



Crypto-conspiracy

Description

CryptoArt is a term applied to artworks that are bought, sold and authenticated on a [blockchain](#). In this sense, *CryptoArt* is no more a genre, sub-genre, style or movement in art than *auction art*, *gallery art* or *collectible art*. *Art* is not a protected or regulated noun and invites appendage to many other nouns. A search on Google demonstrates the proliferation of *art*-related terms.

Cash-art includes artworks that fetishise paper money. *Cheque-art* looks like bank cheques. *Banana-art* is made of bananas. *Crypto-art* does have identifiable characteristics other than its mode of transaction. It looks a lot like *electronic art* or *digital art*. In this respect *crypto-art* bears the subtle signature of the creative environment in which it is produced and consumed – like clip art, commercial art or public art.

The *crypto*-prefix implies hiddenness. *Hidden-art* also exists as an art sub-genre, often subsumed under the themes of *optical illusion* and *anamorphism*. The related sub-genres of *paradoxical art*, *faux perspective* and *op-art* (*optical art*) also exist. My investigation here says less about art than the power of online image search that identifies, legitimises and generates all manner of word combinations, genres and categories.



Use Blockchain to Authenticate Art ...
medium.com



Cryptographic Art | Fine Art America
fineartamerica.com



Encrypt your secret, creat...
moovandj.com



Classic Cryptography Systems. A Visual ...
towardsdatascience.com



Kryptos - Wikipedia
en.wikipedia.org



Cryptographic
fineartamerica.com

Stego-art

[Steganographic art](#) would imply concealing one artwork inside another using encryption, though a Google image search doesn't yield enough pictures to suggest a sub-genre. *Stego-art* is taken up with pictures of stegosauruses!

A search for *cryptographic art* turns up a substantial sub-genre. If *cash art* fetishises the imagery of money, *cryptographic art* plays about with the imagery of codes, ciphers, and the machinery of encryption.

There is scope for a *CryptoArt* that expands from its mode of transaction in cryptocurrency to the arena of cryptography, encryption, and cryptanalysis. Moving *CryptoArt* beyond the borders of the canvas and the flat screen to *performance art* advances the crypto-theme further.



QArt

The “Luther Blissett Project” was an invention of an anonymous activist Italian art collective in the 1990s. Some [commentators](#) cite this collective as one of the inspirations for the QAnon conspiracy movement – social conspiracy co-creative performance as art project.

[Other commentators](#) have also linked the methods of QAnon to cryptocurrency. The invocation of the letter “Q” and its made-up stories are supposedly sourced in the US Intelligence Service. An interesting article in the *Financial Times* blog pages last year argued, “Cryptic messaging, puzzle-solving and anonymity/pseudonymity feature prominently in both systems.” By “both systems” the author controversially binds QAnon conspiracy theories to bitcoin.

Art, conspiracy theories, performance art, [ASMR role-play](#) and cryptography feed off inventive combinations, however edifying or perverse – a *crypto-combinatorics* as it were.

See posts: [Rogue fan fiction: the peculiar case of QAnon](#), [Pseudo-crypto currencies](#), and [Crypto-art 101](#).

Bibliography

- Blissett, Luther. 2004. *Q*. Trans. Shaun Whiteside. London: Arrow.
- Frankel, Eddy. 2021. An anonymous left-wing art group known in the 1990s as Luther Blissett are wondering what they have unwittingly helped create. *The Art Newspaper*, 19 January. Available online: <https://www.theartnewspaper.com/feature/was-qanon-america-s-most-dangerous-conspiracy-theory-inspired-by-italian-artists> (accessed 30 January 2021).
- Kaminska, Izabella. 2020. From bitcoin to QAnon: bits to qbits. *Financial Times: FT Alphaville blog*, 26 August. Available online: <https://www.ft.com/content/59c03a8e-2b6e-45d2-bf28-744391ffa372> (accessed 30 January 2021).

Note

- The tangle of paper tape is part of an artwork by CÃ©sar Escudero Andaluz called BitterCoin: The worst miner ever, seen here at the VW Gallery Space, in Berlin December 2018.

Category

1. Art

Tags

1. conspiracy theory
2. cryptography
3. QAnon
4. steganography

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