

THE FIELD HAS EYES

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS: ART IN THE FIELD

Essential Question: What is visual ethnography?

Ethnography is the study and interpretation of social organizations and cultures in everyday life. It is a research-based methodology, and when this research is conducted using photography, video or film, it is called visual ethnography.

According to Hal Foster, visual ethnography emerged as a debate in art in the 1960s due to the rise of performance art and social movements like feminism. It was no longer possible to describe audiences as simply observers, just as it was no longer possible to describe the institutions in which the art was shown in terms of space. As a result, art passed into the expanded field of culture that anthropology surveys.

Essential Question: What is experimental ethnography?

Experimental ethnography is an approach to studying and interpreting the cultures of everyday life that uses the technique of experiential filmmaking, like montage, found footage and surrealism, to create new ways of seeing the world around us. As opposed to traditional ethnographic film, which tended to divide the world into those 'out there' being watched by those 'in here', experiential ethnography searches for new ways of representation that reflect the complexities of the multicultural world in which we live.

Essential Question: What is the relationship between ethnography and cybernetic technology?

The relationship between ethnography and cybernetic technology is referred to as cyber-ethnography (virtual ethnography, digital ethnography, online ethnography), which is an online research method that adapts ethnographic methods to the study of the communities and cultures created through computer-mediated social interaction. Cyber-ethnography can involve different methods such as content analysis, analysis of online interaction, and/or interviews with participants, allowing us to consider how the "virtual" and the "real" worlds relate to one another.

VISITING ARTIST LECTURE

[Amy Franceschini – Provisions... for Situations Yet to Come](#)

Amy Franceschini considers and re-examines societal errors through her works. Franceschini deconstructs systems such as food policies, public transportation, and rural farming networks to visualize and understand their intrinsic logic for new narratives to emerge and reconfigured principles that once dominated these systems. An example of this focus is ERRATUM (2010). ERRATUM (2010) is a video that documents a collaborative performance of her and Michael Swaine deconstructing a porcelain toilet and reforming it into a series of bricks and a book that calls to reverse society's erratum, or error, of indoor plumbing and waste processing systems. The hand-bricks composed of porcelain toilet shards is a reconfigured vessel that invites new ideas, self-reliance, and regeneration by becoming a conduit of sustainable design. This work is to be offered as a "reverse ready-made" that reimagines the potentiality of resources. Franceschini also uses her works to recalibrate culture and reimagine the future by providing tools for an audience to gain insight into deeper fields of inquiry in order to initiate change. This approach acts as a catalyst of change by administering an open dialogue for local farmers, politicians, and scientists through a broader perspective. Franceschini achieves this accomplishment through documentation. She uses documentation to demonstrate her creative process and the function of the work as a forum for discussion and to critique institutions.

It's striking that Amy Franceschini's creative process is boundlessly wandering. This openness is due to Franceschini's willingness to interact with and involve underrepresented communities in order to provide them with a partnership and platform. The involvement of the underrepresented communities enables her to consider the historical values of a site and the future that the locals want to envision. She respects the locals and the land they reside on while also pursuing her reimagining of a sustainable community. She depends on collaboration with underrepresented communities in order to perform a recalibration of culture that is environmentally conscious and a collaborative effort. Thus, Franceschini values the humanity of underrepresented communities and the maintenance of sustainable living. This value can be seen through her founding of Futurefarmers, an international collective of artists, activists, researchers, farmers and architects who work together to propose alternatives to the social, political and environmental organization of space. Futurefarmers is a community composed of various individuals that are collaborative and expressive in critiquing the institutionalized systems of food, public transportation, urban planning, and education through expressive discussion. This idea is exemplified through *This is Not a Trojan Horse* (2010), a human-powered wooden horse that becomes the nucleus for discussion, programming and video documentation about issues and possibilities related to rural regeneration. *This is Not a Trojan Horse* (2010) invites villagers and farmers of the Abruzzo region of Italy to gather and openly discuss their perspectives on the changing rural landscape and their vision of a future that forges a synthesis of ancestral wisdom, strategies for environmental defense and leading-edge technologies, to investigate and safeguard the indigenous genetic resources. The discussion among the Futurefarmers and locals catalyzes the recalibration of the principles of organic agriculture into practices aimed to support biodiversity and preserve the natural fertility and vocation of the soil.

CRITICAL CONVERSATION

Steve Rowell – Uncanny Sensing, Remote Valleys

Steve Rowell investigates ecology and post-natural landscapes in his multi-component installation *Uncanny Sensing, Remote Valleys* (2013-20). The project's title combines "remote sensing" (a method of data collection from the physical world via sensors and other remote technology) and "uncanny valley" (the cognitive dissonance caused by lifelike replicas of living things). Through the use of autonomous aerial cameras, air-monitoring sensors, and sound detectors, Rowell gathers and contextualizes media and data from the field. His presentation of this nonhuman documentation of animal behavior, plant cycles, waste, displacement, erosion, and other elements of the human-altered landscape investigates how we understand, perceive, and experience the environment through technology.

MODEL OF BEST PRACTICE: STUDENT RESEARCH THROUGH A VISUAL PRACTICE

Sasha Michelle White – FIRST-AID KIT FOR THE FIRE-PRONE

A terminal Masters Program Project for the Environmental Studies Program, *FIRST-AID KIT FOR THE FIRE-PRONE* explores the slippages between art, ecology and medicine within the context of Oregon's fire-prone landscapes. In these landscapes, many plants that thrive with the recurring disturbance of fire can be used for the injuries and illnesses acquired in proximity to fire: the plants' medicinal properties have emerged out of the long-term, multispecies dynamics that include fire. *FIRST-AID KIT FOR THE FIRE-PRONE* considers a broad implication of "fire-prone," beyond spectacular devastation, as a relationship with embodiment and with flammability that encompasses (more or less willingly) whole ecosystems and whole ways of being/becoming. The Kit builds from the intimate connections between land and health emphasized within vernacular medical systems, as well as from the historical interchangeability of aesthetic and medicinal substances. It comprises a set of Object medicines, which engage plants and earths of Oregon's fire-prone landscapes as colors, medicines and participants, and a set of interweaving poems and protocols, which serve as an Instructional Manual. While a standard first-aid kit implies the repair of a discrete, autonomous body, and the possibility of entering a landscape intact, exiting it untouched, this project centers the sympoietic processes of tending and harvesting, ingesting and propagating, relinquishing and renewing. In both the Manual and the Medicines, Tall Oregon Grape, Balsam Root, Blue Elder, Ceanothus, Clay, and other denizens of the fire-prone landscape converse with the global materialities that have, directly and indirectly, altered these landscapes: alcohol and glass, beeswax and aluminum, cotton and wool and silk. Embracing fire as medicine, medicine as aesthetic substance, and aesthetic substance as ecological process, *FIRST-AID KIT FOR THE FIRE-PRONE* asks what it means to heal through and with others, and how attending to these fire-prone, multispecies materialities might inflect differently the contemporary discourse of environmental crisis and emergency.

RESOURCES: ART IN THE FIELD

Where is 'the field'?

- Anthropological Locations: Boundaries and Grounds of a Field Science by Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson
- I Swear I Saw This: Drawings in Fieldwork Notebooks, Namely My Own by Michael Taussig

The Studio

- The Function of the Studio by Daniel Buren
- The Function of the Studio Revisited: Daniel Buren in Conversation (Interview)
- Factory, Laboratory, Studio: Dispersing Sites of Production by Caroline Jones and Peter Galison

Other Arenas

- Think Tank Aesthetics: Midcentury Modernism, the Cold War, and the Neoliberal Present by Pamela Lee
- Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life by Jeff Kelley

Travel and Self Discovery

- The Ethos of Photography in Mexico and Brazil by Esther Gabara
- Far Afield: French Anthropology between Science and Literature by Vincent Debaene

Shared Anthropology

- Beyond Observation: A History of Authorship in Ethnographic Film by Paul Henley
- Jaguar (1967) by Jean Rouch (Film)
- On the Vicissitudes of the Self: The Possessed Dancer, the Magician, the Sorcerer, the Filmmaker, and the Ethnographer by Jean Rouch
- Tourou and Bitti: The Drums of the Past (1971) by Jean Rouch (Film)

Porous Skin: Body/Clothing

- Passion of the Same: Cacique de Ramos and the Multidao by Irene V. Small
- The Equal and the Different by Eduardo Viveiros de Castro
- Cosmological Deixis and Amerindian Perspectivism by Eduardo Viveiros de Castro

Porous Spaces: Museum/Favela/Nest

- What a Body Can Do by Irene V. Small
- Experiments in Exile by Laura Harris

Feedback

- Juan Downey's Ethnographic Present by Benjamin Murphy
- The Laughing Aligator (1979) by Juan Downey (Film)
- The Axe Fight (1975) by Napoleon Chagnon (Film)
- The Falling Sky: Words of a Yanomami Shaman by Davi Kopenawa
- The Yanomami in My Life by Claudia Andujar

