

Style and Voice with Shortcut

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This article is part of the Alpacawhal interview series ***A Couple Minutes on Crypto Art***, where we talk with brilliant and emerging crypto artists.

We are joined in this edition by Shortcut, a full-time crypto artist and pioneering creator hailing from Germany who has been in the cryptocurrency space since 2015 and in the crypto art space since its inception.

Alpacawhal: *Hallo, Shortcut! Hope you and yours are doing well. Thank you so much for agreeing to tell us some more about you and your art! Please give us an introduction to get things going.*

Shortcut: I'm a 51 year old full-time cryptoartist. who grew up with Commodore home computers and was always fascinated by the intersection of art and technology.

As I was rejected at art academies, I started studying Computer science with a minor in the subject of art. Due to the birth of my first two children, I broke off my studies and started working in the TV industry in the mid 90s. There, I quickly worked my way up from sound assistant to ENG cameraman and editor. When non-linear editing became a

thing, I specialized in editing with Avid Mediacomposer and started my own business relatively quickly.

I worked for international companies like Camel and Smirnoff and was responsible for their in-house event documentaries. Due to various economic crises in the early 2000s, I was forced to work more for television again, but the quality and pay were getting worse and worse.

Since about 2015, I have been into crypto currencies, and in 2016 I discovered the possibility to work from home as a blogger for the blockchain based service Steemit. I wrote a lot about my art, which I'd constantly created through the years. The feedback was so encouraging that I started to see myself more and more as an artist. In 2017, I started selling my first physical artworks for Steem and while digging deeper into the topic, I started a blog series called "Art and Blockchain" in April 2018.

In this series [I wrote about Bitmark](#), Ascribe, Creativechain (now Creary), Digital Art Chain and Opensea among others. While I shared my explorations on twitter, I was then invited to join KnownOrigin, quickly followed by SuperRare and MakersPlace. What happened at these platforms just blew my mind and while I was mostly exploring generative, AI and glitch-art, it was the success of the first AsyncArt piece (that I was part of), that finally convinced me to be able to make a living as a cryptoartist.



Shortcut. "[Mind Puzzle](#)," [current state at time of writing] 2020 (Async Art)

Alpacawhal: *Absolutely astounding! We certainly know of you over these years from the early days, and also minted some NFTs on Bitmark and Ascribe (RIP) of our own, too. Those early days seemed as if it was not quite clear if one could indeed earn a decent livelihood from crypto art. So you must certainly be one of the pioneering full-time crypto artists indeed doing so. How long has it been full-time for you now? What is your favorite aspect of it? How about a part of it that is not as great as you wish it could be?*

Shortcut: In fact it had been a mix of different circumstances, that had lead to my decision to go all in on cryptoart. While I was mostly caring for my youngest daughter during the day, it was nearly impossible for me to work in my editing job like I did before.

When I started blogging on Steemit, it was just an experiment to work from home during my spare time. But when crypto-prices exploded at the end of 2017, I suddenly had a decent amount of money available, like I never had before. Unfortunately the crash came shortly after, but from that moment, I was aware, that working for crypto would be the future.

While I was still able to make a living for several months from what I had earned, my focus shifted from blogging for crypto to making art for crypto when I suddenly earned \$100 for some of my artworks at the new cryptoart platforms. It just

felt like I had found my destiny. Making art and getting paid for it was everything I ever wanted. Despite the crisis I still was a strong believer of crypto and after all my attempts to remotely work as an editor and webdesigner kind of failed, I was more and more convinced that cryptoart would be the future for me.

The downside was, that my wife wasn't willing to believe in my plan and wanted to force me into a classic job. As she also wants to break up our relationship, I now work every free minute to be able to make a living being a cryptoartist. Future will tell if it's enough to live on, but fortunately it looks very good at the moment.

Alpacawhal: *Also looking particularly good of late is your art! You have adopted a stunning signature style that is radically different from anything you showed us before. We want to look at this new work first, but will also share your previous styles, too. We are super excited to see this metamorphosis in your creativity and are huge fans and collectors ourselves of both your past and current style. Please tell us more about your newer style and how you developed it! It is a strong voice— is this the true voice of Shortcut coming through now?*

Shortcut: Thanks a lot for your kind words. Seeing my art being appreciated like that means so much to me. Although I feel the need to create art regardless of what people say, it

always gives me a real boost, when people can relate to my art. It's also kind of funny that I only really feel like an artist since I can actually sell my art. Maybe it's a lack of self-confidence that makes it hard for me to see myself as an artist without that.

