laCollection

PARIS PHOTO

PORTRAITURE & IDENTITY IN WEB3

Paris Photo 2023

THE GALLERY

Portraiture & Identity in Web3

As part of the new digital sector at Paris Photo 2023, laCollection presents a curation on the theme of the return of the portrait in Web3 artistic practices, beyond the controversial success of the first PFPs. This return of the portrait highlights not only the return of the human figure, but also the evolution of the post-human figure, and questions our identity in the physical vs. virtual world. The works relate to photography as a medium and highlight the technological and sociological innovations brought about by the Web3. Justin Aversano presents his portrait series 'Smoke and Mirrors' for which he investigated and photographed mystics from around the world to create a complete tarot deck based on these unique encounters. A sense of community and spirituality take centre stage in this series, which blends tradition and technology. With Acts of Devaluation, experiential artist duo Operator denounces the price disparity between male and female artists and presents their signatures as a conceptual self-portrait inscribed in two critical forms: the physical, 20-meter scroll they signed in a durational performance and a digital record capturing every signature. Quayola with Pointillisme #03_05658 mixes photography and technology to re-imagine the pointillist movement and create a timeless pixelated landscape. Rosa Menkman's Self-Portrait with DTC intentionally reveals problems of resolution, highlighting the imperfections of a technology too often sublimated. Aleksandra Art, a young talent in the selection, presents her new series of AI-generated portraits that serve as visual narratives of the creative visionaries in the ecosystem. To experience and include traditional collectors in the Web3 community, Aleksandra Art will be offering to collectors the opportunity to commission their own portraits during the fair's VIP days.

Most of the artworks will be accompanied by NFTs using blockchain technology.

Curation is by Marlene Corbun, curator, and art director of laCollection, a leading Web3 art platform dedicated to creating a link between cultural institutions and digital artists.



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laCollection

SMOKE AND MIRRORS

Justin Aversano

THE ARTIST

Justin Aversano
Figure of digital art

Justin Aversano is a compassionate humanist and a fine art photographer whose work serves as a bridge between his creative vision and the world that envelops him. His journey exemplifies the power of innovation and adaptability in the ever-evolving art world. In 2021, Aversano unveiled his «Twin Flames» NFT collection, featuring 100 sets of twins inspired by his own fraternal twin. This collection quickly became the highest-selling photography NFT collection of all time. Notably, one piece from this collection, #49, sold for a staggering $3,781,159 USD in Ethereum, making him the fourth-highest-selling living photographer and the creator of one of the most expensive photographs ever sold in history, following in the footsteps of iconic figures like Man Ray, Cindy Sherman, and Edward Steichen. Furthermore, another piece, #83, made history by fetching $1.1 million USD at a Christie's auction, the first NFT photography ever sold by the auction house, and surpassing sale prices of historical photographers like Ansel Adams. Through his lens, Justin Aversano weaves together the stories of people and places, forging connections that transcend the boundaries of time and space. With a camera as his tool, he skillfully captures the essence of fleeting moments, the depth of human faces, and the vibrant tapestry of communities that surround him. His photography is a testament to the power of imagery in uniting diverse lives and experiences into a cohesive narrative, highlighting the beauty of the human spirit and the rich tapestry of life's moments.



