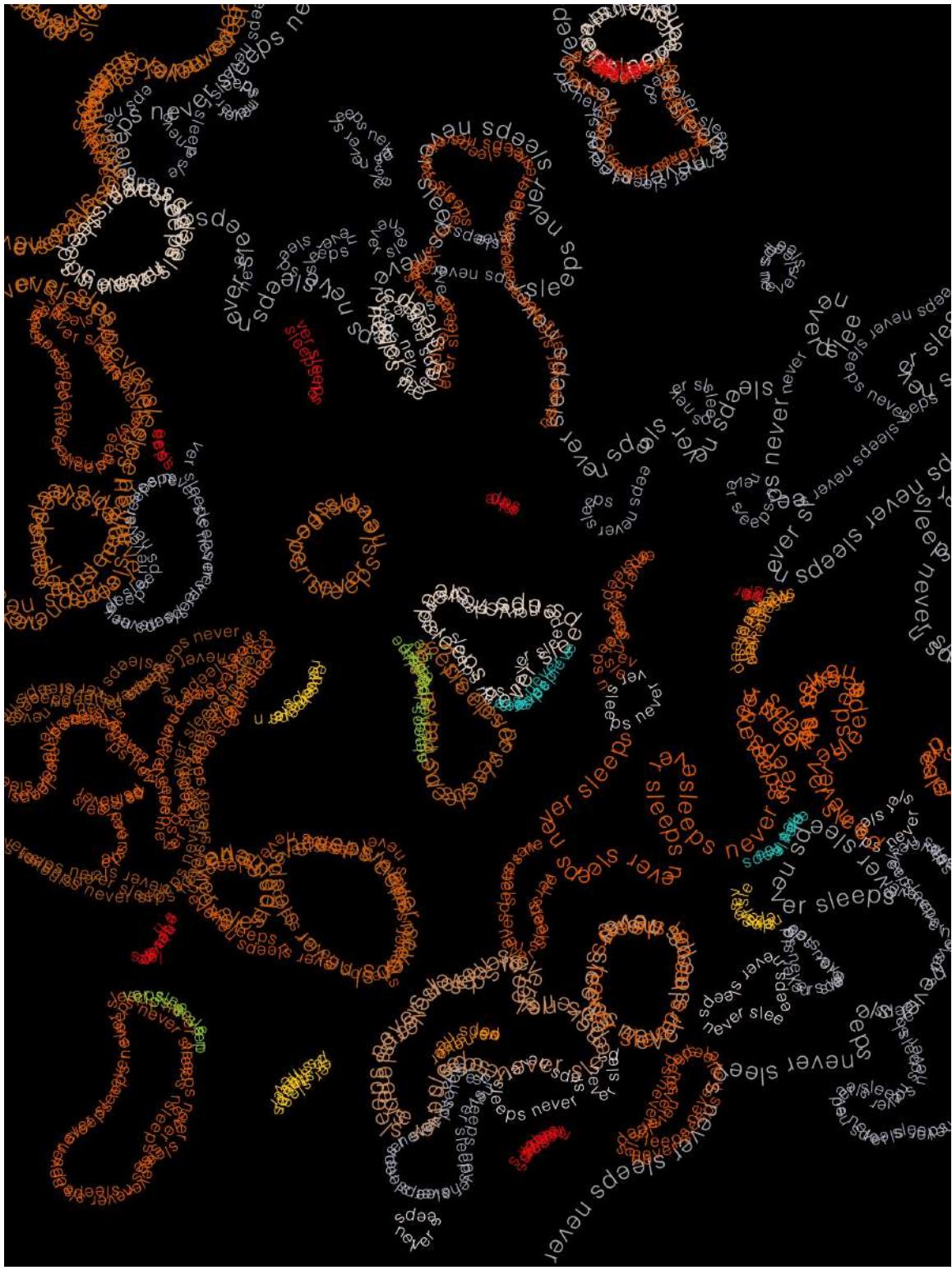




Minneapolis







