



Faceless Portraits Transcending Time

AICAN + Ahmed Elgammal

HG Contemporary, New York

February 13 - March 5, 2019

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HG Contemporary presents *Faceless Portraits Transcending Time*, a collaboration between an artificial intelligence named AICAN and its creator, Dr. Ahmed Elgammal. The exhibition shows two series of works on canvas portraying uncanny, dream-like imagery generated by AICAN excavating the ageless themes of mortality and representation of the human figure. The first series examines this joint effort between man and machine as a historically specific moment in the chronology of image-making; the second focuses on how artificial intelligence serves as a mirror to reflect human (sub)consciousness.

The first series investigates the history of the image with portraiture as its focus. At our present moment, the advent of AI-generated imagery asks us to consider the work of art in the age of not only mechanical reproduction but also algorithmic production. “Deepfake” videos of political figures now challenge the status of the image as an index of authenticity. Further still, the ability of algorithms to generate imagery from their “imagination” causes a severance between imagery and reality altogether. If photography freed painting from the task of representation, then how will AI change how we make visual culture?

The second series plays with the tradition of memento mori. In doing so, it highlights the ability of AI’s pseudo-intelligent neural networks to let us more closely examine the nature of visual meaning-making, via a reflection of our own intelligence in a machine. “Deep learning” algorithms have propensities that eerily mimic the human brain, exhibiting behaviors such as fractal-like hallucinations or producing abstract compositions that invoke seemingly atavistic or subconscious sources.

- Luke Cheng

About AICAN

Modeled from psychological theories of the brain's response to aesthetics, AICAN is a complex algorithm that draws from art historical knowledge and a mandate to create something new, enabling it to make new artwork without human intervention. AICAN has been provided with over 100,000 images that represent the Western art canon over five centuries, learning the aesthetics of existing works of art and their evolution over time. When working without an artist collaborator, AICAN chooses the style, subject, composition, colors, and texture of its work. Through this combination of knowledge and its independent creative process, AICAN facilitates a new way for artists of the past and present to engage in dialogue across centuries of art history.

About Dr. Ahmed Elgammal, AICAN Creator

Dr. Ahmed Elgammal is the founder and director of the Art and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory, and a professor of computer science at Rutgers University. He developed AICAN, an autonomous AI artist and collaborative creative partner. Dr. Elgammal's research on knowledge discovery in art history and AI art generation received wide international media attention, including reports in the Washington Post, New York Times, NBC News, CBS News, the Guardian, the Daily Telegraph, Science News, New Scientist, and many others. In 2017, an Artsy editorial acclaimed AICAN as "the biggest artistic achievement of the year". In 2016, a TV segment about his research, produced for PBS, won an Emmy award. AICAN art has been shown in several technology and art venues in Los Angeles, Frankfurt, San Francisco, Miami and New York City.

About HG Contemporary

Founded by Philippe Hoerle-Guggenheim, HG Contemporary is a breakthrough global gallery founded in 2014. The gallery has built a reputation for unearthing distinct artists and producing shows that embrace groundbreaking aesthetics and concepts. The gallery is committed to developing an international contemporary program that is ambitious as well as diverse. The gallery's locations include New York, Madrid, Napa Valley and Brooklyn. This commitment carries with it an innovative and clear vision about producing exceptional art exhibitions as well as a deep understanding of visual culture's function within and beyond the walls of the gallery.

