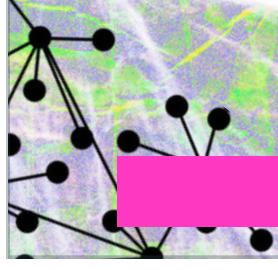
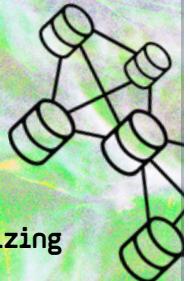
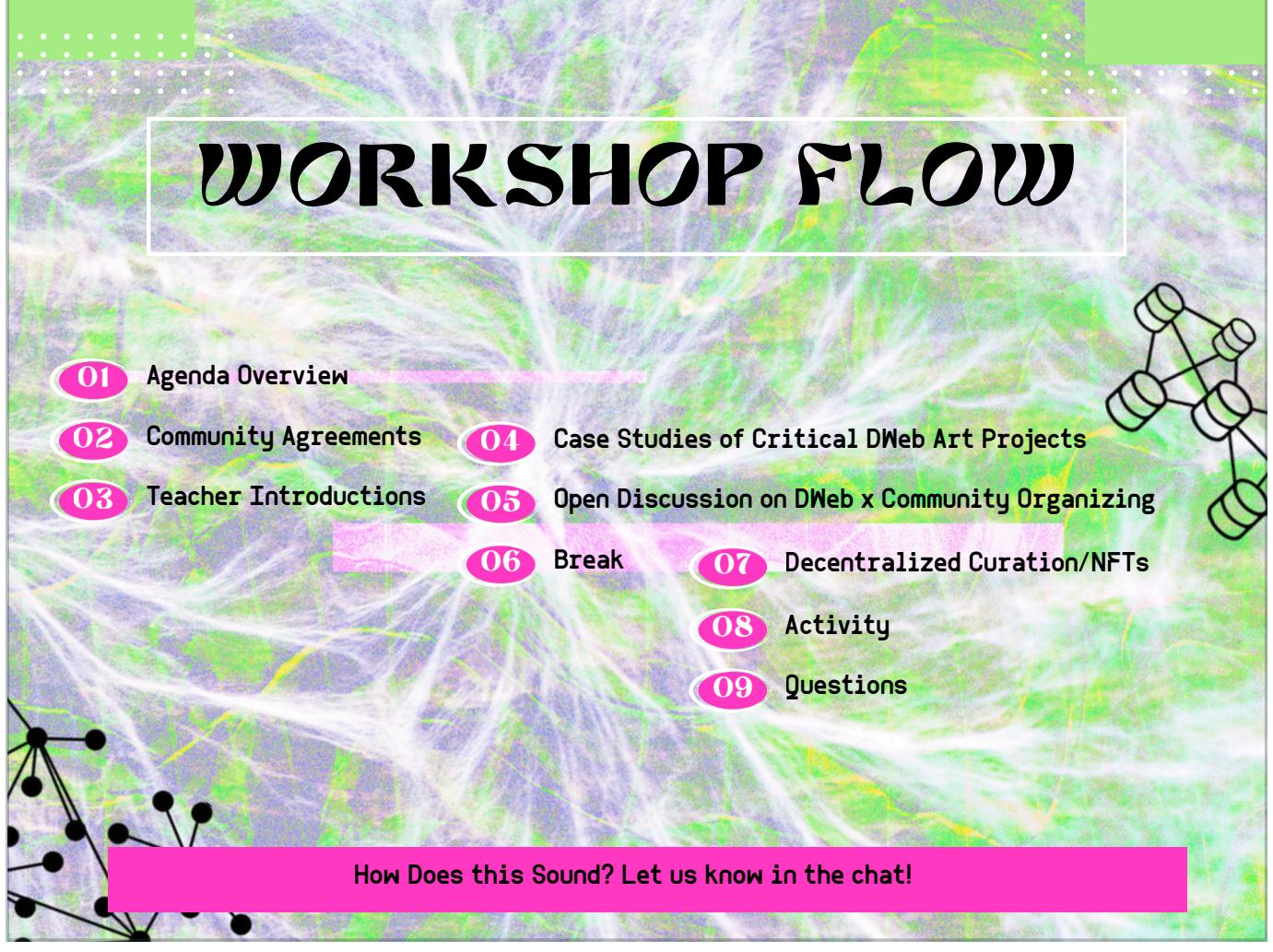


WORKSHOP FLOW



- 01** Agenda Overview
- 02** Community Agreements
- 03** Teacher Introductions
- 04** Case Studies of Critical DWeb Art Projects
- 05** Open Discussion on DWeb x Community Organizing
- 06** Break
- 07** Decentralized Curation/NFTs
- 08** Activity
- 09** Questions

How Does this Sound? Let us know in the chat!



COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS (1/2)

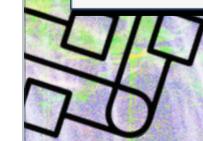
WE PRIORITIZE THE SAFETY*

Of queer, trans, black, indigenous, people of color (QTBIPOC), disabled, gender-nonconforming, low-income, survivors, and all other oppressed people over the comfort of those in privileged positions.

WE ALWAYS KEEP MUTUAL RESPECT*

In mind when sharing space with others, including virtual space. Ask people how they want to be addressed instead of assuming their identity or pronouns based on their outward appearance.

*From the Relational Guidelines borrowed from the cloth of the School of Poetic Computation.





COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS (2/2)

WE TAKE UP SPACE MINDFULLY*

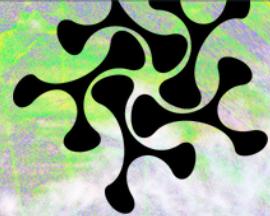
As there is a limited amount of space to speak in any given meeting, class or gathering. Be aware of how much space you and others are taking. Embrace awkward silences! An awkward silence is an opportunity for people who may take longer to respond to prompts or like to be sure they are not taking anyone else's chance to speak.

WE SHARE MINDFULLY

As these conversations are recorded we share only when we feel called and share only what we feel comfortable sharing. Sharing mindfully also means refraining from sharing personal stories, reflections and names outside the workshop without the expressed consent of the classmate you're citing.

*From the Relational Guidelines borrowed from the cloth of the School of Poetic Computation.





WE KEEP EACHOTHER SAFE...

A Reminder: Safety is a *relation* ...



tamara k. nopper
@tamaranopper

...

Mariame Kaba said on being safe, “I don’t believe I can possess safety. Because I don’t think safety is a thing. I think safety is a relation.”

12:03 PM · Feb 27, 2022 · Twitter for iPad

707 Retweets 32 Quote Tweets 3,353 Likes

Screenshot of slide from [Teaching and Learning as “PRIMITIVE HYPERTEXT”](#) led by [Kameelah Janan Rasheed](#) with support from [Elizabeth Pérez](#) through the [School for Poetic Computation](#).





AYANA ZAIRE COTTON



ARTIST, WRITER, FACILITATOR FOR THE WORLDBUILDERS

During my biotechnology residency at Ginkgo I wrote the non-linear speculative fiction novella [Cykofa: The Seeda Origin Story](#) in collaboration with creative writing software I engineered at the Recurse Center. I'm the founder and steward of [Seeda School](#), named after the future ancestor and protagonist from the prison-free parallel universe of Cykofa. Seeda School is a skill development platform for learning how to worldbuild through a black feminist lens. Through Seeda School I host a podcast [For the Worldbuilders](#). Inside the ecosystem of my practice I braid storytelling, engineering, and interspecies collaboration to engage our collective imagination around the worlds we need in the future we desire.



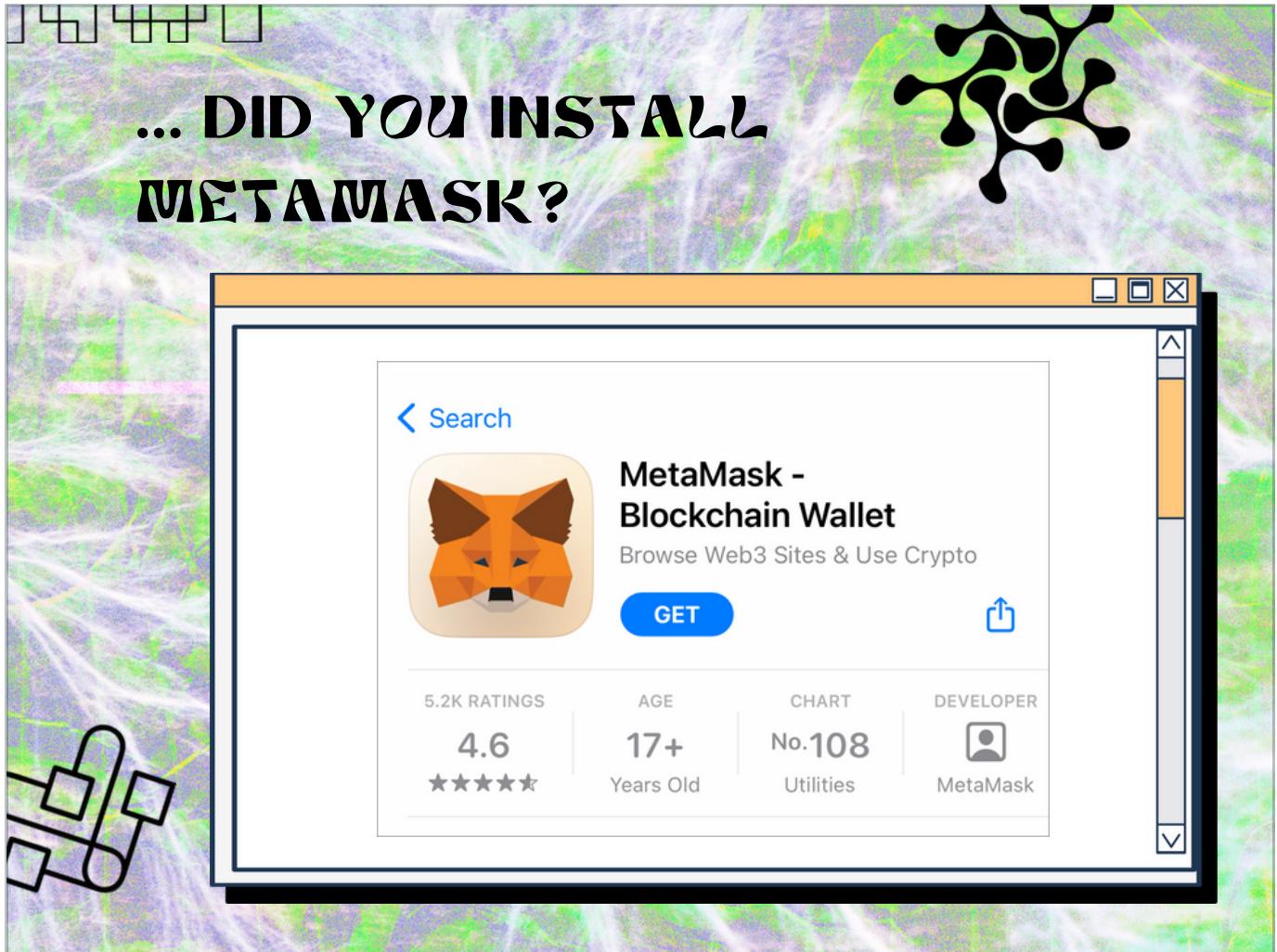
A digital artwork featuring a portrait of Sarah Friend on the left, a title section in the center, and a bio box on the right, all set against a background of green and purple abstract patterns.

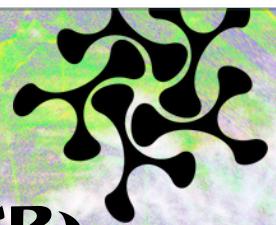
SARAH FRIEND

ARTIST/RESEARCHER/SOFTWARE DEVELOPER

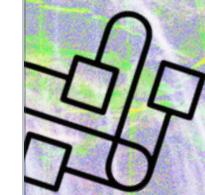
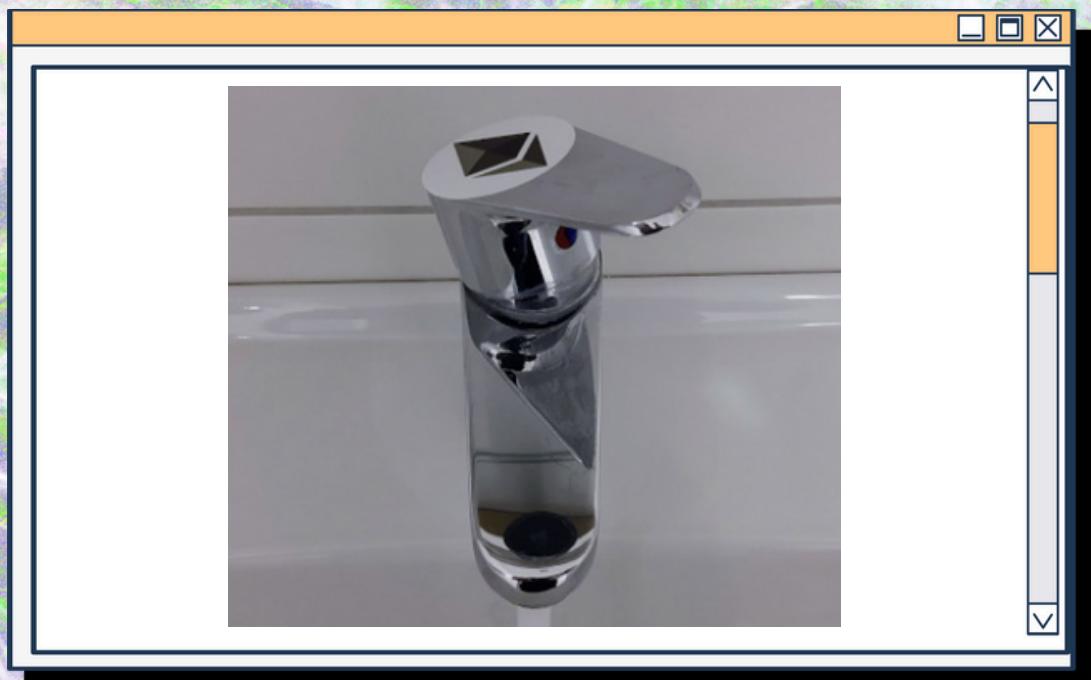
Sarah Friend is an artist from Canada and currently based in Berlin, Germany. In 2023, she was a research fellow at Summer of Protocols, led by Venkatesh Rao and the Ethereum Foundation, and in 2022, she was a professor of blockchain art at the Cooper Union.

She has exhibited at and worked with MoMA (NYC), Centre Pompidou (Metz), Kunsthaus Zürich, HEK (Basel), Haus der Kunst (Munich), ArtScience Museum (Singapore), bitforms (NYC), Albright Knox Museum (Buffalo), Rhizome (NYC) and KW Institute for Contemporary Art (Berlin) among others.





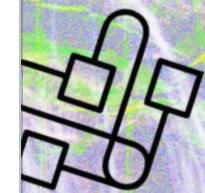
... CAN YOU OPEN THE FAUCET? (OPTIONAL PREP)

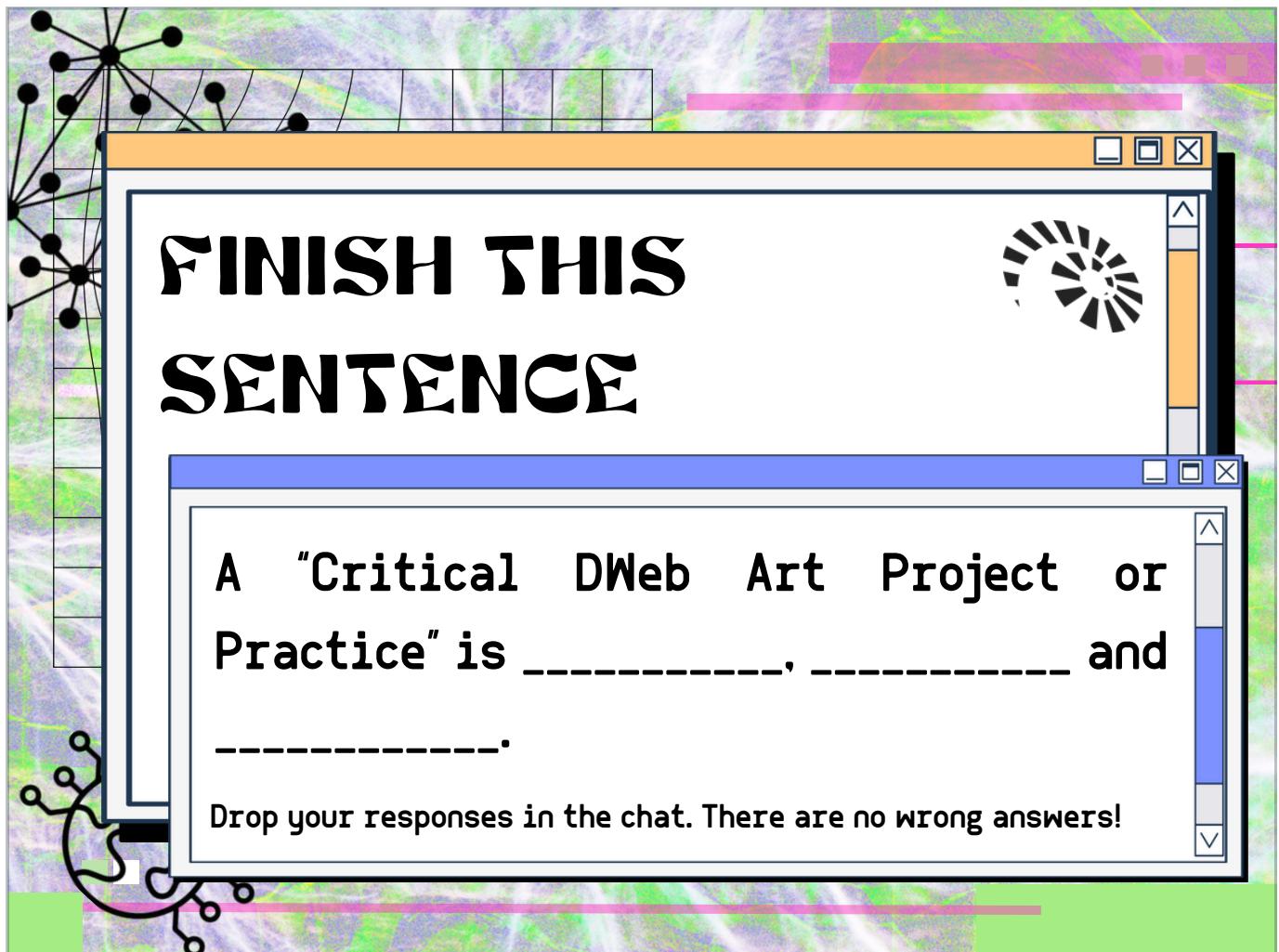




3 CASE STUDIES

of Critical DWeb Art Practices and Projects







The Social Dimension of Technology

"Race After Technology: Abolitionist Tools for the New Jim Code" by Ruha Benjamin offers critical reflection on the social dimension of technology. This opening epigraph serves as a helpful reminder and directive as we review case studies of critical DWeb art projects and practices.

CASE STUDY 01

NON-FUNGIBLE PLANTS (NFP)

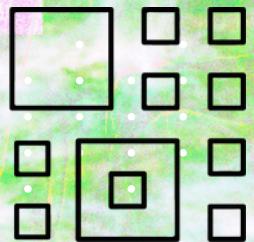
by Cyrus Clarke of Grow Your Own Cloud

"Imagine if you could store your memories in a format that would live forever. Imagine if you could take a walk in a musical garden, where each of the flowers contain a different song. Imagine if you could share a file with someone by sharing seeds. Imagine if you could grow NFTs that were alive.

This is the vision of Non-Fungible Plants: blending regenerative thinking, artistic creativity, web3 technology and synthetic biology to develop a symbol for what might be, if we allow our imaginations and emerging technologies to combine in unexpected ways."