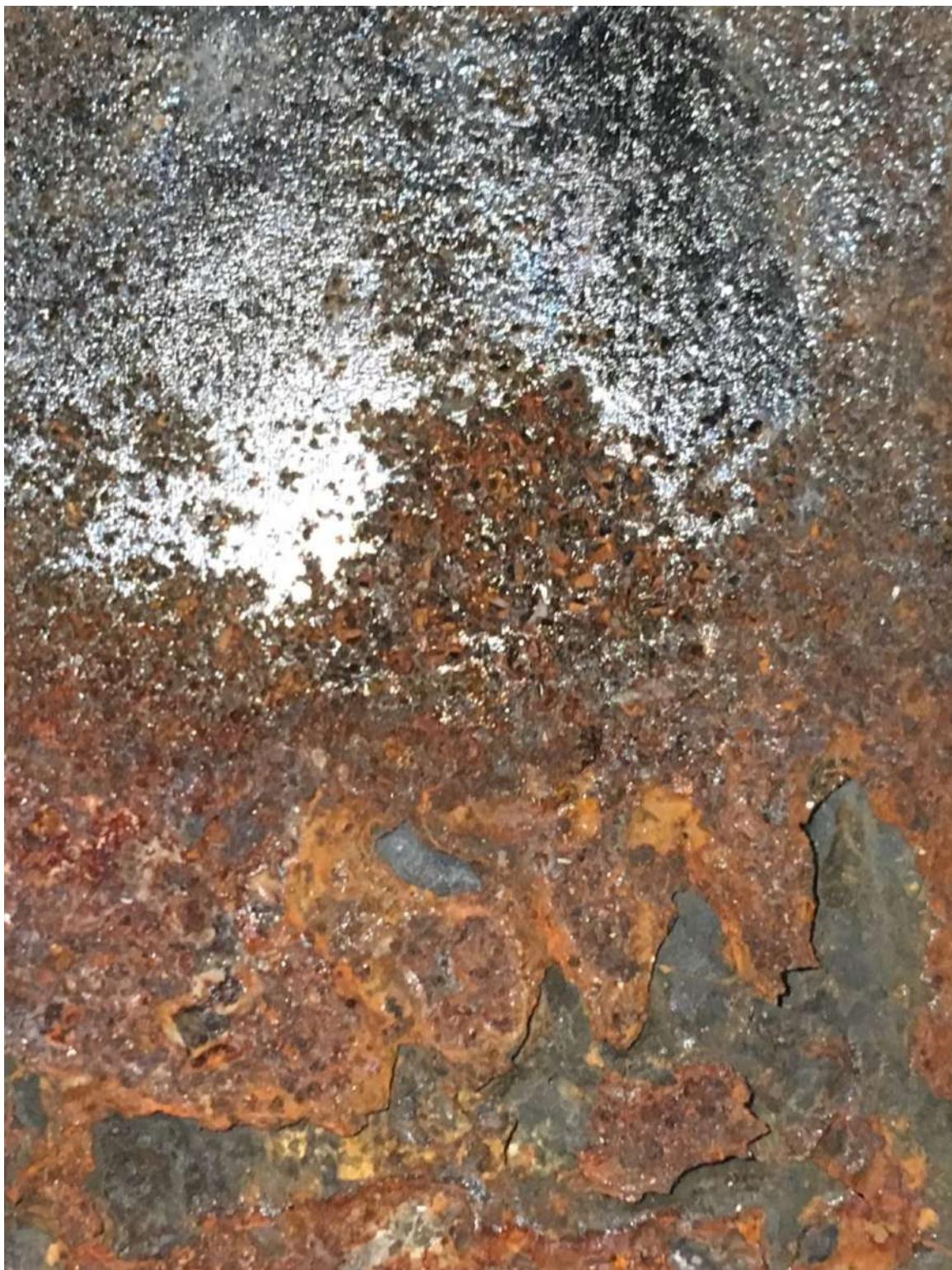
**Seattle**



