

LIGHT MATTER

by Nancy Burson

SOLO SHOW VI

March 21 - May 2, 2026

LIGHT MATTER

This March-April, Heft Gallery presents a solo exhibition of Nancy Burson's new body of Quantum Entanglement paintings, along with the early composite portraits that reaffirm her position as one of the most consequential figures in the history of photographic innovation and digital portraiture. Burson's early practice from the early 80's through the '90s pioneered facial morphing and recognition technologies that were used to create polaroid and silver gelatin works now found in most major museum collections in the US and Europe. These same technologies would later be adapted by law enforcement and intelligence agencies, laying the groundwork for current facial recognition and AI developments. Light Matter, Burson's debut exhibition at Heft Gallery, expands her inquiry of universal connectivity into the realm of quantum physics with paintings that embody emergent patterns found in everything from the swarming of birds to the distribution of stars across the galaxies.

Burson's new experiential Quantum Entanglement paintings are depictions of the energy she sees so clearly. They provide living examples of the quantum world by interacting with viewers recording their changes in color on video. The paintings themselves are composed of thousands of dots representing sets of entangled particles that when observed, seem to display a form of consciousness that is still unexplainable through current physics. What Burson offers us is a new contribution to the realm of digital photography/videography by utilizing the electronics of digital cameras to capture the movement of the photons between the viewer, camera, and painting. She thinks of it as photon-ography. The paintings are a reminder of how we are a part of the bigger picture of the physics surrounding us and reassuring that we're all immersed in the same sea of particles.

From her early composite portraits which embraced the concept that we are all one, these new works further refine the same concept. As she says, "We are all composites in that we are composites of our parents, our decades, and our ancestry. We are also composites of our ancient DNA, now recognized as relevant to what we've inherited over the past 5000 years of our lineages. Additionally, we are also composites of every atom within us that were once a part of stars."

In the tradition of Hilma af Klint, Burson's work hovers between the physics she sees, and the information conveyed through the guidance she receives. She not only experiences the phenomena's constant visual and audio communications, she believes it is her mission to assist others to see the same energies that she does.

To that end, Burson will be doing performances with her Mother Mary and the Quantum Spheres sculpture within the Heft Gallery space. She uses these glow-in-the-dark statues as tools for audiences to see and experience the movement of particle physics in the darkness around them. There are particles of energy moving constantly around us and she's been photographing and filming them for three decades. These performances are a remarkable interactive experience of the physics surrounding all of us.

One of the ancient symbols used to represent the Divine Feminine aka Mother Mary was two interlocking circles or the Vesica Piscis. In modern times, physicists have used that same symbol to represent quantum entanglement as a Möbius strip moving between two interlocking spheres. At the end of each performance, viewers are allowed to videotape the energy surrounding the statues by shooting a short video in the darkness. These performances will occur every afternoon between 1pm and 6pm at half hour intervals and will require a viewer commitment of 10 minutes in the dark. Scheduling details through email will be available shortly.

Government interest in what Burson sees has been ongoing for decades and is complicated by controversial physical evidence still being evaluated by material scientists. Her 13-minute award-winning short documentary on the subject is now available on her website at <https://www.nancyburson.com/p/its-not-up-to-us>

Burson's work is in the permanent collection of museums worldwide including the MoMA, Metropolitan Museum, and the Whitney Museum in NYC, as well as the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, the Centre Pompidou in Paris, the LA County Museum of Art and the Getty Museum, MOMA (San Francisco), the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston, and the Smithsonian Museum in Washington DC.

Watch the Introductory Video



NANCY BURSON

b. 1948 USA

Nancy Burson is internationally known as the inventor of facial morphing through her groundbreaking collaboration with MIT's Media Lab in the late 1970s. Burson's early photographic composites—created using her patented triangular grid system—laid the foundation for technologies that today inform AI-driven facial recognition and digital filters. One of her photographs was selected for Time Magazine's 100 Photographs: The Most Influential Images of All Time, and her composite image merging Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin went viral as a Time Magazine cover in July 2018.

Her work has continued to embrace the concept that we are all one. As she says, "We are all composites in that we are composites of our parents, our decades, and our ancestry. We are also composites of our ancient DNA, now recognized as relevant to what we've inherited over the past 5000 years of our lineages. Additionally, we are also composites of every atom within us that were once a part of stars."

Burson's new series of Quantum Entanglement Paintings extends this inquiry into the realm of quantum physics. Composed of thousands of paired dots representing entangled particles, the works draw on emergent behavior patterns found in nature from the swarming of birds to the distribution of stars across galaxies. Inspired by what Einstein called "spooky action at a distance," the paintings explore the invisible relationships that unify matter across space.

Burson has collaborated on a number of public New York art projects with Creative Time, the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, and Deutsche Bank, including the poster project, "Visualize This" (Creative Time, 1991), the billboard, "There's No Gene For Race" (2000), the poster/postcard project "Focus on Peace", commissioned for the first anniversary of 9/11, and "Looking Up" and "Truth" at the 60 Wall St. Atrium, 2005. In 2014, Burson's public artworks were displayed as works projected in light in both the Berlin Festival of Light and the New York Festival of Light. "Seeing and Believing", her traveling 2002 retrospective originating at the Grey Art Gallery, was nominated for Best Solo Museum Show of the Year in NYC by the International Association of Art Critics.

Burson's work is included in museums worldwide including the MoMA, Metropolitan Museum, and the Whitney Museum in NYC, as well as the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, the Center Georges Pompidou in Paris, the LA County Museum of Art and the Getty Museum, MoMA (San Francisco), the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston, and the Smithsonian Museum in Washington DC, as well as many others.

She has served as a visiting professor at Harvard and as a member of the adjunct photography faculty at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts for five years. Burson currently teaches at the New York Film Academy and produces the NYFA Guest Speaker Series.



NANCY BURSON
Quantum Entanglement Painting #4

NANCY BURSON

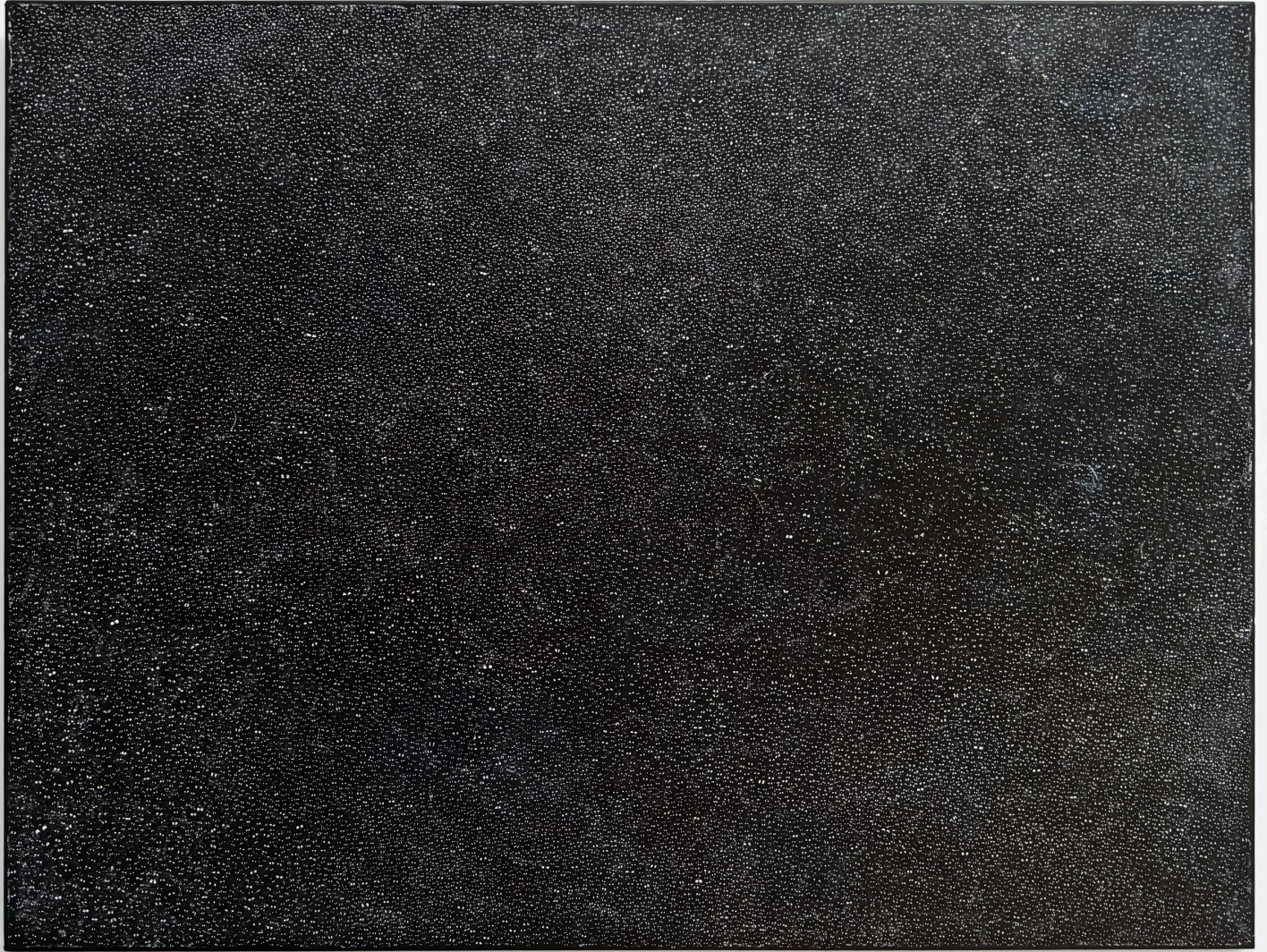
Quantum Entanglement Painting #4

2021

Unique painting

\$38,000

Oil, acrylic, and pen on canvas, signed on verso, float framed in hardwood
36 x 48 in.



NANCY BURSON
Quantum Entanglement Painting #1

NANCY BURSON

Quantum Entanglement Painting #1

2021

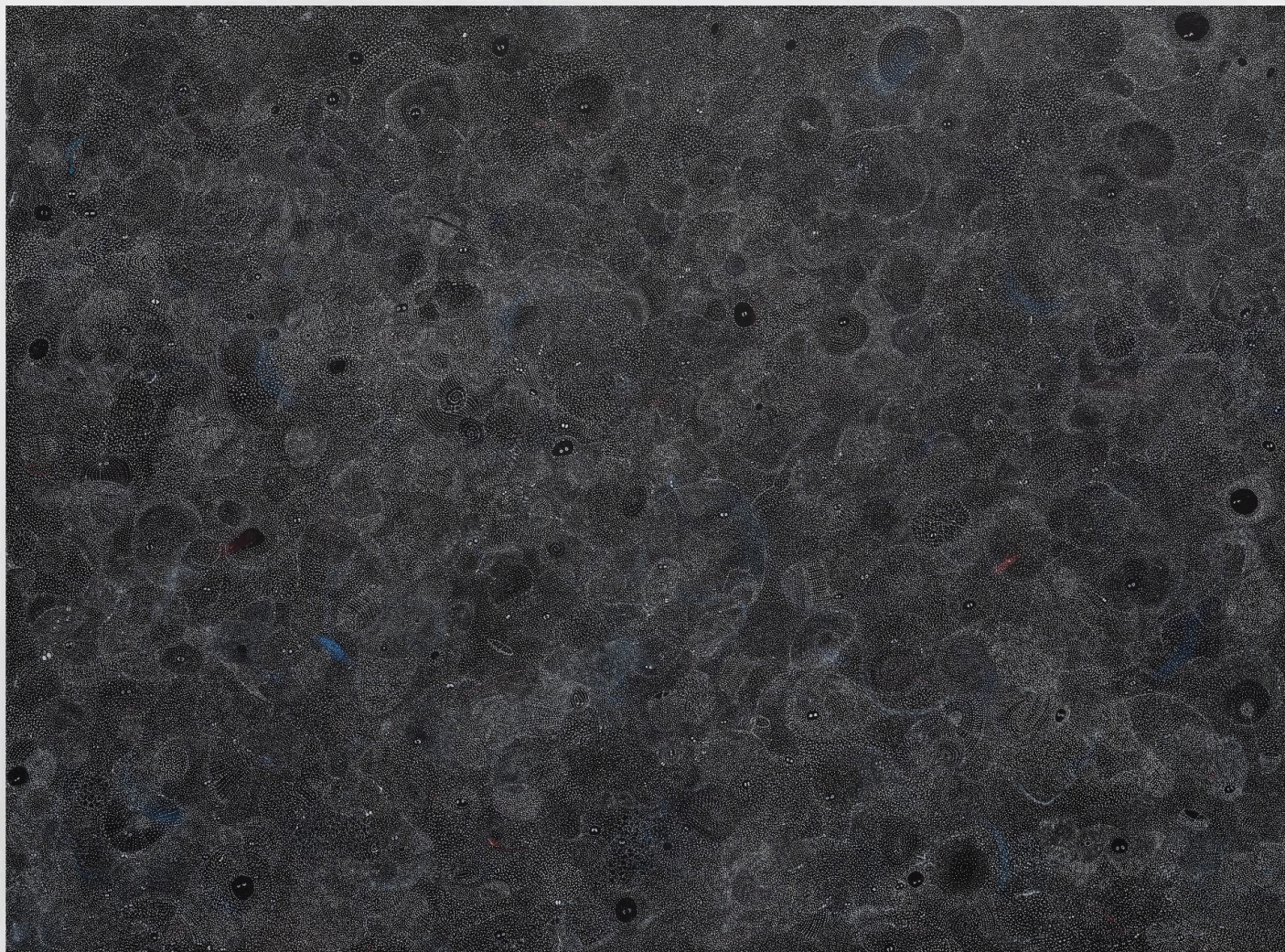
Unique painting

Oil, acrylic, and pen on canvas
36 x 48 in.

