

AVERAGE

Exploring composition in panorama

Paul Stewart

I have been working for many years shooting panoramas and was curious to see if I was following any particular repetitive compositional formula. Could I discover and illustrate this formula or perhaps unlock my own personal style?

Panoramas follow strict technical criteria. If you are shooting man made structures, rooms and buildings for example. Like the boxes that they are, the composition repeats itself over and over. They have function but are boring from a creative point of view. At least, in my opinion.

If you shoot the environment these technical criteria are still present in acquiring the panorama but you have the ability to be creative in your composition. What is above and below you? How close to a tree, to a rock or the surface of a flowing river?

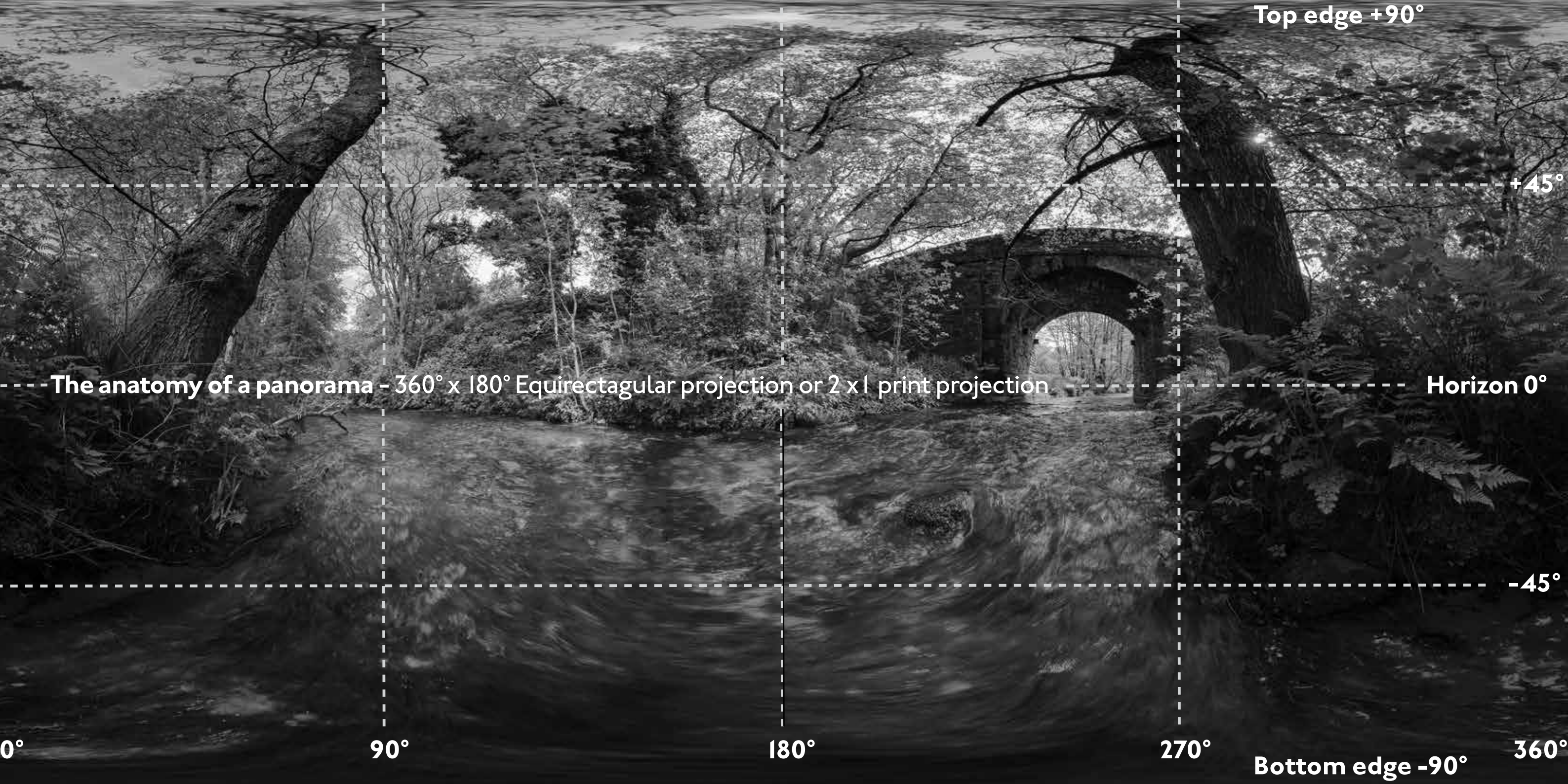
In panorama 'proximity' is essential in creating form in the final image print projection. So how do I shoot a 360° environment? How do I crop an image that is of everything around me? Would I follow the golden rules of composition? Could I discover this from comparing and contrasting my imaging?

To answer this dilemma I decided to combine my panoramas using an image stack (like a tall sandwich of images) to discover if there are any forms, any shadows, that continuously present themselves? If so, would I have discovered my eye? My style?

This is how 'AVERAGE' came about.

After a quick dissection of the anatomy of a panorama, the following pages contain my portfolio of the Eden river catchment. These are representative of my work, my present photographic project and the core images used in the exercise.

