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

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS 1.1

Artist: CL Fisher
April 1-29, 2021,
Tango Palace Coffee Company, 1156 Queen E., 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, Works in progress are posted on Instagram at @clfisher_art

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 1.1 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.

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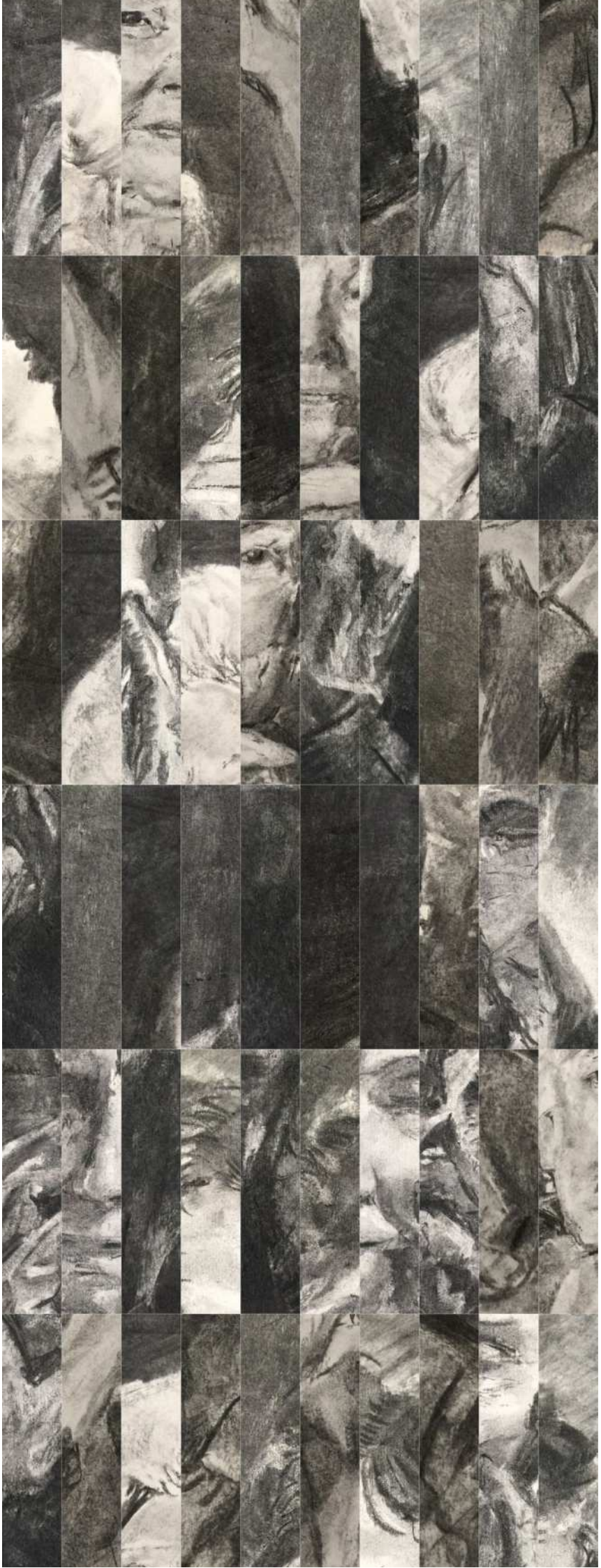
Two Helens

(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".

