



Draft 1.0

Land Art token (PARRY)

Decentralised Land Art ownership using the Ethereum blockchain.

Richard Parry

Table of contents

Abstract – p.1

Introduction – p.2

Token mechanism – p.4

Case studies – p.5

Market analysis – p.9

Conclusion – p.11

References – p.12

Abstract

Land Art is art made directly in the landscape using natural materials. It involves the investigation of alternative sites, production methods and subjectivities outside

established centres. Since the 1960s, Land Art has intensified a media (mediation) practice as much as a sculptural one¹.

Richard Parry introduces his own digital token (Land Art token) to record ownership of his Land Art for both new and established audiences. This token offers new possibilities for operating outside the structural limitations of the art-world. Token owners hold common ownership of Land Art directly. Leveraging the speed of a decentralised and immutable ownership ledger, Land Art tokens can scale and deliver ownership of Land Art in new and specifically different ways.

The token's smart contract on the blockchain collects hashes of the owner which is the basis for Land Art ownership – this data remains available for the public and its immutability can be checked by comparing hashes.

Introduction

Problem overview

The global contemporary art-world is growing, generating 40 million transactions in 2018². Despite the growing markets for Land Art, the established art-world structures of auction houses, museums, commercial galleries, and curatorial services have largely excluded the unnaturalised artists that cannot negotiate market representation within their singularity.

In addition, traditional representative gallery models take up to 60% of the entire artwork sale price. While direct artist-to-collector sales of Land Art are possible,

¹ (Season Five: An assortment of Contributions on Themes of Land, Art, and Commons, 2017))

² (Art market worldwide – statistics and facts, 2020)

most collectors must rely on monopolised exhibition systems, based on the exclusive nineteenth century gallery model to safeguard any value in the underlying art. Represented artists that rely on institutional indexicality and circulation can handle this, but smaller artists and artworks with alternative models of presence are excluded without a pre-subscribed market.

1.1 Why?

Many historicised artists, such as Robert Smithson have taken positions against Land Art's cultural confinement³ within centralised art-world systems that require contextual purchase to 'go back to nature'⁴. Unfortunately, this risks friction between outside subjectivities and private collectors with long-term market commitments. Private collectors today must manage numerous contextual streams across institutional investment platforms, all of which exclude possibilities for artist-led agency and distributed subjectivity happening 'outside'.

1.2 Statement

My idea is to make a decentralised Land Art ledger - so ownership of my Land Art can be experienced outside of art world systems, forever.

Land Art token pertains to an ongoing constellation of Richard Parry Land Art initiatives in Europe, East Africa and the Americas and poses a paradigm shift in the experience and ownership of Land Art. Land Art token is well positioned to take advantage of the decentralised nature of smart contracts to re-mediate contemporary art ownership in new and specifically different ways.

³ (Smithson, 1972).

⁴ (Season Five: An assortment of Contributions on Themes of Land, Art, and Commons, 2017)

Token mechanism

2.1. Specification

TOKEN NAME

Land Art (PARRY)

CIRCULATING SUPPLY

100

FORMAT

ERC20 compliant

DIVISIBILITY

10000

TRADEABLE BETWEEN USERS

Yes

2.2 Token standard

The ERC20 format provides a common interface for digital assets on the Ethereum blockchain, making integration between different wallets, owners, and exchanges a seamless experience.

Land Art tokens are designed to be fully compliant with ERC20 standards to ensure that the tokens are compatible with all wallets (Mist, Geth, Metamask), and future services (e.g., decentralised Land Art exchange).

Case studies

3.1. Why Land Art ownership needs to be decentralised.

Just ten weeks after Hito Steyerl's "Power Plants" opened at Serpentine galleries, Yana Peel, CEO of Serpentine galleries, one of the most interconnected positions in the contemporary art ecosystem, resigned following criticism of her beneficial ownership of at least a 25% stake⁵ in a cyber intelligence company whose software has allegedly been used by authoritarian regimes to spy on dissidents⁶

In a statement Yana Peel warned London's community of artists and supporters, "If campaigns of this type continue, the treasures of the art community – which are so fundamental to our society – risk an erosion of private support. That will be a great loss for everyone⁷".

Situations like this demonstrate how centralised platforms of public circulation and private support are fundamentally misaligned with socio-political agency. Artists are torn between invisibility-without-context 'outside' the art-world and the orchestrated conditions of the image-culture complex therein.