About Davidson Art Advisory

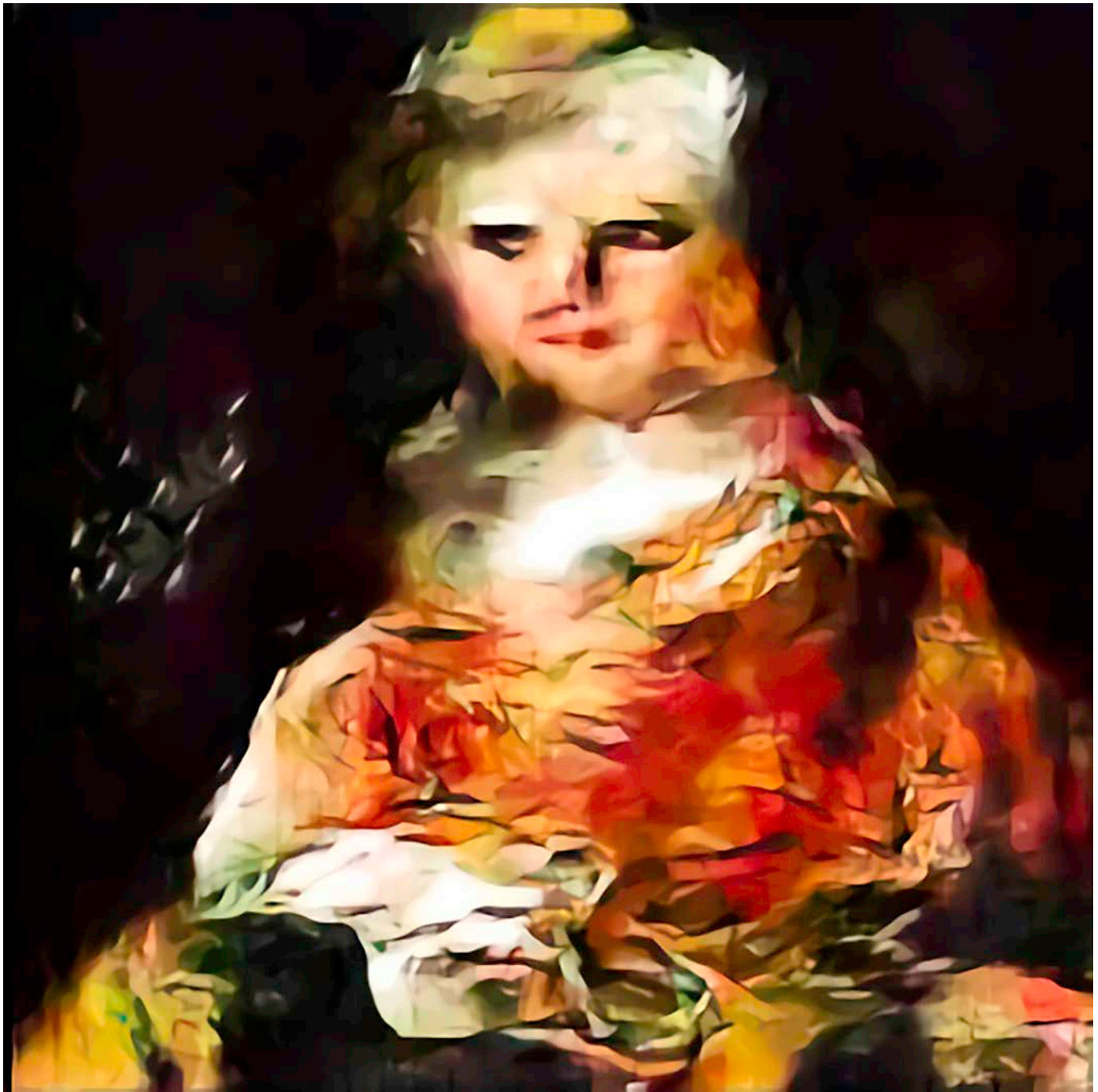
Jessica Davidson launched Davidson Art Advisory LLC in 2017 as a boutique fine art consulting firm that provides acquisition and advisory services to private collectors, artists and institutional clientele with a focus on contemporary art in the primary market. Jessica has lectured and written about investing in art and the intersection of art and technology, currently focusing on AI-technologies for the art market.



