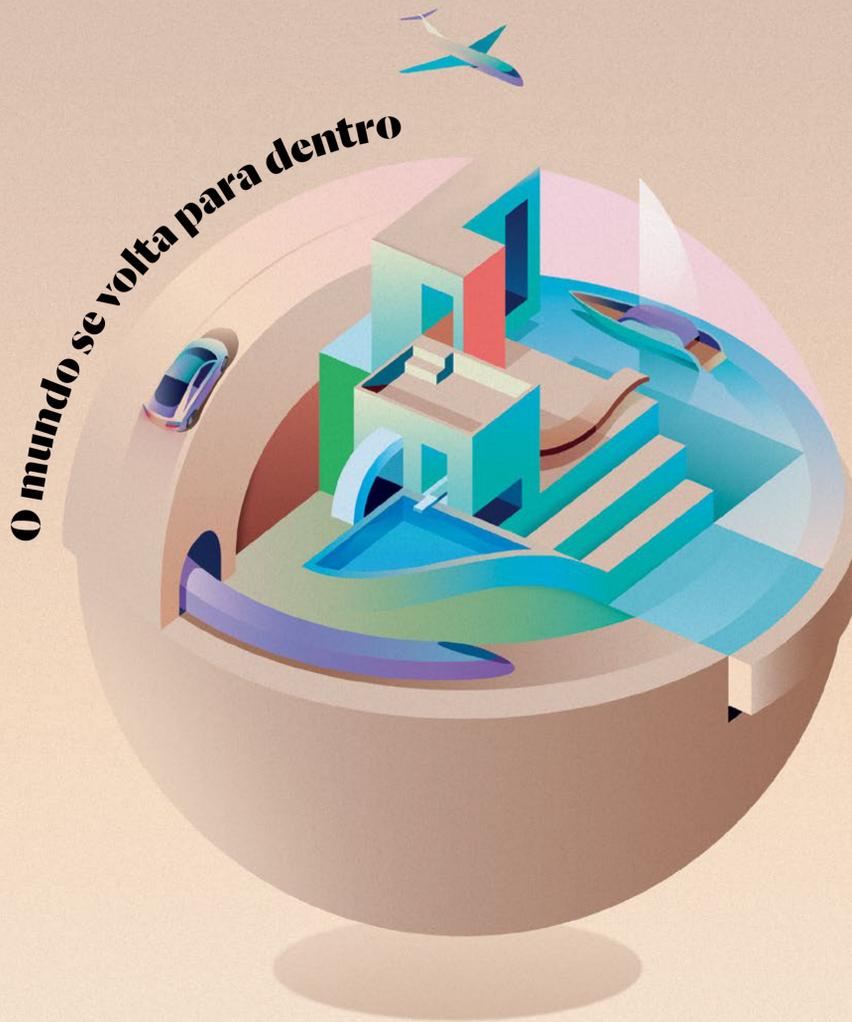


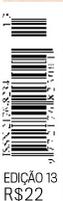
LUXO SEM COMPROMISSO

Brasil

# Robb Report



A VALORIZAÇÃO DA CASA NA PANDEMIA  
E A FORÇA DO DESIGN BRASILEIRO



## THE WORLD TURNS INWARDS

The appreciation of the home over the pandemic  
and the strength of the Brazilian design



Point your phone  
camera here to  
see the art piece  
in Augmented  
Reality



## **THE FUTURE TO THE FUTURE OF ART**

NFT, the new cryptocurrency that can revolutionize digital art. See with your own cellphone as is the experience of augmented reality in the two works on these pages.

*BY BIANCA CUTAIT, art advisor in Miami*

**FIRST PAGE**  
**Rubem Robierb's**  
**work, in**  
**augmented reality**

**LEFT**  
**Nancy Cahill's**  
**virtual installation**  
**in the California**  
**desert**



Point your phone camera here and download the 4thWall app to interact with Nancy Cahill's art pieces