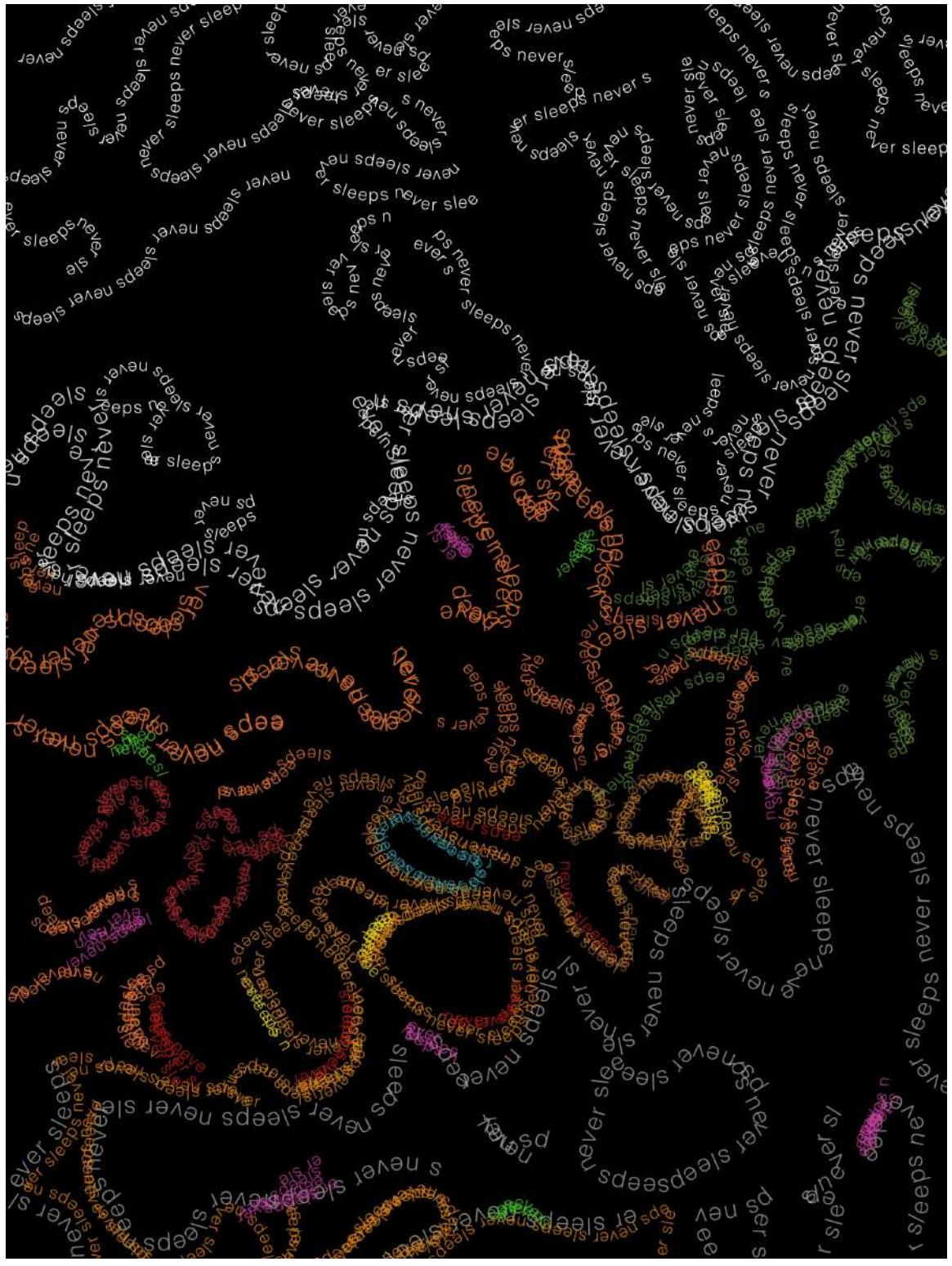




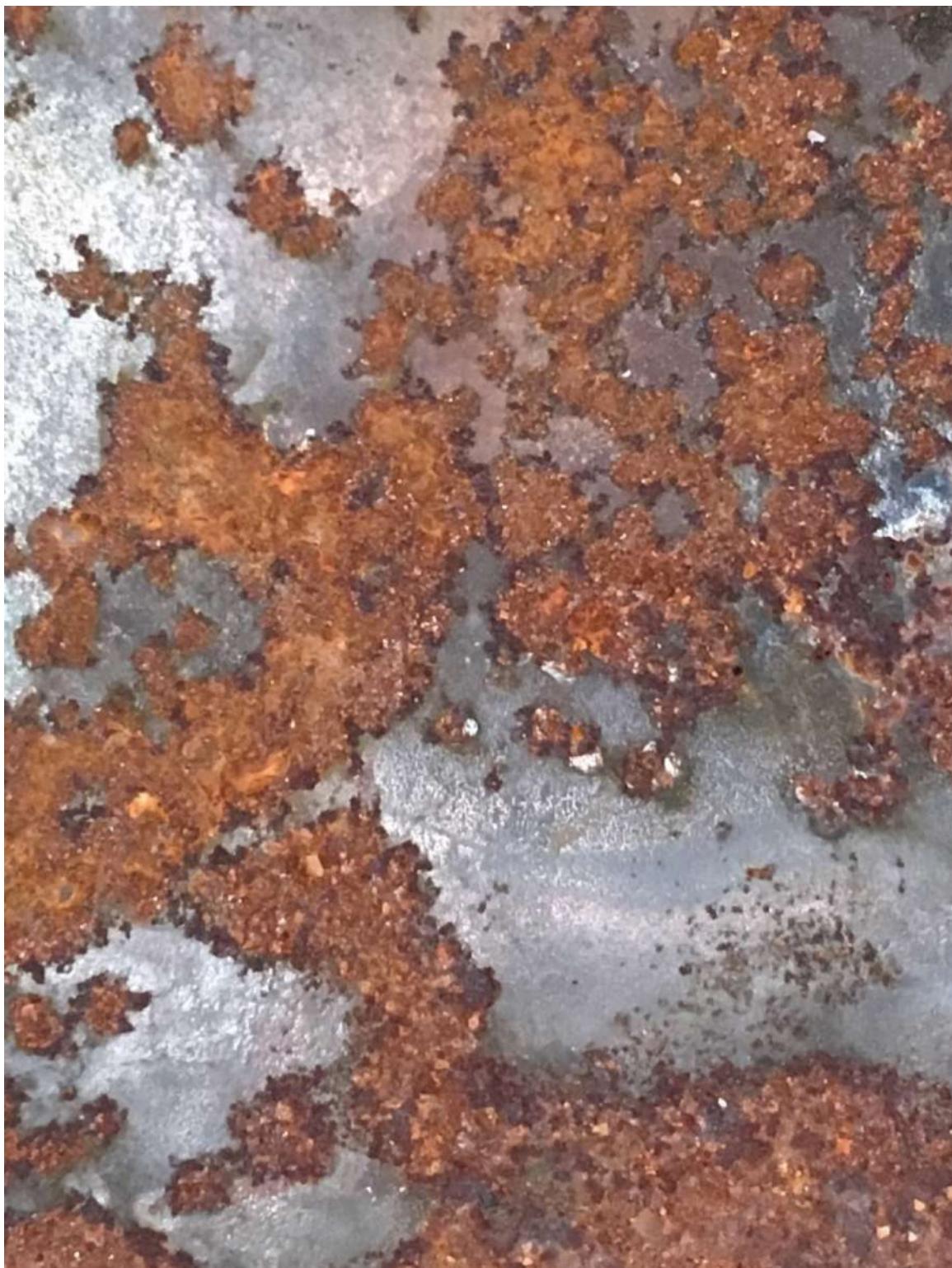
