

# NUBIA, METAVERSES, NFTs AND NEW REALITIES

ESPRONCEDA from September 14 to September 30



*Horrible Adorables - Justin Case*

## NUBIA, METAVERSES, NFTs AND NEW REALITIES

Curators: Alejandro Martin and Kris Pilcher

**Where:** ESPRONCEDA Institute of Art & Culture  
c. de Espronceda, 326, Nave 4 and 5, Barcelona  
<https://www.espronceda.net>

**When:** From September 14 to September 30;  
Tuesday through Sunday from 5:00 to 9:00 pm

**Presentation:** September 13

**Inauguration:** September 14 7pm

**NUBIA** is a new platform launched by the Institute of Art and Culture ESPRONCEDA to produce projects related to liminal metaverses, between the physical and the digital. NUBIA, the land of gold, is also the name of the central region of ancient Egypt, a source of great wealth, chosen by the pharaohs to locate their temples.

**Nubia, Metaverses, NFTs and New Realities** brings together a set of creations (metaverses and experiences), produced by Catalan and international artists and collectives, invited to be part of the NUBIA collective where they receive training, advice, and support in the early stages of their projects.

The Metaverses proposed by the artists/creatives have their own rules, using *gamification*, immersion and interaction to invite collectors, visitors and experts to become part of the immensity of NUBIA, experimenting, interacting and socializing in new worlds inhabited by fantastic avatars and works of art, selected by **Alejandro Martín**, curator of the exhibition and artistic director of IMMENSIVA/Espronceda with the collaboration of **Kris Pilcher**, director of ATL.NFT, for the US artists' section.

The proposals, characterized by their situation between the physical and the digital, are connected to the blockchain economy, through the generation of NFTs, associated with both immaterial artworks and physical works.

The exhibition is complemented by a program of workshops organized in collaboration with the most prestigious universities in Barcelona.

**ESPRONCEDA - Institute of Art & Culture**, founded in 2013 in Barcelona, is an innovative platform for contemporary arts, education and cultural dissemination, which pays special attention to emerging creativity linked to advanced technologies and mixed realities.



# LIST OF WORKS

## Grand Opening and 1984

Obvious

<https://obvious-art.com>

Obvious is a collective of artists based in Paris with great international projection, interested in the use of Artificial Intelligence in art. It presents *Grand Opening*, a work on augmented creativity and *1984*, considered the masterpiece of its series on surveillance.

## Grand Opening NFT image

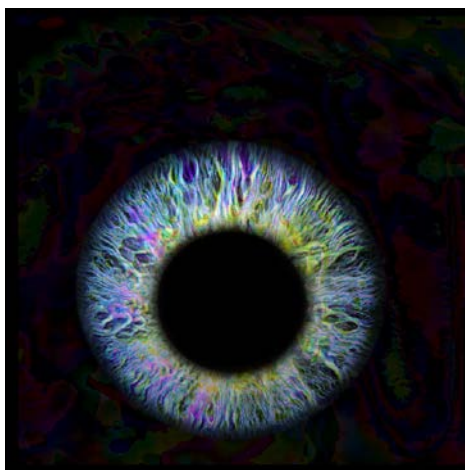
Artificial Intelligence offers the world a vast new range of artistic possibilities. The doors of creativity are already open. People are entering. A new era awaits them where augmented creativity allows anyone to express themselves visually. Soothsayers have been proposing many theories about the consequences of this "grand opening": Will art cease to make sense? Will a new generation of artists emerge? Time will tell.

<https://superrare.com/artwork-v2/grand-opening-36143>

## 1984 NFT video

*1984*, an homage to the Big Brother advocated by George Orwell in his book of the same name, is a visualization of the all-seeing eyes of Artificial Intelligence. The symbol of the eye and its unique and divine appearance has had many meanings over the centuries: protection, secrecy, luck and even harm. The eye represents the gateway to the soul and reflects the deeper human characteristics that AI is trying to replicate. Surveillance programs that monitor the population, with the goal of improving their lives and well-being, end up invading privacy and influencing rights related to freedom. This collection is a tribute to the intellectuals who address this issue in their works. *1984* aims to open our eyes to how facial recognition is used to facilitate large-scale surveillance. Produced in collaboration with the Museum of Crypto Art, MoCA in Paris, the work is exhibited in the documentary *CryptoArt Revolution* and in the metaverse *Cryptovoxels*.