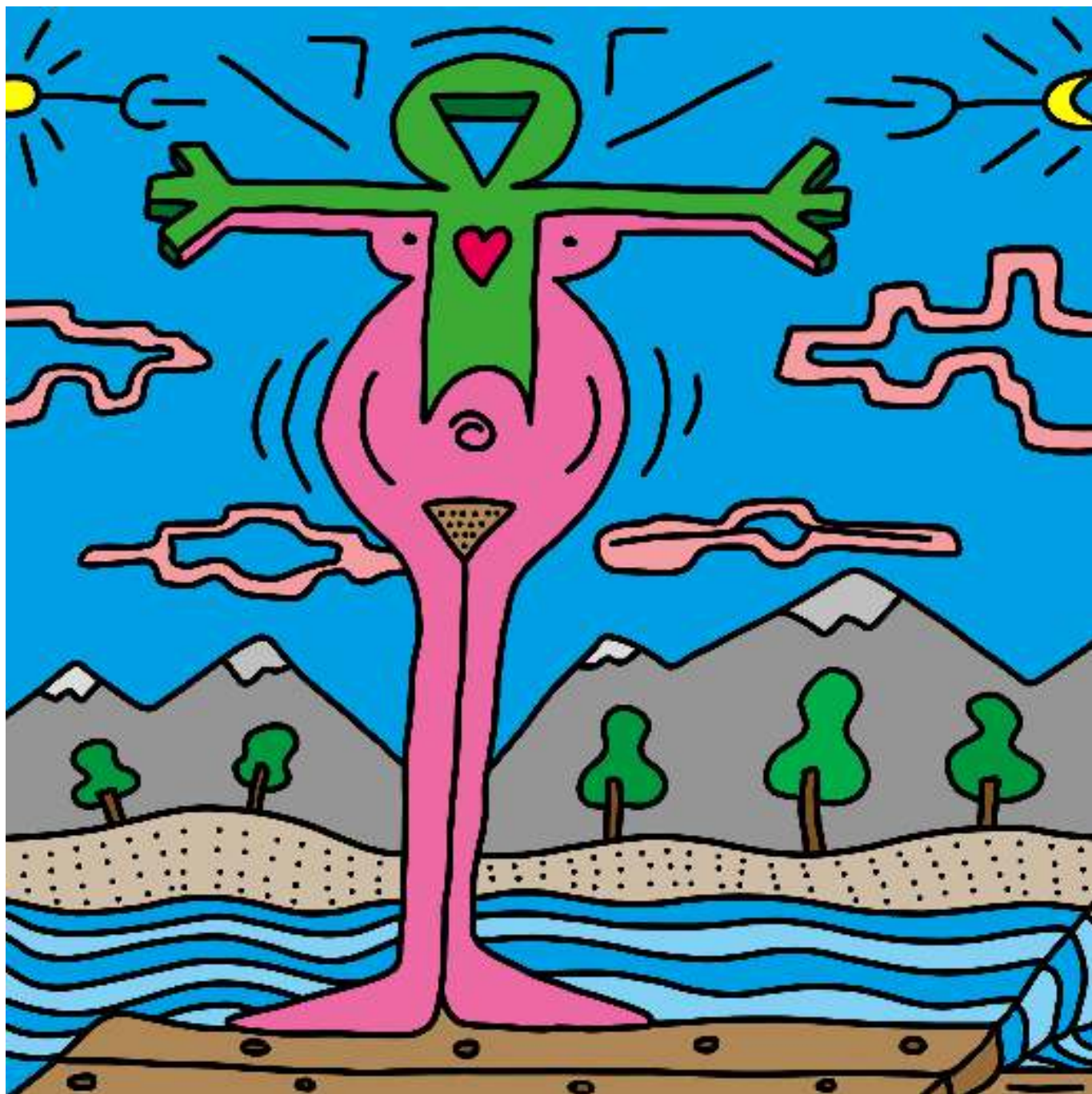
Although some of the first works I've ever sold for crypto were analog drawings, like [my first steembay auction](#) and "[art or garbage?](#)". It was quite complicated and expensive to handle safe shipping, so I seriously started exploring different digital techniques at the same time. In the beginning, I used digital drawing software like Krita and Sketchpad, made some digital collages using Photoshop, and played around with image manipulation and glitch apps like Glitché.

When I was asked to join KnownOrigin, they were particularly attracted by some of my monochrome line art that I had just created. While I saw what other artists offered at SuperRare, I was encouraged to put my glitch-art on that platform and when I was asked to join MakersPlace I had the idea of putting my digital drawings at this marketplace. I liked the idea of following different paths at each platform and having a homogenic profile at each.

My very first artwork at MakersPlace, "[Tune in, Turn around, Drop out](#)," was in fact very close to my recent style, but unfortunately nobody was interested in this kind of stuff at

that time. So I decided to focus on creating cool digital art that wasn't based on my analog style, instead.

"It just felt like I had found my destiny. Making art and getting paid for it was everything I ever wanted."





Shortcut has a new voice. Clockwise from top left: "[King for a Day](#)" 2020 (Rarible), "[Searching for Columbus' Egg](#)" 2020 (Rarible), "[Cupid's Error](#)" 2020 (Rarible), "[Embrace the Stranger in You!](#)" 2020 (Rarible), "[Gas prices are killing me](#)" 2020 (Rarible)

During 2019 I've challenged myself to do a [#dailyart](#) work and I was totally falling down the rabbit hole of digital art. Being a curious mind, I was highly attracted by the whole range of tools, that were available. This went from generative art to AI and GAN art and didn't stop at AR, VR, voxel- and

pixelart. I wanted to know it all. The downside of these creative studies were, that some of my works were highly appreciated by the community, while others remained almost unnoticed.

While I saw works from XCOPY, Hackatao and Osinachi constantly getting the attention they deserve, it was the latter who mentioned the importance of having a recognizable "signature-style" in an IG interview with Serena Tabacchi from MOCDA (Museum of Contemporary Digital Art). I guess this sowed the seed that led to my decision to go back to my origins and to start the search for my own signature style.

When I searched for inspiration in my photo-stream on July 4th, 2020, I discovered an analog work, that I had created exactly 3 years ago and decided to give it a digital makeover like I had done with my very first MakersPlace work. And it was actually the [feedback on twitter \(namely by XCOPY\)](#), that encouraged me to follow that path.

Also the [feedback of Matt Kane](#) on one of my remakes of a sketchbook drawing from 30 years ago was a real kick that pushed me into that direction. And last, but not least, the great community over at [DaDa Art](#) was a huge inspiration and gave me the confidence to create new works just based on my very own style.

Alpacawhal: *It is exceedingly cool that the community bolstered your work and inspired you in that way. It seems that your new style is quite well received and selling nicely too. This must surely inspire confidence. