

June 2022
Artist Interview

Bryan Robertson



Bryan Robertson lives in the mountains of Northern Arizona between Phoenix and the Grand Canyon. As a professional educator, he teaches a variety of college-level visual arts courses and, as department chair, works with a diverse group of students and teachers. Robertson's visual art utilizes paint and pixels to explore an ongoing sense of cultural dislocation in modern society. Robertson has held solo exhibitions in commercial and non-profit spaces, received various grants, and presented his research at academic conferences throughout the United States. Recent exhibitions include the Long Island Museum of Contemporary Art and the CICA Museum in Seoul, Korea.

The Interview

At what point in your life did you know that you wanted to become an artist? Did the realization emerge slowly?

Art has been an integral part of my life from an early age. Doodling with crayons and colored pencils began before I could write words. There has always been something seductive about color, and it is my first true love. Becoming an artist has been slow, with little bits of confidence gained here and there, and when the pieces are all put together, I can look back and say, yes, I am an artist.

How did you evolve your style and favorite mediums?

My style has always revolved around mimicry and copying; focusing reality back on itself has an appeal to me. I mostly find existing images and manipulate them into new compositions. Chalk and oil pastels were my favorite medium for a long time until I discovered water-mixable oil paint, and then I began to focus on applying paint. Additionally, I was introduced to digital art at a young age and began to explore collage and digital painting techniques. I like mixing a sense of photorealism with abstract lyrical mark-making.

What are your time management techniques? Do you have regular working hours...or favorite times to work?

I keep regular working hours, waking up early in the morning to tap into my creativity when it is fresh. I usually begin work at around 5 am and continue into the mid-morning. I also work as a professor of visual art and teach classes some mornings and in the afternoon. Friday, Saturday, and Sunday afternoons I dedicate to my art practice.

Do you work on more than one piece at a time, or primarily just on one?

Yes, I need to work on multiple pieces at once; there is something in the process of creation that I love, and the technical execution of the final work can become daunting. Working on finishing a painting and creating a new concept keeps my ideas and artistic style fresh.

What would you say is your biggest influence--that which keeps you working, regardless of all else, your most steadfast motivation?

Art is like gambling; there is a prize dangling in front of my face that I can never quite reach. My motivation comes from always wanting to explore new combinations of visual information and challenging myself with the technical execution of my work. The final result of my work never yields complete satisfaction, so my motivation comes from the desire to improve.

Does trying something new and not knowing the rules -- the boundary pushing -- create anxiety or excitement in you? (Or both?)

Trying something new always creates excitement Art is like gambling; there is a prize dangling in front of my face that I can never quite reach. My motivation comes from always wanting to explore new combinations of visual information and challenging myself with the technical execution of my work. The final result of my work never yields complete satisfaction, so my motivation comes from the desire to improve. The anxiety comes at the end, not knowing if it will be well received. There is something about trying a new technique that unlocks creative pathways. The hardest thing about being an artist is always thinking of new ideas, and trying new things helps generate new ideas.