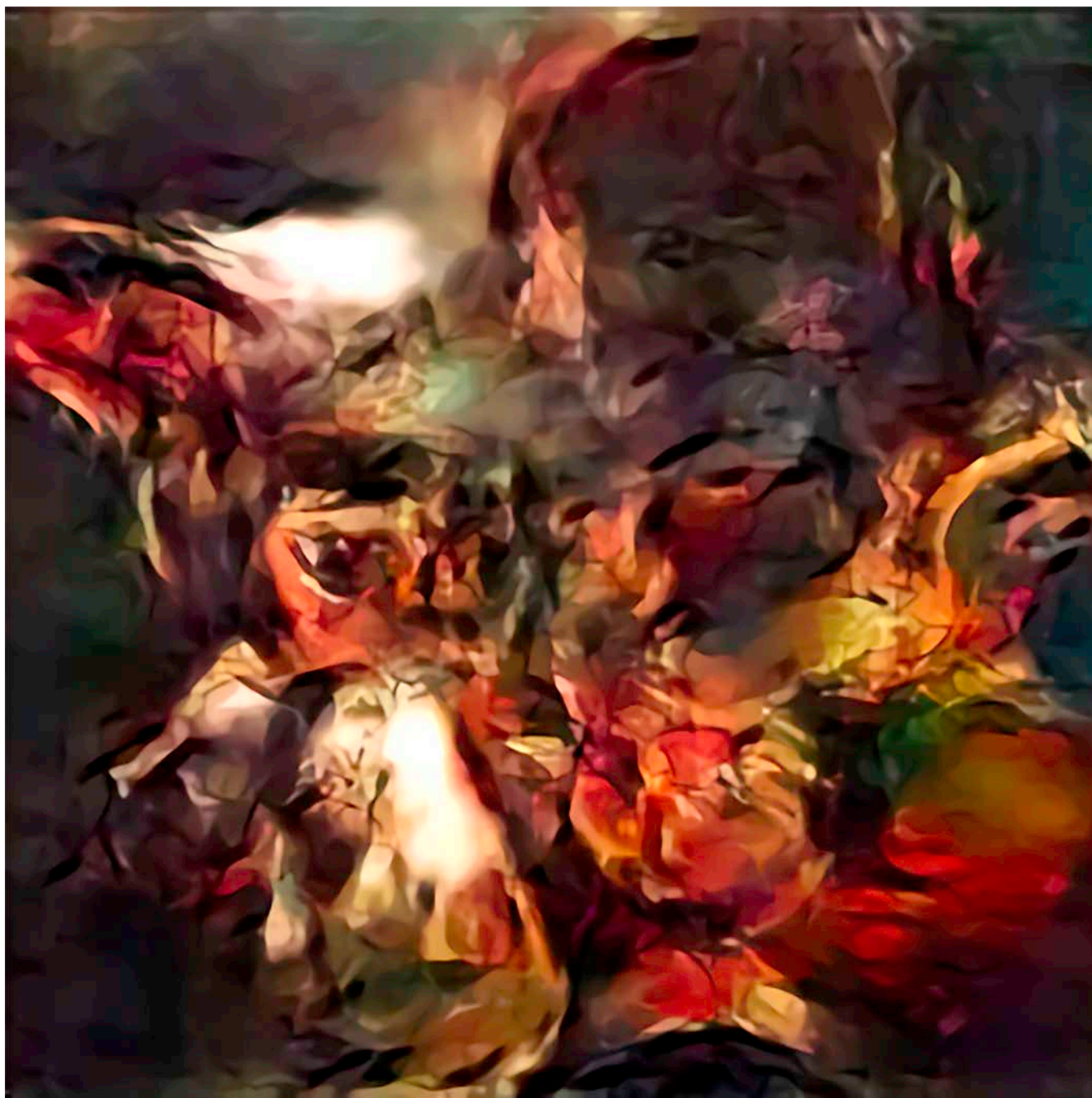
Faceless Portrait #1, 2019, Digital Print on Canvas, 58 x 58 in



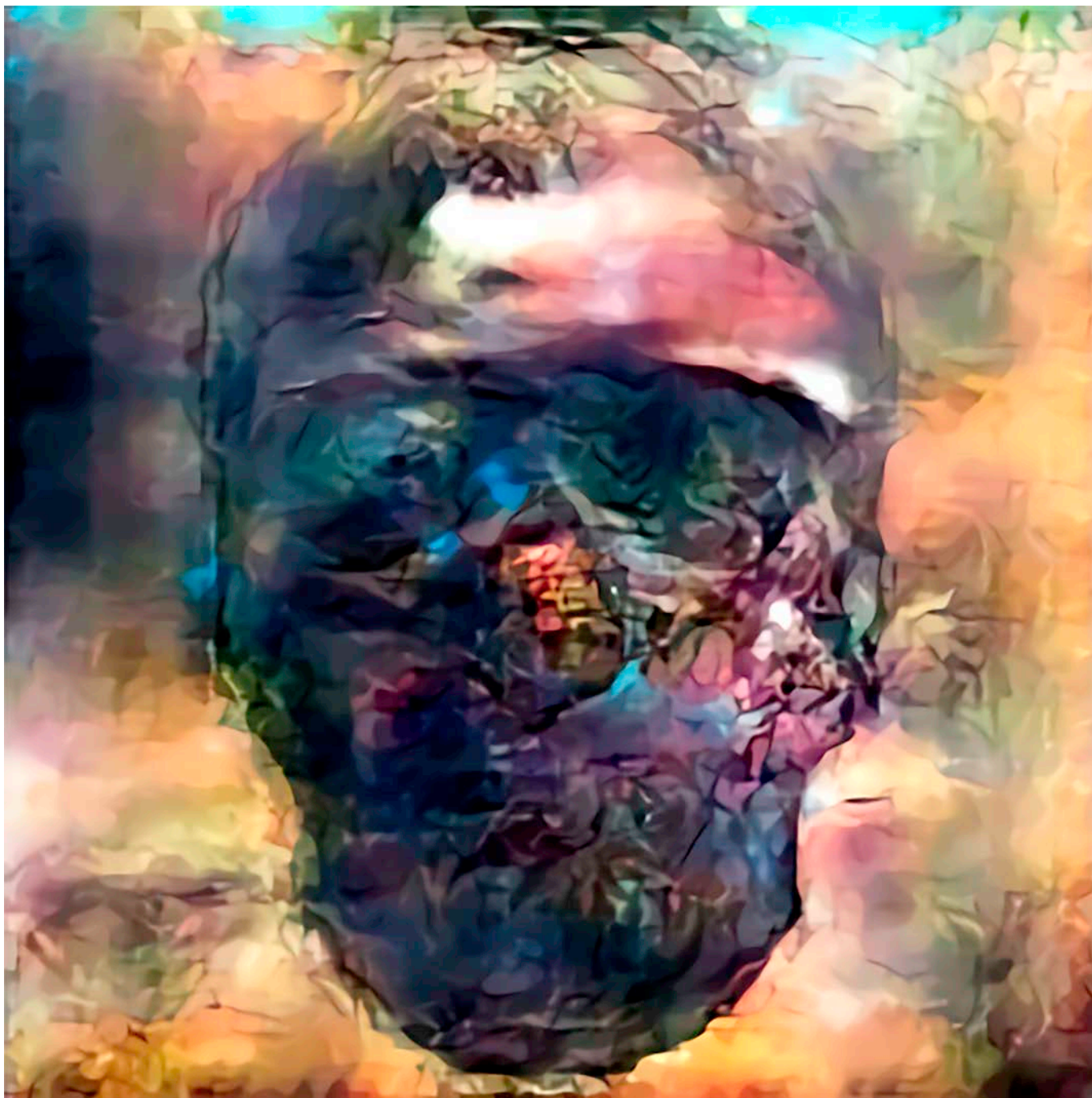
Faceless Portrait #2, 2019, Digital Print on Canvas, 58 x 58 in



