

TRANCE OF THOUGHT
CLAYTON CAMPBELL



Clayton Campbell is an artist, writer, and arts consultant. He has been working with digital imagery since the mid 1990's.

He has been exhibiting paintings, drawings, prints and photographs since 1980 including museums, galleries, art centers and community spaces. They include the Maison Europeenne de la Photographie, Paris; WYSPA Institute for Art; Gdansk Poland; International Center of Contemporary Art, Bucharest; Three Shadows Photography Art Center, Beijing; University of Capetown, South Africa; Unit 24 Gallery, London; Nam Jun Paik Center, South Korea; Higher Bridges Arts Center, Enniskellen, Northern Ireland; Museum of Mobile, Alabama; Los Angeles Museum of Art; the Wonder Institute, Santa Fe, and The Exploratorium, San Francisco.

His work is in the collection of the Wiggins Collection of Prints and Drawings, Boston Public Library; the Center for Political Graphics, Los Angeles; the Library of Congress 9/11 Print and Drawing Collection; The Phoenix Museum of Fine Art; the New Mexico Museum of Fine Art; the Maison Européenne de la Photographie, Paris; the Robert Bell Print and Drawing Collection, Santa Fe; and Highlands University Museum and Archives, Las Vegas New Mexico.

He has received a MacDowell Colony Fellowship; artist in residence Fellowships at the Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin, Ireland, and at the Centre de Art, CAMAC, France. In 2003 he was awarded the distinction of Chevalier, Order of Arts and Letters, by the French Ministry of Culture

As a writer he has contributed reviews, essays and features to Flash Art Magazine (Milan), Artillery Magazine (Los Angeles), Art Voices Magazine (Los Angeles), ArtPresse (France) Res Magazine (Istanbul), Contemporary Magazine (London), THE Magazine (Santa Fe), After Image (Rochester, NY and Berkeley, CA), and DART Magazine (Toronto).

Campbell's recent digital art has been featured on-line by *The Eye of Photography*, Paris; exhibited in the exhibition *Atlas of Affects* at Slought Gallery, UPenn, Philadelphia; featured in the Digital Arts Blog Pavilion in Wrong Biennale media festival; been a virtual artist in residence in the Loop Art Metaverse; and is part of the 2024 survey of the EZTV Museum at Santa Monica Community College Art Gallery.

The digital art work in this volume have been made with Campbell's original photographs, images sourced from public domain archives, and new images generated from AI platforms like DALLe 4 or MidJourney. Many of these images are further processed with Glitchshop, and blended back into AI to make further variations. All of the images are processed in Photoshop, 2024.

Each work is of various sizes, whether in print, projection, or on monitors, ranging from 17" x 22", to 51" x 66" to 66" x 198."

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BIRTHRIGHT

FRONT COVER- *WHITE LIGHT* BACK COVER- *SWIMMING TO ETERNITY*

Piecing Together Glitching Thoughts of the Collective Mind

Is this a dream, or a memory? Perhaps dreams of lost ancestors, or memories of unborn kin. Perhaps both.

I met Clayton Campbell serendipitously, soon after his decision to get back to being public with his art following several years of an introverted focus on creating. His introspective period coincided with a mandatory hiatus for all of us, and our collective memories of the pandemic found a place in his personal explorations. The result is a collection of shared narratives from the glitching mind.

Glitch aesthetics are reminiscent of digital distortions and technological imperfections, and serve as a metaphor for the inherent errors of the human mind. Campbell started working with corrupted jpeg files back in 2006 – there wasn't any software designed for it, and the aesthetics didn't have a name.

Yet, digital distortions that we today call glitching has been the perfect medium for Campbell to express how the human brain processes the non-stop flow of fragmented images. Glitching mirrors the unpredictability and spontaneity of the human mind. It allows for a more unconstrained expression, without specific outcomes in mind. It's the perfect artistic response to the disjointed ideas, judgments, and narratives that the brain relentlessly spins out. Campbell's art evokes ideas around the fragility of memory, the vulnerability of perception, and the beauty that emerges from embracing imperfections, and celebrates the flaws that make us inherently human.

At first glance, *Treasure Room (page 65)* resembles a kaleidoscope – one that offers a glimpse into one's glitching mind. Campbell juxtaposes contradicting angles of perception by overlaying images from the exterior and interior of a Baroque chapel. The viewer sees the structure in all its grandness from above while simultaneously looking up to the saintly figures that cover the ceiling and the walls of the chapel. The work manipulates glitch aesthetics into reflecting a sense of vulnerability, aspiration, and hope, alongside a god-like perspective of overseeing everything below. The visual contradiction suggests that both perspectives are essential for a complete understanding of life – *as within, so without*.

An insightful interpreter of the human condition, Campbell translates the chaos and beauty of one's mind into a visual language that resonates on a collective level. By re-contextualizing simple moments of everyday life as well as pivotal stages in epic scenarios, Campbell ponders on the behavior of ordinary people who find themselves in extraordinary circumstances.

Campbell's trance of thought, which gives the series its name, finds expression in his art that turns his deeply personal meditative sessions into a contemplative space for the viewers. The viewers are invited to witness their surroundings and circumstances, and their part in it.

Furthermore, Campbell doesn't shy away from overtly depicting his contemplation of his own place in tumultuous times – *Navigating the 8th Circle of Hell (page 25)* is a self-reflective piece that depicts a chaotic moment with the artist, taking a mirror selfie, in the midst of the mayhem. Navigating through the labyrinth of memories, Campbell reflects on narratives of personal assumptions with collective echoes. Much like the way our brains piece together disjointed memories to form a cohesive understanding of the world, Campbell's art channels the raw and unpredictable nature of collage to depict the dance between chaos and order that we call life.

Campbell explores one's own mind through the concept of collective memory, for they are often intertwined. Through the artist's lens, the pandemic becomes a crucible for exploring the intricacies of the human psyche, not only because it has been a period of forced introspection, but also because the collective experience of navigating through unprecedented challenges has left an indelible mark on the collective memory of society. Campbell's incorporation of collective memory into the creative process extends beyond one's own reservoir of memories to the elements of shared cultural beliefs, adding an extra layer of complexity to the narrative woven into each piece.

