

A new portrait that is vaguely reminiscent of something painted by an old master is headed to Christie's New York auction block later this week, making it the first computer-generated artwork up for sale at a prestigious art house.

The print, called 'Edmond de Belamy', is a blurry depiction of what could be a 'man of the church' against a dark background, floating in the upper left corner of a gilt frame. It was created by Obvious, a Paris-based art collective that has been using artificial intelligence to make a series of 'paintings' since they began the project last year. Each image is printed on canvas with inkjet then 'framed and signed with the math formula' used to create it in the lower right corner, the group explains on its website.

"The whole process is about humans having as little input as possible in the finished piece," Gauthier Vernier, one of three 25-year-olds who comprise Obvious, told Time.

Christie's says the trio – Vernier, Hugo Caselles-Dupré and Pierre Fautrel – are "engaged in exploring the interface between art and artificial intelligence." Their primary method is the use of Generative Adversarial Networks. These are algorithms composed of two competing parts that ultimately teach themselves through trial and error, as opposed to being programmed by humans.

Caselles-Dupré explained the process has two programs — on one side, the Generator and on the other the Discriminator: "We fed the system with a data set of 15,000 portraits painted between the 14th century and the 20th. The Generator makes a new image based on the set, then the Discriminator tries to spot the difference between a human-made image and one created by the Generator. The aim is to fool the Discriminator into thinking that the new images are real-life portraits. Then we have a result."

Obvious sold its first piece, 'Le Comte de Belamy', directly to a Paris-based art collector Nicolas Laugero-Lasserre, for €10,000 (more than \$11,000) in February.

"I just find it amazing that some young people built a program allowing the creation of an original artwork, based on a selection of the 'bests' from past art history," Laugero-Lasserre, said in an interview with Artnet News. He also called the approach "grotesque and amazing at the same time."

Adapted from [www.npr.org](http://www.npr.org), October 22, 2018

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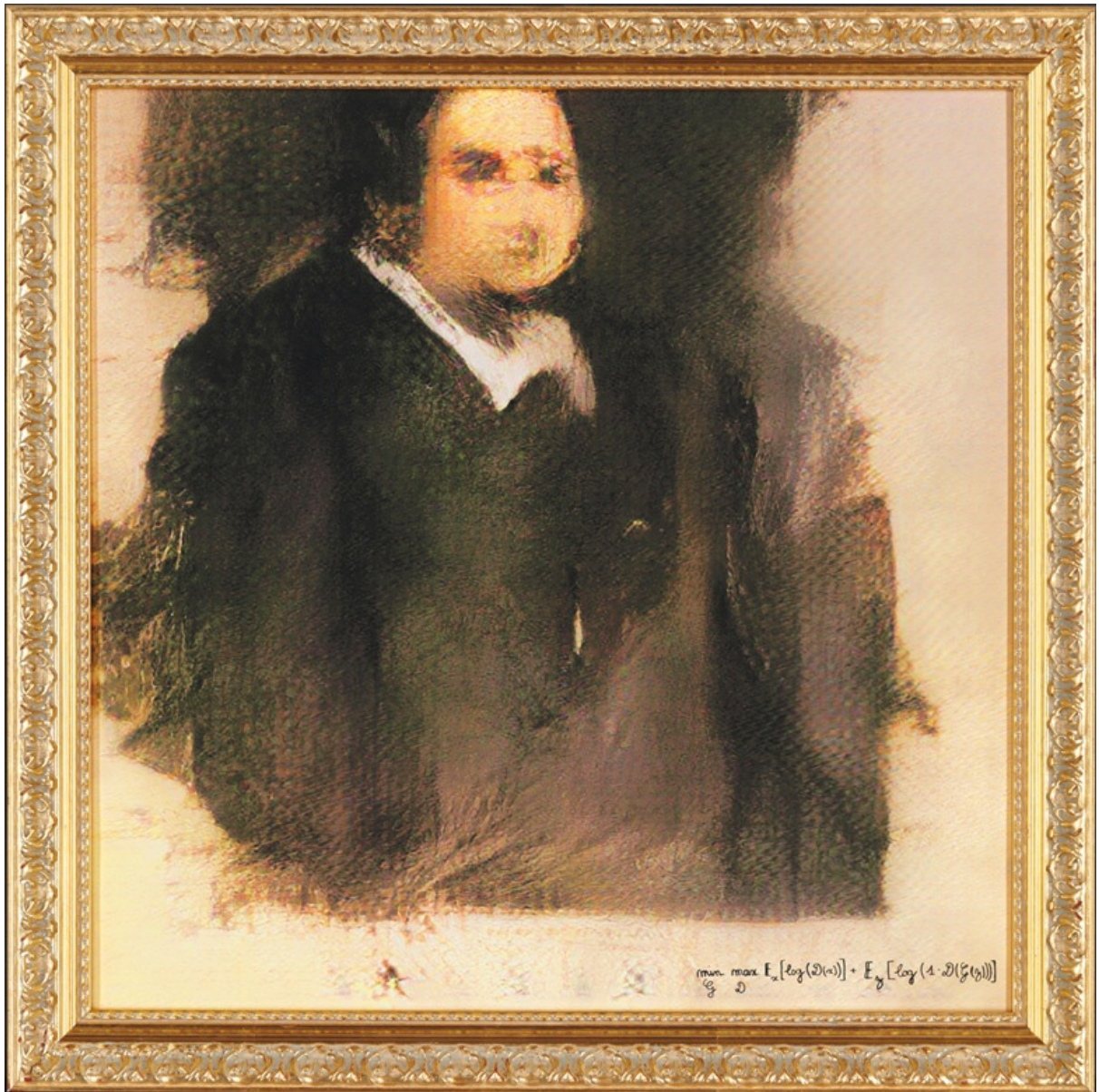
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**To FOOL SB INTO THINKING STH**

TO TALK SB INTO DOING STH

TO TALK SB OUT OF DOING STH

TO THREATEN SB INTO DOING STH

TO TORTURE SB INTO TALKING

TO BLACKMAIL SB INTO SIGNING

1. According to the journalist, how was the portrait created? Answer the question in your own words. (80 words,  $\pm 10\%$ )

- Select the relevant information in the text
- Organize it (avoid lists)
- No personal comment
- **In your own words**
- No introduction / no conclusion required for Question 1