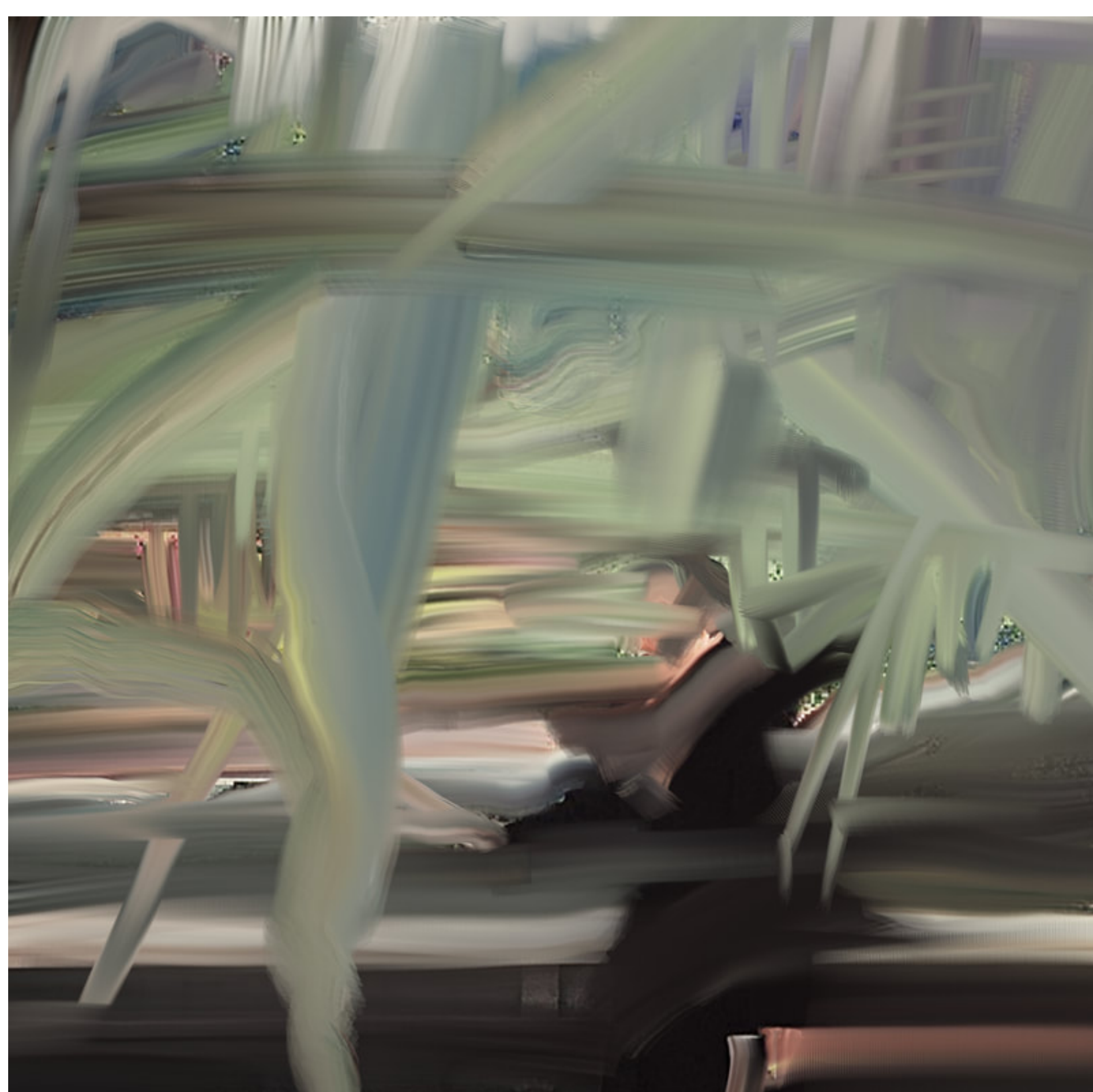
Do you enjoy having the "duality of both chaos and control" or are you happiest with a set plan?

In the best scenarios, I leverage chaos and control against each other. My work begins with experimentation and not knowing what will happen in terms of composition, but the design comes with a clear technical execution plan. However, the piece ends with the chaos of execution. Who knows where my work will go once it leaves the brain and comes out into the world. One of the things I enjoy most about art is that it mitigates the boundaries between the internal and external worlds.