New York City

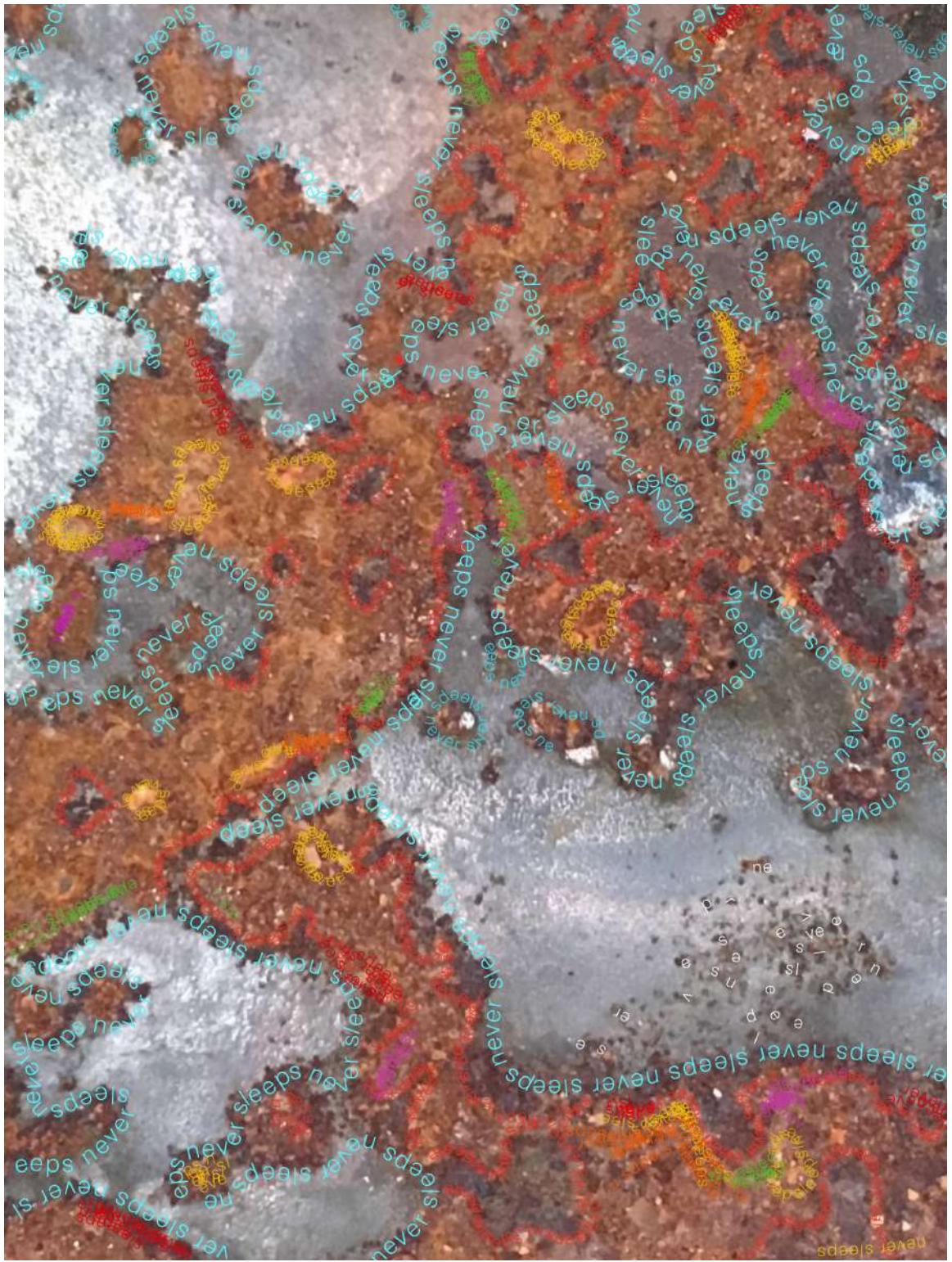


