

FLYING FLIES

Floating somewhere between my cornea and my retina, suspended in a soluble gel-like substance, and formed within the behind-ness of my two supposedly brown eyes, exists a cloud of flying flies. These are more commonly known as phosphenes or floaters.

Recently, these small spheres and strings have become a semi-regular reminder that beyond the concave surfaces of both my eyes, entrenched in cavities either side of my nose; lies a dark unfamiliar territory optically known as the vitreous humor (occupying the space behind the lens and in front of the retina at the back of the eye).

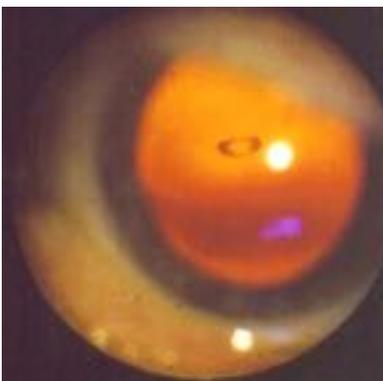
I leave my curtains open at night. I do this so the light in the morning can enter. I like to imagine how the earth slowly rotates eastwards and in turn creates a mirage of a *rising* sun; it climbs up walls and quietly falls through my bedroom windows, carefully tracing every object on the floor until it finally reaches my closed eyes. It rests here, burning brighter and brighter until its weight is heavy enough to permeate into the vitreous (my eyes open simultaneously). This is light's medium; finally reaching its point of absorption. I wake up and light fills the slightly irregular spheres of my eyes, I let through as much as I can bare, then quickly change my gaze to the ceiling. Above me appears a mobile of scattered, transparent dots and strings- Ancient Greeks explained this phenomena as 'myodesopsia', translating as "seeing fly-like corpuscles".

Much like a winged fly, phosphenes beg for the attention of the brain to try and decipher their fleeting and esoteric existence.

After some concentration and research into these entoptic phenomena- we can begin to notice certain repeated morphological characteristics. Firstly, these small particles of dust and debris* rely on the presence of light to exist, in order to cast their shadows onto the rear of the cornea, resulting in the ghost images in our eye sight. Other dependable factors for their persistence are concentration and distance. The more time you spend looking at a phosphene, the brighter they will become; the closer you are to a source of light, the brighter they will become.

Subordinate to light particles and the eyes of the beholder, these globular clusters of fibrillae blindly follow the eyes gaze as they sink in and out of dark blinks into a pool of coagulated vitreous fluid.

My gaze breaks and I keep my stare. Curiously, the flies don't abide by this. They continue to sink down into the transparent gel at the rear of my eyes. Perhaps this is osmosis in action. Blink again and look over there and the flies return in full flight. It is familiar and it is a feeling in the dark.



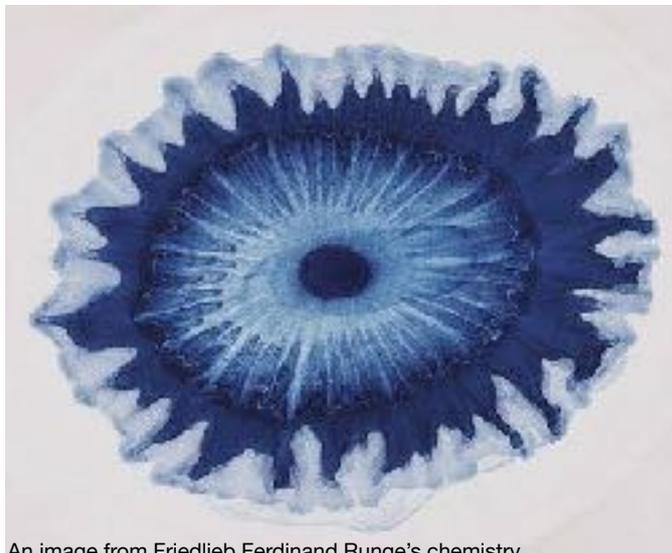
Euan Campbell-Vaughan
SUNDAY SMART, MONDAY BLUE, 2019
<https://vimeo.com/user98465847>