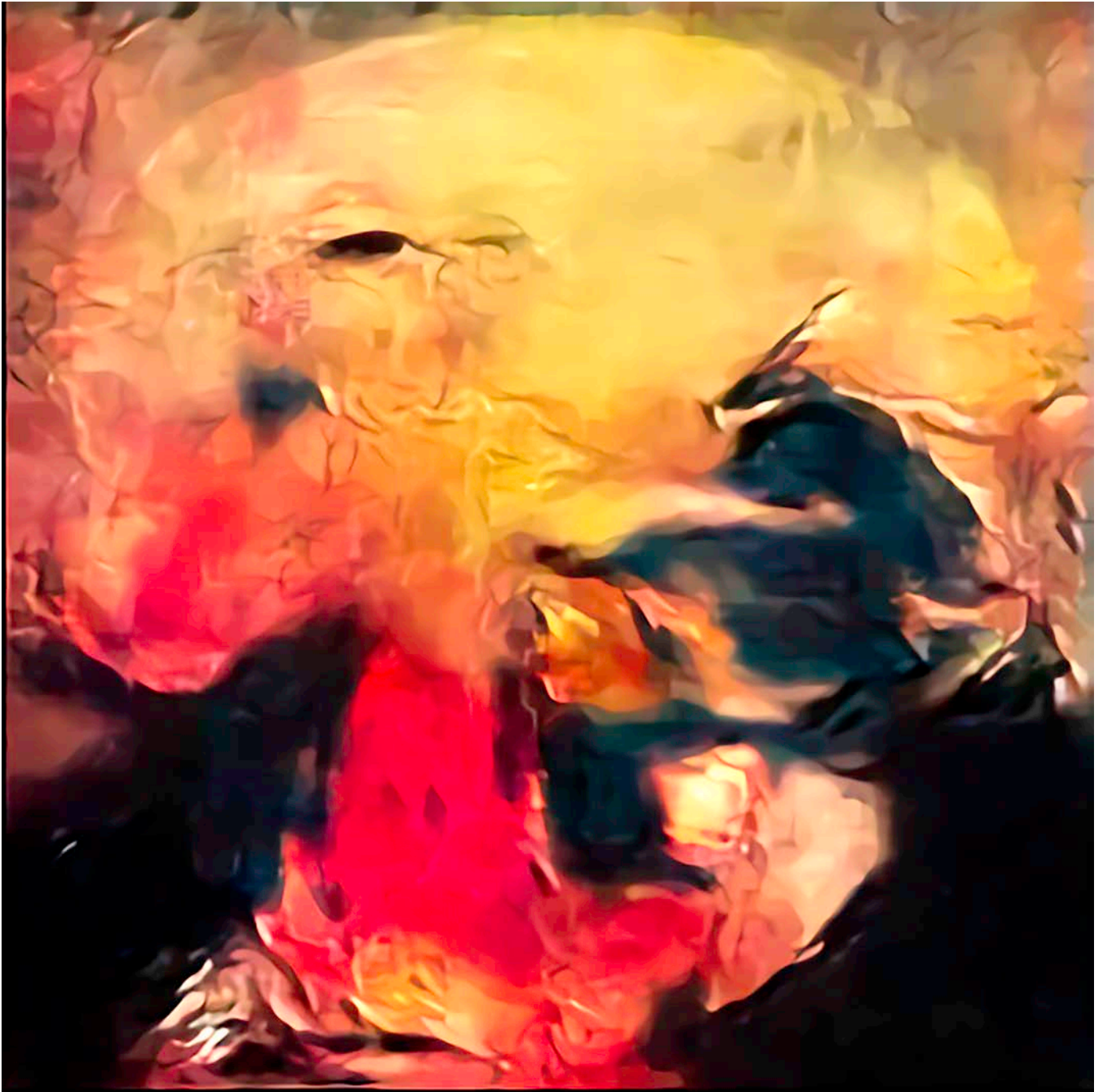
Faceless Portrait #3, 2019, Digital Print on Canvas, 58 x 58 in