Sold

Detail





NANCY BURSON
Quantum Entanglement Painting #3

NANCY BURSON

Quantum Entanglement Painting #3

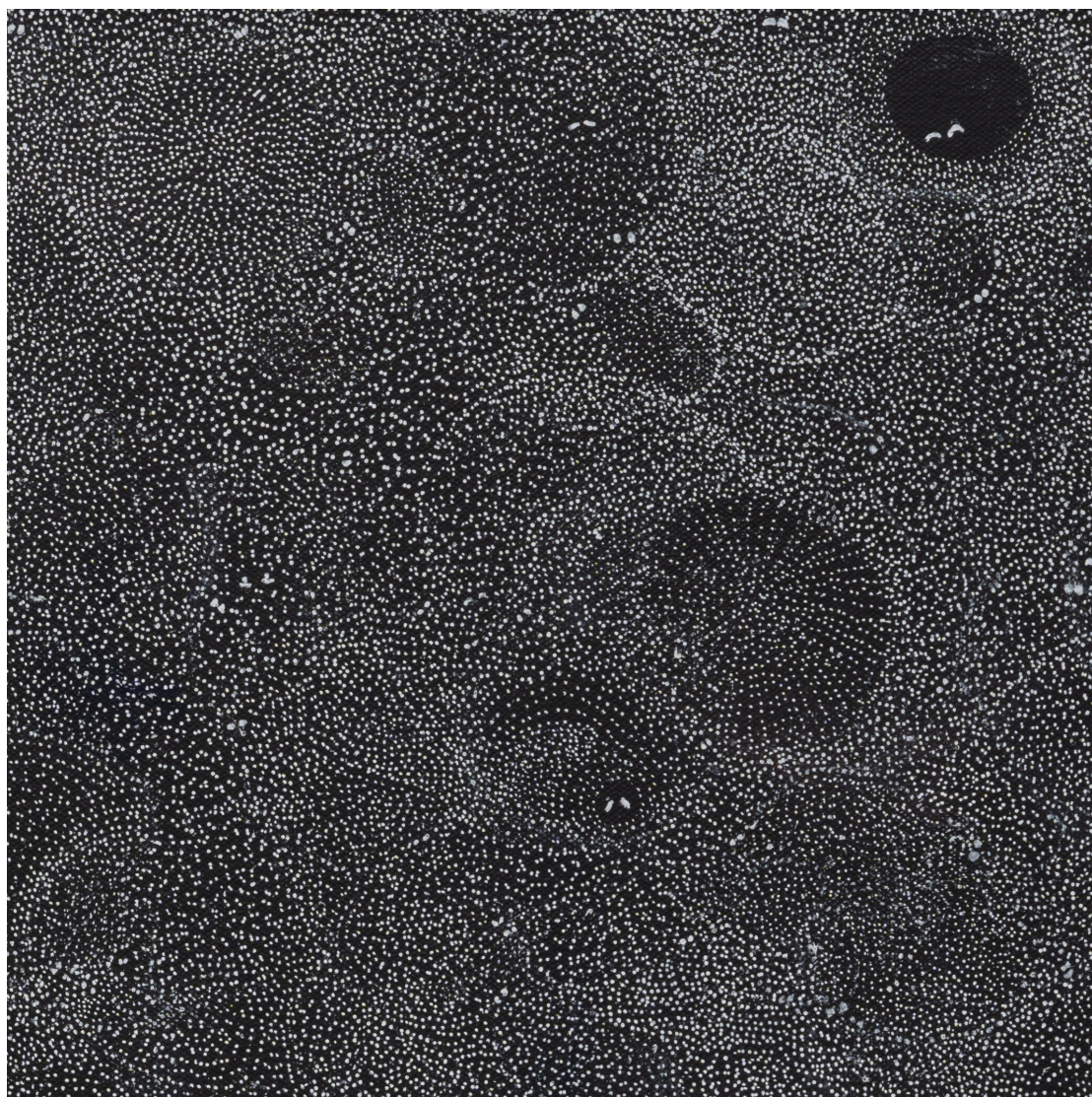
2021

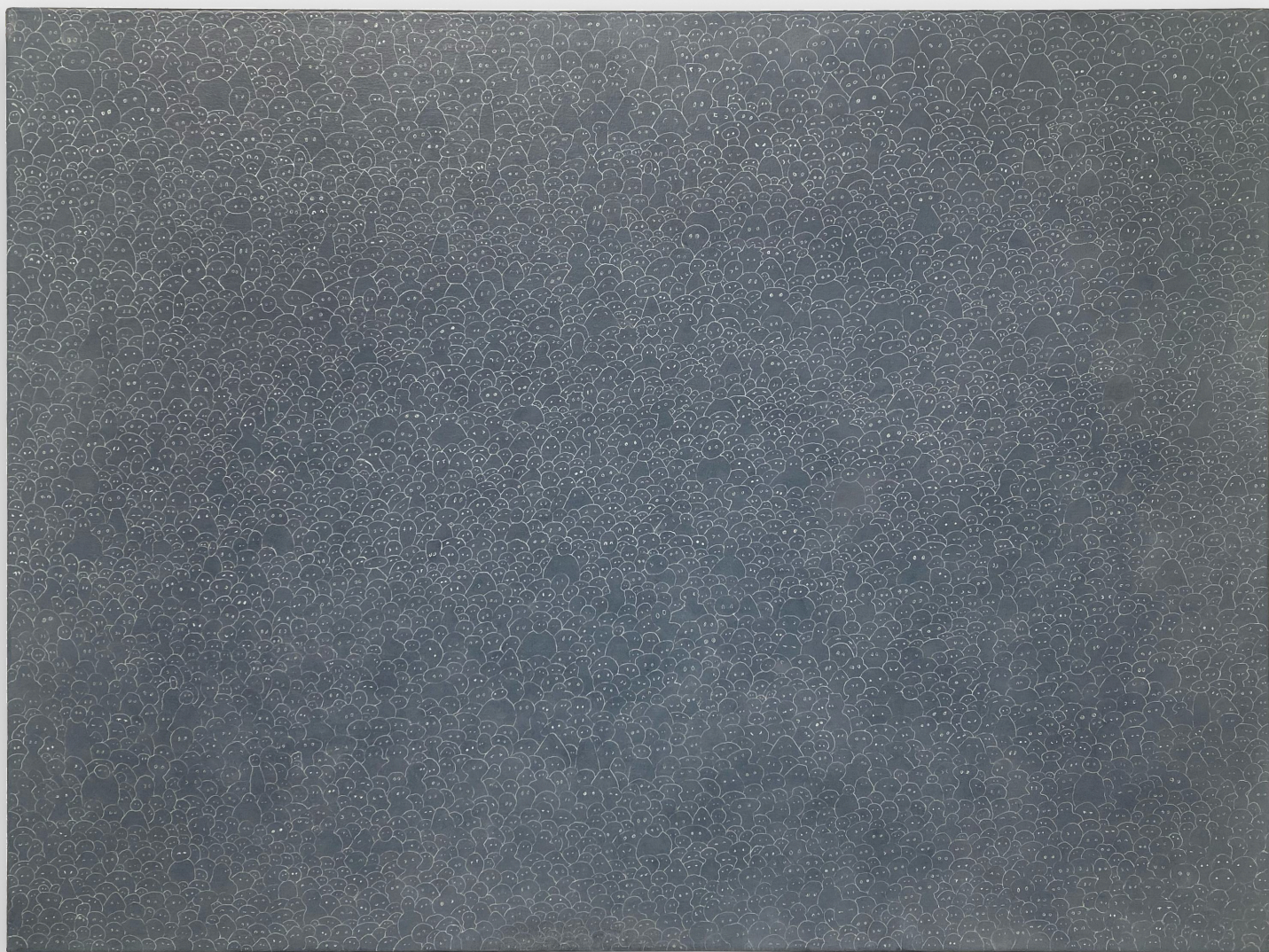
Unique painting

Oil, acrylic, and pen on canvas
36 x 48 in.

