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**“How to Bring Yourself Up Gay”
2012 – today**

The project “How to Bring Yourself Up Gay” explores memorial practices and temporality in relation to queer childhoods. Children - often used as innocent figures in need of heterosexual saving - find ways to sail around such protection. I have been tracing how in different kinds of memorial objects such as photographs and toys.

Using digitally manipulated photographs and film, the series “m.a.s.k. / men acting super kinky” (2015 –) and “When Disney fell asleep at the desk, all the queer kids came out to play” (2012 –) form the current renditions of this project.

Leather Armor (m.a.s.k. series)
2015, Giclée print, 60 x 80 cm





Self service (m.a.s.k. series)
2015, Giclée print, 56,7 x 60 cm

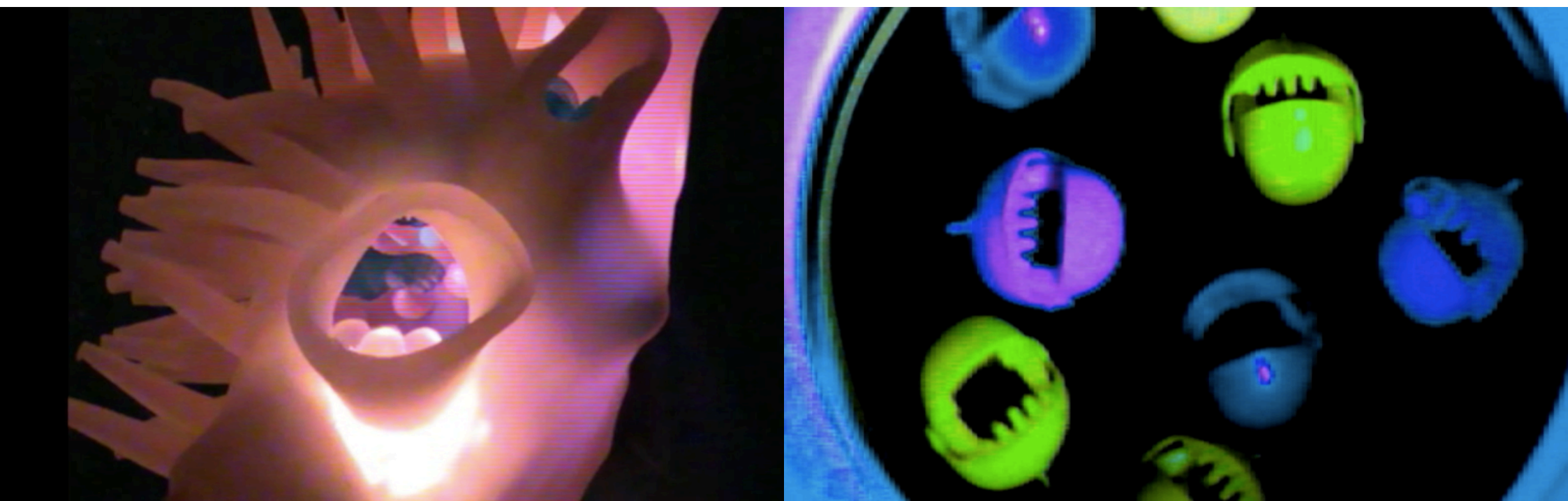
men acting super kinky

Is there a childhood before gender? Sensing that the decade of androgyny still left most of the cool stuff to boys, I traversed the world of Back to the Future, Star Trek and Karate Kid as Andi. This went without question between my friends and I. We spent hours and hours playing with our favorite toy line of the time called *m.a.s.k.*, small action figures who drove cars called *Stiletto*, *Slingshot* or *Afterburner* that turned into submarines, helicopters and hovercrafts and had their very own animated series.

Amazingly enough its evil characters Floyd Malloy, Bruno Sheppard and Sly Rex sported gay codes that appear more than subtle to the adult queer eye: leather outfits, pink triangles, purple socks and conspicuous gloves. *V.e.n.o.m.* was the archenemy of *m.a.s.k.* who would trick them by following their motto “illusion is the ultimate weapon”. Add that to Disney's evil über-lesbian Ursula who terrorized Ariel, the mermaid. Fat ladies have to be evil, blond billionaires beat leather guys. Or do they? Luckily, kids have a queer sense of their own.