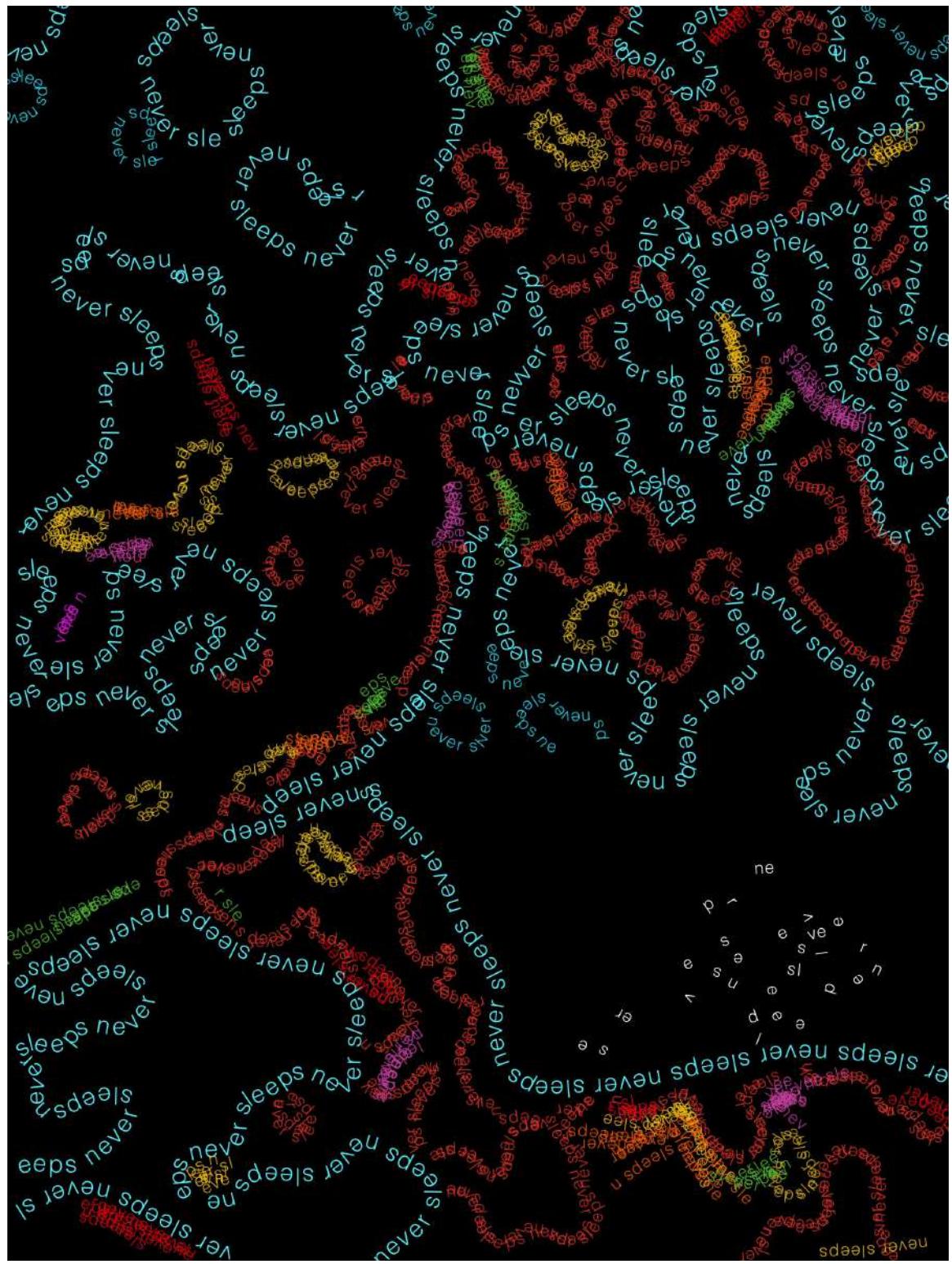




Atlanta