<https://superrare.com/artwork-v2/1984-30851>



1984 - Obvious



**How the Internet Changed My Life** Documentary and NFT  
Nicole Ruggiero, The Glad Scientist and Dylan Banks

The work consists of virtual reality worlds, an augmented reality face filter, and a retro website, which together makes the visitor's relationship with the Internet an active experience. *How the Internet Changed My Life* is a participatory documentary by Nicole Ruggiero with the collaboration of artist and developer Daniel Sabio (The Glad Scientist) and composer Dylan Banks, which analyzes the elusive entity of the Internet based on personal stories. The work is presented in a large-scale installation, which includes mixed reality portraits, virtual reality worlds, an AR (augmented reality) facial filter and a website. The installation was exhibited at Art Basel Miami week in 2021, the Kunsthalle Düsseldorf in 2021, and 11 Newel Gallery in New York in 2022. The edited NFTs are available through Opensea.  
<https://opensea.io/collection/hticml>

**Solarpunk Daydreams** Images and NFT  
The Glad Scientist (aka Daniel Sabio, artist and developer)

This is a series of AI-generated images that aim to help populate the Internet with more inspiring visions of the future and in particular the complex relationships between humans, nature and technology. While a post-apocalyptic future has been postulated in countless works, it remains less common, and even challenging, to imagine a future where technology coexists and enhances the relationship between humans and the planet. Realizing this sad fact and the cognitive dissonance between technology and nature, the artist proposes to visualize and advocate for an optimistic symbiosis between biological and technological realities. The exhibition at Espronceda is the

premiere of this collection of images, which are available in NFT format through Objkt.com.

**HEARAFTER** Installation and virtual reality experience  
Niall Hill, Fran Macías and Marcos Morán

*HEREAFTER* is a virtual reality installation, which takes the public on a journey into the afterlife, guided by real people's visions of what happens after death. In the room, the visitor physically enters a rowboat, where after taking a seat, he or she puts on a virtual reality helmet, which catapults him or her into a beautiful, otherworldly river. As you row with the physical oars, the virtual oars move in unison, carrying you along the river. As you travel, you hear voices sharing personal and authentic visions of what awaits us beyond this life. The ideas may be poignant, irreverent, fearful or loving.

All are real voices. The images that accompany these stories provide a sense of travel, passing through otherworldly landscapes, symbolic structures or images of the sky. The conclusion, optimistic and open, proposes to raise a debate on the subject, confronting our fears and finding a deeper connection with life and with each other.

**Horrible Adorables** NFT video  
Justin Case

Audiovisual portrait of the toy design duo Horrible Adorables, formed by Jordan Perme and Christopher Lees, a married couple from Ohio, passionate about cryptozoology (the study of beings of unproven existence), known above all for their creations of scaly fantastic animals in felt and vinyl.

**Bubblia. As Above, So Below** NFT  
Susana Medina

Susana Medina, a video game designer from Madrid based in Barcelona, with this physical and ephemeral piece, allows the public to create other digital realities in the virtual world that last forever and connect us with the universe.

**There is nothing materially valuable** Audiovisual installation  
Valdas NeuroVirtual

A narrative audiovisual work, with a 360° panoramic vision, which presents three-dimensional objects in virtual space.

## **Lava NFT Image**

Cait Lamas

Cait Lamas is an American artist known for her 3D works, who created her own genre, "magical digitalism," focusing on myths, women and nature. Her works, populated by digital demons with glowing eyes and nonchalant but creepy gestures, are heavily influenced by surrealism and magical realism. She creates collections of still images and animations.

## **The Model Video**

Nina Swaeny

*The Model* is a projection of a performance by a computer-generated model. The choreography consists of movements preset by digital animation software and a combination of gestures borrowed from combat games, silly dances, and commercial and sexualized attitudes. Stripped of its original meaning and function, the digital body transforms according to the artist's appearance, puts on a costume, and does what she cannot do.