A Storytelling (page 82-83) depicts two women sharing a private matriarchal moment of intimacy in a sacred temple-like space – the elder is passing on knowledge and wisdom of the great feminine spirituality to the younger through her storytelling. The circular roof is open to the sky, connoting a path and access towards the transcendent realm and divine mysteries from our tangible reality. It's a mirror image, hinting that the stories will be echoed to future generations, and the transmission of knowledge and wisdom will continue. The work is a beautiful narrative representation of an exchange of collective memories. It's not only about the events and moments society experiences together, but everything we pass on to generations to come – much the way Campbell's work conveys cultural learnings through visual representations, weaving our collective story.

Just like reading an intimate passage from a dream journal, or picking up lost pieces of a distant conversation, Campbell's viewers find themselves not only immersed in a visual narrative, but also actively participating in the exploration of the mind while contemplating their place and role in this world.

Is this a dream, or a memory? Perhaps dreams of lost ancestors, or memories of unborn kin. Probably both.

Cansu Peker, March 2024, New York
Founder, DigitalArtsBlog.com



FROM THE ANTHROPOCENE BLOOD BOOK, PAGE 17



LOST IN THE MINDSTREAM



ALLEGORY OF AIR (DEPENDENCY)



RULE OF WOMEN



TRANCE OF THOUGHT



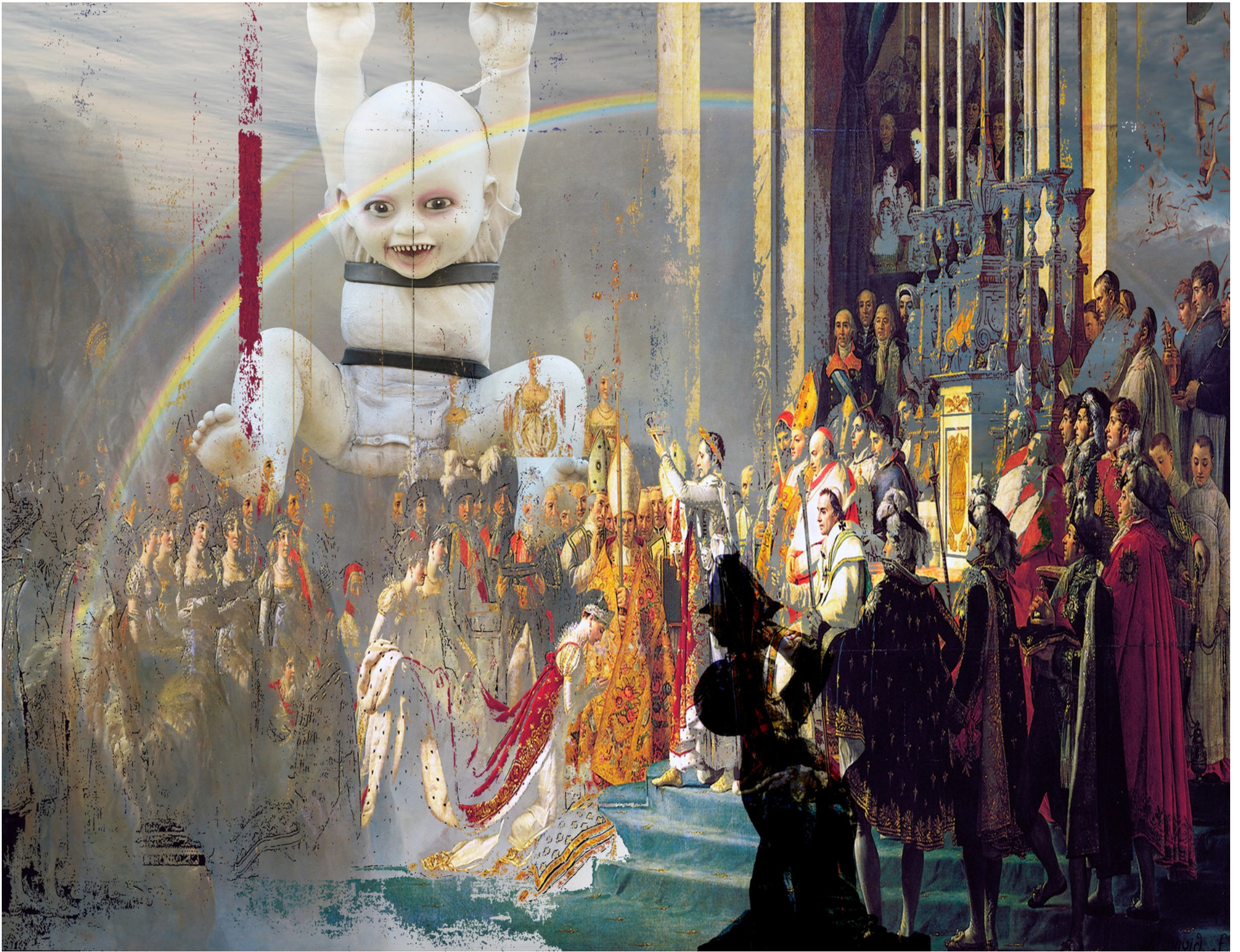
LONG BLACK DRESS



LAND OF SLEEP



DAY OF THE DEAD







UNEXPECTED VALOR



FORECLOSURE NOTICE



BORDER CROSSING



DANCE LITTLE SISTER DANCE



WHIRLWIND





IDENTITY THROUGH ACQUISITION



