

# Solitary Baobabs

for solo single line instrument (including voice),  
solo electronics,  
solo single line instrument with electronics,  
or  
any combination of single line instruments, with or without electronics

Alexander Hawkins

For the 200th birthday of the Royal Academy of Music.

All subsequent notations and performance directions represent possibilities, rather than stipulations.  
Please - in this composition: music first, the ink second.

AH, Oxford, 10th December 2020

# Solitary Baobabs

(2020)

## Preliminary

The pages labelled 'P', 'T', 'Additive' and 'Subtractive' should be printed on transparencies. The primary material, 'P', can be layered at the performer's discretion with any number of 'T' pages, in any orientation/rotation, and the result placed either on a blank background, or on top of a 'U' underlay.

## Performance

The primary material should be navigated either through an additive process (cell 1, cells 1+2, ... , cells 1+2+3+4+5+6+7), or a subtractive process (proceed as far figure 1, then to figure 2, figure 3, etc.), with the relevant transparency overlaid.

All rhythmic notation is relative. The melodic line should be interpreted extremely freely. This includes dynamics, and phrasing (neither of which need be the same on subsequent iterations of the same cell). Free use should be made of octave transpositions, whether for interpretative purposes or purposes of instrumental compass.

Free use should also be made throughout of modulations and inflections of the sound: harmonics, tremolos, false fingerings, pizzicato, multiphonics, and so on.

In this composition from the Baobabs family, the circle is a nod towards Anthony Braxton's music system (the use of transparencies having been inspired by Braxton), and indicates an optional period of improvisation, as do the double-headed arrows. These improvisations should begin in the melodic and rhythmic language of the written materials at that point. They may be interpolated as (in)frequently as the performer wishes (including always or never).

The box in the final cell indicates an open repeat.

The graphic overlays should, in the first instance, be treated methodically rather than impressionistically: but what this method is should be determined by the performer. For one simple example, where a note intersects with a patch of colour, this might be taken to cue a modulation of the sound (such as that any note sitting within a blue area might be played 'sul ponticello'; and the intensity of the blue might in turn be linked to a dynamic response). This modulation could itself change over each iteration of the additive/subtractive process.

No explanation is offered of the 'U' underlays.

Where the piece is performed with electronics, the graphic overlays could be taken as cues for processing; but additionally, parameters such as spatial diffusion could be considered. If the electronics are operated by an additional performer, there is no need for the performers to use the same system of 'T' overlays or 'U' underlays as each other. Where the performance is by a solo electronic musician, the melodic information could be performed 'live' on a keyboard, or the cells stored as a series of pre-recorded samples (constructed from any sound source(s) whatsoever).

Vocalists have complete choice as to texts/phonemes/etc. One option for the use of the graphic overlays would be to help derive a 'found text' from a given source.

## Ensemble Performance

Where the piece is realised by multiple performers, they should all adopt the same structural process (additive or subtractive); but need make no effort whatsoever to synchronise their melodies, instead moving through the material in their own time. Especially with larger numbers of performers, the graphic overlays could also be read as suggesting spatial arrangements of the players.

## Baobabs

Other compositions from the Baobabs family (where relevant, ensemble name - album title - record label - year of composition or release):

Baobabs

(Alexander Hawkins Ensemble - No Now Is So - FMR Recordings - 2009)  
(The Convergence Quartet - Song/Dance - Clean Feed - 2010)

Scarlett Ibis, Then Constellation

(2011)

Unknown Baobabs

(2012)

Unknown Baobabs, Seen In The Distance

(Alexander Hawkins Solo Piano - Song Singular - Babel Label - 2014)

Baobab Constellation

(Alexander Hawkins Ensemble - Step Wide, Step Deep - Babel Label - 2014)

Baobabs + SGrA\*

(Alexander Hawkins Trio - Alexander Hawkins Trio - Alexander Hawkins Music - 2015)

[K]now

(Alexander Hawkins Ensemble - Unit[e] - Alexander Hawkins Music - 2017)

Environment Music

(Alexander Hawkins/Elaine Mitchener Quartet - Uproot - Intakt Records - 2017)

Ecstatic Baobabs

(Alexander Hawkins ft. Evan Parker and Riot Ensemble - Togetherness Music - Intakt Records - 2021)

# P1 (C, treble)

Musical score for P1 (C, treble) consisting of four staves. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, trills, and dynamic markings. The first staff contains a sequence of notes with slurs and accents. The second staff features a trill marked 'tr()' and a double bar line. The third staff shows a series of notes with a double bar line and a trill. The fourth staff includes a boxed section of notes and a trill marked 'tr()'.

