

Detail of Contessa (2019), 8" x 10", Digitally generated image



RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

Artist: CL Fisher

January 6 - February 8, 2021

At Origin, 687 Mount Pleasant Road, Toronto

ABOUT

CL Fisher



CL Fisher is a generative artist who came to visual art after a 30-year career in software development. Working primarily in code-based art, CL studied at Centennial College's Fine Arts Studio program, winning the Peter Dickinson Award for radical creativity, and at the Arts Academy of Turku University of Applied Sciences (Finland).

CL has exhibited in Toronto and Sweden.

Samples of Fisher's work can be found at clfisher.com

Introduction

In 2018, I started focusing on psuedo-randomness as the main thrust of my art practice. Initially, letting chance play a significant role freed me from worrying about whether I was doing every single little thing "right", but I have found it has led me down paths I would never have investigated otherwise.

Random Encounters is the result of two-and-a-half years of working with randomness and developing new ways to combine it with my love of words and of the mythology of the common era.

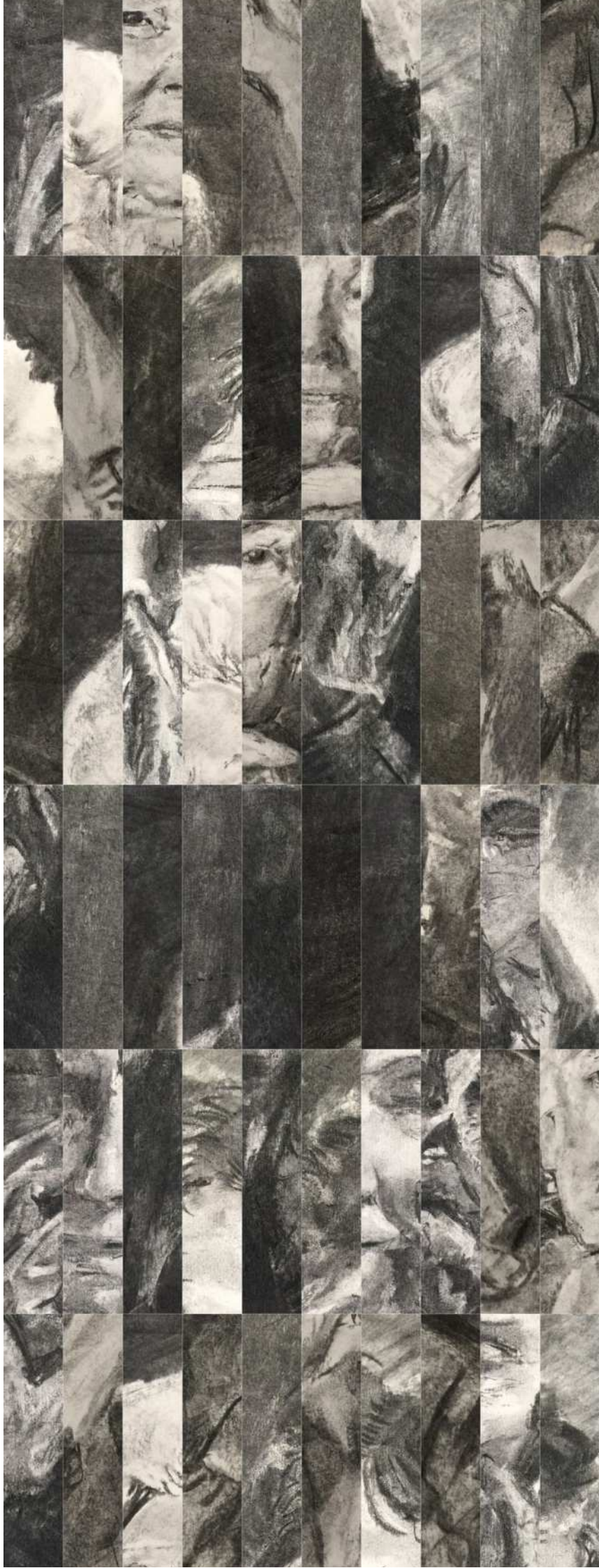
The copyright for all works belongs to the artist.
Images may not be reproduced in any form without express consent by the artist.

Two Helens

(2018) 12" x 32" Digitally manipulated drawing
Limited canvas edition of 5 \$235

"Two Helens" is ultimately based on Yosuf Karsh photographs of Helen Hayes, and of Helen Keller. I made charcoal drawings from the photographs, then divided them into sections and rearranged them by chance.

The fragmentation and combination of the two base images speaks to the unreliability of our mental images of our elders, of the near truths, misattributions and utter fabrications that make up our stories of our predecessors..



Jericho

**(2019) 8" x 10" Digitally Generated Image
Limited Metal Edition of 5 \$105**

In 2019, I started manipulating the pixels in existing images, developing methods that let me give my process a set of parameters, then walk away for several hours while it sorted the pixels in the underlying image according to my instructions.

This image is based on a portrait of Claudette Colbert. The title refers to the blowing of the trumpet in the last scene of "It Happened One Night" destroying the "Walls of Jericho".

The first 25 images from my "Assorted Actresses" series formed the basis for a project where people voted on which images they liked best, and then I used that information to generate new images. (see my website for the results)



Kansas

(2019) 10" x 8" Digitally Generated Image
Limited Metal Edition of 5 \$105

"Toto...

I have a feeling we're not in Kansas anymore."

Based on a photograph of Judy Garland, this piece captures a little of the overstimulation of arriving in a place of too many colours and too many people.

