

A PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS OF THE ART MARKET IN THE DIGITAL AGE: HISTORICAL IDENTITY, SACRED NARRATIVES, AND CONTEMPORARY VALUE

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Abstract: This study delves into the philosophical dimensions of the art market in the digital age, examining how historical identity intertwines with contemporary value. Using qualitative methods, including semi-structured interviews and case study analysis, the research investigates the strategic invocation of historical identity by artists to enhance the cultural and monetary worth of their digital creations. Findings reveal that established reputations in the traditional art world and the recontextualization of cultural artifacts—such as iconic historical events or artistic movements—significantly influence the perceived value of digital artworks. For instance, algorithmic art and daily creation processes evoke deeper narratives that resonate with historical art traditions. The study also highlights the role of blockchain technology and NFTs in ensuring authenticity, fostering trust, and redefining ownership models. Scarcity, through limited editions or unique variations, further amplifies the perceived value of digital art. Artists like Beeple leverage their pre-digital careers and innovative techniques to command substantial market attention, while works such as Grimes's "The Persistence of Chaos" illustrate the influence of celebrity on value creation. The research underscores the philosophical and cultural significance of digital art, exploring how historical identity and technological innovation converge to shape contemporary artistic value systems within a globalized digital marketplace.

Keywords: Historical Identity, Digital Art, Digital Age, Culture, Beeple and Market

1. INTRODUCTION

The digital age has revolutionized the art market, blending traditional artistic values with modern technological advancements. This transformation raises profound questions about the nature of art, its value, and the role of historical identity in shaping contemporary perceptions. Art has always been a reflection of cultural, historical, and philosophical contexts, and the digital marketplace introduces new dimensions to these interactions. With the advent of blockchain technology and

Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs), the art world has seen a shift in how authenticity, ownership, and scarcity are conceptualized and valued. These changes prompt a reevaluation of how historical identity influences the perceived worth of digital artworks. This study explores the intricate relationship between an artwork's historical identity and its contemporary value within the digital market. By examining how artists strategically integrate historical narratives and cultural significance into their creations, this research highlights the enduring influence of traditional art movements and iconic cultural references. Furthermore, the integration of technological tools, such as NFTs, not only preserves the authenticity of digital works but also reshapes the way art is consumed and valued globally. Through qualitative methods, including interviews and case studies, this inquiry aims to provide a philosophical analysis of how the interplay between historical identity and innovation defines the evolving art market, fostering new ethical and aesthetic considerations. (Benjamin & Jennings, 2010; Greffe, 2004; Jenkins, 1999; Rogers, 2016). The philosophy of digital art examines the essence and value of art forms whose creation and presentation rely heavily on computer processing. However, this exploration cannot occur in isolation. It necessitates acknowledging perspectives from various fields – media and cultural theory, art theory, and audience reception. These perspectives offer crucial insights into how digital technologies for image and sound manipulation are fundamentally altering our understanding of art, physical representation, and the act of perception itself. Theories like the "digital condition" proposed by Kittler suggest that digital technologies lead to a loss of trust in imagery, a fragmented and indeterminate experience of the world, and a blurring of traditional boundaries between artist, audience, artwork, and artistic process (Kittler, 1999). Evaluating these claims requires a foundational understanding of the distinction between analogue and digital systems, along with the implications these differences hold for artistic appreciation. The philosophy of digital art builds upon a comprehensive understanding of digital representation. It meticulously investigates how specific digital art forms utilize digital technologies in their creation. This, in turn, paves the way for examining how the digital nature of an artwork influences its appropriate appreciation. Through systematic analysis of "digital" as an artistically significant category, the philosophy of digital art aims to provide a solid foundation for the burgeoning interdisciplinary and popular interest surrounding the so-called "digital revolution" in the arts. According to Thomson-Jones and Moser, despite being recognized as part of the "final avant-garde of the twentieth century" and achieving mainstream acceptance by the late 1900s, the philosophy of digital art remains a burgeoning subfield within aesthetics (Thomson-Jones & Moser, 2015). Pioneering works like Tavinor exploration of videogames (Tavinor, 2009), Gaut