© Image courtesy of the artists

THE ARTWORKS

SMOKE AND MIRRORS, The Four of cups

Justin Aversano

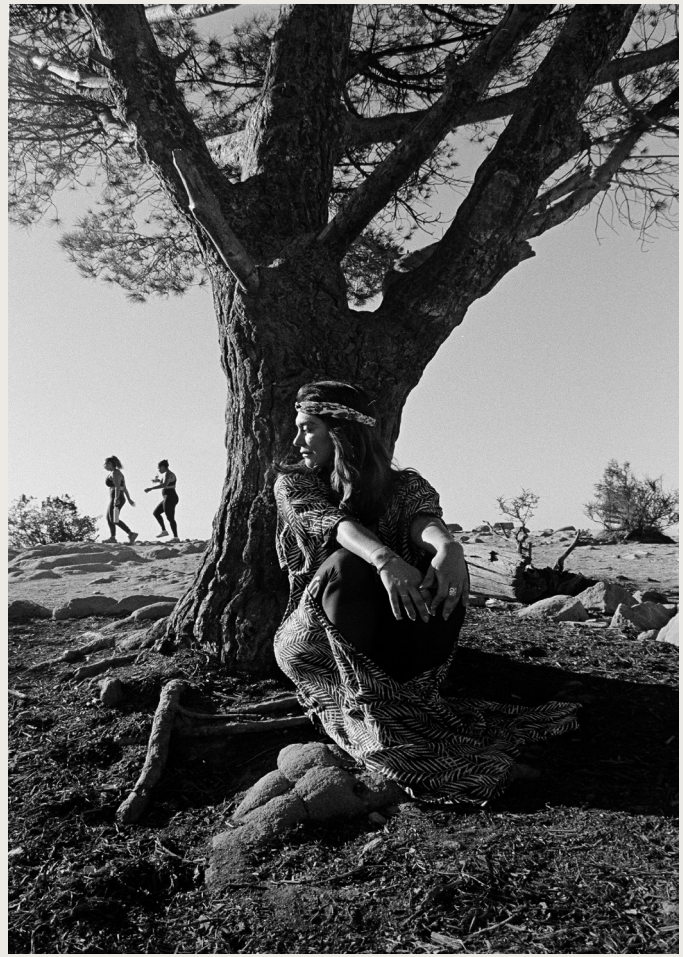
2022

NFT accompanied by 'Smoke and Mirrors' Full Physical Set

For the NFT: Darkroom print, 16''x 20''

For the full set: 78 silkscreen black ink prints printed on papyrus paper, 40,7 x 61 cm (or inverse)

Ed. 3 of 3



In 'Smoke and Mirrors,' Justin Aversano crafts a unique tarot deck, through a mixed-media approach that bridges the digital and analog worlds. Since 2018, Aversano has photographed 78 sets of artists, astrologers, psychics, and other forms of mystics from all around the world, each representing a unique tarot card in his polaroid deck. After capturing each person's black-and-white portrait, Aversano converts the photograph into a silkscreen printed on papyrus paper sourced from Egypt.

As in earlier projects, Justin Aversano addresses a theme that is equally universal and personal to the artist: death. He said : "*All of my projects have this element of death... Cognition' started after my mom passed away... And then I started Twin Flames two years after, and that was more to honor my twin who passed away before we were born. Smoke and Mirrors is for my father, and it's about confronting death before it happens and its inevitability."*

Through this project, he has been able to talk about death more, understand it and not be afraid of it. His father's photograph, the Death card, depicts him standing at the grave of Aversano's mother, next to a tombstone that bears his own last name too.

© Image courtesy of the artists

SMOKE AND MIRRORS

Justin Aversano

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© Image courtesy of the artists

laCollection

ACTS OF DEVALUATION

Operator

THE ARTIST

Operator
Ania Catherine and Dejha Ti
Award-winning experiential artist duo

Ania Catherine (b. 1990, USA) and Dejha Ti (b, 1985, USA) are an award-winning experiential artist duo who founded their collaborative practice, Operator, in 2016. The duo has been called «the two critical contemporary voices on digital art's international stages» by Clot Magazine, with their expertises colliding in large-scale conceptual works recognizable for their signature nuanced integration of technology. Ti's background as an immersive artist and human-computer interaction technologist, and Catherine's as a choreographer and performance artist make for a uniquely medium non-allegiant output, bringing together environments, technology and the body. For their most recent work, Human Unreadable, the artists developed an on-chain generative choreography method. Operator has been awarded two Lumen Prizes (Generative Art in 2023, Immersive Environments in 2021), ADC Gold Cube, S+T+ARTS Prize (Honorary Mention), and MediaFutures (EU Commission program). They've spoken and appeared in BBC Click, Bloomberg ART+TECHNOLOGY, Christie's Art+Tech Summit, SCAD Museum of Art, Art Basel, MIT Open Doc Lab, HEK, University of Cambridge, Ars Electronica, ZKM, MEET Digital Culture Center, MoCDA, Universität für Angewandte Kunst (Vienna), Francisco Carolinum Museum, and CADAF. The duo are originally from LA and currently based in Madrid.

Universität für Angewandte Kunst (Vienna), Francisco Carolinum Museum, and CADAF. The duo are originally from LA and currently based in Madrid.