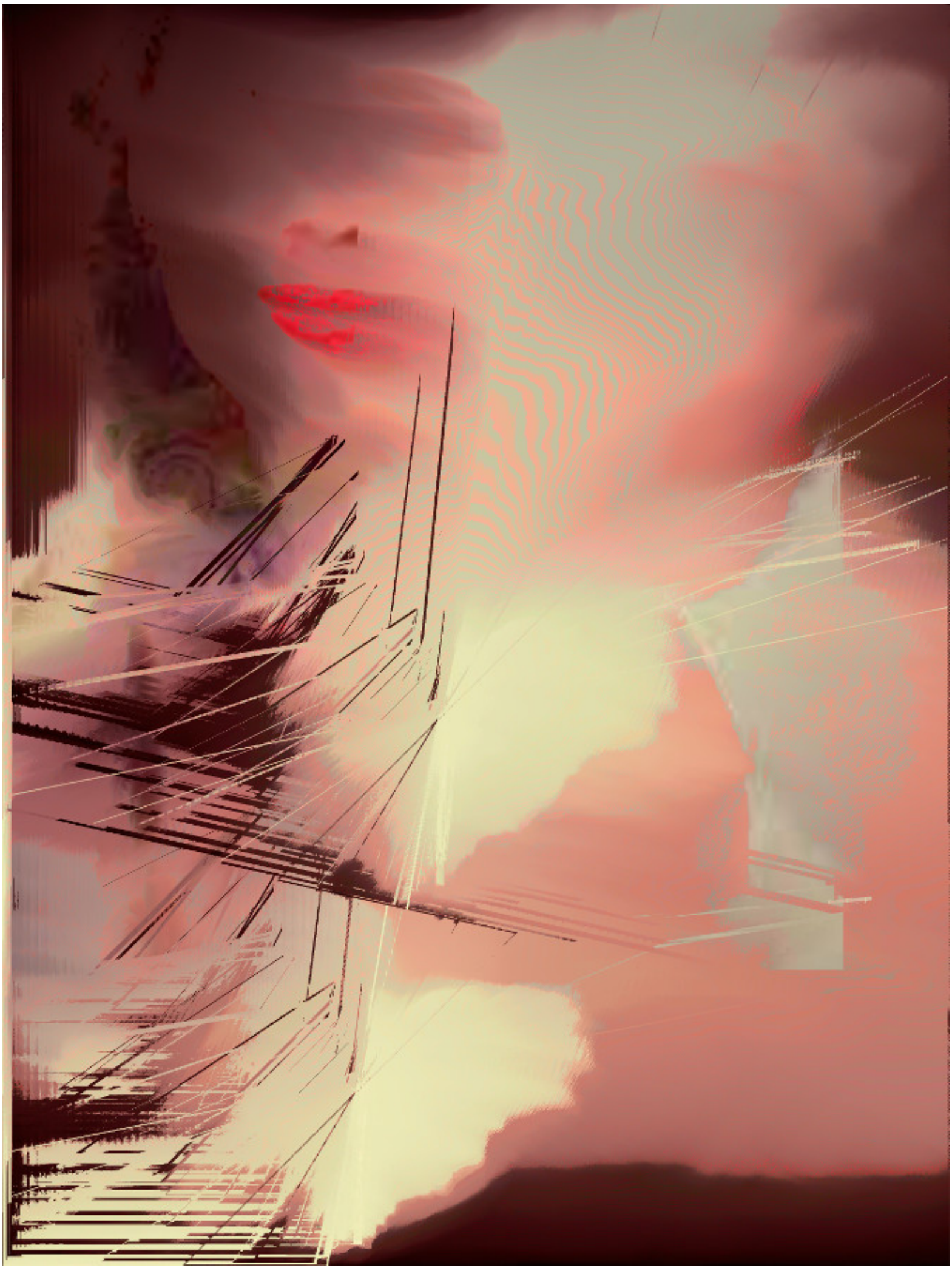
The first 25 images from my "Assorted Actresses" series formed the basis for a project where people voted on which images they liked best, and then I used that information to generate new images. (see my website for the results)

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.

