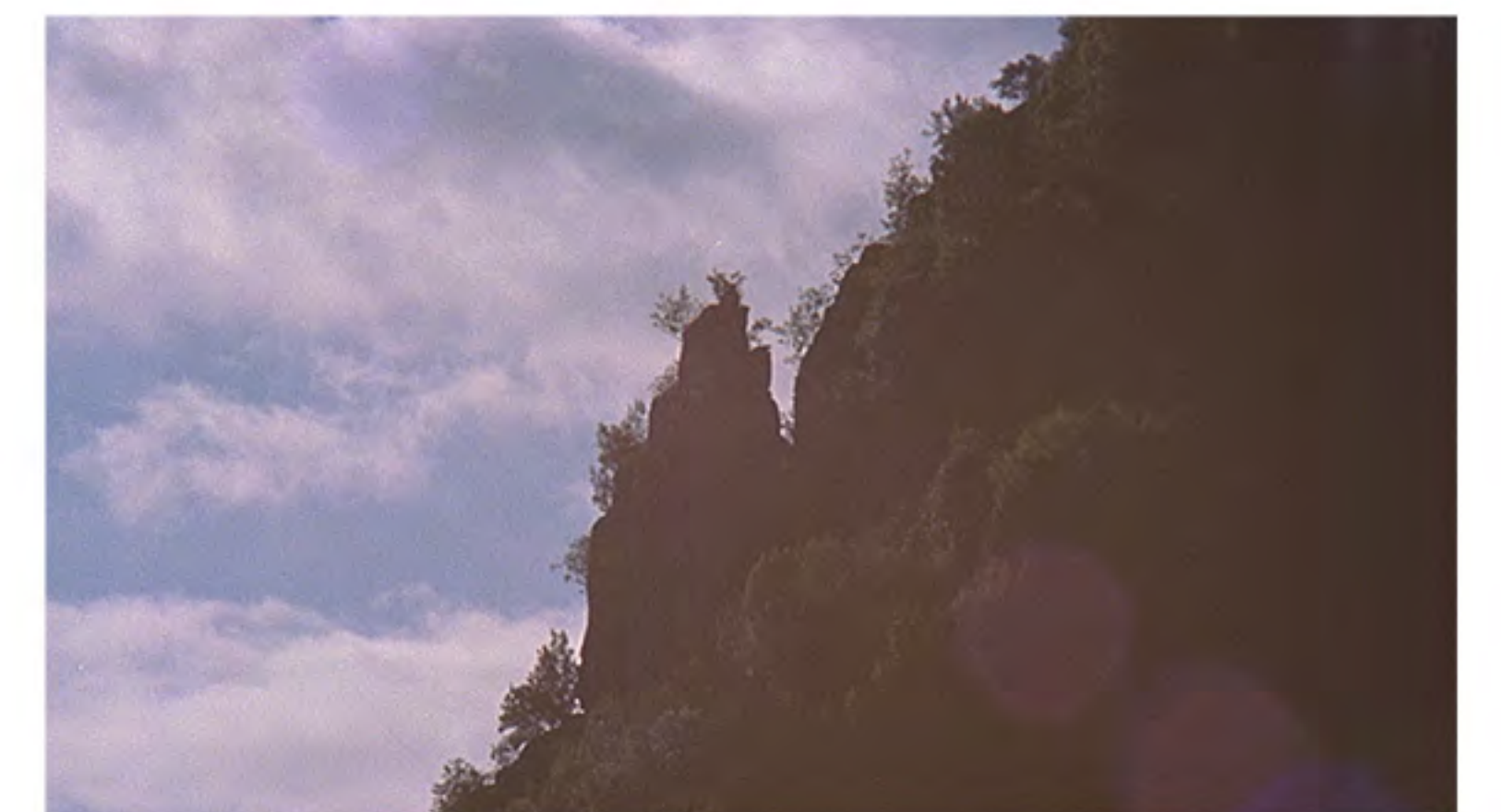
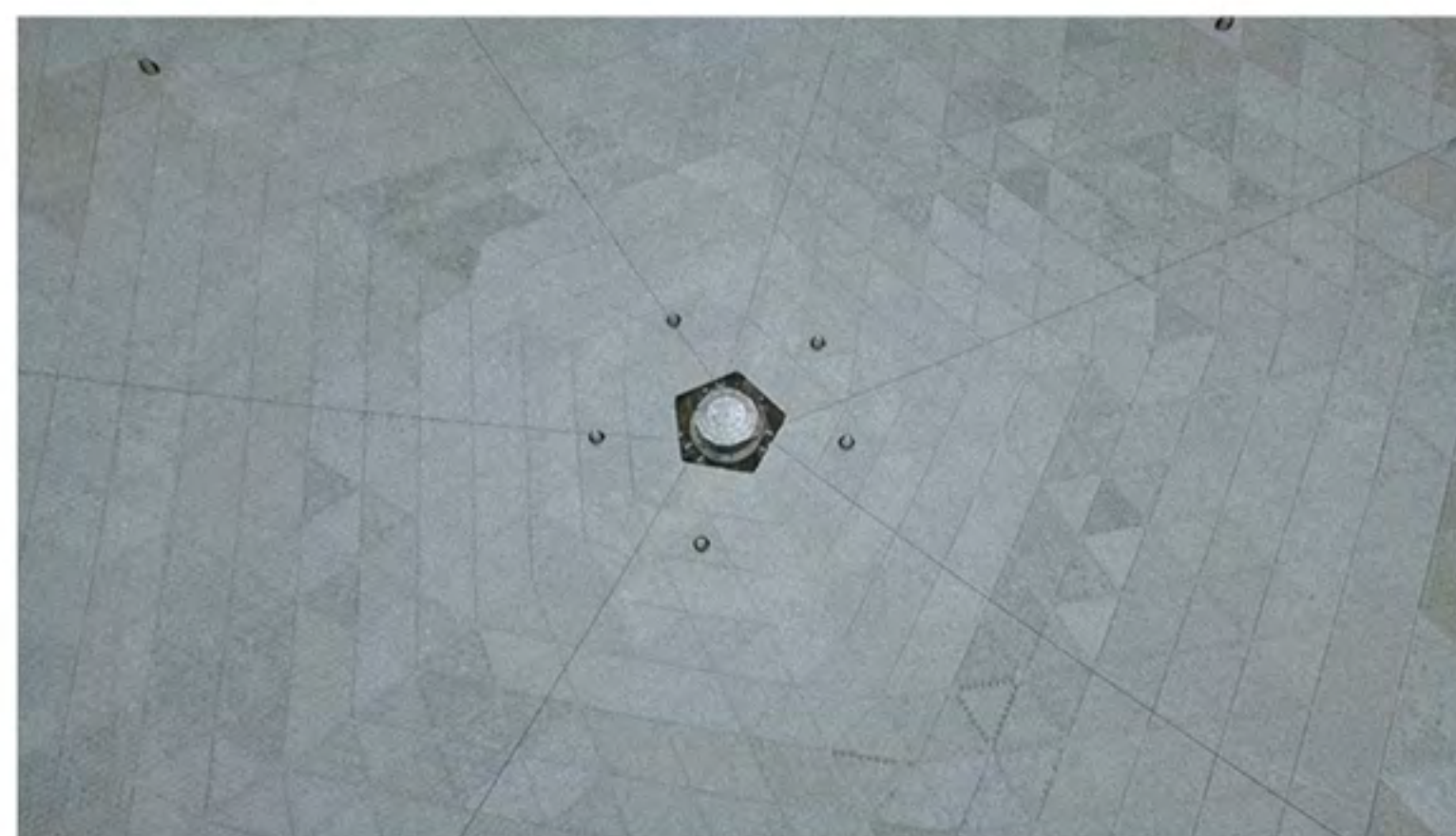