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Top edge +90°

+45°

--- The anatomy of a panorama - 360° x 180° Equirectangular projection or 2 x 1 print projection

Horizon 0°

-45°

0°

90°

180°

270°

Bottom edge -90°

360°



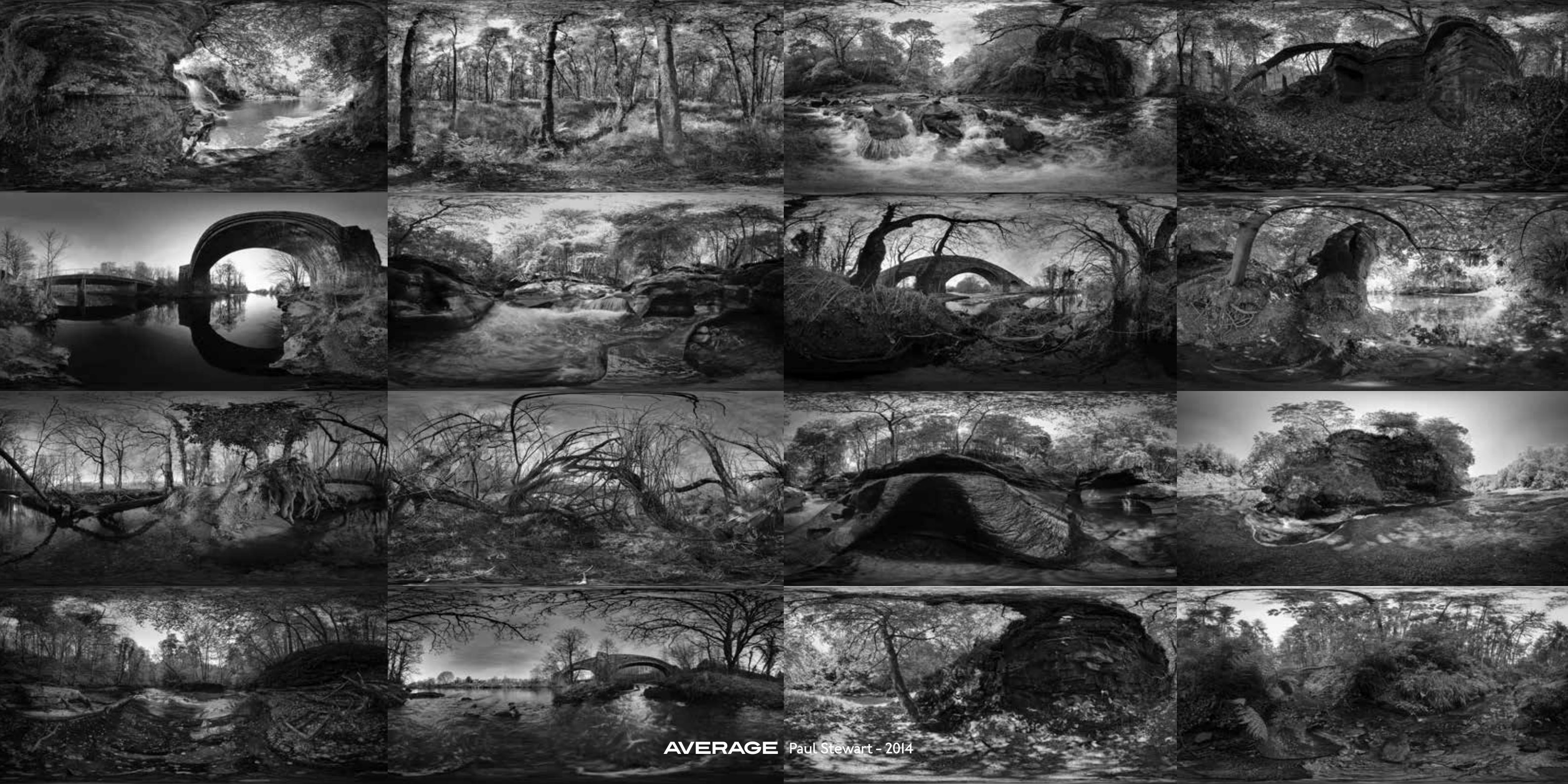
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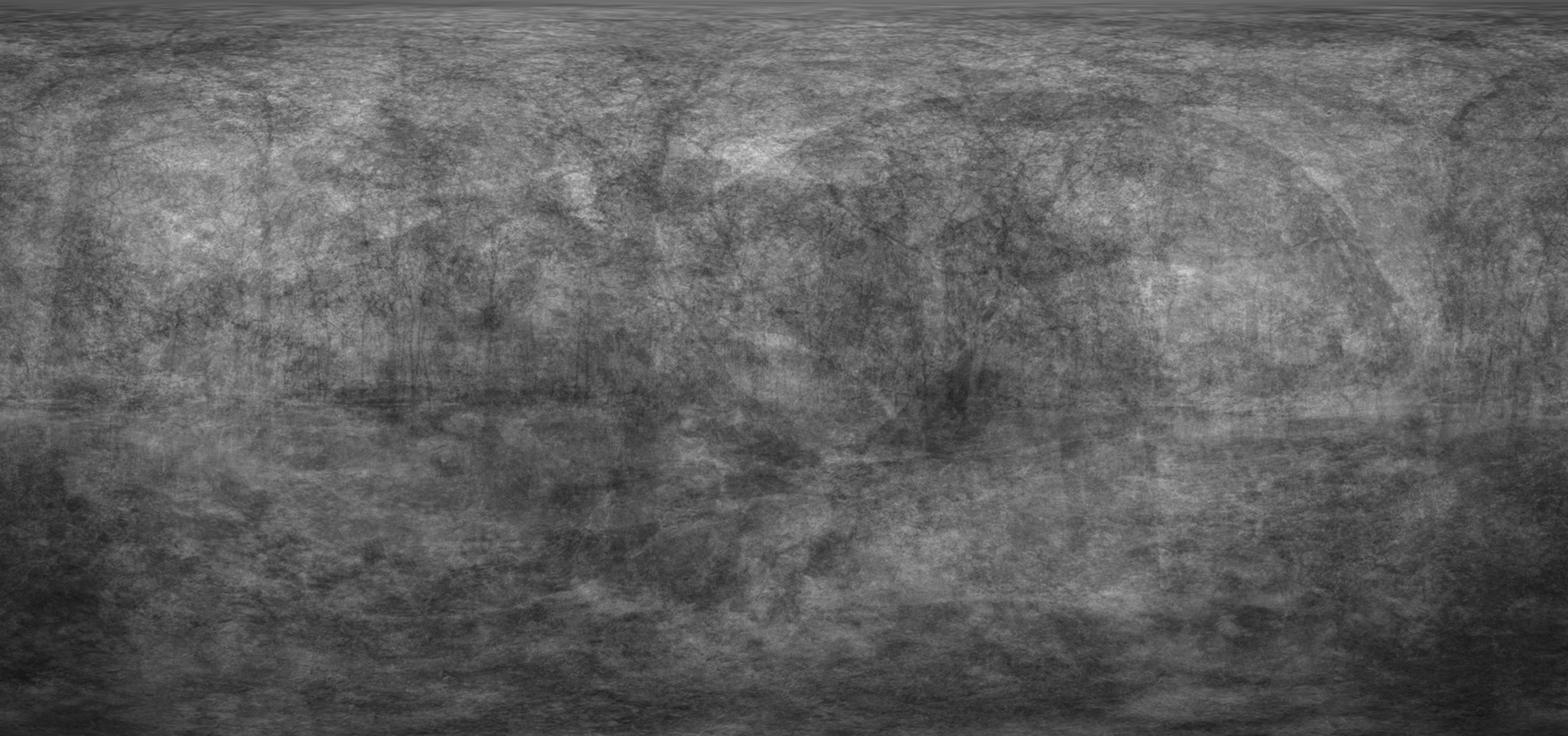
The following pages contain the results of blending the original panoramas in various sets of multiples. 9 and 12 image blends then multiples of those blends.