ALLEGORY OF PAINTING



ODALISQUES





FAMILY ALTAR



FALLING SKIES



NAVIGATING THE EIGHTH CIRCLE OF HELL



GATEKEEPERS



MY MOUNTAIN



SQUANDERING OF THE TREASURY



DEFENDING THE GATE



CONTEMPLATING PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE



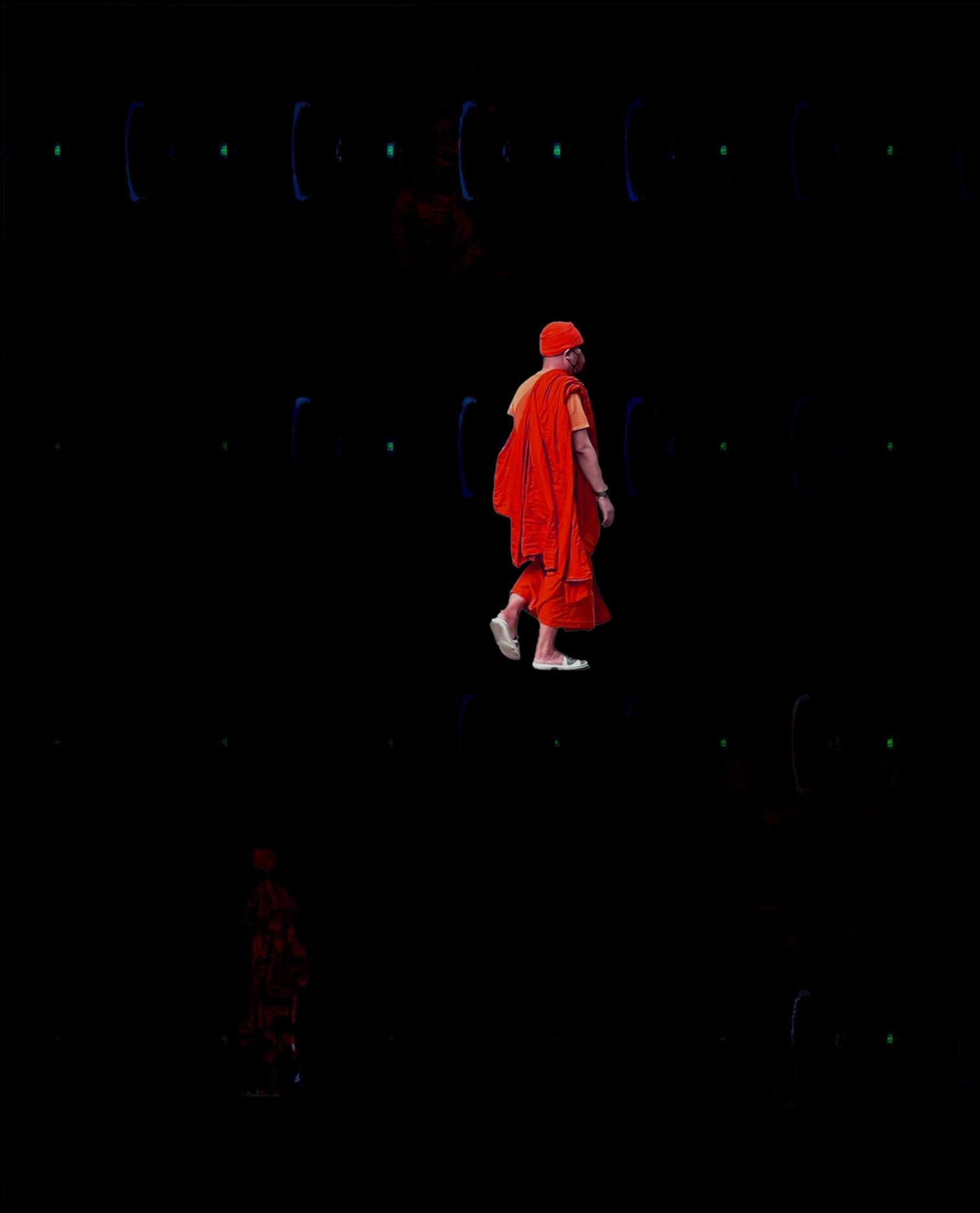
PARTIAL ERASURE IN PROGRESS



MARFA DIORAMA



L'ATELIER DU LIBERTINE





EKPHRASIS, SPRING



EKPHRASIS, SUMMER



EKPHRASIS, AUTUMN



EKPHRASIS, WINTER



THE LEAF BLOWER'S MASTERSTROKE



LOVE. COMPASSION





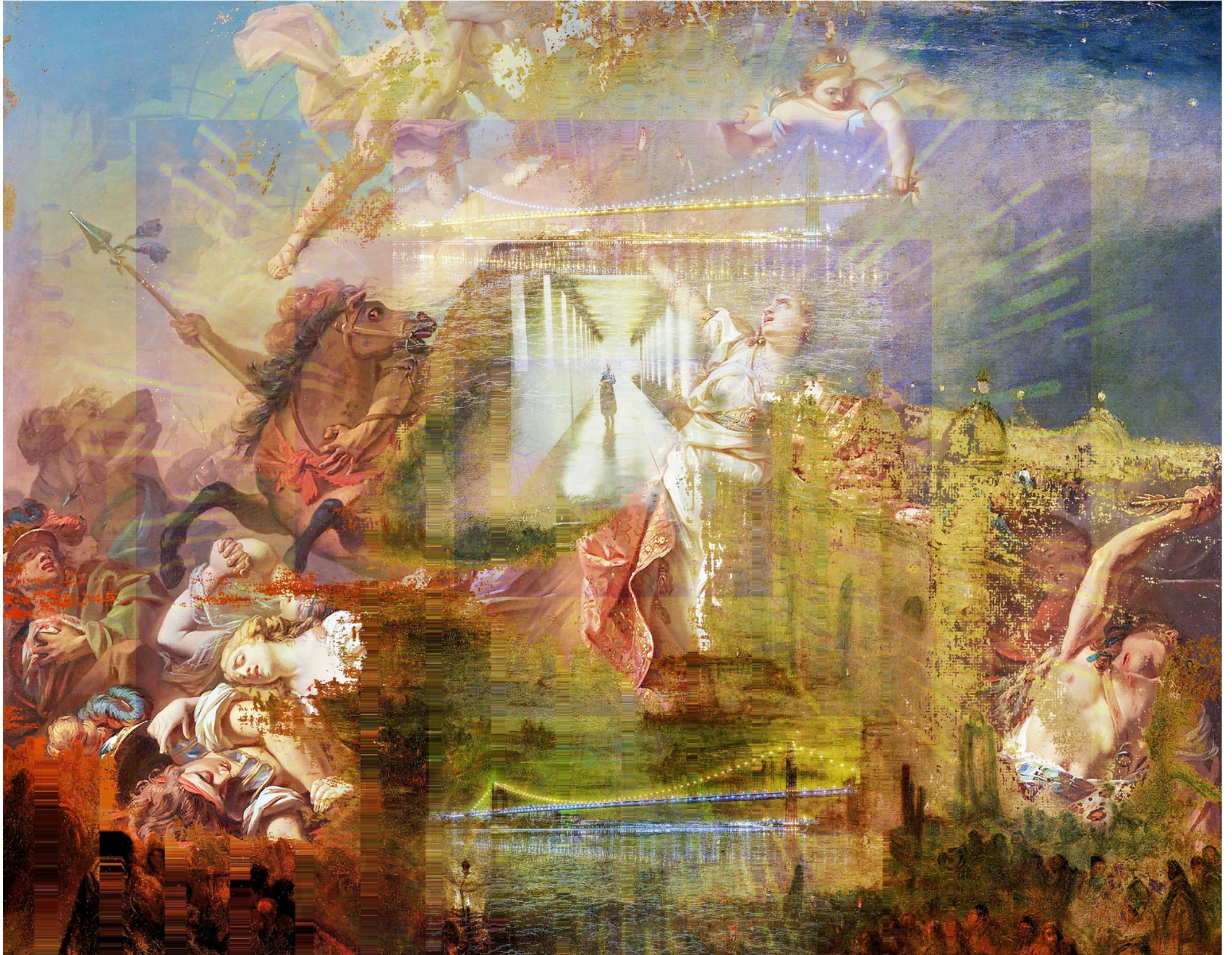
ABDUCTION OF THE BUDDHA



IN PURSUIT OF THE FLYING DUTCHMAN



UNRELENTING FALL INTO A MASS OF CONFUSIONS



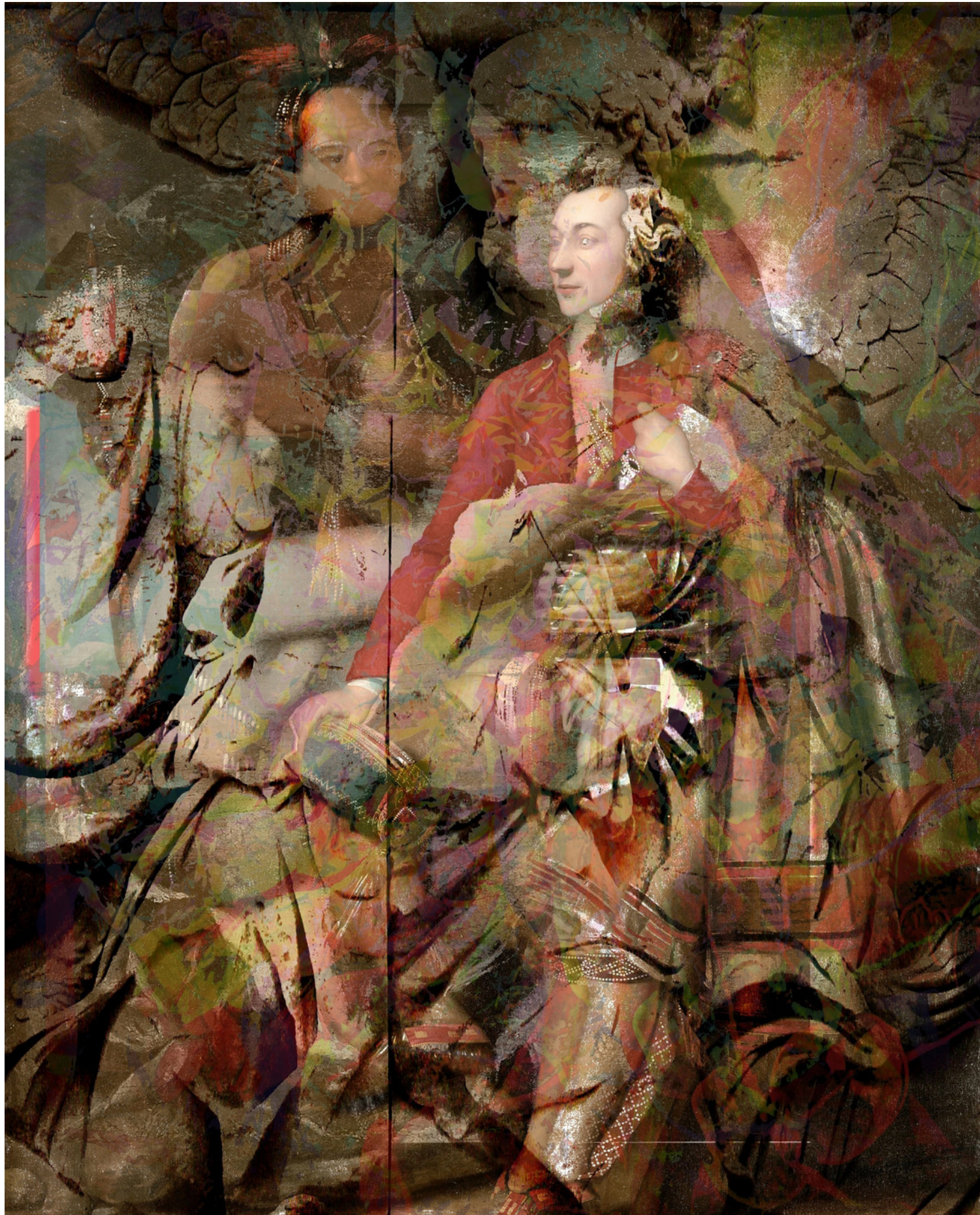
THE WHITE LIGHT



GHOST SHIPS



SAFETY IN NUMBERS



FORBIDDEN











THE PATHWAY



OUR BETTER ANGELS PASSING BY.....