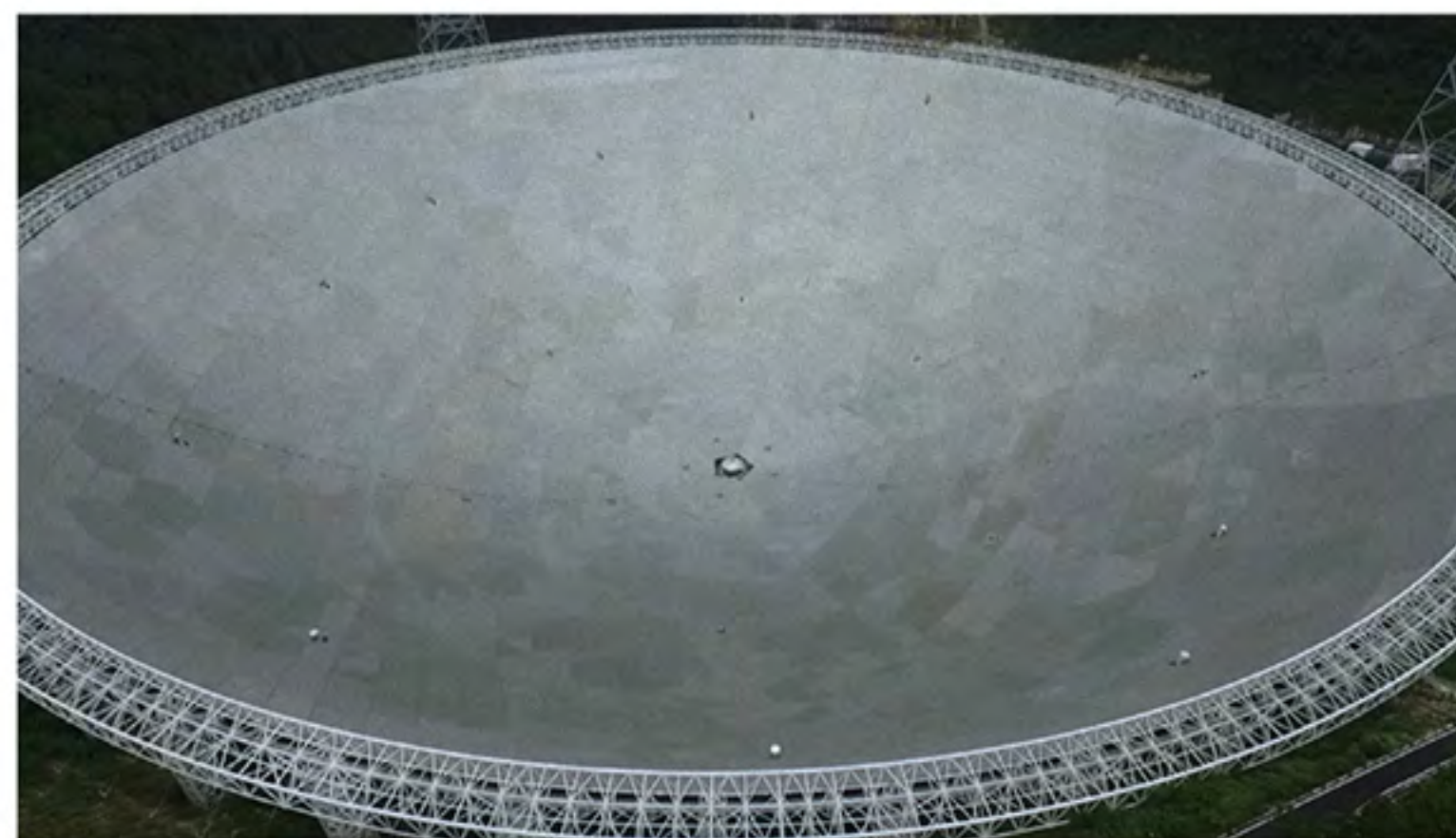