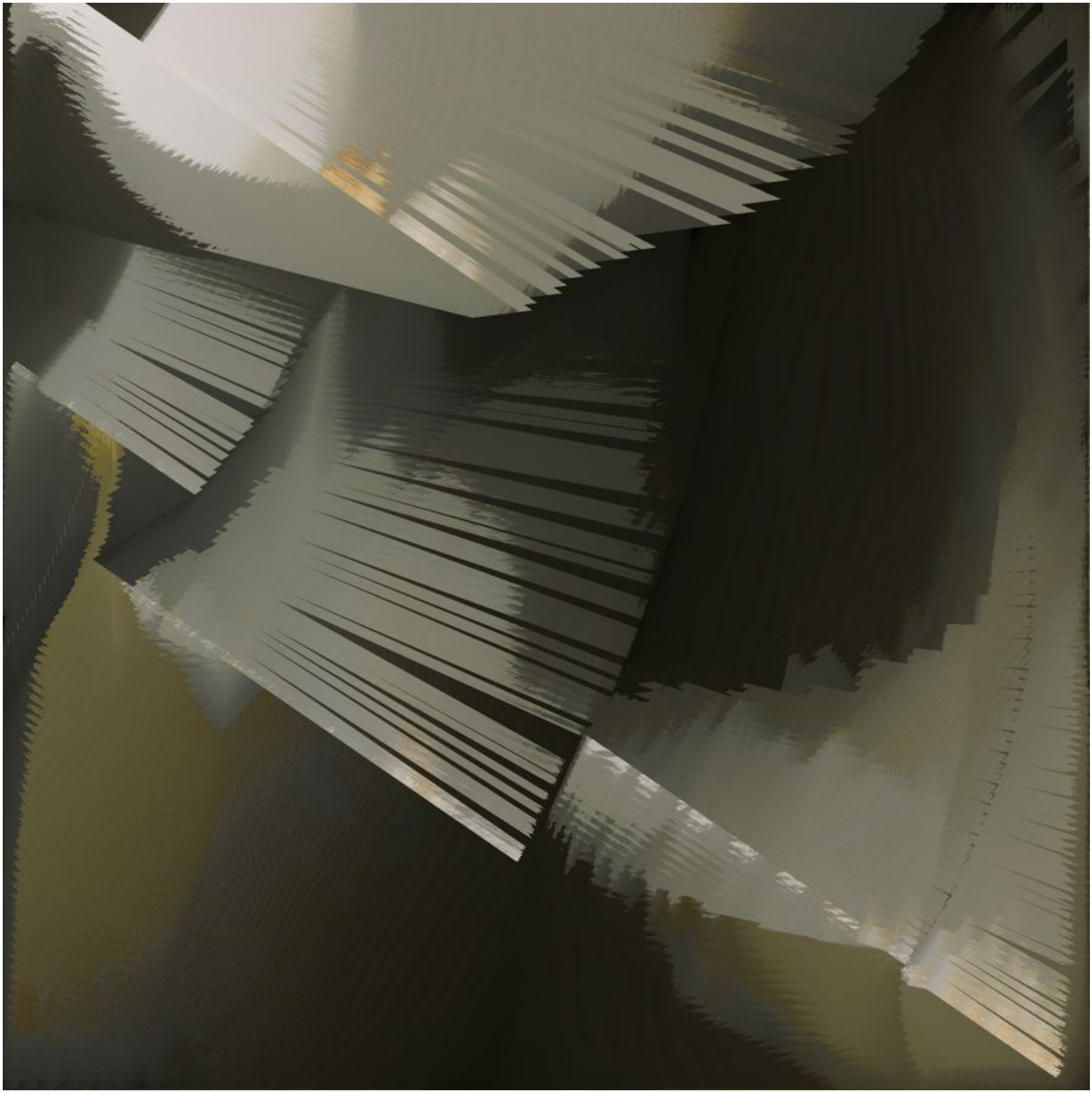
The process of creating the pieces was deliberately limited to 4 hours for each image. While this one was running, I had to travel for an hour, and shut my laptop to take it with me. Hence, it had fewer iterations through the process, and ended up in a rawer state.



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."