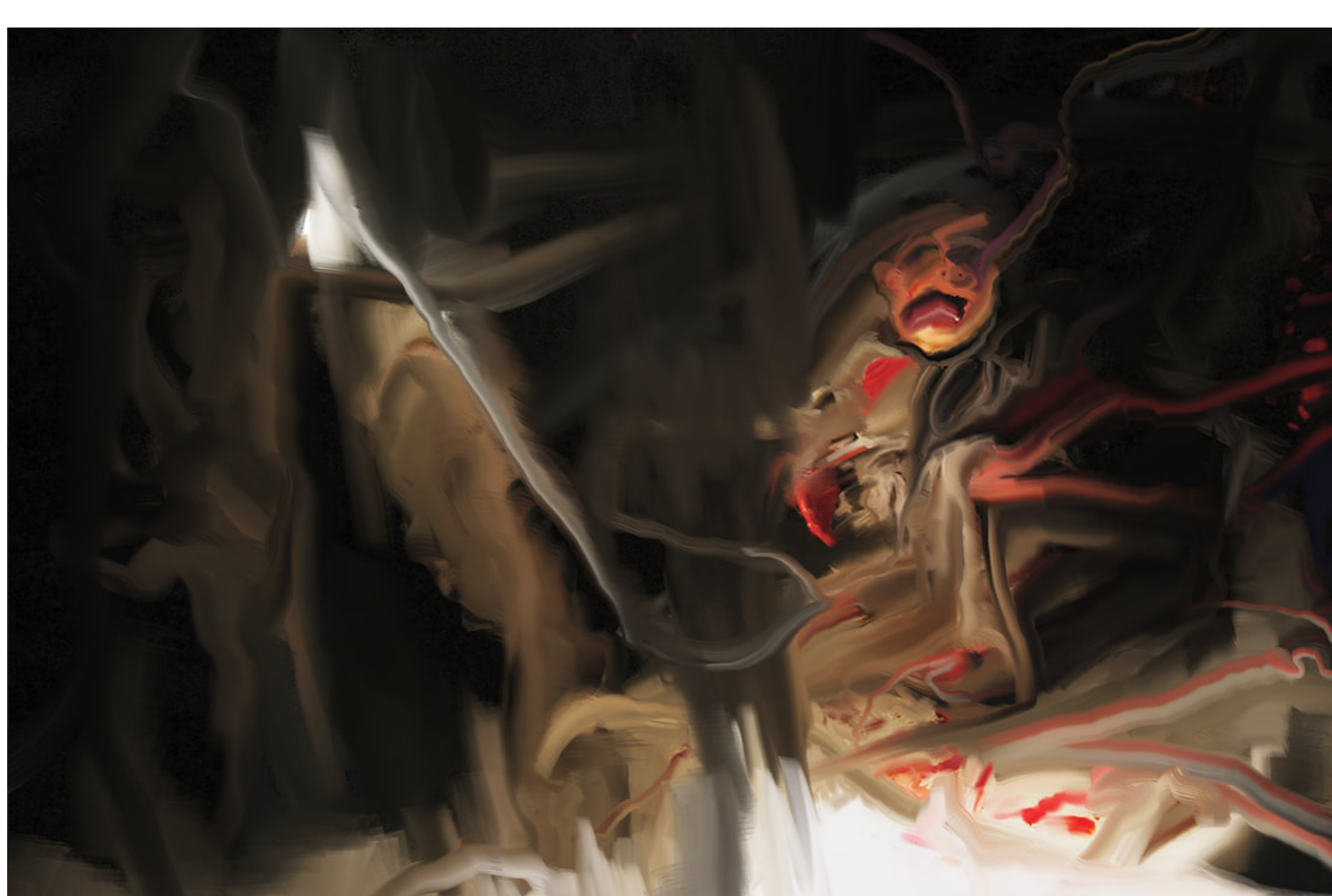
Do you have any projects or events forthcoming?

Yes, my biggest project is participation as a presenter and exhibitor at the CICA Museum's New Media Conference in Seoul South Korea in June. <https://cicamuseum.com/nmaconference/>