examination of digital cinema, and analysis of computer art laid the groundwork for philosophical inquiry into the relationship between art and computer technology (Gaut, 2010). This foundation has been further strengthened by publications like the edited volume by Tavinor, which delves into the aesthetics of videogames (Tavinor, 2019). However, there is still a significant amount of unexplored works in this field. As Ruche aptly states, our world is defined by complexity, interconnectedness, and rapid, unpredictable change (Ruche, 2017). This principle applies directly to technological systems, which are constantly propelled forward by various forces. Consumer demand for "more, better, bigger, faster" fuels the need for more engineers, the primary developers of technology. However, this escalating pace creates a feedback loop, with a growing pool of engineers generating solutions at an ever-increasing rate. Sustainable development often faces a disconnect between theory and practice. This gap can be bridged by harnessing the power of art, artistic methods, and aesthetics. Shrivastava et al. propose that art can foster passion and emotional connection with sustainable practices, encouraging individuals to embrace sustainable living and organizational models (Shrivastava et al., 2012). Analysing the "green" initiatives undertaken by art organizations can yield valuable insights.

Pulido et al. suggest that studying these practices can help identify key competencies necessary for the successful implementation of sustainability principles in various contexts (Pulido et al., 2022). Joubert highlights the effectiveness of art programs in promoting cultural values, fostering a sense of belonging, and providing social services (Joubert, 2004). These programs offer a meaningful way to empower communities and build resilience. The emergence of digital movie projection and LCD screens compels us to re-evaluate the relationship between display technology and the nature of digital art. Goodman argues that images are fundamentally analogue, defined by continuously variable properties like colour, shape, and size (Goodman, 1988). He acknowledges the possibility of a digital sub-scheme using black and white grids, but emphasizes that such schemes wouldn't encompass the full range of pictorial distinctions. This distinction becomes particularly challenging when applied to high-resolution LCD screens. Merely pointing to pixelation as evidence of a digital scheme is insufficient. Even with finite numbers of colours and shapes available, the gaps between these discrete categories create ambiguity at the boundaries. Grouping colours, shapes, and sizes into types inevitably involves lumping together sub-phenomenal variations that may be perceptually distinct. This inherent ambiguity undermines the possibility of achieving true finite differentiation, a key requirement for a digital scheme according to Goodman (Goodman, 1988). However, a closer look at digital image technology offers a potential solution. Current

sampling and light intensity technologies operate well below the threshold of human visual discrimination. For example, "Truecolour" displays utilize a vast number of objective colours, creating the illusion of a continuous spectrum. While there are gaps between the actual light intensities displayed, these gaps are too small to be perceived by the human eye. Digital technology essentially segments variations in colour, shape, and size, keeping them sufficiently subtle that they don't impact image perception (Zeimbekis, 2012). In this way, digital images create a technologically defined scheme with transitive groupings based on human perception. These groupings are tailored to the limitations of the human visual system, ensuring that users perceive a continuous and coherent image. Ultimately, the replicability of digital images hinges on this gap between human discriminatory limitations and the discriminatory capabilities of digital sampling technology.

2. RATIONALE AND MAIN OBJECTIVE

The digital age has revolutionized the art market, introducing new avenues for buying, selling, and experiencing art. This study examines how the philosophical implications of this transformation, specifically focusing on the interplay between an artwork's historical identity and the value it acquires in the contemporary digital landscape. By examining this intertwining, we aim to illuminate how the digital art market both disrupts and reinforces traditional notions of artistic value.

3. METHODS

- *Research Design*

Our research adopted a qualitative approach to explore the interplay between an artwork's historical identity and the value it acquires within the contemporary digital landscape using interviews and case studies.

- *Data Collection*

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten volunteer participants (see Figure 1) including artists, curators, collectors, and platform developers. There were 15 open-ended questions, lasting approximately 20 minutes. Informed consent was obtained, and participants were assured of their right to withdraw at any time. The interviews centered on exploring participants' perspectives regarding the entanglement of historical identity and value within the digital art market.