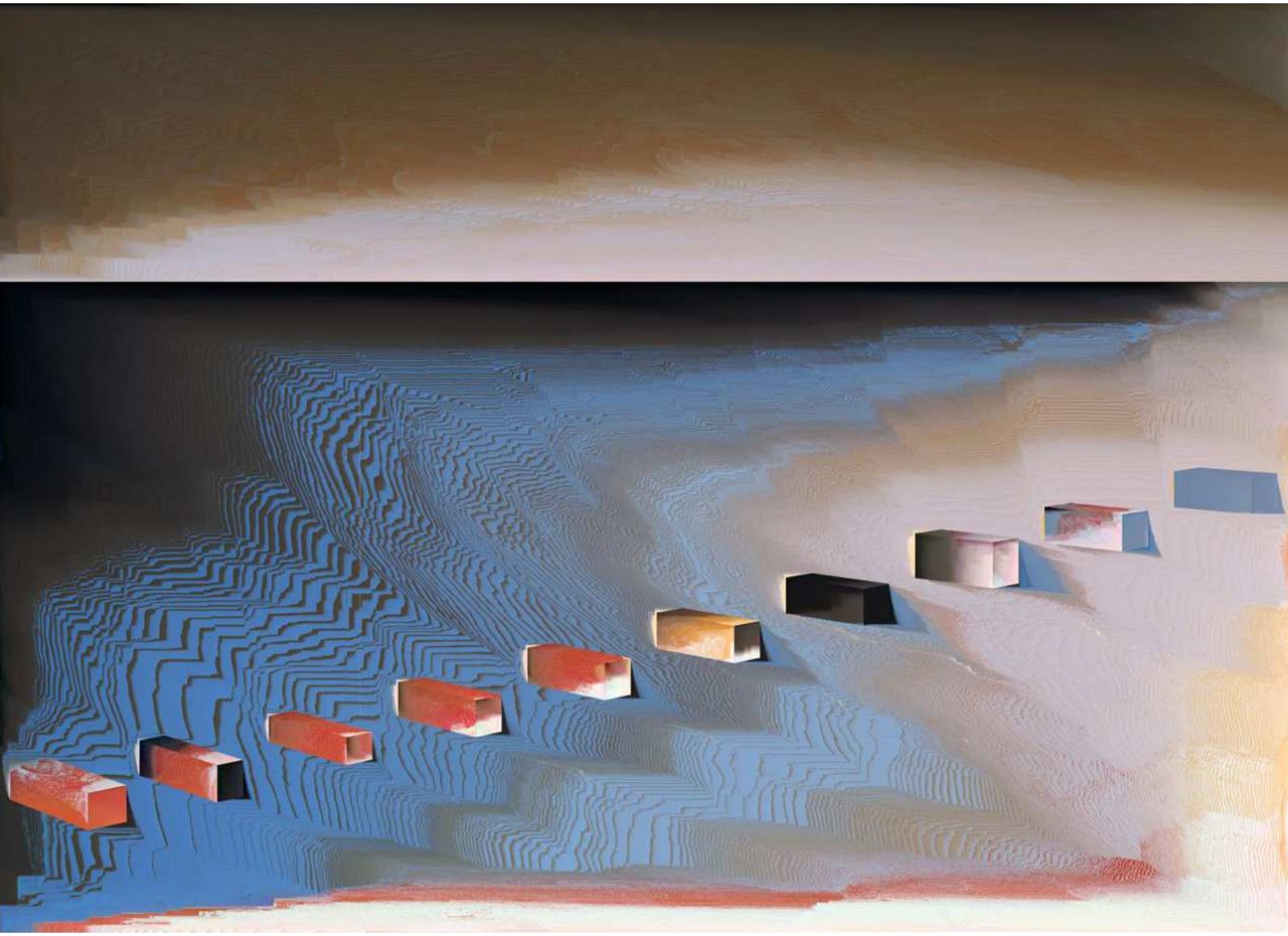
Canute

(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.