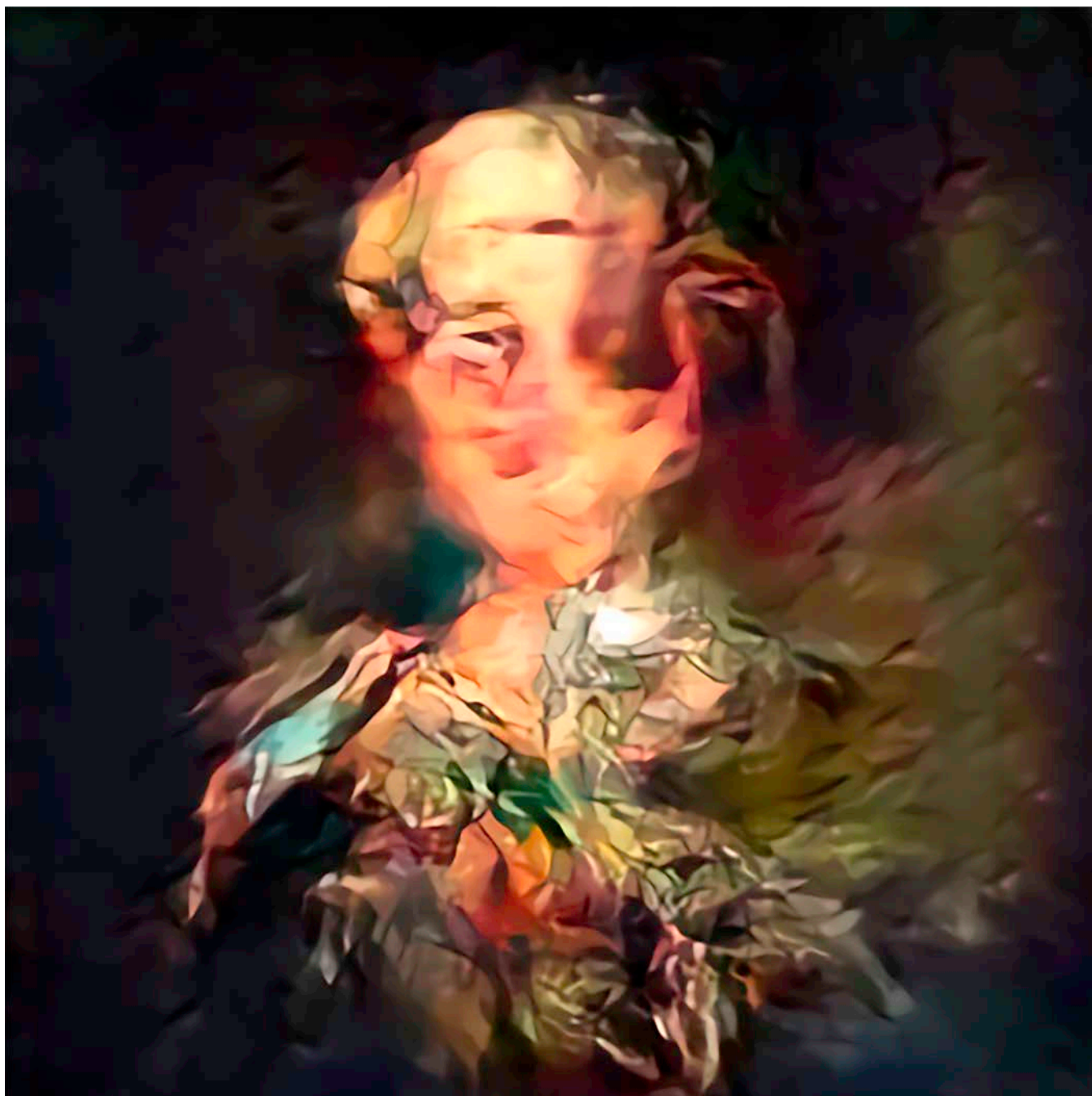
Faceless Portrait #4, 2019, Digital Print on Canvas, 58 x 58 in