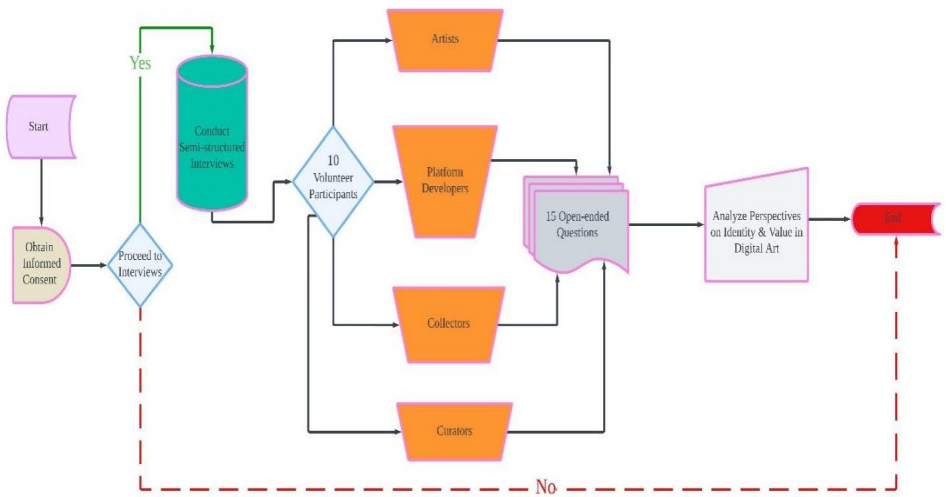


Figure 1: An Illustration Flowchart of the Semi-structured Interviews Process

Our case studies (see Figure 2) focused on 1.) Beeple's "Everydays: The First 5000 Days" (2021), a digital collage NFT by Mike Winkelmann. 2.) Art Blocks Curated, a platform featuring programmatically generated artworks tied to the Ethereum blockchain, was also explored. 3.) The Persistence of Chaos by Grimes (2021), a digital artwork by musician Grimes that was auctioned as an NFT for \$390,000, provided another interesting case. 4.) The Moon by Trevor Jones (2021), a digital ownership token (DOT) attached to a virtual plot of lunar land garnered significant attention. 5.) Right-click and Save As Guy by Know Your Meme (2021), a meme-inspired NFT by Know Your Meme sold for nearly \$500,000.

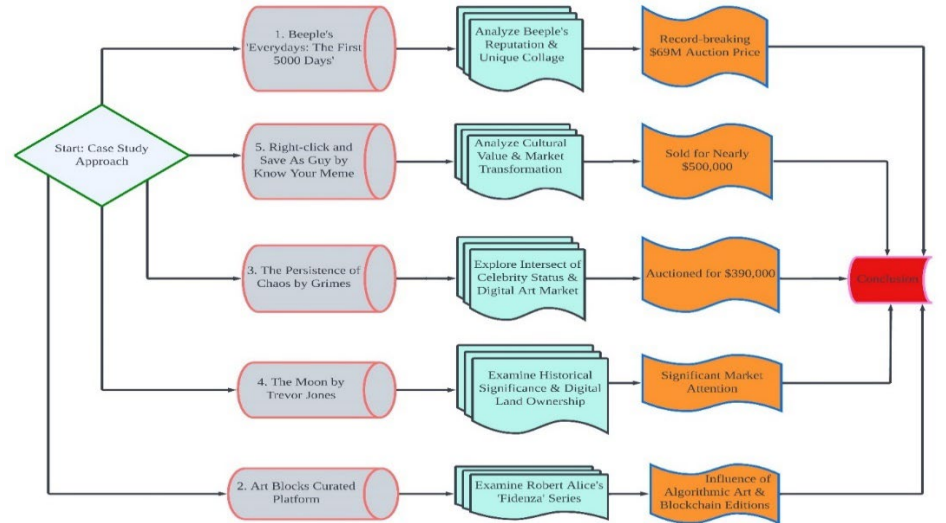


Figure 2: An Illustration Flowchart of the Qualitative Case Study Analyses

• *Data Analysis*

Thematic analysis was employed to extract key themes from the qualitative data collected through the semi-structured interviews and case studies. This process involved a coding approach, where recurring patterns and ideas within the data were identified and categorized.

4. RESULTS

Our analysis identified several themes influencing digital art's value. Established artists leverage their reputation alongside digital innovation to elevate worth (e.g., "As a traditional sculptor..."). Authenticity concerns exist due to the digital nature of the works (e.g., "The whole NFT market..."). Interestingly, the digital market disrupts traditional gatekeepers, allowing artists more control and potentially democratizing value creation (e.g., "The digital art market allows me...") (see Table 1 and Figure 3).

