

# **Lonely AstroBears Space Agency: Educating Young Filipino Artists About the Basics of Non-Fungible Tokens and Creating a Space for Artistic Collaboration to Address Social Isolation and Loneliness by Means of a Generative NFT Art Collection**

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## **Abstract**

This research aims to create a collaborative space for Young Filipino artists and to raise awareness on the implications of the pandemic that started in 2019 towards young Filipino artists through a generative Non-Fungible Token (NFT) art collection. Many young artists have lost touch of their art style and their confidence to promote their art due to this issue, and this project will aim to address that. NFT is an intangible digital certificate of ownership for non-interchangeable physical, but mostly virtual assets such as digital artworks, generative art, 3D sculptures, and photographs. While NFTs can be unstable due to the cryptocurrency market, it can be argued that it is a notable avenue for collaboration and promoting social causes. With the use of generative art using Photoshop and Visual Studio code to generate visual icons using bears as subjects—as well as going through the process of selling it as an NFT collection—this study aims to educate young Filipino artists about the Basics of NFT, while raising awareness on social isolation and loneliness brought by the pandemic through a collaborative space within the art scene.

*Keywords:* social isolation, implications, digital token, raise awareness, identity, NFT, stability

## Introduction

As the art scene continues to push forward during the Corona Virus 19 (COVID-19) pandemic, young Filipino artists—students or not—struggle harder in extending the reach of their audience and patrons. But even before the pandemic, young visual artists in the country—though not limited to them—have been marketing their services for too low to nothing, just to build traction and make low-profit sales (Cristobal, 2018). Social media platforms have been the band-aid solution for most young artists who are building their identity. Without social media presence, it is now nearly impossible for any aspiring young Filipino artist to make a name for themselves in the art scene. It costs nothing, and it most certainly provides a quick fix to finding target audiences (Emptyspace, 2019). This brings up plenty of choices for artists and consumers, and at this point, the only consideration will be the price.

However, given that many young artists have turned to social media platforms to market their services, the works that they showcase are copied, pasted, and passed around freely which hurts their profitability. This also creates problems for young artists who are only starting to build their career. Here in the Philippines, it is especially problematic for many artists, thus leading them to deteriorating self-esteem and increased stress (Chen et al., 2021) since it is a common practice for the country's major social media demographic to simply take other people's visual works to post for their own gain or profit. The problem with this is the perpetual ignorance encouraged within said demographic (Mercado, 2019).

To address this concern, I utilized one relatively new method of profiting from artworks called Non-fungible Tokens (NFT).

NFT is a rising trend in the digital space. It shares a market with cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin yet is inherently different from it because in essence, NFT is a unique representation of ownership of unique items through tokenization which are protected by the blockchain of Ethereum. Ethereum is a decentralized platform that allows for peer-to-peer crypto currency exchange. This helps protect the owner of a particular property from losing its original copy, making the property innately unique. Items that can be turned into NFT include but are not limited to art, collectibles, game assets, or even properties from real estate (Xie, 2021). Although it appears complicated, many artists from all over the world have begun taking advantage of this new means of possessing ownership, as well as selling their artworks through bids and for better market prices.

One example of an NFT transaction is from a Canadian musician known as Grimes, who sold her animations on an NFT website for approximately six million dollars within 20 minutes of being posted in the market (Heemsbergen, 2021). While this artist was able to sell it for a whopping multimillion price tag, this simply shows how promising the NFT market can be. Another example of an NFT transaction is from Filipino Luis Buenaventura II, a prominent figure in the Philippine Crypto Market and pioneer in the NFT Art scene in the country, and his collaboration with Jose Delbo, an Argentine artist who once worked with Marvel and DC Comics. Together, they designed a multi-edition NFT art called "Satoshi the Creator – Genesis" which had 222 editions and made a net sale of approximately four hundred and forty-three thousand U.S. dollars (Gonzales, 2021). While this level of profitability is since these artists and personalities are well known and are

already established, NFT can no longer be taken lightly, but still needs to be trodden upon carefully.

With that, I focused on testing the stability of NFT, and studied its reliability as a solution in protecting young Filipino Artists' profitability and in building our identity in the Philippine art scene by means of commercializing a collection of uniquely generated artworks.