Sold

Detail





NANCY BURSON
Quantum Entanglement Painting #5

NANCY BURSON

Quantum Entanglement Painting #5

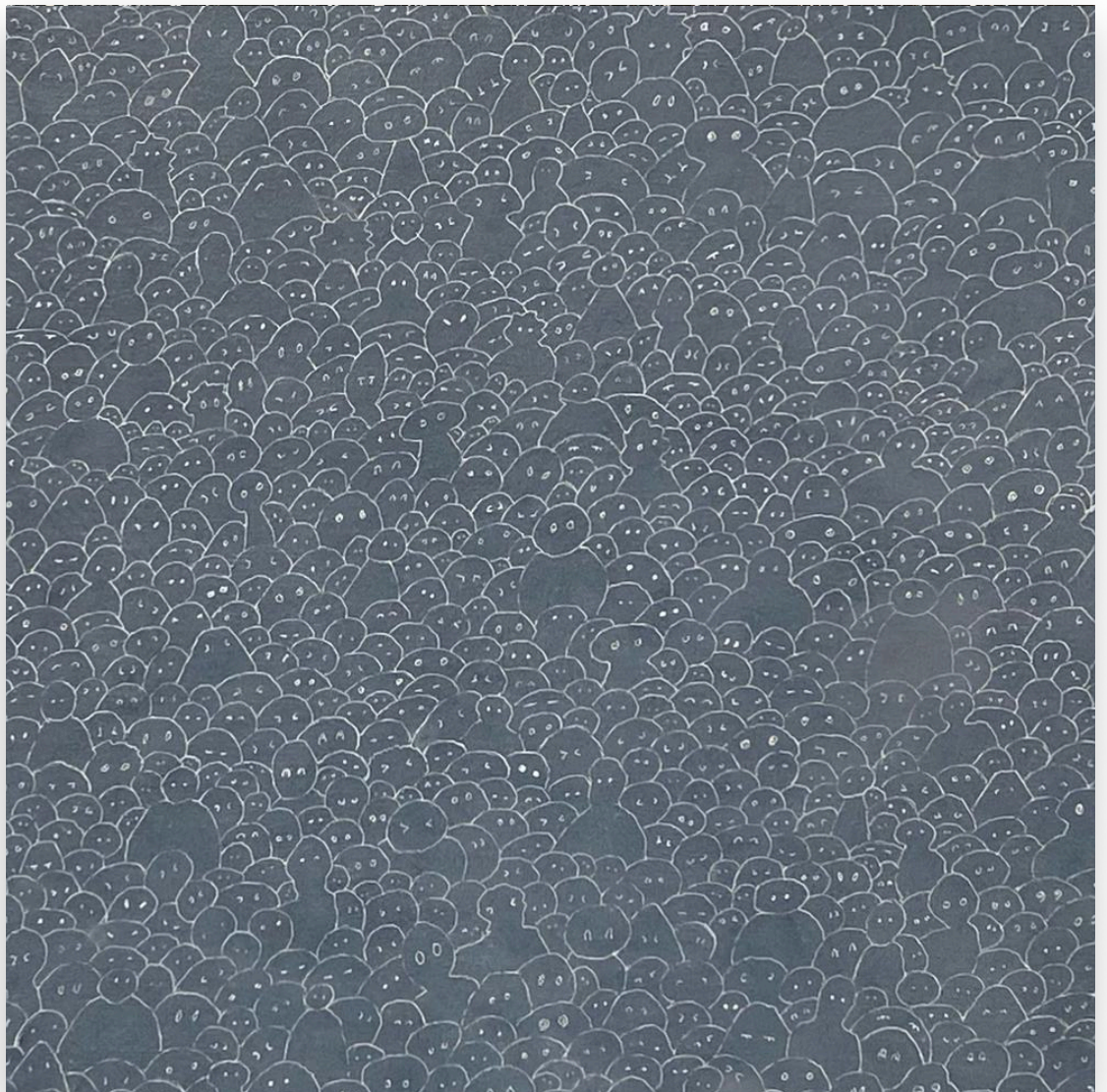
2022

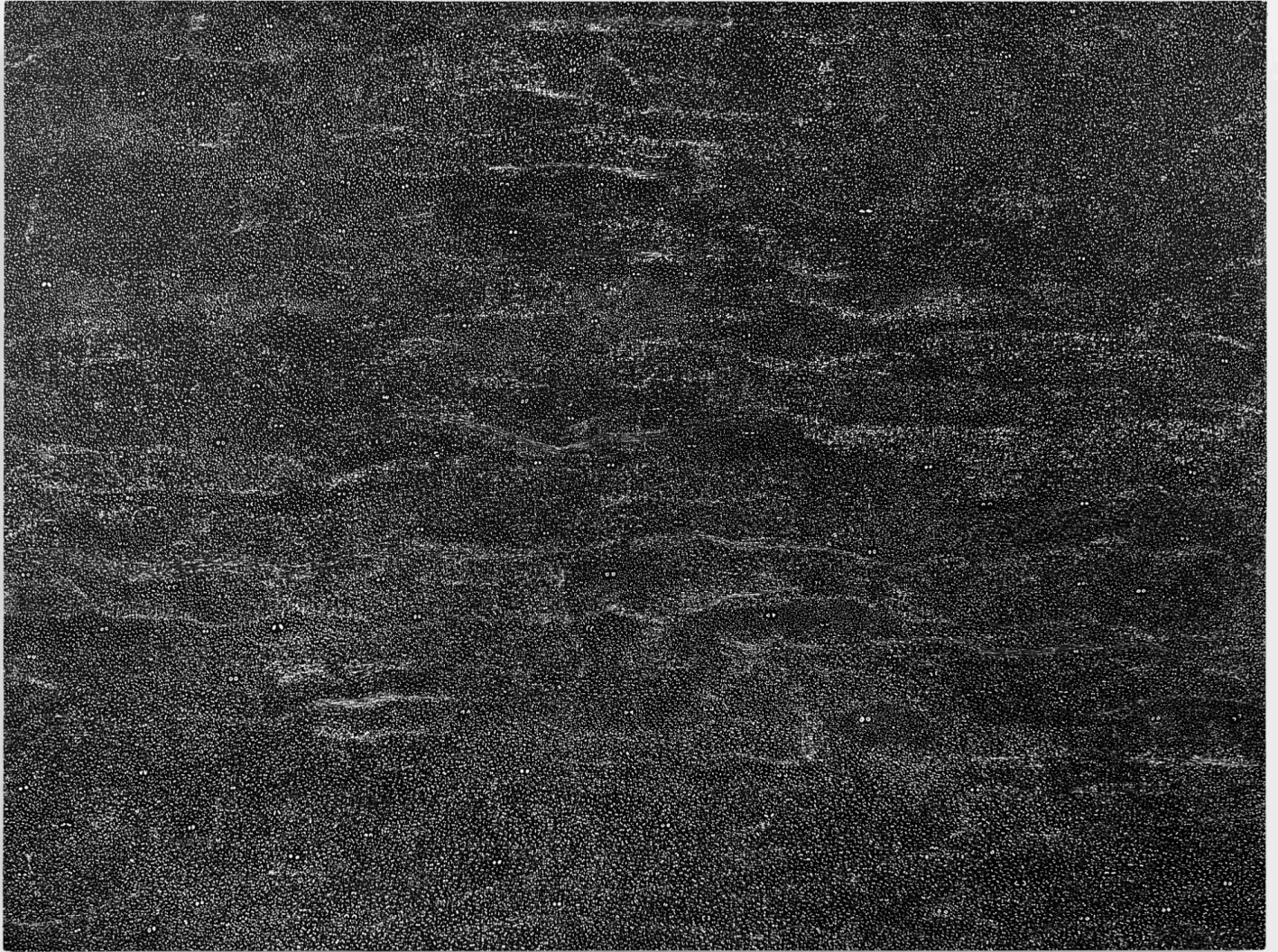
Unique painting

\$30,000

Oil, acrylic, and pen on canvas
36 x 48 in.

Detail





NANCY BURSON
Quantum Entanglement Painting #8

NANCY BURSON

Quantum Entanglement Painting #8

2023

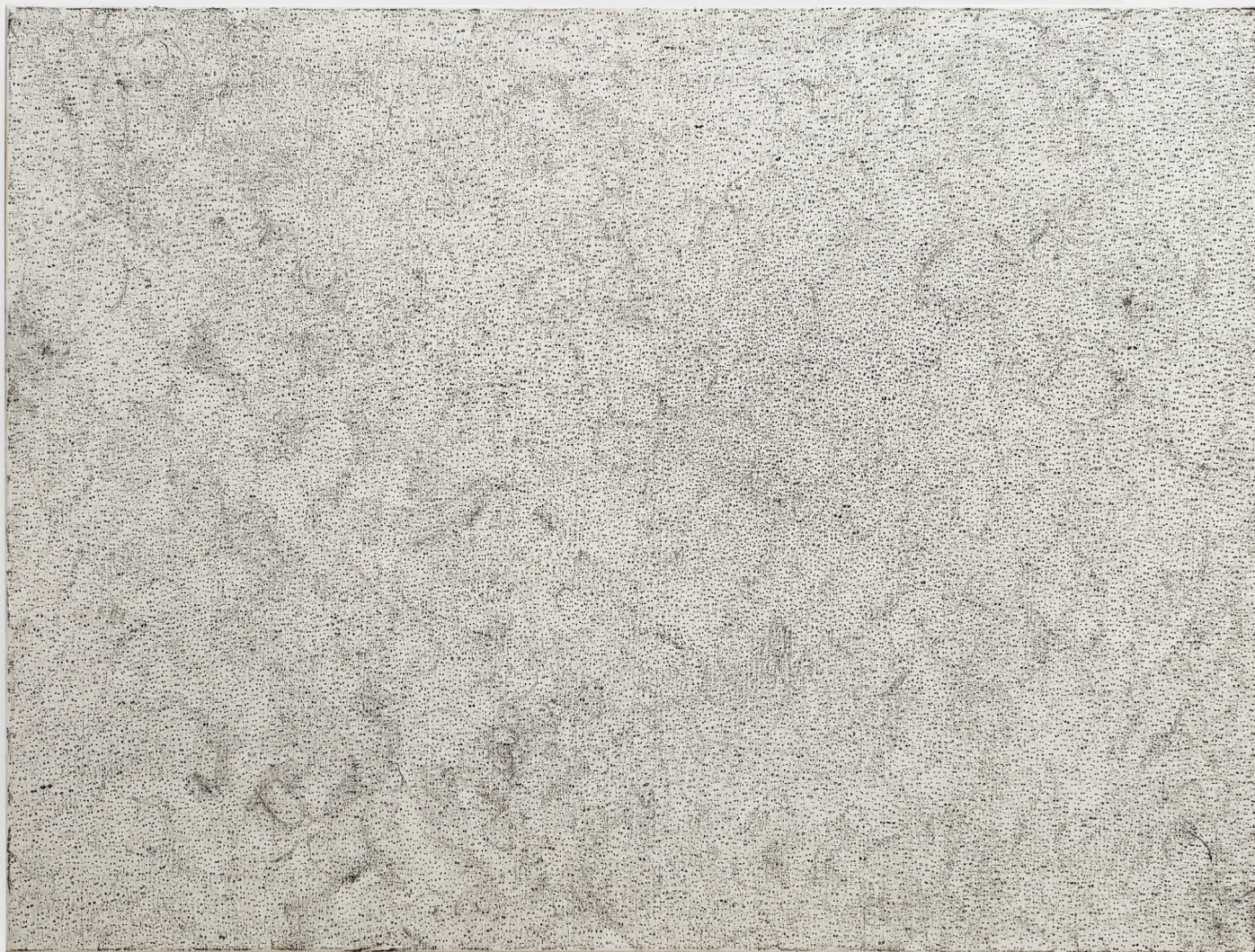
Unique painting

Oil, acrylic, and pen on canvas
36 x 48 in.

\$36,000

Detail





NANCY BURSON
Quantum Entanglement Painting #11 (White Background)

NANCY BURSON

Quantum Entanglement Painting #11 (White Background)

2020

Unique painting

\$36,000

Oil and pen on gessoed canvas
36 x 48 in.

Detail





NANCY BURSON
Quantum Entanglement Painting #12

NANCY BURSON

Quantum Entanglement Painting #12

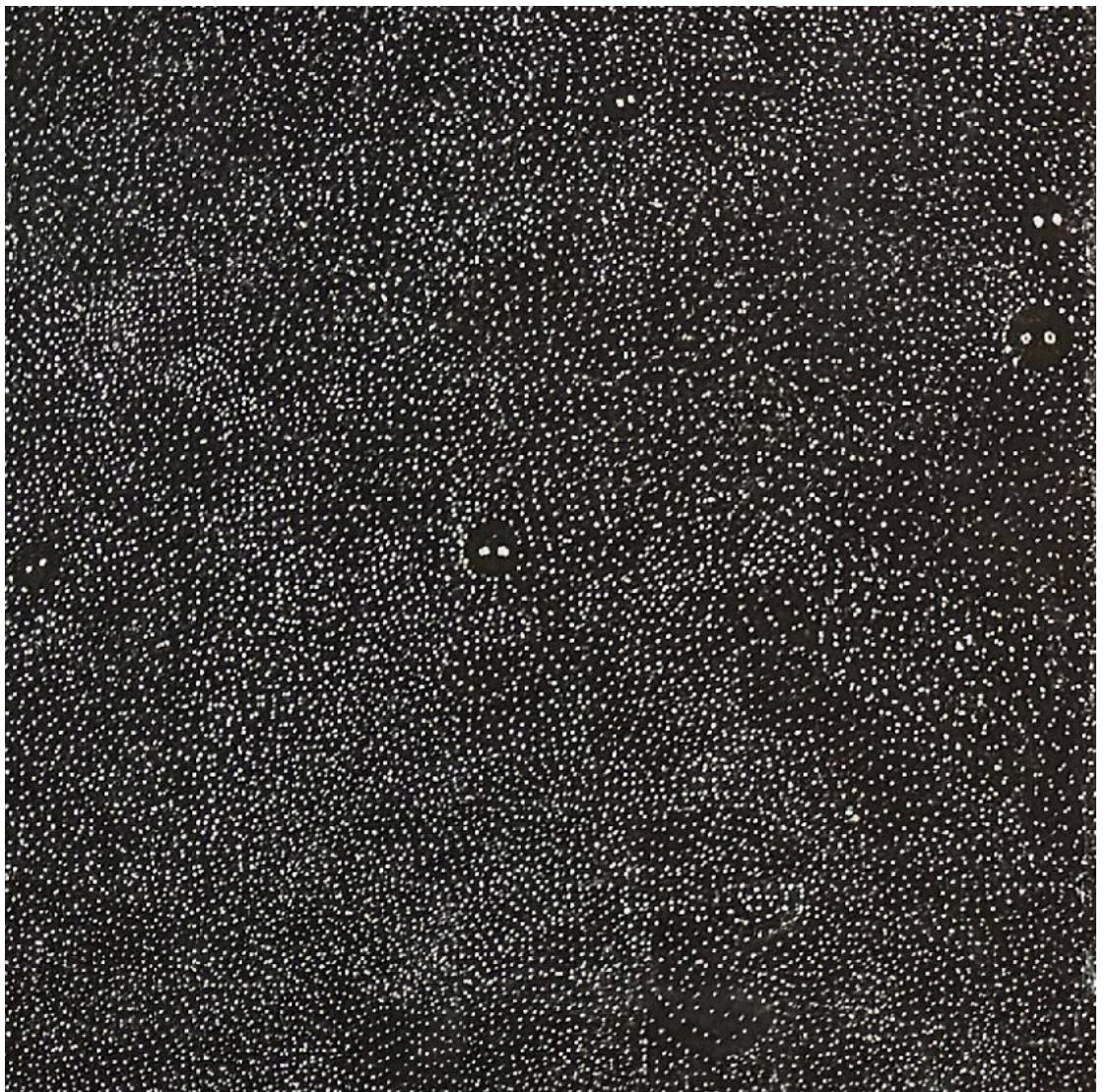
2026

Unique painting

Oil, acrylic, and pen on canvas
36 x 48 in.