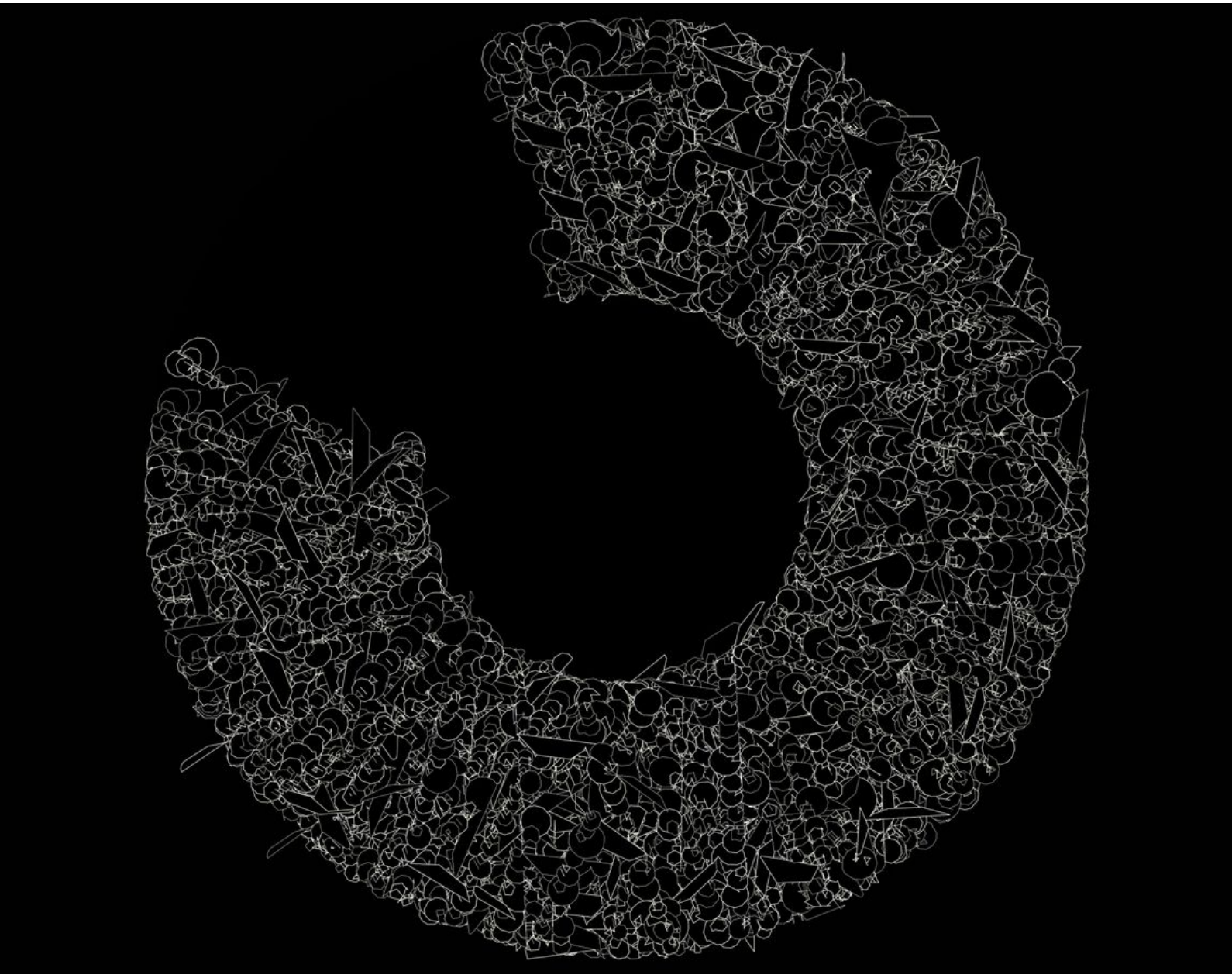


Determination II

(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". Ruth Bader Ginsburg 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 Ginsberg's trademark collars.



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.

Twister

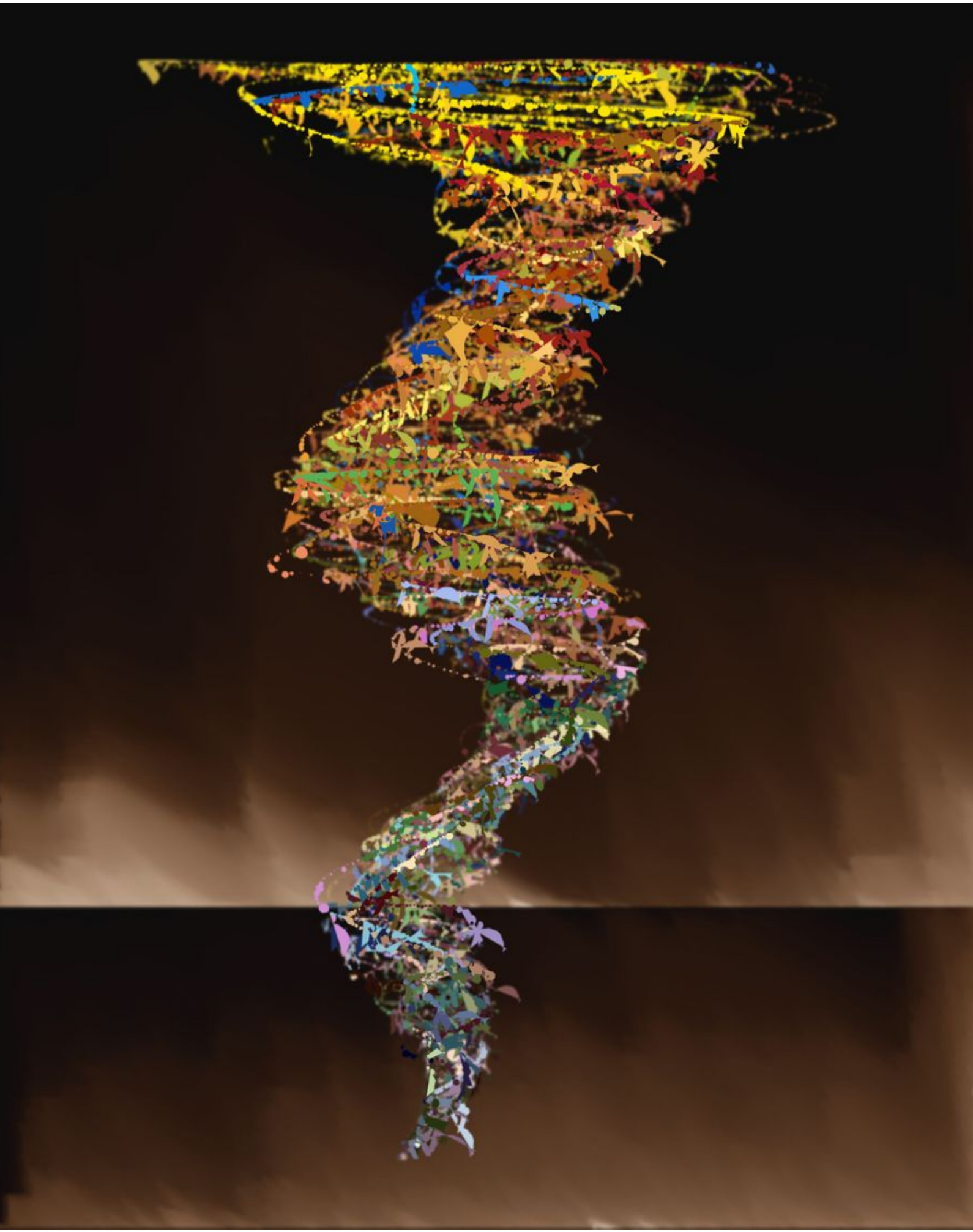
(2020) 16" x 20" Digitally Generated Image Limited Metal Edition of 5 $205