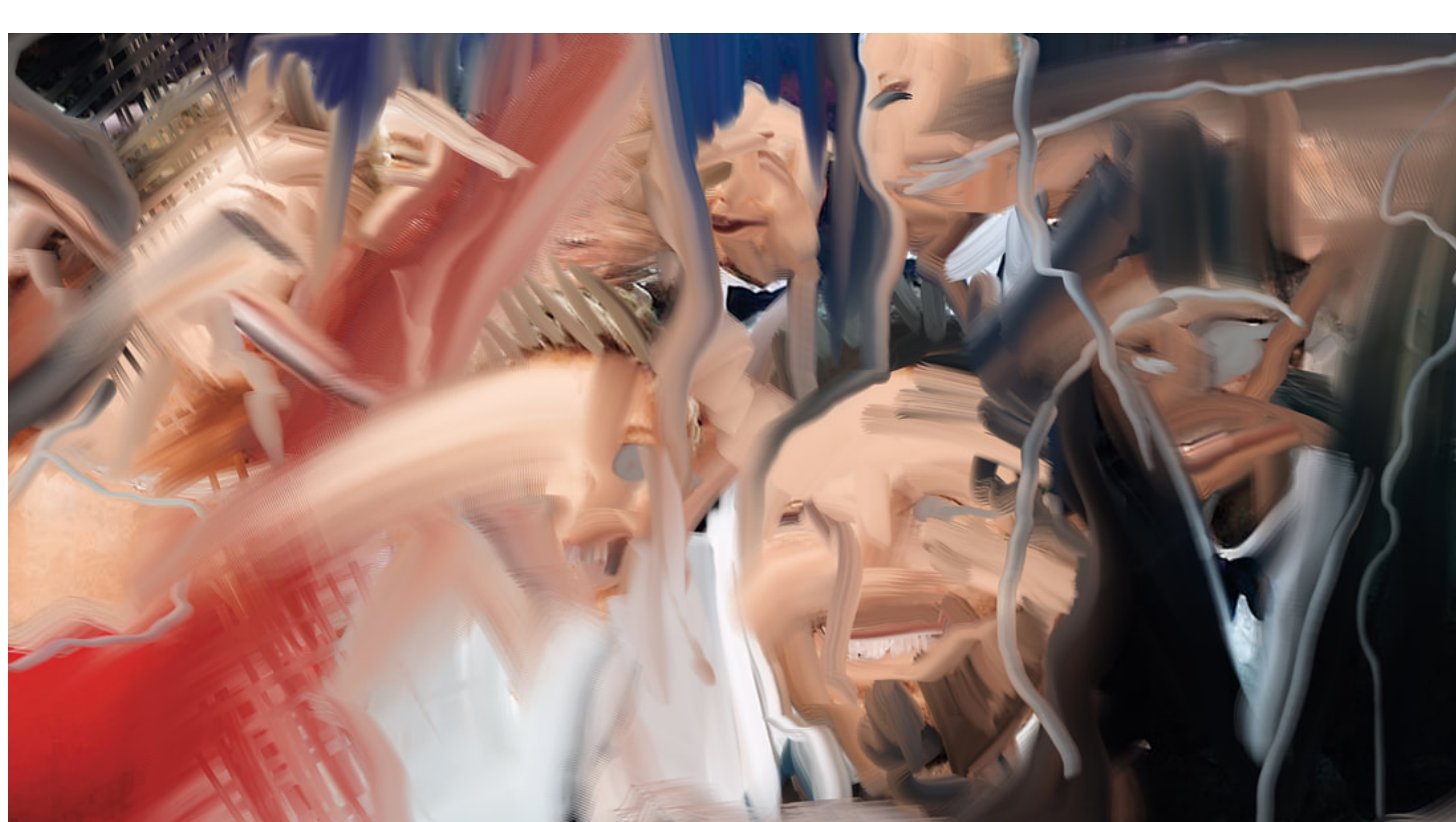
Additionally my work will be featured in Kolaj Fest in New Orleans in June: <http://kolajmagazine.com/content/content/collage-exhibitions/politics-in-collage-exhibition-at-kolaj-fest-new-orleans/>