\$36,000

Detail





NANCY BURSON
Quantum Entanglement Painting A

NANCY BURSON

Quantum Entanglement Painting A

2023

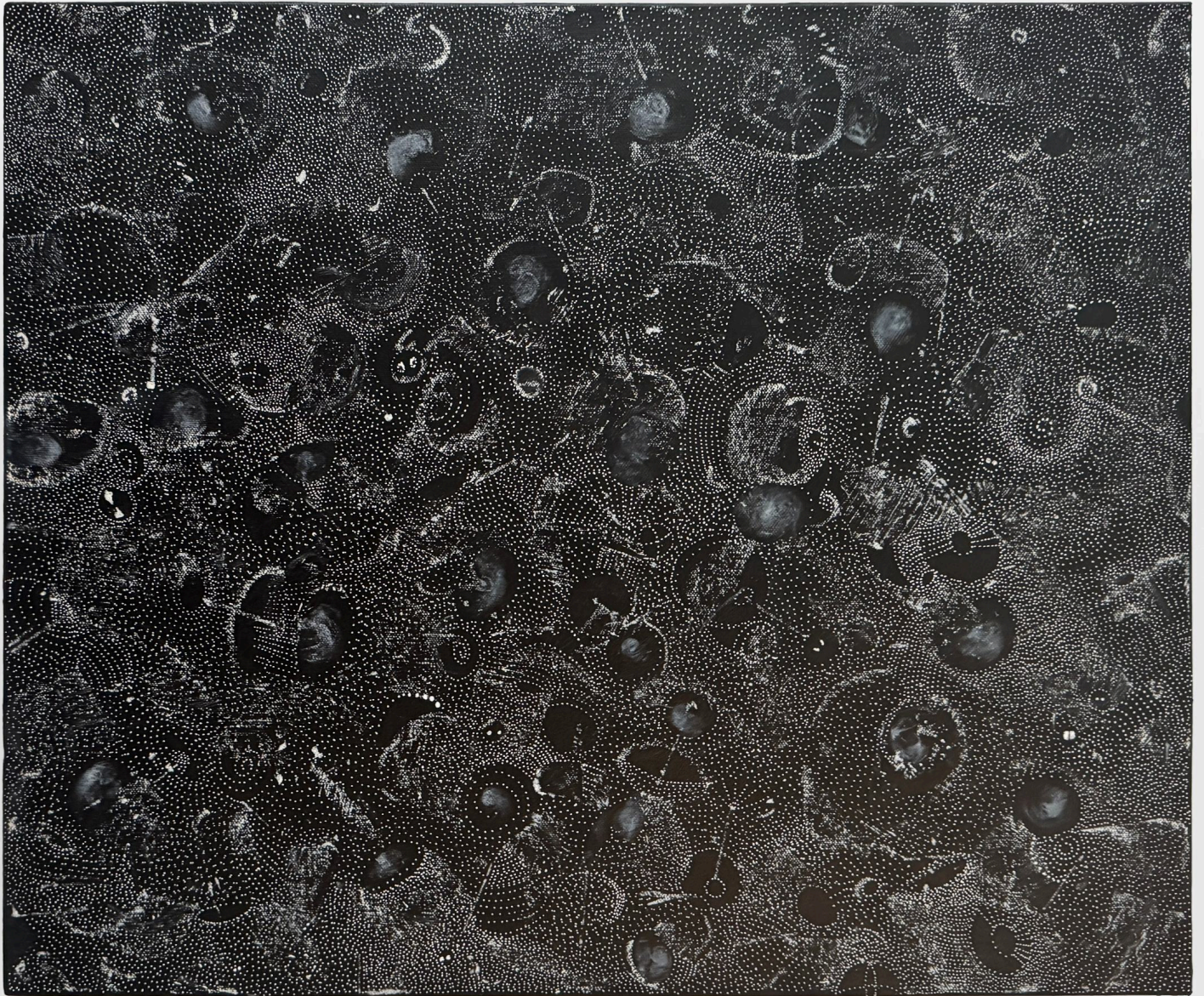
Unique painting

Oil, acrylic, and pen on canvas
20 x 24 in.

\$16,000

Detail





NANCY BURSON
Quantum Entanglement Painting B

NANCY BURSON

Quantum Entanglement Painting B

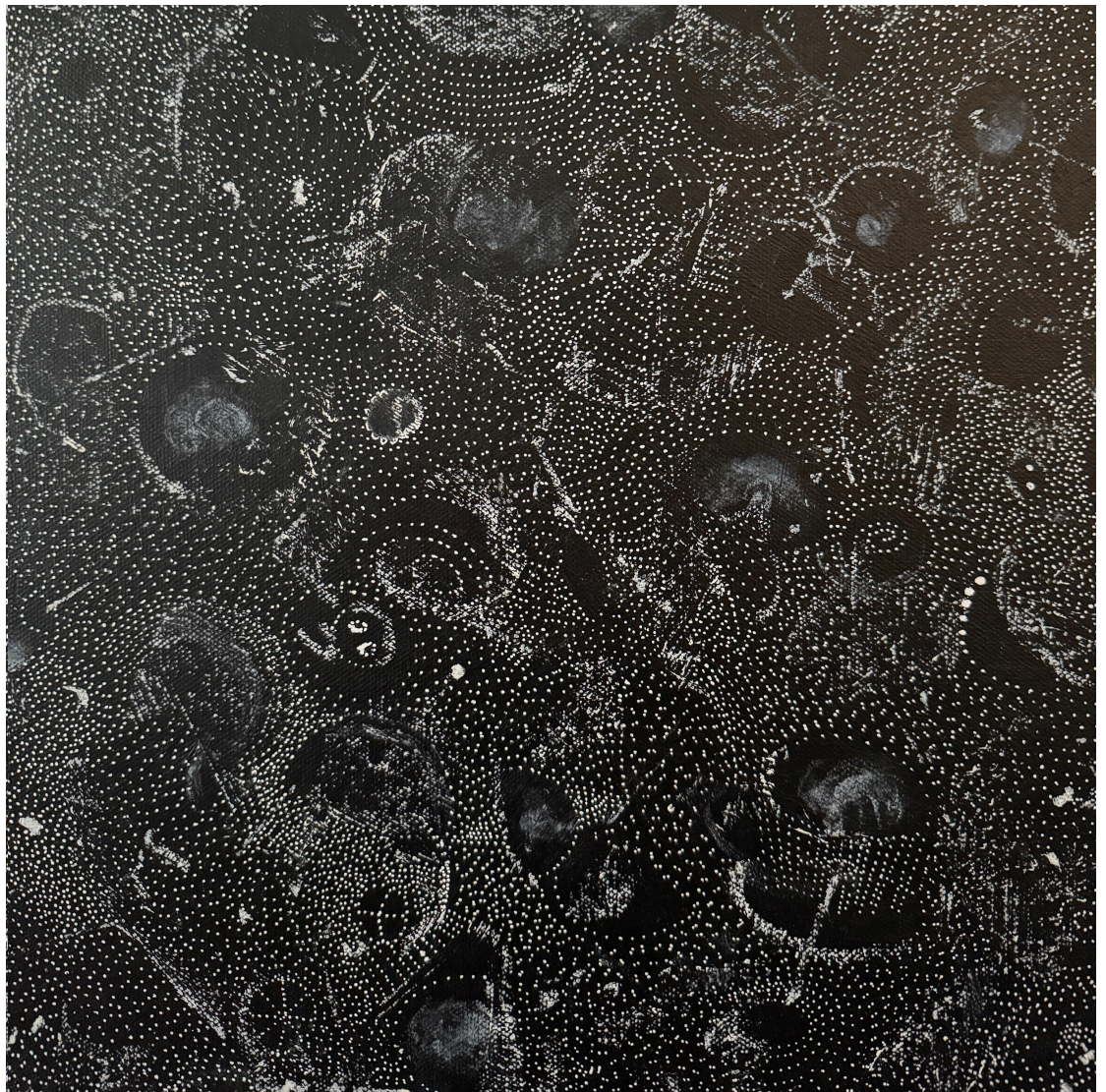
2025

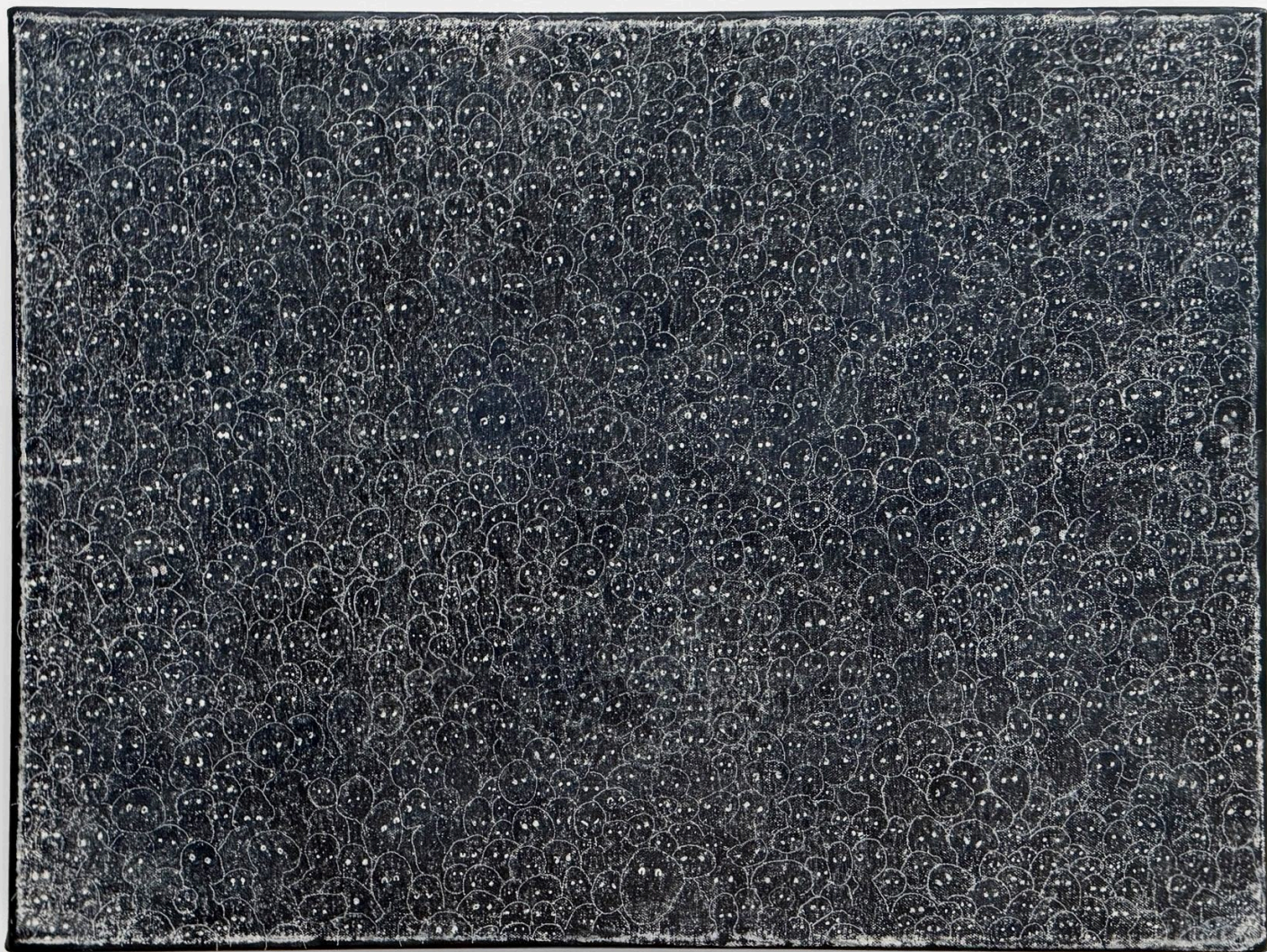
Unique painting

Oil, acrylic, and pen on canvas
20 x 24 in.

Sold

Detail





NANCY BURSON
Quantum Entanglement Painting C

NANCY BURSON

Quantum Entanglement Painting C

2022

Unique painting

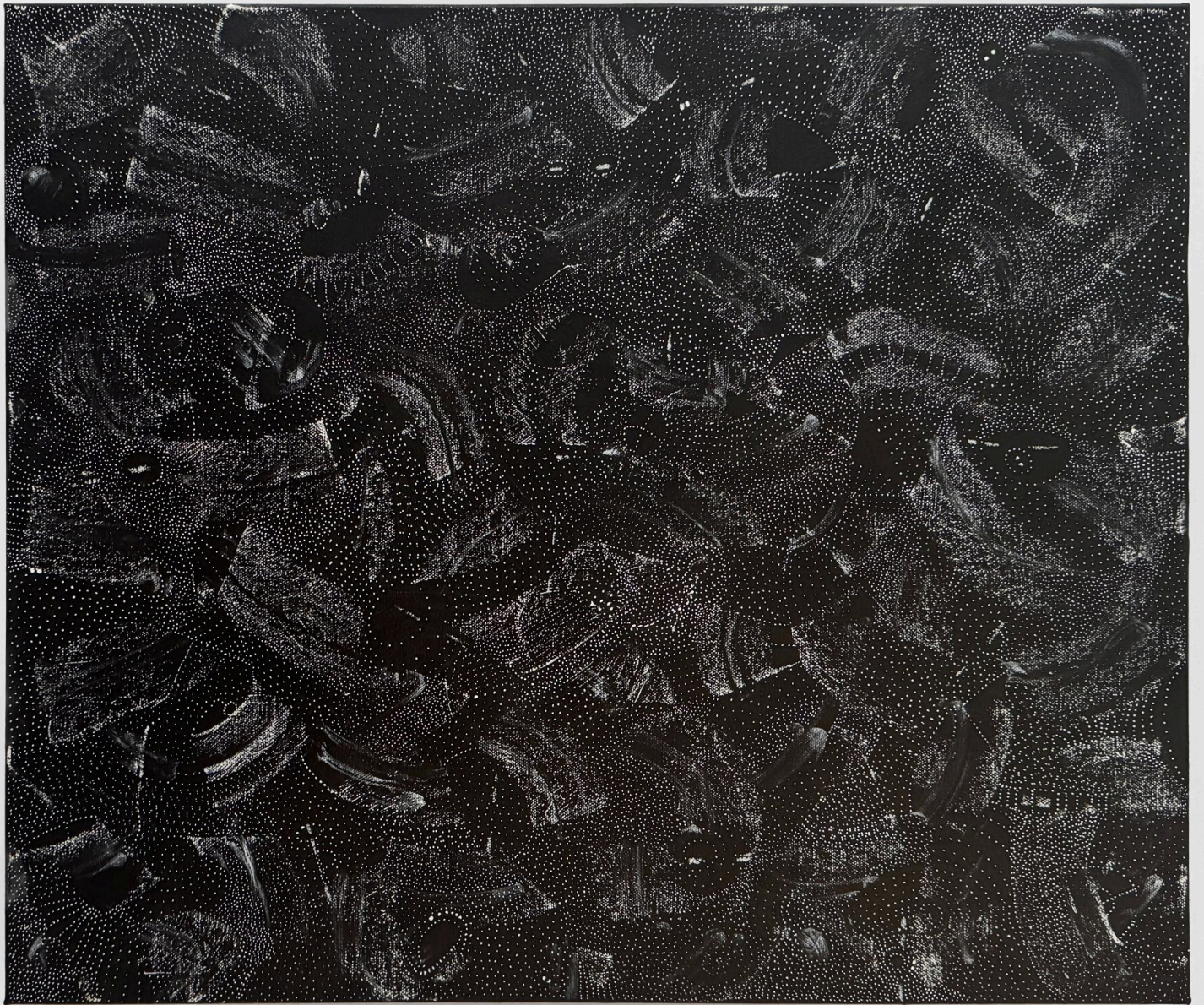
Oil, acrylic, and pen on canvas

18 x 24 in.