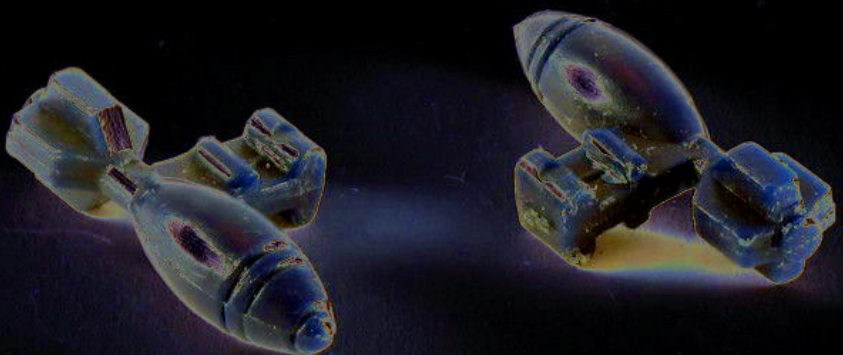
What children play with is often under gender-normative scrutiny in fear of queer futures. It is only fitting then that my childhood toys are now becoming protagonists in the series “*m.a.s.k. / men acting super kinky*”, a photographic and filmic homage to lesbian appreciation for gay mens' aesthetics. By putting these characters in queer constellations, I re-cite them as formative elements of a queer becoming. After all, Andi is only a lesbian some of the time.





men acting super kinky, video stills, 2015, 11:56 min.

<https://vimeo.com/151956635>
code: m.a.s.k.





***“When Disney fell asleep at the desk,
all the queer kids came out to play”***

For the past couple of years I have been collecting childhood photographs from the personal archives of others and myself. The images I pick out offer traces of early queer selves - a pink overall worn with the outmost pleasure, a lingering gaze, or the way a body is leaned forward.