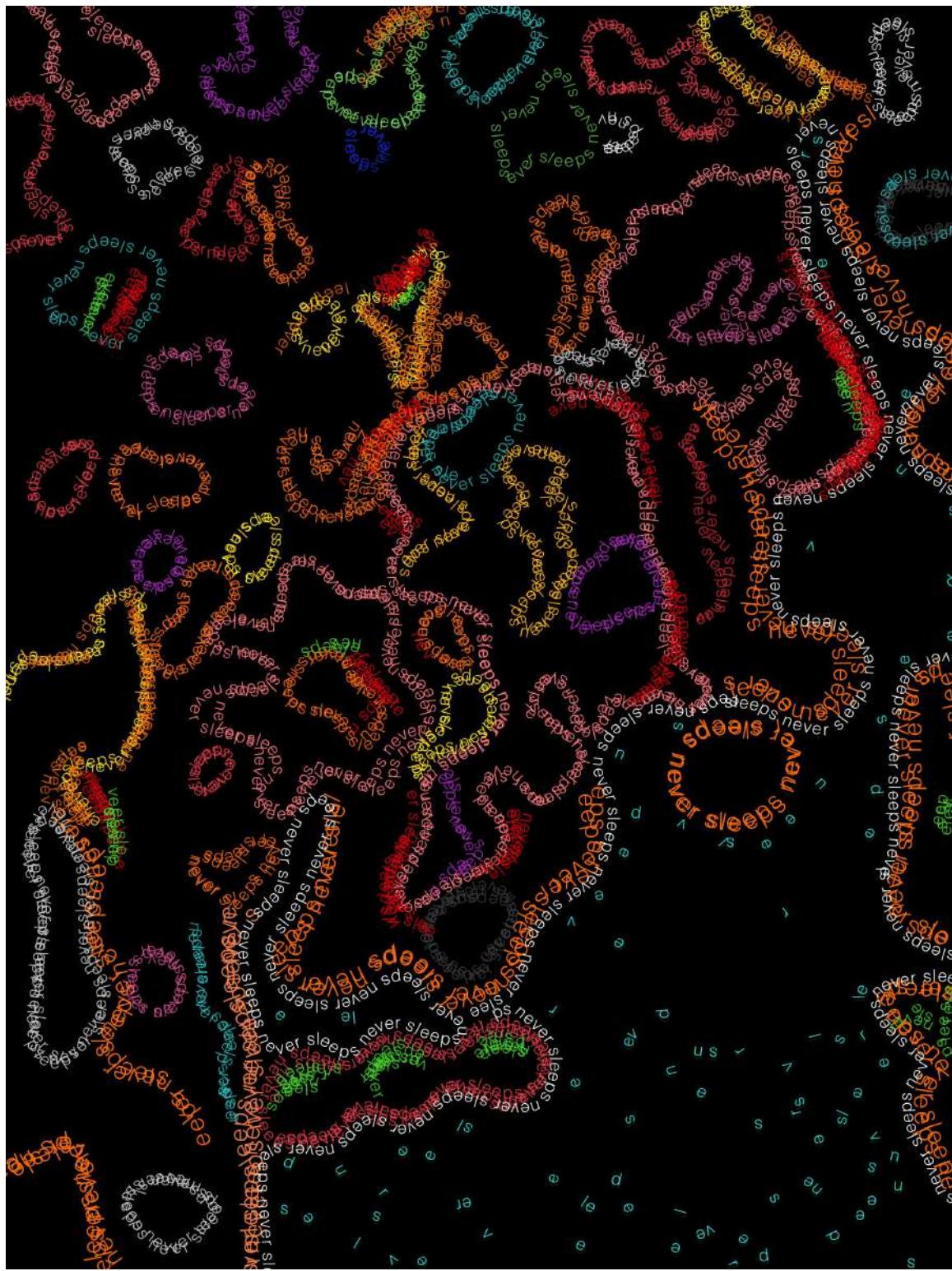




**Boston**