Sold

Detail





NANCY BURSON
Quantum Entanglement Painting F

NANCY BURSON

Quantum Entanglement Painting F

2025

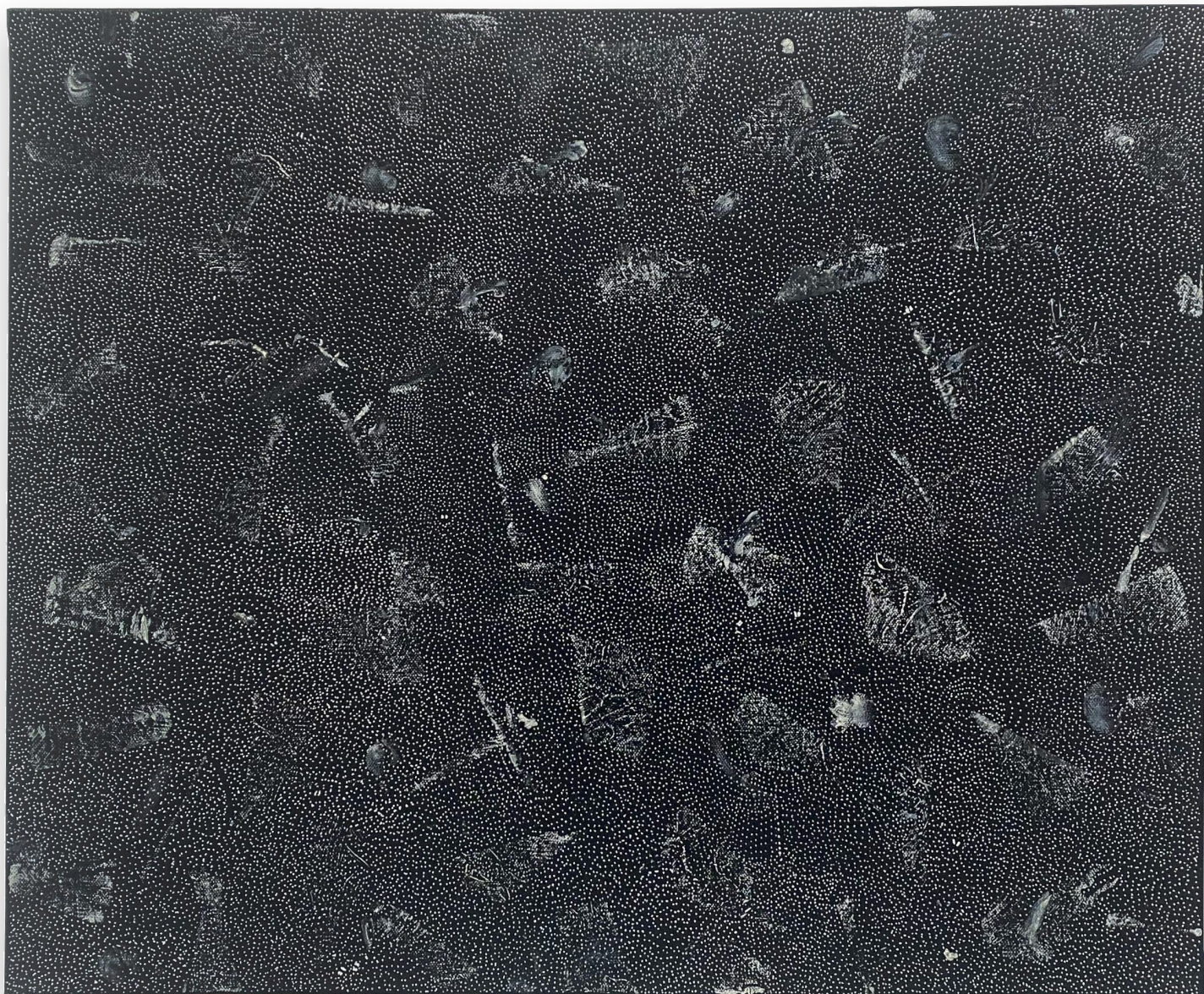
Unique painting

Oil, acrylic, and pen on canvas
20 x 24 in.

\$16,000

Detail





NANCY BURSON
Quantum Entanglement Painting L

NANCY BURSON

Quantum Entanglement Painting L

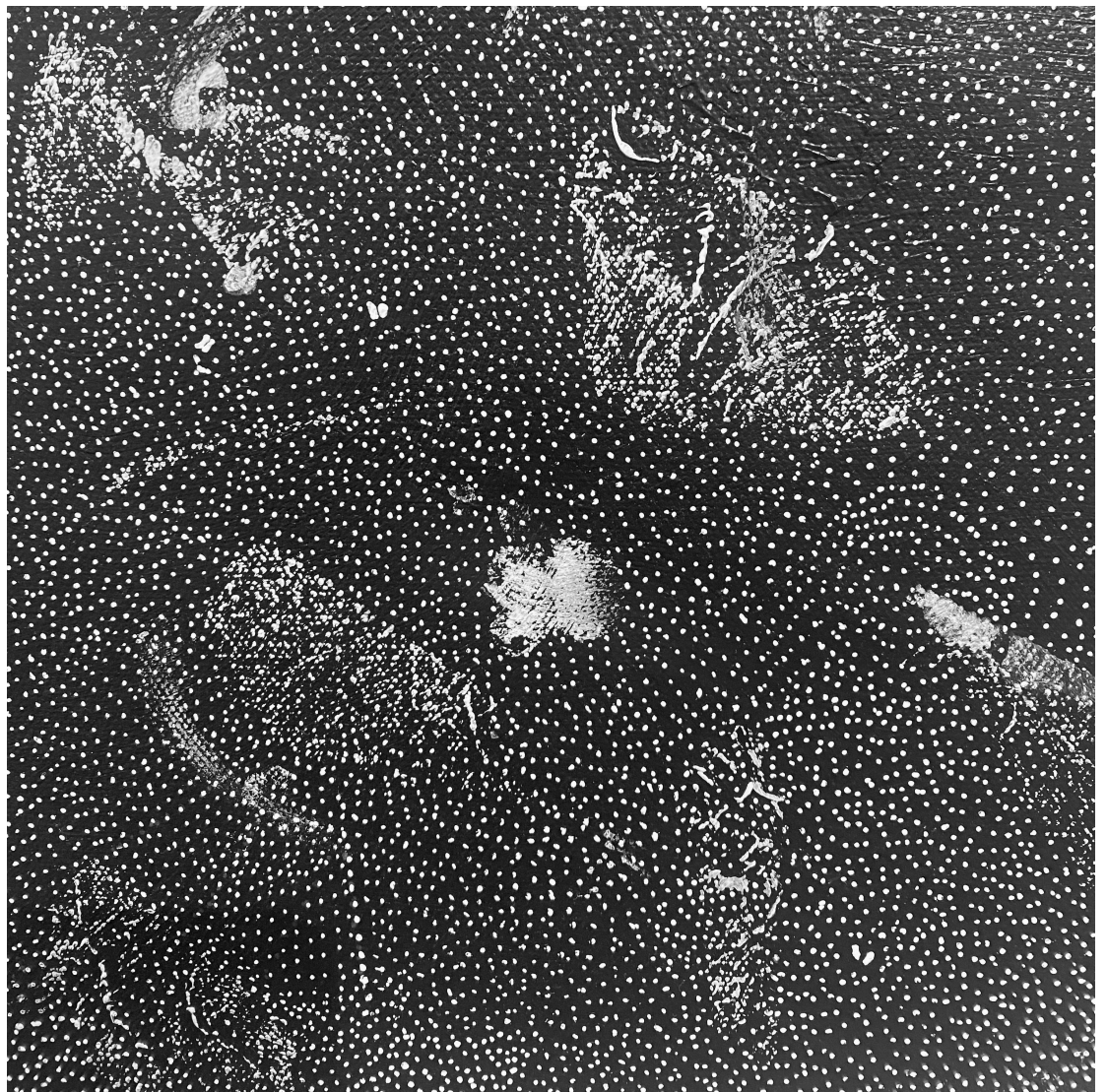
2025

Unique painting

Oil, acrylic, and pen on canvas
20 x 24 in.