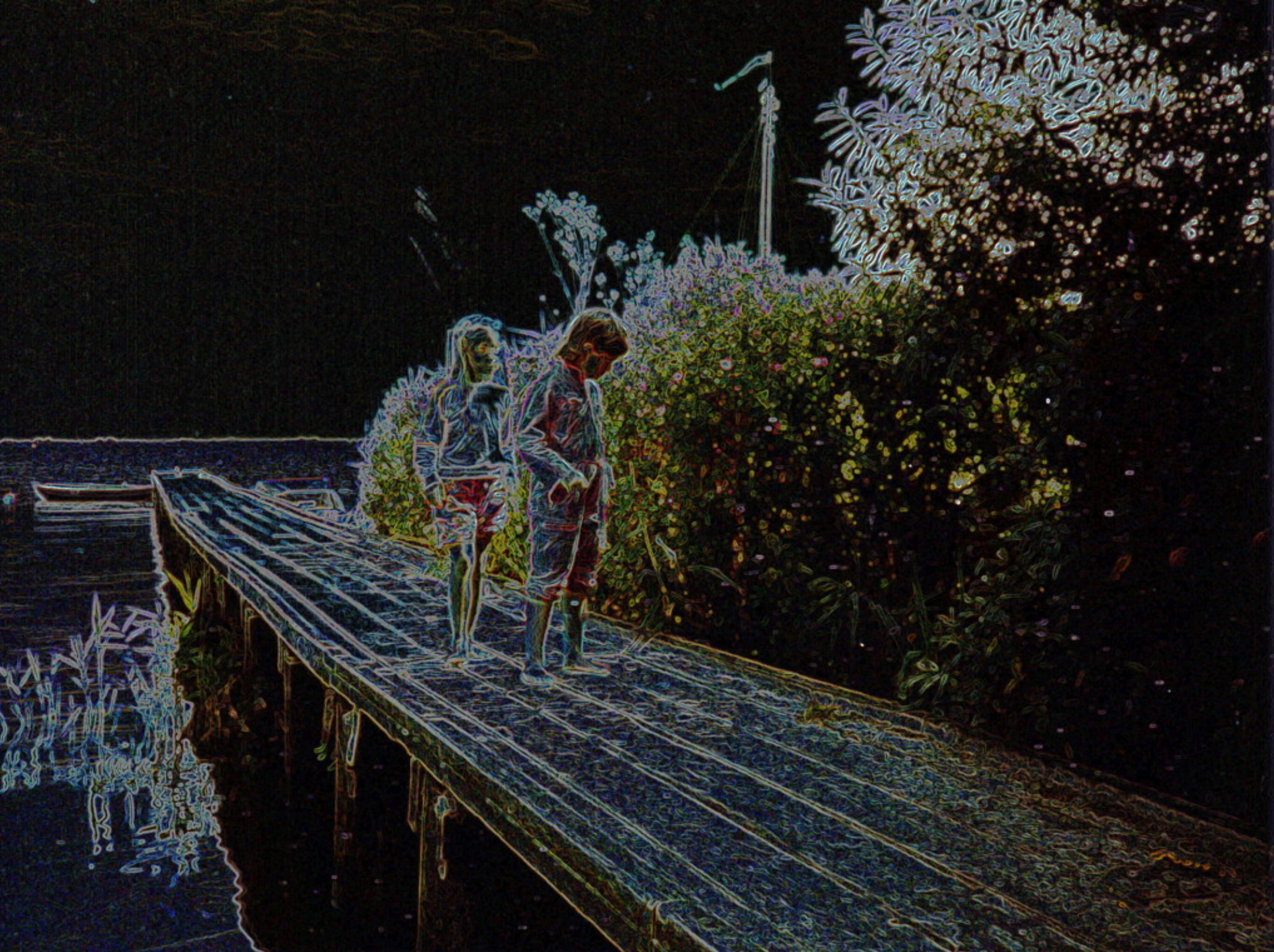
I scan and then digitally re-work these photographs, manually cut out details from the originals as well as the manipulated images and layer them into one another. Others, I submit to an exuberance of digital colors until the queer pierce they elicited in me when finding them feels most present. Creating my own prints in RGB allows for color spaces reminiscent of the 1980s esteem for Neon. Handling the images, emphasizing details and pairing them with imaginary surroundings, are all ways to gaze backwards in time.

The historian Annette Kuhn says that taking pictures is actually a way of remembering forward in time. Someone took these pictures with the intention of creating particular memories. I re-create alternate ones.

To me, the archive that unfolds itself through this project offers traces of bringing yourself up gay when no one else would.



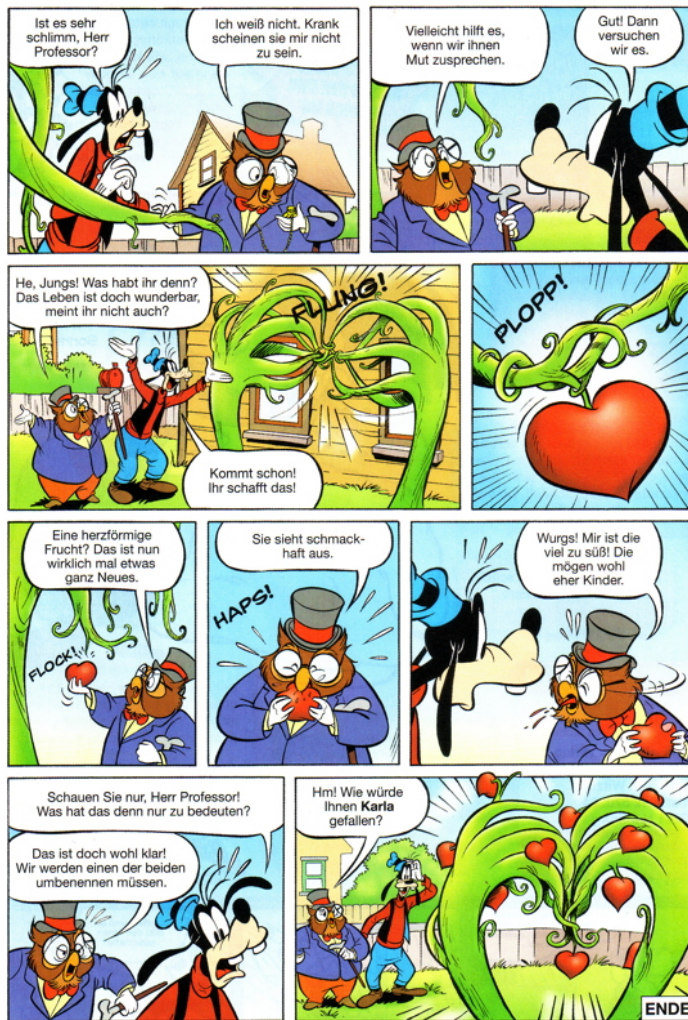
Hulk rocks green, 2015, Giclée print, 81,6 x 60 cm