Regarding the importance of human connection, isolation and rejection by others psychologically wound us more deeply than almost anything else, and research by neuroscientists reveals that ostracism can lead to feeling actual physical pain. Other studies confirm that loneliness isn't good for anyone's health as it increases levels of stress hormones in the body and leads to poor sleep, a compromised immune system, and, in the elderly, cognitive decline (McAndrew, 2016).

Loneliness and isolation can be correlated with each other because the effect they have on people is often similar. For artists, there are various forms of bullying that they encounter—being mocked, downed, and stolen from and is a cause of many problems and social isolation and loneliness are not exempted from those. And one of the leading “bullies” that teenagers come across daily are social networks.

According to Agrawal (2017), social networks are not always a positive interaction medium especially for teenagers and young adults as it can also cause loneliness and depression. They may already feel as if they are not enough in normal real-life situations, and social networks do not help them to get any better as it only amplifies their feeling. However, this doesn't make these networks bad, nor should they not be used by young Filipino artists. They are just more likely to compare themselves to what they see and feel insecure which eventually leads to loneliness.

Further, Young Filipino Artists especially struggle in building their artistic identity even when they take advantage of various social media platforms during the pandemic due to social isolation. Their self-confidence deteriorates; thus, they are vulnerable to various issues including intellectual theft that leads to non-profitability. Although NFT is also designed to protect artists from intellectual property concerns, it does not come without its problems. Because NFT is part of crypto trading platforms, it is important to note its volatility. As it is highly volatile, it becomes risky for those who are not well-educated in crypto trading. There is also a likelihood that NFT may be unyielding for young Filipino Artists considering that most reports of sold NFTs are often those made by well-known artists such as Grimes, Luis Buenaventura II, and Jose Delbo. And while many established artists struggle understanding what NFTs are and the potential it holds (Ohlheiser, 2021), the same can be said for young Filipino artists knowing that their experience—when compared to the former—is much less. Another concern is that NFT is rather complicated and quite difficult to understand at first, which might appear extremely overwhelming and discouraging. The market has also become more and more saturated and challenging because tech capitalists are taking over the platform (Dash, 2021). Because of these concerns, I conducted a study on NFT's reliability to raise awareness and to promote oneself by commercializing a generative NFT art collection. I also created a how-to guide on how young Filipino artists can start creating their own NFT art and collection. Finally, I also conducted a survey for those who are experienced in the NFT market to help cement the outcome of this research. This research will

specifically answer the following questions: How reliable is NFT as a solution for young Filipino artists to get out of their comfort zone and jumpstart their career and artistic identity in the Philippine art scene? Are NFTs a good avenue to raise awareness regarding social issues? If selling NFT artworks is feasible and sustainable, how satisfactory is the profit in consideration of the return of investment and artistic value?

The process of achieving the output requires following a set of guidelines beginning from the concept formulation, creation of artworks, listing them as NFT art collectibles, followed by the commercialization of these artworks through OpenSea. Following the theme “Lonely AstroBears Space Agency”, I selected bears as the subject for this project as they are creatures that are naturally alone and in the context of this research, they ironically thrive better on their own. Another reason why I selected bears as the subject is because when the economic markets are down, it’s called bearish season, often perceived to be something negative, however, it can be taken advantage to reconnect to disconnections within the daily life, turning it into something more positive.