Using StarStaX, a tool normally used to assist photographers in combining images of stars in the night sky. The images were blended using the Average +0.3 Exposure algorithm.

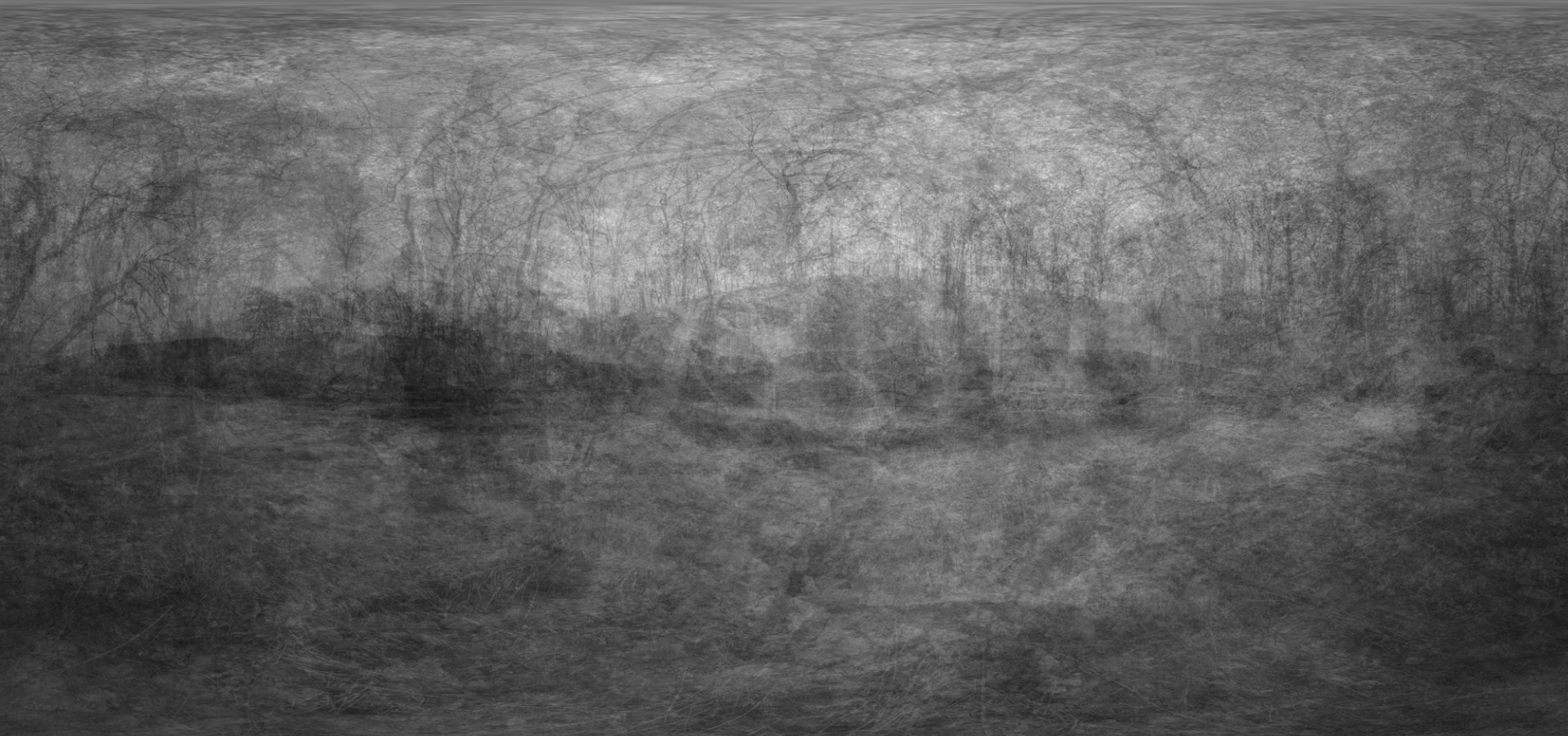
This means the tool averages the pixel luminance in the image stack and increases exposure by one third of a stop. The 'Average' algorithm can be used to reduce digital image noise.