In times of uninterrupted and inevitable inconsistencies, the art market is at the financial turmoil of the moment. The high instability in times of uncertainty has raised questions. For the past few months now, clients, friends, artists, partners and even veteran collectors have been asking my opinion about the great news in today's pandemic world: NFTs. I confess that at first it took me a while to understand who was buying digital art and making such a fuss about it, but I soon realized that it would be more important to deeply understand what NFTs really are before understanding who is paying to have it in hand. NFT stands for Non-Fungible Token, or simply a new type of unique digital asset - a kind of digital certificate, established via blockchain, which defines originality and exclusivity to digital goods. And in an endless investigation, I understood that, in reality, NFTs are nothing new - since 2016, cryptocurrencies have already covered the art market. However, it is still very experimental, and I would not dare to speculate or give financial advice, and probably everything I say from now on will transform and transmute in a few unstable units of time. With this digital certificate, everything becomes negotiable. In a market already established in cryptocurrencies, transactions are made within that system, in which a record of transactions made is kept on several connected computers while using the same technology.

For instance, a football sticker can be considered collectible, but once there are unique stickers, specially created with computer generated images (CGIs), a new value is assigned and the form of the transaction is all done through Blockchain, and the new owner of that unique figure then manages to trace the origin of his asset. For art, the concept is the same.

The technologies of Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality are taking place every day, and new artists appear using these mediums, while some veteran artists have started to adapt to the new factuality. In 2016, Acute Art app had already been launched integrating some important artists, such as Kaws and Olafur Eliasson. Navigating between AR and VR (Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality, respectively), the user can choose between the free version and some paid digital works. In 2018, Google launched its AR platform, where the only thing the user must have to acquire their very own virtual lion is an internet connection and a Google account. And more recently, Sotheby's launched its virtual auction room, accompanied by an augmented reality platform. "The oldest auction house, founded in 1744, is the one at the forefront of innovations, as a pioneer of hybrid auctions in live streaming and the use of the AR tool", explains Katia Mindlin, President of Sotheby's Brazil. With the platform, the customer can view the auction lots on their wall in perspective, while they can dream without having the playful possession of the derivatives of the new tools. Virtual Reality is a computer-generated simulation of a three-dimensional image that can be interacted in a way apparently by a person using some equipment device such as a cell phone screen. Augmented Reality, in turn, is a technology that allows people to superimpose digital content (images, sounds or even text) in real life scenes, as it is in the case of the works presented by Sotheby's during auctions.

So, is the use of Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality applications with works of art ready to be promoted? In the 1960s, an innovative avant-garde group emerged in the USA based on the artists' mental attitude: Conceptual Art - an artistic expression based on concepts, reflections and ideas, and not on aesthetics. For many, this was the beginning of a revolution that organically came to what digital art is now. This parallel seems to me to be the most relevant, since the difference is found to be no more in the applied technique, but more recently in the purchasing public. I then look for the idea of conceptual art and draw the parallel, and the work of a visual artist is presented to the public who previously could buy the 'real' work and have it in their possession, but today they can simply have it virtually on their devices. With NFTs, what could initially be used to publicize the artists' marketable work which is already there, within my own reach to buy, and have a digital certificate for my purchase. For example, at the DesertX exhibition in California, I got to know the digital work of artist Nancy Cahill. With an application in hand, we are able to put some of her works anywhere, in any situation, and simply take a photo. And the expedition of digital art was inevitable, as were the digital cameras that replaced analog cameras with films that were to be developed and printed on special papers. As a photographer, I experienced this transition and

it took months of study, relearning to work with new instruments that were modernized faster than my ability to absorb new changes. The different techniques and productions of visual arts have been changing over the years and shaping themselves according to the new realities. As with all media, there are some rare success stories and others that spend years trying to prove their existence in the market. But what validates an artist?

I spent the first many years of my career as an artist and consequently as an art advisor hearing that art is bought out of affection, that the collector has to love what he is going to buy. On the other hand, I always perceived the financial interest attached to the transactions that I participated in, even when refused by the buyer even. The two major factors in common in all the processes of purchasing artwork are authenticity and provenance. In contemporary art it is infinitely simpler to be able to prove authenticity, while new Blockchain technologies have been used to validate both factors, making it difficult (or impossible) to go back and falsify information. The wide truth is that NFTs were created by artists in order to be able to validate their careers without having to go through the most universal validation process in the art market: passing it on. The reality is that Blockchain technology changes the way we make, market and appreciate art. With the provenance registered and stored, market power is returning to creators.