Table 1: Historical Identity and Value in the Digital Art Market

Theme	Description	Example Quote
Established Reputation and Digital Innovation	Artists with a strong pre-digital presence can leverage their historical identity to elevate the value of their digital artworks, particularly when incorporating innovative digital techniques.	"As a traditional sculptor, entering the digital art space allows me to reach a new audience, but my existing reputation helps collectors trust the value of my work."
Authenticity and Provenance in a Digital World	Concerns exist regarding the authenticity and long-term preservation of digital artworks, potentially impacting their value.	"The whole NFT market feels a bit like the Wild West. How can I be sure the digital artwork I buy will still be accessible and valuable in the future?"
The Disruption of Traditional Gatekeepers	The digital art market bypasses traditional gatekeepers like galleries and museums, potentially democratizing access and value creation for artists.	"The digital art market allows me to connect directly with collectors without relying on galleries that might not understand my work."

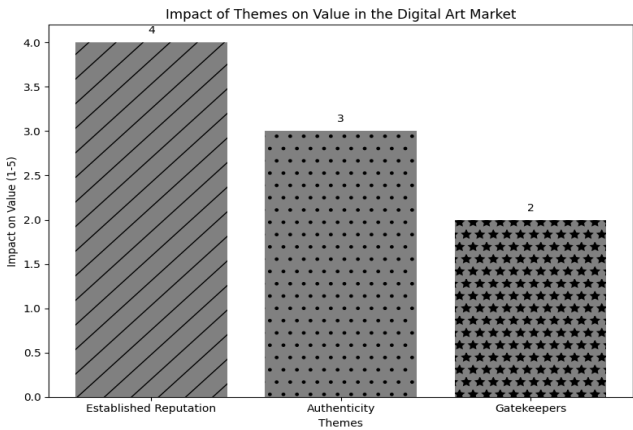


Figure 3: Analysis of the Impact of Themes on Value in the Digital Art Market

In Table 2 and Figure 4, Artists reinterpret historical movements through digital tools, creating new value (e.g., "My glitch art series..."). The convergence of art forms in the digital realm challenges traditional valuation methods (e.g., "My interactive digital installation..."). Finally, the ephemeral nature of digital technology raises concerns about the longevity and historical significance of these artworks (e.g., "Will anyone care about my digital sculptures...?").

Table 2: The Evolving Role of Art Historical Context

Theme	Description	Example Quote
Reinterpretation of Historical Movements	Digital art allows for reinterpretations and reinterpretations of established art historical movements, potentially creating new value propositions.	"My glitch art series draws inspiration from Dadaism, but the digital medium allows me to push the boundaries of artistic expression in new ways."
The Blurring of Lines Between Art Forms	The digital realm facilitates the convergence of different art forms, potentially creating challenges in valuation based on traditional art historical categories.	"My interactive digital installation combines elements of sculpture, video, and code. How do we even begin to value something like this?"
The Ephemerality of Digital Art	The ever-evolving nature of digital technology raises questions about the longevity of digital artworks and their historical significance.	"Will anyone care about my digital sculptures in 50 years if the software they're created in becomes obsolete?"

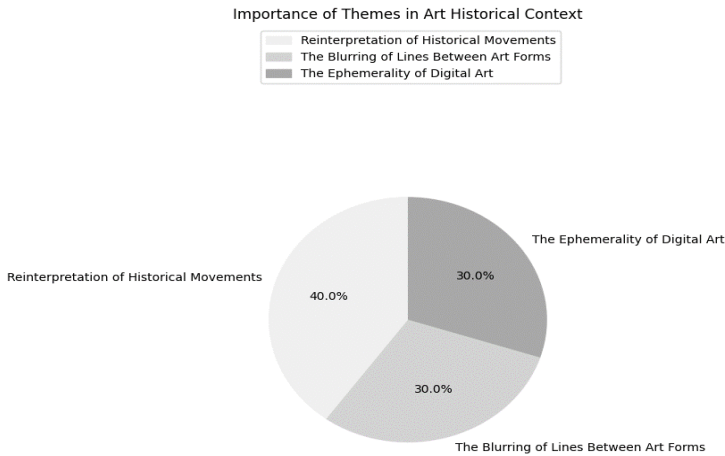


Figure 4: A pie chart of the importance of themes identified in arts historical contexts.

In Table 3 and Figure 5, our analysis of the social and cultural value of digital art identified the importance of online communities for collaboration and knowledge sharing (e.g., "Being part of online communities..."). Digital art's role as a tool for social commentary can influence its value through cultural impact (e.g., "My NFT project explores themes..."). Additionally, the digital market democratizes art appreciation, creating value beyond monetary gain (e.g., "I love that anyone with an internet connection...").

