

## KEVIN ABOSCH Synthetic Optimism



### **1. *Eight False Flags* (2022)**

The input data collected that informs this work pertains to 8 examples of “false flags” used by individuals on social media to sway public opinion, and by nation states as a pretext for violence. A false flag is an act committed with the intent of disguising the actual source of responsibility and pinning blame on another party. Only one of the false flags chosen by the artist for this work has not been widely reported by the media. Two of the false flags chosen by the artist for this work had a significant impact on the price of a number of cryptocurrencies. This work cannot be used effectively as material evidence in a criminal trial. Insights have been encrypted using conventional and unconventional encryption methods before being fixed with paint by the artist to best support the emotional value of the underlying “truths.”



### **2. *Novel Strategies To Protect Seed Phrases* (2022)**

The input data collected that informs this work pertains to a number of “best practice” strategies to protect seed phrases. Seed phrase are list of words generated at the time of a crypto-wallet creation. The seed phrase is used to recover a crypto-wallet. The most popular method for protecting seed phrases at the time this work’s creation was to write the list of words on a piece of paper and store it in a safe place. Secure storage of seed phrases is a source of much frustration for holders of crypto-assets. Insights have been encrypted using conventional and unconventional encryption methods before being fixed with paint by the artist to best support the emotional value of the underlying “truths.”



### **3. *Universal Basic Income & The Price of Avocados* (2022)**

The artist connects the principles of Universal Basic Income (UBI) with the price of avocados, which has been increasing dramatically worldwide due to both their popularity and the COVID pandemic’s impact on international transportation. The input data collected includes supply-chain data from the blockchain, open-source market data and data collected firsthand by the artist from avocado growers in the United States, Colombia and Israel. Insights have been encrypted using conventional and unconventional encryption methods before being fixed with paint by the artist to best support the emotional value of the underlying “truths.”



#### **4. *Nothing Is Off The Long Table* (2022)**

Many world leaders when questioned about options available when confronted by a major conflict have been known to respond “All options are on the table.” The spectre of nuclear weapons being used by Vladimir Putin in his war cum genocide of Ukraine has been made clear by the Russian leader in public speeches. Images of Putin sitting at one end of a remarkably long table while two of his military generals were seated at the other end circulated around the globe with people wondering why the leader placed such a distance between himself and the other two men. Was he practicing social-distancing due to COVID? Was he concerned that his own generals might try to harm him? Perhaps he just thought it looked cool? Input data collected by the artist that informed this work was mainly photographic. An underpainting of Putin and his generals is visible with the leader in the lower-right corner of the canvas. Insights have been encrypted using conventional and unconventional encryption methods before being fixed with paint by the artist to best support the emotional value of the underlying “truths.”



#### **5. *Stay Cool Liquidity Fool* (2022)**

The input data collected that informs this work pertains to the practice of “providing liquidity” into a liquidity pool. In decentralised finance (DeFi) this is important for the health of a token. The artist focused only on the Telcoin (TEL) / Ethereum (ETH) pool on the UniSwap decentralised exchange. Insights have been encrypted using conventional and unconventional encryption methods before being fixed with paint by the artist to best support the emotional value of the underlying “truths.”



#### **6. *Some Of Our Best Bubbles* (2022)**

The input data collected that informs this work pertains to the custom of visualising relationships between users on a social network or marketplace as interconnected bubbles. The artist scraped hundreds of bubble charts from social media shared by users who wanted to show off their networks. Insights have been encrypted using conventional and unconventional encryption methods before being fixed with paint by the artist to best support the emotional value of the underlying “truths.”



## **7. *Quarantine and Metaverse Etiquette* (2022)**

During the COVID pandemic which forced populations across the globe to take measures to isolate and quarantine starting in early 2020 and continuing through 2022, we witnessed the proliferation of a number of virtual phenomena including the metaverse. The complications that arise out of humans interacting in the metaverse via virtual proxies, frequently anonymously, suggest the need for an etiquette that inhibits the collective communication from devolving into chaos. The input data collected that informs this work has been collected from 36 events held in a number of popular metaverses attended each by between 20-500 users. Each event was held within a virtual structure built upon a land registered on the blockchain. All of the events exhibited NFT artworks. Insights have been encrypted using conventional and unconventional encryption methods before being fixed with paint by the artist to best support the emotional value of the underlying “truths.”