Reframing History

- Impossible Closure: Realism and Durational Aesthetics in Susan Meiselas's Nicaragua by Terri Weissman
- In the Rights of Molotov Man: Appropriation and the Art of Context by Susan Meiselas and Joy Garnett
- Pictures from a revolution (1991) by Susan Meiselas, Richard P. Rogers and Alfred Guzzetti (Film)
- Reframing History (2004) by Susan Meiselas and Alfred Guzzetti (Film)
- The Life of an Image (2015) by Susan Meiselas (Image)

Robert Smithson in Yucatan

- Landscapes of Indifference: Robert Smithson and John Lloyd Stephens in Yucatan by Jenniffer Roberts
- Incidents of Mirror Travel in the Yucatan by Robert Smithson
- Hotel Palenque by Robert Smithson

Leandro Katz and Mesoamerica

- The Catherwood Project: Incidents of Visual Reconstructions and Other Matters by Leandro Katz and Jesse Lerner

Critics at the Clinic

- Learning From Madness: Brazilian Modernism and Global Contemporary Art by Kaira Cabanas

Artist as Therapist

- Interview: Suely Rolnik On Lygia Clark's Structuring of the Self
- Micropolitics of thinking: Suggestions to those who seek to deprogram the colonial unconscious by Suely Rolnik (Lecture)

No Limits: Art, Capital, Expansion

- The Traffic in Culture: Refiguring Art and Anthropology by George E. Marcus and Fred R. Myers
- Slippages by Renee Green
- Thomas Hirschhorn: Establishing a Critical Corpus by Claire Bishop

Off Limits: Borders and Black Sites

- Beyond the Pink Tide: Art and Political Undercurrents in the Americas by Macarena Gomez-Barris
- The Matter of Photography in the Americas by Natalia Brizuela and Jodi Roberts
- Foresight, Hindsight and State Secrecy in the American West: The Geopolitical Aesthetics of Trevor Paglen by Henrik Gustafsson

Global Market as Field

- Van Gogh on Demand: China and the Readymade by Winnie Wong

Black Atlantic as Field

- Radical Virtuosity: Ana Mendieta and the Black Atlantic by Genevieve Hyacinthe
- Shine: The Visual Economy of Light in African Diasporic Aesthetic Practice by Krista Thompson

PROJECT: THE FIELD HAS EYES

Statement

The Field Has Eyes is a project based on webcams founded on the Internet and is inspired by Julián Pérez Romero's A Real Time Story. The project addresses the particular sense of unease about Privacy that the Internet and Surveillance have always caused, whether it was religiously or politically motivated. This project utilizes the website, Opentopia, as a fieldwork site to conduct ethnographic research on the accessibility and use of webcams online. Opentopia is an archive of publicly accessible webcams that were found automatically on the Internet.*

**Notes from Opentopia's About Page:*

- *We do not deliberately violate anybody's privacy or rights; however, it is entirely possible that some cam owners did not intend for their cams to be public, but simply forgot to secure them. Some are security cams in companies or semi-public places. Others are public tourist attractions that happily share their video stream with the world.*
- *These pictures and video streams are most likely copyrighted by whoever owns the cameras. The snapshots you see here appear as fair use according to copyright law. However, if a picture from your webcam appears here and you object to that, let us know and it will be removed*

Although the website creators do not deliberately violate anybody's privacy or rights, there is a sense of unease as a User of the site. While Users have the ability to view webcams, there is still a concern of permission or consent. Especially from Owners that do not publicly intend to share their webcam for the Internet to view, putting them at risk of a cyberattack.

Creative Process

Although Opentopia allows owners to submit requests for their webcam to be removed from the website, location and network information can still be traced if a site User already has a screenshot. To address the privacy of the images obtained from different webcams online, I manipulated the image data of the screenshots I collected using a hex editor and noise input. By data moshing the screenshots, the viewer's readability of the location is disrupted. The only readable information I included is the webcams' general coordinates so viewers can refer to the geographical location on a map for context.

Personal Critique

Although these screenshots are most likely copyrighted by whoever owns the webcams, I was allowed to collect and manipulate them under fair use according to copyright law. This is due to the fact that the images were used in a manner of social criticism and research. In order to avoid further implications of rights and privacy violations, I strictly utilized screenshots of large corporations and public spaces. I thought this was a much more appropriate action as I did not want to put nonconsenting owners at further risk of information being stolen.