\$16,000

Detail





NANCY BURSON
Quantum Entanglement Painting D

NANCY BURSON

Quantum Entanglement Painting D

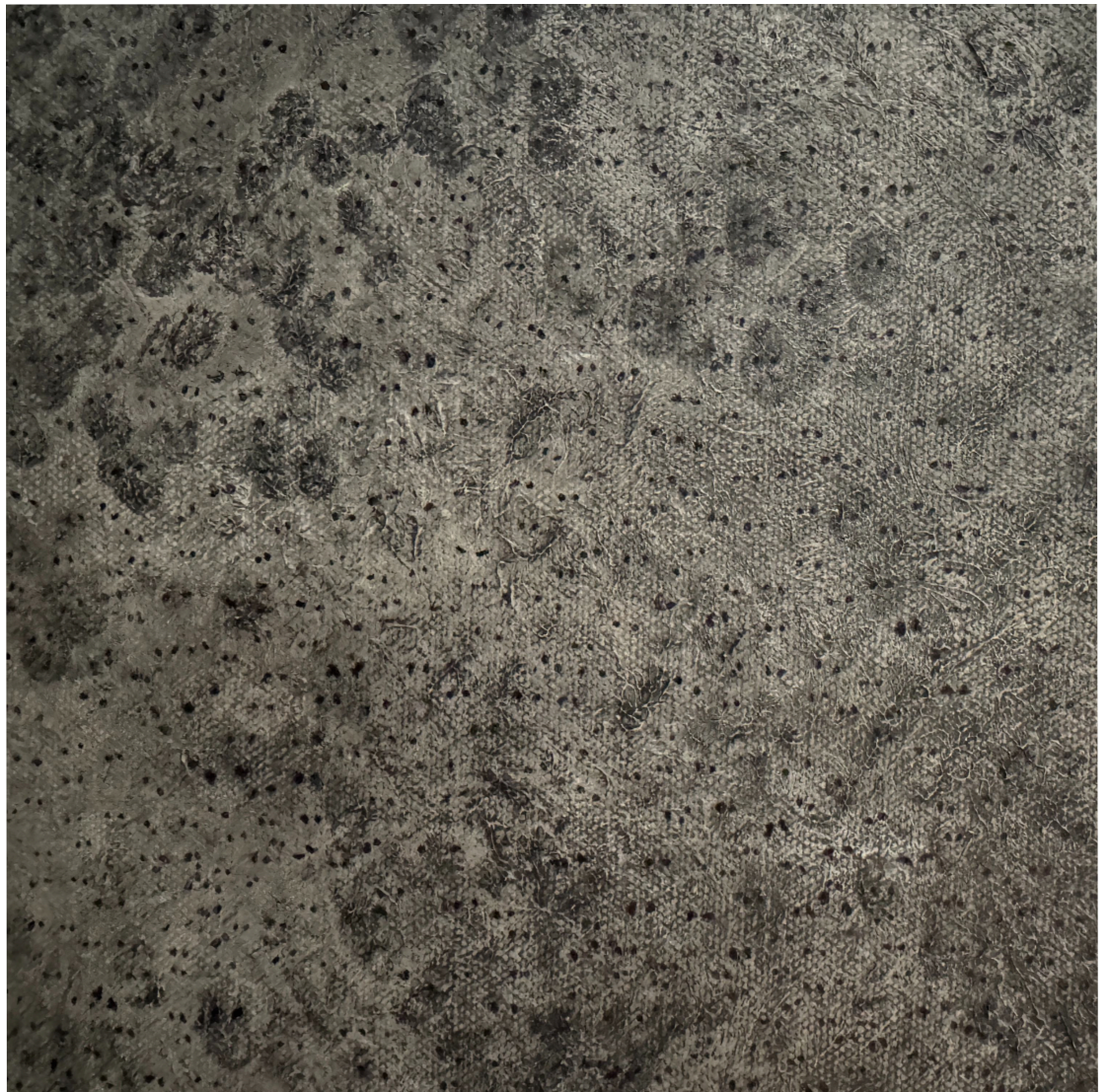
2022

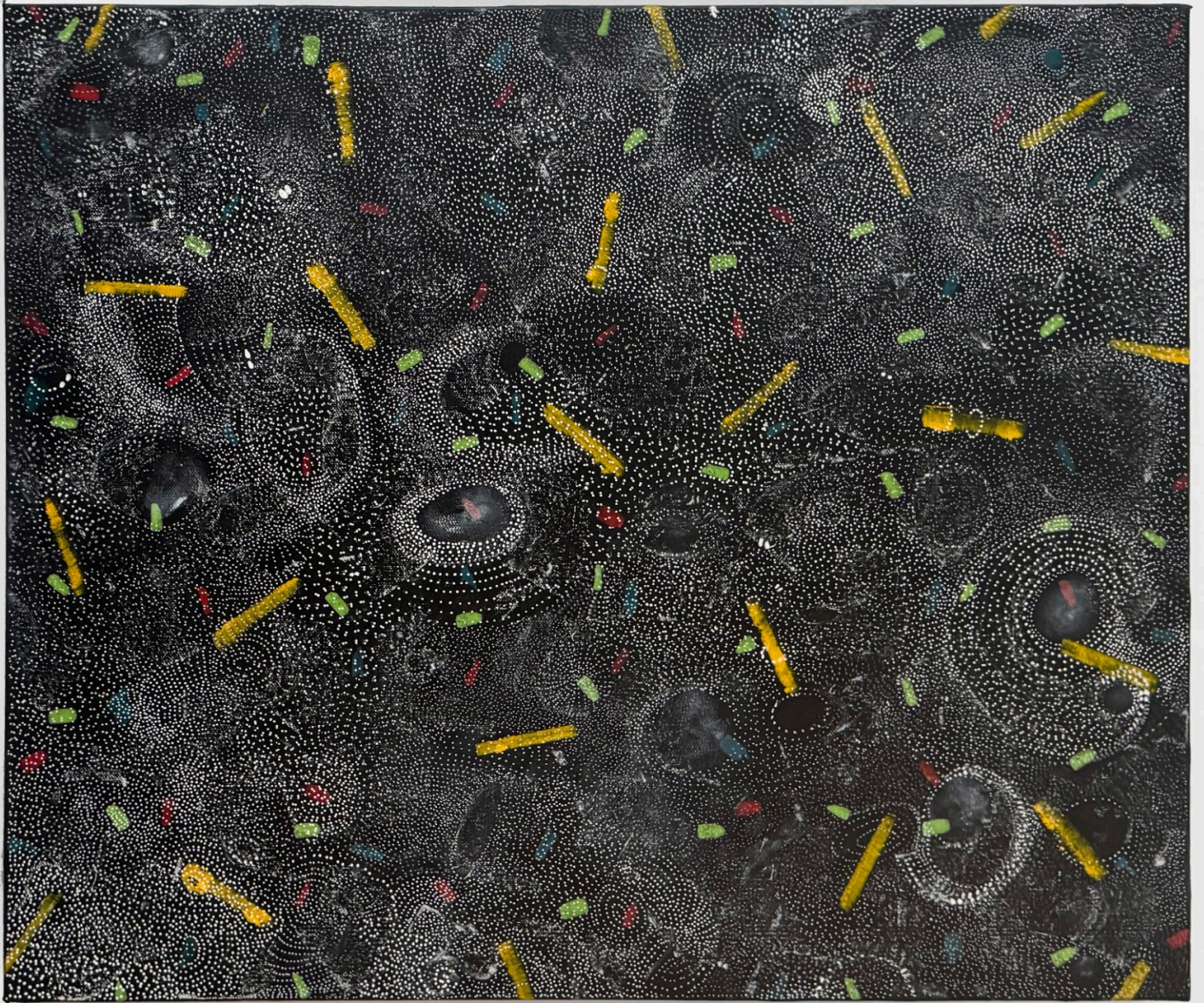
Unique painting

Oil, acrylic, and pen on canvas
20 x 24 in.

\$16,000

Detail





NANCY BURSON
Quantum Entanglement Painting H (With Color)

NANCY BURSON

Quantum Entanglement Painting H (With Color)

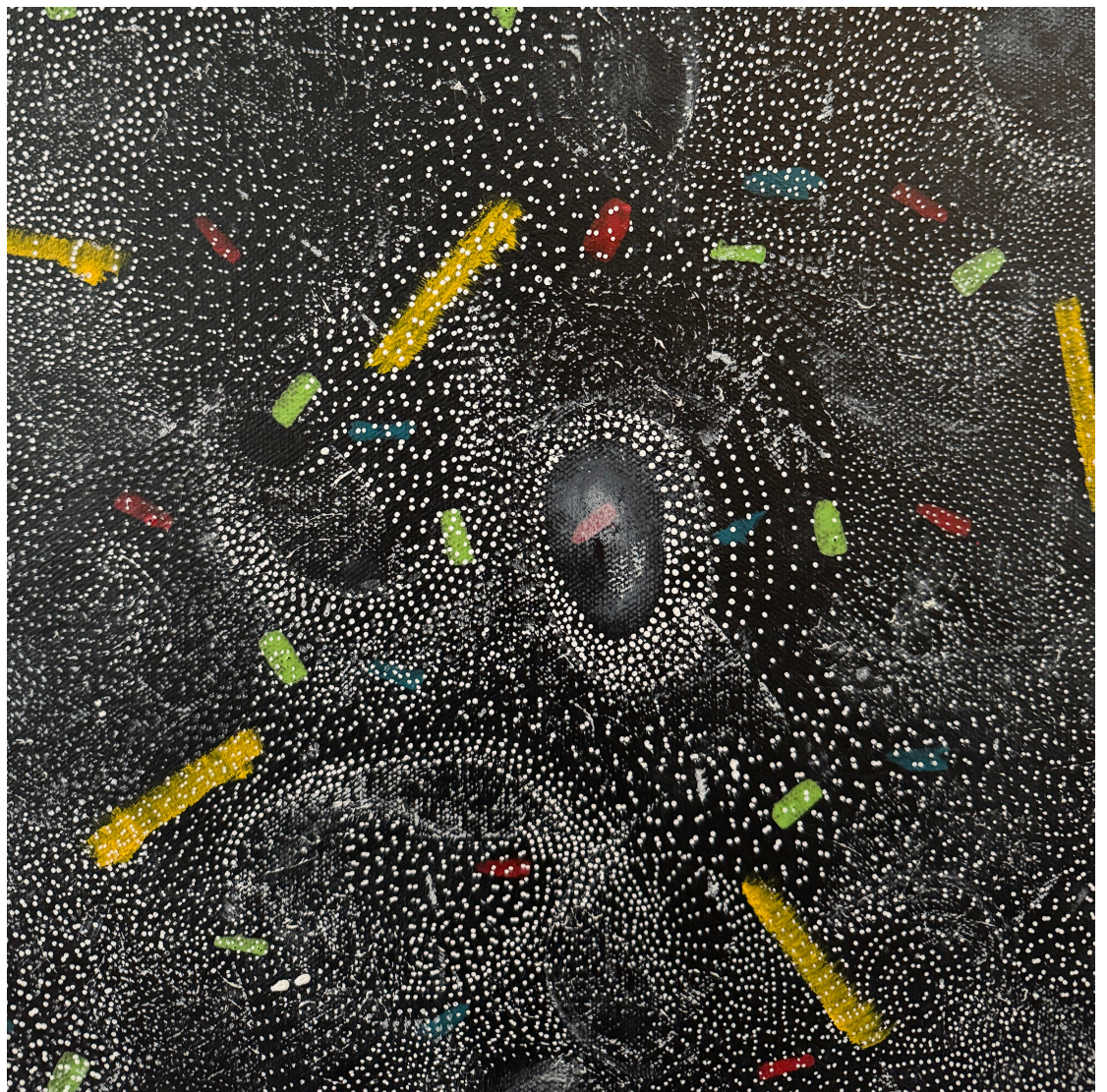
2024

Unique painting

Oil, acrylic, and pen on canvas
20 x 24 in.

Sold

Detail





NANCY BURSON
Quantum Entanglement Painting G (With Color)

NANCY BURSON

Quantum Entanglement Painting G (With Color)

2025

Unique painting

Oil, acrylic, and pen on canvas
20 x 24 in.

