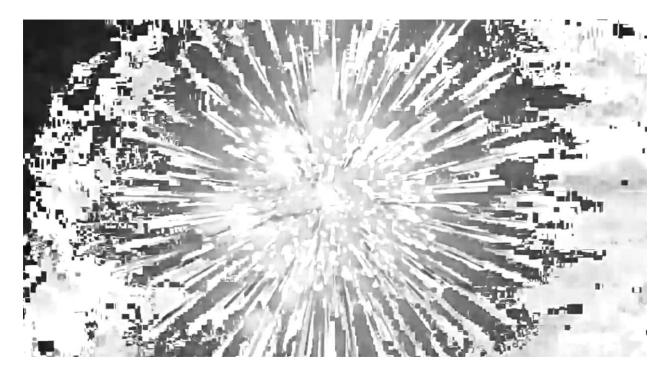Everything we consume is processed in some way. The movies you see on Netflix, in a theater or by other means, these are all processed and compressed to a certain size. Celluloid film is processed as well, as well as MP3 files, MacDonald's hamburgers, and the commercials seen on TV. Everything has a source and destination, and for one reason or another they undergo a change through this journey. Sometimes in the course of this journey, it is over-processed and loses its integrity and becomes something new. Many times this is a bad thing, and these products are discarded for being of low quality, or low fidelity. They have strayed too far from their origin. Alex Jamal's artwork is influenced by these lo-fi products, as well as dilapidation in general. These are random and transformative characteristics, and each object or media is unique because of this.

Lo-fi (meaning of low-fidelity) is a style or method that sacrifices sharpness and clarity on purpose for interesting results. It exists as a response to the more prominent "hi-fi" (high fidelity) method of music and video production. "Hi-fi" is usually seen on VHS tapes, speakers, or cassettes to show that the audio quality is up to a certain standard. This is desirable, when the

consumer is looking for something very close to the orginal audio or film masters. With lo-fi, quirks like record scratches or noise are encouraged. A visual example of this can be seen on the anthology TV series *Off the Air*, created by Dave Hughes. Instead of a simple cut or wipe transition between scenes of video, the transitions are made using flash video glitches—these errors are most commonly found on YouTube. Note the rough blocky fusion of multiple frames that were not meant to be combined. These are the kind of raw ugly images that could be considered lo-fi. The violent combination of two elements is essential to Alex's process. It places alteration as the most important element. This alteration blends different components, creating something altogether new and different.

One way of thinking about this is to see over processing as a form of collage. By re-creating these glitches or errors he is able to utilize unique and random elements in his artwork. Other examples of processing are old VHS tapes, and the type of video found on YouTube. These two are very different in the way the picture rates but both can be very useful.

Generally the audience for this to work must be willing to acknowledge the imperfections in the image, but also acknowledge its beauty. This this type of work could be interpreted as simply of low-quality, but the artist must take steps to direct the viewer in a different direction. These glitches are jarring, as well as fun and very attention grabbing.

The image shown above is by the artist Maddie Keaton, who creates promotional art for the band TV Girl. Her artwork has a very distinctive blurred and grainy style, which highlights and glorifies imperfections. The rough texture and blurring suggests that these source images are very old or of lower quality. However, while they certainly have a vintage look, these images may not be old at all. This ambiguity along with the blurring creates a sensual mystery, which pulls the viewer in. The attractive mystery and chaos observed in these art works are two important themes and ways to draw viewers in.

Alex Jamal's artwork is also influenced by computers and the internet in general, as well as science fiction adaptations of the net as a tangible world, such as *The Matrix* or *Ghost in the Shell*. These types of films attempt to shape and adapt the net into something not otherwise visual. The net is exploratory, it has forums and followings, it has criminals and secrets, it has

glitches and errors, and it has an effect on people. It can also be seen as vast dark expanse; an untracked frontier. Other themes include isolation, anonymity, and the vast unknown.

The culture and things associated with the net are important as well. One important association is that of copying, as Tyler Durden said in *Fight Club* "Everything is a copy of a copy of a copy". Alex uses copying in the form of "tiles". He uses low resolution images, and repeats them over and over across a background to create a texture.

All of these styles of alteration contribute to Alex's series of works. They all are able to convey experience and weariness, which in a way is humanizing. These are all worth consideration.

Off the Air - "Color". Dave Hughes. Williams Street, 2012.

Maddie Keaton - "Untitled" (2014).

Jim Uhls, Chuck Palaniuk. *Fight Club*, 1999.