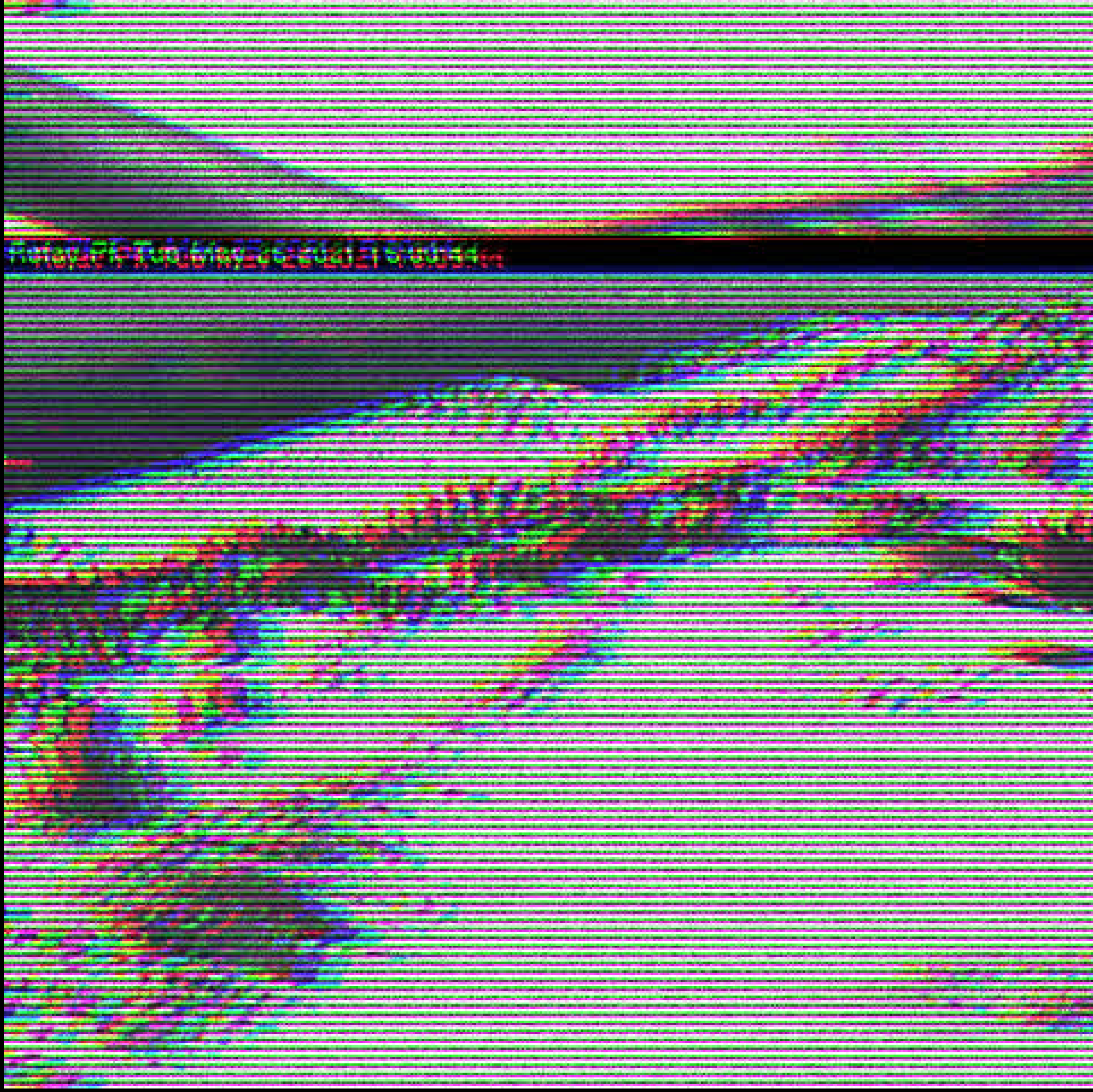
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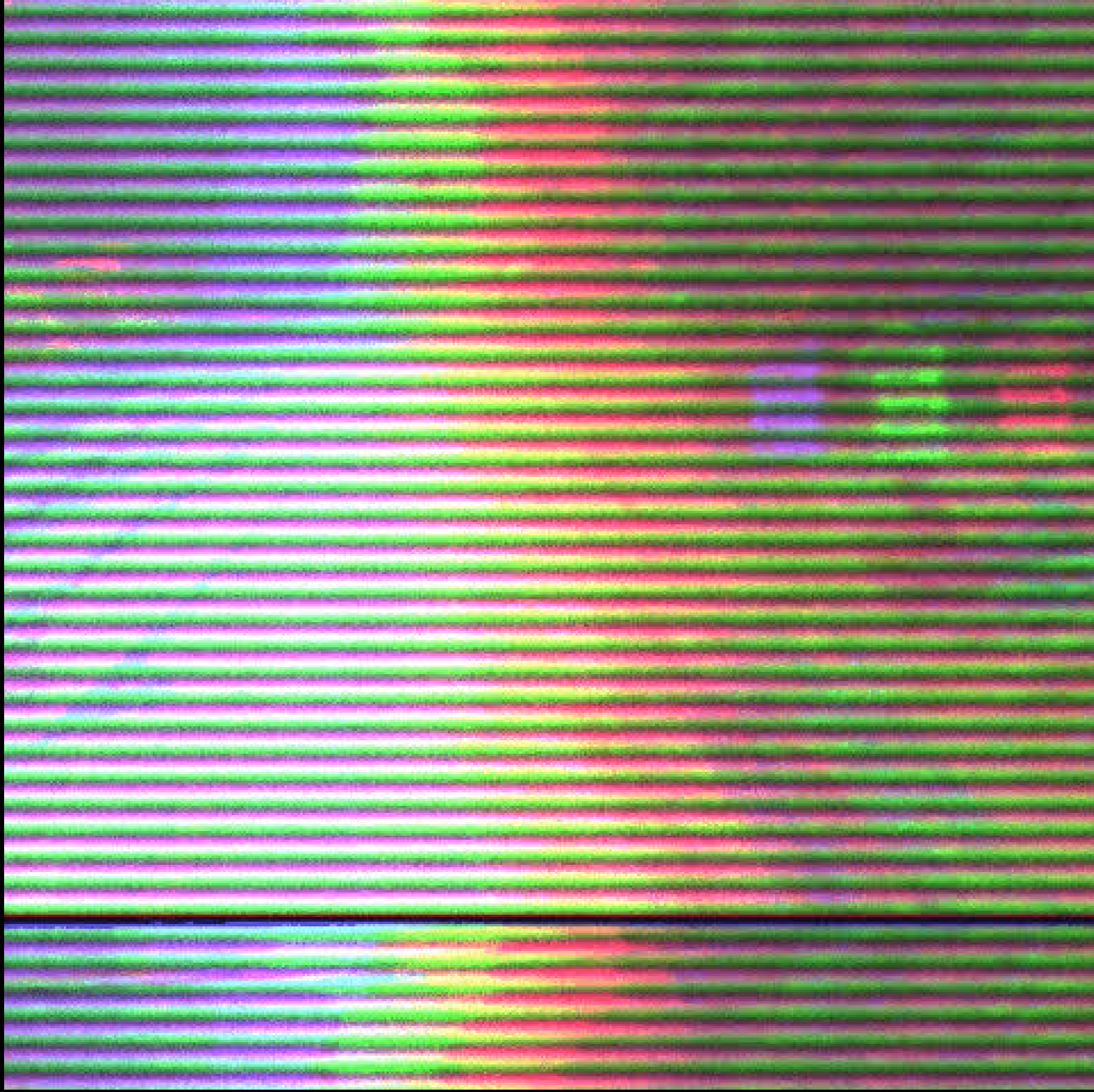
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