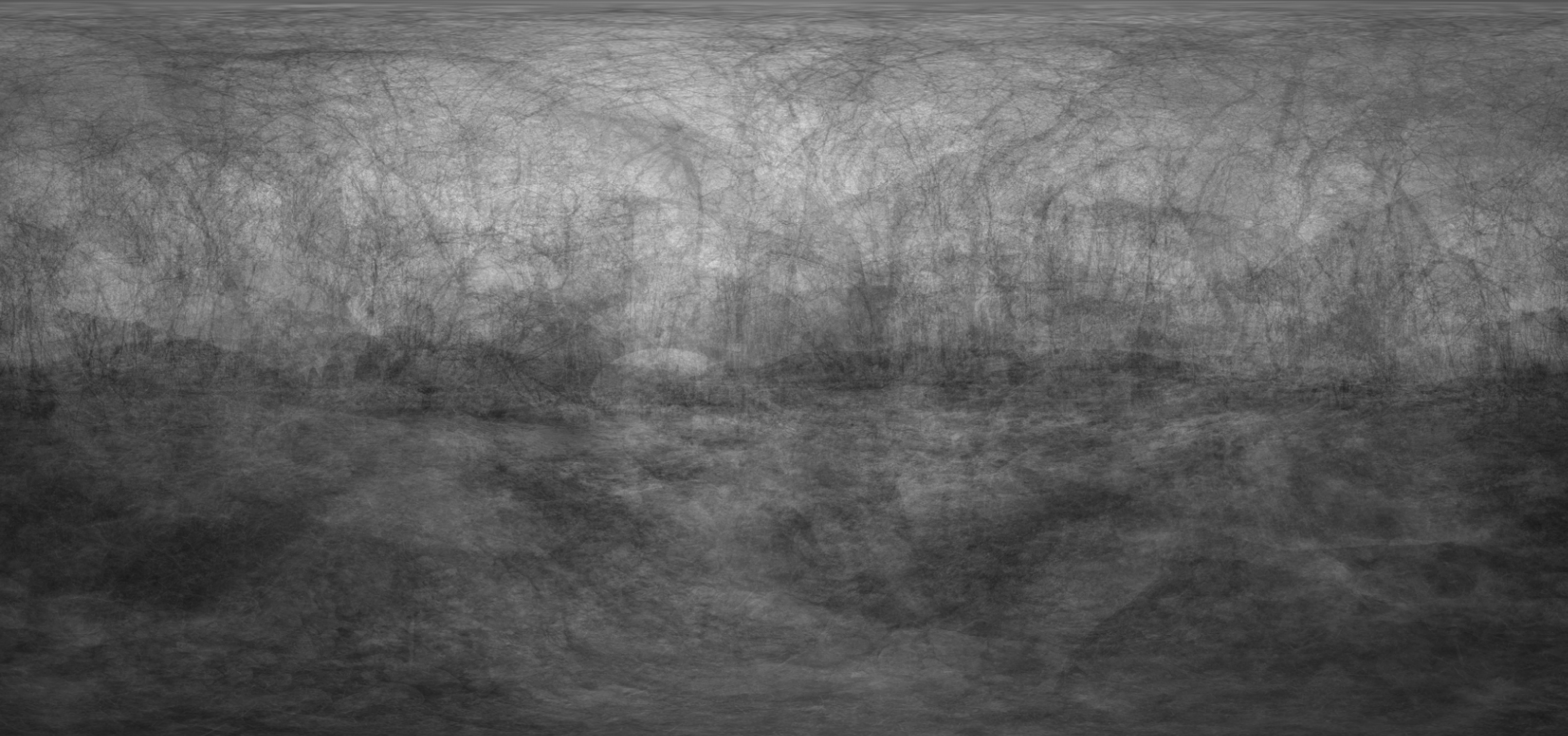
The results I was hoping to find were strong forms, exposed, emphasised and repeated through the blends.

