

## LACMA Acquires Largest Collection of Blockchain Artworks

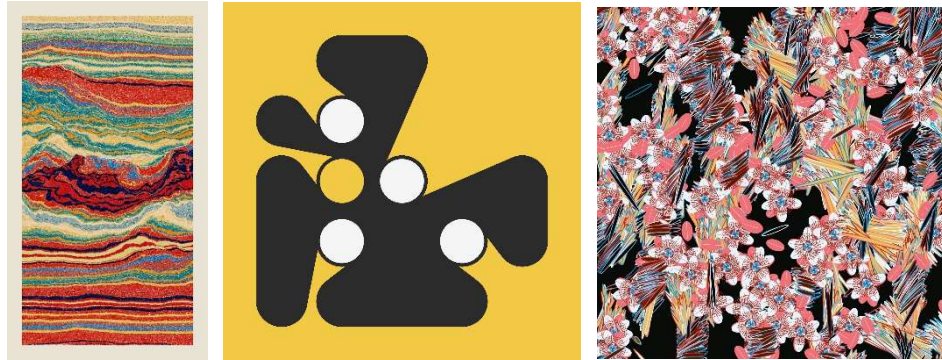


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(Los Angeles – February 13, 2023) The Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) announced today the first and largest collection of artworks minted on blockchain to enter an American art museum. Thanks to a generous gift from collector Cozomo de' Medici, 22 digital artworks by a group of 13 international artists—from Brazil, Canada, China, England, Germany, Portugal, and the United States—are now part of or promised to the museum's permanent collection. With works spanning 2017 to 2022, the collection reflects a boom of artistic experimentation with web3 technologies like blockchain that have been budding since the 2010s.

"For decades, artists have incorporated technology within their practice, and the intersection of art and technology has been central to LACMA's programming since the '60s," said Michael Govan, LACMA CEO and Wallis Annenberg Director. "As one of the first museums to support artists' experimentation with technology, it's fitting that LACMA would receive this first museum collection of blockchain art. We're grateful to Cozomo de' Medici for his forward-thinking generosity that will expand the diversity of our art collection and propel us to develop new standards and techniques for preserving works created on the blockchain."

The focus of The Cozomo de' Medici Collection has been to assemble works that tell a representative history of the cryptoart movement. From generative art to the first major book on the Ethereum blockchain, photography, code, video, and

portraits generated with artificial intelligence, the collection has sought to capture important digital works that emerged during the pandemic and the rise of blockchain in public discourse.

“It is a great honor to have works from The Medici Collection find a permanent home at LACMA. With this gift, my goal was to help bridge the worlds of on-chain art and contemporary art, which until now have existed separately. I’m thrilled to have these historically significant on-chain works contextualized beside many iconic works of art in LACMA’s collection.”

“LACMA has always supported artists' expressions with new technology,” said Dhyandra Lawson, Assistant Curator, Contemporary Art. “Artists have examined topics related to digital art such as perception, intangibility, authorship, automation, and surveillance for at least a century. I’m excited to explore the Medici collection in the context of LACMA’s holdings.”

The artists represented in the Cozomo de’ Medici donation and pledge include Justin Aversano, Cai Guo-Qiang, Dmitri Cherniak, Han (CryptoCubes), Matt DesLauriers, Matt Hall and John Watkinson (CryptoPunks), Yam Karkai, Johannes Gees and Kelian Maissen (Kleee), Adam Swaab, Claire Silver, Neil Strauss, Monica Rizzolli, and Pindar Van Arman.

At LACMA, an institution that has engaged with and collected digital art since its founding, the acquisition of blockchain artworks is the latest example of the museum’s longstanding support of artists as they harness technologies to express their ideas in new ways. Through conversations with artists and cross-departmental collaboration with curators, preservation specialists, the Art + Technology Lab, registrars, and other experts throughout the museum, LACMA is developing new standards for acquiring, exhibiting, and conserving NFT-authenticated digital art. Thanks to a number of recent gifts, the museum has begun the process of bringing artworks minted on blockchain into the collection, including its first acquisition, *Western Flag* (NFT), a generous donation from artist John Gerrard, a gift from Tom Sachs from his collectible series *Rocket Factory*, and Lee Mullican’s *ALMT28B.TGA*, “*Computer Joy*,” which he developed during UCLA’s Advanced Design Research Center’s Program for Technology in the Art in the mid-1980s. Other works on blockchain to enter LACMA’s collection include works by artists Erick Calderon, Jessica Wimbley, and Peter Wu.

In 2022, LACMA announced a new fund to support the acquisition of digital art by women, an initiative spearheaded by philanthropist and entrepreneur Paris Hilton. Through this fund, LACMA is acquiring works by Nancy Baker Cahill, Shantell Martin, and Krista Kim. LACMA has also partnered with Cactoid Labs, an experimental curatorial and blockchain consultancy, on an initiative that invites digital artists to make work inspired by the museum's encyclopedic collection.

LACMA's exhibition programming has also long explored the intersection of art and technology with exhibitions such as *3D: Double Vision* (2018–19); *John Gerard: Solar Reserve* (2018); and more. A new exhibition, *Coded: Art Enters the Computer Age, 1952–1982*, explores how the rise of computer technology, together with its emergence in popular consciousness, impacted the making of what we now call digital art. This exhibition is on view February 12–July 12, 2023.

#### **About LACMA**

Located on the Pacific Rim, LACMA is the largest art museum in the western United States, with a collection of nearly 149,000 objects that illuminate 6,000 years of artistic expression across the globe. Committed to showcasing a multitude of art histories, LACMA exhibits and interprets works of art from new and unexpected points of view that are informed by the region's rich cultural heritage and diverse population. LACMA's spirit of experimentation is reflected in its work with artists, technologists, and thought leaders as well as in its regional, national, and global partnerships to share collections and programs, create pioneering initiatives, and engage new audiences.

Location: 5905 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 900036. [lacma.org](http://lacma.org)

**Image captions:** (left to right) Dmitri Cherniak, *Ringers #962*, 2021, .JPG delivered as an NFT, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, promised gift of The Cozomo de' Medici Collection, © Dmitri Cherniak, image courtesy of the artist; Matt DesLauriers, *Meridian #547*, 2021, .JPG delivered as an NFT, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, gift of The Cozomo de' Medici Collection, © Matt DesLauriers, image courtesy of the artist; Monica Rizzolli, *Fragments of an Infinite Field #800, Autumn*, 2021, .JPG delivered as an NFT, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, promised gift of The Cozomo de' Medici Collection, © Monica Rizzolli, image courtesy of the artist

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