Observing bushes, 2013, Giclée print, 53 x 40 cm



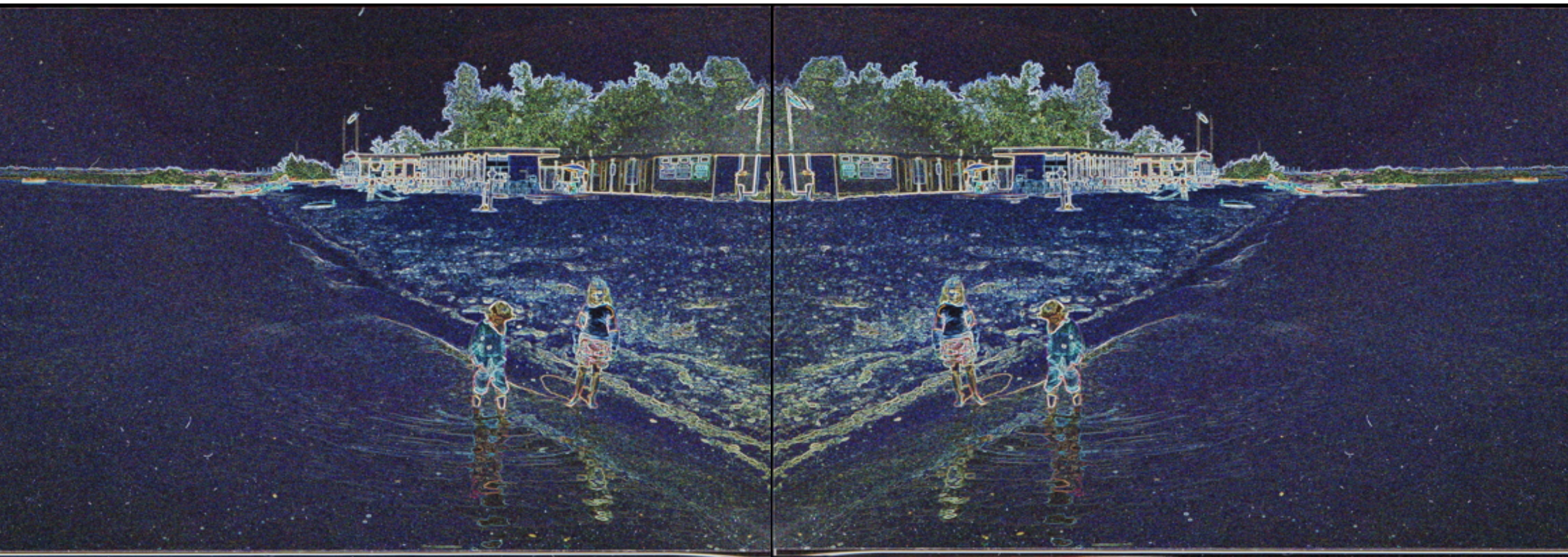
When Disney fell asleep at the desk, all the queer kids came out to play, 2014-2015, collage, 125 x 250 cm



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When Disney fell asleep at the desk, all the queer kids came out to play, detail



Blue walk, 2014, Giclée print, 59 x 20 cm