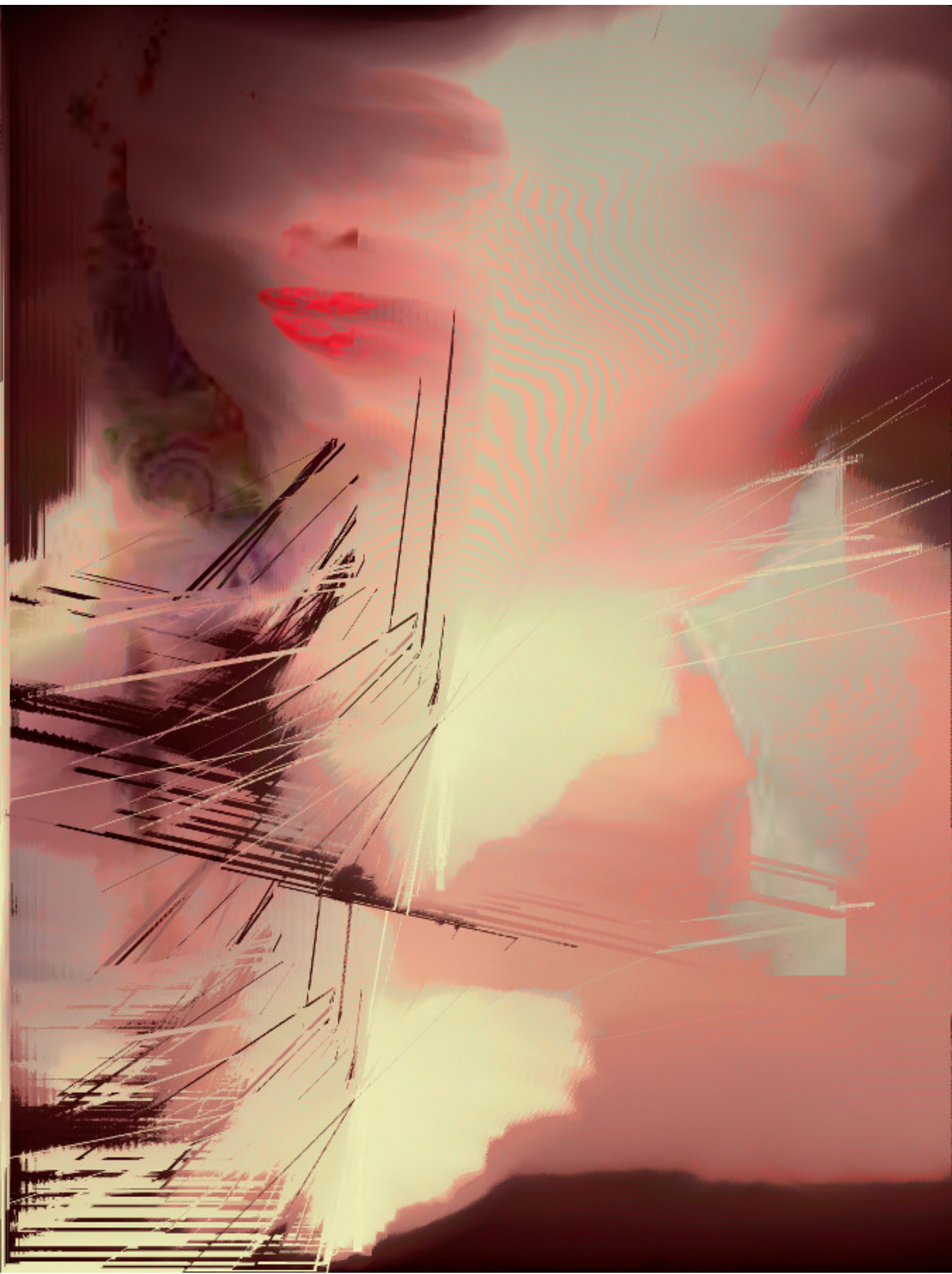


Contessa

**(2019) 8" x 10" Digitally Generated Image
Limited Metal Edition of 5 \$105**

This piece, based on a publicity shot of Ava Gardner, retains more of the flavour of the original than the other pieces in the series.

The process of creating the pieces was deliberately limited to 4 hours for each image. While this one was running, I had to travel for an hour, and shut my laptop to take it with me. Hence, it had fewer iterations through the process, and ended up in a rawer state.



Dinner

**(2019) 8" x 10" Digitally Generated Image
Limited Metal Edition of 5 \$105**

This piece is based on a portrait of Jean Harlow. The title refers to the film "Dinner At Eight".

I chose the titles for the "Assorted Actresses" pieces first, before generating them, based on some fact I knew, some movie or particular scene the actress had been in. So I quite enjoyed the interplay between the title of this piece and the bloodiness of the resulting image.

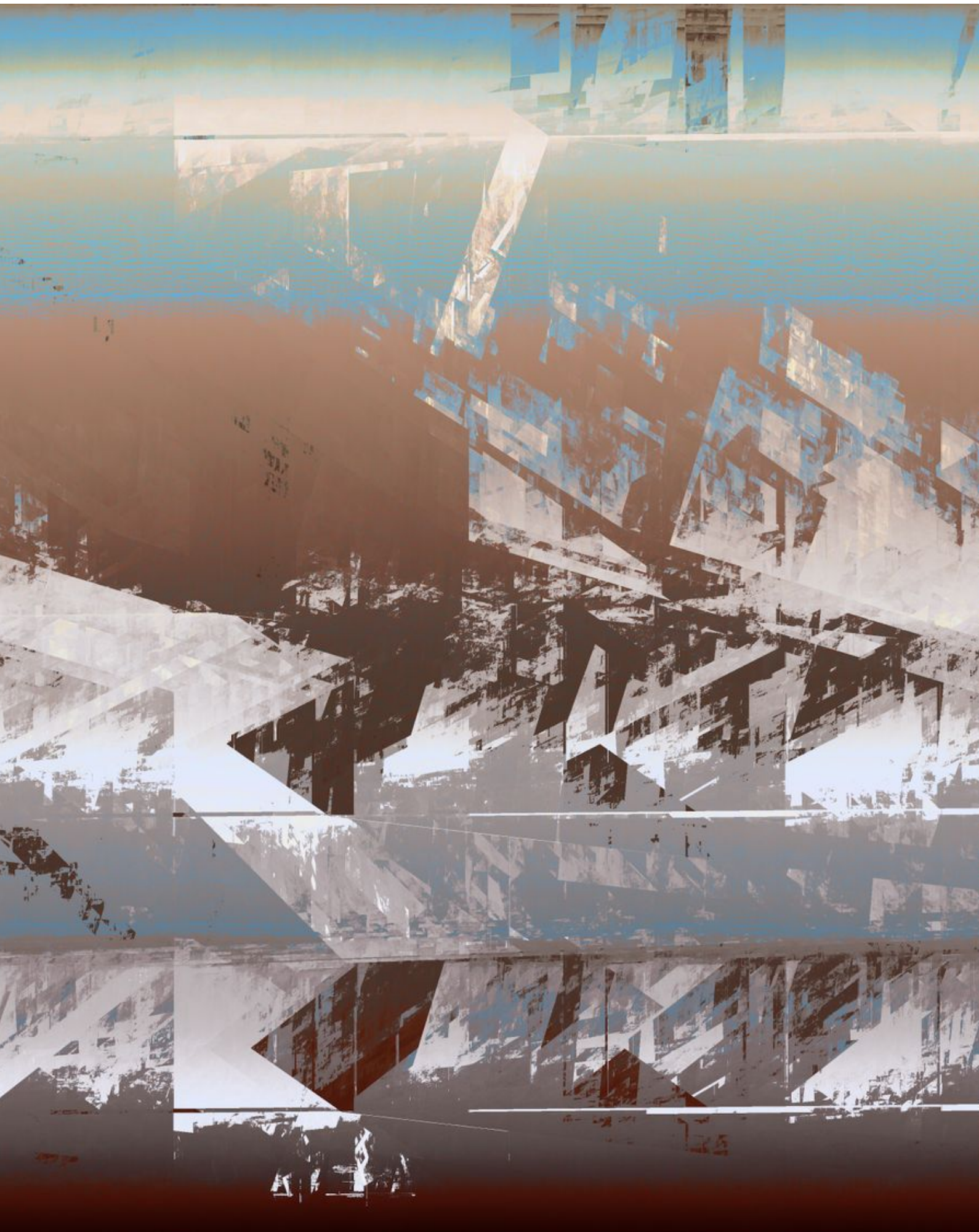


Mame

(2019) 8" x 10" Digitally Generated Image
Limited Metal Edition of 5 \$105

*One night she started to shim and shake
That brought on the Frisco Quake.
So you can put the blame on Mame, boys.
Put the blame on Mame.*

This piece is based on a photograph of Rita Hayworth, The title refers to a song sung in the film "Gilda". Once again, some lucky correspondence between the title and the result.