\$16,000

Detail





NANCY BURSON
Quantum Entanglement Painting J

NANCY BURSON

Quantum Entanglement Painting J

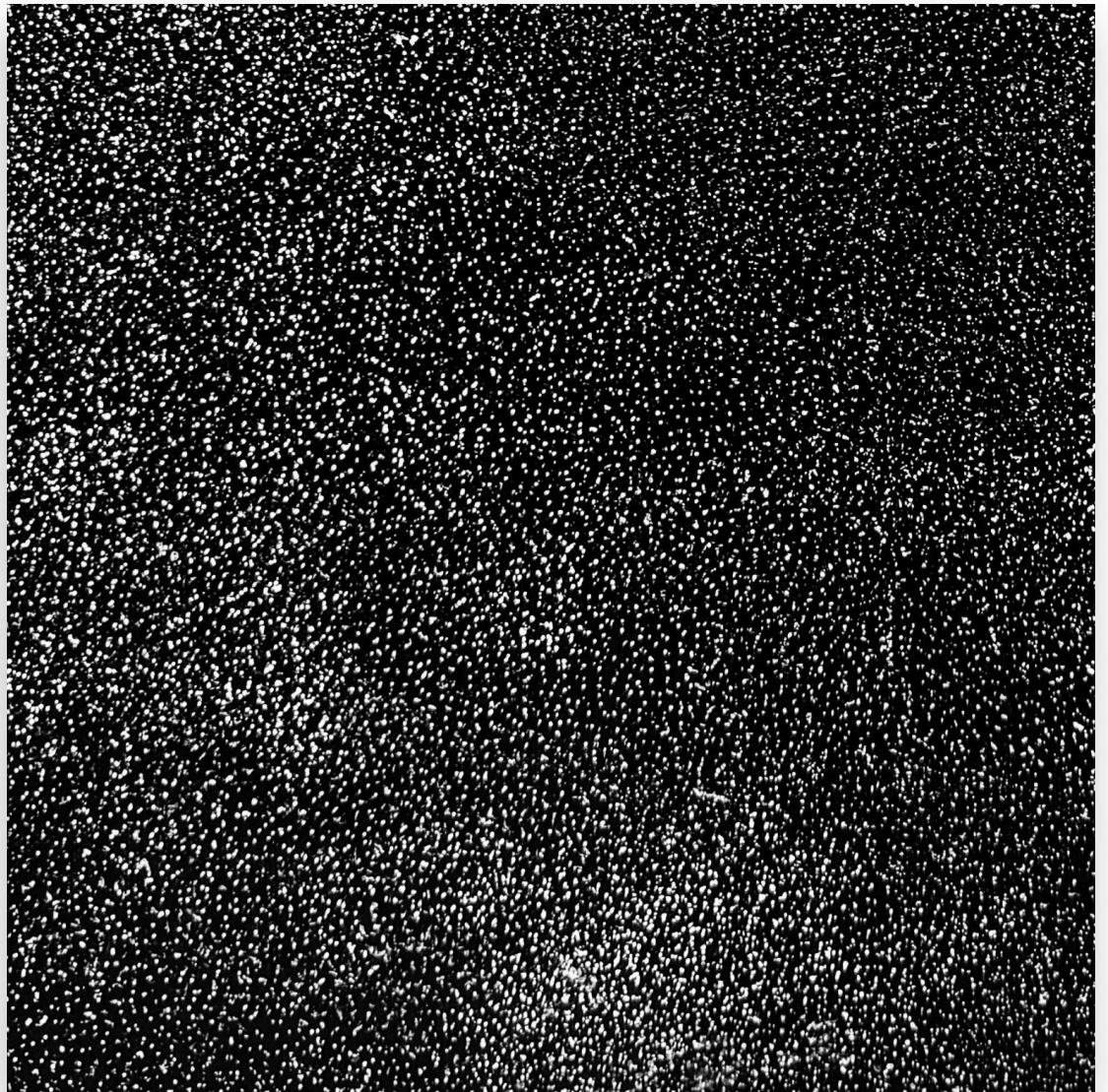
2025

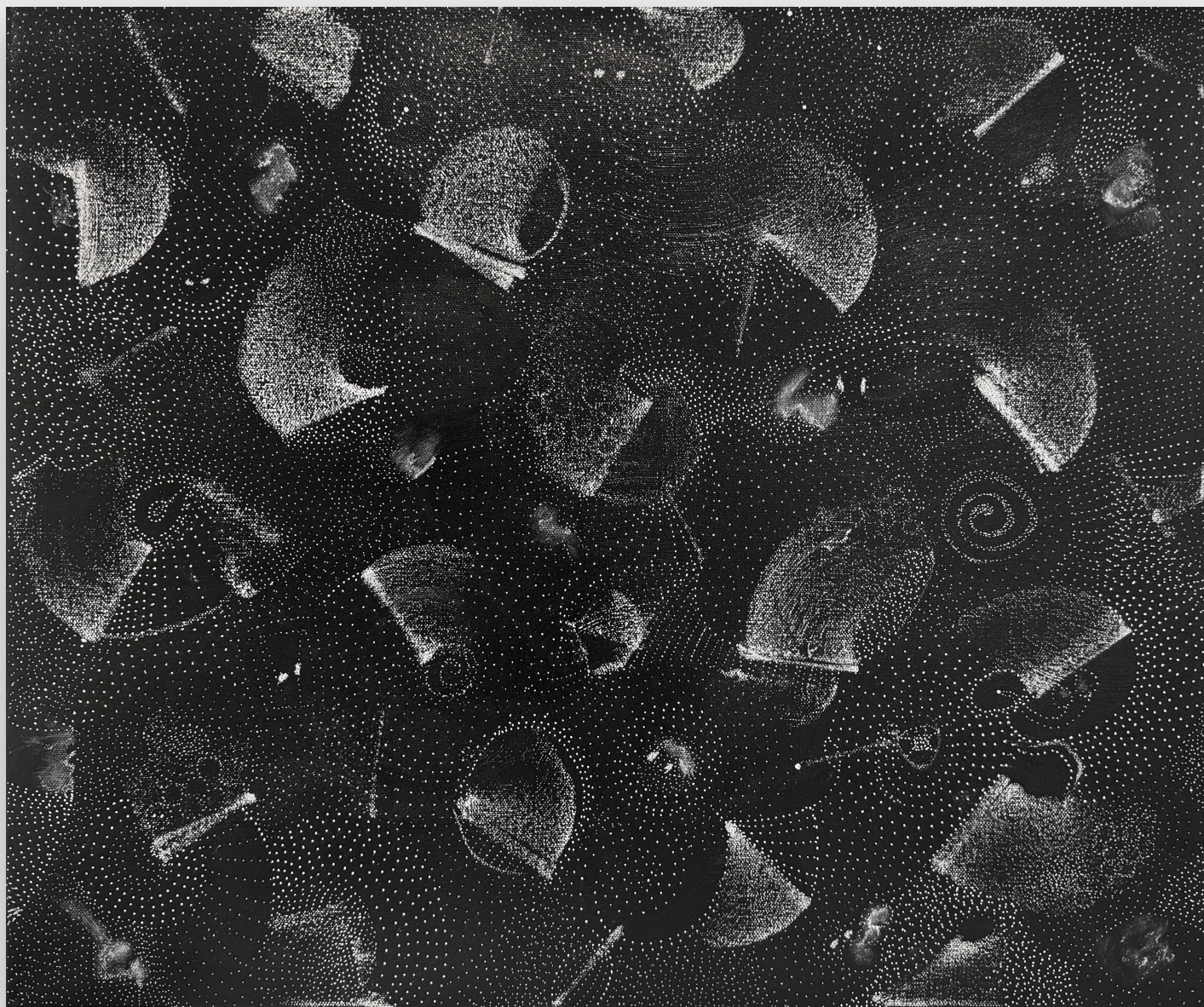
Unique painting

\$16,000

Oil, acrylic, and pen on canvas
20 x 24 in.

Detail





NANCY BURSON
Quantum Entanglement Painting K

NANCY BURSON

Quantum Entanglement Painting K

Unique painting

Oil, acrylic, and pen on canvas
20 x 24 in.

\$16,000

Detail





NANCY BURSON
Fireworks in Daylight #1

NANCY BURSON

Fireworks in Daylight #1

2016

Edition of 3 pigment print

Digital print on Moab Entrada paper, signed on verso + Ethereum token
44 x 36 in.

Ed 1: \$5,000

Ed 2: \$7,000

Ed 3: \$10,000



NANCY BURSON
Fireworks in Daylight #2

NANCY BURSON

Fireworks in Daylight #2

2016

Edition of 3 pigment print

Digital print on Moab Entrada paper, signed on verso + Ethereum token
44 x 36 in.

~~Ed 1: \$5,000~~

Ed 2: \$7,000

Ed 3: \$10,000



NANCY BURSON

Marilyn and Elvis, De-Aged Simulacra

Unique (diptych)

Gelatin silver prints

7.25 x 6.25 in. each

\$14,000



NANCY BURSON
Androgyny (6 Women + 6 Men)

NANCY BURSON

Androgyny (6 Women + 6 Men)

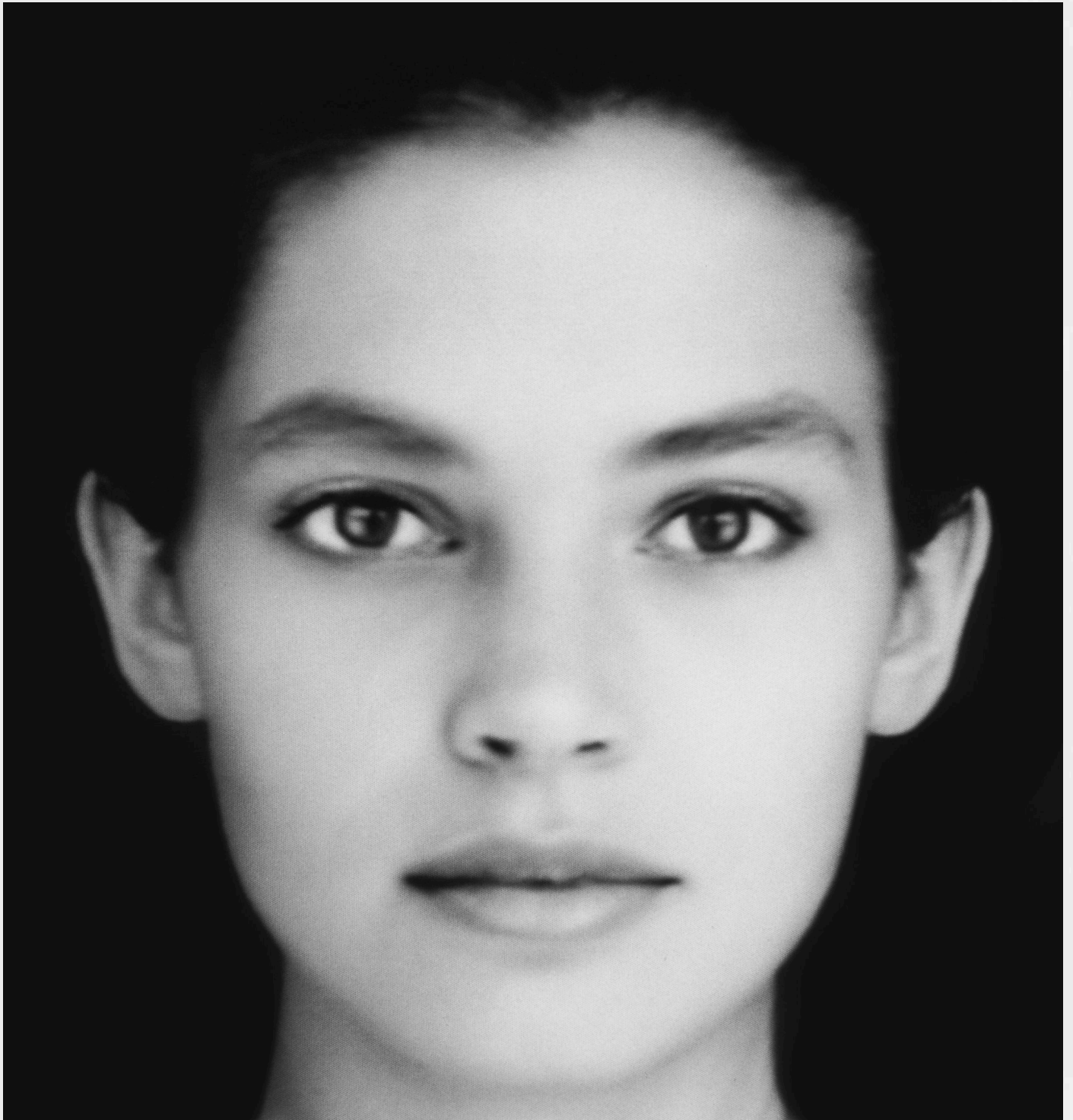
1982

Edition #13 of 15

\$12,000

Gelatin silver print

11 x 14 in. (Image size 8.25 x 7.25 in.)



NANCY BURSON
Four Vogue Models

NANCY BURSON

Four Vogue Models

1989

Edition #3 of 7

\$7,000

Gelatin silver print

11 x 14 in. (Image size 9.25 x 8.25)



NANCY BURSON
Aged Barbie

NANCY BURSON

Aged Barbie

1994

Edition #2 of 2 Polaroid Spectra (+AP)

3 x 4 in.

\$16,000



NANCY BURSON
Untitled (Mannequin with Real Eyes)

NANCY BURSON

Untitled (Mannequin with Real Eyes)

1990

Unique Polaroid Spectra (+ 2 AP)

3 x 4 in.

\$3,000



NANCY BURSON
Untitled (Snake Guy)

NANCY BURSON

Untitled (Snake Guy)

1990

Unique Polaroid Spectra

3 x 4 in.

\$5,000



NANCY BURSON
Untitled (Bug Eyes)

NANCY BURSON

Untitled (Bug Eyes)

1988

Unique Polaroid Spectra

3 x 4 in.

\$5,000



NANCY BURSON
Untitled (Snake Guy)

NANCY BURSON

Untitled (Snake Guy)

1990

Unique 20x24 Polaroid AP (2/3), signed
24 x 20 in.

\$10,000



NANCY BURSON
Untitled (Fuzzy Man)

NANCY BURSON

Untitled (Fuzzy Man)

1988

Unique 20x24 Polaroid AP (1/3), signed
30 x 22 in.

\$10,000



NANCY BURSON
Untitled (Bug Eyes)

NANCY BURSON

Untitled (Bug Eyes)

1988

Unique 20x24 Polaroid AP (1/3), signed
30 x 22 in.

\$8,000



NANCY BURSON
Big Brother

NANCY BURSON

Big Brother

1983

Edition #11 of 15

Gelatin silver print

11.5 x 14.5 in.

\$7,000

QUANTUM OBSERVATION VIDEOS

Nancy Burson's Quantum Observation Videos are one-minute recordings of energies captured in complete darkness during moments of joy with friends and family. Grounded in scientific observations that photon behavior is altered through acts of observation, these works bring attention to forms of energy that typically remain imperceptible.

Rooted in Burson's three-decade engagement with perceiving and translating these energies through drawing and painting, this video practice continues her effort to render phenomena that exist beyond conventional visibility. Over the past few years, new approaches have produced especially vivid and expressive results that more closely align with her observed experience – now presented as unique 1/1 video works on the Ethereum blockchain.

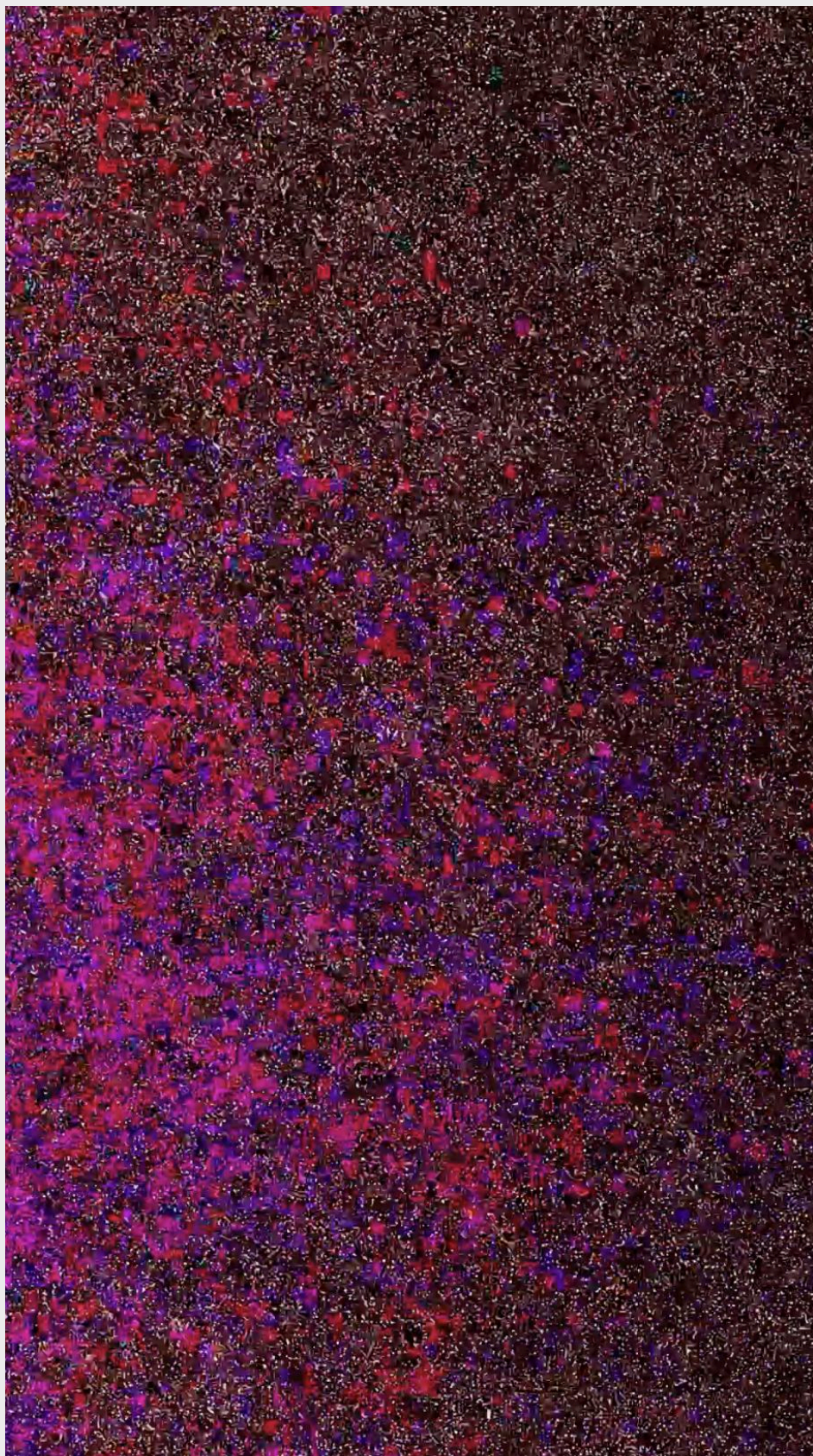
The videos are closely linked to photon-based phenomena observed while documenting Burson's Quantum Entanglement paintings, where colors appear to shift, pulse, or flash in both daylight and darkness. She refers to this process as photon-ography – the convergence of light (photons) and digital imaging technologies. As with much work engaging perception as medium, the experience is inherently subjective; viewers often report differing color interpretations even when observing the same recording.