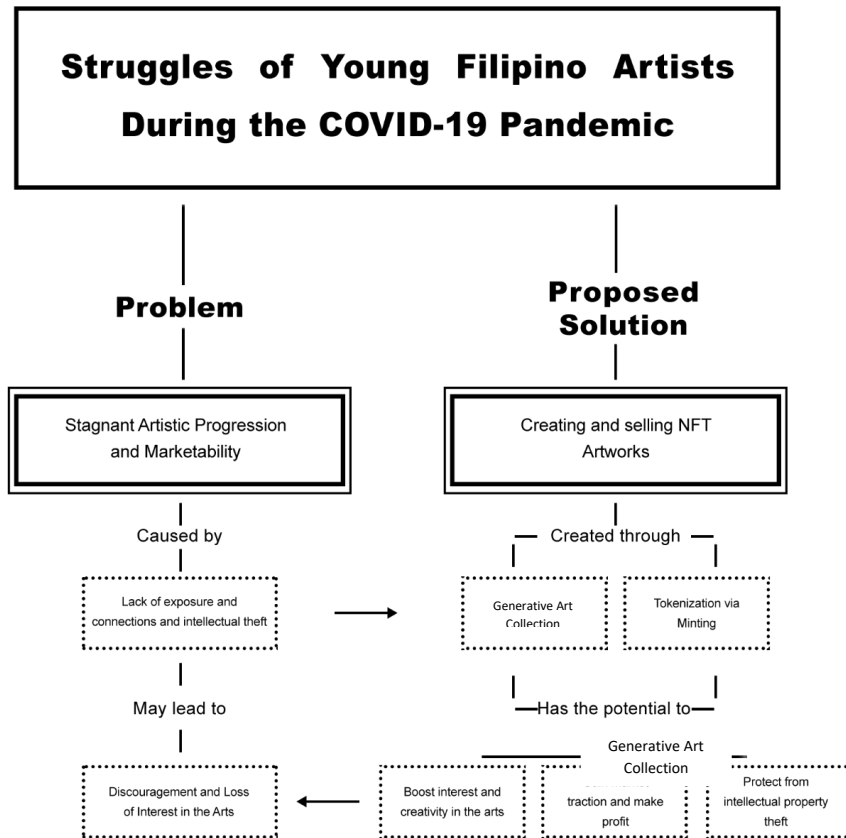
After minting these artworks into non-fungible tokens, they will be instruments in determining whether selling NFTs as an artist helps progress artistic identity and profitability. These artworks will help determine whether NFT is also a tool that can be used in promoting one’s artistic branding. This project aims to determine whether NFT is the next big step in artistic progression for young Filipino artists moving forward with today’s technology and norm. This project also aims to contribute to the progression of Multimedia Arts in the Philippines by giving young artists a new means to share and sell their artworks. If successful, this will introduce remarkable and talented Filipino artists globally.

To expound further, detailing the creative framework should be necessary.

### Creative Framework

Figure 1

NFT Creative Framework



In this section, my creative process, topical ideology, proposed solution, and medium of output execution are discussed. This section contains an extensive and creative overview of details in relation to the creation of the multimedia project. Generative art will be discussed to provide a contextual knowledge for the expected NFT art outputs and all the parameters of its production.

Formalism is the main theory applied in the output. Formalism helps artists focus on the form and design, without regard for the deeper perception of the arts. I used this theory and the freedom of expression that it brings to create artworks that depict how the researcher visualizes the “bears of this nation”—young Filipino artists who struggle with social isolation and loneliness and building their artistic identity.

I created a collection of 1553 artworks using bears as a subject along with themes of space and astronauts. All artworks are sized five hundred twelve by five hundred twelve (512x512) pixels and will all be randomized generated artworks. The artworks revolve around the theme “Lonely AstroBears Space Agency,” as mentioned in this article.

The diagram above visualizes the framework of my chosen topic and presents the expected outcome based on the proposed solution of a multimedia project. These artworks will function in connection to the chosen subject matter by being tokenized as NFT artworks, whether they are sold or not thereafter. I also created a set of guidelines on how to create NFT art for interested Young Filipino Artists which will be promoted using Facebook and YouTube. After the period of studying and testing the results of these artworks, I used gathered data for a conclusive report on the experience, repercussions, and new information regarding NFT art. The conclusive report will help fortify or change the pre-existing guideline to NFT art creation, which will then be used as the final guide for Young Filipino Artists aiming to create NFT art which could then serve as a new platform for all artists.

This research was designed to utilize qualitative methods in gathering data. The said method is meant to give answers to and or develop explanations to a certain phenomenon mainly by asking questions such as how, why, and what. The qualitative method was used to understand how NFT can become an alternative for young Filipino artists seeking to build their community of patrons. The data gathering has resulted into finding out if the minted artworks and website is effective in introducing Young Filipino Artists in creating NFT works.

The research materials used within this study are collected from various sources namely articles that discuss NFT and its parameters and a survey for NFT Artists. The research aims to introduce NFT to eager young Filipino artists through one of the favored media in the NFT Art Scene: Generative Art. Part of the research materials used are information shared online by other NFT Creators worldwide.

The respondents are selected people from NFT Philippines Facebook Group. The method of gathering data would be divided into two (2) steps. The first step would be a preliminary survey questionnaire given to the respondents which will ask what media are most used to produce artworks, and what artworks are they willing to learn even further. The preliminary survey is comprised of a Likert scale type of question followed by a long descriptive type of question. The second step would be after the artworks and educational materials have been created, and whether these materials helped the respondents learn and become more eager to learn about NFT. This project is aimed towards community building and exposing an artist to more patrons.