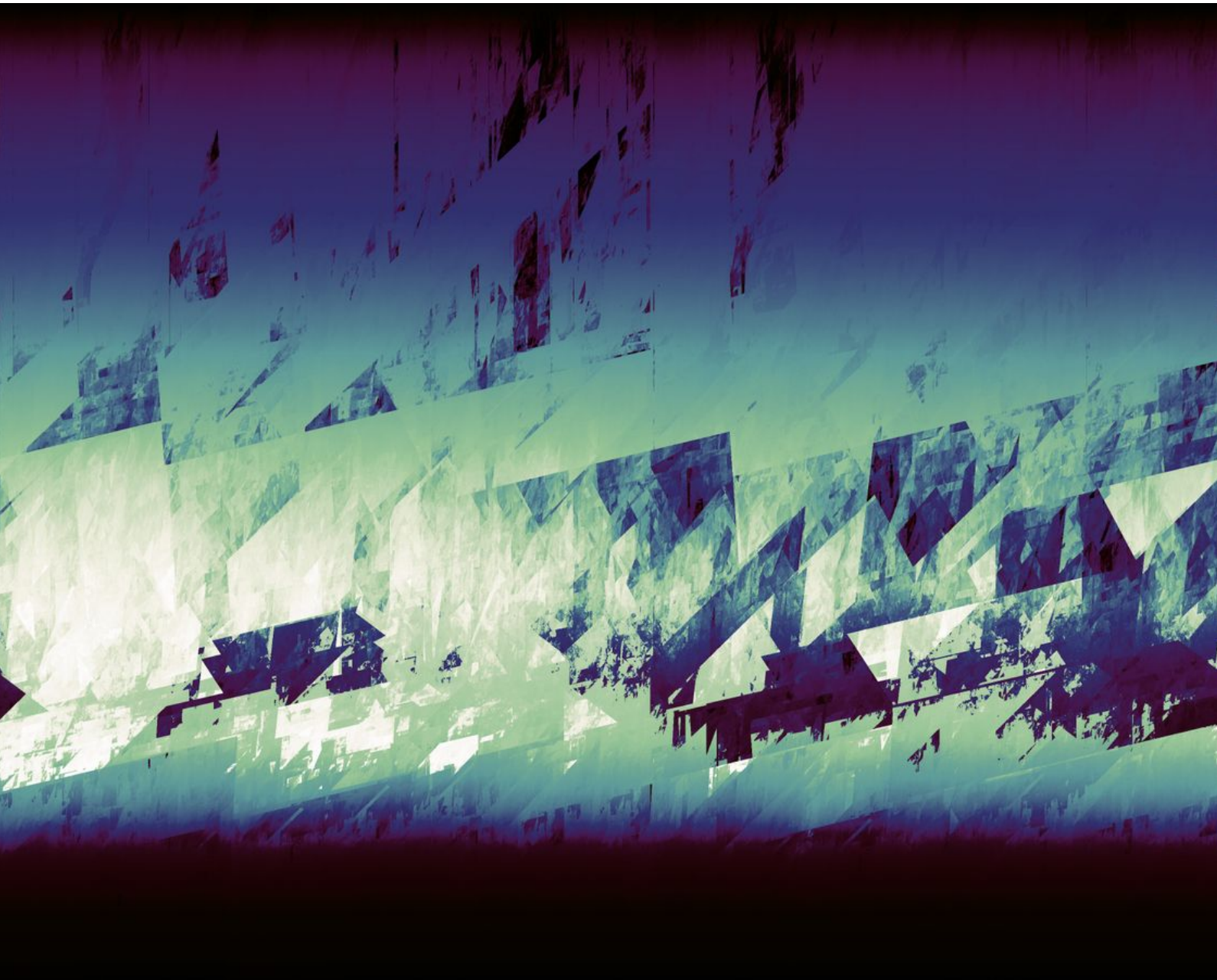
Goodness

(2019) 10" x 8" Digitally Generated Image
Limited Metal Edition of 5 \$105

Coat check girl: "Goodness, what beautiful diamonds"
Maudie: "Goodness had nothing to do with it."

This piece is based on an image of Mae West.

Maybe it's just the suggestion of the title, but I see diamonds.

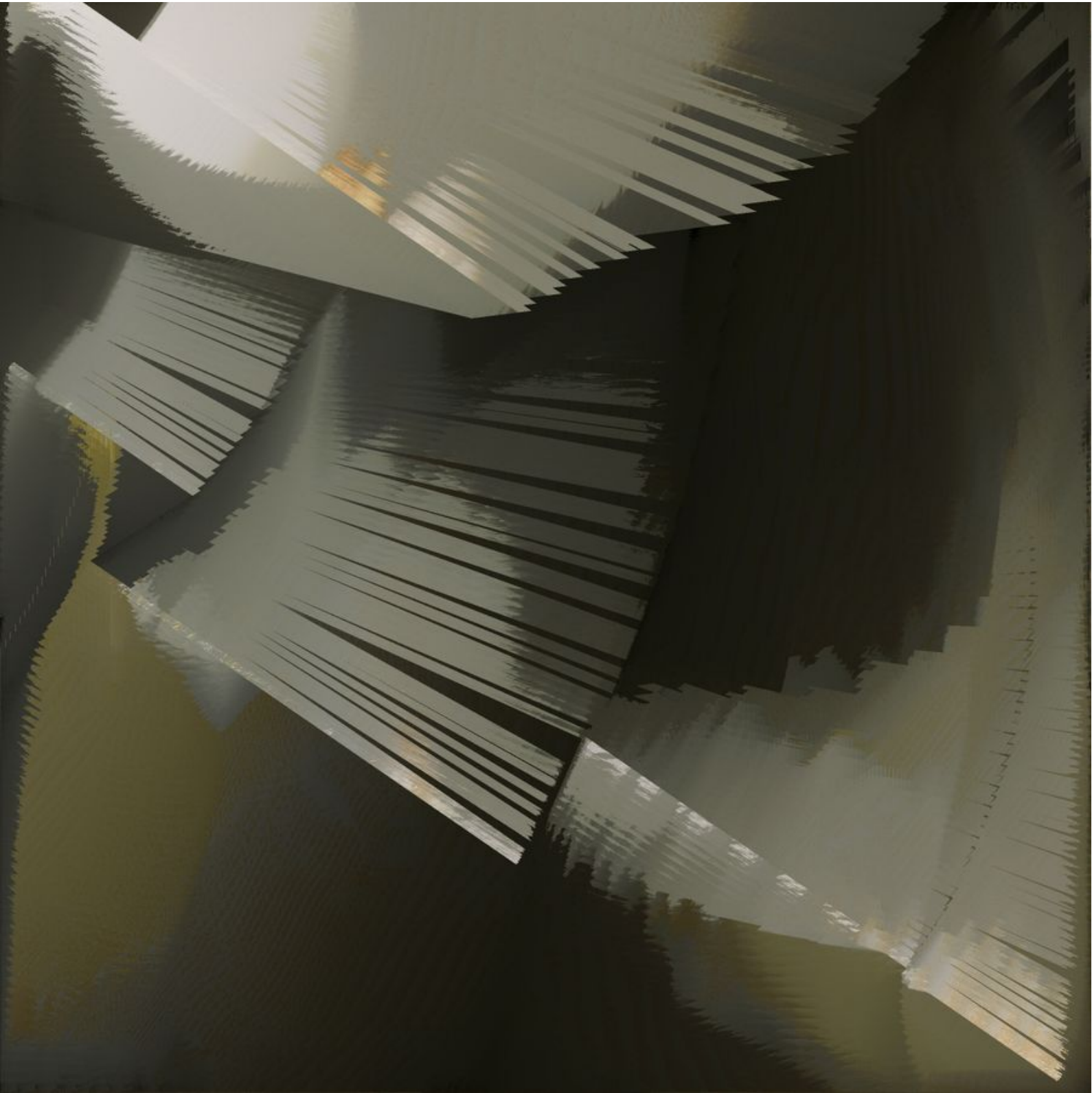


Rearrangement in Grey and Black No. 1

(2020) 8" x 8" Digitally Generated Image
Limited Metal Edition of 5 \$100

This piece is based on John McNeil Whistler's "Arrangement in Grey and Black No. 1", aka "Whistler's Mother."