In 2017 Beatrix Ruf resigned as director of Amsterdam's influential Stedelijk Museum amid allegations of conflicts of interest. The allegations stemmed from Ruf's operation of a private art advisory service, where she earned €437,306 in 2015 at the same time as serving as Director of the Stedelijk Museum, and the terms attached to a major donation to the institution that she secured in 2016⁸.

⁵ (Serpentine Galleries Director Yana Peel Resigns, Blaming 'Toxic' Allegations About Her Links to a Cyberweapons Company, 2021).

⁶ (Serpentine Galleries chief resigns, 2021)

⁷ Ibid

⁸ (Kaplan, 2021)

In her resignation, Beatrix Ruff stated, “We brought extraordinary collections to Amsterdam and significantly deepened our relevance to society and our communities⁹”.

Situations like this demonstrate how art’s institutional hierarchies and social structures are fundamentally misaligned with the ethics of public accountability. Art operates as an interface – between public-facing incantations of social relevance, and the exclusive derivatives of private wealth thereafter.

In the writing of this paper, I observe that ‘decentralisation’ and ‘blockchain’ are latter-day buzzwords with numerous artists creating “blockchain art” simply because of the growing popularity of the term. Many of these projects either fail to understand the meaning of “decentralised” or simply do not implement a fully decentralised item, attempting to sell a pseudo-decentralised platform as a surrogate art object instead. The Land Art token protocol is completely, fundamentally, and technologically different. The protocol delivers a truly blockchain-based service that is entirely decentralised, unlike many other “decentralised” art ownership platforms in existence today.

3.2. The voracious gallery backer

Todd from New York is a really into contemporary art. He has visited London’s commercial galleries including Project Native Informant, Sadie Coles, and Arcadia Misa. He also likes to travel the world and enjoys attending a wide variety of international art fairs such as Frieze, Frieze Masters, Frieze New York, and Frieze Los Angeles. His favourite artists are Eddie Peake, Oscar Murillo, and Merlin Carpenter.

⁹ Ibid

Unfortunately, there are many obstacles between Todd and his favourite artists. Todd's painting collection is valued at over 30,000GBP, and he does not want to keep buying more art because of the ecological impact of shipping it, so he joins an art fund to back a cool new commercial gallery instead. The gallery's application, unfortunately for Todd, is rejected by Frieze. In fact, this gallery is not admitted to any international art fairs. Todd then suggests applying to an alternative exhibition platform in London – Condo. However, much to Todd's dismay, some of his favourite London artists dismiss the platform, threatening his subjectivity.

Emerging commercial galleries are also a very limited store of wealth in the contemporary art industry since every represented artist requires their own contextual infrastructure. Nevertheless, Todd now backs a mix of different galleries to deliver the contextual relevancy he requires. This is very annoying to Todd, and he wishes there were a more unified solution.

This is where Land Art token comes in. Using Land Art token, Todd can enjoy ownership of the Richard Parry Land Art constellation existing around the world without any limitations.

3.3. The old-school collector

Peter is in his early 60s. Throughout his life, his favourite hobby has been acquiring material from the Relational Aesthetics movement and buying undervalued art by Martin Kippenberger. He is disappointed that art in the digital age is mediated and streamed by commercial galleries and vested interests, rather than artists. He wishes he could genuinely "own" art online and be able to experience it forever - even after commercial gallery and streaming sites are abandoned in the future.

The Land Art token revitalises Peter's dreams of being an attuned conceptual art collector. With Land Art token, ownership is stored forever on the blockchain, which means that access to the art is unlimited, and ultimately artist led.

3.4. The reluctant curator.

Claire posts about overlooked art histories for her small group of professional followers on Instagram in her free time. She wants to materialise her engagement with minor contexts to both broaden her professional reach and monetise her anteriority. However, for curators like Claire, admitting ownership of an art object would risk paralysing re-creations of hierarchy within dialogic space. The high cost of buying an artwork - along with the discomfort of being seen to do so means that Claire cannot acquire the subjectivity so conditional on owning an artwork she desires.

With Land Art token, however, Claire can register her ownership through the contract directly. Claire can now participate in the ownership of artwork without having to make commercial agreements with third parties.

3.5. The counter-gentrificationist making their first purchase.

Jupiter is an artist who only engages with the counter-gentrifying subjectivities of public art. They find it extremely difficult to find art of this quality in London, even though they are willing to pay more for the experience.

Using Land Art token, however, Jupiter can experience Land Art unenclosed by the speculative forces of cultural representation. Jupiter and many other artists like them can participate in ways that conform to their taste, without displacing other senses of self.

3.6. The established artist seeking an audience.

Richard sells his paintings through gallery and auction house platforms. He is tired of their commission structures, fees, and general vibes. These platforms take, giving him only 40–50% of the total revenue.