Clarke, C. [2024, January 25]. Introducing non-fungible plants. Introducing Non-Fungible Plants. <https://paragraph.xyz/@cyrus/introducing-non-fungible-plants>

(1/3)



The Ecological Dimension of Technology

Just as Ruha Benjamin invites us to consider "the social dimension of technology", Cyrus Clarke of Grow Your Own Cloud invites us to imagine the ecological dimension of technology. This case study could be considered a critical DWeb art project and practice because Grow Your Own Cloud stores the data of artworks in plant DNA representing, "an evolution from the digital to physical, bytes to bases, carbon emitting to carbon absorbing."

CASE STUDY 01

WHAT ARE NON-FUNGIBLE PLANTS?

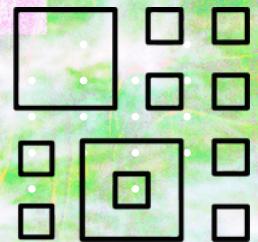
by Cyrus Clarke of Grow Your Own Cloud

"Non-Fungible Plants [NFPs] are living plants with digital data encoded in their DNA. They are a biological equivalent of an NFT. Like many NFTs, an NFP can be seen as simultaneously an artwork and an asset. Depending on the file size, an NFP could host an artwork, or simply act as a certificate of ownership / authenticity."

While NFTs live on-chain, NFPs are in-plant. Since plants have life-cycles, NFPs are distributed via seeds and synthetic DNA. This represents an early experiment with the possibility of using biological computing as a low-carbon complement to data storage, data archival and blockchains. An evolution from the digital to physical, bytes to bases, carbon emitting to carbon absorbing."

Clarke, C. [2024, January 25]. Introducing non-fungible plants. Introducing Non-Fungible Plants. <https://paragraph.xyz/@cyrus/introducing-non-fungible-plants>

[2/3]



CASE STUDY 01

HOW DO YOU GROW AN NFP?

by Cyrus Clarke of Grow Your Own Cloud

"To create an NFP, we start with a digital file [like a JPEG] and convert the binary code [0s and 1s] of digital data into the language of DNA [A, T, C, G]. Next, strands of DNA are created through a process known as DNA synthesis, ultimately transforming digital data into biological matter.

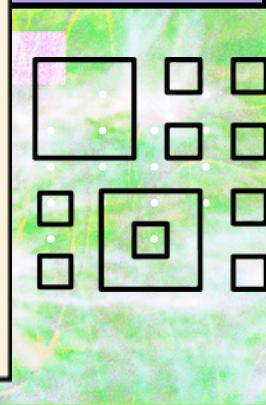
This synthetic DNA can then be incorporated into the genome of an organism such as a plant through targeted genetic engineering techniques. Thereby seamlessly integrating digital data into a living breathing organism.

Using a small amount of digital data [in this case an NFT] does not affect the plant's characteristics or interfere with the plant's living processes. The data is furthermore stored in the non-coding regions, sometimes known as 'junk DNA', to avoid any disruption to the plant."

Clarke, C. [2024, January 25]. Introducing non-fungible plants. Introducing Non-Fungible Plants. <https://paragraph.xyz/@cyrus/introducing-non-fungible-plants>

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[3/3]



CASE STUDY 01

LET'S DISCUSS!

The NFP Garden website invites us to:

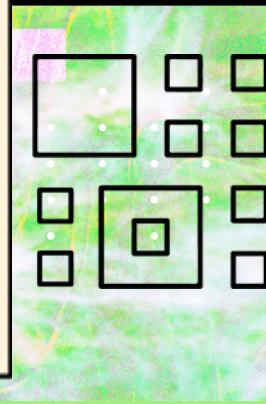
- "Imagine if you could store NFTs in plants"
- "Imagine if NFTs could absorb CO₂"
- "Imagine NFTs that are alive"

With the long term goal of "making it possible for anyone to encode precious digital data into a plant that might serve as a memory across generations".

LEARN MORE: <https://nfp.garden>

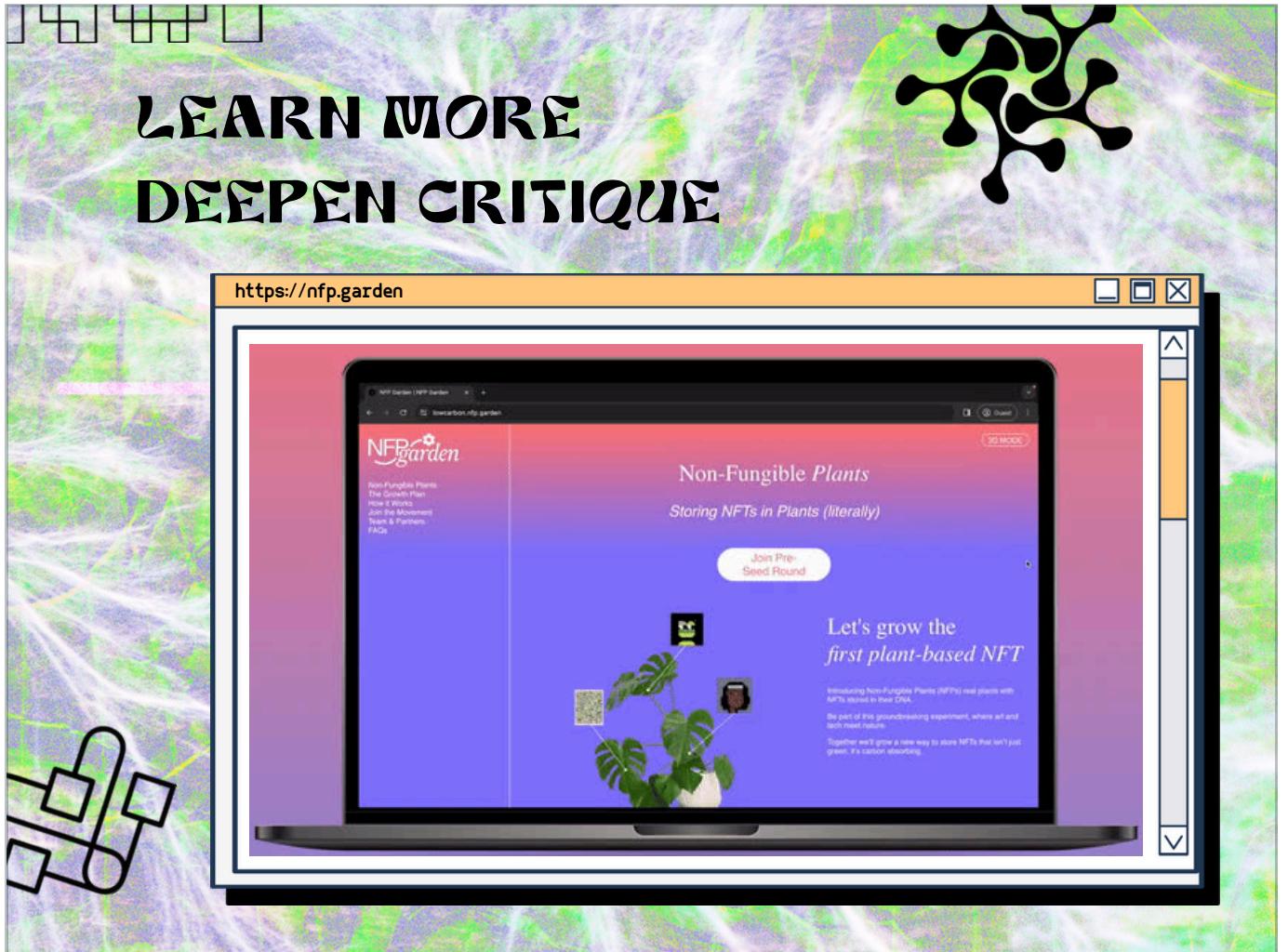
Discussion Questions:

- Whose plants?
- If we can store NFTs in the DNA of plants, can we store NFTs in the DNA of humans? How might we imagine 'ownership' in this instance?
- What happens to the data when the plant dies? [From website: 'The data might be replicated when the plant reproduces in the form of seeds. It may even be remixed through cross-pollination or mutations.')



Critical Discussion

The NFP Garden website invites us to "imagine if you could store NFTs in plants". Let's do exactly that and discuss what social and political challenges might arise around themes of interspecies consent, ownership and sovereignty.



CASE STUDY 02

FORKONOMYO

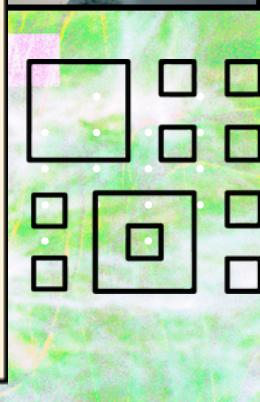
by TzuTung Lee and Winnie Soon

"China's claim over virtually the entire sea—through which about a third of the world's maritime trade flows—is contested in places by Taiwan, Vietnam, Brunei, Malaysia, and the Philippines, with additional involvement from the United States. Against this fraught political backdrop, Forkonomy() reimagines oceanic autonomy through a queer hackerist ethos. The project began in late 2020 as a workshop at Taiwan's C-LAB, in which artists Tzu Tung Lee and Winnie Soon brought together policymakers, scholars, marine life conservators, cultural workers, artists, and activists to consider one question: 'How do we buy, own, and mint one milliliter of the South China Sea?' Simple to the point of audacity, this proposition nonetheless launches a playtest for what it means to fight hostile legalities with codes—both computational and ethical."

Yuan Zhang 张元. A. [2023, March 8]. Sea Change. Outland. <https://outland.art/forkonomy/>

X

[1/3]



The Economic Dimensions of Technology

Forkonomy() by TzuTung Lee and Winnie Soon was chosen as a case study for critical DWeb art projects and practices because it is a project that collaborates with community members, experiments with cooperative ownership models and integrates collectively authored contracts to potentially re-imagine a capitalist relationship with land and sea to one of collective stewardship.

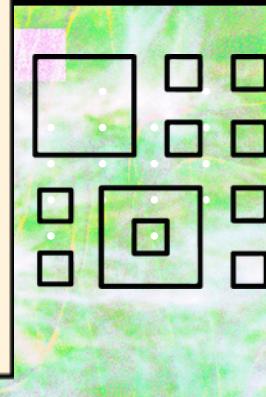
CASE STUDY 02

X

FORKONOMYO

by TzuTung Lee and Winnie Soon

'Forkonomy[] takes its name from the software development process of 'forking,' which means to copy the original code and start working on it as a separate project with its own community of developers. This is a powerful strategy in situations of collaborative deadlock: it can be enacted without permission in the case of open-source software or by pirating proprietary software. As state-led governance calcifies over the South China Sea, Forkonomy[] seeks an alternative path forward. Through a series of workshops, participants agreed on a cooperative ownership model with a set price of 1.61 New Taiwan Dollars (TWD) per milliliter of seawater.'



[2/3]

Yuan Zhang 张元. A. [2023, March 8]. Sea Change. Outland. <https://outland.art/forkonomy/>

CASE STUDY 02

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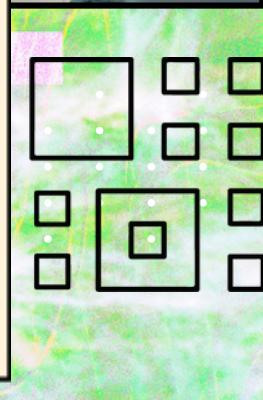
FORKONOMYO

by TzuTung Lee and Winnie Soon

"A collectively authored contract, written in English, Chinese, and the Bash programming language, endows each purchaser with the material asset as well as ecological and economic responsibility for the South China Sea at large. The artists later published 10,000 editions of the contract as NFTs on the Tezos blockchain with the aim of using potential royalties to generate subsequent editions, such that the number of member-owners may grow to eventually fork the South China Sea out of its current nation-state binds. In the process of setting a price, signing a contract, and drafting a code of conduct together, workshop participants found themselves confronting daring questions..."

Yuan Zhang 张元. A. [2023, March 8]. Sea Change. Outland. <https://outland.art/forkonomy/>

[3/3]



CASE STUDY 02

LET'S DISCUSS!

Some of the workshop participant questions cited in Alice's article, "Sea Change":

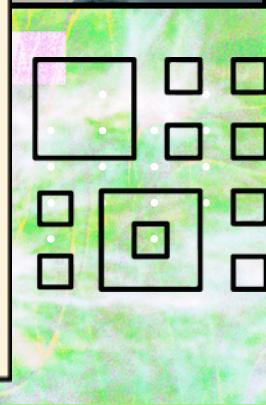
- "Who has the right to make decisions about the sea?"
- "Can the act of collecting be in service of a commons?"
- "What does watery liberation consist of?" [i.e. "wet ontology" coined by: Phil Steinberg and Kim Peters in 2015]

"The Forkonomy[] contract for the South China Sea itself can be taken as open source, replicating across translocal groups to make many situations of fugitivity possible, until they ultimately corrode the very notion of ownership itself." — Alice Yuan Zhang 张元

LEARN MORE: <https://hackmd.io/@siusoon/forkonomy-public>

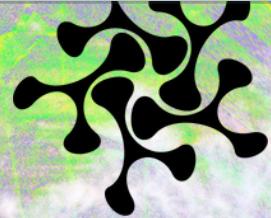
Discussion Questions:

- Can critical DWeb projects such as these facilitate pathways to reparations? [Ravon Ruffin, "D is for Domain"]
- What can DWeb learn from the Land Back Movement?
- How might we think about cooperative ownership in the context of NFTs so as to not replicate colonial imaginaries inside this new technology?

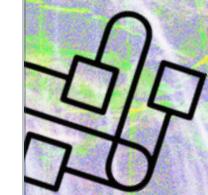
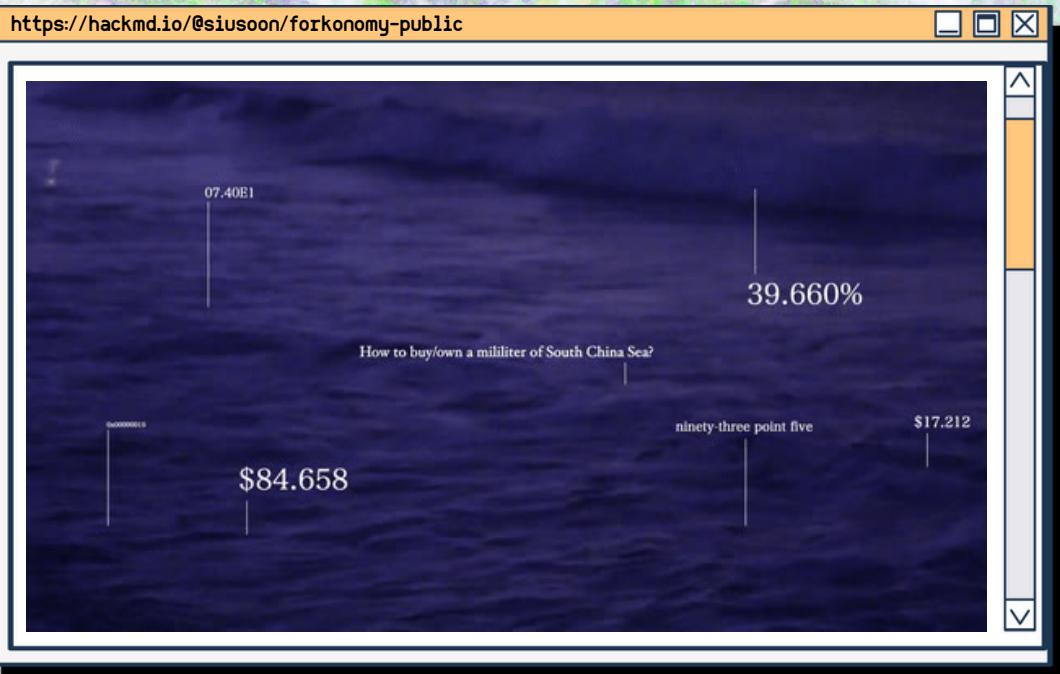


Critical Discussion

Let's use this case study to critically discuss how DWeb technologies might empower fugitive art projects and practices — creative interventions that might subvert, or escape entirely, the logics of capitalism, colonialism and systems of domination over the land or sea and all the life it holds.



LEARN MORE
DEEPEN CRITIQUE



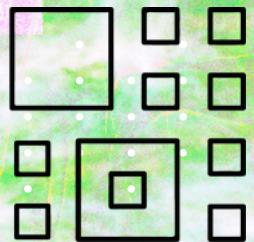
CASE STUDY 03

DISTRIBUTION
INSTEAD OF
DECENTRALIZATION

DISTRIBUTED WEB OF CARE

by Taeyoon Choi

"Can we code to care and code carefully? The Distributed Web of Care (DWC) is a research initiative on communication infrastructure, exploring the Distributed Web as a peer-to-peer, alternative web which prioritizes collective agency and individual ownership of data and code. Through collaborations with artists, engineers, social scientists and community organizers, DWC imagines distributed networks as a form of interdependence and stewardship, in critical opposition to the networks that dominate the world today."



Choi, T. [n.d.]. Distributed Web of Care. Taeyoon Choi. <https://taeyoonchoi.com/soft-care/distributed-web-of-care/>

[1/3]

The Care-Full Dimensions of Technology

The Distributed Web of Care by Taeyoon Choi was chosen as a case study for critical DWeb art projects and practices due to the way this creative intervention makes the argument for "distribution instead of decentralization" through establishing peer-to-peer networks of care. While decentralized systems emphasize removing a central authority, distributed systems prioritize sharing tasks across many nodes.

CASE STUDY 03

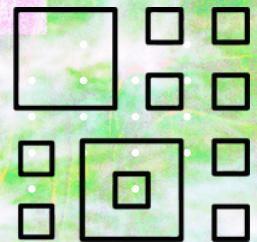
DISTRIBUTION
INSTEAD OF
DECENTRALIZATION

DISTRIBUTED WEB OF CARE

by Taeyoon Choi

"The Distributed Web of Care (DWC) project is an initiative of [Taeyoon Workshop](#) based in New York City in collaboration with DWC stewards, fellows, and participants, weaving together different ideas and expertise. Much of Taeyoon Choi's work engages with concepts of personhood and technology, particularly as it intersects with the experiences of minority and disability communities. His article, [Artificial Advancements](#), published in *The New Inquiry*, challenges the notion that technological innovation is an inherent good for disabled people, offering instead the concept of [Soft Care](#). He writes, 'Care, in contrast to cure, is a form of stewardship between people who support each other in communication, action, and social engagement. It is actualized by extending one's mindfulness of another person's dignity and feelings, while respecting their independence.'"

Choi, T. [n.d.]. Distributed Web of Care. Taeyoon Choi. <https://taeyoonchoi.com/soft-care/distributed-web-of-care/> [2/3]



CASE STUDY 03

DISTRIBUTION
INSTEAD OF
DECENTRALIZATION

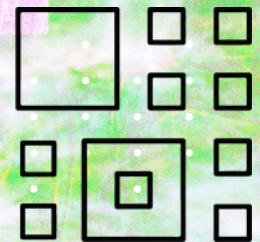
DWC — SKILLSHARES: PEERS IN PRACTICE

by Ari Melenciano, Jessica Lynne, Mindy Seu, Stephanie Gray, Shannon Finnegan and Eliza Chandler

"The Distributed Web of Care presents a skillshare series called 'Peers in Practice'. This series invites the artists in residence at the Ace Hotel to investigate the distribution of power, autonomy and control. Through an intimate interactive event, participants and artists will develop a dialog related to their practices by performing acts of collective caring, discussion and documentation. As a participant in the skillshare, all we require is an open mind and desire to share together. We will be experimenting with different modes of documentation throughout the events. We will also send out a small set of readings and ask you to generate a few questions based on those readings so we can come together with an informed baseline."

Choi, T. [n.d.]. Distributed Web of Care. Taeyoon Choi. <https://taeyoonchoi.com/soft-care/distributed-web-of-care/>

[1/3]



CASE STUDY 03

DISTRIBUTION
INSTEAD OF
DECENTRALIZATION

LET'S DISCUSS!

Session 1 Review → What's the difference between Distribution and Decentralization? [Reflect Expansively]

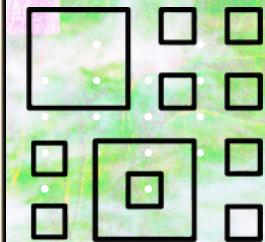
"In a distributed system, the workload is shared, unlike in a decentralised system where each node can act as a master server of its own." Source: StormGain

- "Can we code to care and code carefully?"
- What are some examples of Distributed Web?
 - A: Beakerbrowser: P2P browser with tools to create and host websites. Scuttlebutt: a decent[ralised] secure gossip platform. Rotonde: P2P Social Network. Dat: Distributed Data Community.