A large swath of my work is re-arranging pixels, so I couldn't resist this.



Canute

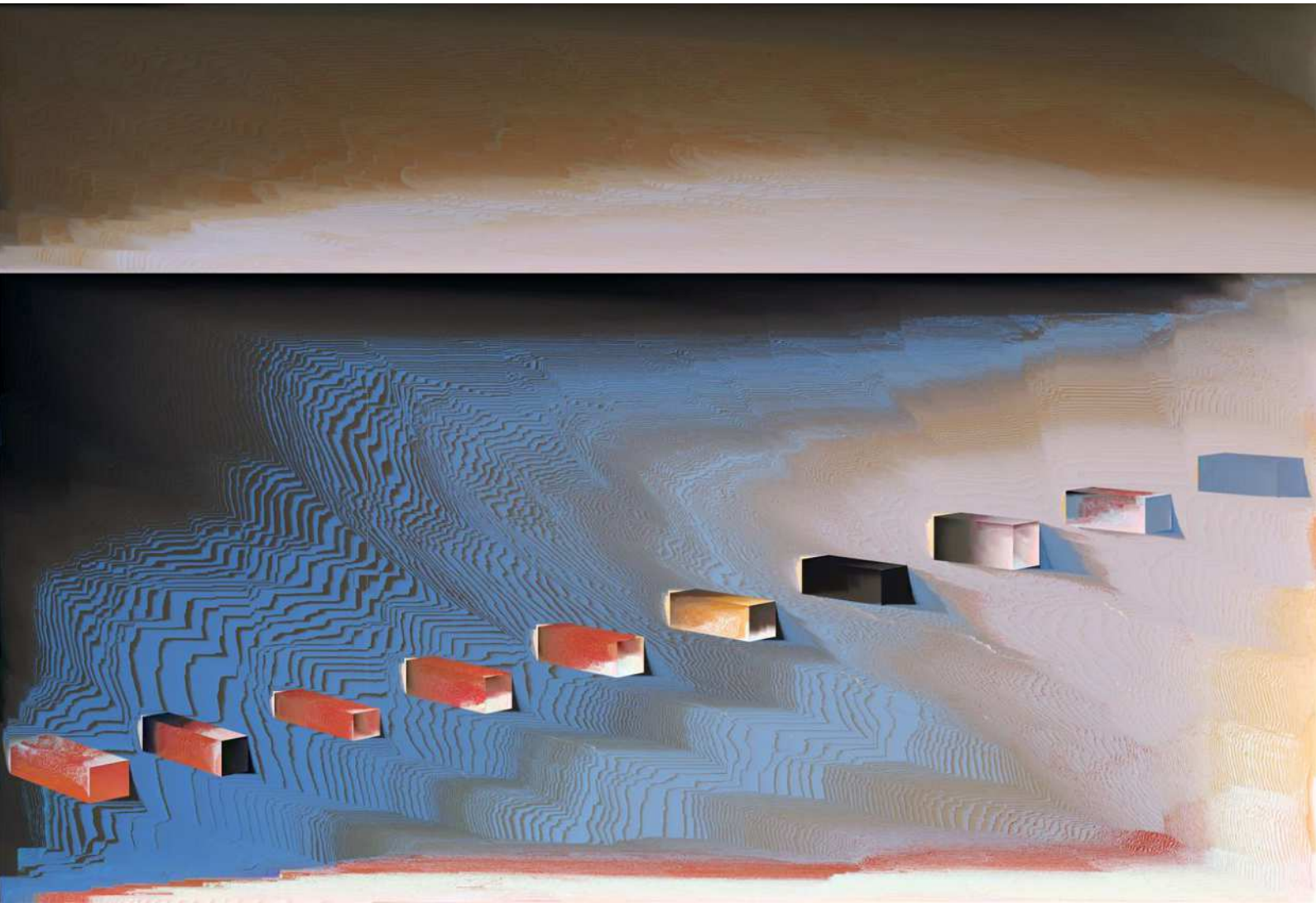
**(2020) 26.5" x 18.75" Digitally Generated Image
Unique Giclée \$295**

Once upon a time, or so the stories go, Cnut the Great set his throne by the sea and commanded the incoming tide to halt, deliberately demonstrating the limits of his power.

One day in 1983, a 767 ran out of fuel over Red Lake, due to an imperial/metric mixup. Luckily the pilot had experience in non-powered flight, landing without casualty at a former airforce base. This image is based on a photograph of that plane, the "Gimli Glider."

The forces of nature care little for we puny humans.

(Gravity sucks, man.)



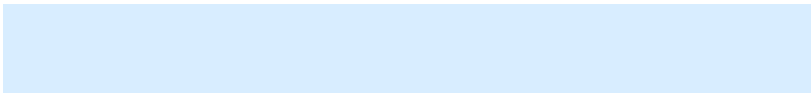
Determination II

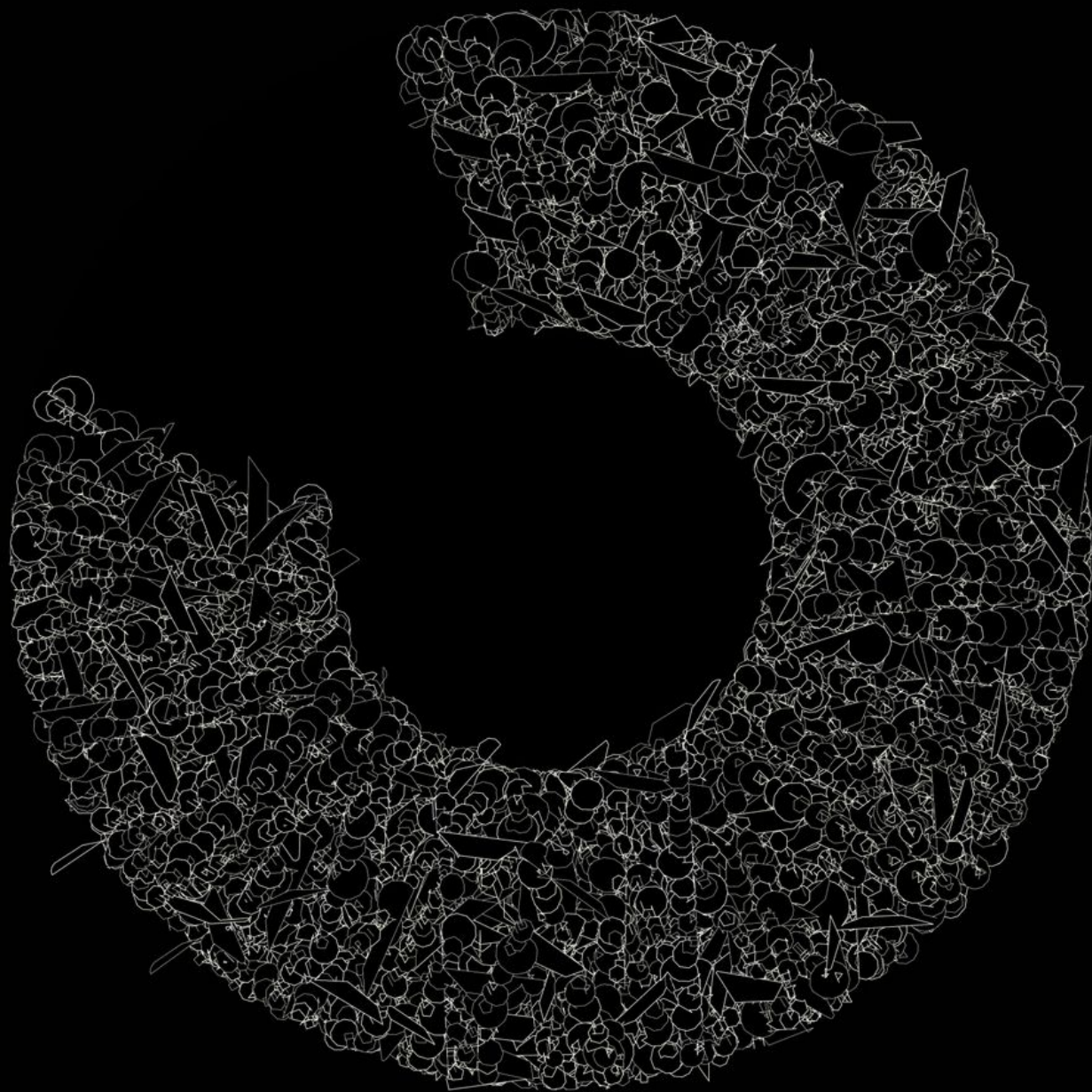
(2020) 14" x 11" Digitally Generated Image
Limited Metal Edition of 5 \$145