Table 3: The Social and Cultural Value of Digital Art

Theme	Description	Example Quote
The Power of Online Communities	Online communities dedicated to digital art foster collaboration, knowledge sharing, and the creation of shared value within the digital art market.	"Being part of online communities allows me to connect with other digital artists and learn from each other. Together, we're building a new art ecosystem."
Digital Art as a Tool for Social Commentary	Digital art can be a powerful tool for social commentary, potentially influencing its value through its cultural impact.	"My NFT project explores themes of climate change. I hope the message resonates with collectors and contributes to a larger conversation."
The Democratization of Art Appreciation	The digital art market allows for broader accessibility and appreciation of art, potentially creating new forms of value beyond traditional monetary considerations.	"I love that anyone with an internet connection can experience my digital artwork. It's no longer limited to those who can afford to visit museums."

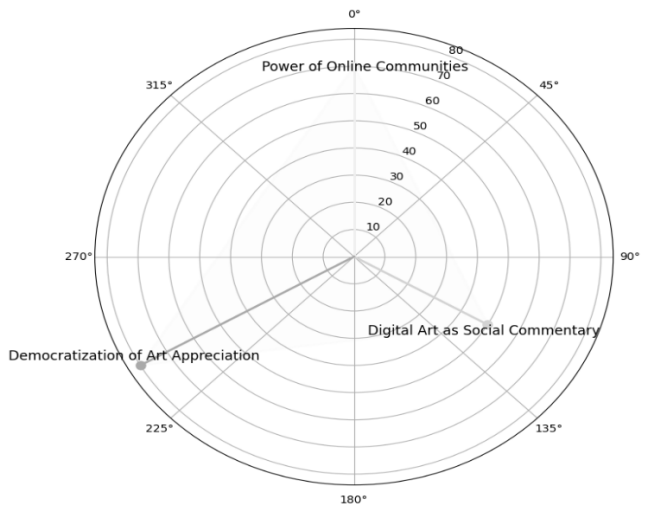


Figure 5: A radar Chart plot of the Social and Cultural Value of Digital Art

Table 4(a): Beeple's "Everydays: The First 5000 Days" (2021) and Art Blocks Curated: Robert Alice's "Fidenza" Series

Beeple's "Everydays: The First 5000 Days" (2021)		
Theme	Description	Analysis
Historical Identity Strategies	* Established reputation as a digital artist * Daily creation process spanning 13 years	* Beeple's existing recognition contributed to the artwork's perceived value. * The ongoing nature of the work embedded a unique historical narrative.
Value Drivers	* Record-breaking sale price * Intersection of traditional (daily creation) and digital art forms * Scarcity (single, non-replicable NFT)	* The high sale price set a precedent and fuelled interest in the digital art market. * The artwork bridged the gap between the familiar and the novel, appealing to collectors. * The limited-edition NFT format amplified its perceived value due to scarcity.

Table 4(b): Beeple's "Everydays: The First 5000 Days" (2021) and Art Blocks Curated: Robert Alice's "Fidenza" Series

Art Blocks Curated: Robert Alice's "Fidenza" Series		
Theme	Description	Analysis
Historical Identity Strategies	* Connection to algorithmic art movement * Limited edition series with pre-programmed rules	* The "Fidenza" series references a historical trajectory of algorithmic art. * The limited editions create a sense of exclusivity and historical significance.
Value Drivers	* Uniqueness of each artwork within the series * Integration with blockchain technology * Growing popularity of programmatically generated art	* Each artwork offers a unique variation within the series, appealing to collectors seeking individuality. * The blockchain technology ensures authenticity and fosters trust in the ownership model. * The rising interest in algorithmic art contributes to the perceived value of the series.

In Table 4, examining two prominent artworks, Beeple's "Everydays" and the "Fidenza" series by Robert Alice, our analysis identified how established reputations and historical references can elevate value. Beeple's recognition and the artwork's ongoing creation process contributed to its worth. Similarly, the "Fidenza" series connects to the algorithmic art movement, while limited editions add exclusivity. Both leverage digital tools (NFTs, programmed art) to create unique experiences and scarcity, further amplifying value within the digital art market.