LEARN MORE: <https://taeyoonchoi.com/soft-care/distributed-web-of-care/>

Discussion Questions:

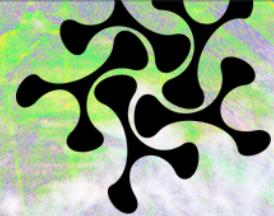
- How do we collectively create a "distributed web of care", "a distributed web of power", "distributed web of ownership"?
- How do we stabilize inside our networks of care while destabilizing systems of oppression that depend on our unpaid, precarious networks of care work and mutual aid?



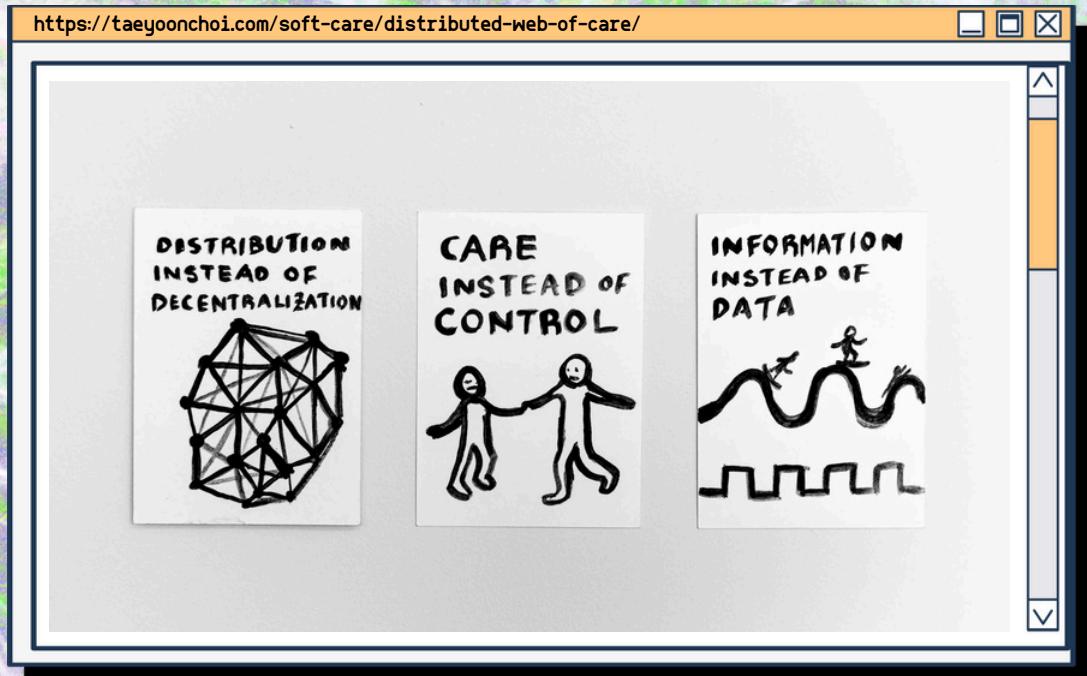
Critical Discussion

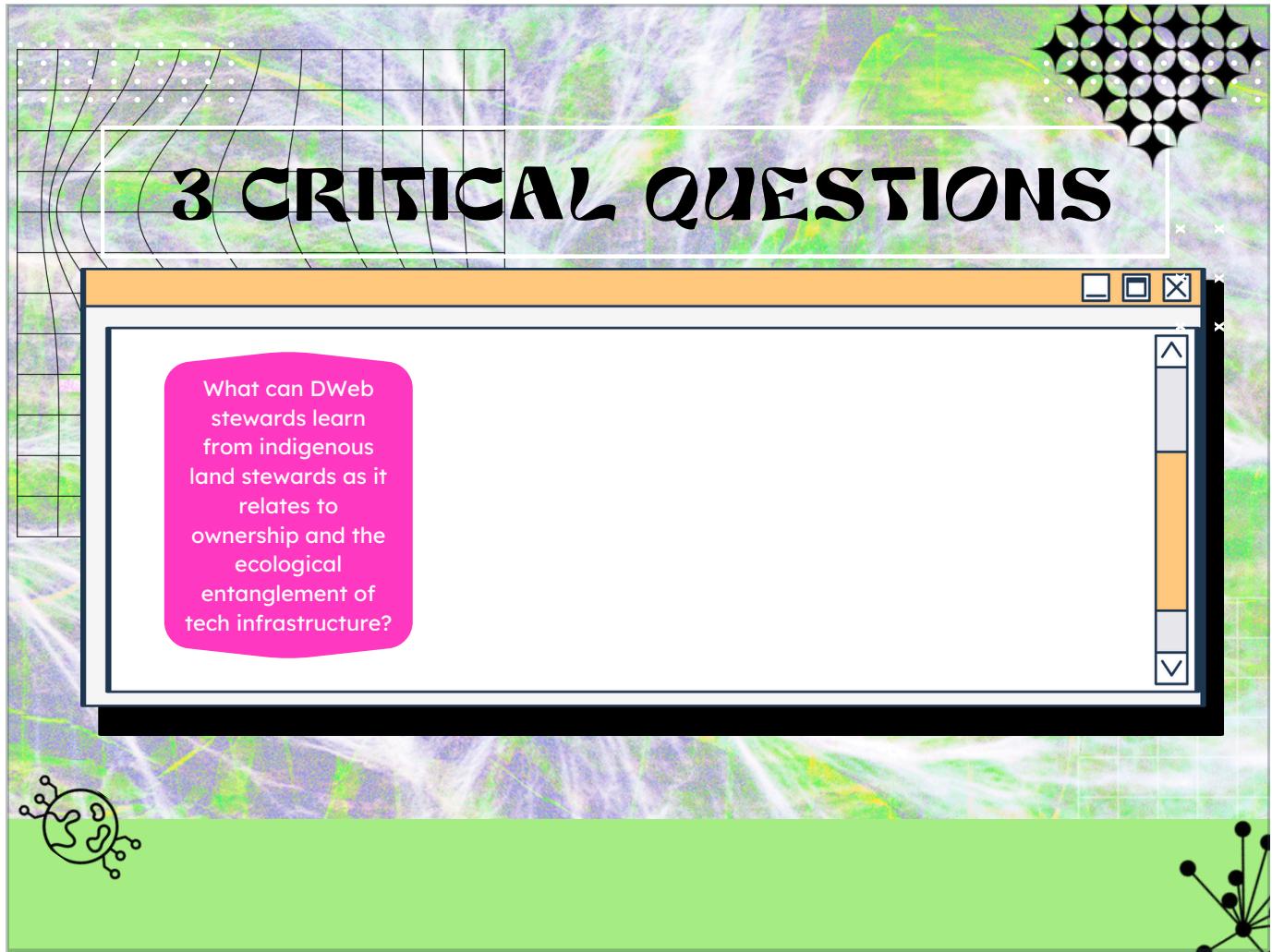
Let's critically discuss and imagine what a "Distributed Web Of Care" might look like in your community. How would it empower networks of care work, mutual aid, the sharing/distribution of labor and cooperative economic models? What role (if any) would technology play in this possibility of empowerment?

LEARN MORE
DEEPEN CRITIQUE



<https://taeyoonchoi.com/soft-care/distributed-web-of-care/>





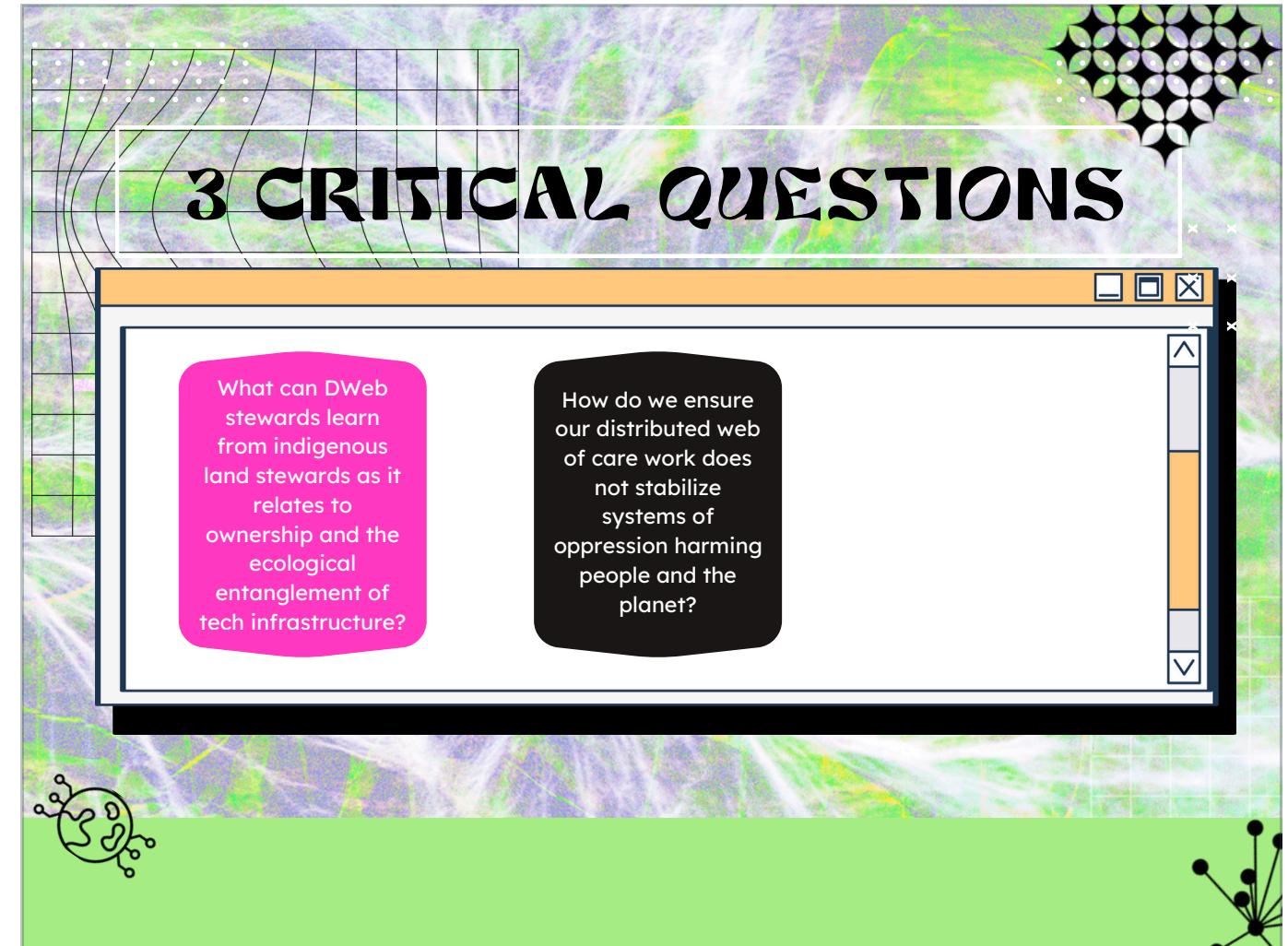
Critical Questions

Explore these example critical questions when embarking on your next DWeb art project, then come up with your own set of critical questions to further reflect on your project's intention and potential impact.

3 CRITICAL QUESTIONS

What can DWeb
stewards learn
from indigenous
land stewards as it
relates to
ownership and the
ecological
entanglement of
tech infrastructure?

How do we ensure
our distributed web
of care work does
not stabilize
systems of
oppression harming
people and the
planet?



3 CRITICAL QUESTIONS

What can DWeb stewards learn from indigenous land stewards as it relates to ownership and the ecological entanglement of tech infrastructure?

How do we ensure our distributed web of care work does not stabilize systems of oppression harming people and the planet?

Does capitalism, as an economic framework, make encoding distrust and corporate choreographies into our collective work inevitable?



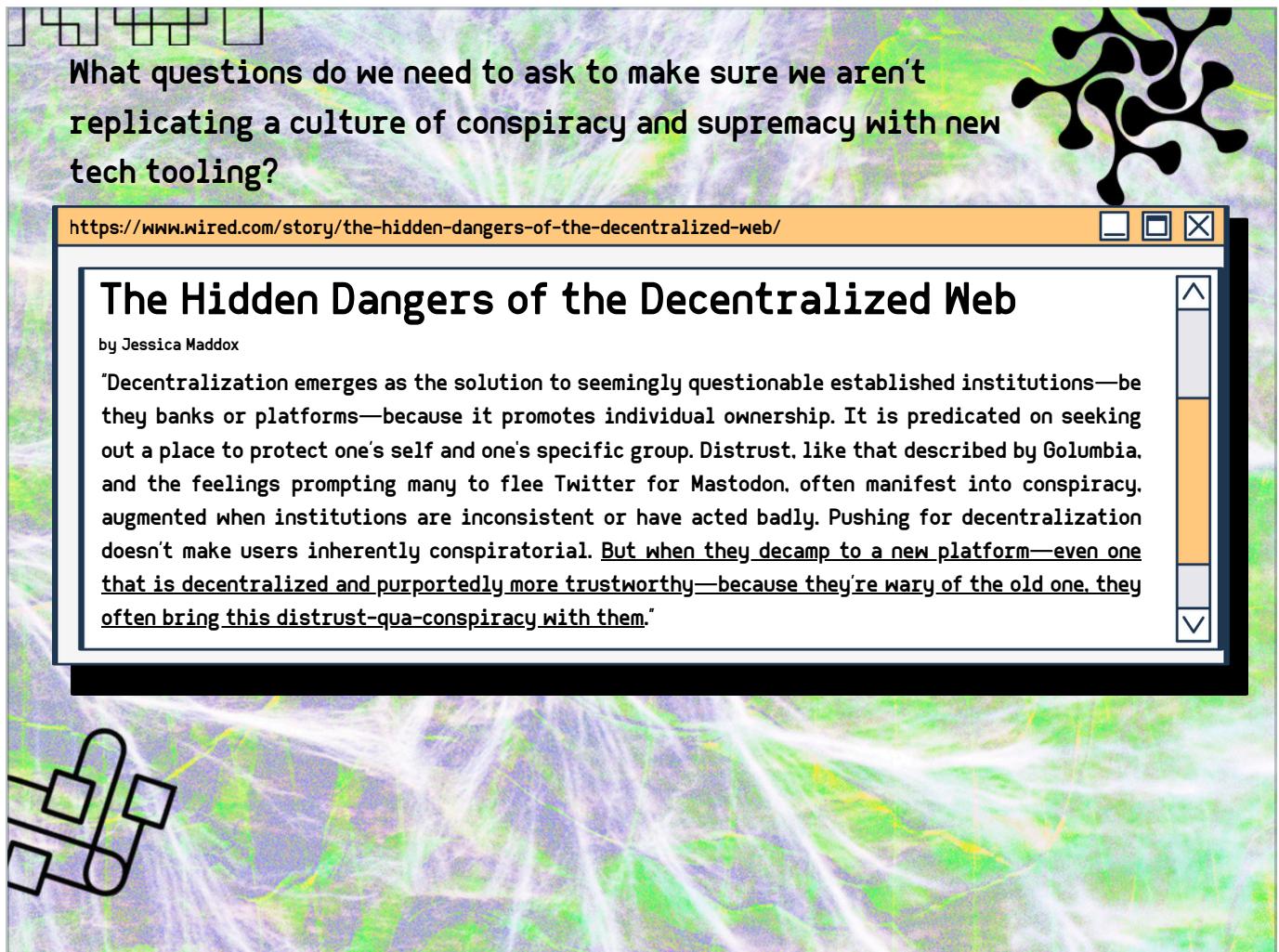
3 CRITICAL QUESTIONS

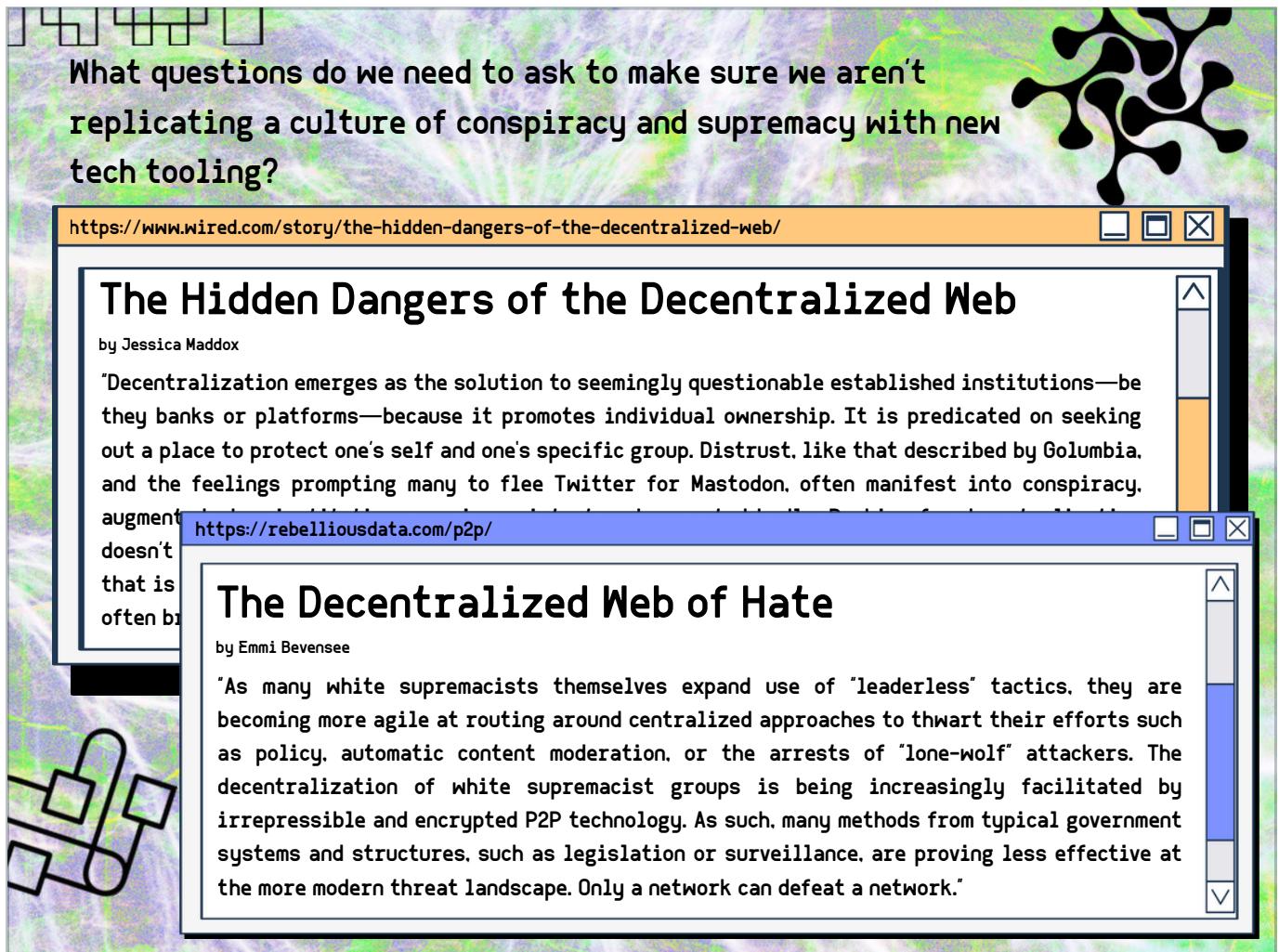
What can DWeb stewards learn from indigenous land stewards as it relates to ownership and the ecological entanglement of tech infrastructure?