This is a smaller reworking of a piece I did for an exhibition on "Grit".

No matter what you may think of Ruth Bader Ginsburg's judicial stances, she was an exemplar of that virtue.

I used shapes derived from the words of Ginsburg's opinions: United States v. Virginia: and Burwell v. Hobby Lobby., arranged with a random element, to mimic Ginsburg's trademark collars.





Twister

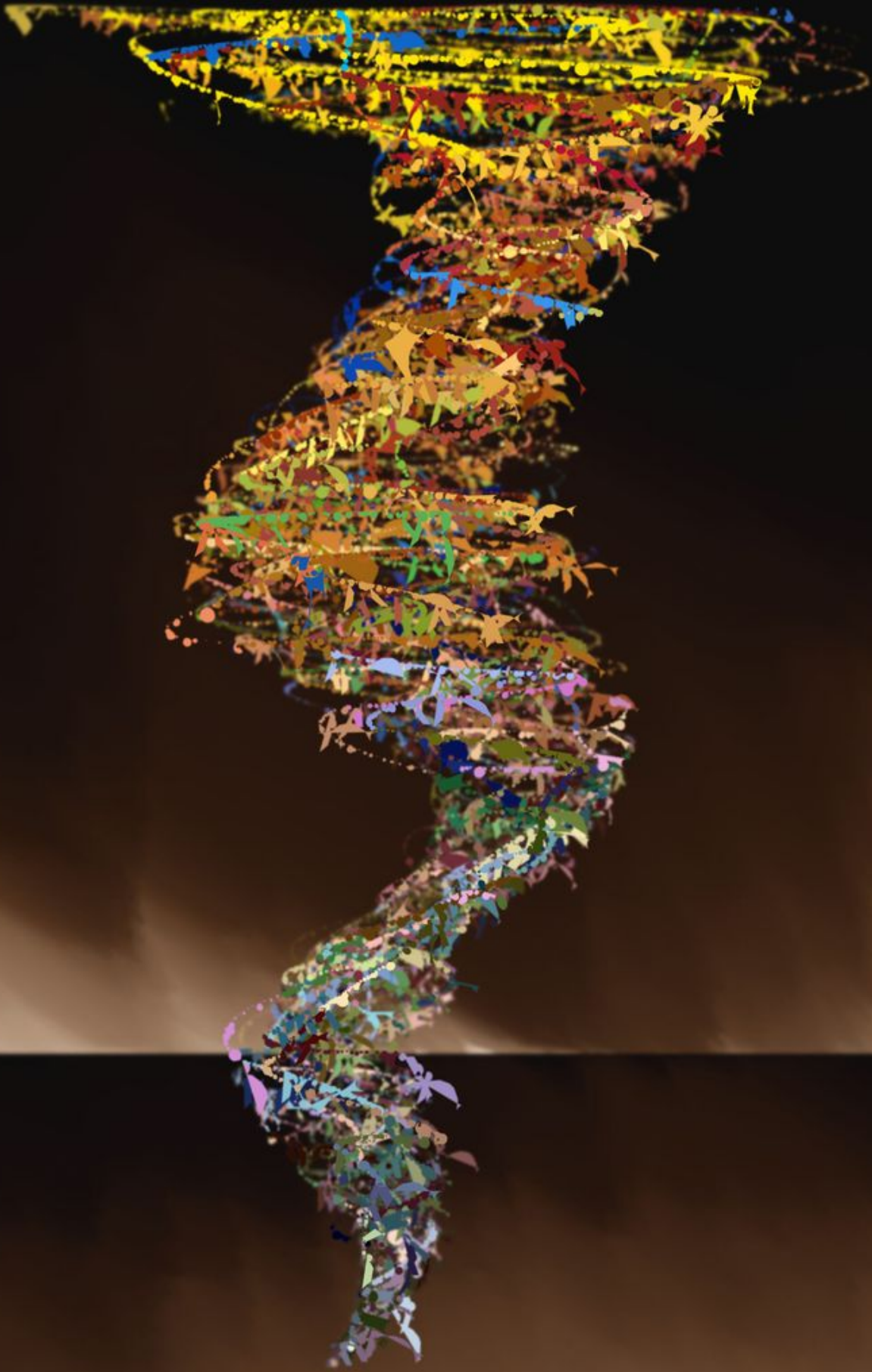
(2020) 16" x 20" Digitally Generated Image
Limited Metal Edition of 5 \$205

It is said that L. Frank Baum deliberately set out to create an American fairy tale with his books about the fabulous land of Oz. It's fair to say that he succeeded - if not directly, then through the adaptations of his work, especially the 1939 movie, "The Wizard of Oz."

The colours in this piece come from that film, and the shapes from the first of Baum's Oz books: "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz".

There will be a "deep dive" into the making of this image for the insatiably curious on the main page for the show:

https://exhibitions.clfisher.com/random_encounters/



Ananke

(2020) 16" x 20" Digitally Generated Image
Limited Metal Edition of 5 \$205

Necessity.

Compulsion.

Inevitability.

These are the province of the goddess Ananke.

This piece marries colours from the Notre Dame fire of 2019 and shapes corresponding to the letters in an English translation of Victor Hugo's Hunchback of Notre Dame.