## WHAT IS BLOCKCHAIN?



It is a database which keeps a record of all transactions taking place on a peer-to-peer network



All information transferred on the blockchain network is encrypted and each occurrence is recorded, making changes impossible



It is a decentralized system, there is no need for a central certifying authority, such as the Central Bank

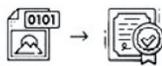


It can be used for purposes other than transferring digital currency; contracts, files and other types of data can be shared



Encrypted information can be shared across multiple providers without risk to user privacy

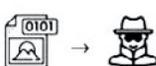
## HOW DO NFTs WORK?



It transforms a digital art into a unique piece



Makes digital limited edition possible



It is impossible to fake or steal because the creator stays connected to the file forever



...and earns compensation for future sales

Yes, NFTs will help the dissemination of digital art to take off, but they will not eliminate the middleman, the validating factor. “The dynamics of technology information takes the art market to yet another service port, but it does not deny the previous ones”, explains veteran artist Gilberto Salvador. The digital camera did not make photography unfeasible, it just added another technique for artists to work on. Experienced photographers use both shooting techniques and maintain the impeccability of their final results.

What the new technology is bringing is an auto-selection of the new public, but with some considerable market share chasing after the change and trying to engage its practices. “One of the most exciting and innovative areas is the shift to the possibility of collecting more art on canvas”, says Clare McAndrew, art economist and responsible for the prestigious UBS Art Report in partnership with the Art Basel fair. Historically, the art market has followed the currency, consequently if new collectors want to buy art to place solely on their devices, all fractions of the market have to adapt. And that is inevitably wonderful. I present to you the work Peace-Makers by the artist Rubem Robierb. Now take out your cell phones and point your cameras at the QR code, then point at the photo of the sculpture. Your instagram automatically created a filter so that you can have the experience through the magazine in the same way that validates the NFT. The current relevance of these new technologies works because professional artists have galleries, agents, dealers and people trained to apply technology as a common factor in real life.

However, at the same time that the artists of this medium found the chance to monetize their works, buyers (collectors) are still few and restricted, but with high monetary power and the possibility of transferring funds. Consequently, this gave the necessary opening to this bubble of NFTs, and the rare cases of success began to appear. Beeple has been the most evident so far. In October 2020, collector Pablo Rodriguez-Fraile spent almost \$67,000 on a 10-second video that he could have watched for free online. Four months later, he resold the ‘work’ for \$ 6.6 million. The video by digital artist Beeple, whose real name is Mike Winkelmann, has been authenticated by Blockchain, which serves as a digital signature to certify who owns the work and that it is the original work. Beeple says in an interview: ‘I don’t like to be called an artist, it seems very pretentious’.

***RIGHT  
Work by  
digital  
artist  
Beeple,  
whose  
NFT sold  
for \$67  
million***



The pandemic became a portal for new ideas, but all these transformations had already started at different times, perhaps without so much international and media presence. In March of this year, the same work by Beeple was auctioned for around \$ 67 million dollars, where more than 90% of the bidders were new customers for Christie’s, according to the Artnet news portal. Meanwhile, some artists are creating chaos in order to stand out. Banksy, for example, burned a work of his own and resold it as NFT. As professionals, we must know how to distinguish what can be beneficial for our clients from what can be mere speculation. We have to scale and engage the audience in order to stand out. Banksy himself put it best when he said that in the future, everyone will be anonymous for 15 minutes. And for those who think that everything is digital now and who believes that the real world will be extinguished, SPOILER ALERT: Beeple issues a physical certificate, which comes inside a paper box extracted from planted trees and retrieved from very real soil, and warns : “You can’t do that on instagram, and it’s what makes everything change instantly. You don’t even need to understand the NFT part, because you’re buying it”, while holding on camera an acrylic box made of synthetic fibers from polymer (polyacrylonitrile) with an average molecular weight of -100,000, about 1,900 units of monomer plastic. And I cannot leave out the SPOILER ALERT of the decade, as Maurizio Cattelan had already played the same prank in the crowd enraged by the banana on the wall: the artwork was, in reality, the certificate of authenticity and the instruction manual purposely placed below from the eye line, where few even bothered to look. Don’t worry, dear reader, if you are still perplexed about NFTs, Blockchains, AR and VR.

We all are.

***Bianca Cutait is art advisor, director of Arte  
Fundamental gallery in Miami***