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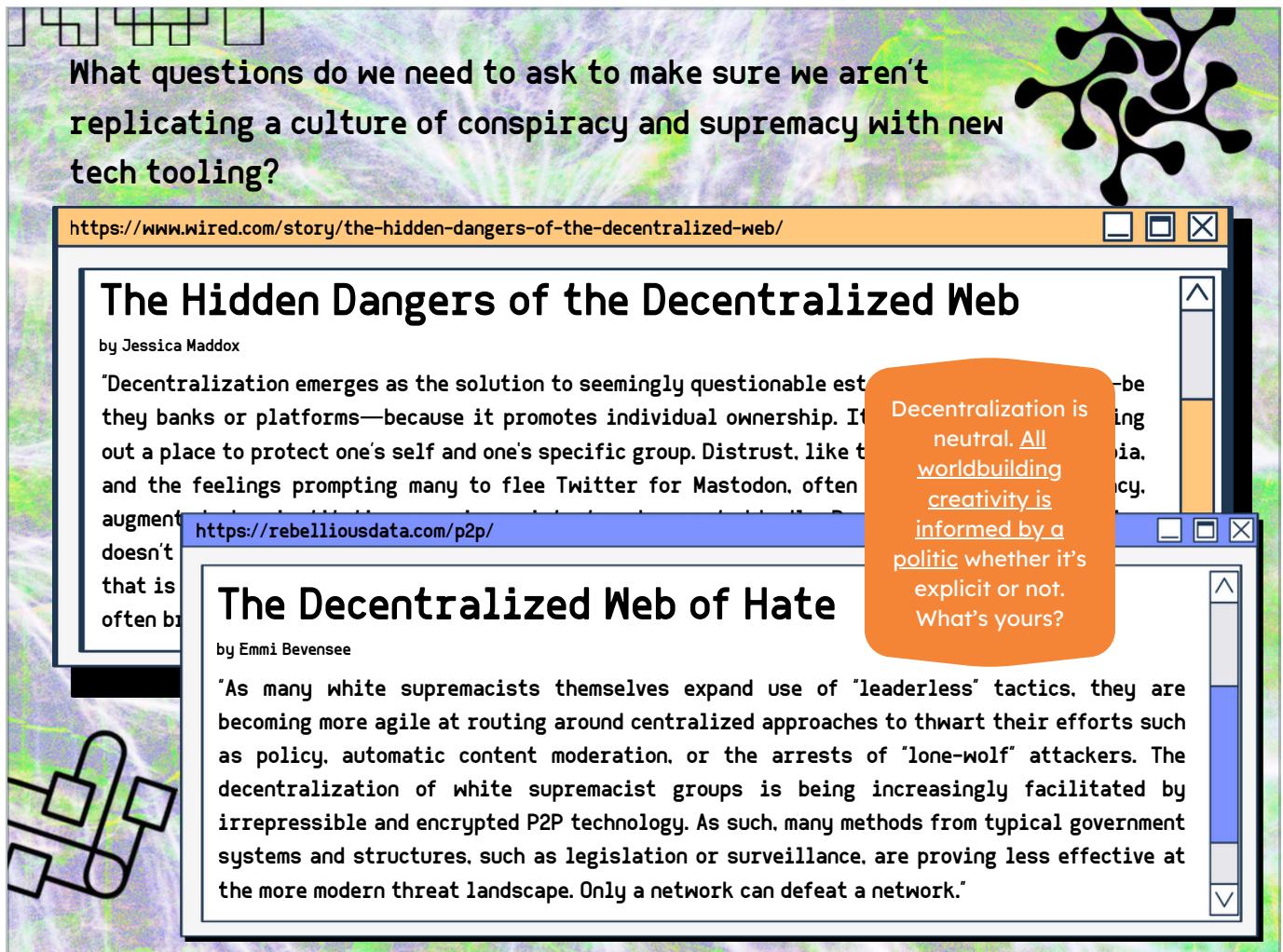
Let's look to a few researchers to help us think through these open questions...





The Dangers of Decentralization

Taeyoon Choi advocates for "Distribution over Decentralization". As these articles point out the dangers of decentralization lie in "leaderless tactics" that have the potential to compromise pathways to accountability, trust and collective responsibility. How can we consider solutions to this danger in our critical Dweb art projects and practices?



What questions do we need to ask to make sure we aren't replicating a culture of conspiracy and supremacy with new tech tooling?

<https://www.wired.com/story/the-hidden-dangers-of-the-decentralized-web/>

The Hidden Dangers of the Decentralized Web

by Jessica Maddox

"Decentralization emerges as the solution to seemingly questionable entities—whether they banks or platforms—because it promotes individual ownership. It's a place to protect one's self and one's specific group. Distrust, like that and the feelings prompting many to flee Twitter for Mastodon, often augment the decentralized web. It doesn't mean that is often bad."

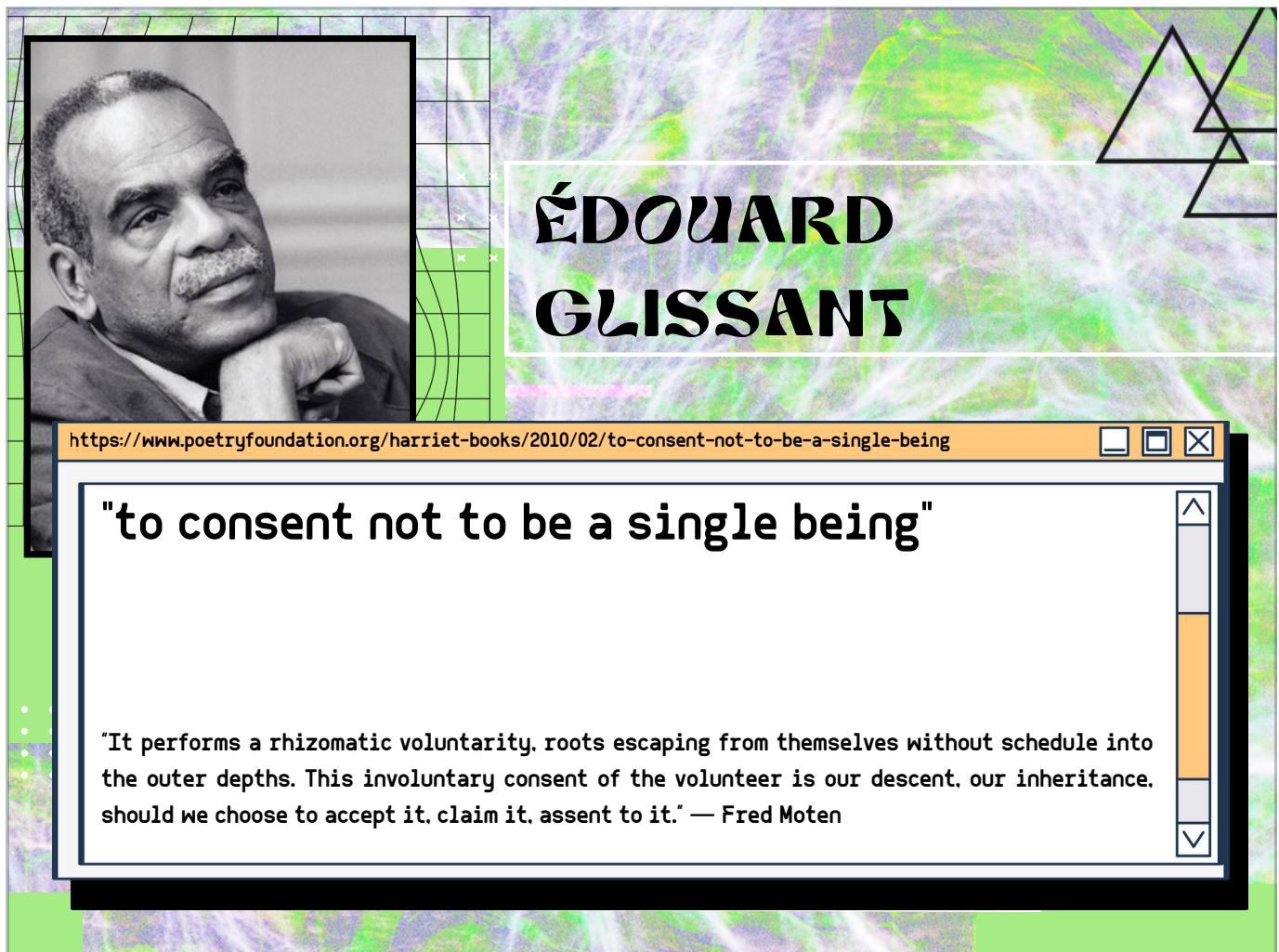
<https://rebelliousdata.com/p2p/>

The Decentralized Web of Hate

by Emmi Bevensee

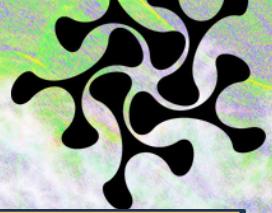
"As many white supremacists themselves expand use of "leaderless" tactics, they are becoming more agile at routing around centralized approaches to thwart their efforts such as policy, automatic content moderation, or the arrests of "lone-wolf" attackers. The decentralization of white supremacist groups is being increasingly facilitated by irrepressible and encrypted P2P technology. As such, many methods from typical government systems and structures, such as legislation or surveillance, are proving less effective at the more modern threat landscape. Only a network can defeat a network."

Decentralization is neutral. All worldbuilding creativity is informed by a politic whether it's explicit or not. What's yours?



Édouard Glissant and The Poetics of Relation

In his book "Poetics of Relation" Édouard Glissant invites us to consider our interdependence as a creative framework toward a more liberatory politic.



Will "consenting not to be a single being" ever be safe?
What does "wet ontology" look like inside the wake?

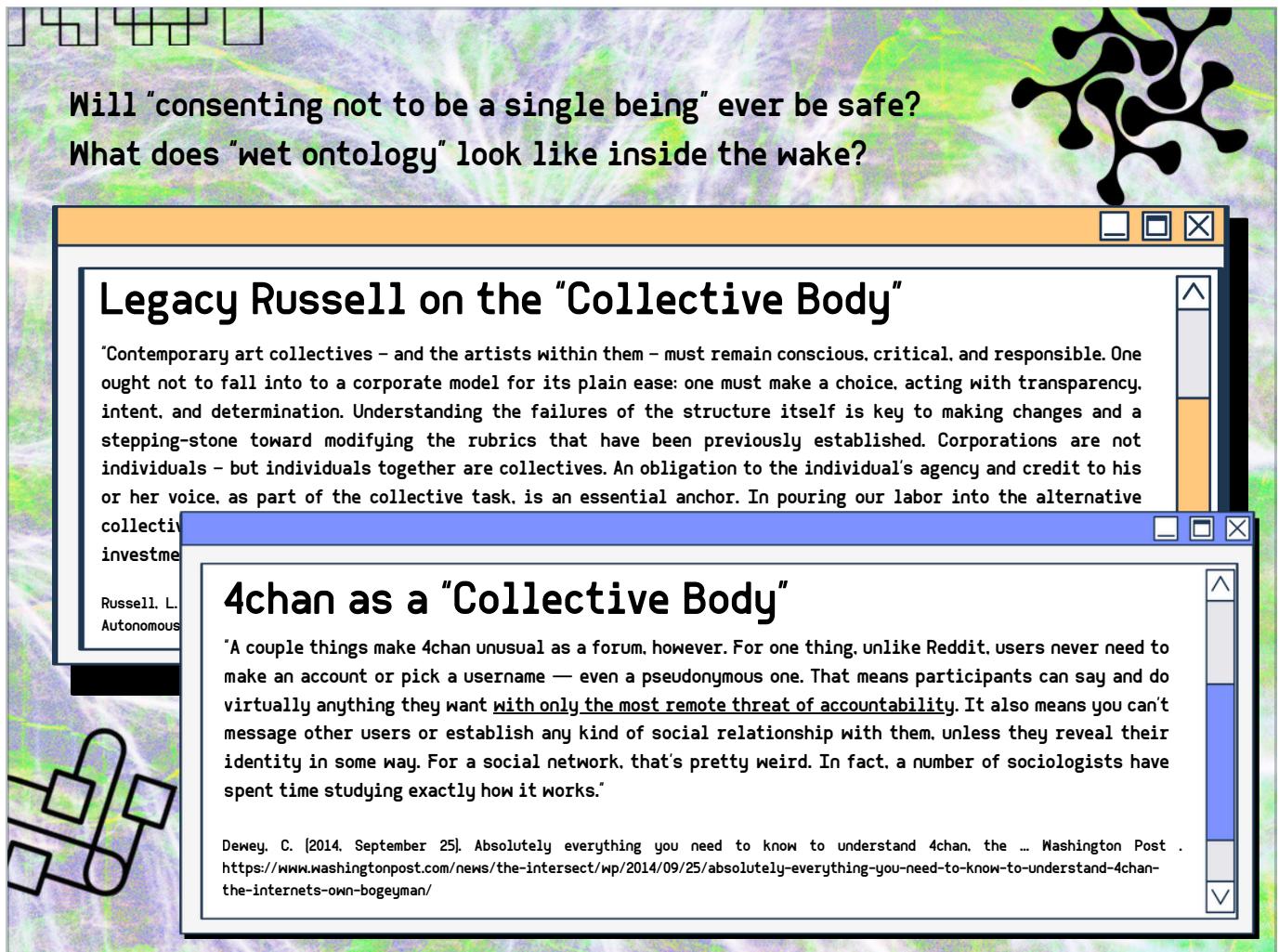


Legacy Russell on the "Collective Body"

"Contemporary art collectives – and the artists within them – must remain conscious, critical, and responsible. One ought not to fall into a corporate model for its plain ease: one must make a choice, acting with transparency, intent, and determination. Understanding the failures of the structure itself is key to making changes and a stepping-stone toward modifying the rubrics that have been previously established. Corporations are not individuals – but individuals together are collectives. An obligation to the individual's agency and credit to his or her voice, as part of the collective task, is an essential anchor. In pouring our labor into the alternative collective effort, let it be in the name of palpable political progress, not solely commercial gain, and let our investment require of the collective an investment back into the populace that built it."

Russell, L. [2022]. Beauty and The Beast: Collectivity and the Corporation. In P. Rafferty & R. Catlow [Eds.]. Radical Friends: Decentralised Autonomous Organisations and the Arts [pp. 138–149]. essay. Torque Editions.

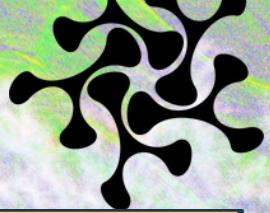




The Dangers of Consenting to the Collective Body

Just as there are dangers in decentralization, there are dangers in a loss of individuation and disappearing into the collective. If we "consent not to be a single being" as Édouard Glissant suggests, how do we ensure we maintain the personal responsibility of self-advocacy, getting our individual needs met and taking personal responsibility for the harm we will inevitably cause to others?

Will "consenting not to be a single being" ever be safe?
What does "wet ontology" look like inside the wake?



Legacy Russell on the "Collective Body"

"Contemporary art collectives – and the artists within them – must remain conscious, critical, and responsible. One ought not to fall into a corporate model for its plain ease: one must make a choice. The choice of intent, and determination. Understanding the failures of the structure itself is a stepping-stone toward modifying the rubrics that have been previously established. Individuals – but individuals together are collectives. An obligation to the individual or her voice, as part of the collective task, is an essential anchor. In pouring over the collective, investment in the individual is a necessary condition for the collective."

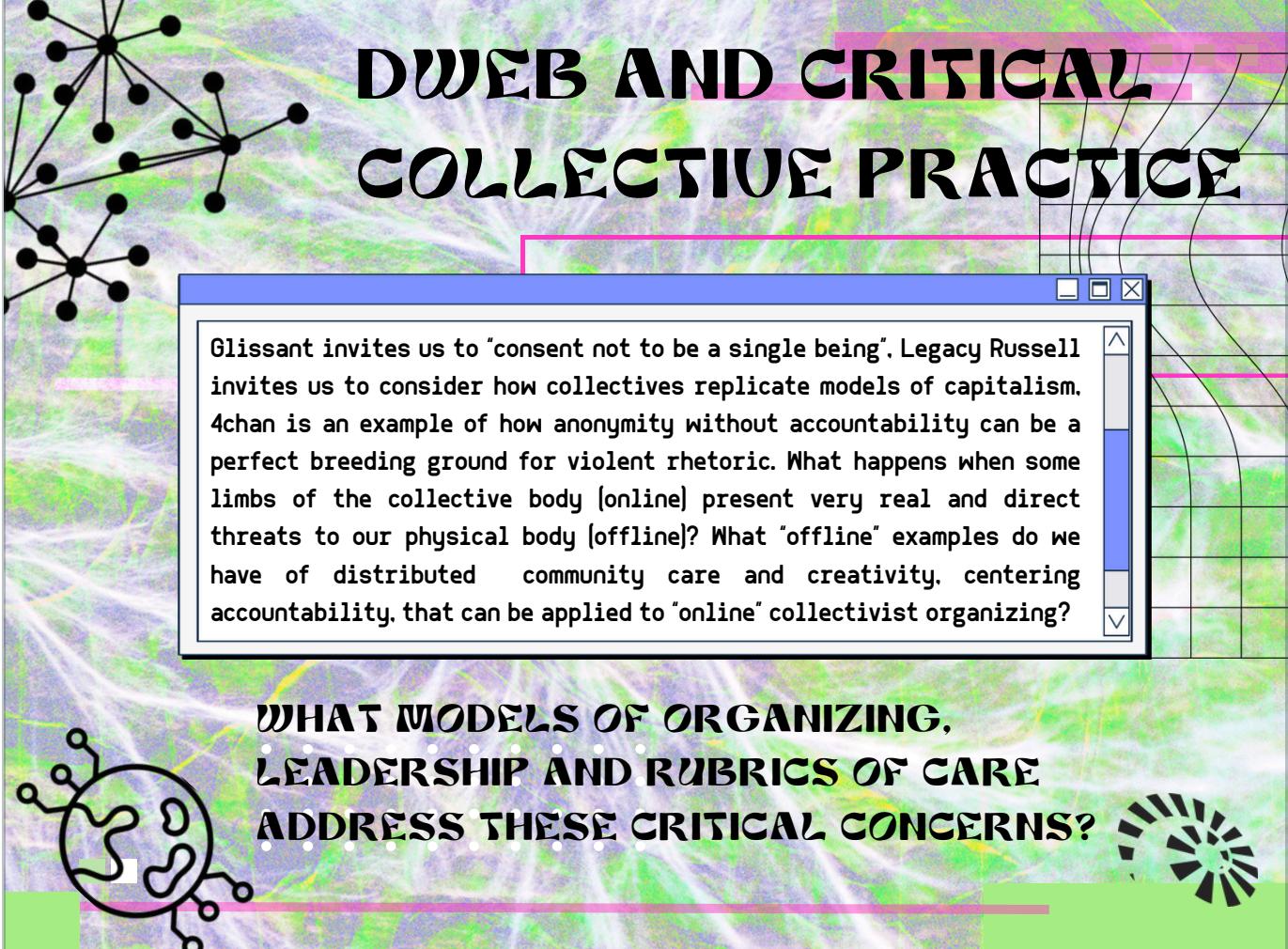
Russell, L.
Autonomous

Entirely different politics can be applied to the same technology and aesthetic. Critical DWeb Practices encourages us to clarify our values.

4chan as a "Collective Body"

"A couple things make 4chan unusual as a forum, however. For one thing, users don't need to make an account or pick a username — even a pseudonymous one. That means participants can say and do virtually anything they want with only the most remote threat of accountability. It also means you can't message other users or establish any kind of social relationship with them, unless they reveal their identity in some way. For a social network, that's pretty weird. In fact, a number of sociologists have spent time studying exactly how it works."