# P1 (Bb, treble)

Musical score for P1 (Bb, treble) consisting of four staves. The first staff contains a sequence of notes with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The second staff includes trills marked 'tr()' and a double bar line. The third staff features a complex rhythmic pattern with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The fourth staff includes a boxed section of notes and a treble clef with a key signature of one flat. Arrows and circles point to specific notes throughout the score.

# P1 (Eb, treble)

Musical score for P1 (Eb, treble), consisting of four staves of music. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, trills, and ornaments, along with performance instructions like slurs and accents.

The first staff contains a sequence of notes with slurs and ornaments. The second staff features a trill marked 'tr(3)' and a slur. The third staff shows a series of notes with a slur and a final ornament. The fourth staff begins with a series of notes, followed by a boxed section containing a few notes, and ends with a slur and an ornament.



# P1 (C, bass)

Musical score for P1 (C, bass) consisting of four staves. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, trills, and dynamic markings. The score is written in bass clef.

The first staff contains a sequence of notes with slurs and accents, ending with a trill. The second staff features a trill marked 'tr()' and a double bar line. The third staff includes a trill marked 'tr()' and a double bar line. The fourth staff contains a trill marked 'tr()' and a double bar line.

Additive

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

Subtractive

7.

6.

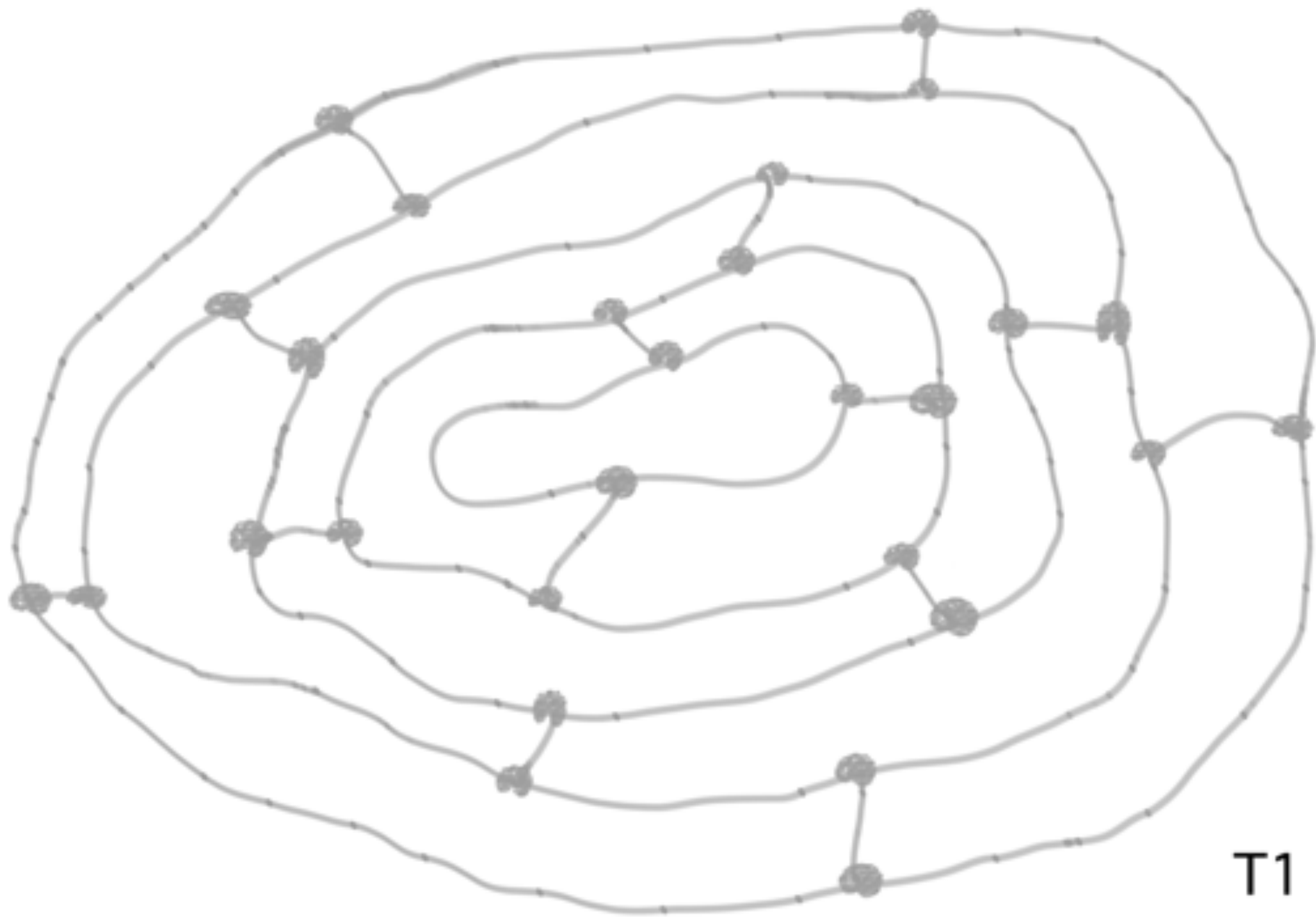
5.