© Image courtesy of the artists

THE ARTWORK

Acts of Devaluation

Operator

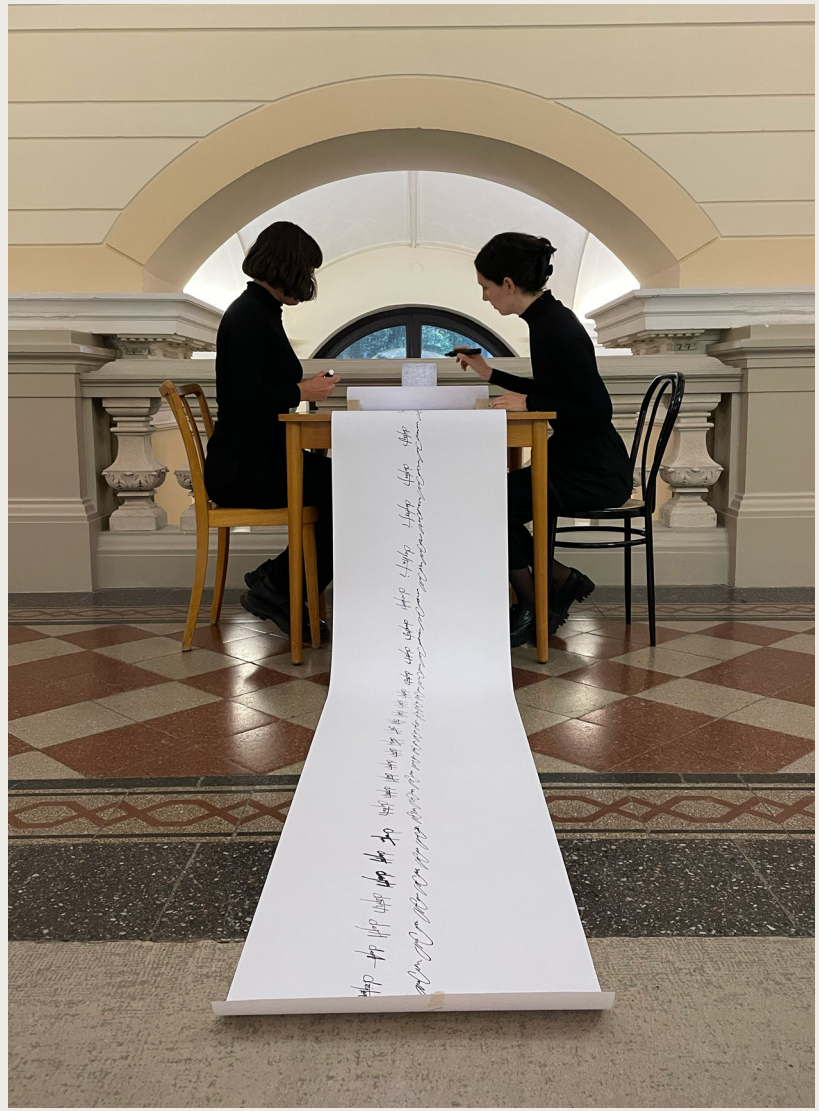
2022-2023

For the Physical component: 20.75m x 49.7 cm, bond paper roll, 70 g/m2, handwritten signatures, perspex hanging and rolling elements, Operator signature museum crate

For the Digital component: 7k Video, 16:9, no audio, 4min19sec

Unique edition

When a man signs an artwork, the value goes up. When a woman signs an artwork, the value goes down.
As a response to this finding by Dr. Helen Gorrill, Operator created Acts of Devaluation, a durational performance during Art NFT Linz at Francisco Carolinum Museum–curated by Anika Meier. Acts of Devaluation is a performance in which the artists signed their names on a scroll for 90 minutes asking: how much devaluation could be inflicted onto one art object? The female signature has historically devalued the price of an artwork. With Acts of Devaluation, artist duo Operator denounces this disparity and presents their signatures as a conceptual self-portrait inscribed in two critical forms: the physical, 20-meter scroll they signed in a durational performance and a digital record capturing every signature on the scroll. The latter is minted as an NFT. The artists reject the signatures' negative value and rather than omit it to secure their work's value, sign it as many times as possible in a hyperbolic act materialized in paper and on the blockchain.