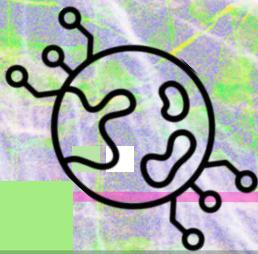
Dewey, C. [2014, September 25]. Absolutely everything you need to know to understand 4chan. the ... Washington Post . <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-intersect/wp/2014/09/25/absolutely-everything-you-need-to-know-to-understand-4chan-the-internets-own-bogeyman/>

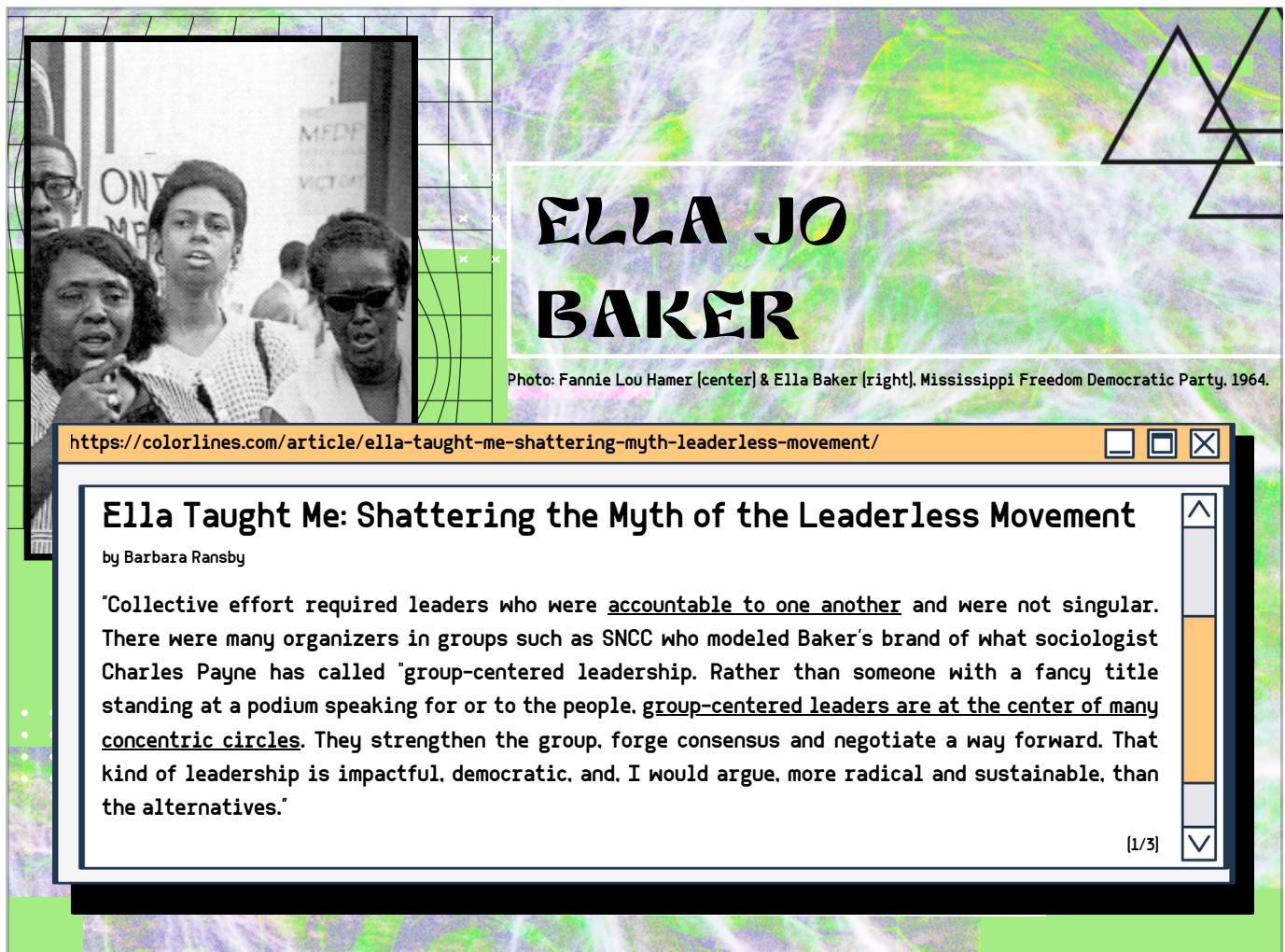


DWEB AND CRITICAL COLLECTIVE PRACTICE

Glissant invites us to "consent not to be a single being". Legacy Russell invites us to consider how collectives replicate models of capitalism. 4chan is an example of how anonymity without accountability can be a perfect breeding ground for violent rhetoric. What happens when some limbs of the collective body (online) present very real and direct threats to our physical body (offline)? What "offline" examples do we have of distributed community care and creativity, centering accountability, that can be applied to "online" collectivist organizing?

**WHAT MODELS OF ORGANIZING,
LEADERSHIP AND RUBRICS OF CARE
ADDRESS THESE CRITICAL CONCERNs?**





Case Studies of Critical Leadership

If we are to advocate for "distribution instead of decentralization" inside our critical DWeb art projects and practices we must take a look at leaders and leadership models that consider the political dimension of organizing and building collective power. This exploration may give us insight and ideas for leadership models that might be beneficial when creating DWeb projects and practices that consider the social and political dimension of technology per Ruha Benjamin's invitation in "Race After Technology: Abolitionist Tools for the New Jim Code".



BLACK PANTHER PARTY

Photo: Panthers serving children free breakfast. Sacred Heart Church, San Francisco [-1969]

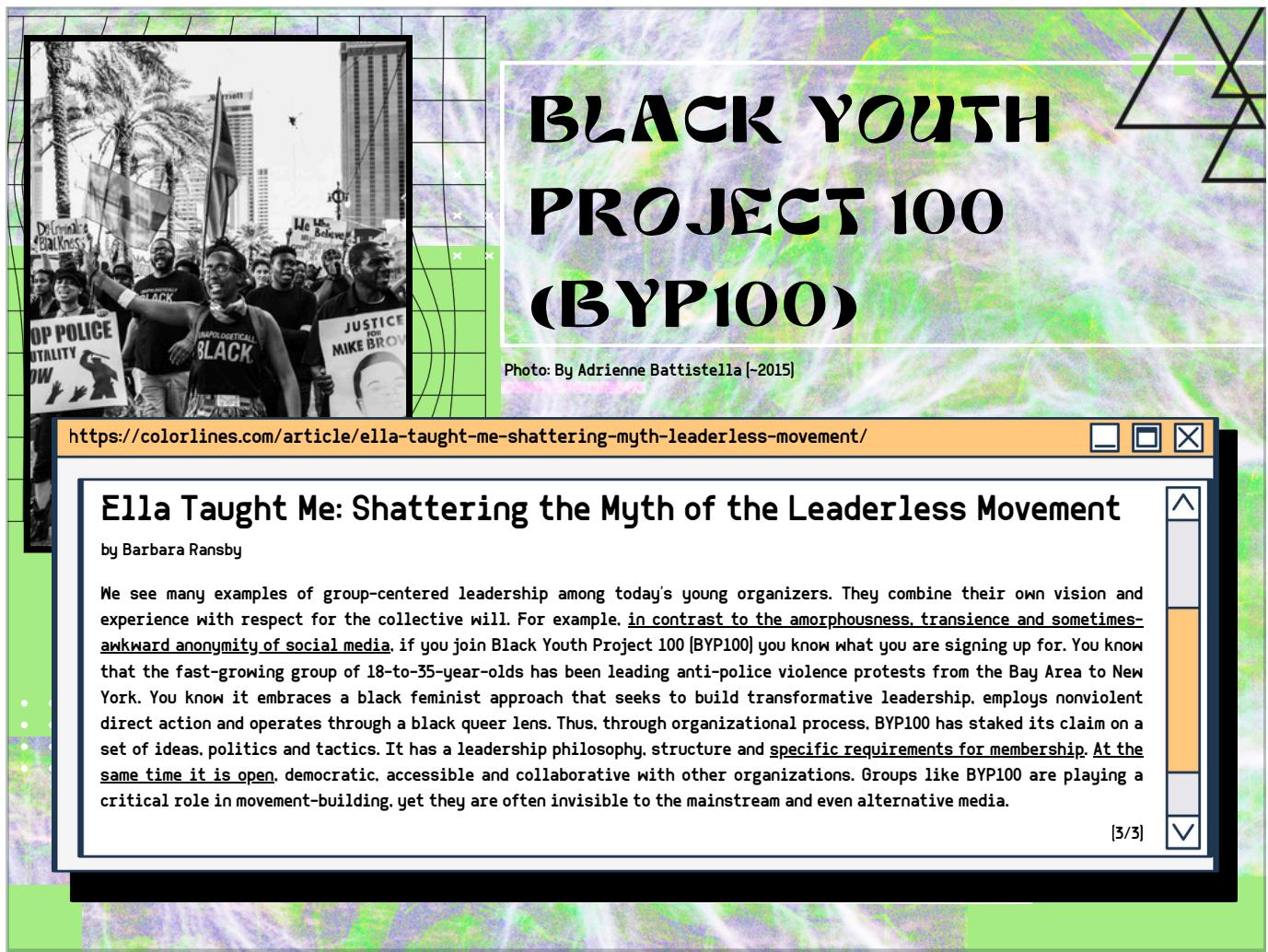
<https://colorlines.com/article/ella-taught-me-shattering-myth-leaderless-movement/>

Ella Taught Me: Shattering the Myth of the Leaderless Movement

by Barbara Ransby

"If we think we can all "get free" through individual or uncoordinated small-group resistance, we are kidding ourselves. This is not a news flash to serious organizers, past or present. The veterans from the 1960s and '70s [SNCC and the Black Panther Party as two of the best-known examples], held meetings, workshops, debates, strategy sessions and reading groups to forge the consensus that enabled thousands of people to work under the same rubric and, more or less, operate out of the same playbook, splits and differences notwithstanding."

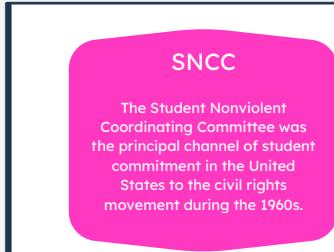
[2/3]



Imperfect Movements

While group-centered leadership can be a powerful approach for critical DWeb art projects and practices, it is not a perfect model. Since facilitating this workshop I have read articles with principled critiques of BYP100's leadership. See "BYP100 is Dead" by Ngwagwa and "Black Youth Project 100 suspends a Chicago leader after sexual assault allegation" by Aimee Levitt. Thank you to the students of Gray Area who brought these calls for accountability to my attention!

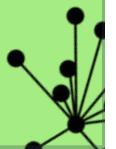
EXAMPLES OF NETWORK APPROACHES TO GROUP LEADERSHIP



EXAMPLES OF NETWORK APPROACHES TO GROUP LEADERSHIP

The window interface displays two entries:

- SNCC**
The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee was the principal channel of student commitment in the United States to the civil rights movement during the 1960s.
- Black Panthers**
The party was active in the United States between 1966 and 1982, with chapters in many major American cities, including San Francisco, New York City, Chicago, Los Angeles, Seattle, and Philadelphia.



EXAMPLES OF NETWORK APPROACHES TO GROUP LEADERSHIP

The window interface displays three examples of network approaches to group leadership:

- SNCC**
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- Black Panthers**
The party was active in the United States between 1966 and 1982, with chapters in many major American cities, including San Francisco, New York City, Chicago, Los Angeles, Seattle, and Philadelphia.
- BYP100**
Black Youth Project 100 is a youth organization in the United States, focused on community organizing, voter mobilization, and other social justice campaigns on black, feminist, and queer issues.



EXAMPLES OF NETWORK APPROACHES TO GROUP LEADERSHIP

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The organizing aesthetic framework: Group Leadership x Accountability.
How is this related to an internet-based art practice? Our art practices have the networked-power to inspire a culture of care and help us imagine new ways of working, learning and being.

EXAMPLES OF NETWORK APPROACHES TO GROUP LEADERSHIP

The organizing aesthetic framework: Group Leadership x Accountability.
How is this related to an internet-based art practice? Our art practices have the networked-power to inspire a culture of care and help us imagine new ways of working, learning and being.

SNCC
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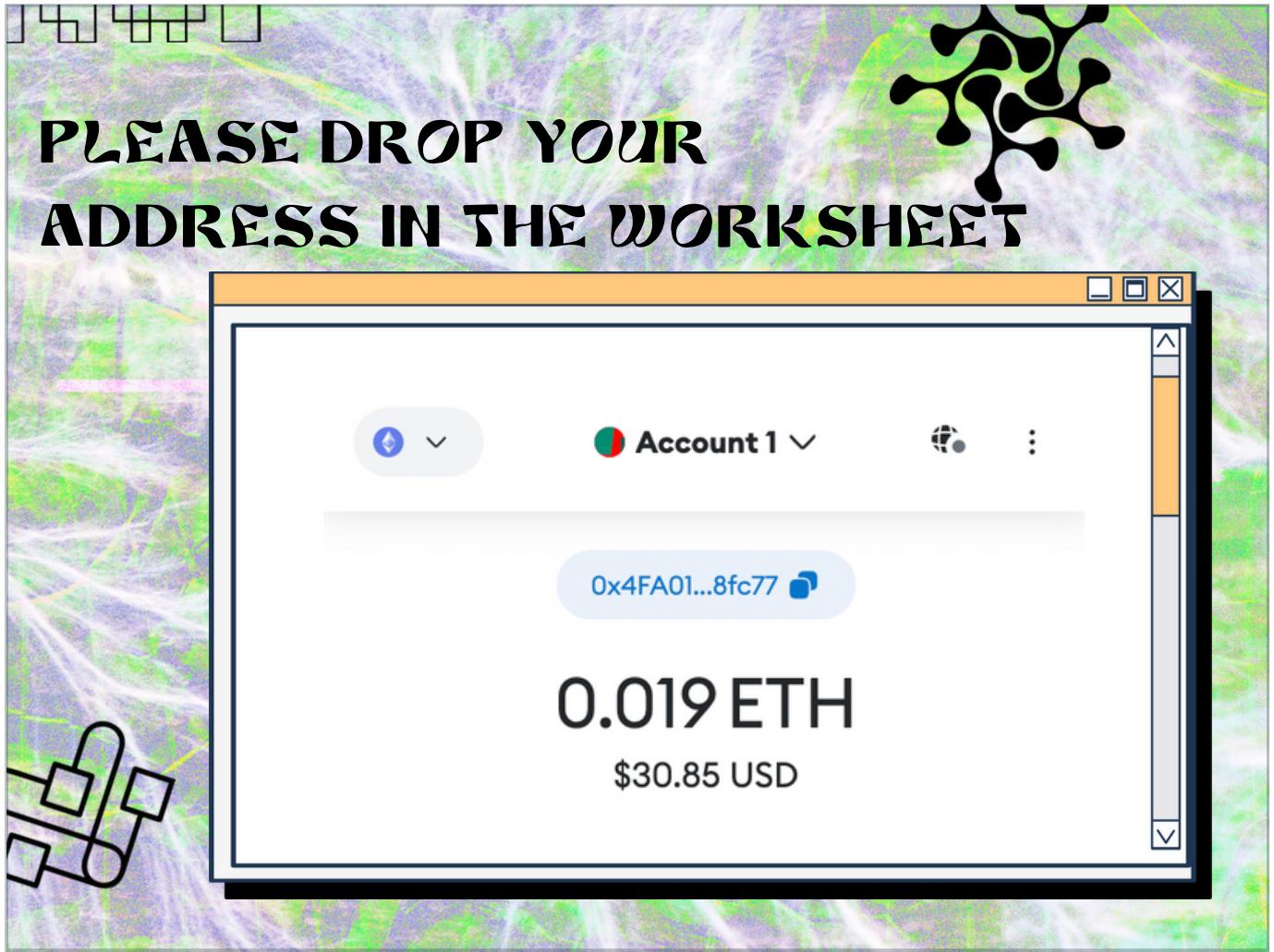
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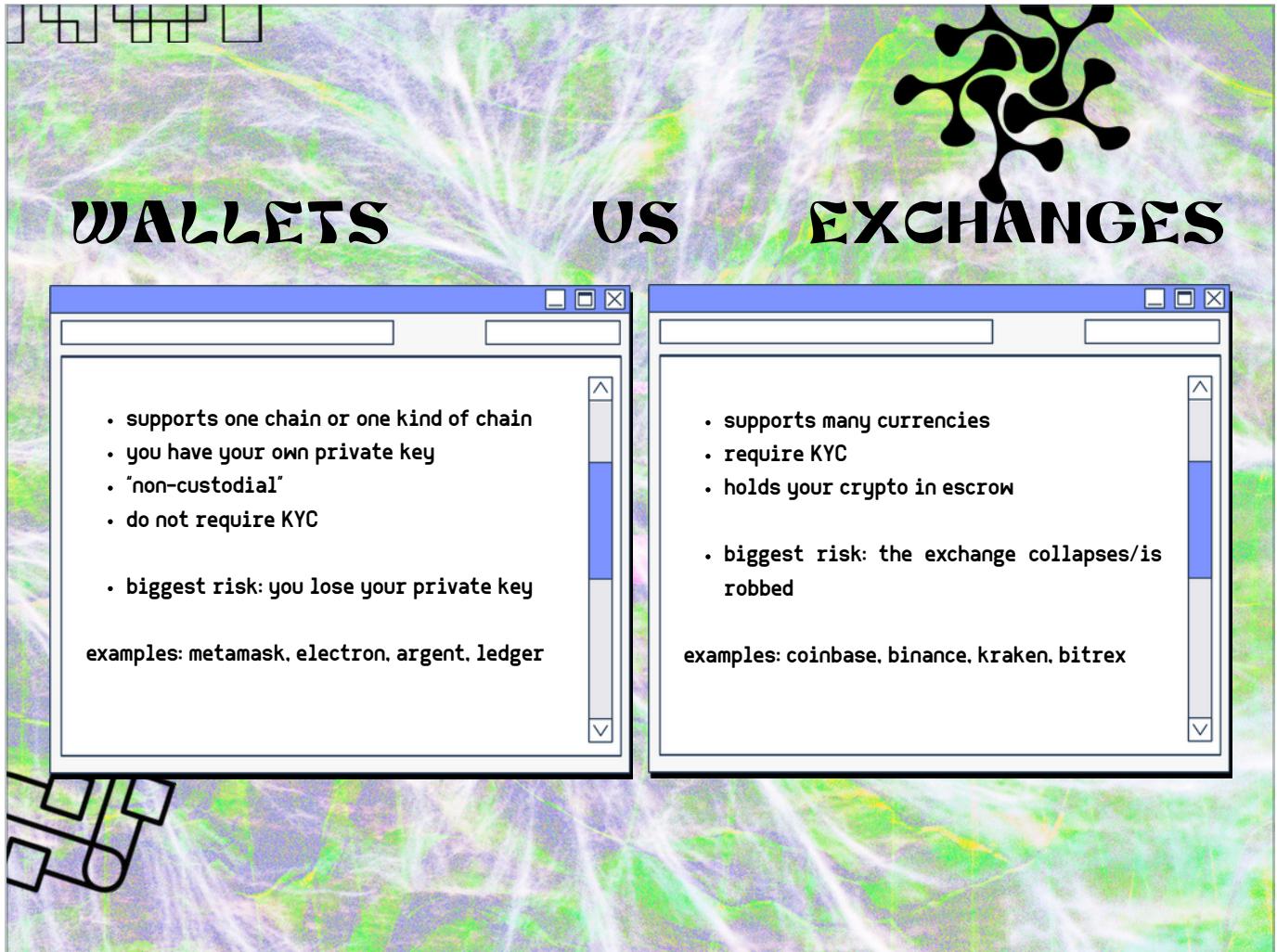
"Only a network can defeat a network" — Emmi Bevensee

How might we imagine our collective art and curatorial practices as networked solutions to injustice? What are the tech tools that might empower our collective imagination, action and group leadership efforts?