Elaborating on the design process, the expected output for this research would consist of 1,553 randomly generated artworks, a Discord server, and a Facebook page that will guide young Filipino Artists in the basics of NFT Art Creation. The theme is called “Lonely AstroBears Space Agency” and was randomized using layers of heads, bodies, backgrounds, and accessories. The method of production is using digital painting and code for generating 1553 art pieces. Select artworks will then be posted on OpenSea. The utility of the project is that all NFT holders gain access to perks from partnership acquired benefits such as exclusive participation in Mental Health Workshops conducted by MentalHealth PH and more.

## **Pre-production**

During the pre-production, I worked on the conceptualization of the design, the code to be used, as well the platforms to be utilized. I also did test designs on Photoshop and test runs on the generative code. I created an approximate of 300 generations out of only 8 designs for every layer including heads, bodies, capes, and accessories. I also did necessary research on NFT designs, Gantt chart preparations, and proper budget allocation. It was also during the pre-production stage that I did my preliminary survey for the people involved in the NFT Market.

Technically, most of the necessary work needed to produce this project was prepared and accomplished during this stage. Finally, the necessary research on formulating the basic steps on NFT Art creation was also done.

## **Production**

The second most important part of the project—the main production stage—is where I created the designs for the bears and the collection. The logos, font selection, as well as the overall theme of the designs were made during this stage. Initially, this is where I made the first draft to the bears. Layers for presentation and conceptualization purposes were also created together with the final code necessary for the final generation. After the design drafts, I proceeded with the creation of the final designs and created layers beginning with the head designs. I then worked on the body and accessory designs after. I created between 20-30 layers for each design. It was a rather straightforward process as I did most of the work in Photoshop, utilizing digital painting. After building all the layers, I designed a few backgrounds as well. Afterwards, I ran the layers through the algorithm that used the generative art code I used and generated 1,553 unique graphics. During the production stage, I began design work for the website and began working on the Discord server.

## **Post-production**

For post-production, the most important stage, I mostly did the finalization touch ups for the designs based on panel suggestions. This is the stage where I made most of the work including publication materials, final website design, post-surveys, and exhibitions. For the final design touch-ups, I made smoother line works and improved on the colors, and finally, I made more variations of the designs. For the publication materials, I created posters and social media marketing materials to promote the project, in combination with the final website. Since the project was finished at this stage, post-surveys were also done to determine the project's effectiveness. Lastly, an in-person exhibit was done for the project and the Discord server was launched as well. Since it's the final stage, the Basics of NFT Guidelines were posted on YouTube and the artworks were listed for sale on the NFT Marketplace called OpenSea.

## **Review of Related Literature**

This section would be presenting previous and related literature tackling NFTs, the situation of the pandemic in the Philippines, as well as the Philippine Art Scene. In this section of the topic, the parameters of NFT, Social Isolation and the Philippine Art Scene will be heavily focused on.

### **NFT and Crypto Market**

With the consistent changes happening in the technological landscape, the art scene plays catch up. While the market has been relatively established, non-fungible tokens (NFTs) are bringing more opportunities for artists to showcase their artworks in these current times. Non-fungible tokens are digital files which become unique digital assets after a process called minting. After the minting process, they become part of a digital blockchain. Digital assets can be photographs, digital art, songs, or any digital file that can be uploaded onto a server, which in this case is the Ethereum blockchain. Because of the pandemic, business gurus, technology innovators, and other mainstream personalities have ventured and hopped into various trends that can either shape the new normal or cause the digital economy to catastrophically crumble (Schumann, 2021).

Thus, it begs the question: Are NFTs sustainable? Are they the solution to the problem of up-and-coming young artists, especially in the Philippines, who struggle to make their mark in the art industry? In the early months of 2021, NFTs peaked and became something to look out for both statistically and innovatively, but in May 2021, NFT dipped, and ultimately crashed causing many buyers and NFT enthusiasts to panic sell their NFT properties for the fear of losing its value. The number of active NFT wallets dipped by 40% and the sales crashed by 60% (Rahul N., 2021).