## **Petroglyphing Data VR Virtual Reality**

Mohsen Hazrati.

In *Petroglyphing Data VR*, the artist wonders about one of the most important keys of the emerging metaverses: communication. Since ancient times, stone carvings and petroglyphs have been used as a channel to tell stories and reflect real and magical worlds. With evolution, man began to experiment with ingenious means of communication, from carrier pigeons to technological innovations such as the telegraph, telephone and Internet that marked social changes and influenced, and continue to influence, the way we humans communicate. Undoubtedly, advanced technologies can open up new possibilities for interaction and the Metaverse is one of them. Mohsen Hazrati's installation has poetic analogies, such as the shape of an inverted boat, and at the same time combines digital objects that refer to both ancient and contemporary cultural elements. In Hazrati's works, there is always this connection between cultural references linked to heritage and current digital objects, composed of data and pixels. It is possible to create new channels of communication and new experiences that make the relationship between human and technology more fluid. This is one of the greatest challenges in the creation of metaverses, highly technological spaces, but at the same time fascinating and culturally rich, that contribute to expanding the human experience, without wanting to trap, control or limit it.

### **Acts of Holding Dance** NFT Video

Wendy Yu.

Starring a group of breakdancers from the Sydney 143 team, the work consists of recording each dance according to an ephemeral script that is unique and impossible to recreate. As the dancers work to refine their breakdancing technique and practice, the recording also progresses so that the dance is always unique and representative of a particular moment. Choreographic works do not usually result in a material product. According to the artist, we live in a time when too many material goods are being produced, while art pieces give us the possibility to enjoy an inspiring experience without leaving any material trace.

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=2770201743244415>

### **Gardens of Felt Zine Delights** NFT, video and interactive experience

FELT Zine.

The work consists of a simulated world, a series of videos, a collection of NFTs, and an interactive experience inspired by classic icons from Hieronymus Bosch's famous triptych, *The Garden of Earthly Delights*. Although originally conceived as a series of 3D sculptures and animations to be released as a NFT collection, it has evolved into a fully developed interactive world built with a video game engine. In this fantastical environment, FELT Zine introduces images that represent the contemporary canon of today's visual language: meme aesthetics, video game graphics and algorithmic feed space.

FELT Zine is a collective consisting of Mark Sabb (Concept and AI Art), Ty Vadovich (3D Artist), Max Bochman (Web3 Developer) and Jawn Billetes aka cyber chola (3D artist).

<https://grayarea.org/gardens-of-felt-zine-delights/>

### **Catch the Stars** silkscreen on paper RA

PEZ

PEZ (aka José Sabaté) is an urban artist and city decorator, a pioneer of street art in Barcelona, where he has worked since 1999. His alter ego, a smiling fish, is present in all his works, always very colorful and accompanied by a strong charge of positivism, ranging from the most classic graffiti to pop art.

In the exhibition, he will present a silkscreen on paper that is activated with Augmented Reality.

The **EXHIBITION**, open from September 14th to September 30th, aims to bring NUBIA, Metaverses and NFTs to the public to encourage interest in a sector still insufficiently known.

**The project consists of:**

1) **Exhibition** of Metaverses and NFT works by renowned Catalan and international artists.

2) Face-to-face and online **workshops** on technologies and key skills to deepen the creation of Metaverses. These workshops will be conducted by professors and specialists linked to the main universities of Barcelona: UB, UPC, UOC, Pompeu Fabra, Ramon Llull and UAB.

The workshops will take place from September 15th to September 21st and will have a duration of 2 to 4 hours each (exact dates to be defined).



**The Workshops**

1) Workshop on Artificial Intelligence tools for creative applications.

In person and online.

2) Workshop on Virtual Reality. In person and online. By Fran Maciá and Niall Hill. September 15th.

3) Workshop The Meaning of Art in the Metaverse. In person and online. September 22nd.

4) Creative storytelling and gamification workshop. Online.

5) Project/installation execution workshop. Online.

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