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/



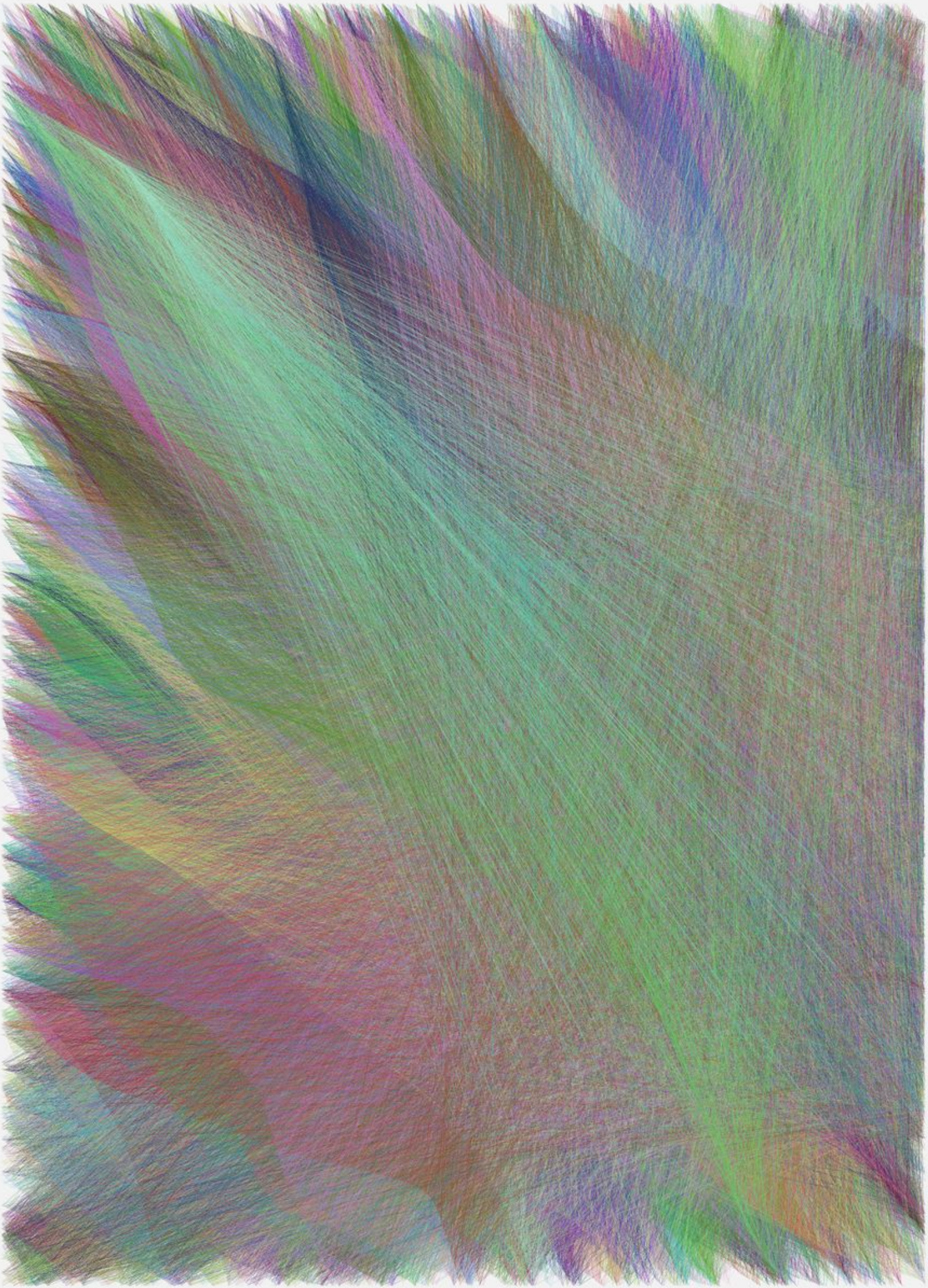
Feb 30, 1712

(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.