Table 5: The Persistence of Chaos by Grimes (2021) and The Moon by Trevor Jones (2021)

The Persistence of Chaos by Grimes (2021)		
Theme	Description	Analysis
Historical Identity Strategies	* Leverage of existing celebrity status as a musician	* Grimes established fanbase may have translated into interest in the artwork.
Value Drivers	* High sale price * Association with a well-known musician * Exploration of themes relevant to digital art and music	* The high sale price, while influenced by Grimes' fame, might also reflect the growing value of digital art. * The artwork's connection to Grimes' musical career adds an extra layer of interest for fans and collectors. * The exploration of themes relevant to both digital art and music broadens the artwork's appeal.
The Moon by Trevor Jones (2021)		
Theme	Description	Analysis
Historical Identity Strategies	* Tapping into the cultural significance of the moon * Offering a unique form of digital land ownership	* The moon evokes a rich historical narrative of exploration and human fascination. * Owning a piece of virtual lunar land presents a novel historical connection.
Value Drivers	* Limited availability of virtual lunar plots * Potential future applications of digital land ownership * Novelty factor associated with owning a piece of the "virtual moon"	* The limited number of plots creates scarcity and potentially increases value. * The evolving landscape of the metaverse could unlock future uses for the land, adding value. * The unique and pioneering nature of owning virtual lunar land contributes to its perceived value.

In Table 5, examining the value drivers behind Grimes' "The Persistence of Chaos" and Trevor Jones' "The Moon," our analysis revealed the interplay between

celebrity and artistic merit. Grimes' fame likely influenced the sale price, but the artwork's exploration of themes relevant to both digital art and music holds intrinsic value. In contrast, "The Moon" leverages the cultural significance of lunar exploration, while the limited availability and potential future uses of virtual land within the metaverse contribute to its perceived value as a unique digital collectible

Table 6: Right-click and Save As Guy by Know Your Meme (2021)

Theme	Description	Analysis
Historical Identity Strategies	* Leveraging the existing cultural value of the meme * Transformation of a cultural phenomenon into a digital artwork	* The meme already held significance within internet culture and humour. * Transforming it into an NFT imbues it with a new layer of historical context.
Value Drivers	* Owning a "piece" of internet history * Potential for the meme to evolve and gain further cultural significance * Supportive community around meme culture and NFTs	* Collectors gain ownership of a recognizable and relatable internet artifact. * The meme's potential for continued cultural relevance could increase its value. * The meme community's enthusiasm for the NFT format might contribute to its market value

In Table 6, our analysis of "Right-click and Save As Guy" by Know Your Meme explores how digital art can bridge the gap between internet culture and the art market. The meme's existing cultural value is leveraged, while its transformation into an NFT adds a new historical layer. Collectors gain ownership of a recognizable internet artifact, and the potential for the meme's continued relevance and the supportive online communities surrounding memes and NFTs might contribute to its value within the digital art market.

5. DISCUSSION

Our findings highlight the strategic use of historical identity by artists to elevate the value of their digital creations. Established reputations in the traditional art world or leveraging existing cultural significance, as seen with memes or the moon landing, can contribute to an artwork's perceived value within the digital market. Additionally, some artists leverage historical art movements, like algorithmic art or referencing daily creation processes, to imbue their digital works with a deeper narrative and historical context. Furthermore, the analysis revealed the emergence of new value drivers specific to the digital art market. The integration of blockchain technology through NFTs ensures authenticity and fosters trust in ownership models, potentially influencing value. Limited editions and the concept of scarcity, whether through unique variations within a series or single-edition NFTs, also play a role. Interestingly, the exploration of themes relevant to both the digital art world and other established art forms or cultural movements can broaden an artwork's appeal and contribute to its value proposition. The digital realm presents new complexities. Authenticity, the cornerstone of historical value in physical art,