While this dip may simply have been a hiccup and a turbulence that most crypto markets experience, it is still rather terrifying to witness millions of dollars' worth of tokens lose their value in a week. But to say that the NFT market is a complete fad and failure is perhaps a pessimistic perspective on what could possibly help shape the future of trading art all over the world, including the Philippines. And even if it is still too early to say whether NFTs are reliable or not, those who claim that NFTs will completely crash may simply lack foresight (Sephton, 2021). This relates to the topic since the artworks are to be sold as NFT.



## **NFT as a New Means to Progress the Arts**

Since it is still too early to say that young Filipino artists should avoid this at all costs, perhaps they could also venture out and try it for themselves to see how it works for them. Albeit unestablished artists may struggle to sell their works as an NFT, the fact that the market will continuously be stimulated may contribute to the consistent growth in value and appreciation of NFTs, as proven by all the other crypto currencies. This is certainly a future to look forward to, especially if it continues to be as promising as it turns out in its earlier configurations.

While NFTs do sound promising, it does not come without risks. These risks include the lack of return of investment, or the diminishing of the idea that NFT is the solution for young artists to thrive. The lack of return of investment is a risk because most certainly, NFTs will always require an investment in hardware and software. To create art pieces to be sold as NFTs, time also needs to be invested. NFTs are not as transactional as commissions are—they will not make quick money as an unestablished artist might hope it would. It might also diminish a young artist's perspective of NFTs and begin to start asking questions as to whether they should keep going or just stick to the traditional means of finding work in the art scene.

However, if a young artist is lucky enough to experience a breakthrough, its long-term effects can be maximized. The profit that can be earned to successfully sell NFTs is highly competitive in value and will also help build clout necessary to be an established artist. Since everything is digitized, the value will either remain the same, or continue to increase as people spend more time in the virtual landscape (Browne, 2021). While it is certainly not the same for everybody, the possibility is always in existence.

Although NFTs are still highly volatile, breakthroughs such as this one will always help pave the way for new innovations. Perhaps NFTs are only a steppingstone for artists to find ways to trade and share their artworks in better and brand-new ways, and this alone makes it worth looking into.

## **Testing NFT**

To test NFT's reliability, the artist will create a collection of generative art as NFT. Being a young unestablished artist, it becomes easier to see how the process works and to see what it takes to be able to sell NFTs. The process to be undergone is 2D Drawing and Painting using Photoshop. After a sketch has been created, the researcher will then choose a blockchain wherein the NFT will be issued as this is what will determine where the NFTs can be sold. Every blockchain has a unique set of token standards, compatible wallet services, and designated marketplaces which will make the trading more seamless (Leech, 2021).

To better test NFTs, the artist will take on a Formalistic approach on this. And because it will be a set of Formalistic artworks, only the lines and the outward detail of the artworks are focused on. To achieve this, the artist will focus will use 2D drawing and painting to create layers for heads, bodies, and accessories. These will all then be used as the final layers for icon generation. After this, the artworks will be put up at OpenSea.io, a website wherein NFT Artists can promote and put up their works for sale.

## **Situation in the Philippines During the Pandemic**

Since late 2019, the Philippines has been facing a tragedy that no one had anticipated: the COVID-19 Pandemic. While the whole world has been terribly affected by this pandemic, the bodies governing the Republic of the Philippines has particularly struggled with handling and mitigating its effects towards its constituents (Vallejo & Ong, 2020). No proper resolution, crisis management, and health care mandates were imposed as soon as the pandemic started resulting in panic among the people (Nicomedes & Avila, 2020).

Because of the pandemic, people have been looking for various ways to earn and survive, including artists both new and established. Among those new ways of earning come disguised as a technological innovation called NFT. It is the central idea challenged in this research by creating sets of artworks to be sold as non-fungible tokens.

## **Importance of Human Connection**

Social isolation is on the rise, and it's becoming clear that it has serious physical, mental, and emotional effects. Since the 1980s, the percentage of adults in the United States who claim they are lonely has increased from 20% to 40%.

About one-third of Americans over 65 and half of those over 85 now live alone. People in poor health, particularly those suffering from anxiety or depression, are more prone to feel lonely (Khullar, 2016).

These social issues are becoming the affected people's way of living their lives, but one can try to stop or at least control it by taking certain actions. According to Dr. Henderson (2016), we need to discover strategies to reach out to those who are socially isolated and allow them to communicate with others so that they can "maintain active participation" in society. They would also need support and encouragement so that they would do better when interacting with other people. He mentioned various steps we can take in order to guide these people and included in it is being nice to others because truly enough, kindness plays a major role in making people feel better about themselves.