Alice Wang

# FILMS

# *Pyramids and Parabolas*





Film stills, *Pyramids and Parabolas II*, 2021, 18m 45s



*Pyramids and Parabolas* is an infinite film series that explores our relationship to the natural world by examining how we communicate with the unknown universe through geometric structures.

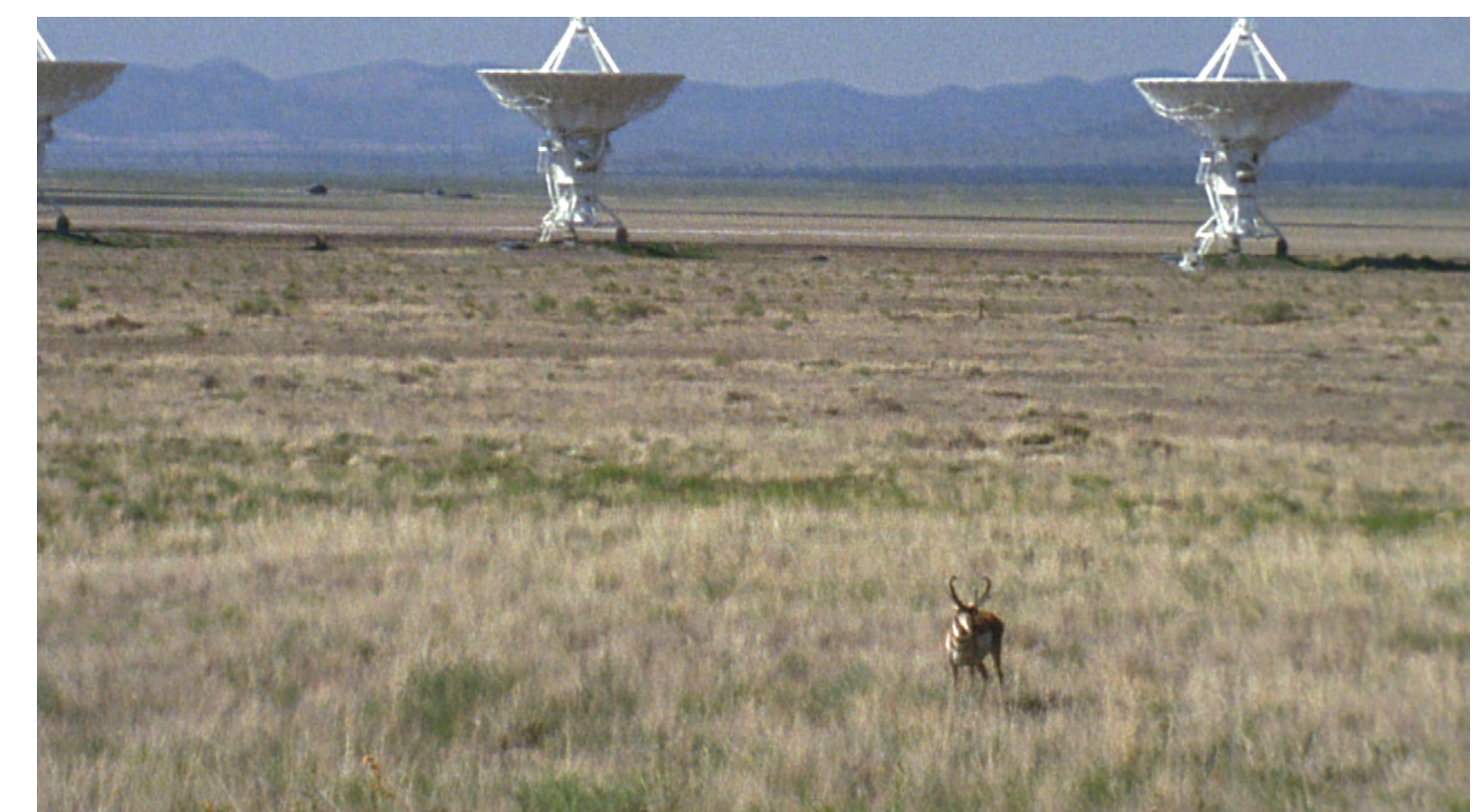
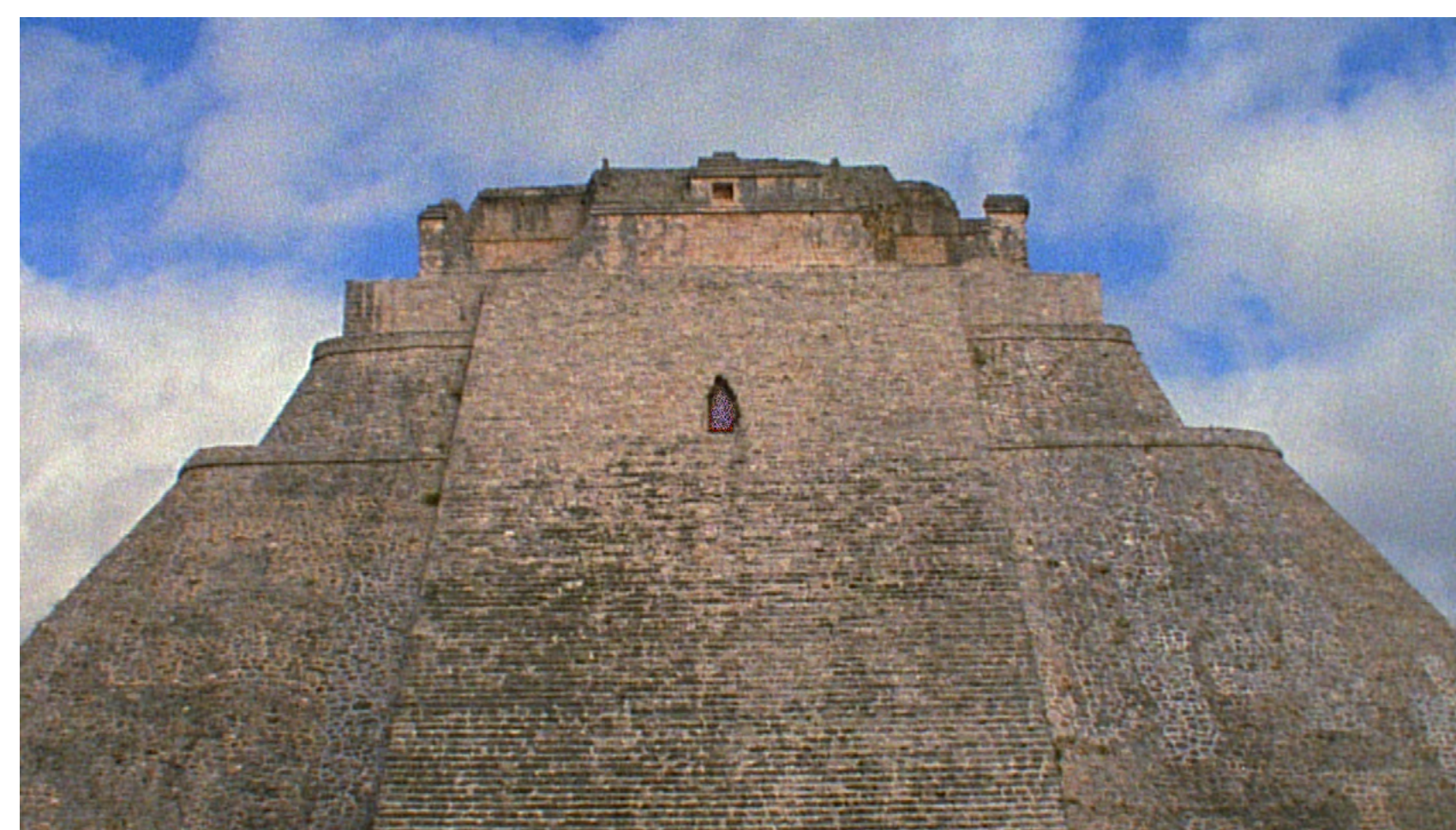
The idea of an infinite film series allows each episode to take on a looseness and autonomy in order to experiment freely with the serial form. From collage, to essayist, to abstract, each installment of the series assumes a different genre, which can be independent of the others. The episodes all-together form a total work of art with a common theme and interconnected narrative threads.

As the series unfolds, *Pyramids and Parabolas* will shape shift and take on a life of its own. New ideas and formal experiments may emerge from the openness of the film form that is not predetermined.



Weaving together scenes from the movie *Contact* with 16mm footage shot at the Very Large Array — the radio astronomy observatory in New Mexico, as well as three Mayan pyramids across the Yucatán Peninsula—Calakmul, Uxmal, and Cobá, *Pyramids and Parabolas I* imagines how geometric forms can function as portals into parallel dimensions. The parabolic shape of modern day radio telescopes—made to listen to signals emitted by celestial objects and events, and similarly the pyramidal shapes of ancient Mayan monoliths—where priests communed with forces beyond the human realm, can both be understood as ways of transiting into alternate universes.

The first episode established the groundwork for the dialectic between the pyramidal structure of ancient monolithic architecture and the parabolic shape of modern radio telescopes. Featuring found dash-cam footage of the apocalyptic fireball that came crashing down from outer space into Chelyabinsk, Russia, *Pyramids and Parabolas* started with a bang that signaled our precarity in the cosmos as a vulnerable planet amidst powerful natural forces. Our relationship to nature is not just what's on Earth; we live in a world that is largely inhospitable to humans and other living organisms.