DEATH ON A PALE HORSE





SLOTH, TORPOR, MADNESS



STASIS



AN UNDERWORLD OF MALE MADNESS



RIPPING THROUGH THE VEIL 1



WANDERING PROLETARIAT



THE SACRIFICES WE MAKE



THE HISTORY UNDERNEATH



TREASURE ROOM



HEREAFTER





ADRIFT



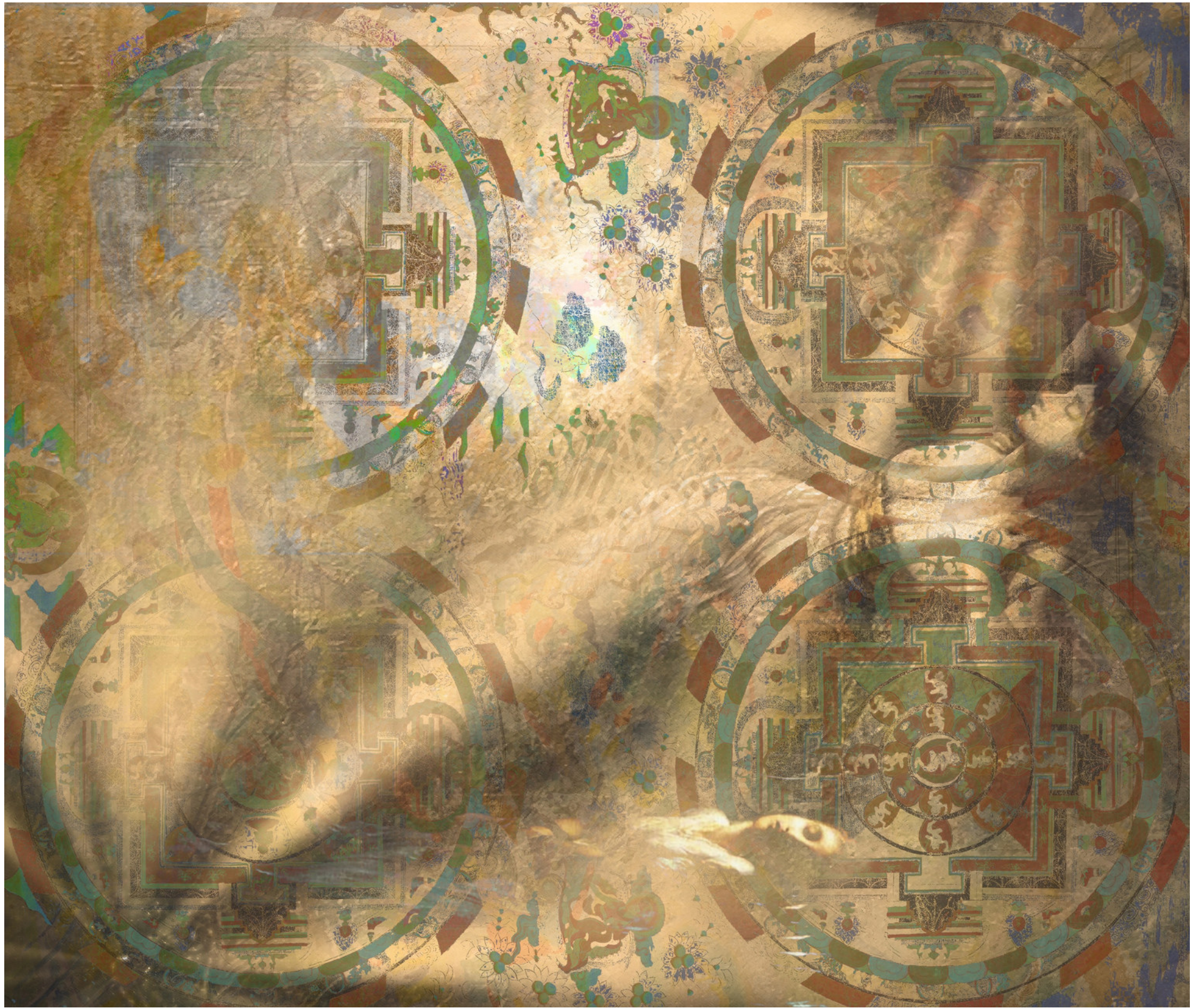
THE GIRLS OF REVOLUTION STREET



FRAGMENTARY LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT



VICTOR HUGO'S LAMENT (UKRAINE)