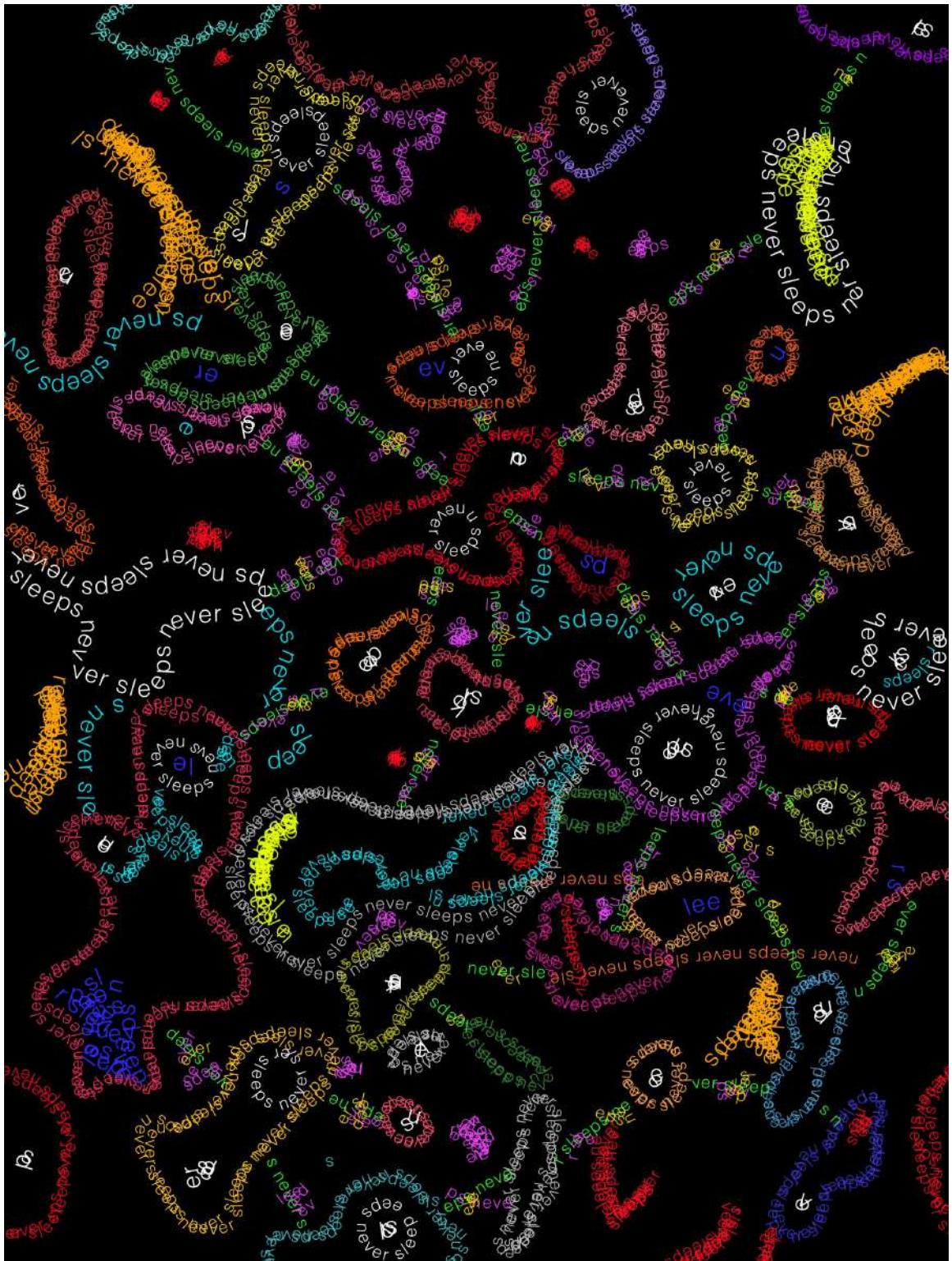




Nashville







Austin