4.

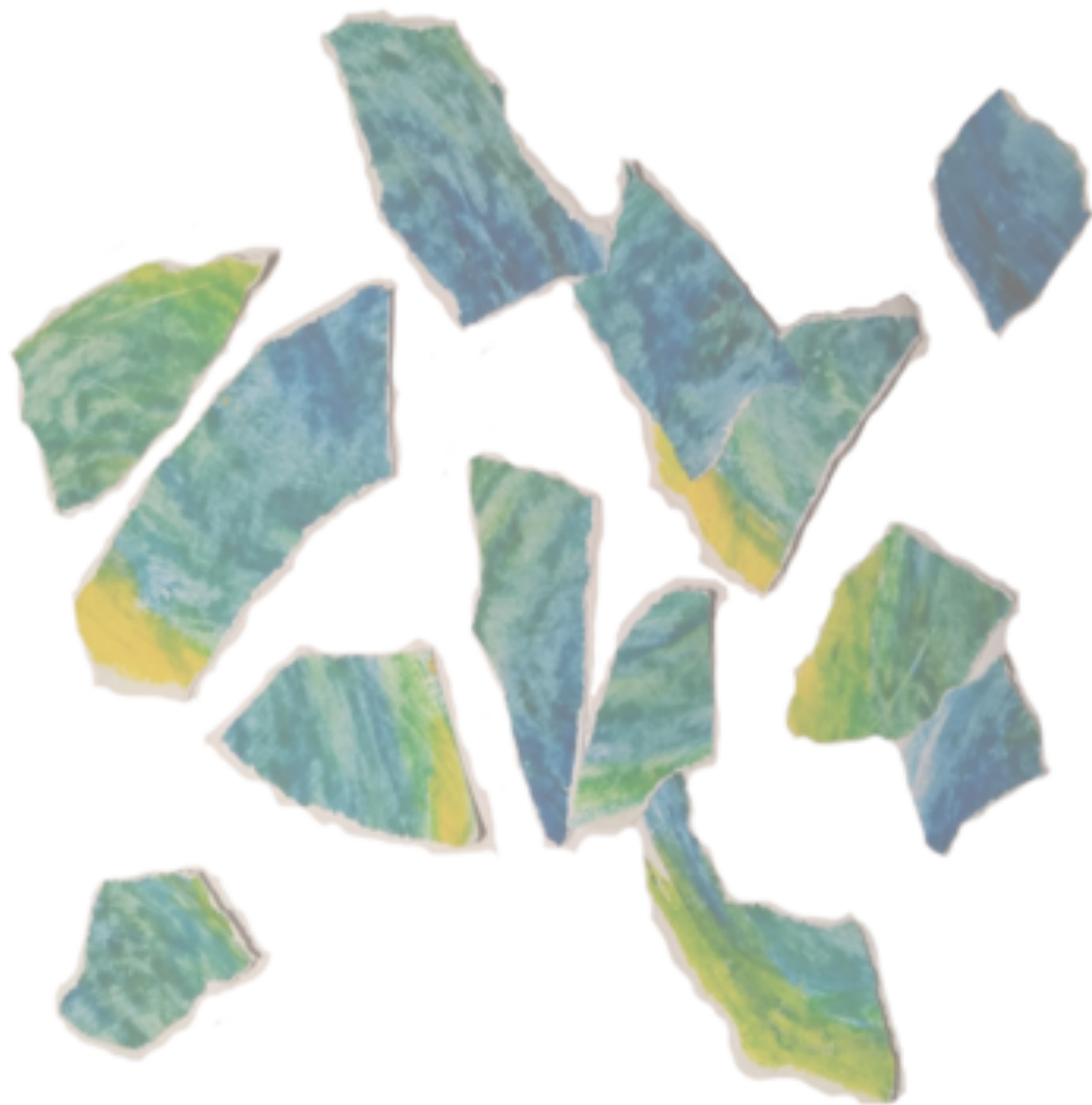
3.