## **The Pandemic and the Philippine Art Scene**

Because of the constraints and limitations caused by the pandemic, the visual art scene was also affected. Exhibitions were halted and art showcases became entirely virtual. While this does not necessarily take away from artworks themselves, the viewing experience becomes compromised (Sorilla, 2020). The ability to convey emotions through art may diminish which may lead viewers to understand artwork differently than what was intended.

And since everything today is mostly digital, artists can take advantage of digital avenues in promoting this ideology. Since most artworks today are exhibited virtually, promoting artworks has also become easier. With that said, taking advantage of virtual art showcases may contribute to the marketability of the artworks to be tokenized as NFTs. Instead of perceiving virtual art

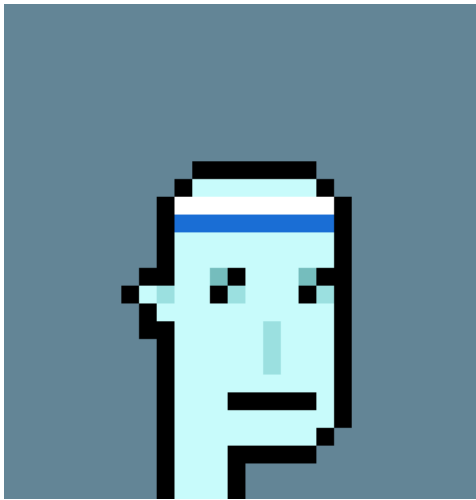
exhibits as a limitation, they can become an advantage in commercializing artworks, especially NFT art.

### Review of Related Works

This section of the paper will be citing visual designs that either relate to the aesthetics of the researcher's artworks or works that correlate with subject matters involving the pandemic. Cited works will help with analytical deconstruction and reconstruction of my artworks and each one's design inspiration, determining what is aesthetically pleasing and what is not in relation to commercializing NFT and showcasing art in general.

#### Figure 2

*Larva Labs, CryptoPunks 3100, 2017*



This artwork highlights the birth of generative art and are one of the pioneers of change in how artists share their artworks by selling art as NFT. Larva Labs began in 2017, and even though their first collection was stolen, they are still one of the leaders in the NFT art scene. Adding colorful twists to represent an ideology is a unique innovation and the artists made use of bright and light colors to highlight the pixel icon. Similarly, the researcher will add color, bright lights, and randomized layers. The researcher will also sell the artworks as NFT.

### Figure 3

*Louise Soloway-Chan, Full Gear, CONTACTLESS, 2020*



This artwork depicts the gritty reality of life during the COVID-19 Pandemic. This artwork comes from an Online Exhibit held during the pandemic called 'CONTACTLESS', where a series of artworks highlighting life during the pandemic are curated and showcased. The artistic choice to make the colors dull and lifeless helps convey the feeling of lifelessness even better. The murky art style also helps emphasize the confusing and difficult life that many people experience today. The artwork is essentially a commentary on how people have been forced to distance oneself from other people, ultimately leading everyone to detach from life and the living. The researcher aims to invoke the same feeling with his artworks by also creating pieces that are dark and dull and lifeless.

### Figure 4

*Yuga Labs, Bored Ape Yacht Club 3749, 2021*



This collection depicts apes as the subjects of their icons. It comes from a collection called 'Bored Ape Yacht Club' made by Yuga Labs, where 10000 variations were created. The artistic choice to make the colors vibrant and the lines rigid solidify the design. The quirky art style also helps emphasize the unique design of each unique icon.

**Figure 5**

*Aswang, Aswang #67 - Sarawali, 2021*



The Aswang Collection is one of the first local Filipino NFT Collections that first made its way to more global audiences. The creator of this collection hand drew each edition and used digital art to highlight every Filipino mythological creature known. While this is different from the researcher's project plan, it still showcases the idea that Filipinos can also create a collection that can be recognized globally.

**Figure 6**

*ArtsofADP, Bored Punks of Society #6325, 2021*



The Bored Punks of Society is yet another Filipino collection that pioneered the NFT art scene here in the country. Part of their project goals is to educate and invite other Filipino artists to create and to invest into the NFT art scene. Similarly, the researcher will use the NFT Collection to raise awareness and to educate other artists on how they can use this avenue to promote themselves and what they believe in.