becomes a significant concern with digital manipulation and perfect copies readily available (Rogers, 2016). Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs) attempt to address this by linking a unique digital token to a specific artwork, creating scarcity and potentially historical significance. The future value of NFTs remains uncertain, but they raise questions about how historical value will be assigned to hybrid art forms that combine physical and digital elements (Guadamuz, 2021; Valeonti et al., 2021). The role of the curator which is traditionally crucial in shaping historical narratives through exhibitions and collections might evolve towards filtering the vast digital landscape and highlighting works with lasting significance. Furthermore, the digital art market introduces new metrics for value, such as online engagement and community participation, challenging the traditional focus on artistic merit, lineage, and scarcity. This shift raises philosophical questions about the nature of value in art – does a viral meme hold the same historical weight as a Renaissance masterpiece? Ultimately, the legacy of the digital art market hinges on how we, as a society, value and preserve these creations for future generations. Technology has demonstrably served as a catalyst for artistic evolution throughout history. It has streamlined creative processes, enabled novel forms of artistic expression, and even birthed entirely new art movements. A core artistic principle lies in unconventional connections: juxtaposing seemingly disparate elements or establishing unexpected relationships between them. This process fosters the emergence of entirely new concepts. Haahr observes that the deliberate merging of domains, particularly in societies driven by information capitalism, is a natural consequence of this principle (Haahr, 2004). Innovation flourishes at the intersection of art and technology, where such cross-pollination leads to the generation of novel ideas. The relationship between art and technology has become increasingly close. Modern technology provides artists with a wealth of new materials and techniques to explore. Contemporary artists are constantly pushing boundaries by experimenting with emerging technologies and even traditional mediums in novel ways. Digital tools empower artists to manipulate media with ease, enabling them to create effects in minutes that would have previously taken months. The rapid evolution of technology makes it challenging to fully grasp its long-term impact on contemporary art, but one thing is certain: the two are now more intricately linked than ever before. The way we perceive technology shapes how we interact with it. Williamson et al. argue that the design and development of technology reflects the social needs and beliefs of a given time (Williamson et al., 2015). This highlights the importance of understanding how society judges' technology, as these perceptions can significantly impact its adoption and integration. While both technology and art stem from human creativity, their ultimate goals differ. Taipale and Rousi suggests that technology is

driven by a pursuit of utility and problem-solving, while art seeks to explore beauty, truth, and evoke meaning (Taipale & Rousi, 2022). Technology acts as a means to achieve other ends, whereas art is valued for its inherent purpose. Beyond their contributions to innovation, artists can play a vital role in bringing equilibrium to these feedback mechanisms. Their unique perspective allows them to "humanize" technology by fostering unexpected combinations that push the boundaries of conventional thinking. Technological advancements serve as a wellspring for economic growth and societal transformation. However, Williamson et al. highlight the limitations of the linear model, which posits a direct progression from basic research to invention, innovation, and product diffusion (Williamson et al., 2015). They argue that research doesn't always lead to truly innovative products, and conversely, innovation can emerge outside the realm of formal research. Williamson et al. further propose that technological change often occurs through the innovative recombination of existing components (Williamson et al., 2015). This is precisely where artists, with their ability to forge unexpected connections, can significantly impact technological innovation. The social and cultural aspects of the digital art market also surfaced as significant findings. Online communities dedicated to digital art provide a platform for collaboration, knowledge sharing, and the creation of shared value. Digital art's ability to function as a tool for social commentary can further amplify its value by resonating with collectors and contributing to broader cultural conversations. Finally, the digital art market's inherent accessibility allows for the democratization of art appreciation, creating value that extends beyond traditional monetary considerations. Art plays a multifaceted role in supporting the UN's Sustainable Development Agenda. Utrera highlights its contribution to strengthening democracies and addressing social issues, key aspects of sustainable development (Utrera, 2020). Art education offers a unique approach to fostering understanding of sustainable development. As Chapman and O'Gorman suggest, the diverse languages of art empower children to grasp complex issues, express their own experiences, and develop a sense of civic engagement in building a more equitable world (Chapman & O'Gorman, 2022). Analysing artworks, as Molderez and Ceulemans propose, cultivates critical thinking and systems thinking, allowing individuals to examine the concept of sustainability from various perspectives (Molderez & Ceulemans, 2018). Contemporary digital art, created with cutting-edge technologies, can stimulate critical engagement. Wang argues that analysing such works prompts viewers to consider their desired future, the balance between technological advancements and societal needs, and the importance of environmental conservation (Wang, 2018). Digital art games offer exciting avenues for popularizing contemporary art and introducing new audiences to current trends.