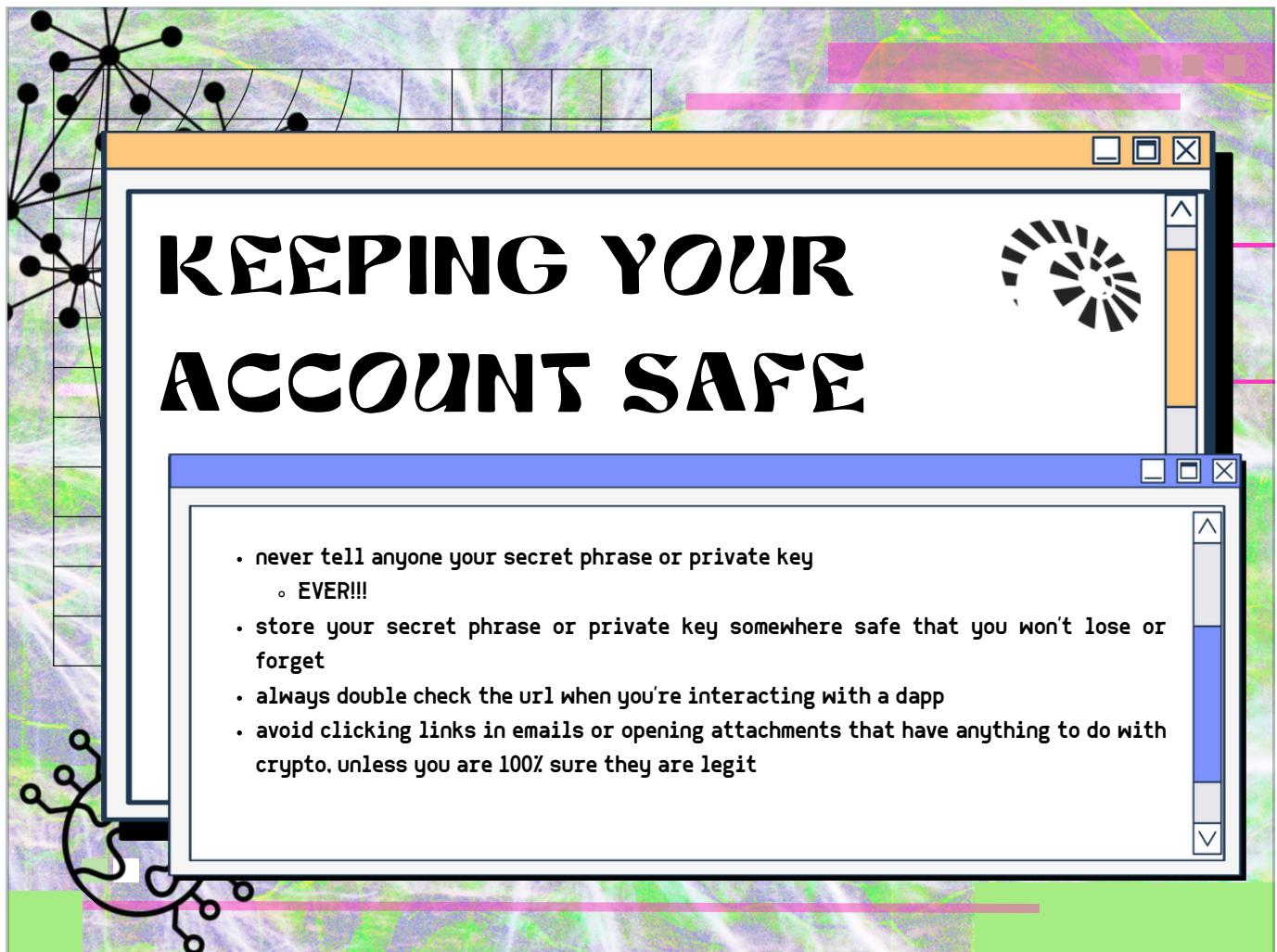
(you don't need a worksheet to do the activity on your own, however, you will need to use the faucet)



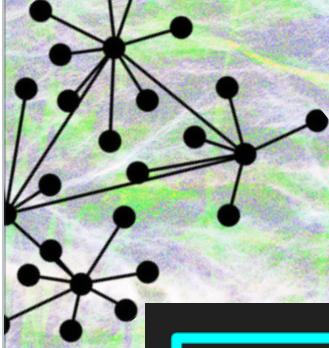
These are the two main kinds of tools you can use to hold cryptocurrency or interact with it. They both have various advantages and disadvantages.

KYC stands for "know your customer" and is a regulatory process that exchanges must go through in order to identify their users using government-issued ID. It will usually involve scanning or somehow uploading a photo of your passport. Exchanges almost always require KYC these days, wallets almost never do.

The term "non-custodial" means there is no custodian of your account - you hold your own private key with all the responsibility and no intermediary. The private key can be called different things depending on the wallet, for example, mnemonic, seed phrase, etc, but the meaning is always the same. It's a cryptographic key for your account, akin to a password without recovery mechanisms



Just some general tips to keep your accounts safe, when you're interacting with the non-custodial world of wallets.

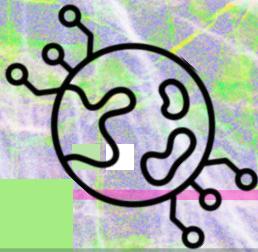


SENDING A TRANSACTION

I Sarah send
10 dollars to
Ayana

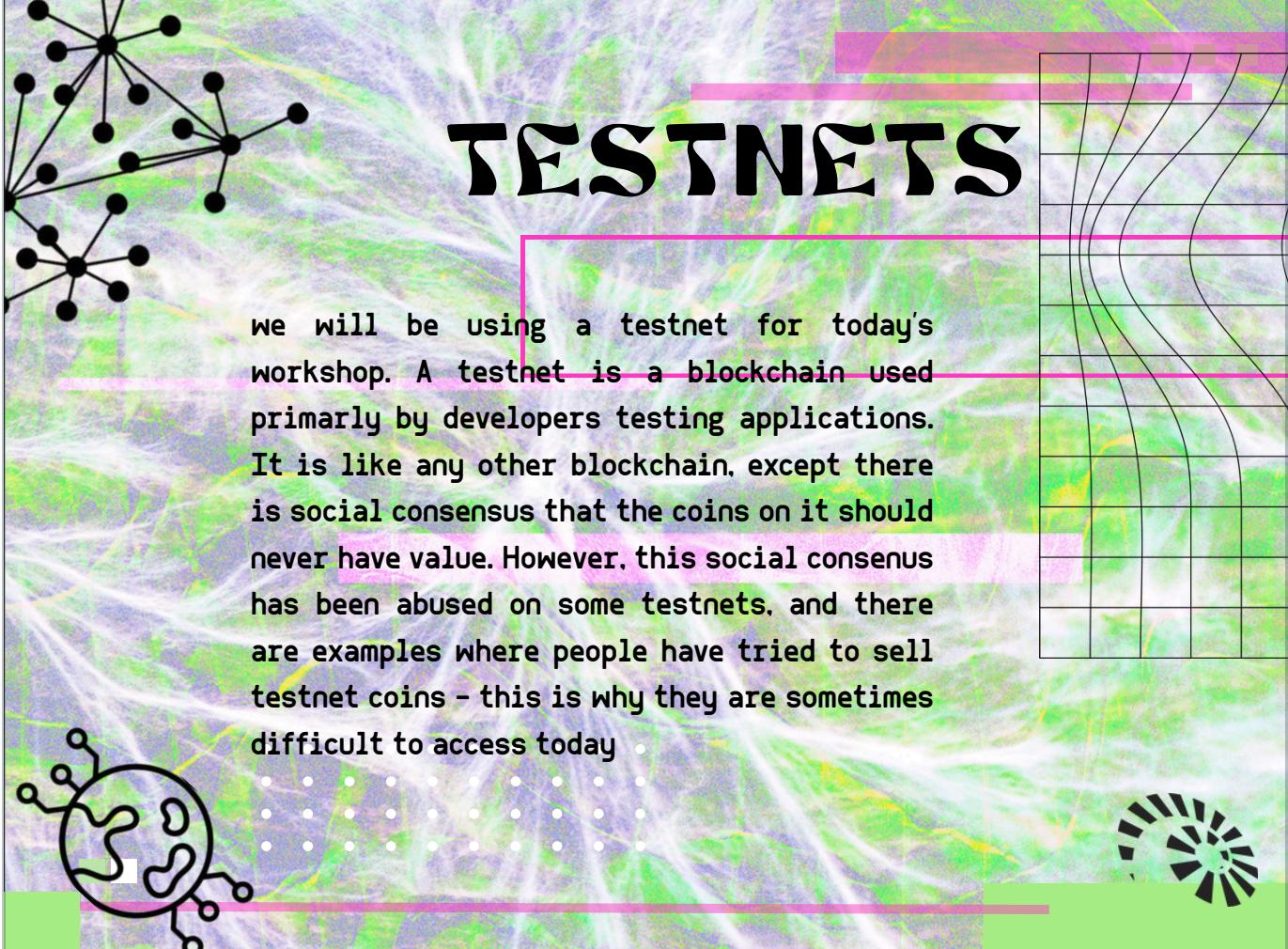
a transaction is a signed message indicating a user's intent

signature



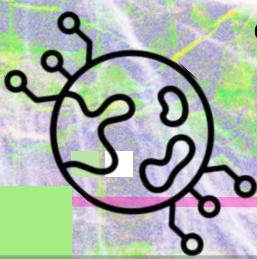
When you're interacting with a blockchain, you are usually sending a transaction. A transaction here, is a signed message indicating your intentions - the most simple case is to send money, but we'll see other examples in the next slides.

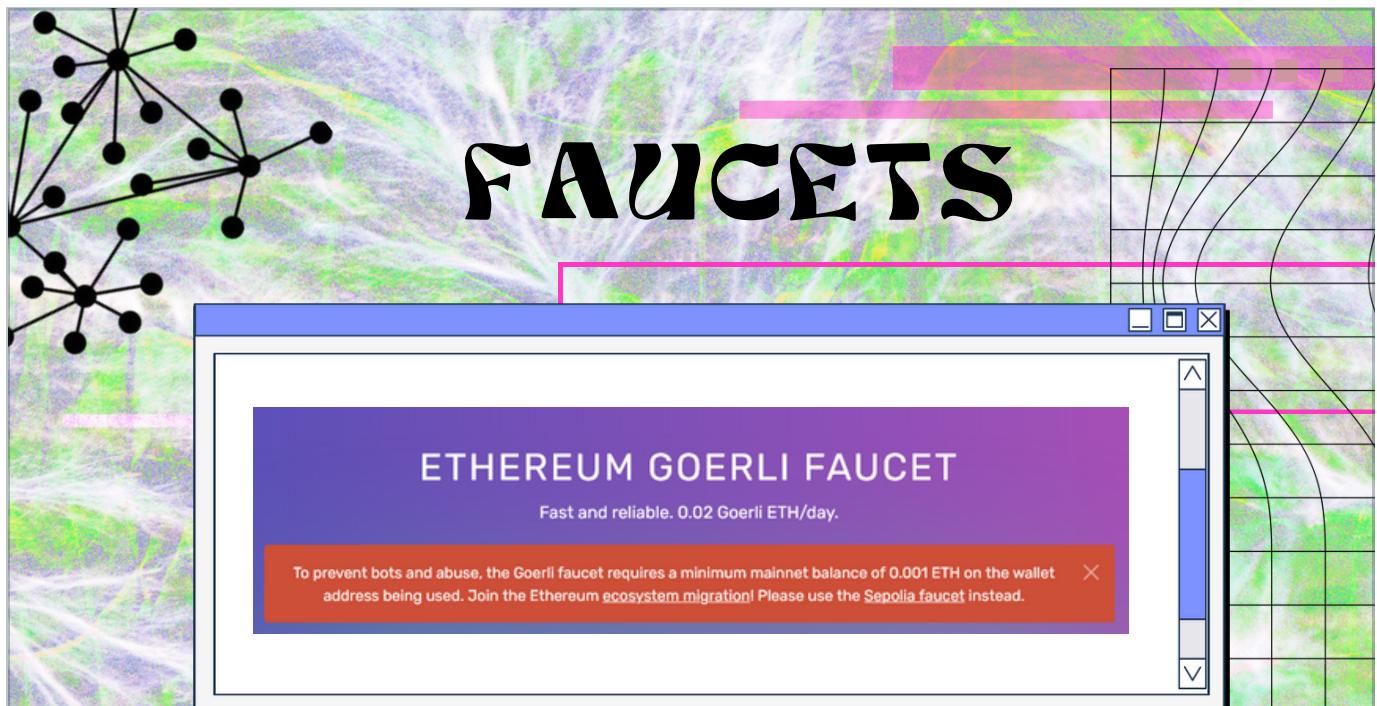
Transactions are authenticated by a digital signature, this is generated by your private key (or mnemonic), which is kept in your wallet



TESTNETS

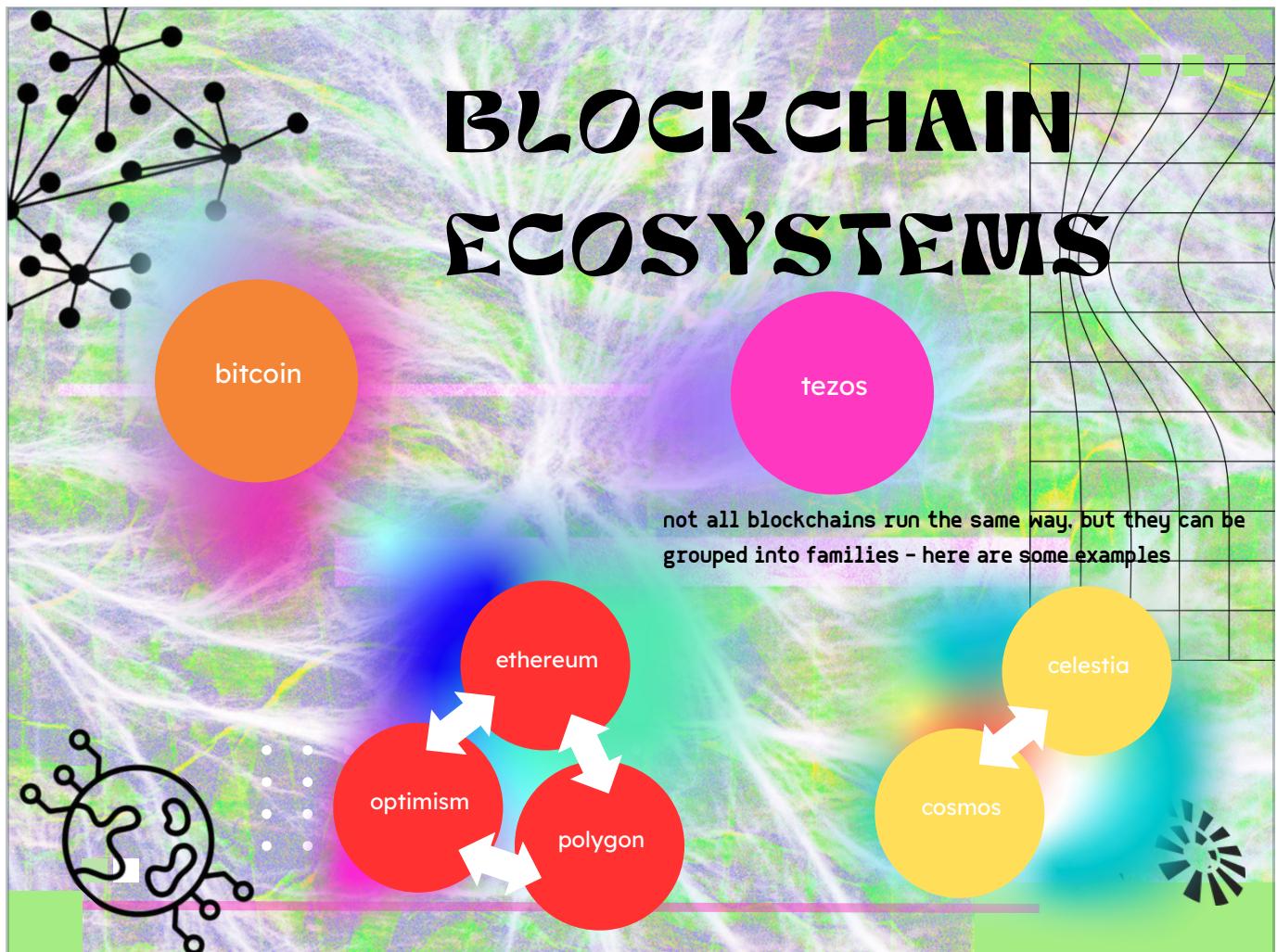
We will be using a testnet for today's workshop. A testnet is a blockchain used primarily by developers testing applications. It is like any other blockchain, except there is social consensus that the coins on it should never have value. However, this social consensus has been abused on some testnets, and there are examples where people have tried to sell testnet coins - this is why they are sometimes difficult to access today.





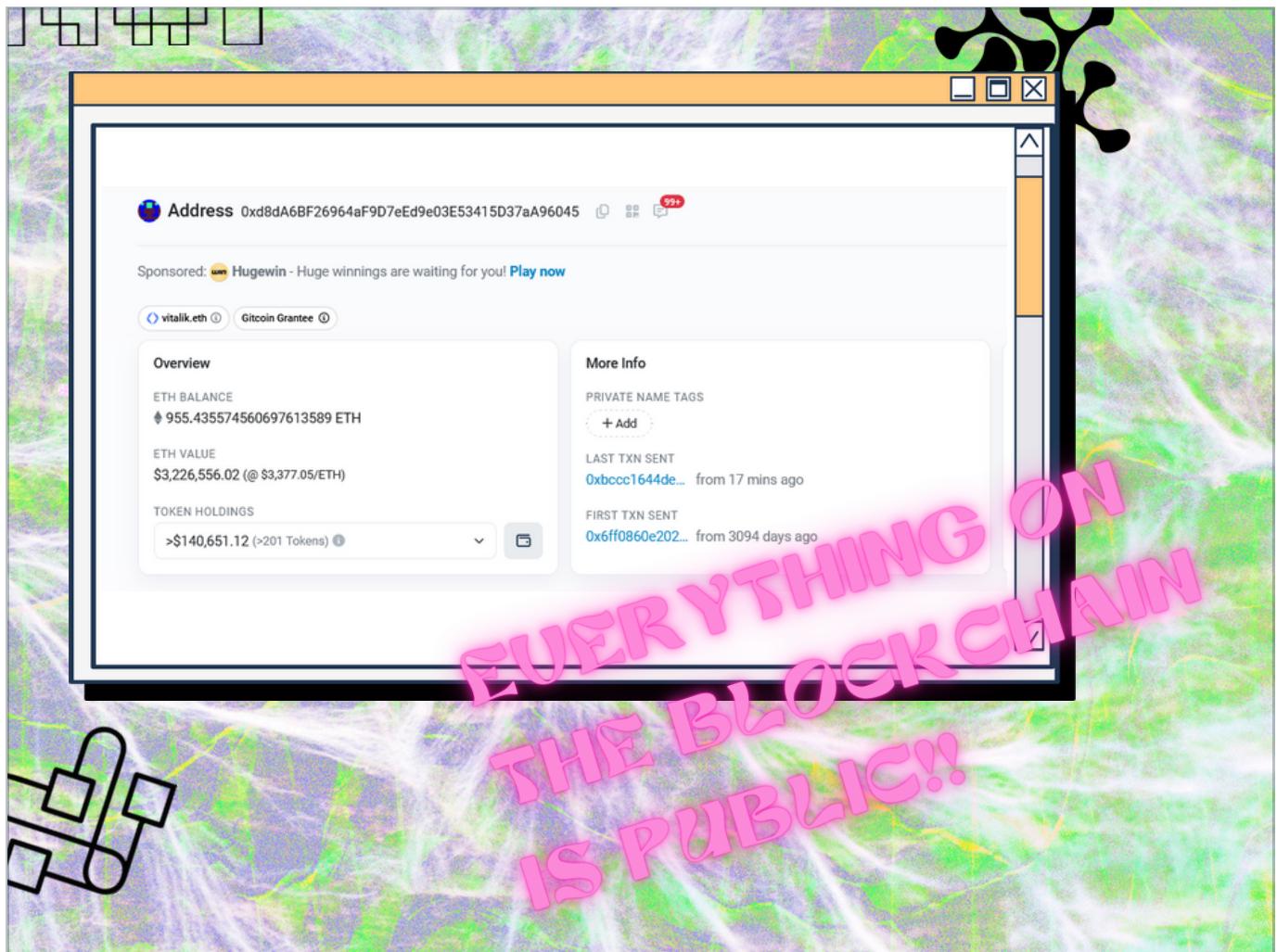
- a faucet is a website where testnet coins are distributed, usually run by a company as a public service