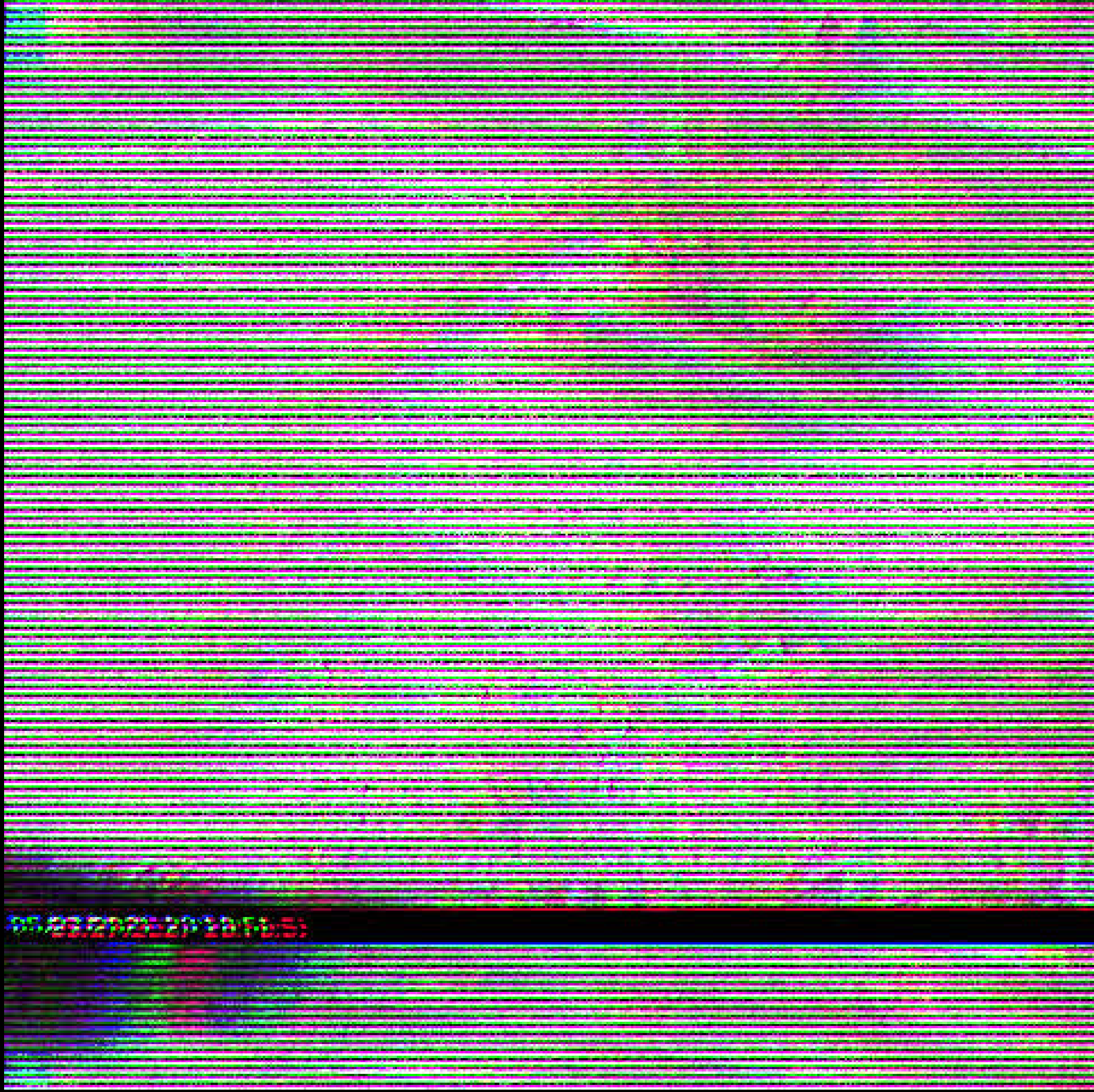
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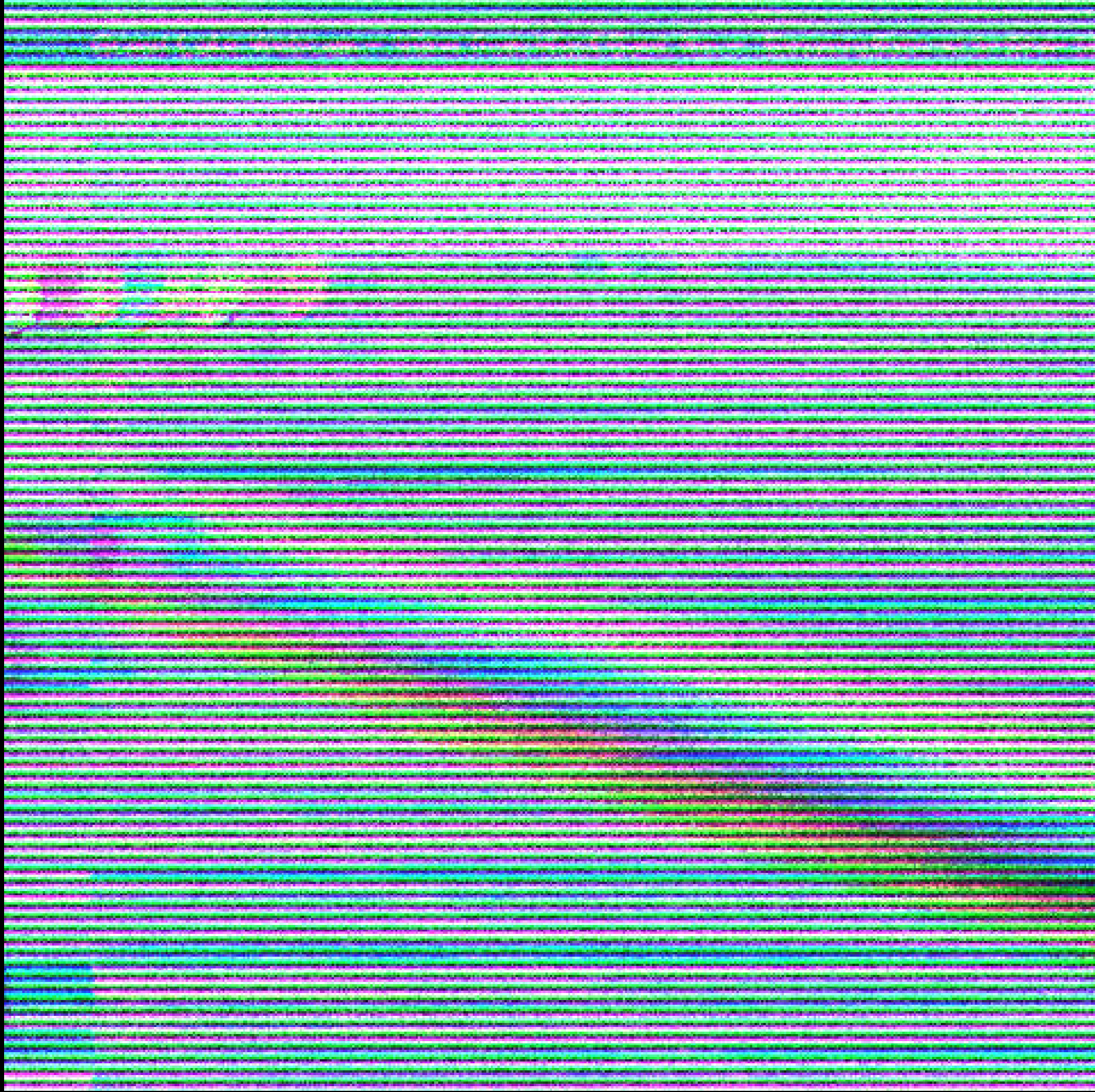
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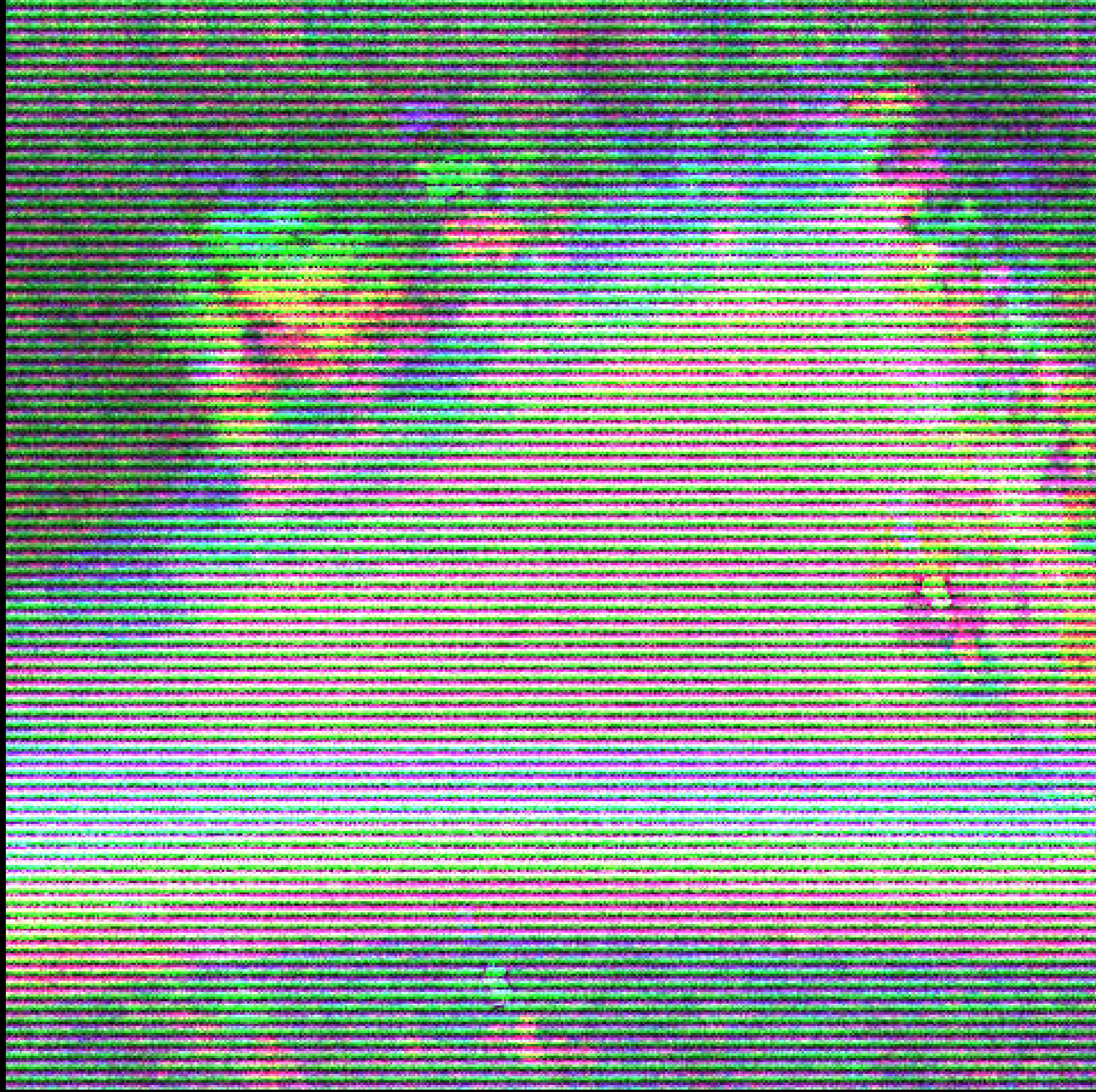