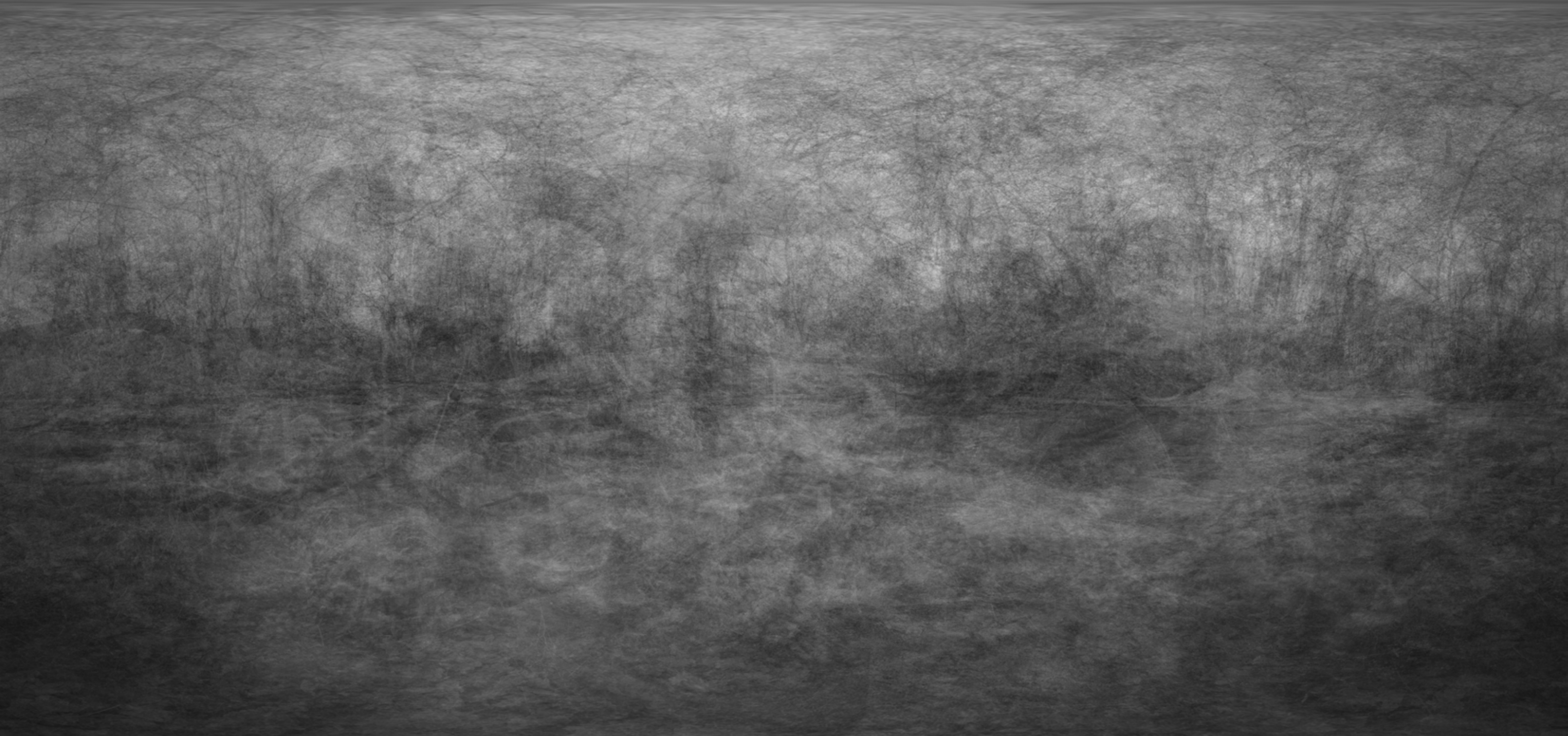
The resulting images run in the order of 3 of 9 image blends, 3 of 12 image blends, 4 of multiblend (blends of blends), 1 of 70 image blend (all portfolio images) and finally 12 image blended backpage.