laCollection

POINTILLISME #03_05658

Quayola

THE ARTIST

Quayola
Digital artist

Quayola employs technology as a lens to explore the tensions and equilibriums between seemingly opposing forces: the real and artificial, figurative and abstract, old and new. Constructing immersive installations, he engages with and re-imagines canonical imagery through contemporary technology. Landscape painting, classical sculpture and iconography are some of the historical aesthetics that serve as a point of departure for Quayola's hybrid compositions. His varied practice, all deriving from custom computer software, also includes audiovisual performance, immersive video installations, sculpture, and works on paper.

His work has been performed and exhibited in many prestigious institutions worldwide including V&A Museum, London; Park Avenue Armory, New York; National Art Center, Tokyo; UCCA, Beijing; How Art Museum, Shanghai; SeMA, Seoul; Palais de Tokyo, Paris; Ars Electronica, Linz; Sonar Festival, Barcelona and Sundance Film Festival.

Also a frequent collaborator on musical projects, Quayola has worked with composers, orchestras and musicians including London Contemporary Orchestra, National Orchestra of Bordeaux, Ensemble Intercontemporain, Vanessa Wagner, Jamie XX, Mira Calix, Plaid and Tale Of Us.



© Image courtesy of the artists

THE ARTWORK

Pointillisme #03_05658

Quayola

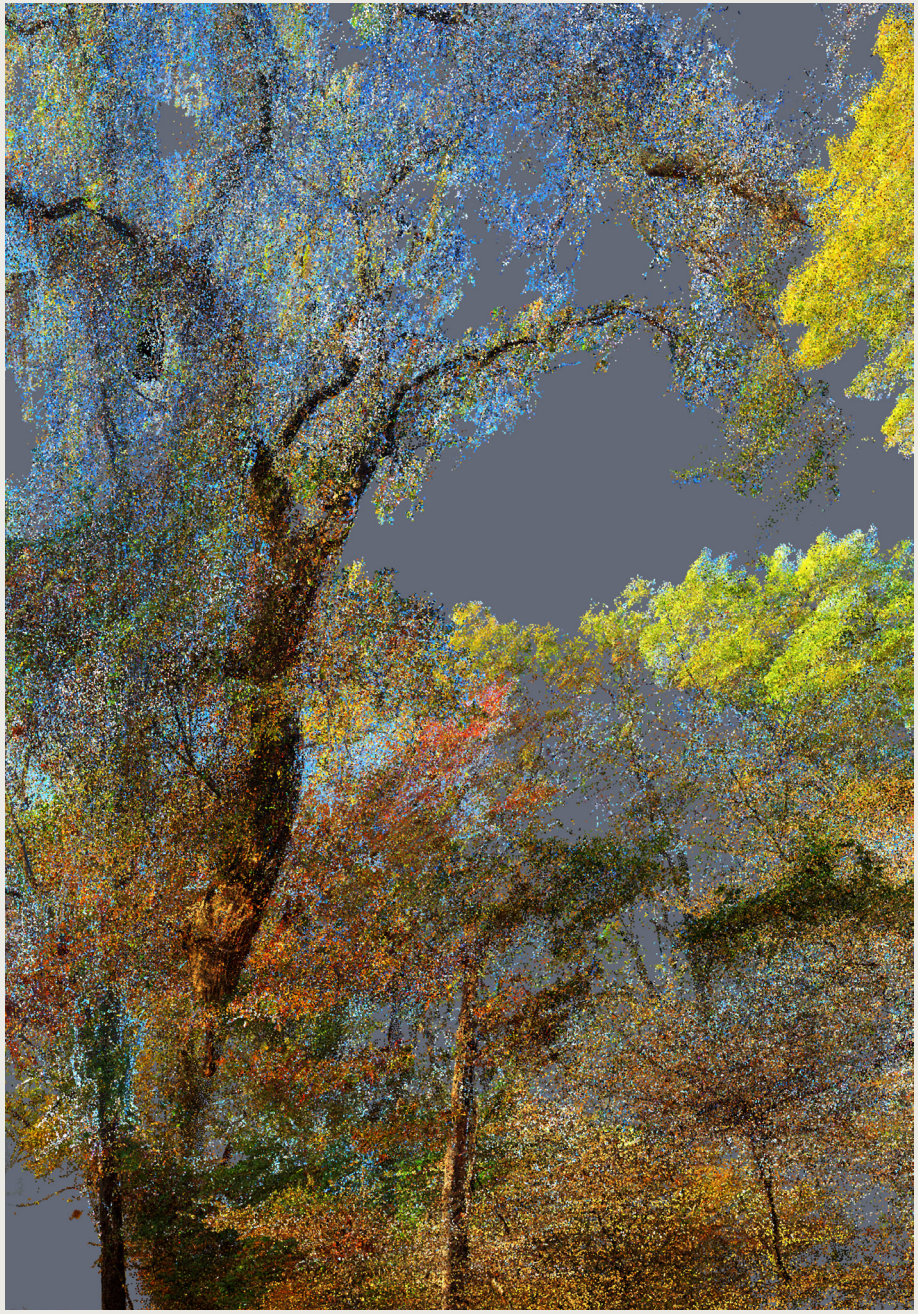
2021

Inkjet print

120x170(h) cm

Unique