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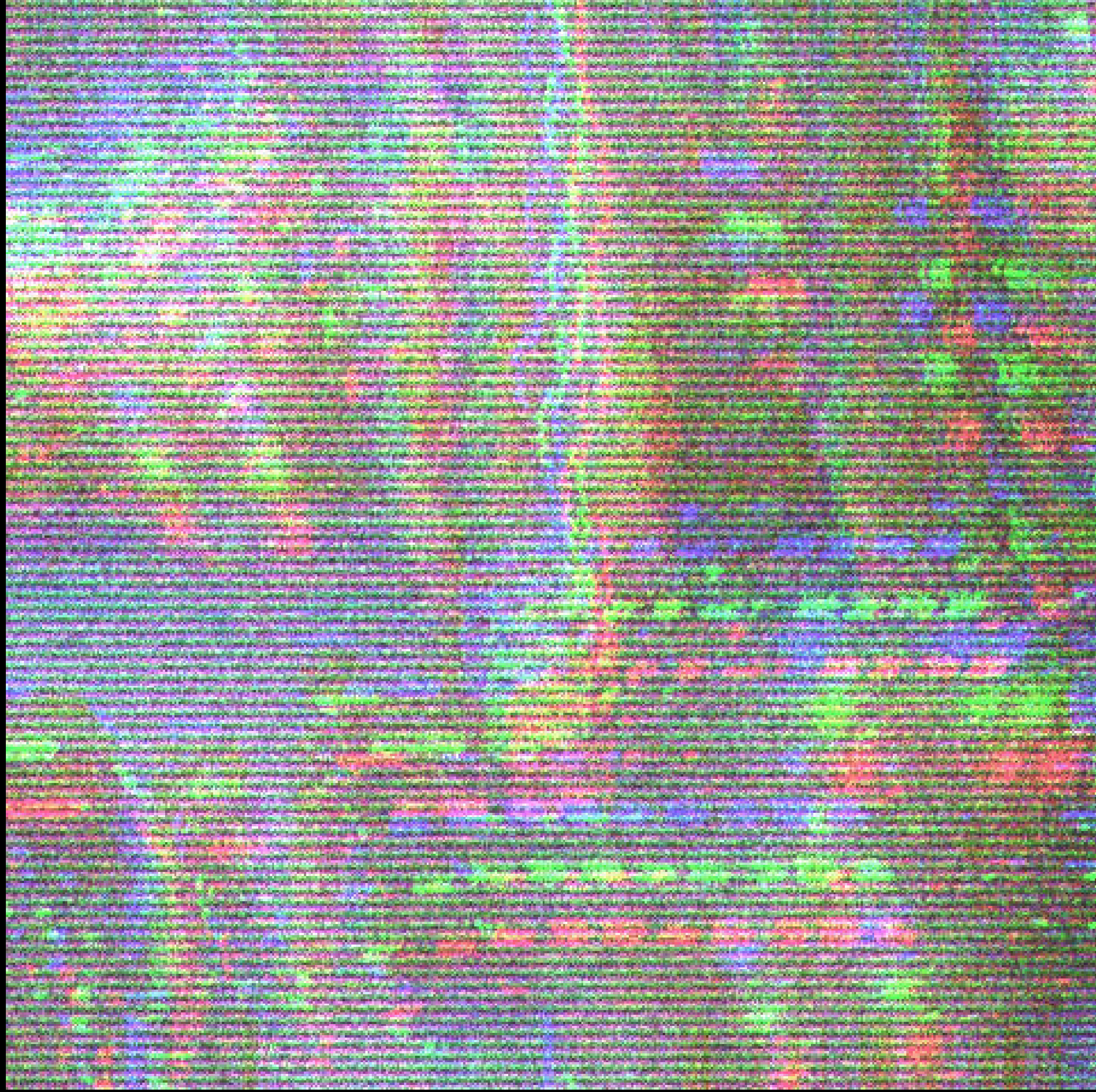
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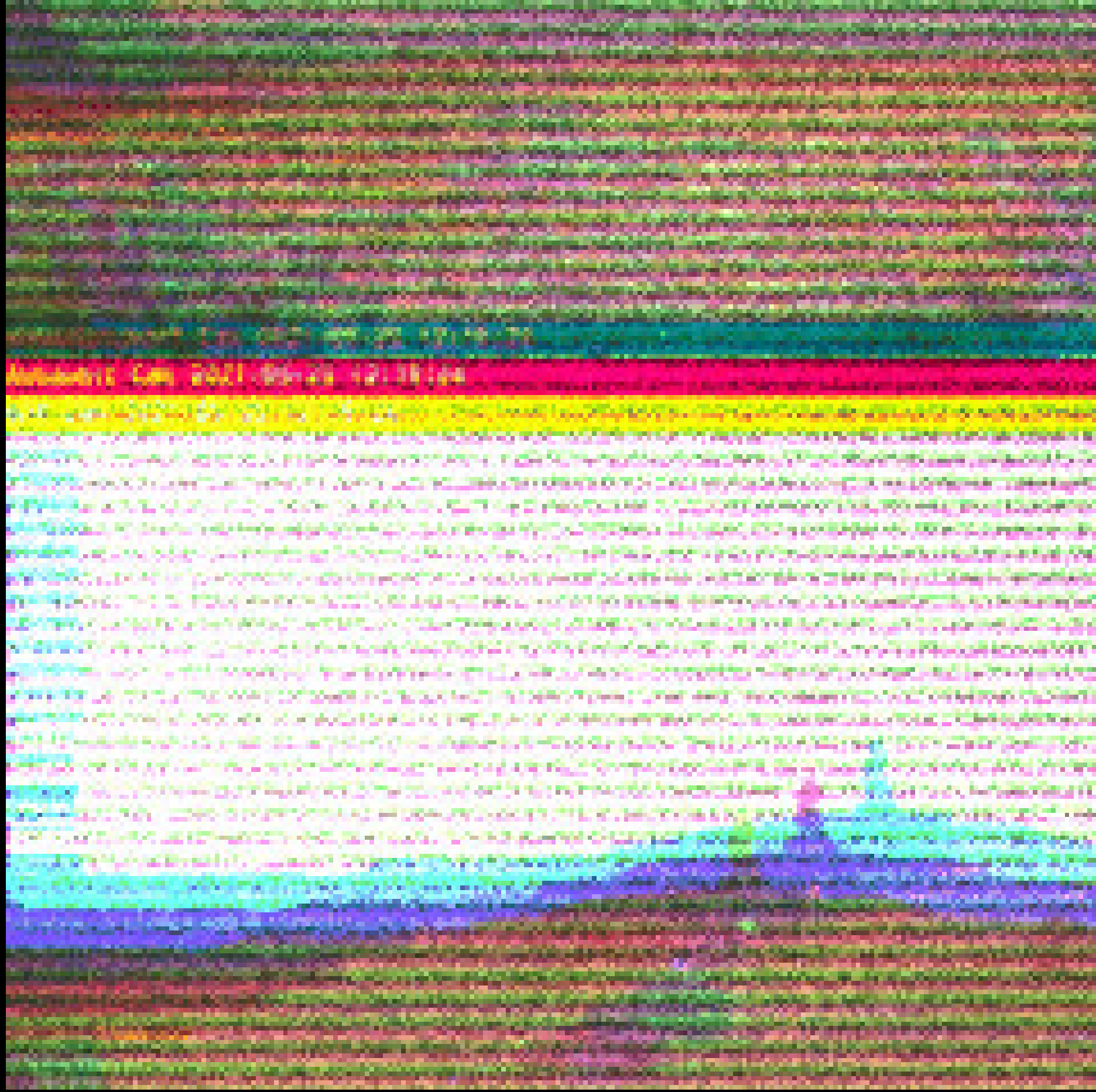