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."

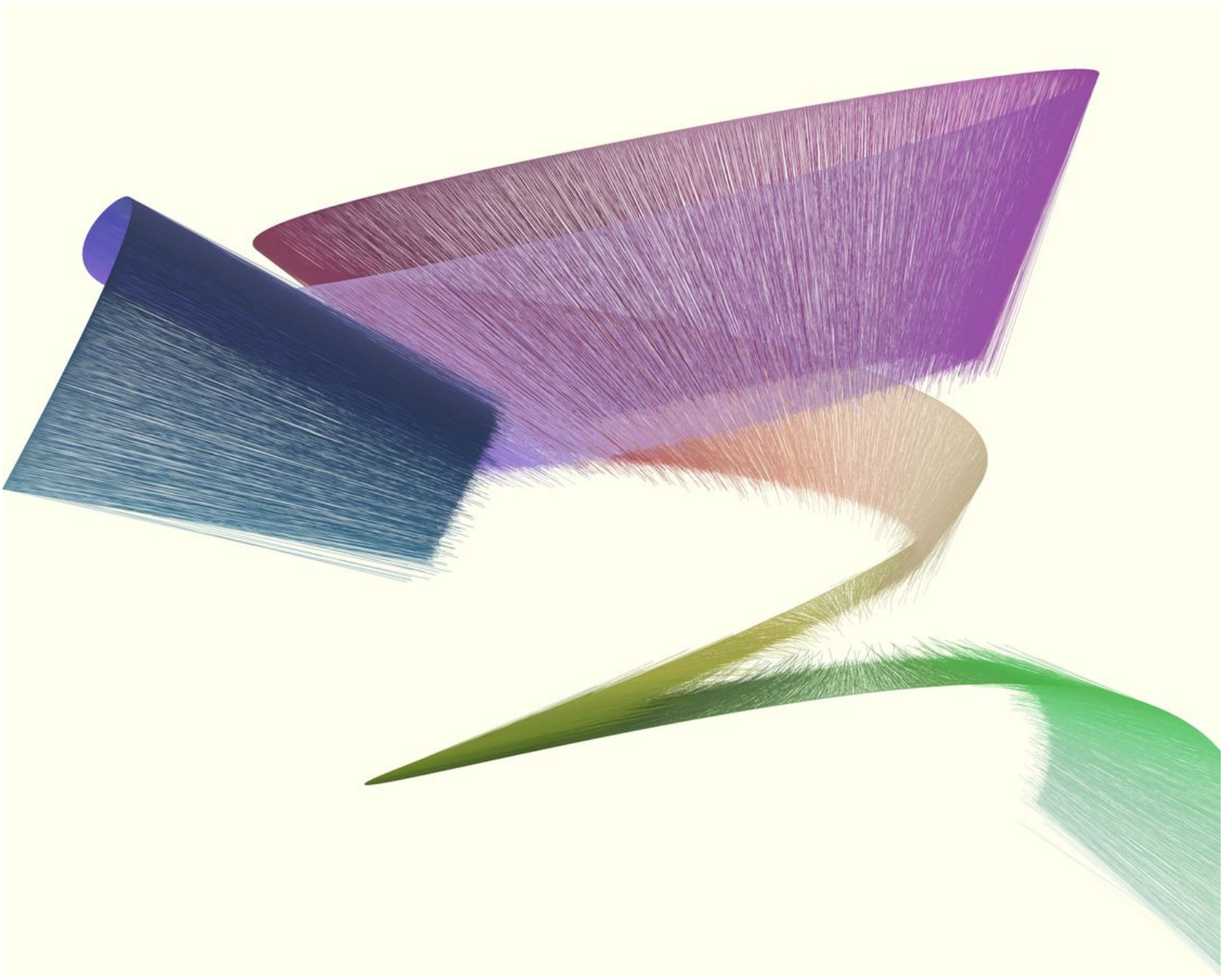
Based on a photograph of a dear friend with a space bra on her head. Because nebulae are pretty.