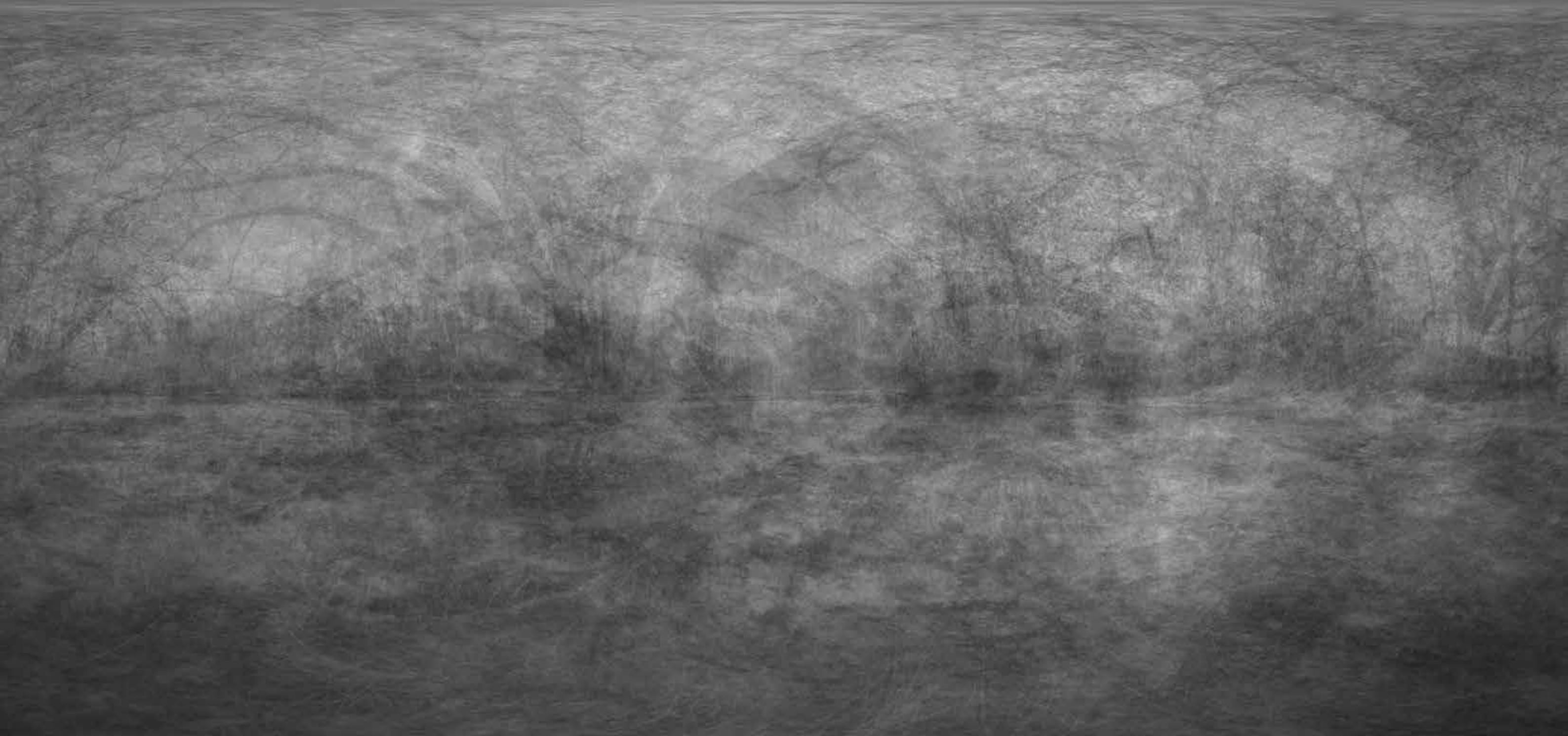


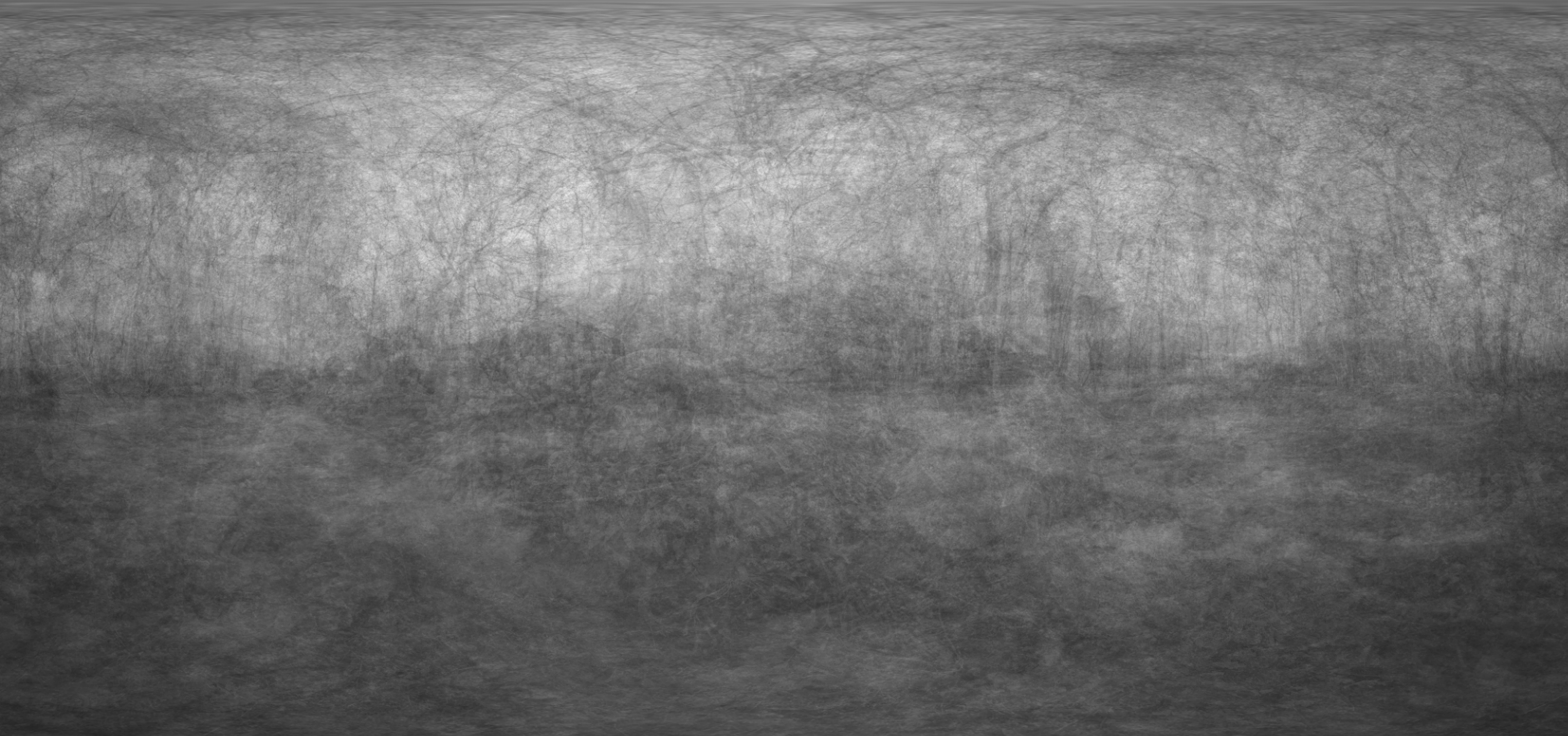