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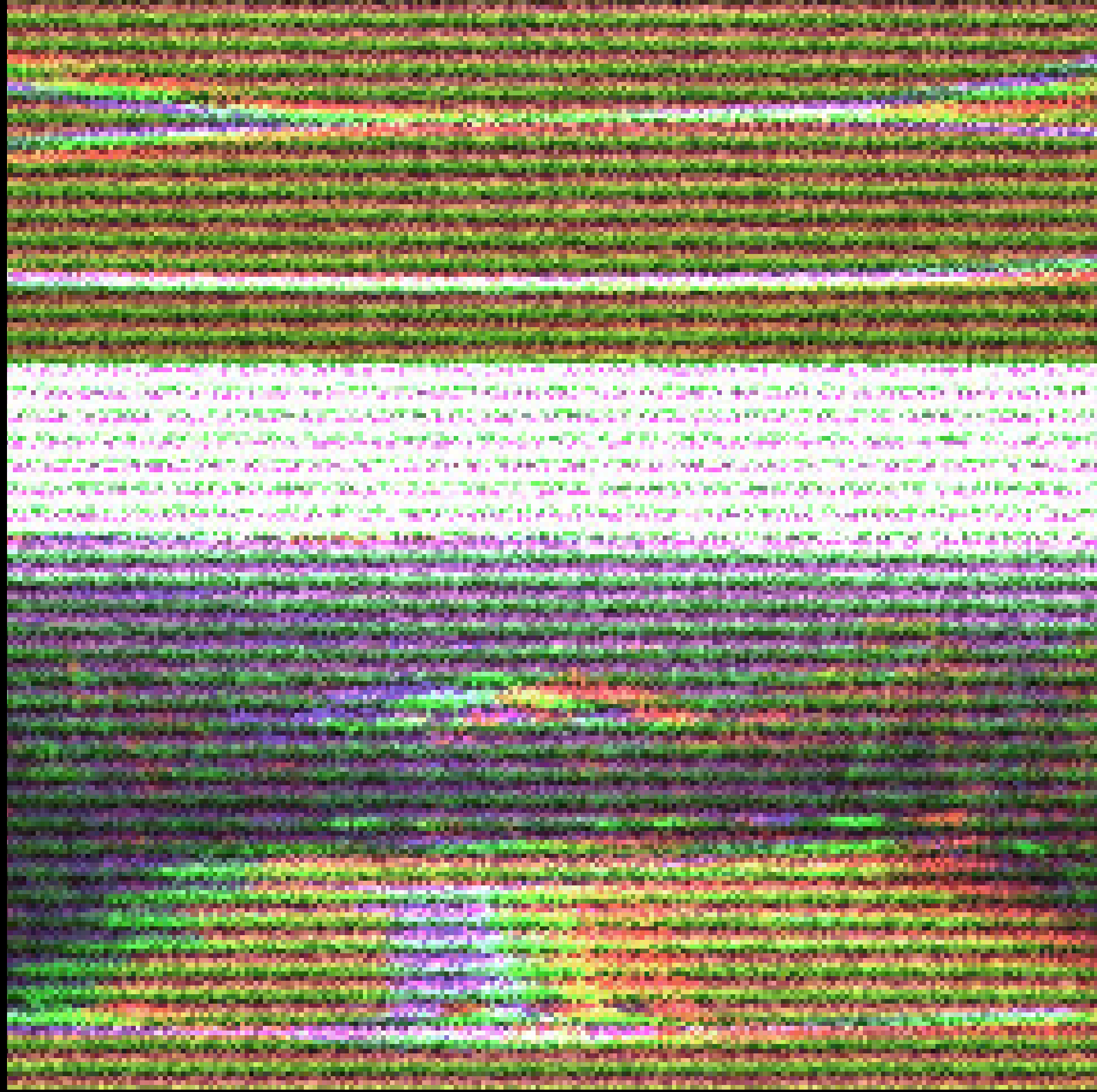
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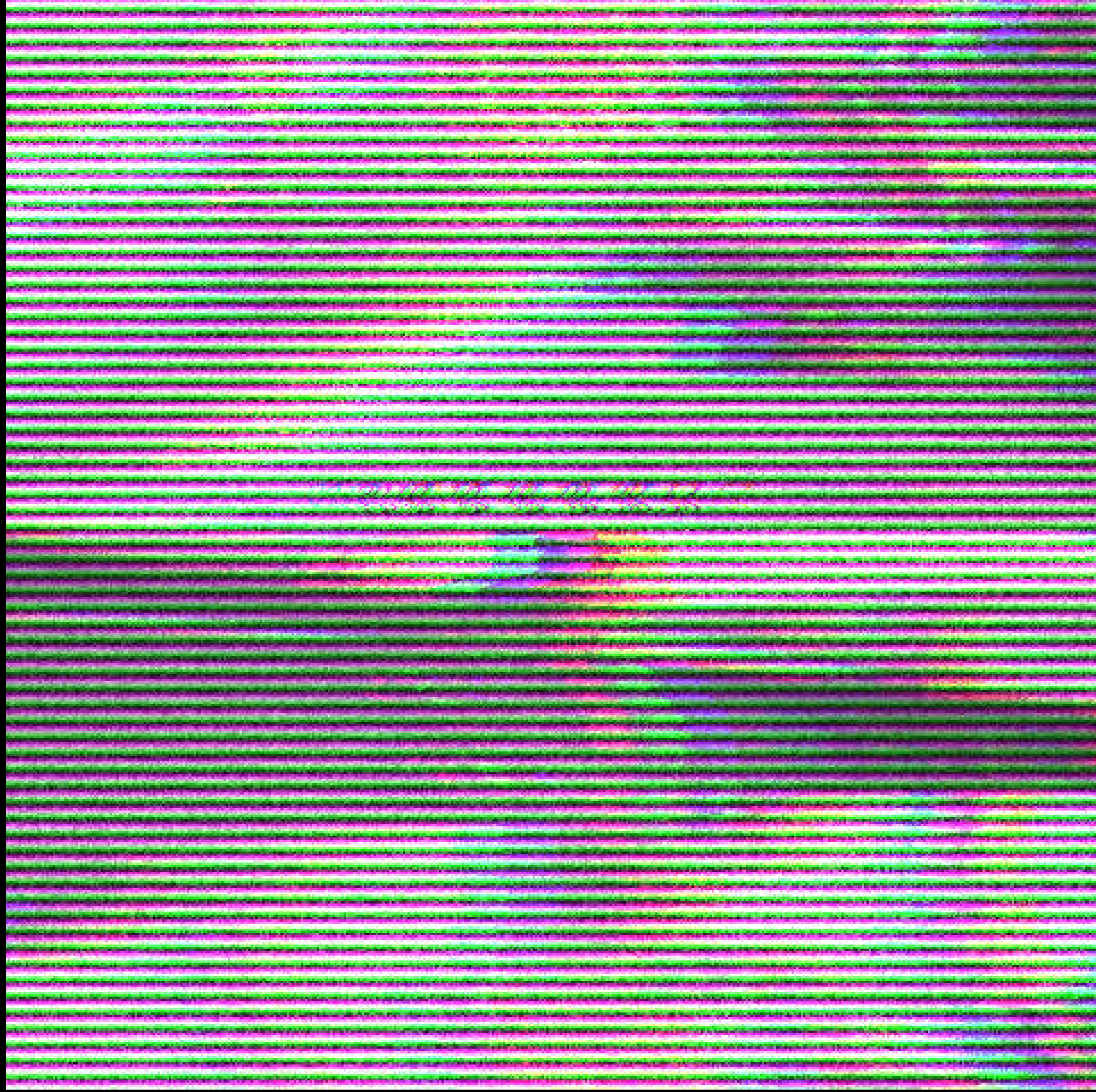