Faceless Portrait #5, 2019, Digital Print on Canvas, 58 x 58 in



Faceless Portrait #6, 2019, Digital Print on Canvas, 58 x 58 in



Faceless Portrait #7, 2019, Digital Print on Canvas, 30 x 30 in



Faceless Portrait of a King, 2019, Digital Print on Canvas, 48 x 48 in



Faceless Portrait of a Queen, 2019, Digital Print on Canvas, 48 x 48 in



Faceless Portrait of a General, 2019, Digital Print on Canvas, 30 x 30 in



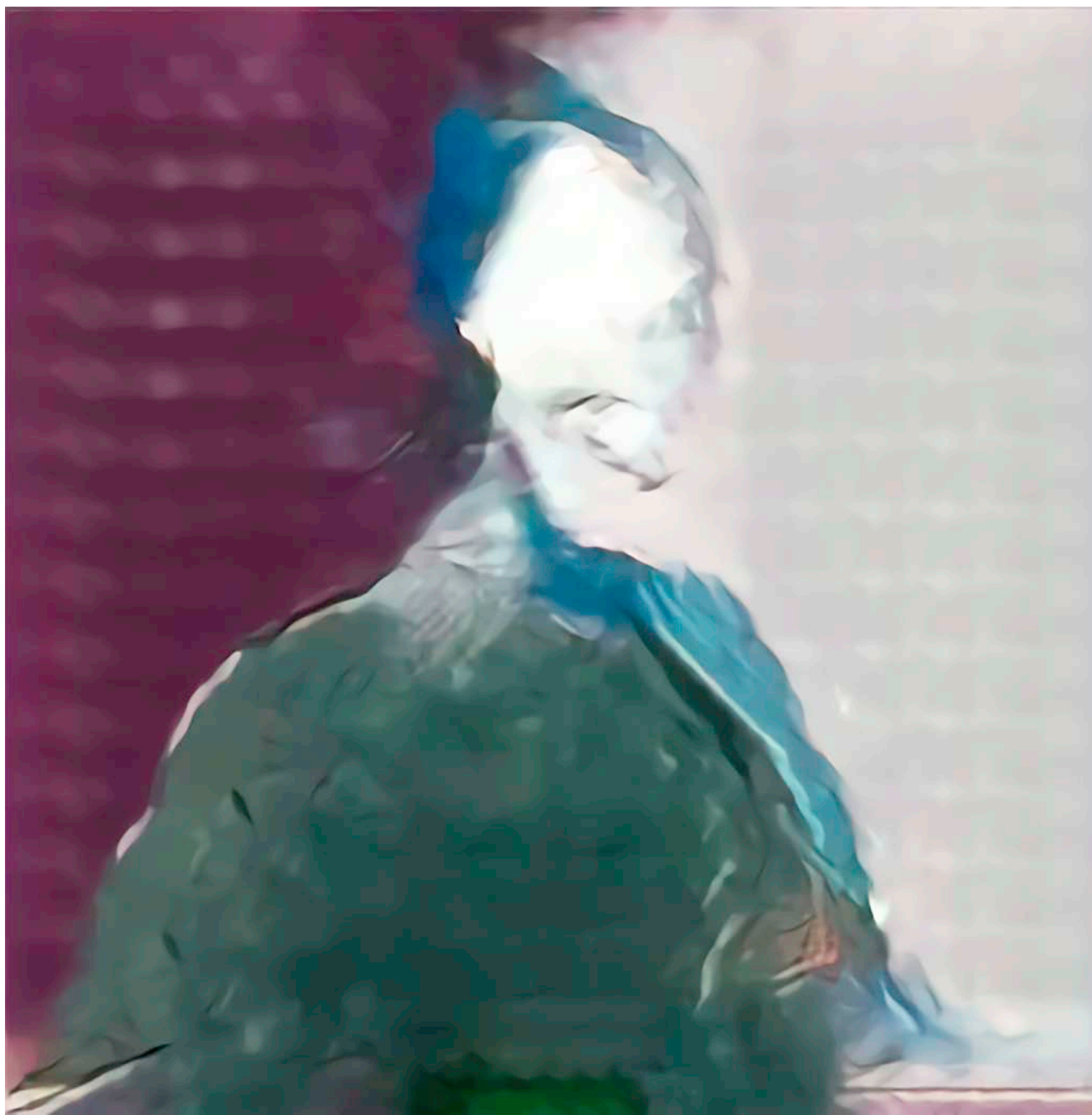
Faceless Portrait of a Pope, 2019, Digital Print on Canvas, 30 x 30 in