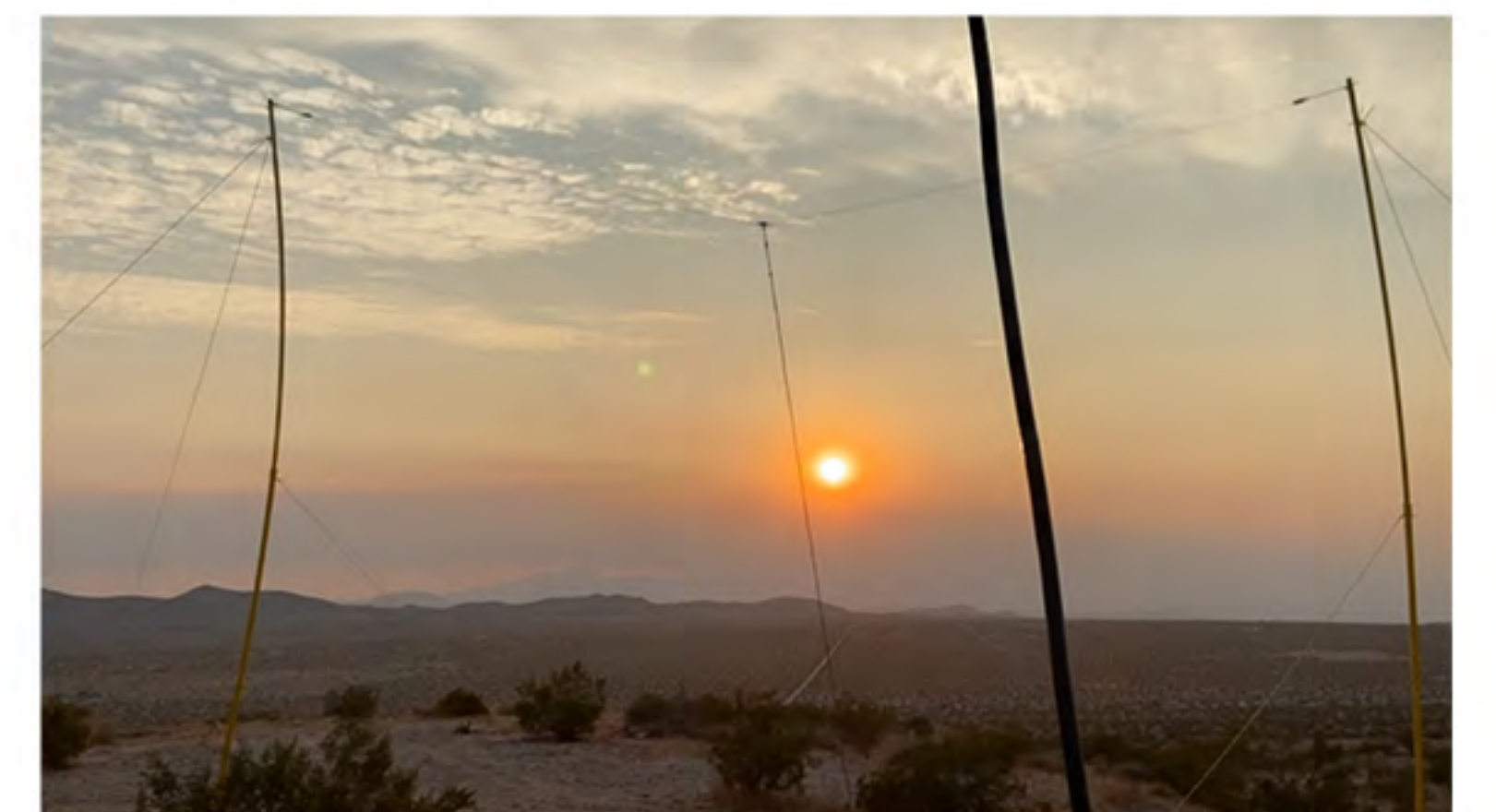
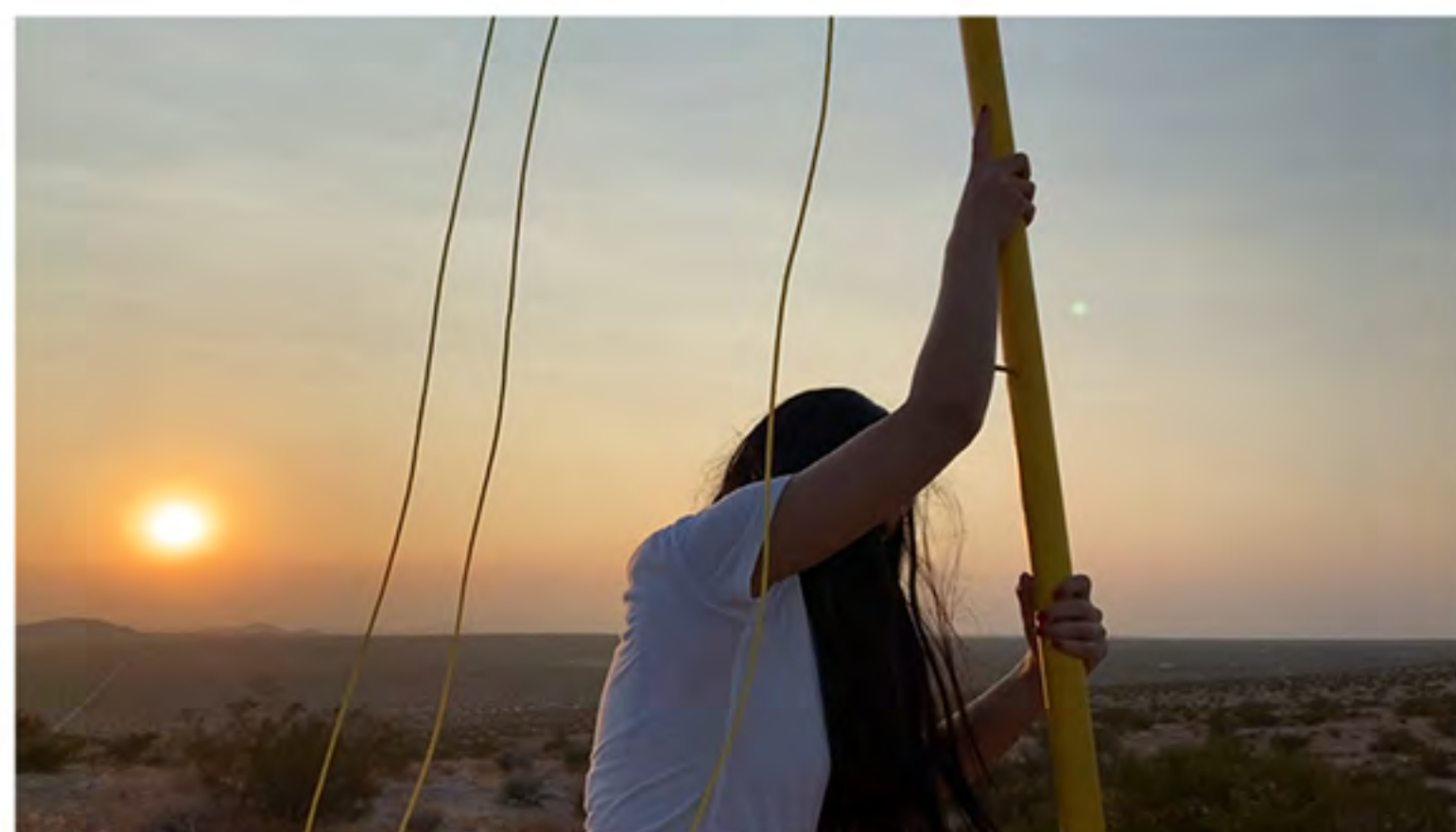
