

Zilliqa's new NFT marketplace: "The Tavern"

1. Name

Shibui Universe

2. Twitter handles

@Shibui_Universe @shilldianajones @eternal_blade

3. Project description

Originating in February 2022, Shibui Universe (formerly known as "The Soulless Citadel") is a Cinematic Anime Universe that utilizes digital collectibles to deepen the experience of fans and community.

This is us:

We have a proven track record of being trustworthy and hard-working builders who have always had the best of the Zilliqa ecosystem in mind. We have sold 11,110 NFTs on Zilliqa across two collections – "The Soulless Citadel" and "The Women Warriors" which have been responsible for over 6 million \$Zil in trading volume across multiple native marketplaces. The characters represented by the ZRC-6 NFTs have been featured in multiple stories shared on our websites, as well as in various songs, a music video, and an Anime episode ("ORIGINS"). These together have totaled over 900,000 views on YouTube and Spotify, adding to X and Instagram, we have scored a total of over 1.3 million views, representing Shibui and thus Zilliqa. Additionally, the characters (currently mostly the Women Warriors) are now the subject of our regularly launching manga, "The Eternal Blade," which has already garnered over 140,000 views across multiple Web2 websites and thousands of hard copies sold.

This is what we want to build:

The most necessary foundation for NFTs on any blockchain are the marketplaces. They are also what has held Zilliqa's NFT ecosystem back before. Our NFT marketplace will be called "The Tavern" - a place for collectors and builders to join together, have a good time and make some deals. Created in a collector/creator first approach.

Basic functionalities will of course include buying, bidding, listing and selling of all listed NFT collections. We will provide current and future NFT builders with the means to mint and list their collections in a decentralized manner while also employing a centralized authentication metric that allows us to protect our community by highlighting good builders and warning from scam collections. Founders will also be able to launch their collections in cooperation with us, allowing collectors to mint directly within The Tavern; however, they will need to undergo an extensive vetting and Know Your Customer (KYC)

process. Collectors will enjoy a smooth process when searching for the best deals, including rarities, browsing by specific categories, or simply browsing through the galleries.

Our alignment with this mission's theme:

“Driving on-chain activity and real-world utility by supporting projects that spark ecosystem usage and deepen user engagement”

NFTs are well known to accomplish everything that this season's mission statement calls for. They have been a significant driver for on-chain activities with thousands upon thousands of high-value transactions - mint sales, secondary sales, transfers etc. The real world utility added onto our NFTs just by our own project alone is also obvious, since the characters minted and owned by the Zilliqa community have already been featured in multiple Mangas (Thousands of hard copies already sold and hundreds of thousands Web2 views achieved) and an Anime episode. Our proposal goes far beyond the scope of our own project, though; it is meant to provide the foundation for the future of all Zilliqa NFTs. Lastly, NFTs are one of the biggest drivers to spark ecosystem usage and deepen user engagement. A true community member of Zilliqa most often chooses to represent themselves online with a digital collectible of their choice, from within one of the ecosystems NFT creators.

Our success metrics:

Our goal is, quite simply, to bring NFTs back. To make collecting fun again, engage the Zilliqa community, and drive user engagement. We will measure success for that broad goal with the following metrics:

- No. of profiles created with linked wallets. Goal: 1000
- No. of profiles that bought, bid, listed or sold NFTs. Goal: 400
- No. of transactions facilitated by our marketplace. Goal: 10 000
- No. of new collections minted. Goal: 50
- Amount of volume facilitated by our marketplace. Goal: 5 million \$ZIL.

We plan to achieve these goals within the first six months following launch.

4. Roadmap

We will build “The Tavern” by completing the following milestones, one after another:

Milestone 1: Core Smart Contract Suite

Goal: Deploy foundational smart contracts on Zilliqa EVM.

Components:

- **NFT Collection Contracts** (ERC-721 & optionally ERC-1155 for multi-edition support)
- **Marketplace Contract** for:

- Fixed-price listings
- Auction/bidding system
- Escrow handling
- Royalties (EIP-2981 compliant)
- **Factory Contract** for minting user-created collections

Deliverables:

- Complete Solidity contract suite
- Unit tests with Hardhat or Foundry
- Deploy to Zilliqa testnet

Milestone 2: Backend & Metadata Infrastructure

Goal: Enable off-chain features and reliable metadata handling.

Components:

- **Backend server or subgraph** (most likely custom indexing)
- **IPFS or Arweave integration** for storing NFT metadata and images
- **Collection indexing, filtering, and search logic**
- Wallet auth & signature-based API endpoints

Deliverables:

- Working backend or indexer
- Metadata uploading/minting API
- Testnet NFT metadata lifecycle complete

Milestone 3: Creator Portal & Minting

Goal: Empower users to mint their own collections.