Siri Black
Fig 23 (Phosphene), Fig 10 (Phosphene), Fig 12 (Phosphene) (2019)
Jesmonite casts, 29.7x21cm
Exhibited in *Tunnels, Spirals, Lattices, Cobwebs* Exhibition



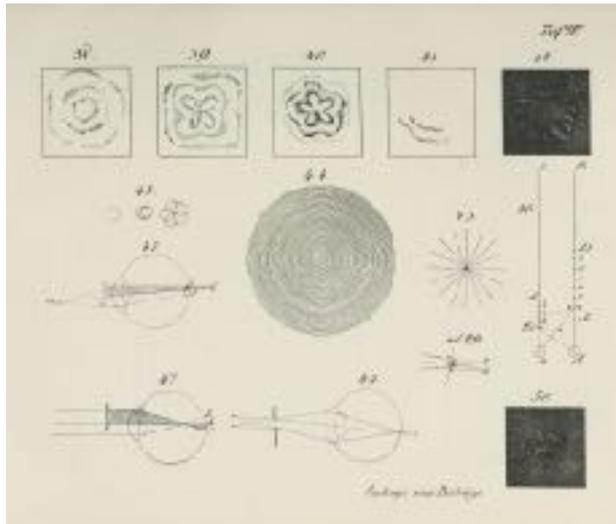
Text by Siri Black

Wietske Maas
The Corruption of the Eye: On Photogenesis and Self-Growing Images (2015)
E-flux Journal



An image from Friedlieb Ferdinand Runge's chemistry experiments as seen in *Der Bildungstrieb der Stoffe, veranschaulicht in selbstständig gewachsenen Bildern* [The formative tendency of substances illustrated by autonomously developed images], (Berlin: Matthes & Seitz, 2014).

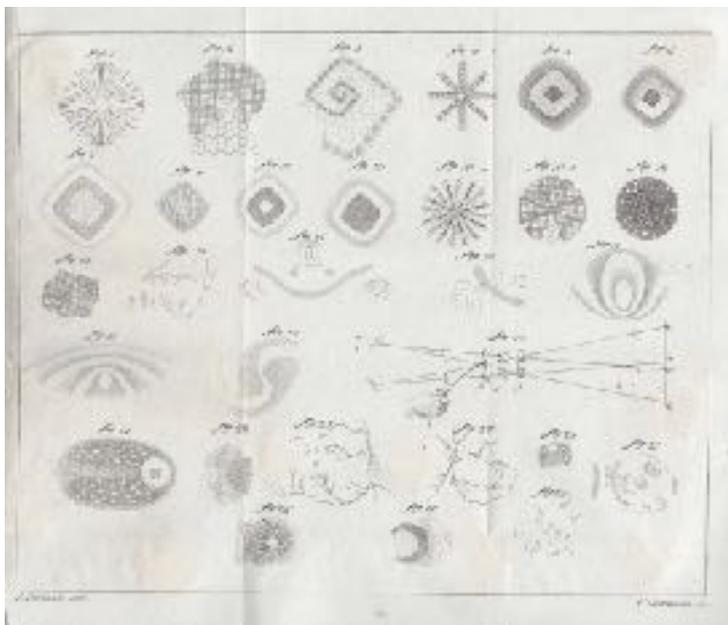
Purkinje's Drawings (1887-1869)



Visual vertigo and flashing lights after the use of foxglove (38–42), concentric circles and rays for testing of the myopic eye (44–45), axis of the short- and long-sighted eye for an explanation of strabismus (46), or explanation of inverted movements of an object (pin) in front of an image near the eye (47–49). In *Neue Beiträge zur Kenntniss des Sehens in subjectiver Hinsicht*, 1825, p 54.