## **Results and Discussion**

In this chapter, the results, information, and data gathered will be discussed and expounded upon. Explanations, clarifications, and further elaborations will be completed with regards to the NFT community questions namely its inclusivity, what it offers in terms of artistic collaboration, and community building. Details of its risks and feasibility are also discussed in this chapter. The sum of survey respondents was a combination of NFT enthusiasts and creators, and student artists. The researcher also interviewed an NFT Project Manager and a Decentralized Autonomous Organization Officer for a more in-depth talk on the parameters of NFT including its launching and conceptualization.

The survey was conducted using Google and Microsoft Forms using Likert scale questions. The results can be found below starting with the preliminary survey, followed by the interviews, with the post-research survey assessment thereafter.

### **Research Interviews**

In an interview with a Filipino NFT project manager under the pseudonym Varian, questions regarding parameters of NFT art communities and projects including the feasibility of promoting a project for a social cause in the NFT Space is possible. He was also asked about NFT's future, together with artists and creators.

According to Varian, NFT is a great tool for promotion (full interview transcript can be found in Appendix F). But this is limited by the fact that because the community continuously increases in volume, it becomes more and more difficult to hit a good break. However, if the right avenue is achieved and the right target people are reached, it can educate and bring awareness to certain topics.

In another interview with Joshua Ignacio, a House Coach at Merit Circle, one of the larger International Decentralized Autonomous Organizations, questions on his personal experience in the NFT Space, the focal point of the industry as it is currently, and the parameters of developing a project were asked.

He said he believes that a project requires both an artist and a developer for it to be successful. He also believes that projects require ample time when it comes to marketing, or in terms of the NFT Space, "shilling" to also help gauge the interest of those participating in projects. He also mentioned that one of the common problems in space currently is the stigma that is just another Ponzi scheme, or a networking job, as some would say. But ultimately, Mr. Ignacio says that he believes that all Filipinos will one day have some form of NFT Property, regardless of how this industry develops.

## Research Results about the Design Process

The Design Process began with the conceptualization of the NFT niche or topic. The project is done with generative art, thus unique images are necessary to complete a certain number of icons, and in this research, 1553 is needed. Since the topic revolves around social isolation and loneliness, it is important to relate this to how NFTs are often created and commercialized. NFTs are often created in the form of creatures, such as apes, rhinoceroses, cats, and many more. For this project, I decided on using bears as the subject matter who will be wearing space suits. This is because bears are creatures that are known to be naturally isolated, and they will be wearing space suits as this will portray the idea that being lonely and isolated can be like the feeling of being adrift in space, not knowing where to go next. These ideas contributed to the formulation of the project icons.

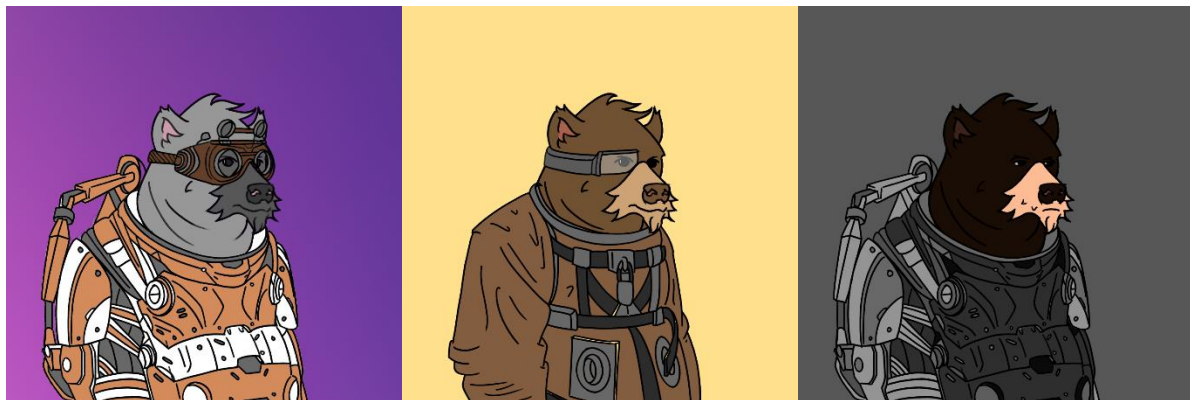
### Figure 9

*The Final Design for the Base Layer for the Bears*



### Figures 10-12

*The Bears After Using the Randomizer (using code)*



The Bears' outfits were designed to have unique colors, combinations, and designs to successfully generate 1553 unique icons. The three (3) icons above are an example of these designs ranging from classic space suits to more modernistic ones, and colors that are dark and light.