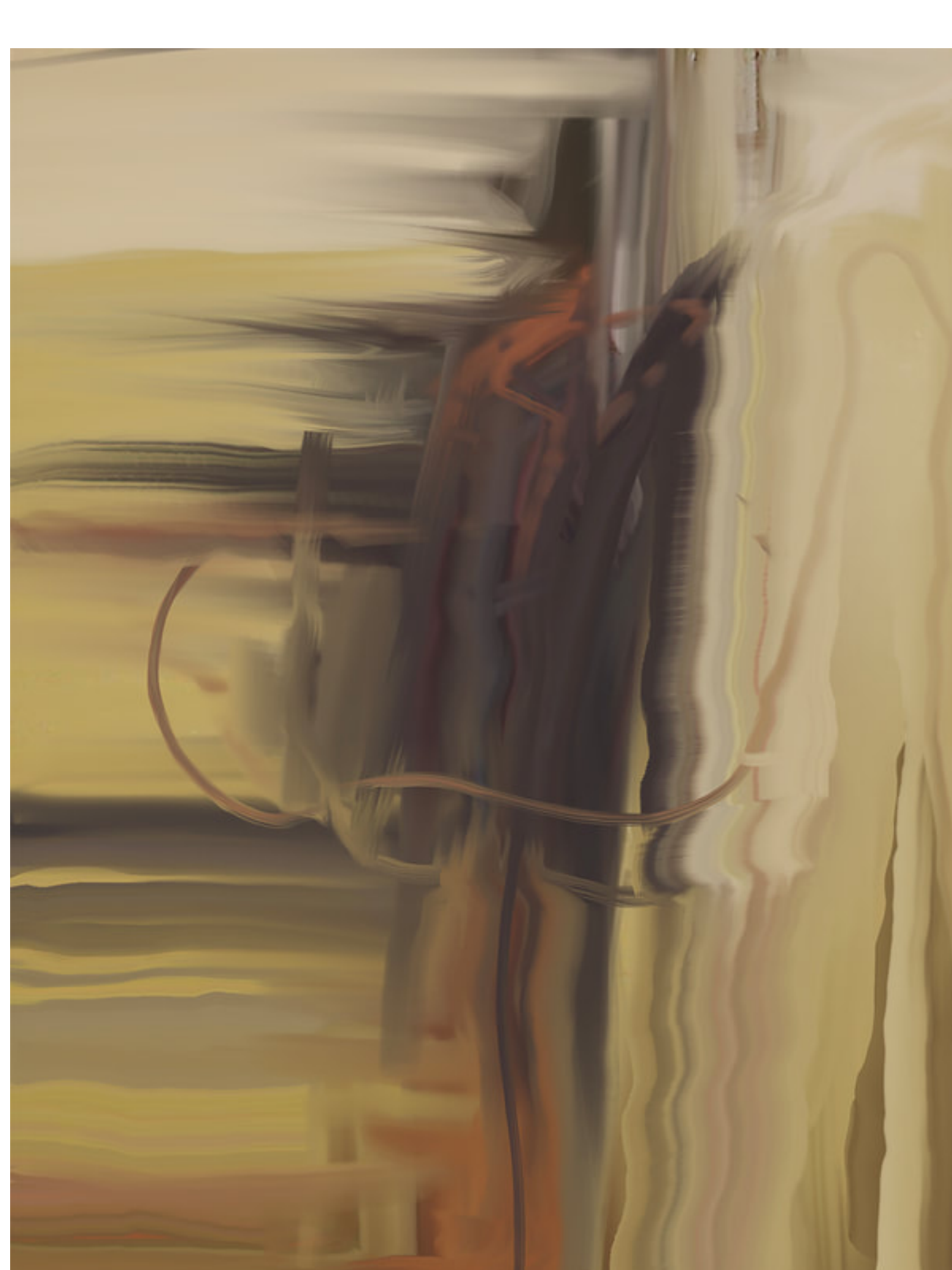
North Korea



Iraqi Girl at Checkpoint



Oscars Selfie



Oscars Selfie

Contact the artist directly:

(c) 314-313-5810

(e) bryan.robertson.art@gmail.com

Website-<https://bryan-robertson.com/work>