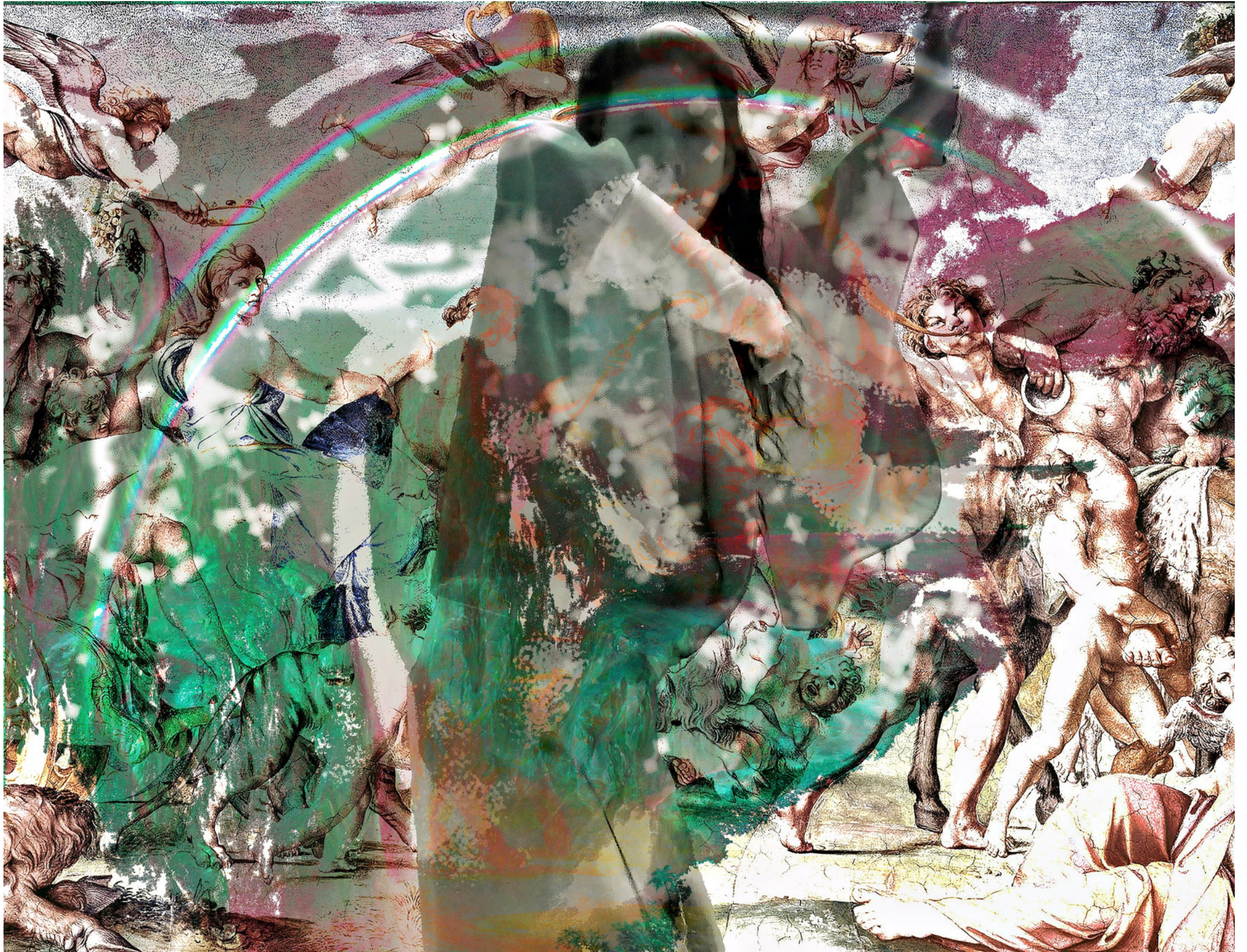


SAFE



PAUSING AT THE ESPLANADE MARKET





IN THE BARDO



CYCLOPEAN



BURNING MAN



SAD CLOWN
PARADOX



BREAKOUT



A STORYTELLING





GREAT GRATITUDE



AFTERSHOCK





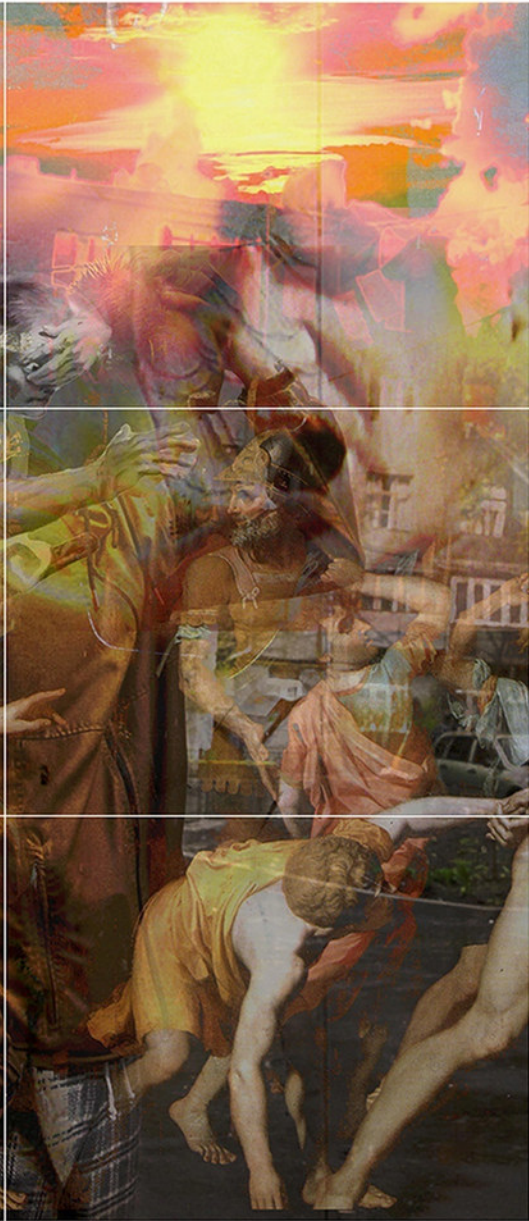
SOUNDING OF THE FIRST TRUMPET...



AN EXCEPTION WAS TO BE MADE.....