Burson's work is situated within a lineage of artists who have treated light, perception, and signal as primary material – from James Turrell's perceptual environments to Nam June Paik's use of electronic interference, and more recent practices that visualize otherwise invisible systems. Yet her approach remains distinct in its intimacy, grounding these investigations in human presence and relational proximity.

Through these works, Burson advances an expanded form of videography – one that leverages the sensitivities of digital sensors to register subtle movements of light and energy typically obscured by visible form. What is usually dismissed as noise or interference is treated here as signal.

Historically, analog television static offered a glimpse of the cosmic microwave background – residual radiation from the Big Bang. Today, digital image noise arises from multiple sources, including electronic interference, heat, and sensor activity. Burson acknowledges these conditions while suggesting that the pulsing patterns captured in her videos may be a result of larger cosmic phenomena through disturbances in spacetime generated by massive events like black hole collisions. It is these events that seem to engage the more newly discovered gravitational wave background that perpetually echo the cosmological events of the universe.

Operating at the threshold between artifact and signal, the works articulate a visual language for perceiving photon activity: rhythmic, wave-like oscillations between brightness and darkness – present yet rarely seen.



[Click here to see the videos](#)

NANCY BURSON

Quantum Observation Videos (still image from 'Anonymous Room (With Flashes)')

NANCY BURSON

Quantum Observation Videos

2026

Unique video (+AP)

\$1,000 each

Digital video file, 1 minute length + Ethereum token
1920 x 1080 px

Additional black-stained hardwood frame with a linen wrapped mat holding a 24" screen

\$1,000 additional

Series of 16 unique video works:

Anonymous Room (With Flashes)

Nancy Portrait (Thomas)

Smallest Mary

Thomas (With Music)

Elizabeth Dancing

Mary 2020

Birthday with Jodi and Susan

Anonymous Room

Self-Portrait

Rengu

MinRick

Nancy Portrait (Lu)

Medium Mary

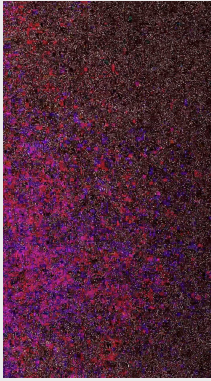
Studio

Luana Ceiling

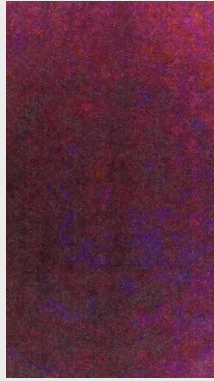
Largest Mary



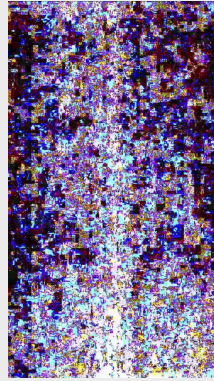
[Click here to see the videos](#)



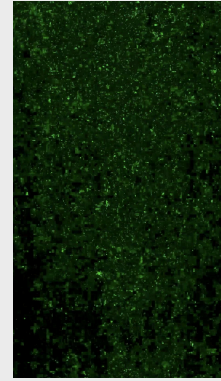
Anonymous Room (With Flashes) ●



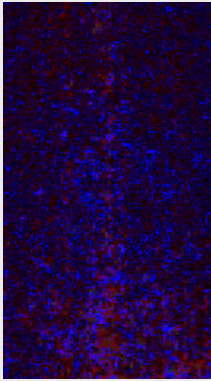
Nancy Portrait (Thomas) ●



Smallest Mary ●



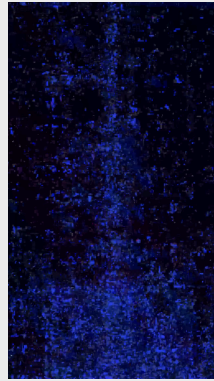
Thomas (With Music) ●



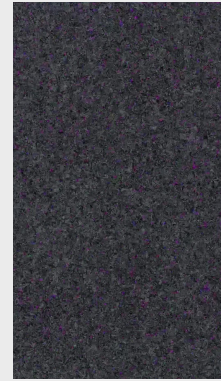
Elizabeth Dancing ●



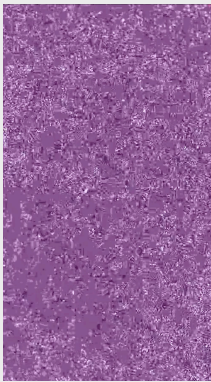
Mary 2020 ●



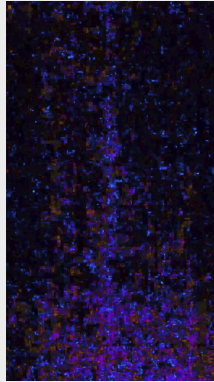
Birthday with Jodi and Susan



Anonymous Room



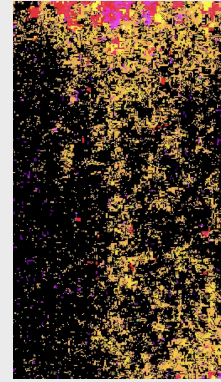
Self-Portrait ●



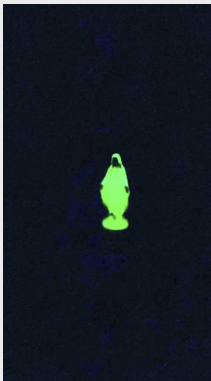
Rengu ●



MinRick ●



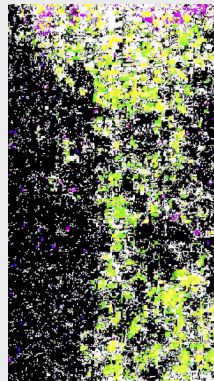
Nancy Portrait (Lu) ●



Medium Mary ●



Studio ●



Luana Ceiling



Largest Mary ●

MARY AND THE QUANTUM SPHERES

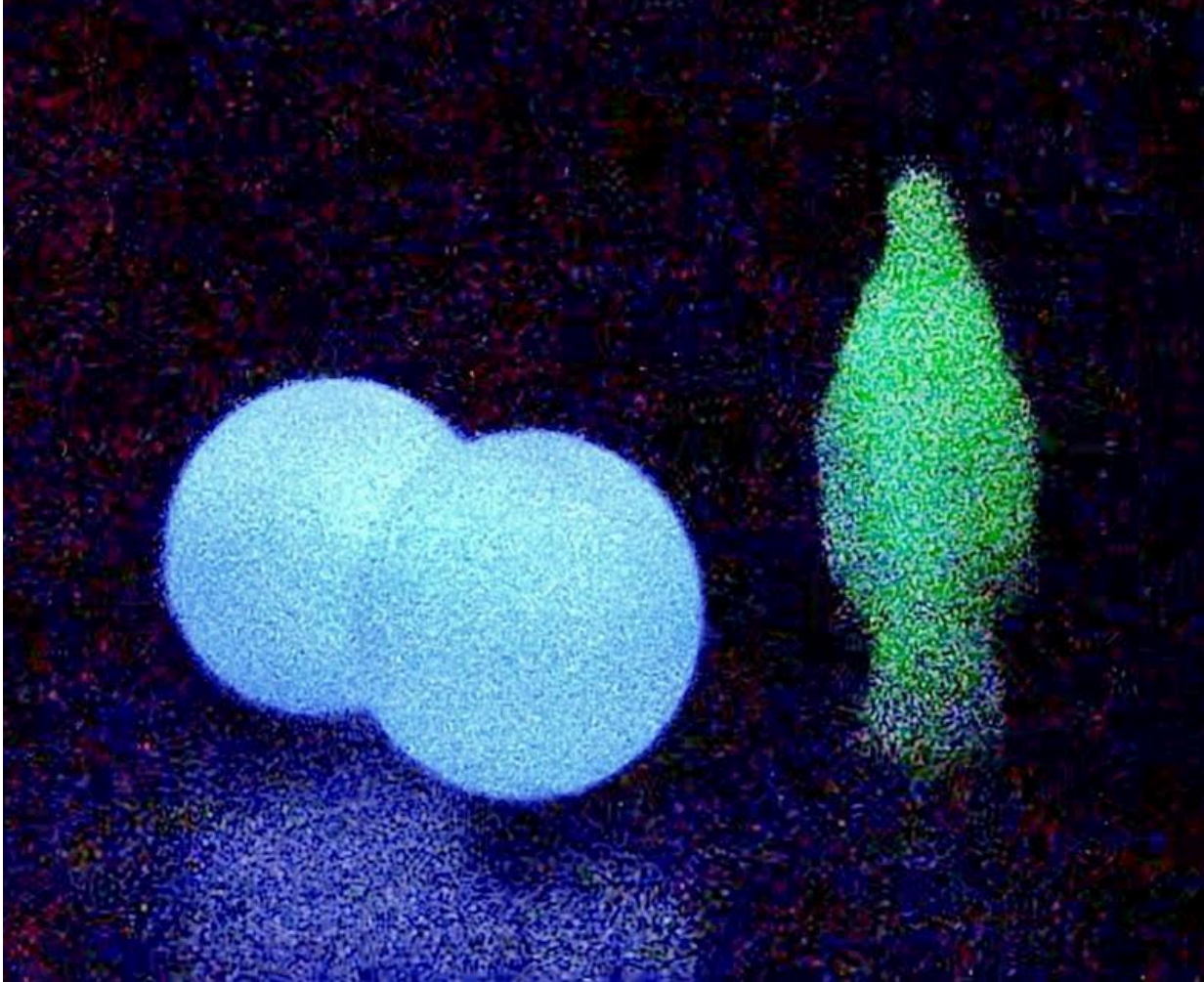
Nancy Burson's performances of Mary and the Quantum Spheres sculpture will be held at Heft's east gallery every half hour from 1pm to 6pm during gallery hours. Participants can shoot video of the observed photons around the sculpture by recording a video on their cellphones in the room's complete darkness. Please reserve your space as the room only accommodates 6 participants at a time – Nancy will be your guide!

"I use glow-in-the-dark statues of Mother Mary and two interlocking spheres as tools for audiences to see and experience the movement of particle physics in the darkness around them. One of the ancient symbols used to represent the Divine Feminine aka Mother Mary was two interlocking circles or the Vesica Piscis. In modern times, physicists have used that same symbol to represent quantum entanglement as a Möbius strip moving between two interlocking spheres.

In these performances, many participants see things they've never seen before. Most attendees claim that the statues appear to move. Others see tiny luminous multicolored lights or patches of light. Emergent behavior patterns are also seen as delicate, lattice-like grids of silvery-grey light. There are particles of energy moving constantly around us and I've been photographing and filming them for over 30 years. This is an interactive experience guided by me and in collaboration with the physics surrounding all of us."

In the beginning of these performances, the statuette of Mother Mary appears quite luminous. However, during the 10 minutes in the darkness of the room, her light fades and the two interlocking spheres slowly take on Mary's light. It is this transference of light that symbolizes what Burson believes will be humanity's future shift to physics-integrated faith.

[Book your experience here.](#)



NANCY BURSON

Mary and the Quantum Spheres (Sculpture in glow-in-the-dark resin)

Inquire for sculpture

HEFT

THANK YOU

Contact Adam Berninger at Heft to collect works from this show.

Adam Heft Berninger

Founder + Director, Heft Gallery

adam@heftgallery.com

@adamberninger on x and ig

1.917.609.2365

HEFT

Heft is a contemporary gallery in New York City presenting artists who use systems to create meaningful new works. Partnering with a fluid roster of artists, the gallery shows a wide spectrum of work – emphasizing inventive uses of traditional materials, memorable experiences, and provocative artworks that are rapidly gaining recognition for advancing the generative art movement.

Featuring projects by pioneers and groundbreaking emerging artists, Heft collaborates closely to elevate their practice. These artists engage urgent cultural questions using the tools of their time – algorithms, systems, artificial intelligence, and other generative processes – to show broader audiences what this medium is and what it can become. Heft is led by artist, curator, and creative director Adam Heft Berninger, alongside a growing team of artists and insiders. His background spans traditional art disciplines and creative technologies, bringing a unique perspective to the gallery's vision and program. A RISD graduate with a lifelong art practice and decades of collaborative work, Berninger has also created digital experiences and brand platforms for arts organizations including MoMA, Public Art Fund, Paddle8, UOVO, the Gardner Museum, and Google Art Project.

With over 50 projects presented under Heft (formerly Tender), the gallery continues to engage a global collector base and participate in leading international fairs – such as Untitled Art Miami, Paris Photo, and Contemporary Istanbul – while presenting monthly exhibitions from its Lower East Side space in NYC.

GALLERY INFORMATION

300 Broome Street
Lower East Side, NYC 10002

@heft_gallery on twitter
@heft_gallery on instagram

info@heftgallery.com

