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## What Is Our Visual Approach To This Collective Art History Timeline?

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Our approach to A Blockchain Art History Timeline is defined by three concepts inspired by features and capacities of crypto and blockchain technologies and art historical debates about the use of timelines. It also seeks to communicate both to viewers and contributors to the timeline, through its collective construction. A user's journey through the website and timeline is depicted in the following demo animation:

[vimeo.com/443439158](https://vimeo.com/443439158)

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### 1. Time as Spiral

Blockchains are special kinds of clocks. Inspired by astronomical clocks and charts we have organised artworks in a chronological spiral, starting with a piece of blockchain and crypto art prehistory, 'Boggs Bills 1980-90s' in the centre. As users navigate away from this starting point the background colour subtly changes, visually indicating the progression of time and allowing the user to easily understand where and when they are in time (Image 1). They navigate through time, space and the connections between artworks within the timeline.

This allows users to navigate between artworks via a way that embraces the complexities of how artworks inhabit time (temporally), space (media) and concept (contextually). This vision is in direct opposition to the oversimplification present in conventional art history timelines which privilege a more centralised top-down view of what qualifies as significant art.

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### 2. Collective, Subjective Perspectives

Users can navigate the timeline and artworks in two ways: via a 'diagrammatic view' (Image 3) and a 'psychogeographic map' (Image 2). Both of these follow a psychogeographic approach which emphasises a collective and subjective perspective of cultural history. When submitting artworks to be included in the timeline, contributors will be prompted to include five (approximately) contextual tags which serve to highlight

and communicate the themes and relevance of artworks to a timeline.

Each artwork will be visualised in context, revealing the nature of the scenes in which artworks are created rather than purely heralding individual practitioners or artworks.

Each artwork will require the submission of text (to be used in the diagrammatic view) and images (to be used in the psychogeographic map).

#### Diagrammatic View

From the diagrammatic view the user can navigate to other artworks which share the same tags (Image 4). Thematic connections are made across time and artworks,

enabling users to simultaneously navigate time and concept. The visual language of this view draws inspiration from astronomy diagrams, this aesthetic serves as a visual metaphor for the science of prediction core to blockchain functionality. The diagrammatic view will also contain timestamped details of the author of items of content that can be toggled on and off.

#### Psychogeographic Map View

Within the psychogeographic map view users will be able to navigate through a visual and visceral point of view which is constructed using five image tags which accompany the text based tags. Connections between these image tags are constructed using rudimentary predictive machine processes\* which meld together artwork and context. Allowing users to navigate the visual and contextual landscape of Blockchain Artworks and their associated contexts.

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### 3. Prediction

Prediction is the third and final characteristic which comes into play throughout the visual identity we have created for A Blockchain Art History Timeline. Our designs explore this characteristic through aesthetics as well as process in order to play on the concept of speculation which is integral to the cultures and functionality of cryptocurrency and the blockchain.

Astronomy and astrology diagrams became a key visual reference for the ways in which complex information about space and time can be communicated.

Prediction was also important in terms of process when constructing the psychogeographic map. These images were created using predictive machine processes, which filled in the gaps between artworks and image tags. Exploring how content-aware tools can be used as a tool to predict aesthetics and contexts. (See image 10, before and after prediction process)

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#### Summary

In summary, our vision for the timeline is for it to look forwards to the future as well as back through time, however we hope that through navigation the two can become a blurred, simultaneous experience. Playing on the notion of prediction as an integral aspect of the blockchains functionality, as well as an ode to the contextual connections made through artworks in non-linear time. Blurring the aesthetics of the future, present and past.

- ★ We are currently doing this through subverting Content-Aware Tools predominantly used to touch up photographs. There is scope to explore similar predictive machine processes at a later stage in the project.