THE FURIES





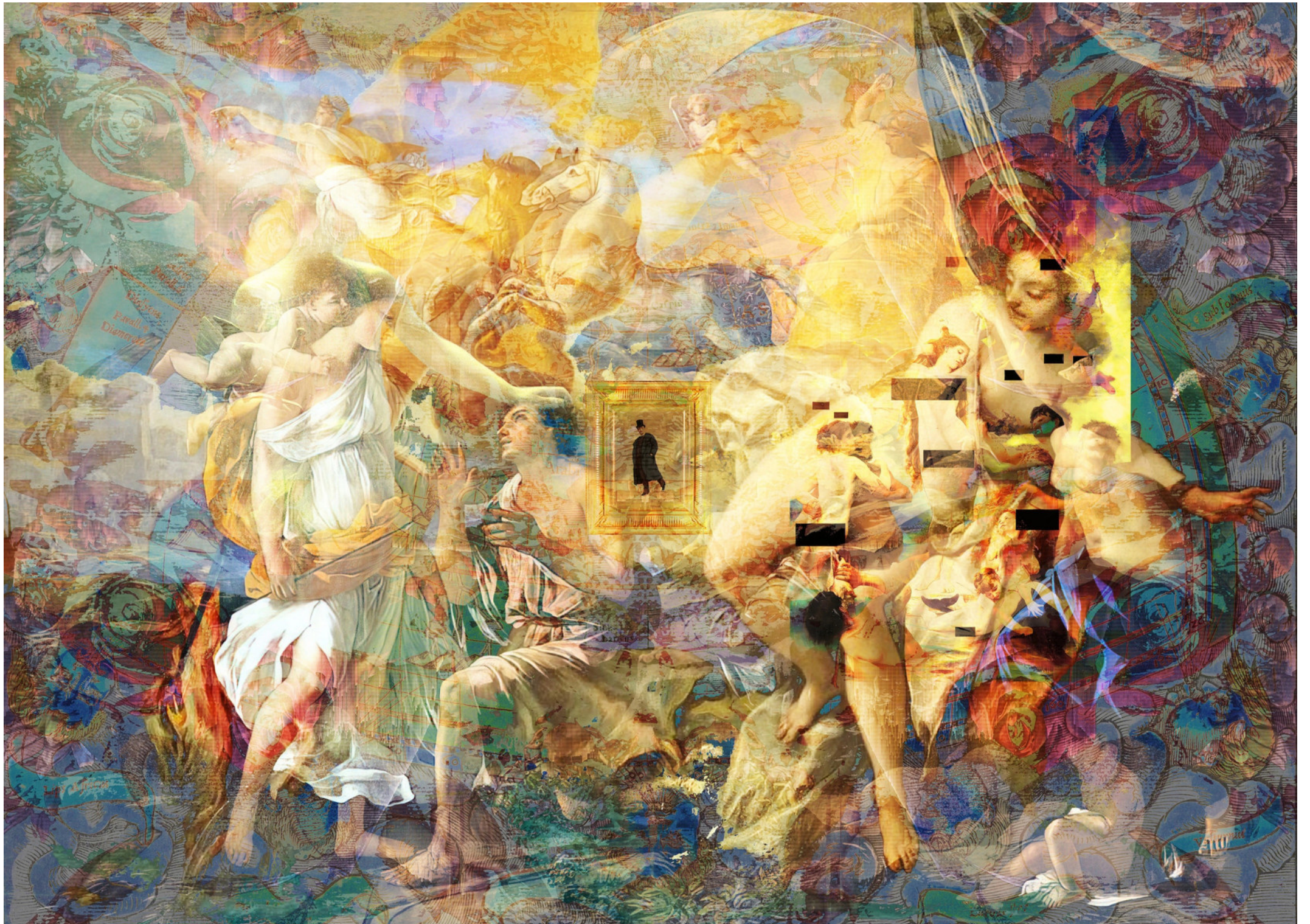
THE FURIES - VENGEFUL DESTRUCTION



THE FURIES - ENDLESS ANGER



THE FURIES - JEALOUS RAGE



EXIGENCE



NEUROTYPICAL BEHAVIORS



ENRAGEMENT



IT TAKES ONE KIND WORD TO WARM THREE COLD WINTER MONTHS 1



IT TAKES ONE KIND WORD TO WARM THREE COLD WINTER MONTHS 2



IT TAKES ONE KIND WORD TO WARM THREE COLD WINTER MONTHS 3



IT TAKES ONE KIND WORD TO WARM THREE COLD WINTER MONTHS 4



RIPPING THROUGH THE VEIL 2



THE GREAT PONTIFICATE



LANDSCAPE -GARDEN OF BABEL