Pointillisme is a new work which continues Quayola's ongoing exploration of high-precision laser scanning systems and their inherited imperfections. Drawing a parallel between historical pictorial traditions and computational aesthetics, this project speculates new landscape paintings created by machines. While reproducing similar conditions to those favoured by the 'en plein air' painters of the late 19th century, the natural landscapes are actually observed and analysed through extensive technological apparatuses and re-purposed through new modes of visual synthesis.



© Image courtesy of the artists

laCollection

SELF-PORTRAIT WITH DCT

Rosa Menkman

THE ARTIST

Rosa Menkman
Digital artist

Rosa Menkman is a Dutch artist and researcher of resolutions. Her distinct approach, particularly in incorporating noise into her artwork, creates an entirely new dimension in the realm of contemporary art. Her work stands out as a pioneering force in the art world.

With a career dedicated to innovation, Menkman has left a profound impact on the art scene. She specializes in unraveling the mysteries of glitches, resolutions, and digital anomalies. Notably, her «Glitch Moment/um» collection (INC, 2011) has earned international acclaim for shedding light on captivating artifacts arising from accidents in both analog and digital media.

However, Menkman's artistic pursuits are not confined to surface-level exploration. She delves deep into the intricate world of resolution standardization. In her book 'Beyond Resolution' (i.R.D., 2020), she challenges established norms, exposing the compromises and hidden potentialities concealed within our digital landscape.

Through her art and research, Menkman invites us to explore the enigmatic world of technology, uncovering the stories that often remain hidden behind the screens. Her presence at Paris Photo promises to be a reflection on the uncharted territories of portraiture and the materialities of photography.