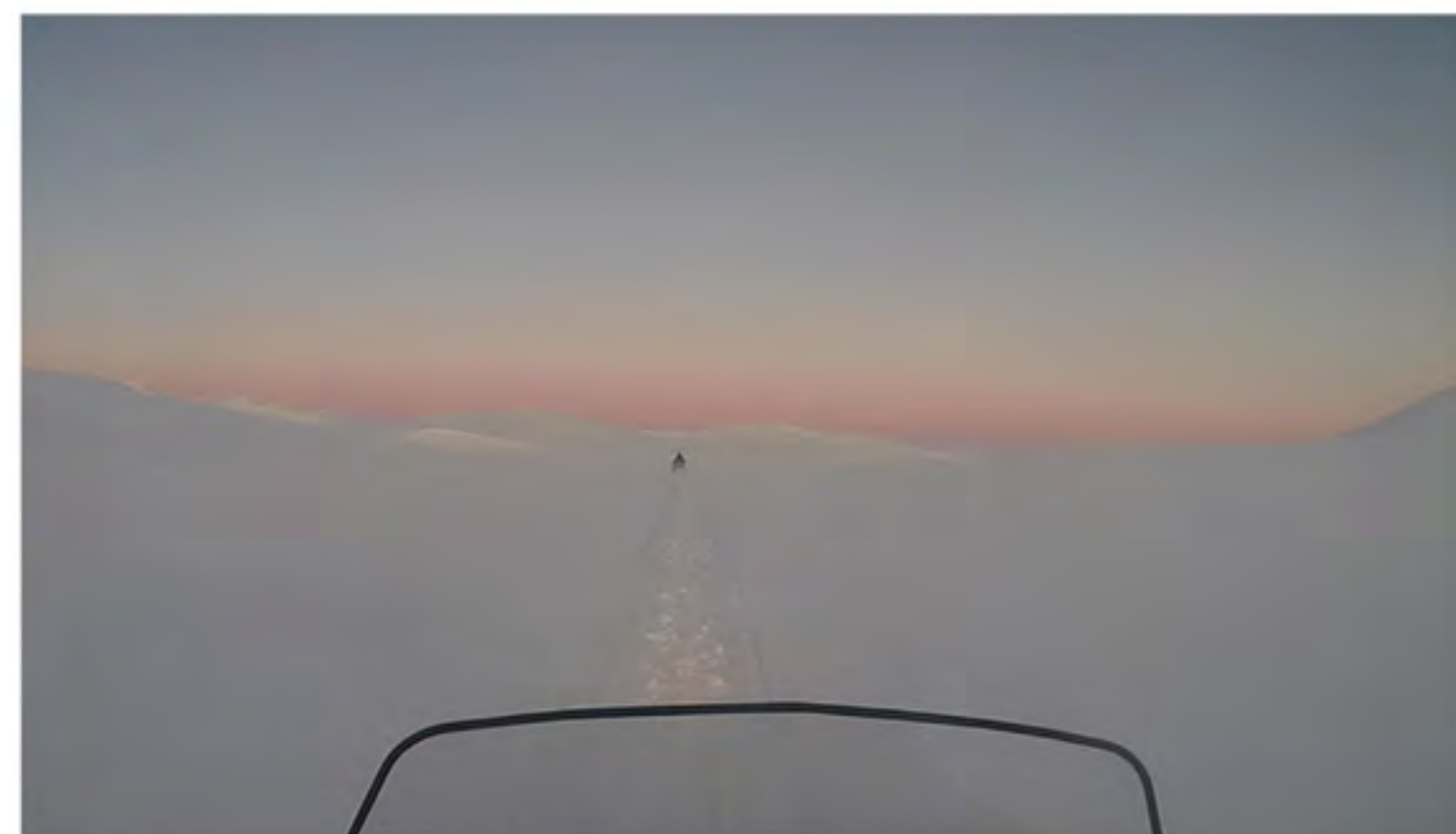