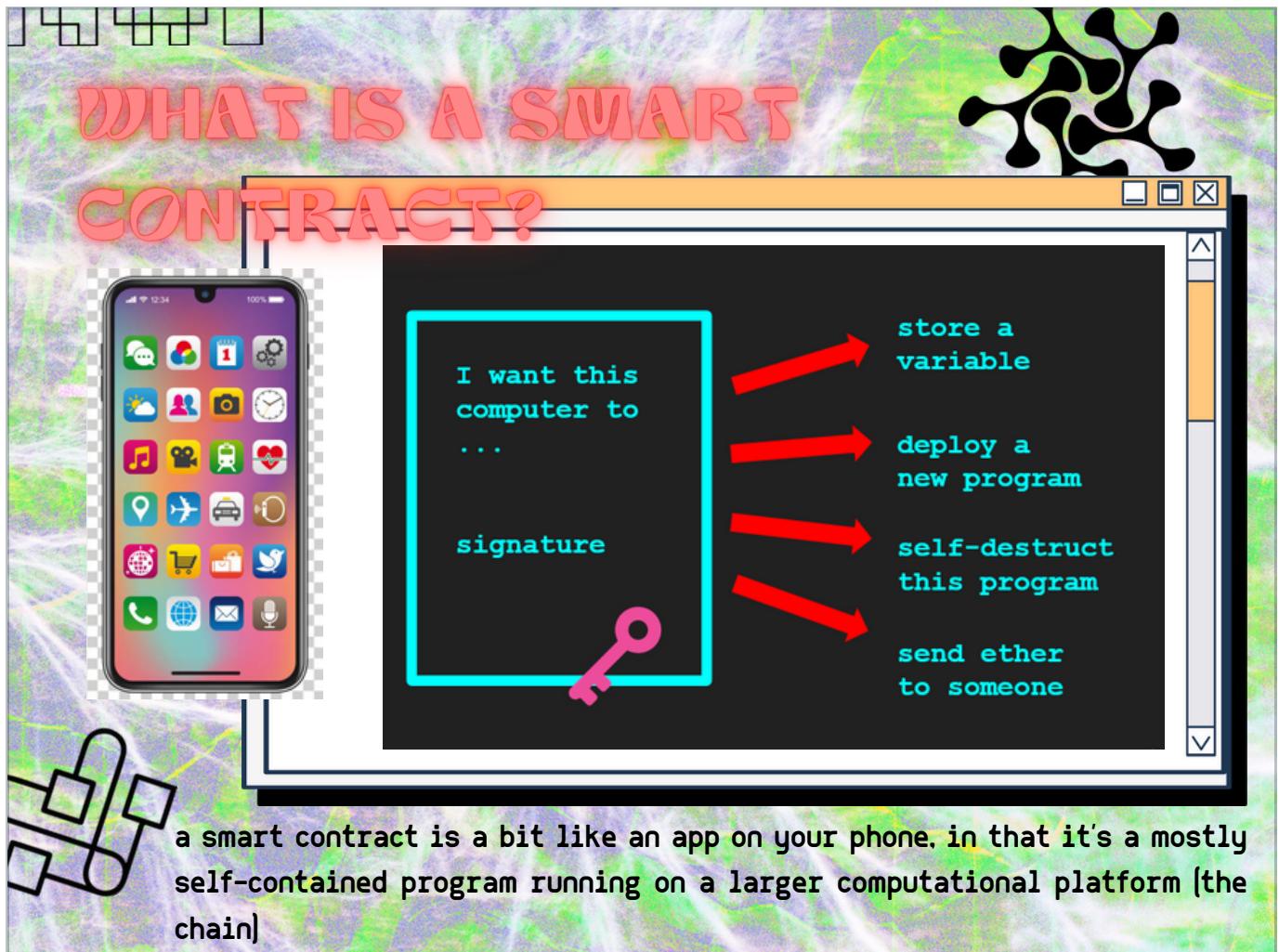




The block explorer we'll be using today is called Etherscan, but there is a similar explorer for all major networks



This needs to be kept in mind with all blockchain applications or payments. A lot of the infrastructure and social assumptions in many places assume that bank account balances and transactions are at least somewhat private. On the blockchain, they can all be viewed anytime by anyone



A smart contract is a bit like an app, deployed on the larger computational platform (operating system) of the blockchain. It is mostly self contained. It has its own storage, and also an interface that you can use to interact with it, and that can interact with other smart contracts (in a limited way)

It can't act or do anything without being triggered by a transaction sent by a person. In a blockchain that contains smart contracts, a transaction could be doing any number of things: sending data, triggering some kind of computation, creating a new smart contract, destroying a smart contract, and of course, the standard, sending money.

WHAT IS A TOKEN

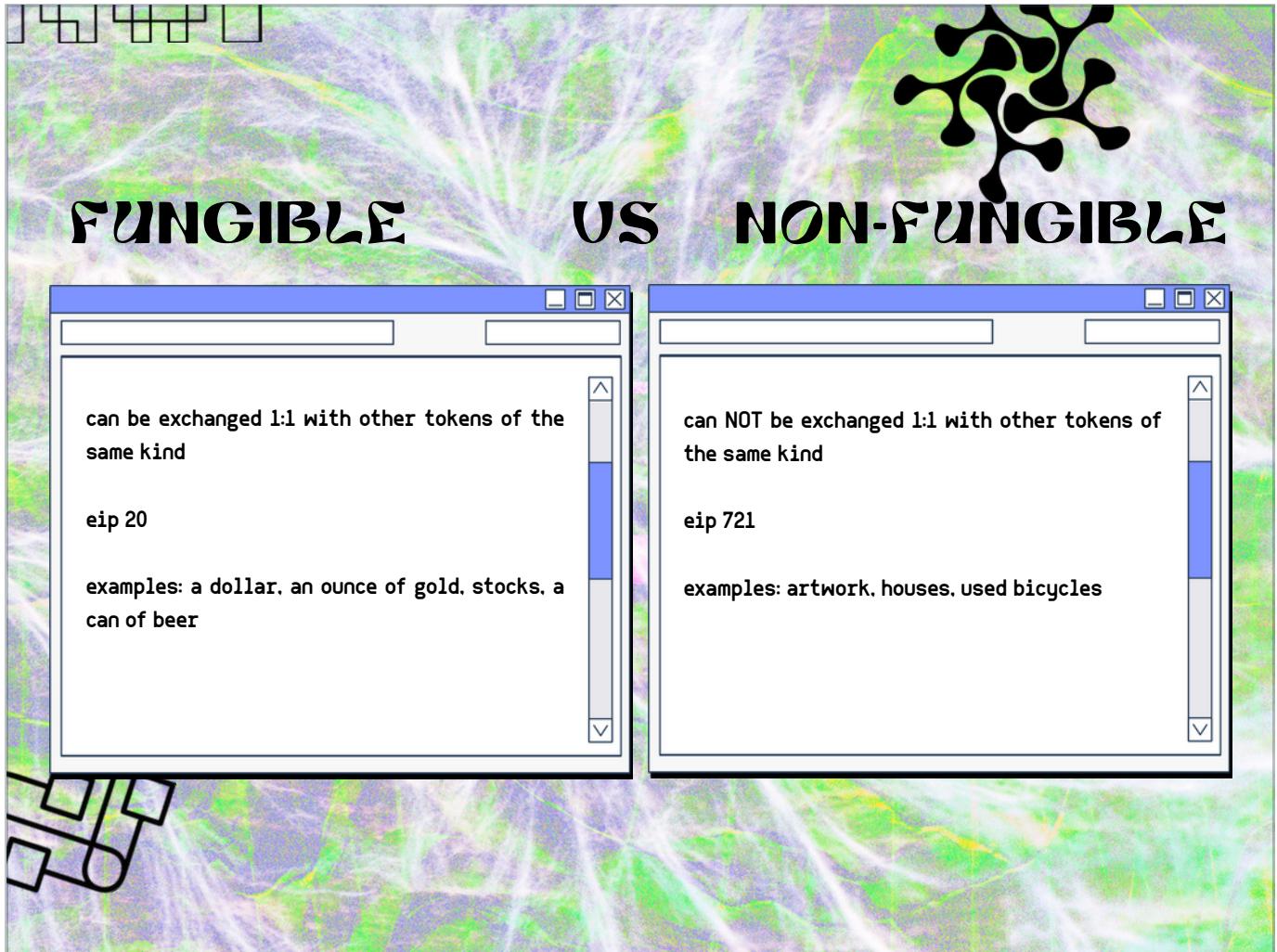
A token is data in a smart contract that conforms to a standard interface

Token standards, otherwise called EIPs, are written by the community in a discussion/governance process

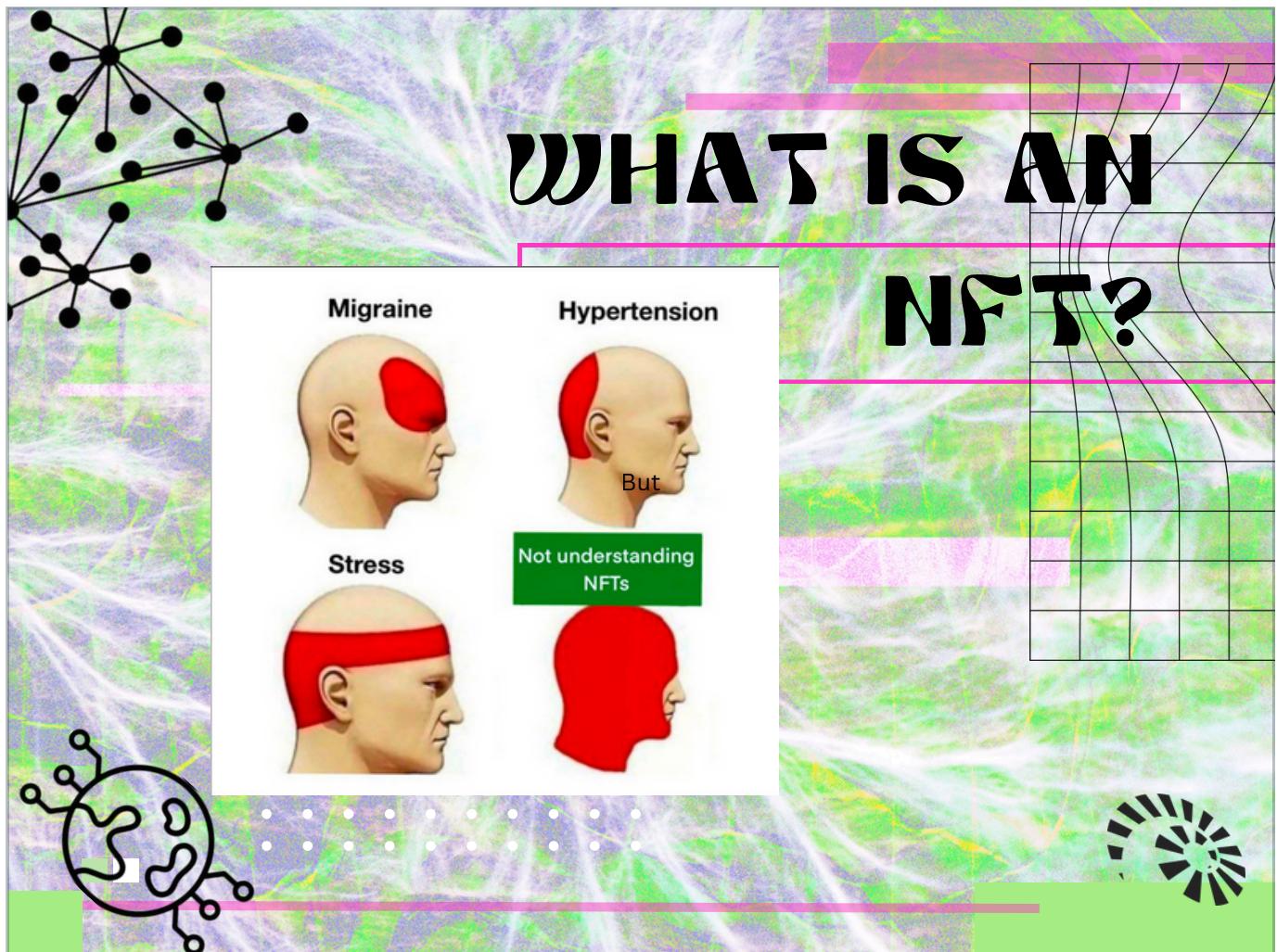
You have probably heard of tokens - there are a variety of kinds. But thinking very simply and literally, a token is a kind of smart contract.

In order to allow more people to interact more easily with smart contracts (and also for smart contracts to interact with one another) there have been a variety of published standards. This is like a spec, or description of all the things the smart contract should do. Contract standards are written by the dev community that works with the blockchain, they are usually discussed publicly on github, then eventually accepted or approved through a governance process.

In the Ethereum world, the standards are called EIPs or Ethereum Improvement Proposals. They don't all deal with tokens, or even smart contracts, some deal with other improvements to the protocol. There are three main EIPs that have to do with tokens: 20, 721, and 1155, which are for fungible, non-fungible, and semi-fungible tokens. Other chains often have a similar process, and similar set of token standards.

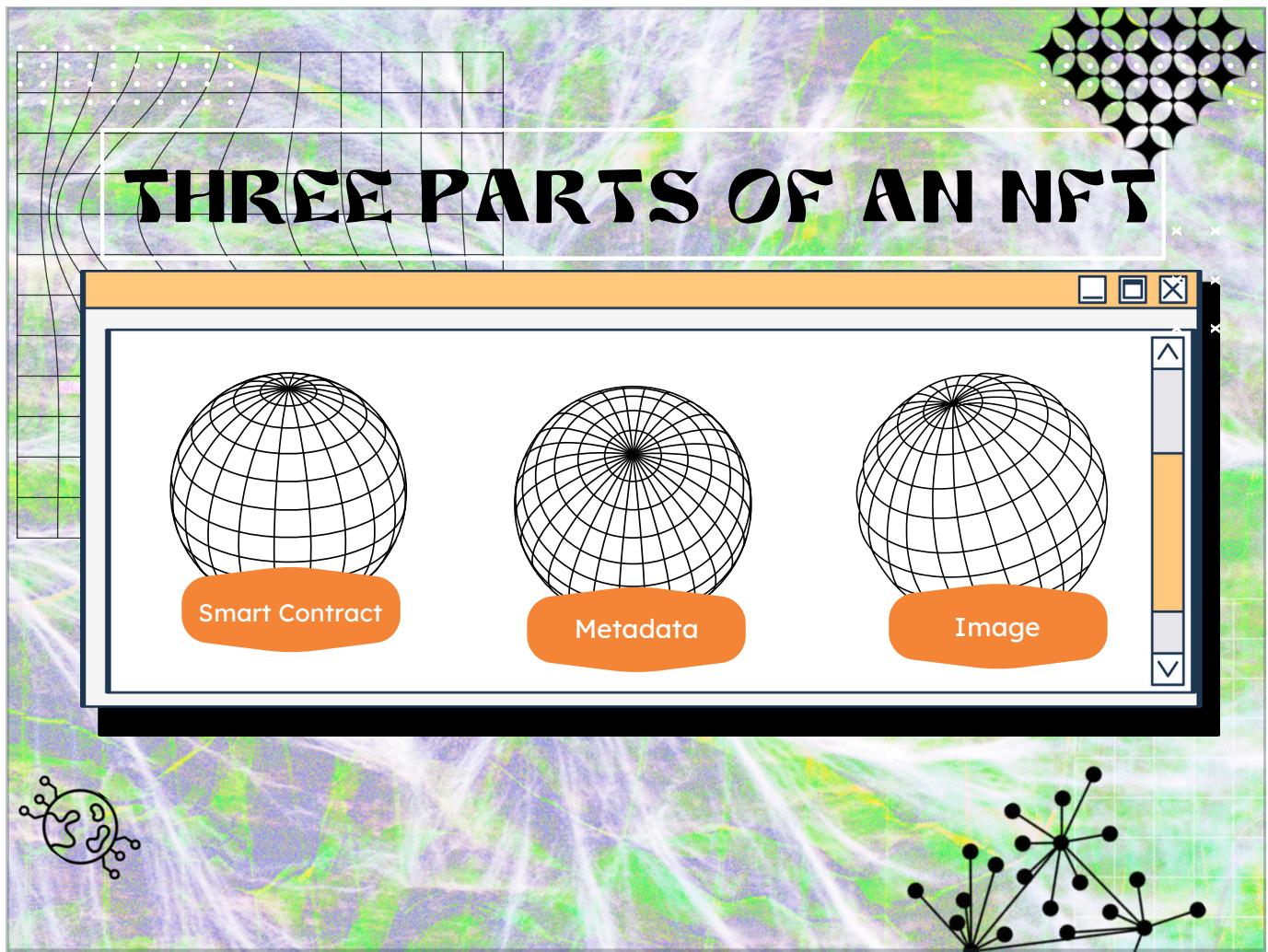


The two main types of tokens you'll hear about. Both fungible and non-fungible assets exist outside the crypto-world too



Now let's get to NFTs, which are non-fungible tokens. You've probably heard a lot about them by this point, and some of it may be negative.

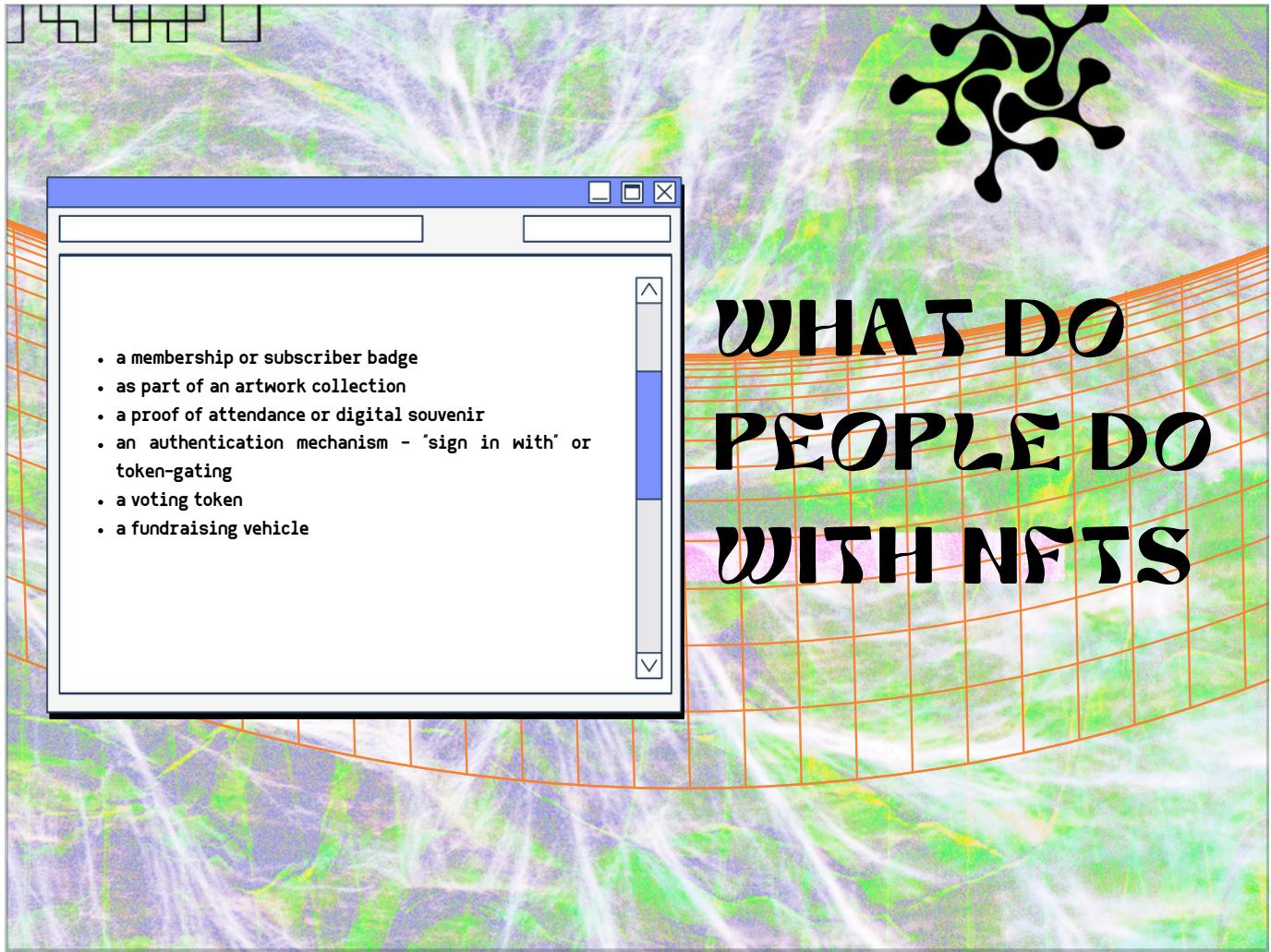
But the reason we're talking about blockchains in an art workshop, is because - very often when you hear about art and decentralized tech going together - you're hearing that because people are using NFTs to create or sell digital artworks.



