# From the “digital street” back to “galleries”

In the previous section, we intentionally avoided to talk about the internet. We will discusse that in this section.

## Internet art

In less than 30 years, the Internet and the World Wide Web, or the Web, have transformed the way we interact with media.

[add on information wants to be free]

### Web 1.0

In its first iteration, the web 1.0 focused on messaging and static web pages. From this perspective, web 1.0 could be seen as "old" media on the side of books, news, and Television. One of the key characteristics of that "old" media is that there are few creators of information and most users are information consumers. Because of this, the creators of information have a lot of control over the information that is made available and when it is made available to consumers.

[add illustration]

### Web 2.0

This changed with the development of Web 2.0. Here it was/is all about reading, writing, and creating content by users themselves. Web 2.0 made the development of social platforms possible. These platforms got big because the content created came from all their users. In this sense, Web 2.0 was the birth of new media.

One of the crucial switches of web 2.0 relative to web 1.0 was that the end user is not only the user but also the participant of the information. In addition to this, the availability of information has moved towards an on-demand model.

These developments have led us to a situation where the web mediates most interactions. These include interactions with ourselves (e.g., agendas), others (e.g., messages), knowledge (e.g., Wikipedia), and information in general.

[add illustration]

### Web 3.0 and the return to capitalism

One of the challenges that digital media brought into the picture is the following:

*"If our (digital) property can be infinitely reproduced, and instantaneously distributed across the planet "without" cost, how are we going to protect it? How are we going to get paid for the work we make with our minds, and if we can't get paid, what will assure the continued creation and distribution of such work?"* (Tehranian 2021)

In the historical tradition, "art" depends on the value that is given to it, and the willingness to collect it and preserve it. This is particularly relevant to digital art. Digital art resists the traditional means to assign value[[1]](#footnote-1) to it and preserve or collect it.

For example, a digital copy of a digital asset (art piece) is, objectively, the same as the original one. This goes against the art tradition of giving more value to the original. Even more, the tradition that to replicate/make art a "artistic craftsmanship" is required does not necessarily apply to digital art.

Moreover, in our society, art has historically developed as a collectible, and value is influenced by rarity. But the nature of digital media is against this. In the words of web pioneers: "information wants to be free". As said above, digital art can be infinitely reproduced and instantly distributed "without" cost. The mainstream business models of the web are advertising and subscriptions. Those have not proven successful when it comes to art. Also, none of the solutions provided by web 2.0 to enforce ownership and authenticity have proven successful.

The next iteration of the web, web 3.0, is happening right now. It is based on blockchain technology. In addition to the reading and writing capabilities of web 2.0, it brings ownership and decentralization as digital natives in its conception.

A key technical feature of web 3.0 was the introduction of Non-Fungible-Tokens (NFTs)[[2]](#footnote-2). NFTs were first promoted as the solution that would allow artis to be free from the middle parties dominating the art market. Artis would have full ownership of their digital assets. This was clearly on the avantgarde rejection of art institutionalization.

At a first glance, this succeeded. In 2020-2021 when NFT’s art stormed the art world. On the commercial aspect, some NFTs sold for over $69 million. This is remarkable put on the side, with famous artworks like the Sun Flowers of van Gogh, valued at around $100 million. The hype has calmed by now but still, NFT’s show an essential development for digital art.

However, as for today this boost seems to have been encouraged by the global Covid-19 pandemic. NFT markets have slowed down and the values of NFTs droped. Let’s now look in retrospective at some of the NFT art.

#### Illustration – Bored Ape

#### Illustration – Life forms

https://lifeforms.supply/

# Art in every day live: Douchamp, Maholy, Jan Robert Leegte, Sander Veenhof.

# Art, craftmanship and autonomy: Bauhaus, Vera Molnar and creative coding as a school of thought

1. According to Sotheby's, the following factors determine the value of art: Authenticity, Condition, Rarity, Provenance, Historical importance, Size, Fashion, Subject Mater, Medium, and Quality [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. A non-fungible token (NFT) is a unique digital identifier that cannot be copied, substituted, or subdivided, that is recorded in a blockchain, and that is used to certify authenticity and ownership. The ownership of an NFT is recorded in the blockchain and can be transferred by the owner, allowing NFTs to be sold and traded. NFTs can be created by anybody and require few or no coding skills to create. NFTs typically contain references to digital files such as photos, videos, and audio. Because NFTs are uniquely identifiable assets, they differ from cryptocurrencies, which are fungible.

   [↑](#footnote-ref-2)