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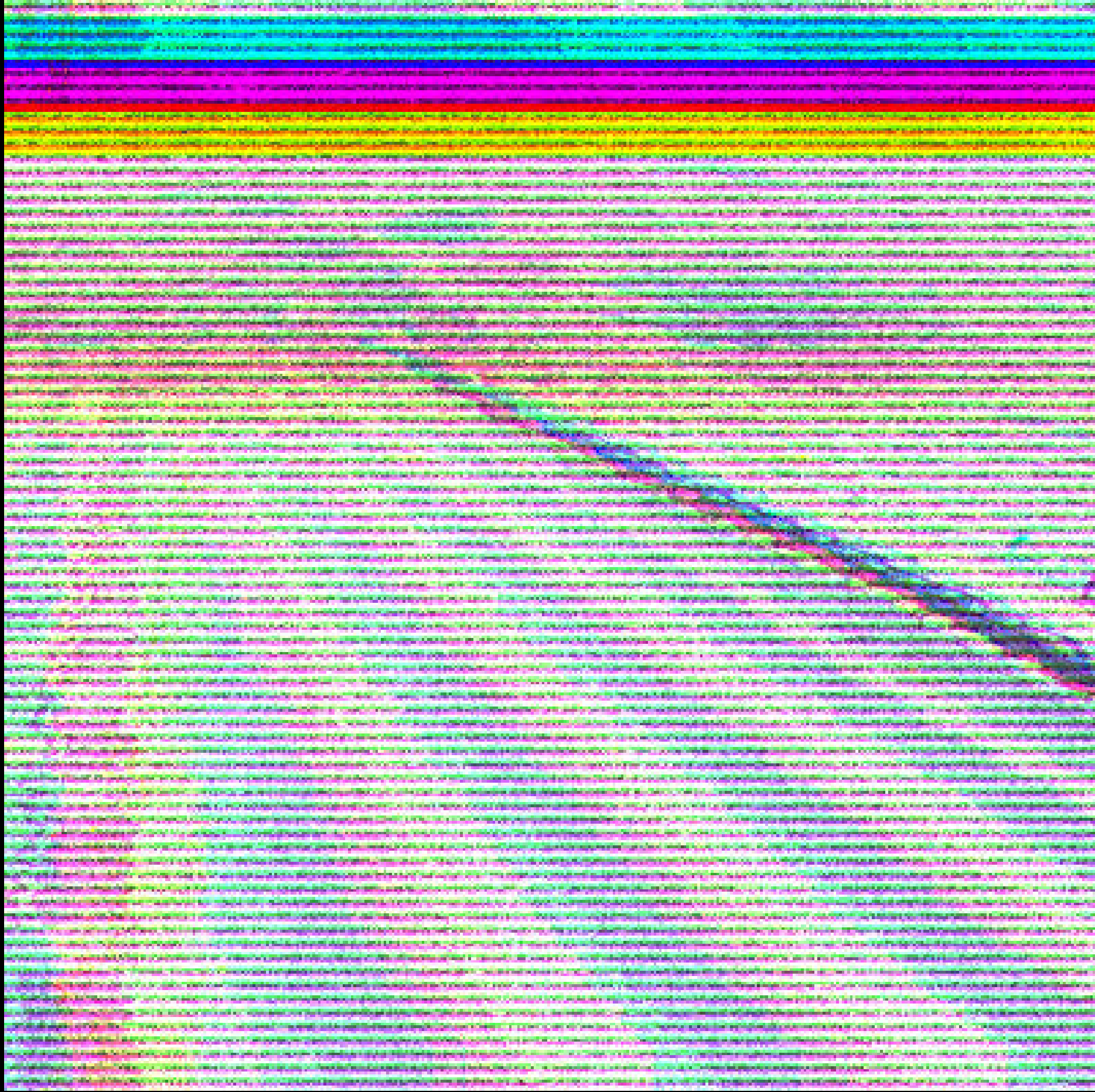
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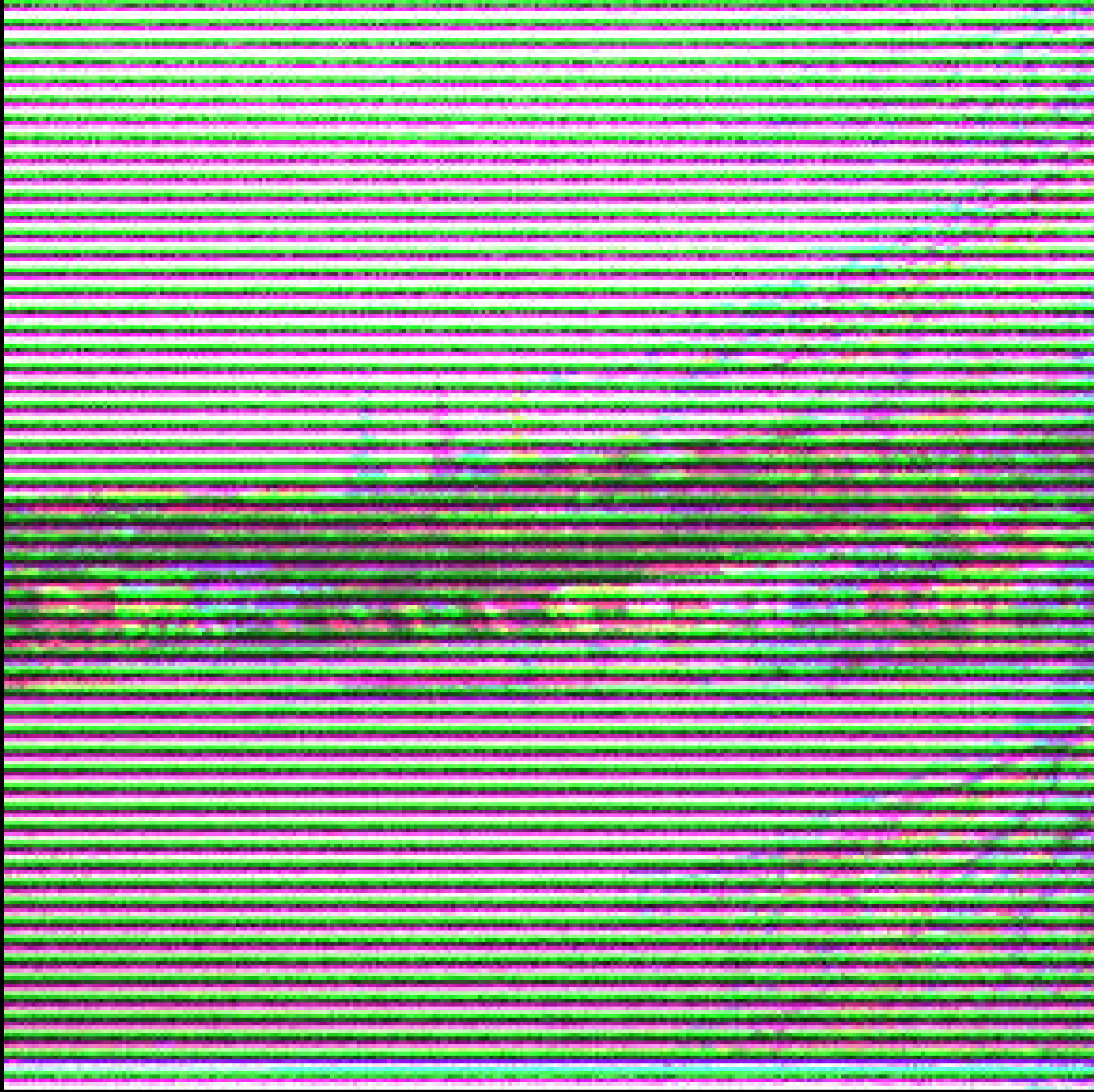
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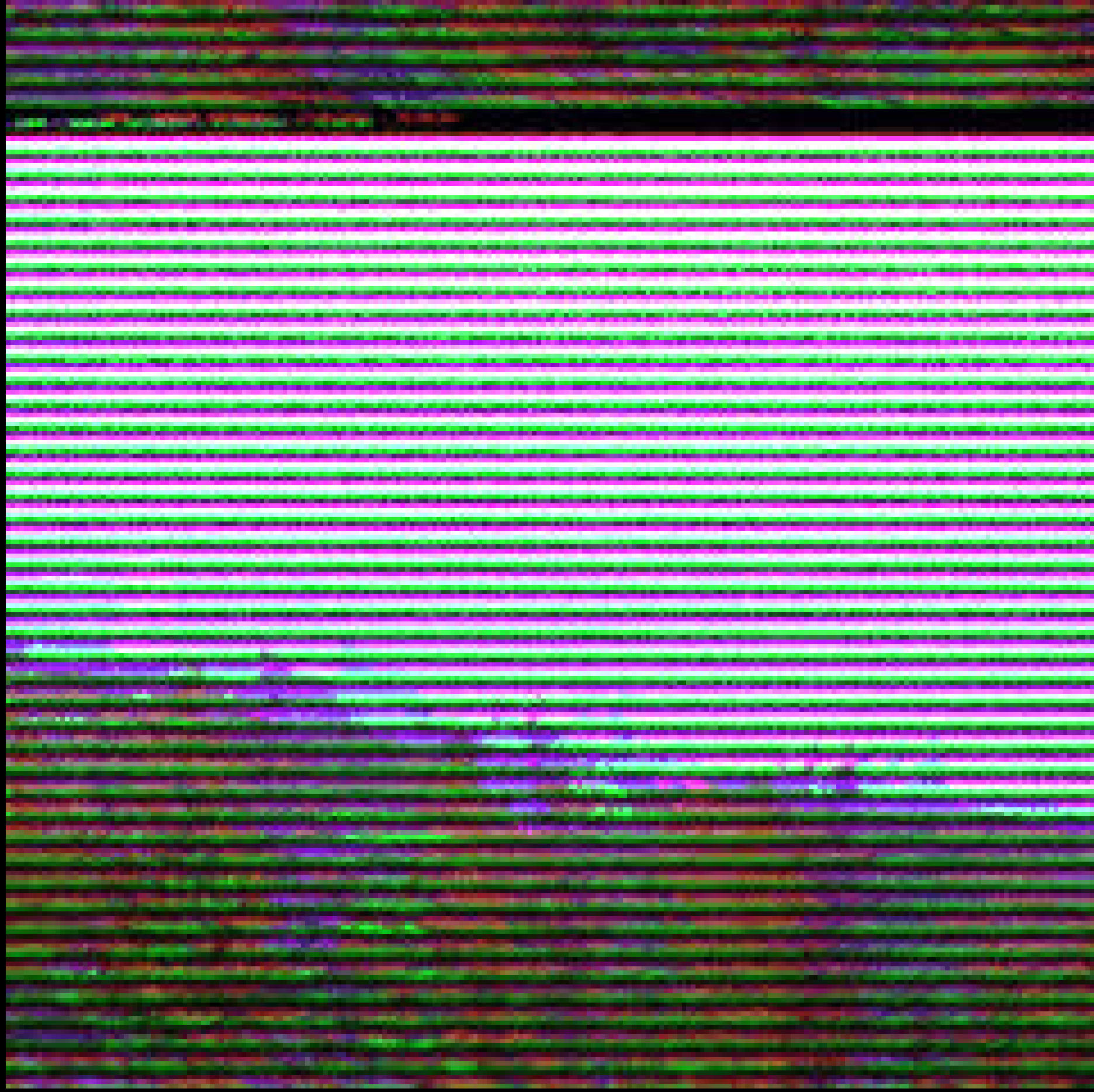