There are three parts or components of an NFT, which may or may not all be stored in the same place.

First, the smart contract itself (which is code that has been written according to the NFT token standard). There is also metadata - this is json and plain text that has basic info about the NFT. For example, the title, the name of the creator, etc. And finally, there is usually an image, which is linked to from within the metadata. The image can be a jpg, png, svg, etc. Both the metadata and the image are referenced with a url - this can be a normal http url (meaning they are just hosted on normal websites), and ipfs url (meaning they are hosted on ipfs), or they can be encoded in url-format and stored in the blockchain directly. If you hear people talking about NFTs being "onchain" it's the last possibility that they mean. It is also considered the most permanent, in terms of long term storage.

To look at these more closely, I recommend trying the hands-on component of this lesson

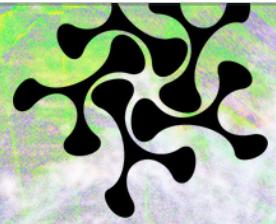


A lot of NFTs have roles in online communities beside just being "digital artworks". Some of the use cases of NFTs are overlapping. For example, an organization might sell NFTs that are also then used as membership badges. A membership badge could also be used to log in to an online community like a discord, etc



Some NFT communities are also DAOs, or decentralized autonomous organizations. You'll hear more about these in other workshops, but here are a few kinds/examples of what they might do.

The last one on here is more speculative - I can't think of any particularly concrete examples, but it's the idea of using a DAO and its mechanisms as a social performance. This comes from an essay by Rhea Myers, called *A Thousand DAOs*, which was published in a book called *Radical Friends*

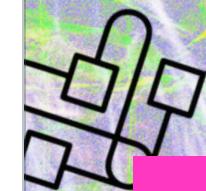


What are the possibilities and weaknesses of
these tools?

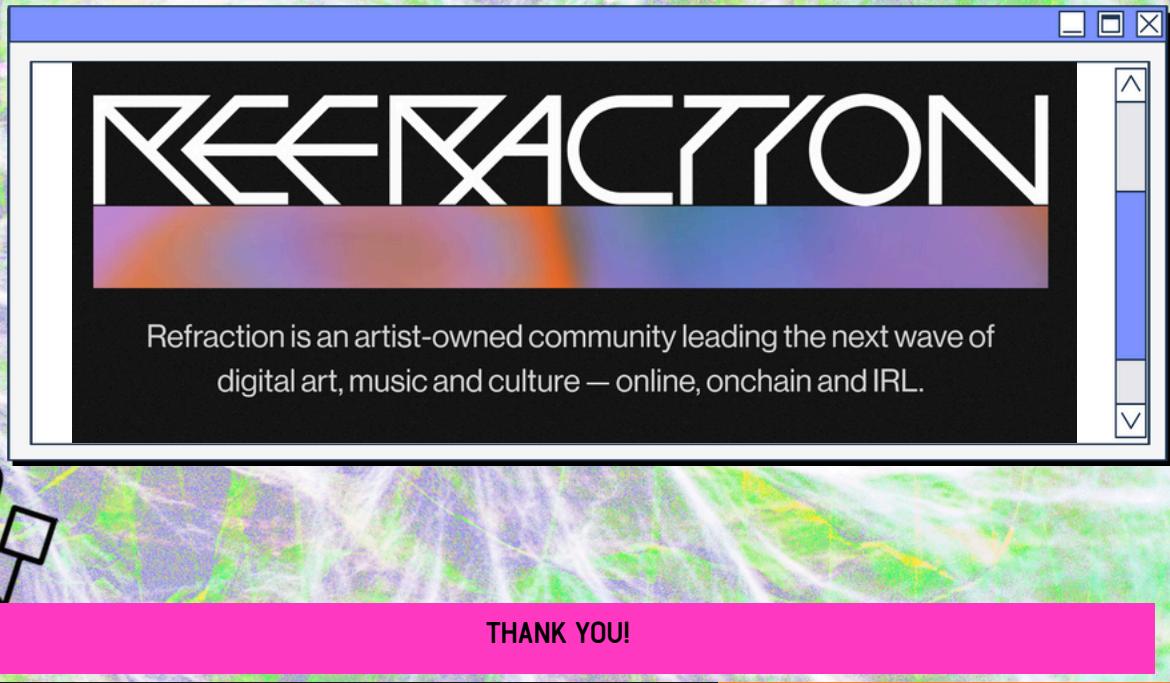
QUESTIONS?

Feel free to use the raise hand feature or drop
your question in the chat!

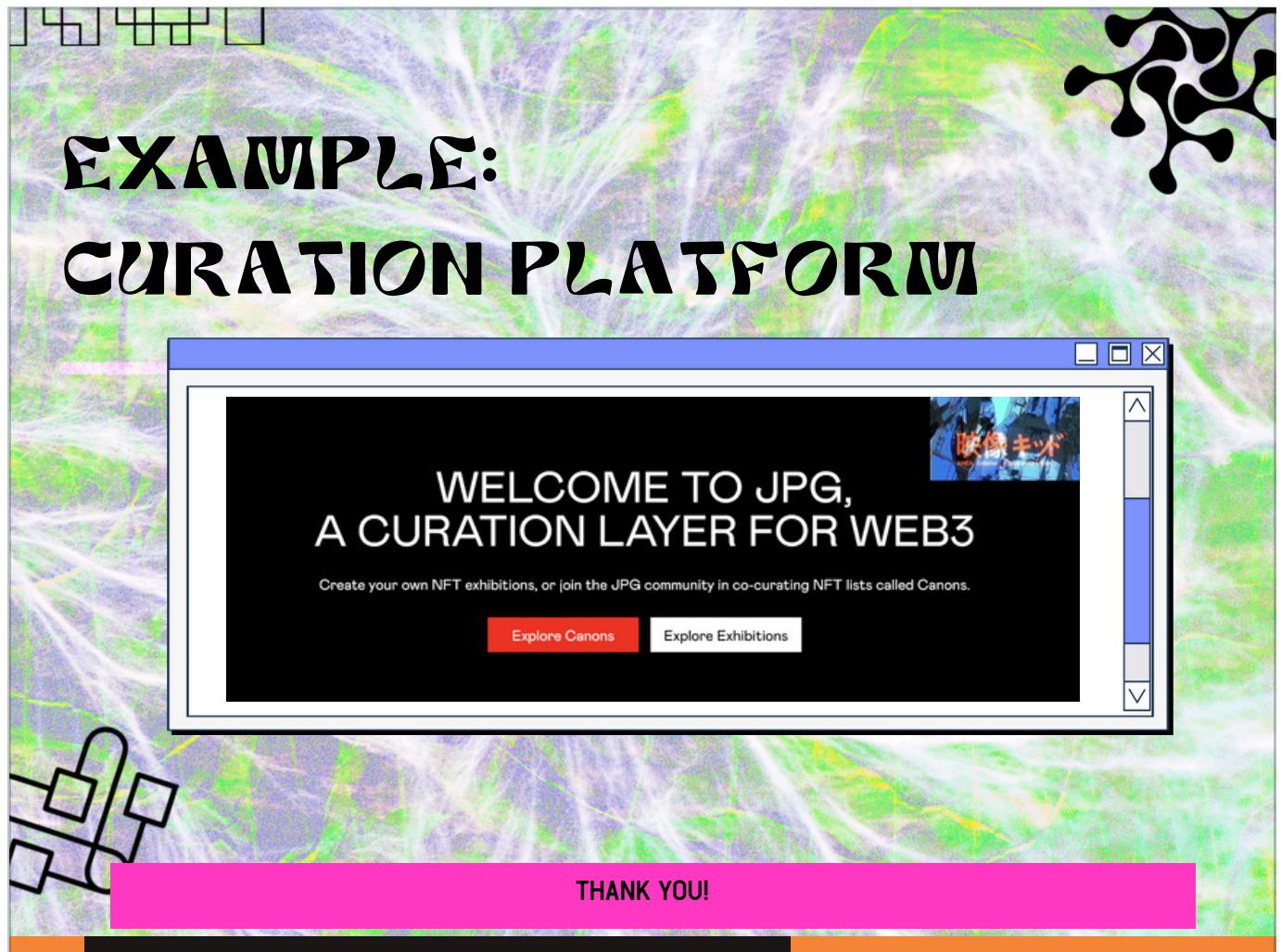
THANK YOU!



EXAMPLE: ARTIST-LED EVENTS

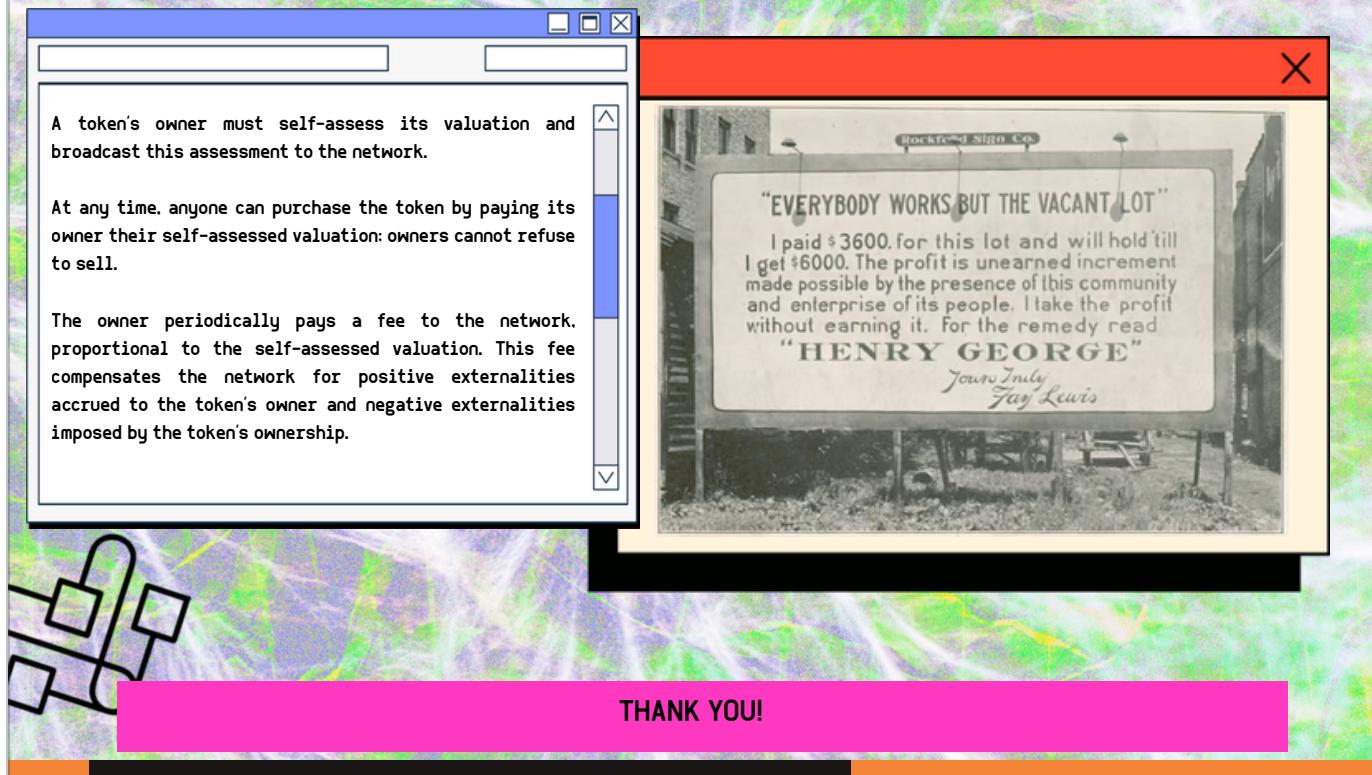


Refraction is a DAO that has used NFTs for fundraising, and focuses on organizing parties, events, and exhibitions in a fairly wide range of places.



JPG is sadly no longer active, but they were founded with the goal of decentralizing the art canon. The community could vote on which artworks should be included in canons, with each canon having a theme. It also had tools allowing anyone to set up and host an online exhibition

EXAMPLE: PARTIAL COMMON OWNERSHIP



People also use blockchains to create economic experiments. There have been several based on Henry George's Harberger Tax.

Very simply, in an economy using Harberger Tax for houses, for example, everyone sets a value for their house. This is the price that they would theoretically sell it at. And it's actually always for sale - if someone comes along and accepts the price, the house would be sold. You might think that people would respond by setting prohibitively high prices (if they don't want to sell their house) - but there's a limit on how a high a price they can set, because they also have to pay an annual tax based on the price they gave. The theory is that this system would disincentivize large property holders, mega landlords, because a too-large property owner couldn't afford the Harberger taxes on all their properties. In the case of a speculative asset bubble, Harberger taxes would also increase, and theoretically limit the speculation. This is of course, not tested in any major capacity (such as a housing market) but there is an active work towards implementing this in art sales via smart contracts being worked on by, among others, the Serpentine Gallery

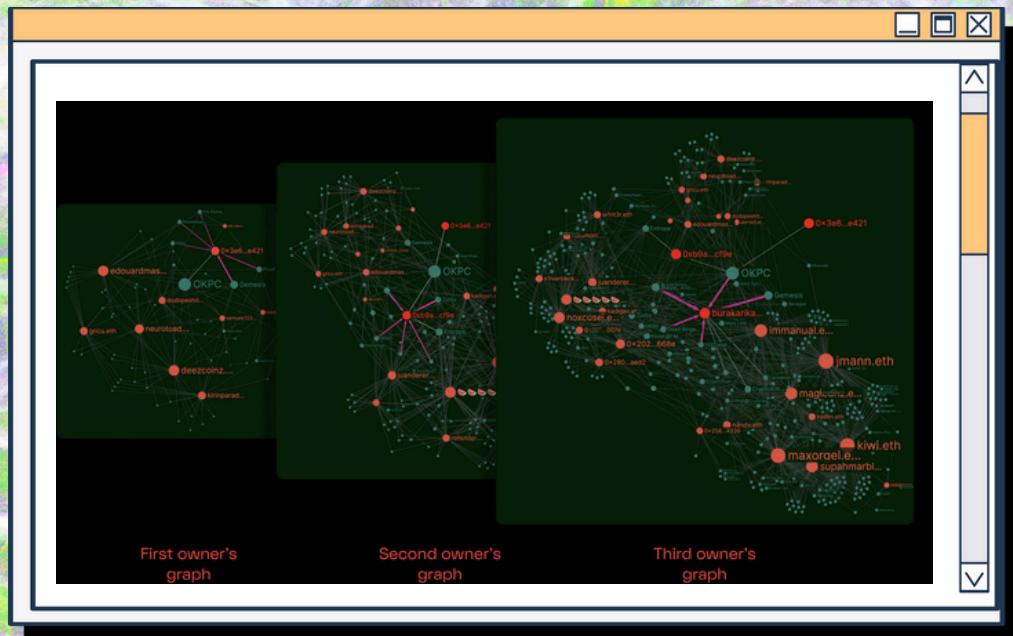
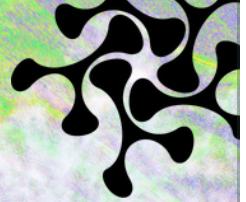


Simon de la Rouviere has also made some artworks exploring this mechanism, with the first ones beginning in 2019



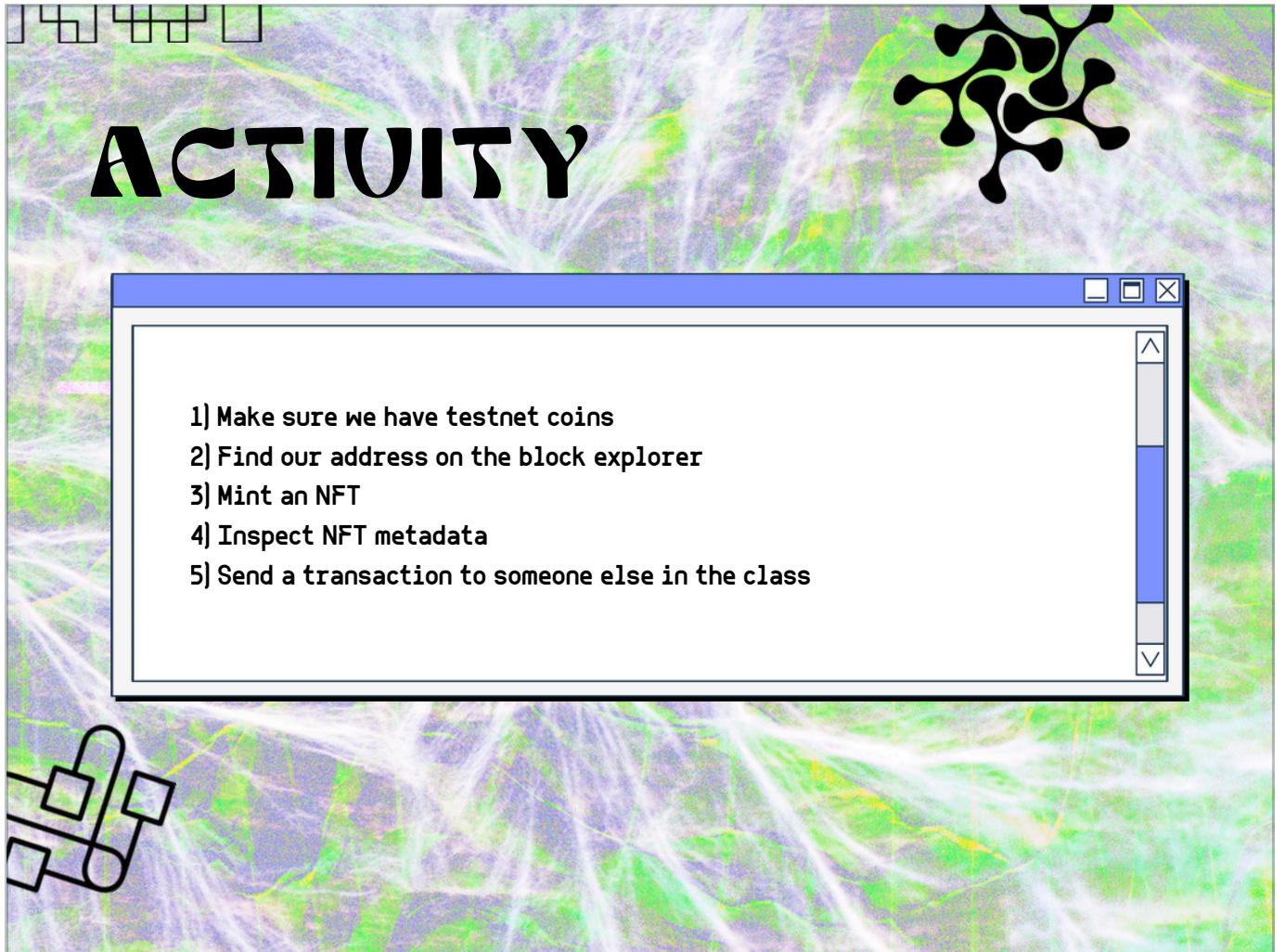
Kudzu is an NFT edition that has an experimental anti-market twist, implemented via a custom smart contract. It's a virus. Once someone has sent you a kudzu, you can never get rid of it. If you try, you will just also give a kudzu to them. Because they can't be traded or transferred in the normal way, they also can't really function within the patterns of the NFT market.

EXAMPLE: SOCIAL CONTRACTS, 2023



THANK YOU!

And finally, social contracts by Burak Arikan. Social contracts generate a visualization based on all the other NFTs in your wallet. If you send them to someone else, they evolve based on the overlaps in both of your collections/interactions. Though they can still move within a market, they are also unpredictable as "commodities" since they will change based on their current owner. They are visualizing and reflecting the social layer/community that engages with them.



Please see the text-based instructions to follow along with the activity