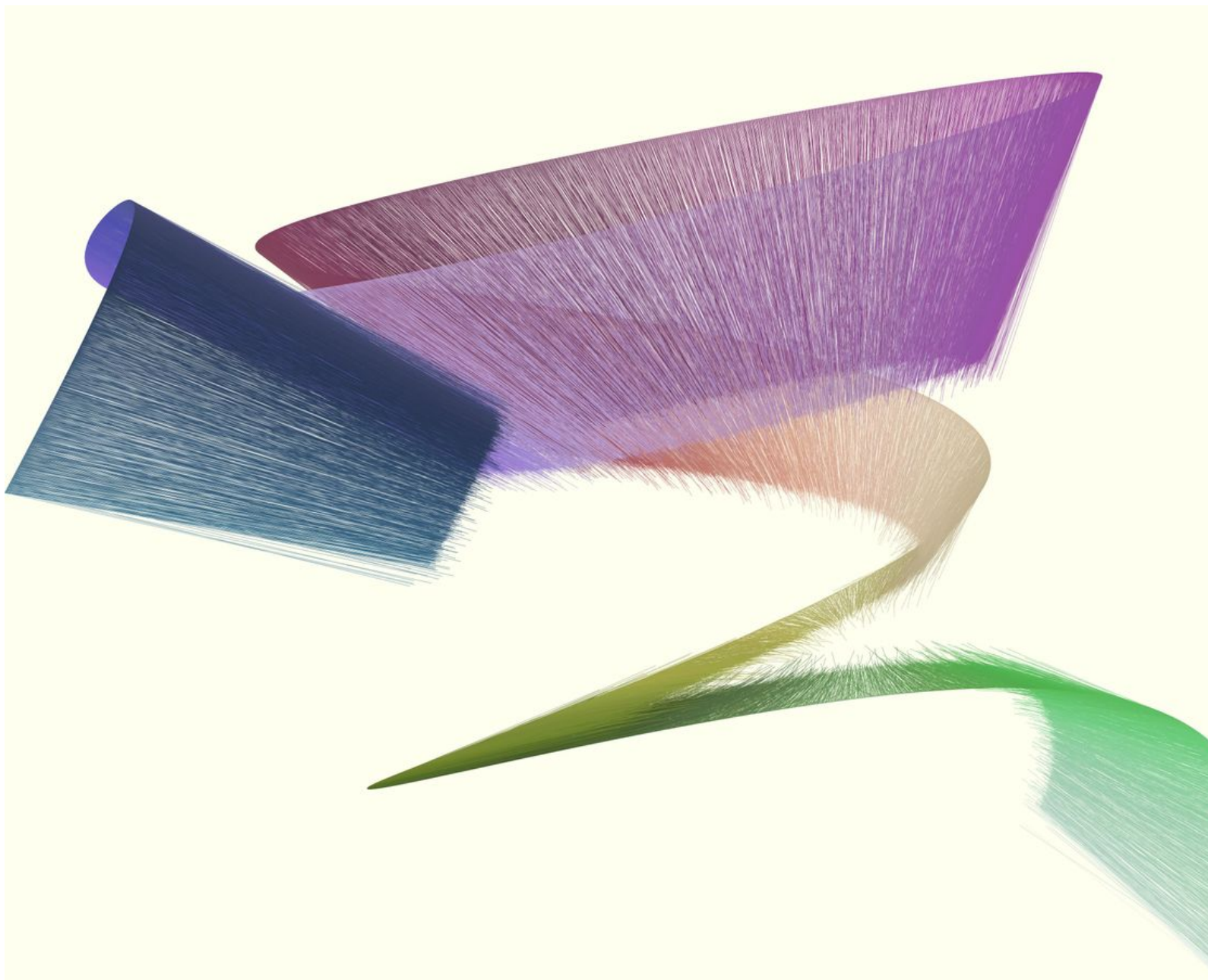


Pronation

**(2020) 20" x 16" Digitally Generated Image
Limited Metal Edition of 5 \$205**

In mid-2020 I embarked on a series of works based on words randomly selected from the Oxford English Dictionary. This is the first in that series:

Using the repeated children's prayer "Now I lay me down to sleep," to govern the length of each line segment, Pronation suggests the process of falling over at the end of a long day.



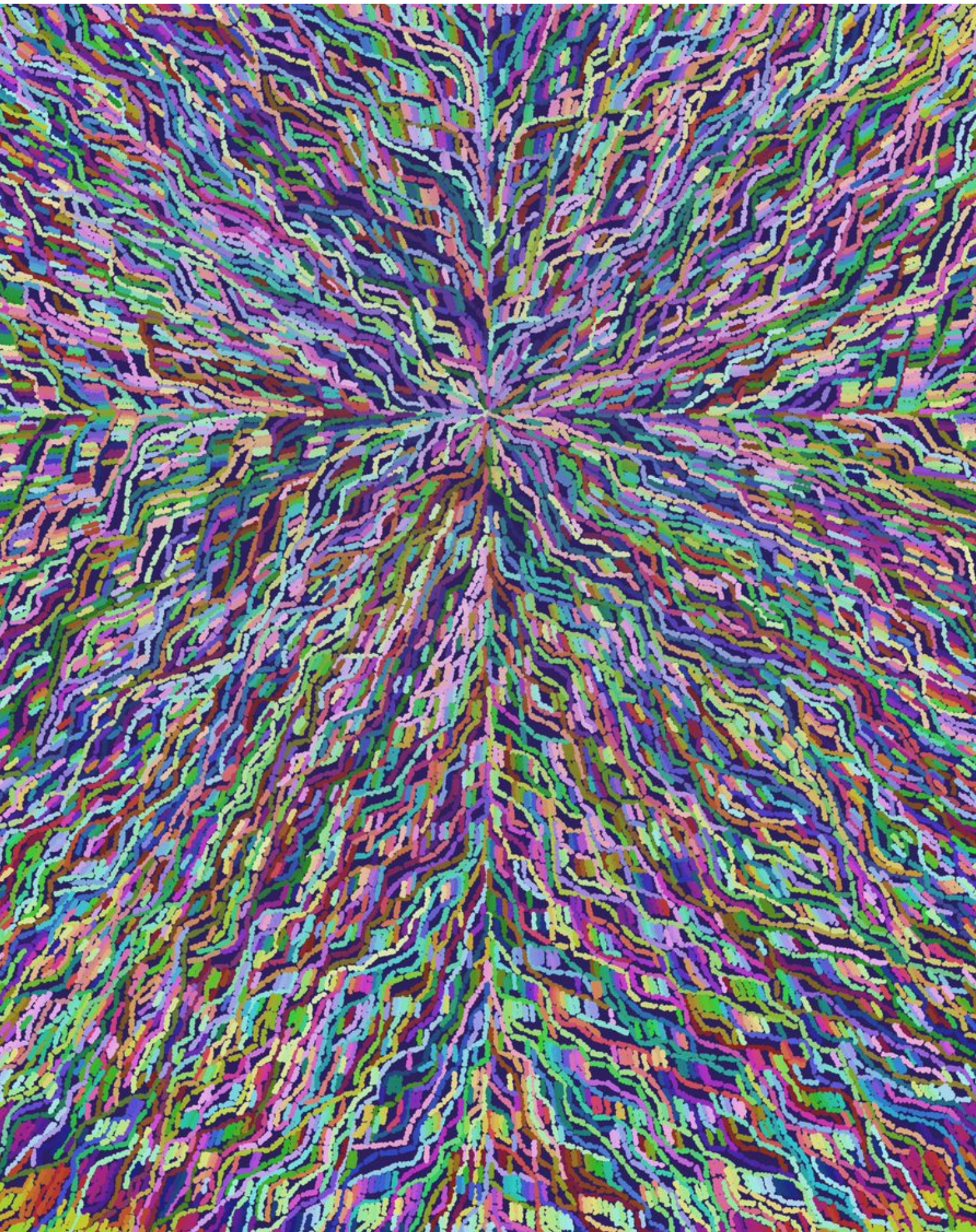
Numerous

**(2020) 16" x 20" Digitally Generated Image
Limited Metal Edition of 5 \$205**

This is the second in my series based on random words from the Oxford English Dictionary

The word "numerous" put me in mind of great herds of sheep. Sheep follow a kind of alpha-sheep known as a bellwethers. I based this image on the idea of masses following leaders. That it ended up looking like crewel work (needlework done with yarn, often wool) was a bonus.