2.

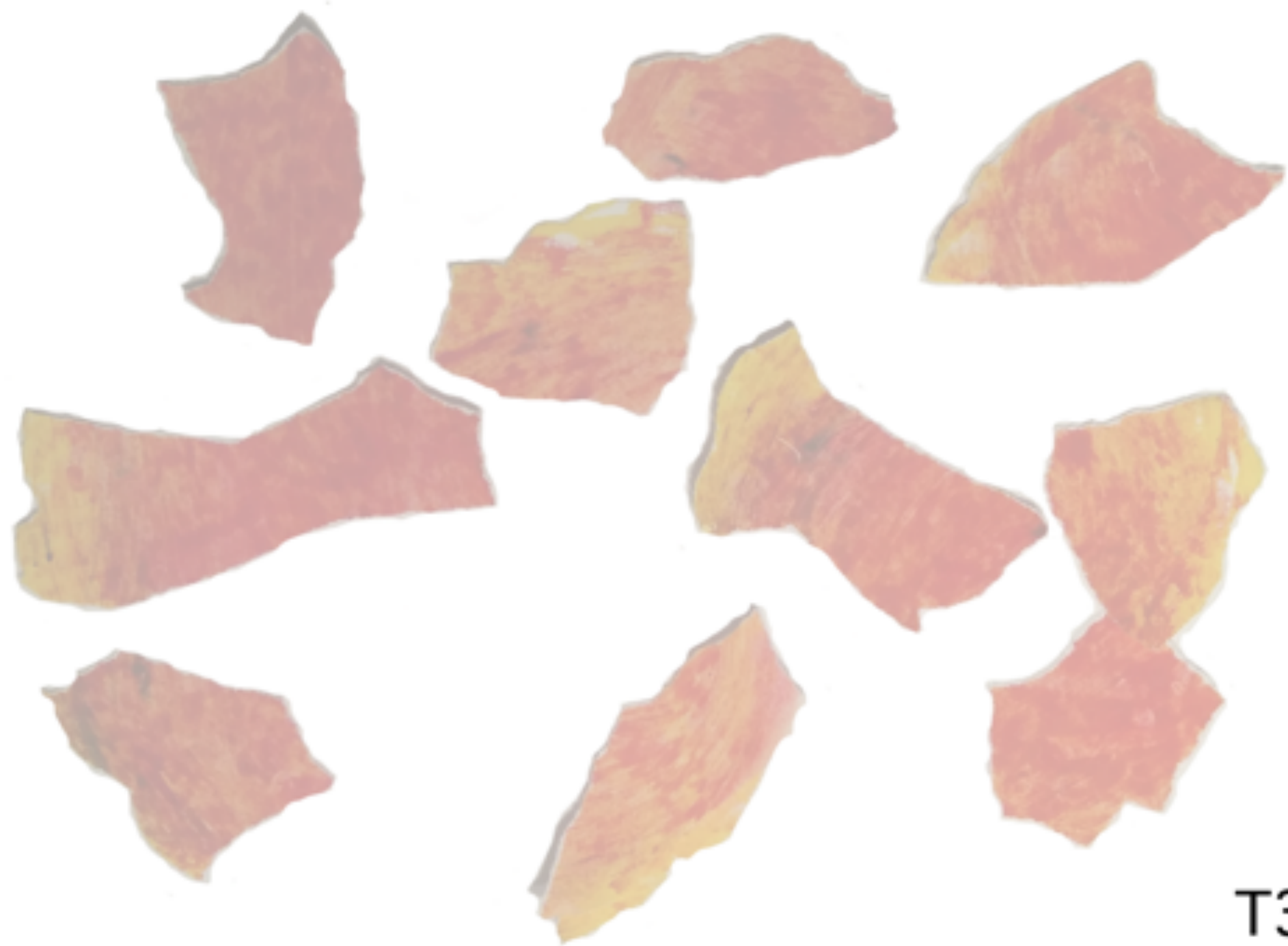
1.