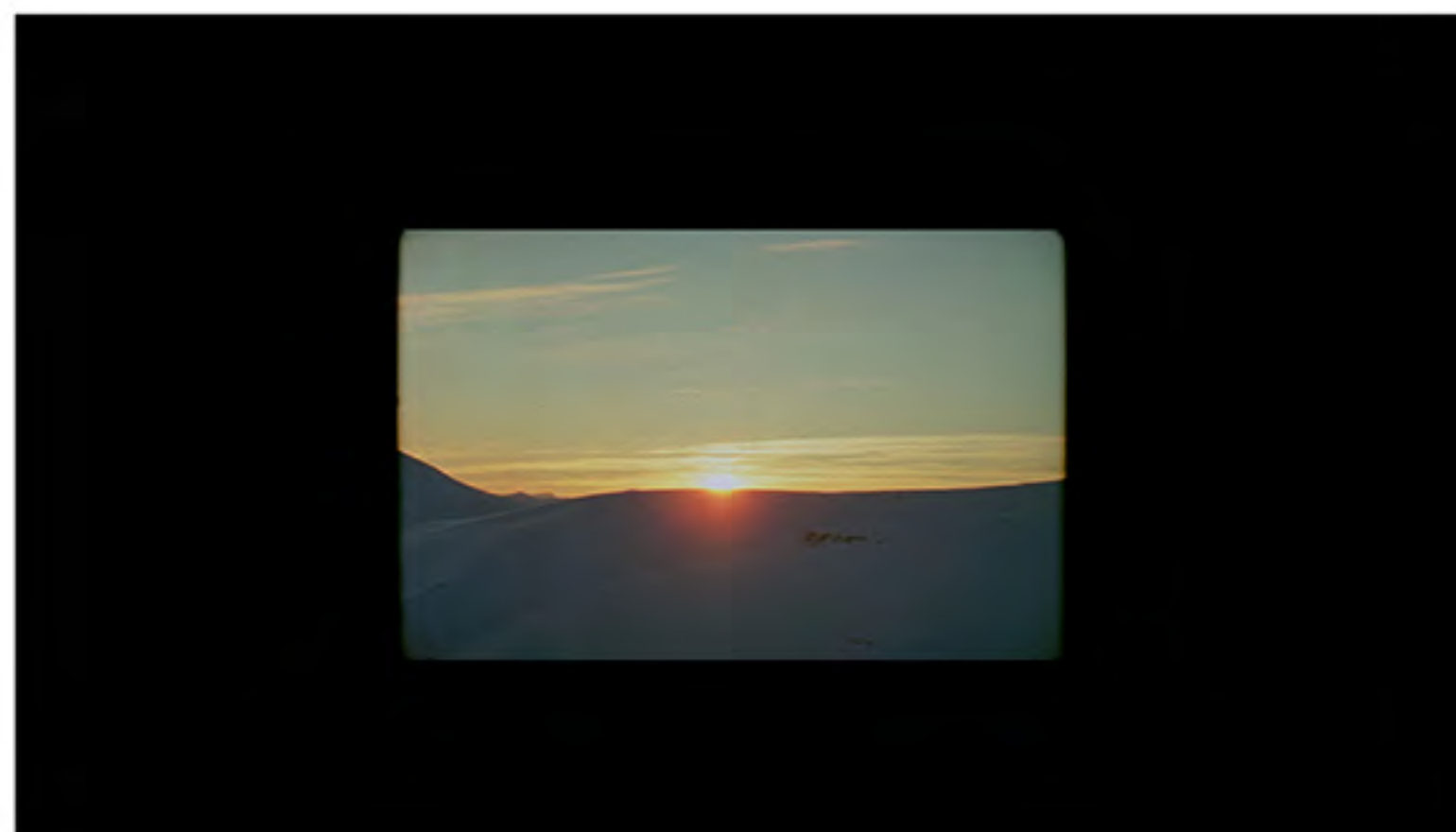
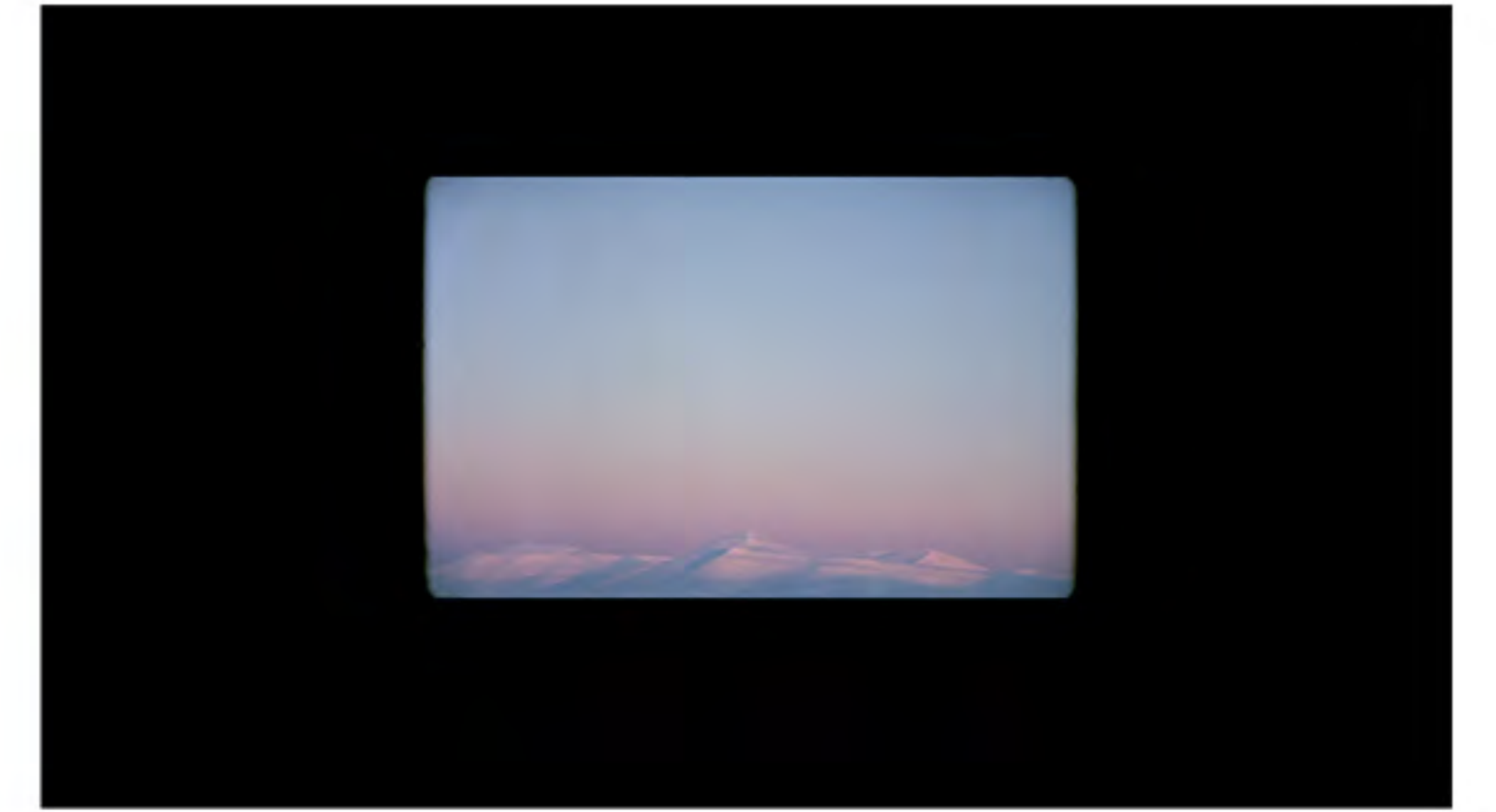