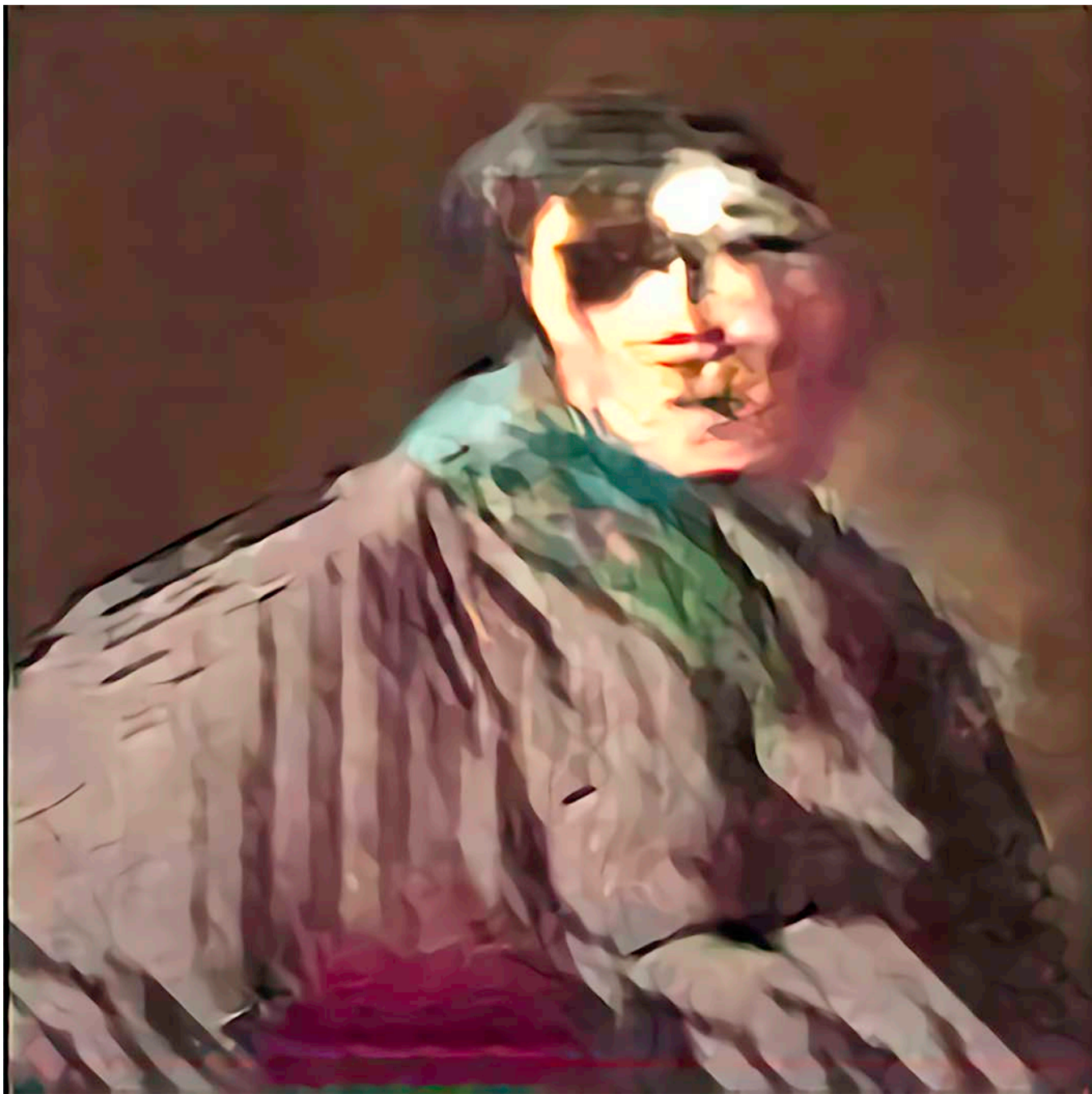
Faceless Portrait of an Earl, 2019, Digital Print on Canvas, 18 x 18 in