## **8. *A Bitcoin Transaction, The Qatari F-35 Deal & The Donbas* (2022)**

An anonymous transaction on the blockchain shows that a large quantity of Bitcoin has moved from one wallet to another. Within a month, the nation of Qatar submitted a formal request to buy F-35 fighter jets from the United States. Then 16 months later President Vladimir Putin sends Russian troops into Ukraine on a “peace-keeping” mission that quickly reveals itself to be a genocide. In presenting these three events together, our natural inclination is to find connections between them. Does one influence the other? Is one the result of the others? Do we even have the data necessary to answer these questions? The input data collected that informs this work pertains to these three aforementioned events using sources including OSINT (Open Source Intelligence), first-person accounts from government intelligence agents, blockchain records, social media and news media. Insights have been encrypted using conventional and unconventional encryption methods before being fixed with paint by the artist to best support the emotional value of the underlying “truths.”



## **9. A Few Unreported Data Breaches of Massive Proportions (2021)**

The input data collected that informs this work pertains to rumours of “a few unreported data breaches of massive proportions” the artist heard about in the course of casual conversations with executives from a number of tech companies. The breaches included users’ identities, email addresses, activity and in certain instances, credit card details. Breaches are sometimes concealed to protect the public’s confidence in a company. In the United States and Europe it is illegal to conceal data breaches. Insights have been encrypted using conventional and unconventional encryption methods before being fixed with paint by the artist to best support the emotional value of the underlying “truths.”



## **10. Evidence Of Radicalised AI (2021)**

The artist is especially interested in the concept of an artificial intelligence (AI) that becomes radicalised as a function of exposure to extremely biased data. The input data that informs this work was created by the artist and used to simulate a radicalised AI with bias to protect one person, the administrator of the AI, at the expense of any system that engages with the administrator’s computer. Insights have been encrypted using conventional and unconventional encryption methods before being fixed with paint by the artist to best support the emotional value of the underlying “truths.”



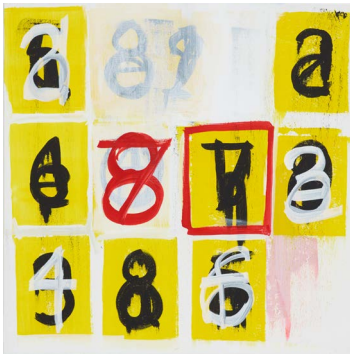
## **11. The Opportunity Cost of Mining Bitcoin Over Playing Poker Professionally (2021)**

The input data collected that informs this work attempts to calculate the opportunity cost an individual might pay by choosing to mine Bitcoin using one mining rig capable of 9.05 Gh/s (9.05 billion Giga-hashes per second), rather than work as a professional poker player. The profitability of the former relies primarily on the prevailing price of Bitcoin and the cost of electricity, while the latter depends on the player’s ability to consistently beat opponents. Insights have been encrypted using conventional and unconventional encryption methods before being fixed with paint by the artist to best support the emotional value of the underlying “truths.”



## **12. Deprecation of Traditional Server Farms (2022)** (not in the exhibition)

The input data collected that informs this work pertains to the prevailing arguments against traditional server farms, which largely focus on energy consumption and the impact on the environment. Insights have been encrypted using conventional and unconventional encryption methods before being fixed with paint by the artist to best support the emotional value of the underlying “truths.”



**13. The Gun-Printing Kids And Energy Drinks (2022)**

Digital files that enable the 3D-printing of lethal firearms are widely available on the internet. As an increasing number of 3D-printers are being sold into homes across the globe, kids, who are known to be early adopters of new technology are printing guns at an astonishing rate. The global market for energy drinks in 2020 was €42 billion. Input data pertaining to children printing guns, and the market for energy drinks was collected by the artist to inform this work before being processed by a battery of machine-learning algorithms. Insights have been encrypted using conventional and unconventional encryption methods before being fixed with paint by the artist to best support the emotional value of the underlying “truths.”



**14. Risk Analysis of Deep-Faking Autocrats (2021)**

\*\*\*\*\*CENSORED\*\*\*\*\* Insights have been encrypted using conventional and unconventional encryption methods before being fixed with paint by the artist to best support the emotional value of the underlying “truths.”



**15. Insurrection Semantics (2022)**

In the United States of America a group of citizens enabled by politicians attempted an insurrection at The Capitol in Washington DC on the 6th of January 2021. The artist is well aware that there are those who would refute his characterisation that the events that transpired constituted an insurrection. The input data that informs this work is comprised of data scraped primarily from Twitter users arguing whether or not an insurrection had occurred. A semantic debate was still active at the time of the creation of this work. Insights have been encrypted using conventional and unconventional encryption methods before being fixed with paint by the artist to best support the emotional value of the underlying “truths.”