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.



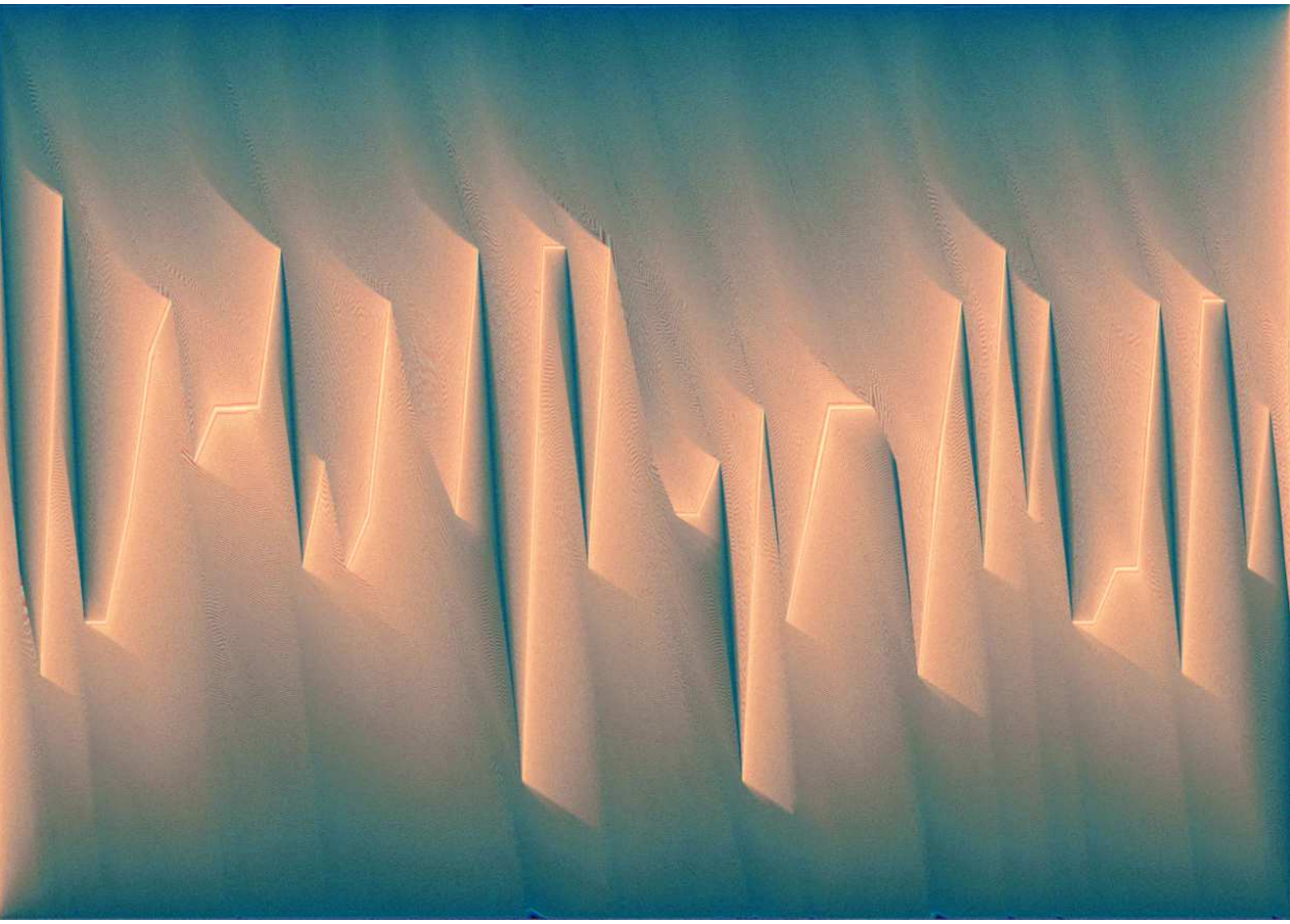
Finnish Line

26.5” x 18.75” Digitally Generated Image
Unique Edition Giclèe $295

In 2019 I spent 4 months in Finland, There, I photographed nearly everything I threw out. Then, I extracted the number of the number of pixels of each colour in the collection of photos to build a new image out of.

For the line element I turned to the Consumer Price Index from 2015 to 2019, and applied a modified sort algorithm to the pixels on each side of it.

The result? One viewer called it “scary desert things will fall on me.” Your mileage may vary.



Acknowledgements

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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.