LANDSCAPE - SECOND ARROW





BURNING DOWN OUR HOUSE



BLISS OF BLAMELESSNESS



THINKING MIND



ALCHEMICAL MAP TO HEAVEN



SOFT LANDING RETURNING TO THE BODY



THE PITCH 1



THE PITCH 2



SEA OF PROTECTION AND GRACIOUSNESS



BARCELONA



CALIFORNIA



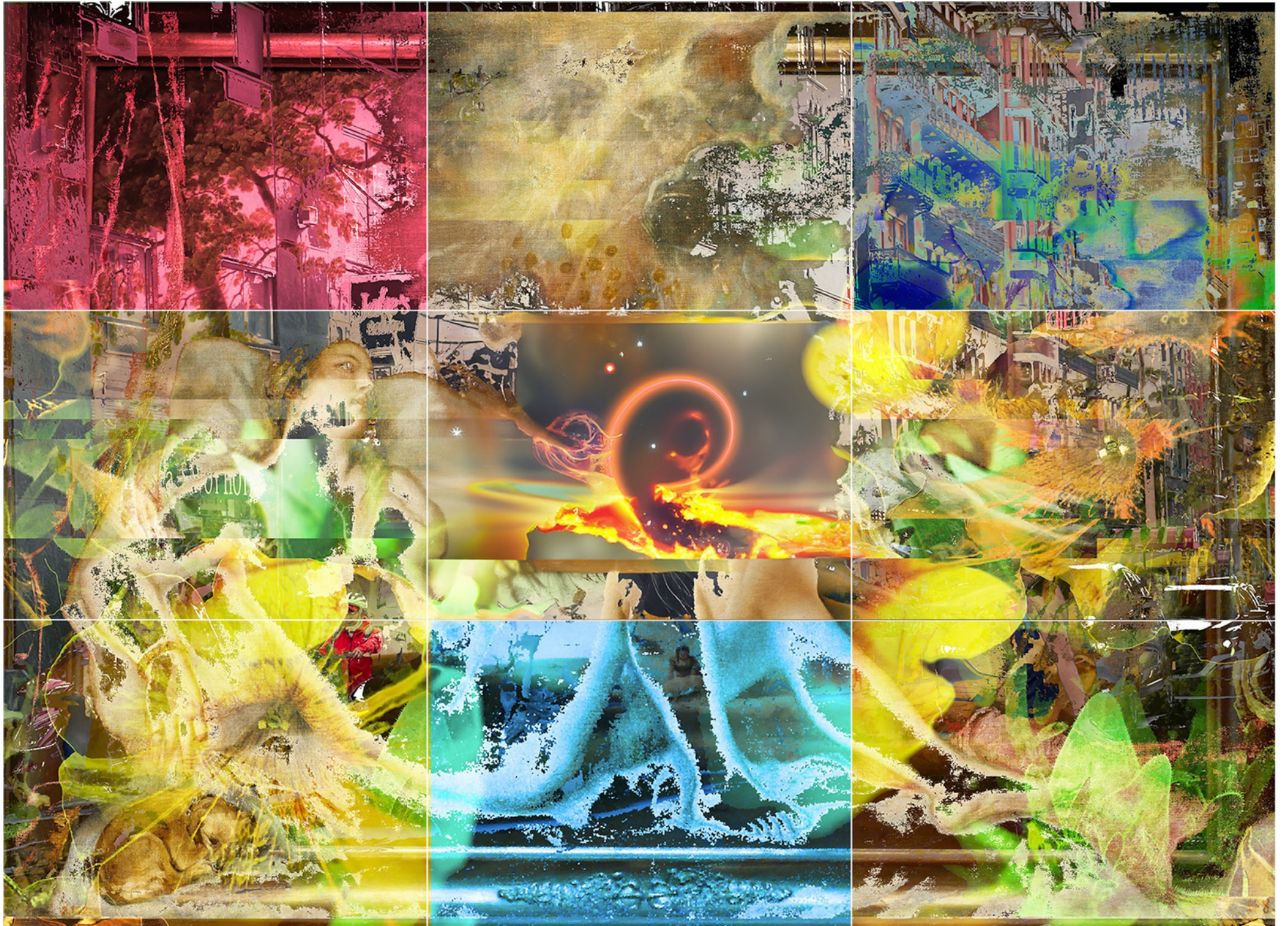
GOYA



PROHIBITION

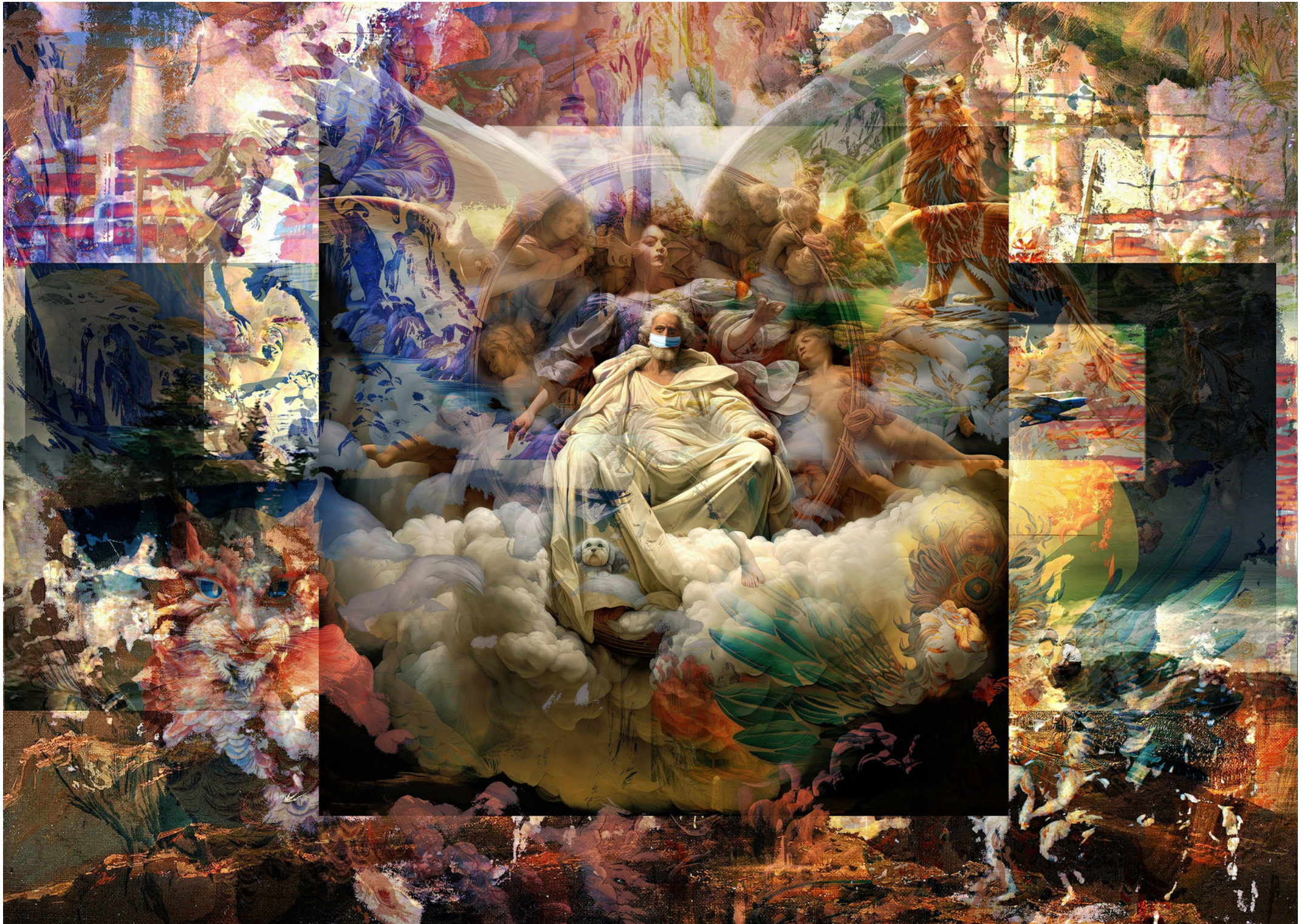


THE BACK ALLEYS OF EUROPE





CHELSEA ART DEALER DEATH MATCH



ALGORITHMIC GODS



ALGORITHMIC DEMONS



HOLDING ON



RIPPING THROUGH THE VEIL 3



ATLAS COLLASPING



MIXED BLESSINGS