Features:

- Collection creation UI (upload metadata, configure royalties, deploy ERC-721)
- Single/multiple NFT minting

Deliverables:

- Frontend creator portal
- Minting smart contract integration
- Testnet-deployed user collections

Milestone 4: Marketplace Core Features

Goal: Launch full NFT trading experience.

Features:

- **List NFTs** at fixed prices
- **Buy NFTs** instantly
- **Bid & Auctions** (timed or open)
- Display royalty distributions
- WalletConnect or MetaMask integration

Deliverables:

- Fully functional UI/UX for buyers & sellers
- Marketplace contract integration
- Marketplace live on Zilliqa testnet

Milestone 5: Mainnet Launch & Security

Goal: Deploy, secure, and launch your marketplace.

Tasks:

- Contract audits (internal + external if possible)
- Mainnet deployment on Zilliqa EVM
- Frontend switch to mainnet endpoints
- Community onboarding, wallet support, analytics

Deliverables:

- Verified contracts on Zilliqa explorer
- Public launch with marketing support
- Monitoring & bug hunting

5. Demo link

During 2022, we already had a marketplace on Scilla that featured only Shibui collections. In this demo link, you can see what it used to look like and get an idea of our future marketplace. Just keep in mind that it will be better, smoother, faster and prettier.

View Here: <https://youtu.be/wTumw9vt3mE>

6. Team overview

Founder: James Fazio (TG: Shibui_James)

James is a filmmaker by trade and has worked in the film industry for years, producing (among others) the award-winning documentary “Time Well Spent”. James’s work is always focused on bettering the world and having a positive impact. He is the founder and has served as the CEO of Shibui Universe since its inception.

Chief artist: Izaac Rodrigues

Izaac oversees the entire aspect of drawing and animating for our Manga and Anime episodes. He has a vast expertise and a high threshold for quality, which has been a deciding factor of our success.

Partner/Head of Web3: Jonathan Apltauer (TG: Shibui_Jonny)

Jonathan, better known as Jonny, is a self-taught community manager that has left a big imprint on the Zilliqa ecosystem and became a well-known figure amongst the community. He does things differently; he’s bold and diligent.

7. Open source?

We are, of course, happy to open source the code for the marketplace.

8. Total Zil requested

We are seeking USD 50k. The amount of Zil will depend on the price of \$ZIL at the time of the grant approval. The \$ZIL will be partially sold to cover costs and partially used for future incentives.

The funds will be used for:

50% (\$30000) - development costs

(see milestones)

20% (\$10000) - creative development

(design, animations and production used for UI, user engagement and marketing purposes)

10% (\$5000) - infrastructure

(standard upkeep, hosting and server costs, software subscriptions, retainers, etc)

10% (\$5000) - marketing

(Social Media - X, Instagram, Youtube, specifically targeted ads, X spaces, KOLs)

10% (\$5000) - community incentives

(gamification, prizes, rewards)

Payout structure:

20% upfront as foreseen in the grant parameters. (\$10000)

16% upon completion of Milestone 1* (\$8000)

16% upon completion of Milestone 2* (\$8000)

16% upon completion of Milestone 3* (\$8000)

16% upon completion of Milestone 4* (\$8000)

16% upon completion of Milestone 5* (\$8000)

**A milestone is considered to be completed upon the referenced deliverables being showcased*

9. Zilliqa token?

We are currently not planning to create a token.

10. Previous funding?

We have never previously applied for funding from the Zilliqa blockchain nor have we ever received any grant or funding from any blockchain. Everything built by Shibui thus far has been entirely self-funded through the founders' funds and NFT sales.

11. Risk assessment and mitigation

- Risk: Security exploits

The team will engage in regular and self-funded audits with our trusted partner, Drew Security. Additionally, our marketplace doesn't custody users' assets, limiting the potential harm.

- Risk: Self sustainability

With the NFT ecosystem starting from scratch on ZIL2, it could take some time for the ecosystem to gain momentum, meaning we may need to prepare for a prolonged period until the marketplace eventually starts generating revenue through fees. The risk will be mitigated by planning and securing a runway that ensures the infrastructure is maintained.

12. Additional Information

NFTs are the heart of an ecosystem. A marketplace is the bloodstream to the heart, as it provides the most foundational support for builders and collectors. With this grant, we will be equipped with all the tools we need to make NFTs on Zilliqa fun again, bringing the excitement back for builders and collectors alike. We will also easily introduce new users to Zilliqa by integrating new chains and ecosystems, and position Zilliqa NFTs for the future, as Zilliqa 2.0 unfolds.

Thank you for your time and attention. For any further questions, the team is happy to answer them!