© Image courtesy of the artists

THE ARTWORK

SELF-PORTRAIT WITH DCT

Rosa Menkman

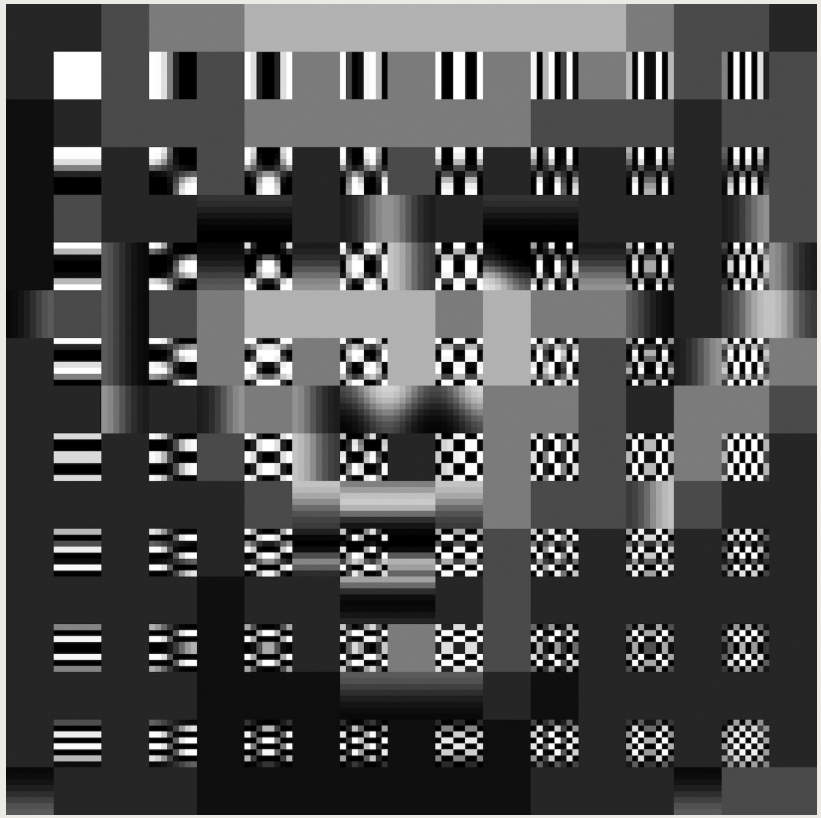
2023

Photograph with DCT and NFT

Ed.3 of 3 - 3+1AP

40x 40 cm (unframed)

Menkman's self-portrait prompts us to rethink the traditional limits of digital imagery. In her photo, presented by laCollection, Menkman presents her face through the prism of the Discrete Cosine Transform (DCT), an algorithm that sits at the foundation of the JPEG compression. Consequently, her visage is resolved in between an enigmatic mosaic of abstracted blocks. This self-portrait is more than just an aesthetic photo collage or a low-res image overlaid with a DCT. This portrait is truly unique because the low-res JPEG data file has been tweaked to manifest the DCT blocks onto the portrait's surface. In other words, the DCT is hard-coded into the original 152x152 px Huffman table of the JPEG, spanning its 19x19 block grid! Its true hifi glitch encoded!
With a profound grounding in glitch culture and a robust critique of contemporary digital culture, Menkman is not just a visual spectacle but a discourse on the 'black box' of digital imagery.



© Image courtesy of the artists

laCollection

WEB3 PEOPLE PORTRAITS: LUMINARIES OF THE DIGITAL FRONTIER

Aleksandra Art

THE ARTIST

Web 3 people portraits: luminaries of the digital frontier

Aleksandra Art
Digital artist

Aleksandra operates at the innovative crossroads of art and technology, where she has honed her expertise since 2016. With a rich background in facilitating startups during their initial phases, producing and curating momentous digital art events, and disseminating knowledge across various industry sectors, she has become a luminary in digital and Blockchain art. Her body of work is a profound exploration of the manifestations of digital identities and an insightful commentary on the transformative role of art in the digital future.

In her compelling portrait series, inspired by her thesis on 'The Power of Photography', Aleksandra navigates the intricate realms of traditional and digital art forms. Each portrait, while capturing the essence of its subject, serves as a confluence of conventional photographic techniques and the rebellious facets of AI. Through her work, Aleksandra aims to challenge the boundaries of portraiture, inviting contemplation on the evolving symbiosis of humans, technology, and art in the contemporary digital landscape.



© Image courtesy of the artists

THE ARTWORK

Dual Echoes: Ania & Dejha

Aleksandra Art

2023

Post-processed photography with AI

NFT

Ed.1 of 2 (1 owned by the portrayed artists)

30 x 30 cm (unframed)

Set amidst the backdrop of enigmatic mountains and ethereal mists, this portrait captures the very essence of Ania Catherine and Dejha Ti, the artists behind Operator. Their collective gaze radiates an undeniable bond, both as life partners and artistic collaborators. Their dynamic relationship, personal and professional, exudes a harmony that resonates deeply within the frame.

Ania and Dejha's artistic journey has seen myriad innovative projects, of which «Human Unreadable» is a recent standout, bringing them their second award in the Lumen Prize for Art and Technology. Here, they seamlessly blend choreography with digital elements, resulting in visual art rooted in concealed human motion. Another pivotal project, «Unsigned», confronts gender biases in art valuation. Collaborating with curator Anika Meier, they amass signatures of female-identifying and non-binary artists, highlighting and challenging the devaluation based on gender.

Through this portrait and their multifaceted projects, Ania Catherine and Dejha Ti stand out as independent artists, pushing boundaries and challenging the status quo, all while beautifully intertwined in their shared vision and journey.