*Pyramids and Parabolas I*

<https://vimeo.com/364601921>





Film stills, *Pyramids and Parabolas II*, 2021, 18m 45s





Calling attention to the body in order to foreground the experiential aspect of the film, the second episode of *Pyramids and Parabolas* begins with a three-minute body scan meditation in the dark. Followed by a quote from the sci-fi novel *Three Body Problem*, “Three days from now, between one and five in the morning, the entire universe will flicker for you” — which acts almost like a spell, the film is a travelogue of the artist journeying through surreal and sublime landscapes in nature. Bookended by the building of a NASA JOVE radio telescope in Twentynine Palms, California, the collage film is the artist’s quest to touch the cosmos and connect with the universe through flesh.

Film still, *Pyramids and Parabolas II*, 2021, 18m 45s



*Pyramids and Parabolas II*

<https://vimeo.com/560699934>



*Oracle*

2017

9m 56s



*Oracle* is a meditation on the relationship between plants, humans, and technology. Filmed collaboratively by Ben Tong and Alice Wang at Biosphere2 — a self-contained ecosystem enclosed in a 3.14-acre glass and steel structure, the work defamiliarizes the synthetic structure and the organisms living within it. In the age of the Holocene, the space of Biosphere2 becomes an allegory for our entanglement with the world. Despite our technological interventions, we find that it is no longer the case that we can disregard the noumenal world. Forces and substances like CO<sub>2</sub>, bacteria, UV rays, the weather and viruses exert their own presence. What is at stake is another way of relating to our mediated environment, our place within it, and death.



*Oracle*

<https://vimeo.com/243046147>