There are 11279 "sheep" in the piece.

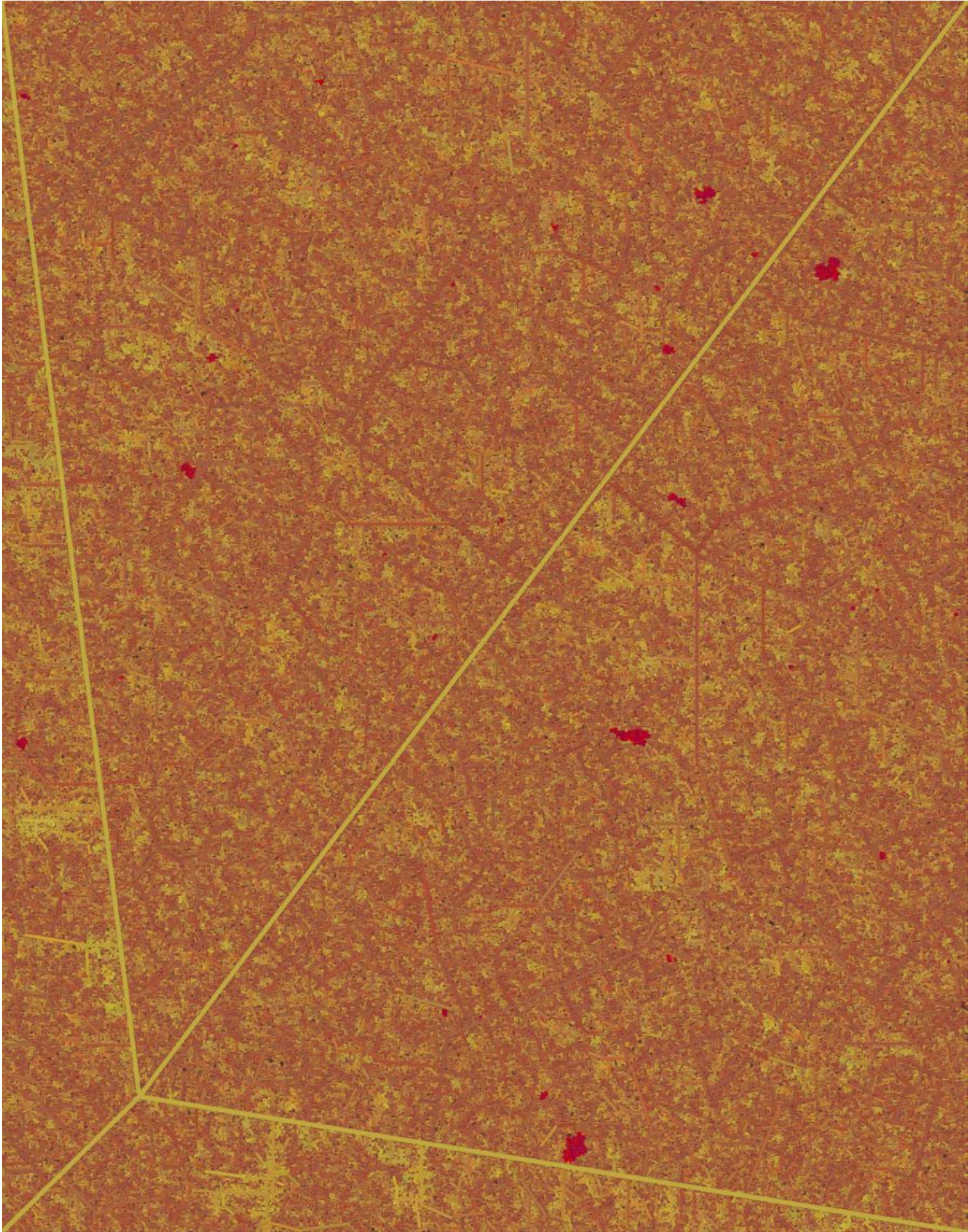


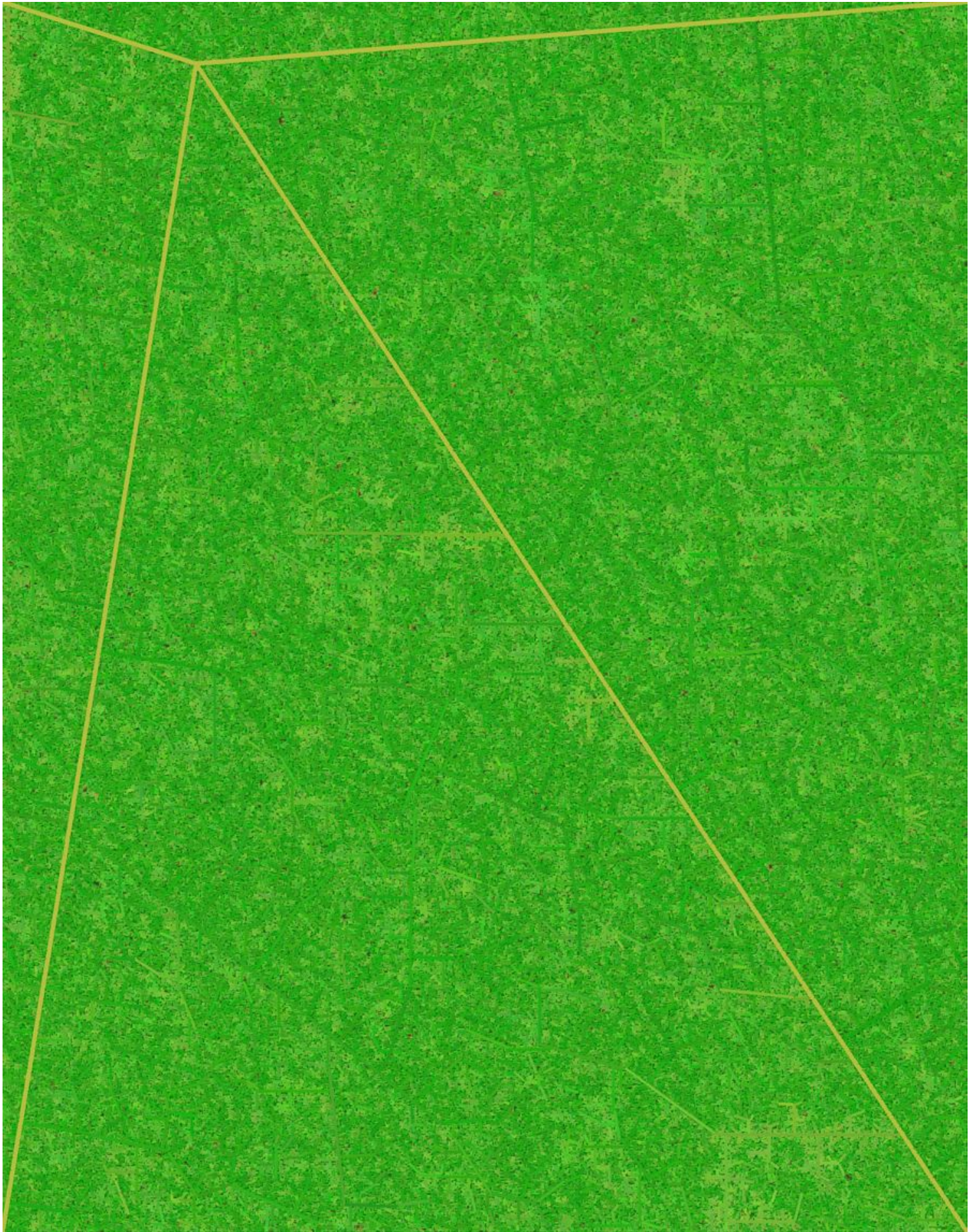
Rise and Fall

(2020) 2 11" x 14" Digitally Created images
Limited Metal Edition of 5 \$235

Rise and Fall were made by first connecting a constrained-random point to all the corners of the image with a thick 'stem', then repeatedly picking random points in the image to connect to the nearest not-background point, with some secret sauce for choosing the colour of the lines.