Faceless Portrait of a Countess, 2019, Digital Print on Canvas, 18 x 18 in



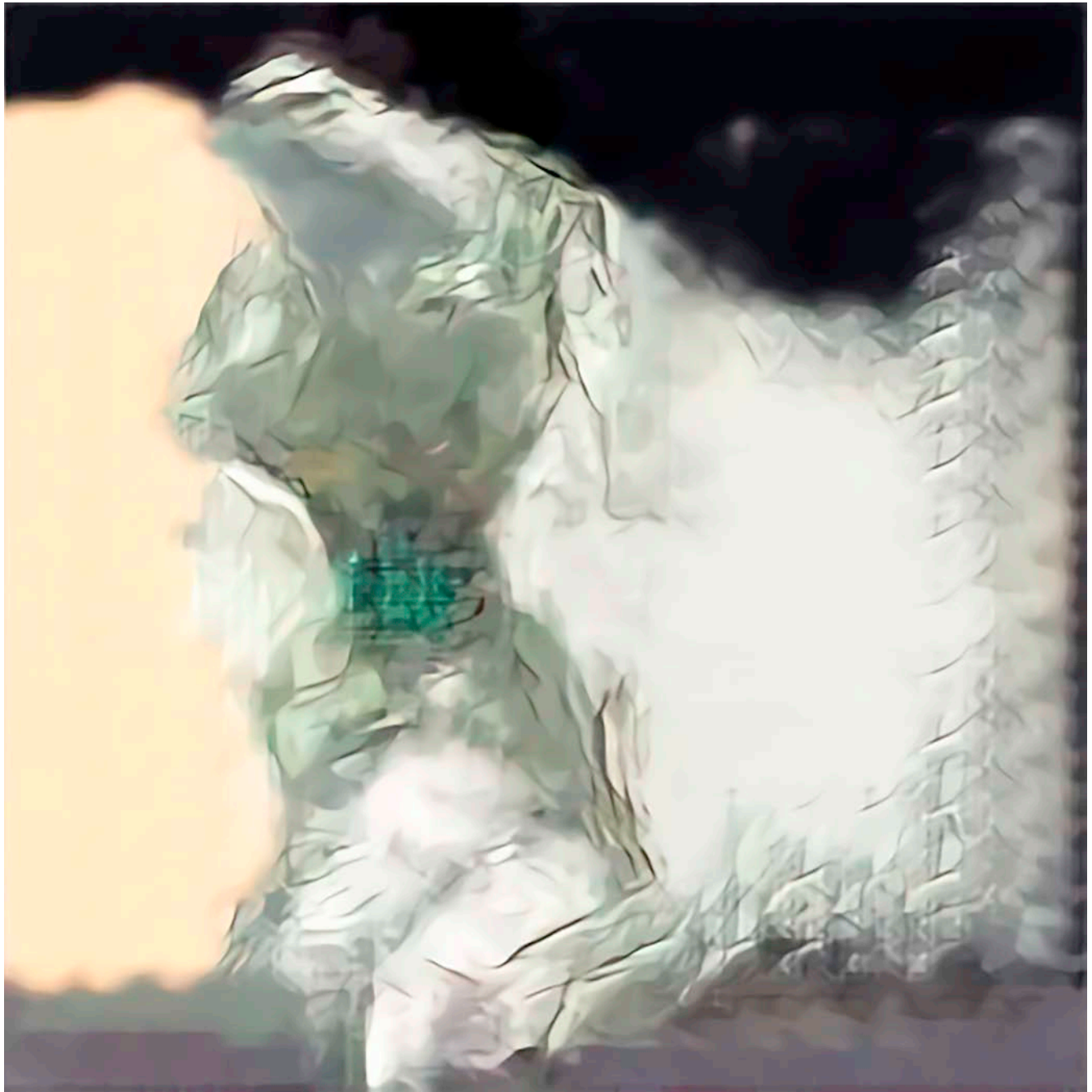
Faceless Portrait of a Man, 2019, Digital Print on Canvas, 30 x 30 in



Faceless Portrait of a Merchant, 2019, Digital Print on Canvas, 30 x 30 in



Faceless Portrait of a Scientist, 2019, Digital Print on Canvas, 30 x 30 in



Sculpture of a Young Lady, 2019, Digital Print on Canvas, 30 x 30 in



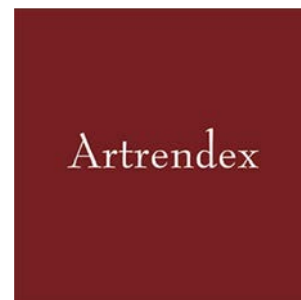
Sculpture of a Woman 1, 2019, Digital Print on Canvas, 30 x 30 in



Sculpture of a Woman 2, 2019, Digital Print on Canvas, 30 x 30 in



Sculpture of a Woman 3, 2019, Digital Print on Canvas, 24 x 24 in



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