© Image courtesy of the artists

THE ARTWORK

Self-portrait

Aleksandra Art

2023

Post-processed photography with AI

NFT

Ed.1 of 2 (1 owned by the portrayed artist)

30 x 30 cm (unframed)



Positioned against an oriental backdrop with a checkered floor, Aleksandra Art stands illuminated by the light filtering through grand windows. She is now both the artist and the subject. The room, dressed in colonial furniture, is painted in calming shades of blue, accented with vibrant yellow and orange lines tracing the ceiling. Dressed in an orange blouse, Aleksandra's silhouette becomes the central focus. Her long hair cascades freely, an emblem of her unrestrained spirit. Those piercing eyes, locked onto the viewer, offer an insight into her soul—a space where serenity coexists with the silent echoes of a tumultuous year marked by conflict in her homeland.

This portrait isn't just a simple self-representation; it's a culmination of a journey that began in 2019 when Aleksandra delved into the world of AI tools. Her commitment goes beyond mere creation—she has been an unwavering pillar, championing projects that uplift and empower the communities that have grown around her. This self-portrait, the inaugural beacon of the 'Web3 People' series, captures not just her image but her essence and her indomitable spirit.

© Image courtesy of the artists

THE ARTWORK

A Glimpse into Abosch's World: From Tangible Memories to Synthetic Realities

Aleksandra Art

2023

Post-processed photography with AI

NFT

Ed.1 of 2 (1 owned by the portrayed artist)

30 x 30 cm (unframed)



Centered amidst a constellation of vintage gadgets and technological artifacts, Kevin Abosch captures attention with his intense gaze from the canvas. A distinctive silver mane frames his face, adding an air of wisdom and gravitas. Abosch, an Irish conceptual artist celebrated globally, weaves a tapestry of mediums – from photography and blockchain to installation and AI – into his oeuvre.

Beyond the frame, Abosch's reputation precedes him. Known for profound works that interrogate identity, value, and the very currency of humanity, his art has adorned civic spaces from The Hermitage Museum to The National Museum of China, and even the bustling corridors of Dublin Airport. His groundbreaking endeavors within the cryptoart realm are equally legendary; «Forever Rose», a virtual magnum opus, shattered records in 2018. Within the intricacies of the portrait's backdrop lie subtle nods to Abosch's exploration into synthetic photography. The vintage gadgets and ephemera, while a tribute to his vast range, also hint at his recent venture where he challenges the boundaries of traditional photography. By harnessing machine learning algorithms, Abosch creates images filled with algorithm-induced corruptions, viewing these visual aberrations as revelatory glimpses into complex truths and untapped emotional depth.

Yet, Abosch's penchant for the profound is balanced with a touch of the whimsical. This is exemplified in «Potato #345», a stark photograph of a lone spud, which found its way into the collection of a European businessman for a staggering sum. Such dichotomies are what make Abosch not just an artist, but a storyteller, weaving tales of modernity, value, and the intrinsic worth we place on the seemingly mundane.

© Image courtesy of the artists

THE ARTWORK

In Dialogue with Quayola

Aleksandra Art

2023

Post-processed photography with AI

NFT

Ed.1 of 2 (1 owned by the portrayed artist)

30 x 30 cm (unframed)

Amidst a serene backdrop of verdant foliage and an intricate android silhouette, the artist Quayola emerges as the bridge between nature's ageless beauty and the precision of technology. His calm demeanor, perfectly contrasting with the complex construction of the android, personifies the enduring conversation between the organic and the synthetic—a core tenet of his artistic journey.

From reimagining landscape paintings to sculptural reinterpretations, Quayola's transformative approach to art finds its roots in both history and innovation. The portrait pays homage to his immersive installations that have graced international platforms, including the V&A Museum in London and Tokyo's National Art Center. The subtle undertones in the portrait echo his musical collaborations with the likes of Jamie XX and the London Contemporary Orchestra, weaving a tale of visual and auditory brilliance. In this poignant portrayal, one can sense the tension and harmony between age-old art forms and avant-garde tech—a testament to Quayola's enduring exploration of the real and the artificial.

In capturing Quayola, the portrait speaks volumes about the artist's quest to find equilibrium in the dance of nature and innovation.



© Image courtesy of the artists