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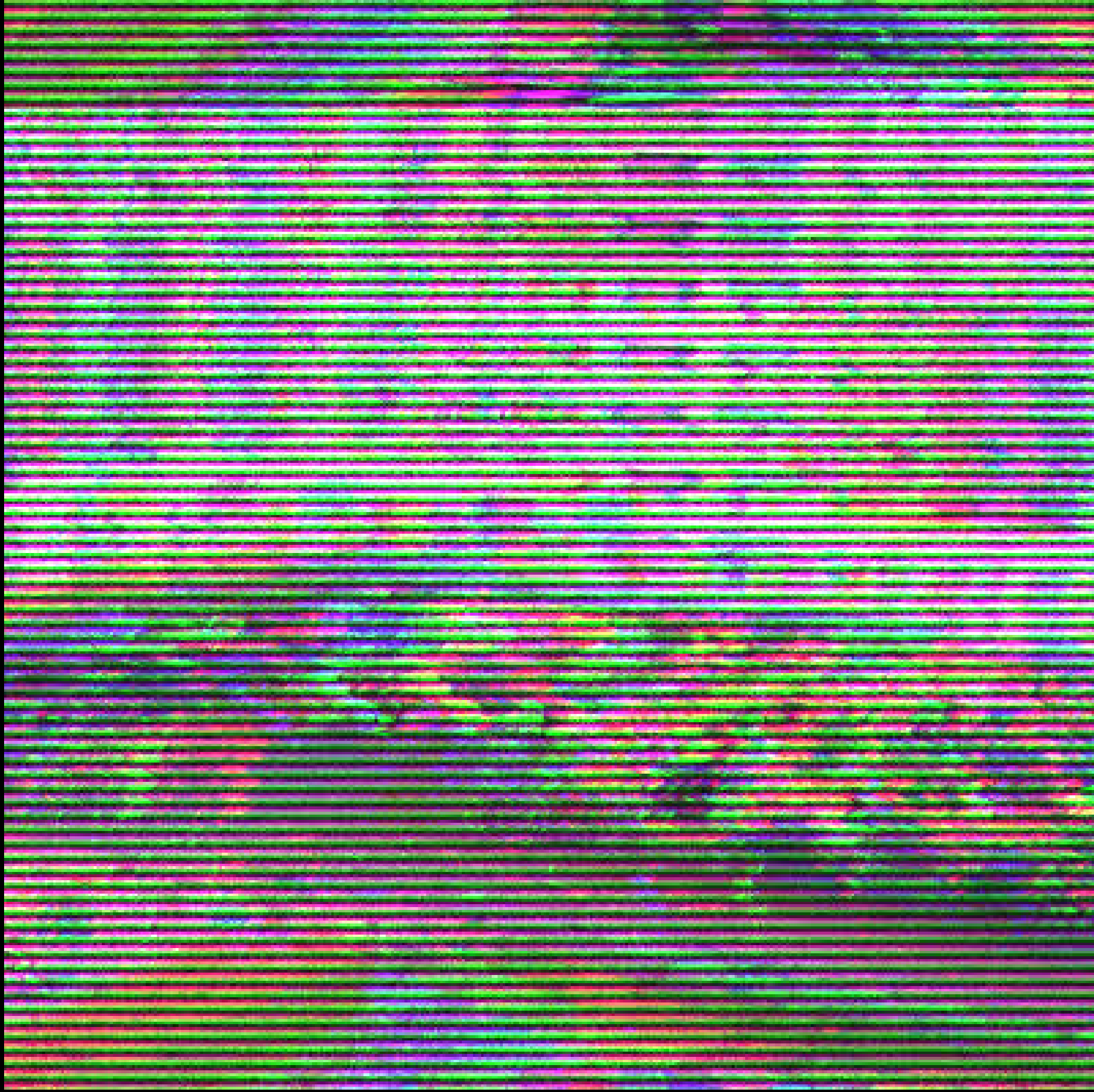
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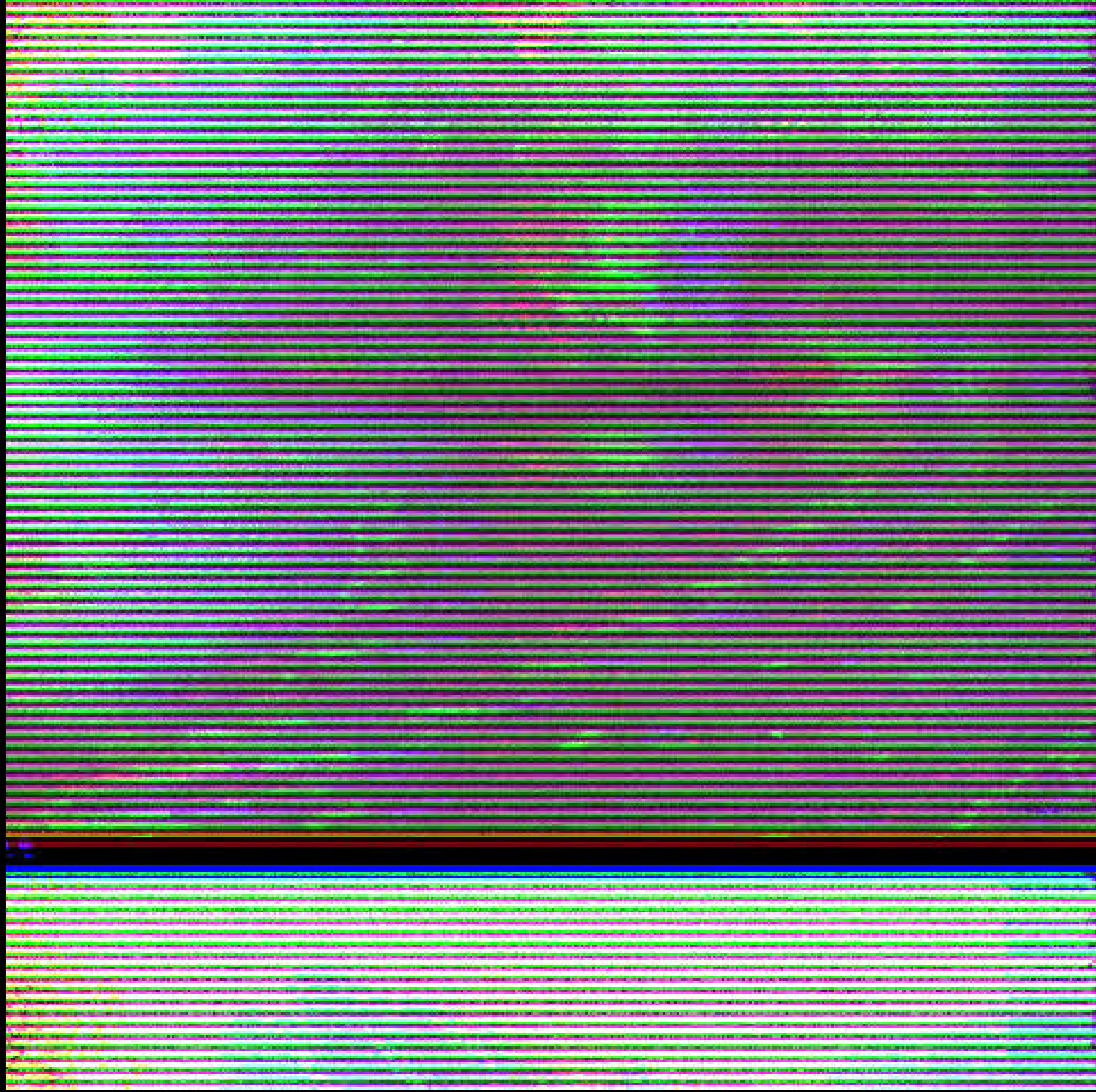
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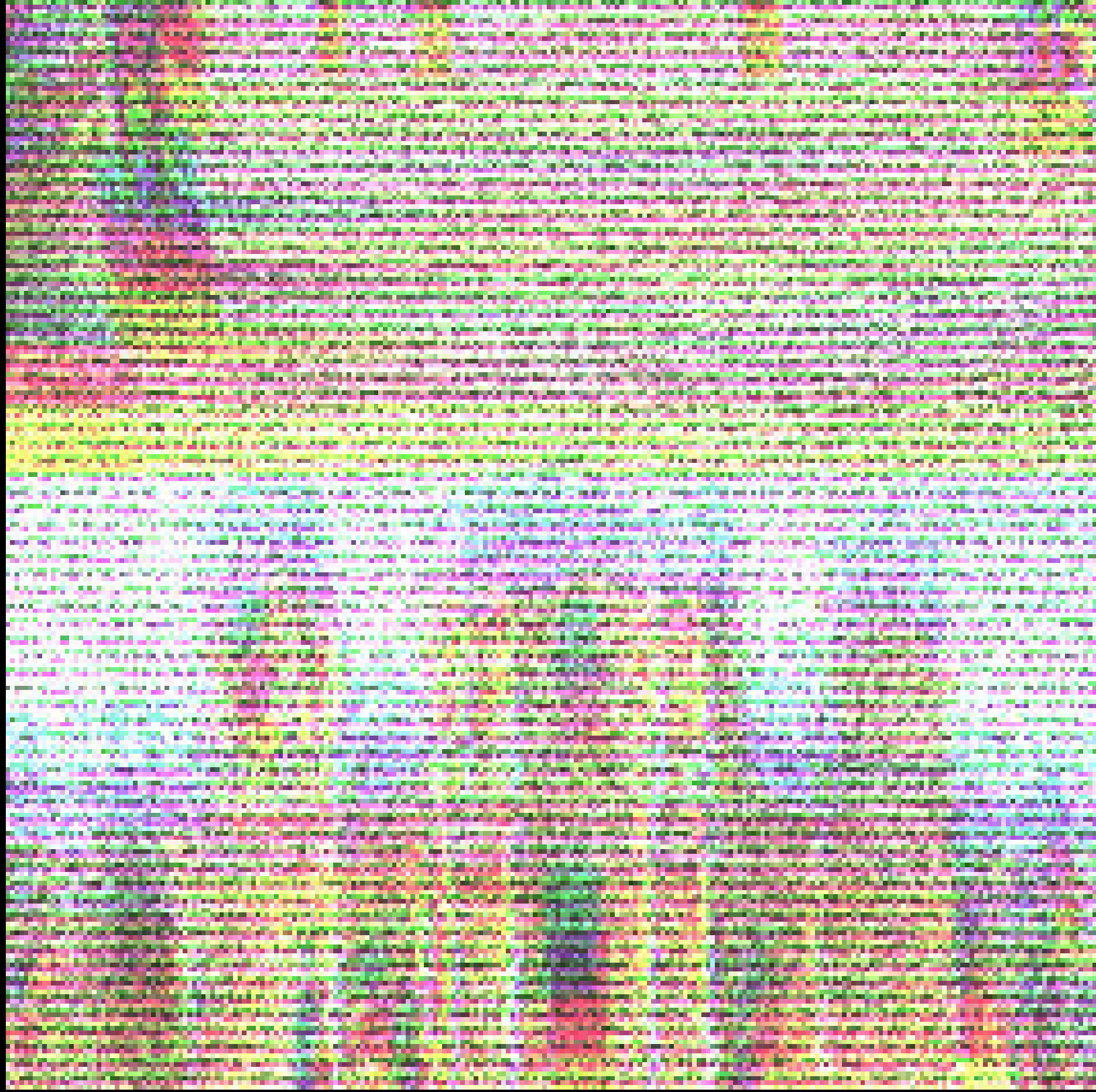
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