Gintere proposes that developing interactive games based on digital art can attract new audiences and dismantle existing cultural barriers (Gintere, 2019). The emergence of digital primitivism in art reflects both nostalgia for pre-digital eras and anxieties surrounding artificial intelligence and widespread digitalization. Venkova suggests that analysing these artistic practices can provide valuable insights into the challenges we face in the digital age (Venkova, 2019). Modern interactive art projects, as Kharchenko et al. observes, foster active communication between artists and viewers (Kharchenko et al., 2023). This fosters a dynamic environment for artistic dialogue, with technology acting as a catalyst for the continued evolution of art and the emergence of new artistic movements. The growing interest in ethnographic approaches within the art world reflects a broader societal trend. Hjorth and Sharp suggests this signifies art's desire to confront contemporary challenges and contribute to a harmonious relationship between the technological sphere and the sociocultural sphere (Hjorth & Sharp, 2014). The case studies further highlighted the multifaceted nature of value in the digital art market. Established artists like Beeple leverage their pre-digital careers alongside innovative digital techniques to command high prices. Conversely, "The Persistence of Chaos" by Grimes demonstrates how celebrity status can influence value, while the artwork itself explores themes relevant to the digital art world. Interestingly, the digital realm facilitates the blurring of lines between traditional art forms. Works like Robert Alice's "Fidenza" series challenge established valuation methods, existing at the intersection of algorithmic art and limited-edition NFTs. Similarly, "The Moon" by Trevor Jones utilizes the historical significance of lunar exploration but presents a unique digital land ownership model, creating value through its novelty and potential future applications. According to Langdon; the emphasis on content over form, aura, and originality – a characteristic of mechanical art – finds significant resonance in the realm of digital art (Langdon, 2014). In his seminal work, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," Walter Benjamin explores how art produced through "mechanical" or industrial means can challenge traditional notions of authorship, originality, and aura. Through this analysis, Benjamin paves the way for the inclusion of technological expressions like "digital art" within the broader category of art, distinct from fields like graphic design, video, or multimedia. Central to Benjamin's understanding of mechanized art forms is the concept of replicability. He argues that artworks reproduced through technological means such as film or photography gain the potential to reach vast audiences, thereby triggering unprecedented social and political impacts. By advocating for the inclusion of new forms of expression under the umbrella of art, Benjamin arguably "detailed a shift in the function and ontology of art in the age of technical reproducibility" (Benjamin, 2006, 2018). Digital artists are actively engaging

with new technologies as core elements of their artistic practice. This aligns with Benjamin's concept of the "creative industrialist" – artists who embrace and utilize industrial tools for artistic expression. Digital collectives like Rhizome, ISEA, Critical Art Ensemble, and Ars Electronica further blur the lines by providing platforms for artistic exploration and critical discourse. New collaborative models involving artists, designers, programmers, and academics challenge traditional notions of artistic production. Enwezor expands on Benjamin's notion, observing how "on occasion artists are able to compete with computer researchers (Enwezor, 2008), rather than simply creating new demos for commercial software, thus functioning as 'memes' for the computer industry". Within this collaborative environment, art and artistry transcend the limitations of rigid categorization. The collaborative nature of digital art also raises questions about authorship. While Okwui Enwezor acknowledges the artist's role in defining "what an object of art is or what it can be," he argues against a purely formal interpretation driven solely by internal artistic evolution (Enwezor, 2008). Enwezor suggests that artists should hold a primary role in interpreting their work, challenging the traditional authority of institutions like established galleries and academia in influencing aesthetics, values, and ultimately, what constitutes art. This challenges the notion of "art as art," which emphasizes form in isolation from meaning, context, and personal experience. However, Enwezor argues that viewing "art as meaning" offers a new language for expressing complex phenomena like globalization and digitization. It also allows audiences to engage with the work and generate their own interpretations, drawing upon both external influences like criticism and artist intent, as well as their own internal responses.

6. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, our research underscores the complex relationship between historical identity and value in the digital art market. Established reputations, historical references, and innovative digital tools all play a role. However, the digital realm also presents unique challenges and opportunities, blurring the lines between traditional art forms and fostering new avenues for artistic expression, cultural engagement, and value creation. While philosophers of art have begun to delve into the significance of digital media and interactivity in the arts, much work remains to be done. Their influence on artistic practices and our understanding of art itself continues to evolve. Several key areas demand further investigation. One important area concerns the unique forms of realism present in digital image-based art. How does digital technology shape the way artists represent the world, and how do we approach questions of realism in this context? Similarly, the exploration of digital

conceptual art requires further attention. How do digital tools and processes redefine conceptual art practices? Another crucial topic involves the impact of digital technology on the categorization and distinction between different art forms and media. Does the digital realm necessitate a revaluation of traditional classifications? Furthermore, how have digital technologies transformed the ways artists create, exhibit, and experience art? The blurring of physical and virtual spaces within digital art presents a fascinating challenge. Traditional notions of site-specific art, rooted in a specific location, are called into question by the interconnectedness and mobility inherent to digital works.

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