T1



T2



T3



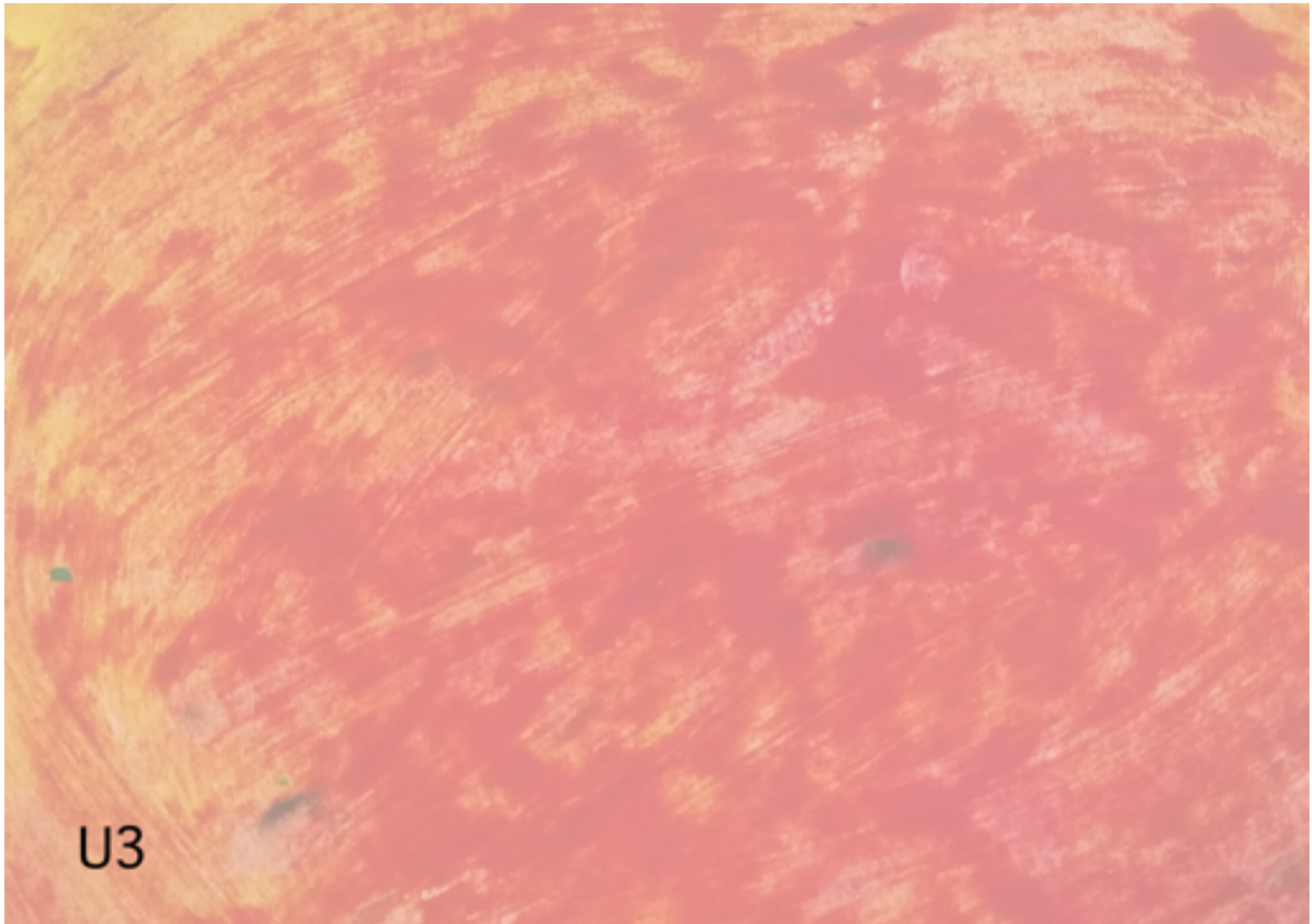
U1





U2





U3