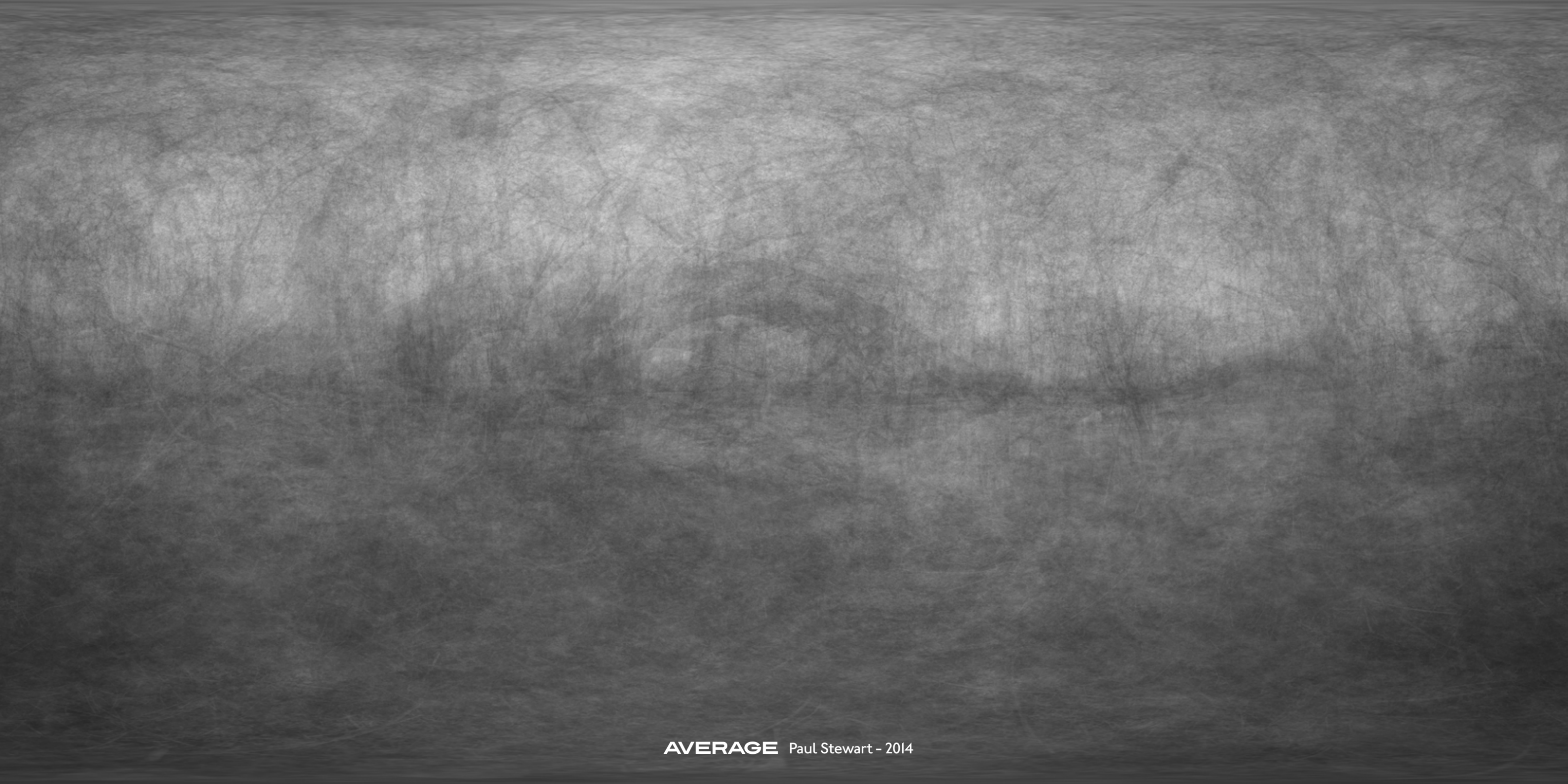


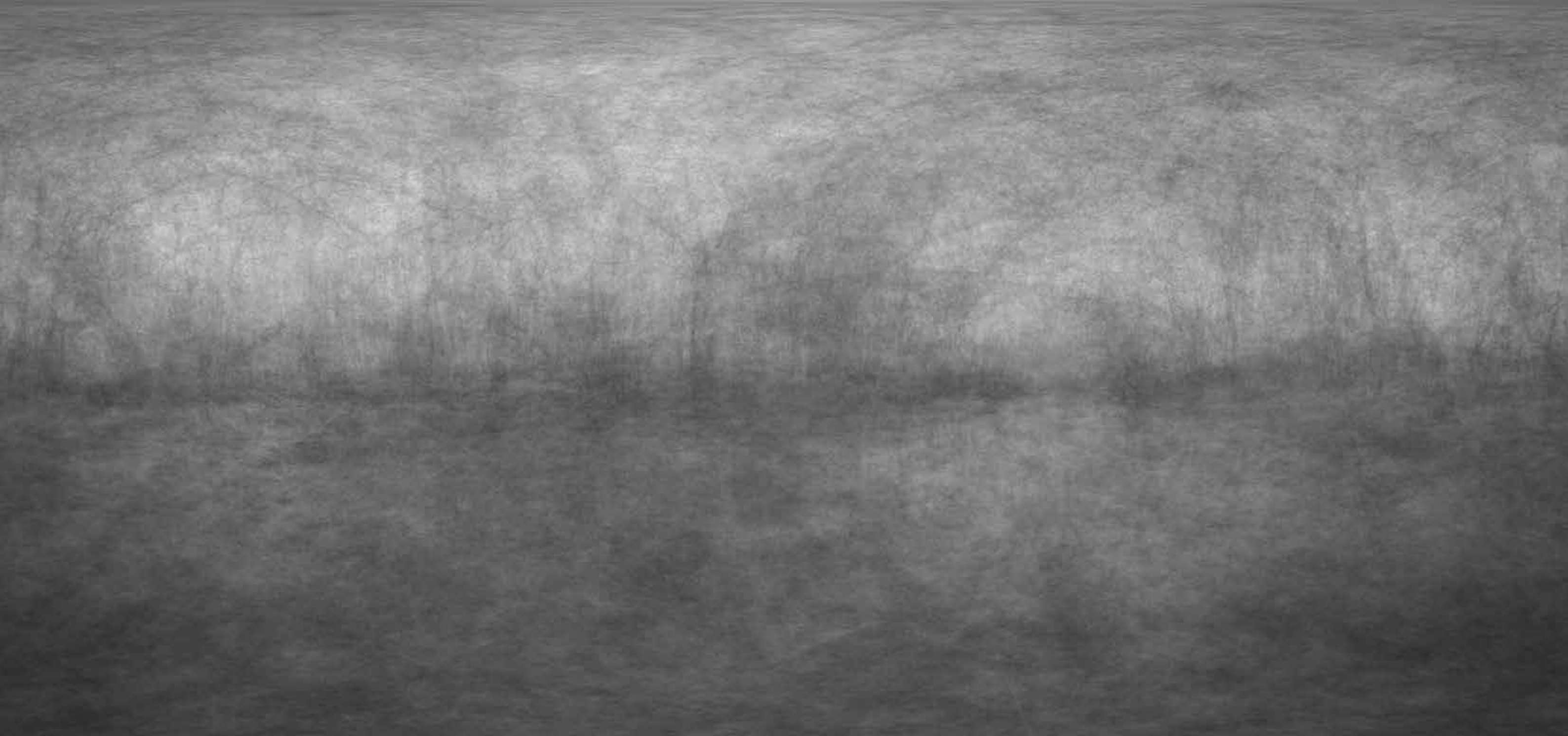