My tendency to see familiar things in abstract patterns both mystifies and delights me.





Dimensions

**(2020) 16" x 20" Digitally Generated Image
Limited Metal Edition of 5 \$205**

Pondering abstraction, representation, and reality and how we decide if an image is representational or abstract – and, if it is representational, what the thing it represents is (a portal to another dimension?, a simple cubic solid?), and whether that is “real”.

“Ceci nest pas une boîte.”

Based on a photograph of a dear friend with a space bra on her head. Because nebulae are pretty.



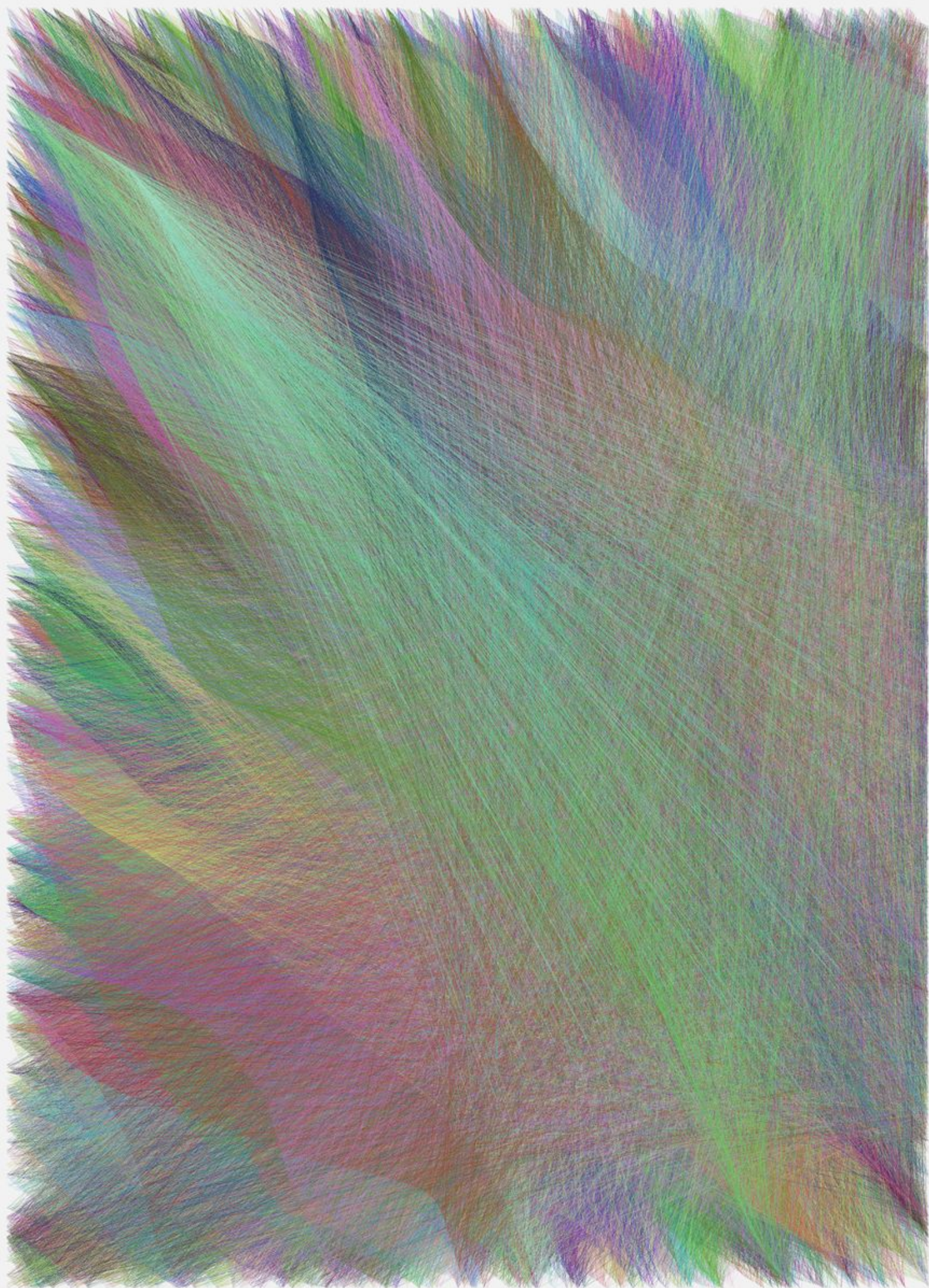
Feb 30, 1712

**(2020) 16" x 20" Digitally Generated Image
Limited Metal Edition of 5 \$210**

It was a real thing.

You see, Sweden made an early attempt at gradually switching over to the Gregorian calendar, by eliminating leap years for awhile. They skipped the first one, but with wars and such, they kind of.. forgot to skip the next couple of leap years. Eventually they decided to go back to the Julian calendar by adding a day in 1712. Since 1712 was already a leap year, that meant the added day was Feb 30.

This piece was constructed from 1 straight line for every day from Feb 30, 1712 to Jan 1, 2021.



Acknowledgements

Thanks to the **AtOrigin** coffee shop in Toronto for hosting the physical show. Check out their single source, site-roasted coffee. (I'm not a coffee person, but a friend who assures me that it is delightful.)

The "Assorted Actresses" pieces were part of a project in collaboration with a group of people that included:

**Sofia Aarmio,
Diane Bayley,
Lisa Binnie,
Brian Peter Dickson,
Jesper Dolgov,
Katharine Draper Quinn,
Pene Gerber,
Saara Hast,
Kati Immonen,
Heli Janhiainen,
Venla Kaasinen,
Aapo Kotilainen,
Sakari Kyyrönen,
Matti Lankireen,
Seonaid Lee,
Jussi Lipasti,
David McClyment,
Eero Merimaa,
Mehtap Memmi Mertdoğan,
Natalie Plociennik,
Robert Quinn,
Bob Shaland,
Michelle Wehrle,
Maria West,
Anita Woodard, and
Shiyu Zhang**

Thanks to **Kai Hart** and the other members of the "Four Points" group: **Shiyu Zhang, Mehtap Memmi Mertdoğan, and Natalie Plociennik** for their curatorial input, and continued support / tolerance when I popped up saying "Here's another thing I did! What do you think?"

Thanks to **David McClyment** for his mentorship in the form of practical advice and kind words.

And thanks to **Seonaid Lee** for (ahem) encouraging me to do something with art in the first place, and for being a regular sounding board.