Using Land Art token, Richard not only cuts out all the ‘middle-men’ surrounding this centralised market but also generates more revenue for his ephemeral and conceptual activities. In addition, Richard feels more secure knowing that Land Art token will not suddenly increase fees, re-contextualise his art with a conditional presence or selectively remove his work from certain markets.

Market analysis

Overview

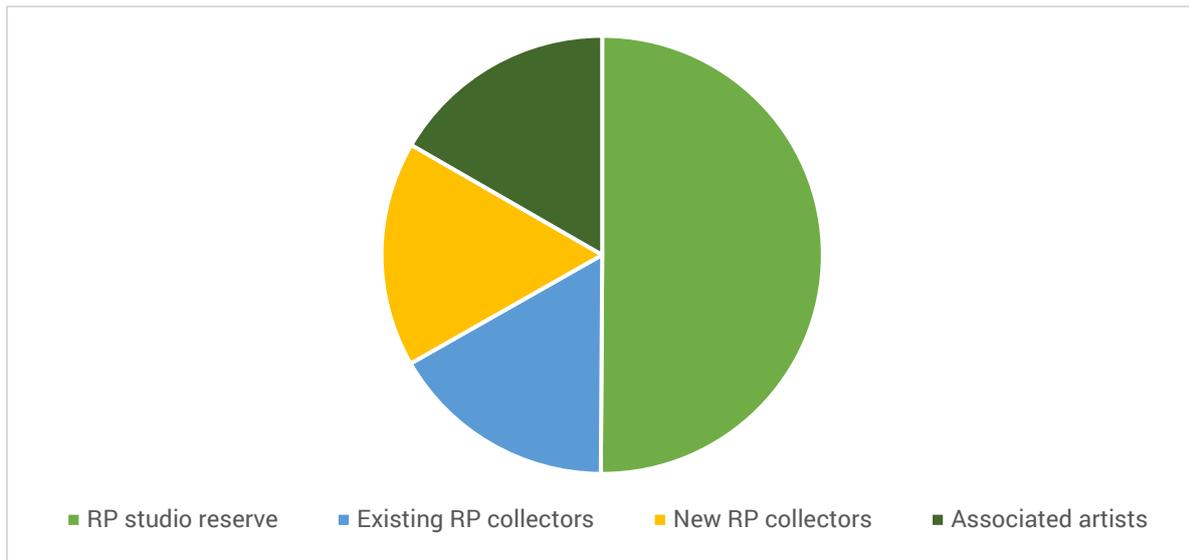
4.1. Land Art tokens use permanent smart contracts.

This decentralized ledger-based system with immutable content, assures that Land Art ownership will be available anywhere and anytime.

4.2. Land Art token breakout

Initial adoption will always be a challenge for any token. To overcome this hurdle, what I plan is to target specific segments of ownership:

4.3 Ownership segments



4.4 Geo-spatial airdrops and Proof-of-Location

Land Art tokens in the Richard Parry studio reserve will be integrated into the situation of future Richard Parry Land Art, through geo-spatial airdrops and Proof-of-Location technologies.

4.3. International

Since 2010, my Land Art is experienced by people from all around the world, even by people who may not necessarily recognise Land Art. This international audience segment is set to expand rapidly in the next few years. Currently, there does not exist a unifying service that aggregates live ownership of a single artist's live Land Art from all over the world.

4.4. Niche markets

The Land Art market is extremely niche-focused. Some existing commercial gallery streams target high-net-worth individuals while others target younger,

entrepreneurs. This is interesting, as Land Art is traditionally a very identity-focused medium. People like to associate with their specific subjectivity or experience which is what allows them to re/connect with the art's context/s, objectively.

Land Art token has the potential to be greater than any single commercial gallery platform as they are accessible to every niche market simultaneously and support multiplicities of ownership.

4.5. Marketing

Richard Parry studio has dedicated resources to implementing a marketing strategy. While the blockchain is still an emerging technology, I will aim marketing primarily at people already familiar with Richard Parry art and owning Land Art and using this technology more generally. These enthusiasts will form the first group of owners of the token.

Conclusion

With the advent of blockchain smart contracts, there now exists the ability to construct an attractive way of owning both Richard Parry Land Art and operating a market-fair, automatic, and transparent Land Art ledger. This new transparent, code-based governance system enables many exciting new opportunities in Land Art distribution. What Land Art token proposes is a revolutionary concept of a fully decentralised Land Art platform and common ownership outside the structural limitations of the commercial art-world.

References

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