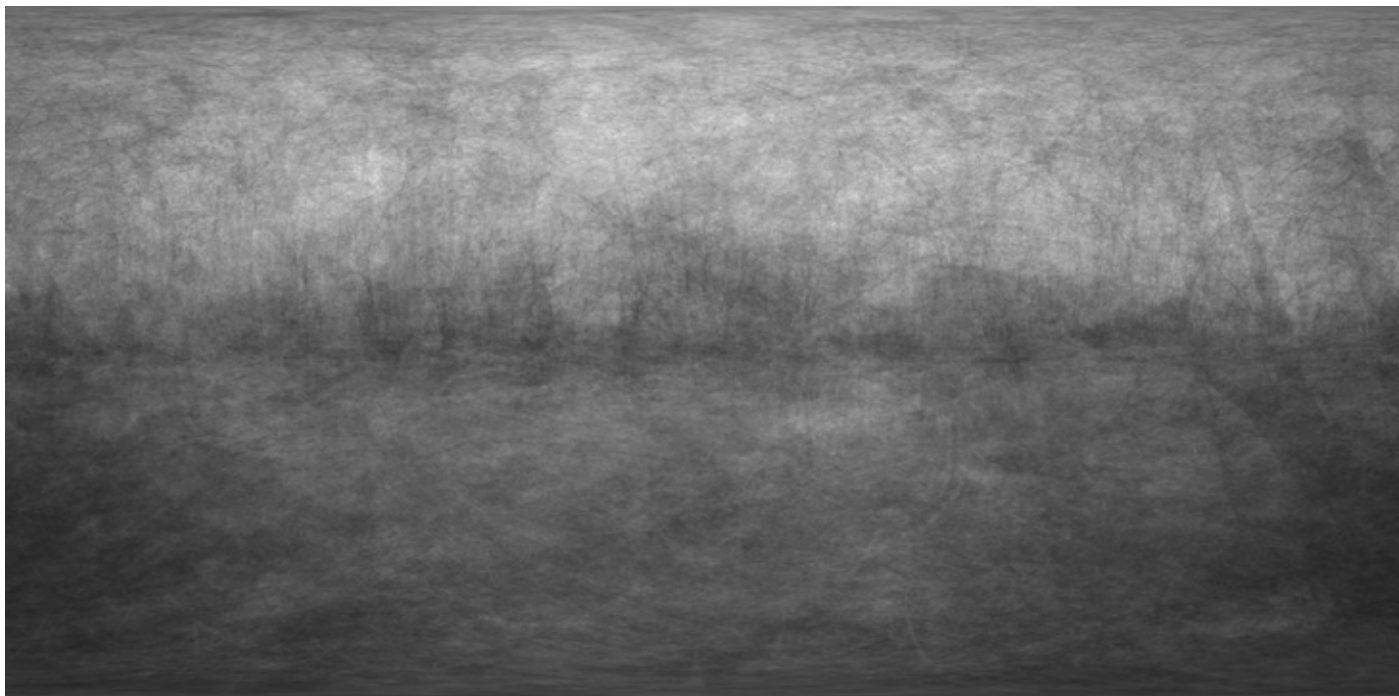












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