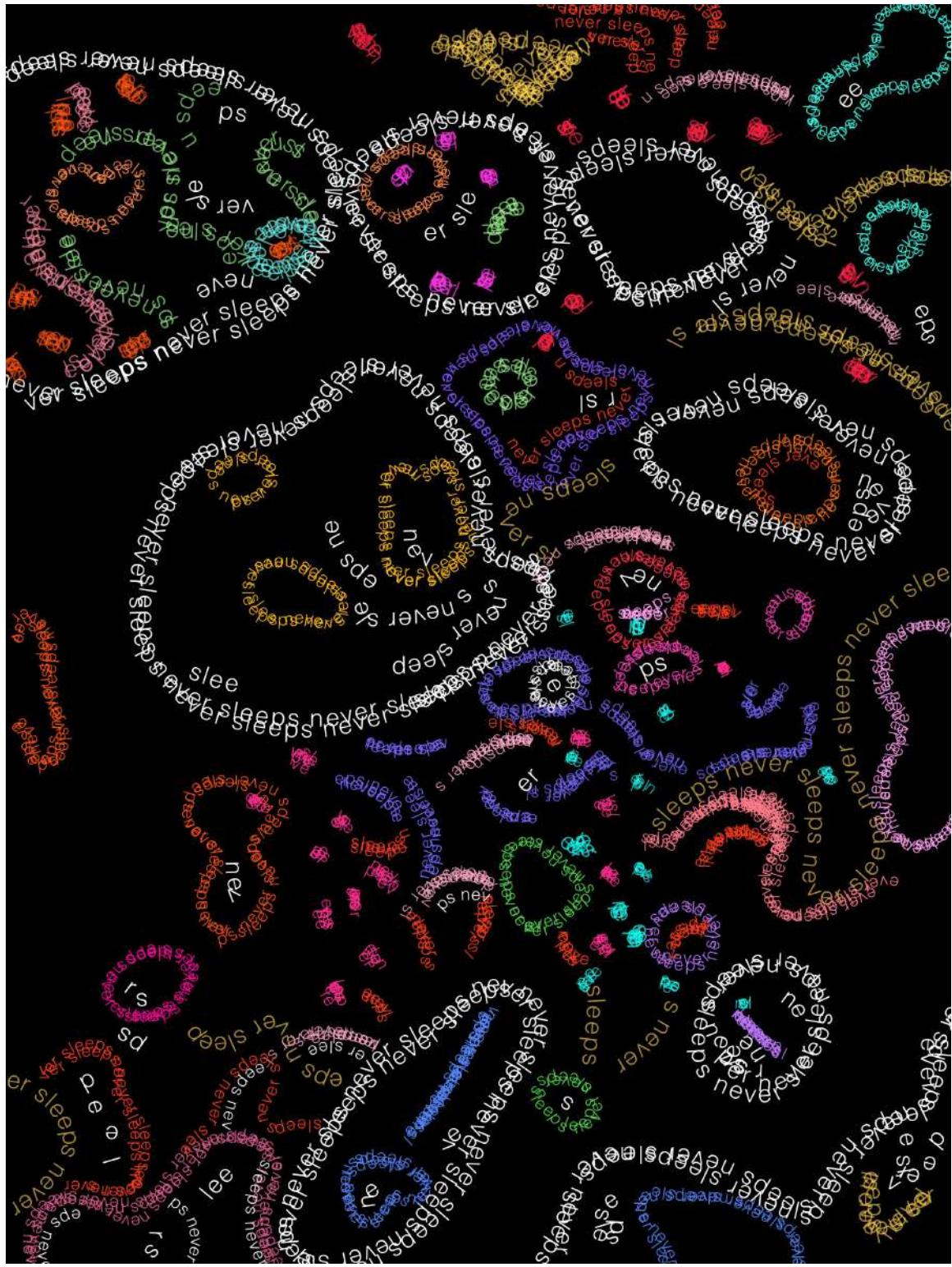




**Portland**







**Madison**