The reflections of a candle flame from the structures of the eye. From *Commentatio de examine physiologico organi visus et systematis cutanei*, 1823, p 59.[9]. "Fig. 1. Candlelight reflection from anterior and posterior cornea and from the anterior and posterior portion of the lens. Fig. 2. Candlelight reflection from the anterior surface of the cornea and the posterior surface of the lens where the image is reversed. Fig. 3. Candlelight reflection from the anterior surface of the cornea and from the anterior surface of the lens where the reflection is erect. Fig. 4. Semicircular umbrula (weak shadow) which projects from the iris to the anterior surface of the lens. Fig. 5. A light from the substantia albuginea to the center of the anterior chamber."



Subjective visual phenomena, in *Beiträge zur Kenntniss des Sehens in subjectiver Hinsicht*, 1819, p 178.

For further reading... *Purkinje's Vision, The Dawning of Neuroscience* (2001) by Nicholas J. Wade and Josef Brožek in collaboration with Jiří Hoskovec

David Fagan

What could possibly be wrong with a man who's lived as long as I have (2013)

Video installation, 2 channel

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fcP8h-g7iAk>

O western orb sailing the heaven,
Now I know what you must have meant as a month since I walk'd,
As I walk'd in silence the transparent shadowy night,
As I saw you had something to tell as you bent to me night after night,
As you droop'd from the sky low down as if to my side, (while the other
stars all look'd on,)
As we wander'd together the solemn night, (for something I know not
what kept me from sleep,)
-Excerpt from *When lilacs last in the dooryard bloom'd* by Walt Whitman,
1865

Daisy Lafarge and Natalie Chin

Courtesy of the artists

a record of failed transcendence (8th May song) (2015)

it is in the General Interest
to be tendril to each other, or something

but the needs flailing out of our eyes like so many
tentacles keep ransacking each other, wavy in the void

at night do trains wrap the tracks around themselves, like
the secret hug given to a lamppost whilst looking a bike?

*no, because there is no night, and
lamps and lampposts have an unspoken jobshare*

on the full moon my eyes crusted over and no amount of
rice cakes could tell you what this means

is it worthwhile crafting metaphors for the heart-burst
felt, when the unknown woman fell

asleep on my shoulder on the last train home? strange
solidarity of unfamiliar tweed, foreign cocktail

of perfume and cheap shampoo: they
briefly quelled the fear in all my inner bestiary

what good are eyes that see shapes before people
what good is an "eye for things"?

when endoscopies outperform interior design? who will
tell the schoolgirls complaining about marks that they'll

be goddamn grateful (once they land the full-time jobs of
assessing degrees of themselves in each other)?

*dread that feathered arms gathered up the ugly
city & its spaces folded in on each other: food
banks and abusers, sick-stairs and conference
rooms: a voice leaked from the Cloud & whispered
words like "invasive" & they were of great comfort
to all*

meanwhile, we live like sleeves without permission to
leak, holding our breath that could summon a storm

at 7am, eyes refreshing screen
as another wave of paper boats
float in from the distance, towards
the shoreline of meshed fingers
tirelessly unfolding all night
that which already bears the
weight of the morning news

now all you can think of is
how as a child you knew to pray
when you were afraid that no one
was coming home before dark

lines fall and fences rise
everyone is a stranger again
it doesn't matter if you're [____]
if your loyalties have been carved up

as if all equally immutable
as if you've given up your agency
as if the dead have said,
'yes, it's true: the place I was born
was the only place that could ever
anchor me back to shore'

so the day's warmth comes forth
black oil rippling through river
maybe this is what it means
when sometimes it has
to close before it opens
and yet who has won
and at what cost

on one hand so tempted by
the slip towards the exit sign
on the other I have this burning
torch I hold before the Thames
and this terrifying unfinished anger

Eye Floaters (EF) and other subjective visual phenomena diagram (2012) by Floco Tausin

Rick Myers

Courtesy of the artist

Drawing with removed subject (2013)

Video & sound

Figure skater: Brittney Rizo

<https://vimeo.com/61148911>