It is also visible in the figures above that the backgrounds are different from one another. Facial expressions and head gear are also randomized among all icons.

The workflow began after researching previous NFT projects done internationally by the likes of Bored Ape Yacht Club and Bored Punks of Society. Tools used were Photoshop and a Wacom tablet.

### **Post-sale Results**

About 36 people have signed onto join the community through Discord. As of writing, 121 people are following the project's Facebook page, with 46 accounts following the Twitter page. Sixteen (16) people subscribe to the YouTube channel where the Basics of NFT Video Tutorials can be found. The video series has garnered over 650 in total views.

After launching the project and listing 51 artworks for sale on OpenSea on June 10, 2022, 6 artworks were sold during the first week. The project has earned a total of 0.021 ETH, which is equivalent to Php 1,265.02. The purchasers included the art style and design as one of their considerations in purchasing the artworks.

Certainly, this project did not perform as well as major projects did, but it is sufficient evidence that an NFT project by a young artist can do relatively well even if it is a start-up. A project needs to be done with a team. It also needs to be done within a long period of time to find success. A year is not enough for unestablished artists, therefore making the Art Scene a difficult avenue for new artists.

It is also important to note that the message of the project was not effectively conveyed. People are unable to relate to bears but found the design to be cool. Something that speaks more about the cause of the project would have contributed to conveying the message better.

### **Conclusion**

With the fast-paced technological advancements that the world has come to adapt to, it was never hindered despite the catastrophe brought by the pandemic. The difficulty to reach others from all over the world may have only forced the hand of technological gurus to find ways to promote the things that matter, and that includes art. Despite the limitations and difficulties brought by the pandemic, the world saw the arising of a new form of art—NFTs. Despite the limitations, and the social isolation brought by all the unfortunate events, NFT became one of the driving forces for artistic collaboration and artistic progression.



Following this project's objectives, the researcher was able to plot simplified guidelines on the basics of NFT through a video tutorial series posted on YouTube. A space was also successfully created not just for the guidelines, but also for new artists who want to share their artworks within the NFT Art Scene. Furthermore, artworks were also listed using the guidelines shared, and made 6 sales on the first week of its release. Finally, I was able to interview those within the space as to how effective their NFT journey was by following it. With all the garnered results, the researcher is now able to create a brand-new set of guidelines that would better help artists in starting off their journey in the NFT Space.

While it is still too early to be completely definite, it is safe to say that NFT is at least a future. Given that the technology it falls under is new and therefore no principles are kept in place, it is very difficult to be certain. However, it is made evident by this research that NFT Collections do not necessarily contribute effectively enough especially when promoting social causes. It also found that this research is evidence that an unknown artist will find difficulties in kicking off a project as it would take a relatively long time that could last for over a year. However, it has the capability to open new opportunities to create new avenues for different social causes, proven by a partnership with MentalHealth PH, a non-profit organization in the Philippines that advocate for mental health causes, and this project. This will help the community to venture out into more programs, whether it still follows through the NFT Space or not.

## **Recommendations**

### **A Broader Timeline**

To succeed in creating NFT projects that make a difference, a broader timeline with proper roadmaps is necessary to not just meet deadlines, but also to build confidence in achieving project goals, including conceptualization, preparation, and execution. This is also important in building up the community to ensure its success and a wide reach. Most NFT projects take from 6 months to a year of preparation before it launches successfully, and even that is not guaranteed. Taking one's time with marketing is also of great importance to ensure success.

### **A Specific Goal in Mind**

What are you aiming for? What do you want the project to achieve? These are just some of the questions that one needs to consider when making an NFT project. People take notice if a project's goals are clear and feasible, and it becomes one of their considerations when buying into one. However, if you just want to create and share your artwork in the NFT Space, it is completely acceptable, not guaranteed to be successful.

## **Build a Team**

While it is doable to do an NFT project alone, the most efficient and effective way to do one is with a team. This makes it so that the strains and difficulties that come with the project aren't dealt with alone, and burnouts will become less likely. It also releases pressure off one's shoulder if there are already some people who believe in the project. It is also important to at least partner with a developer that is experienced in NFT Space so that it will also be so much easier to launch projects.

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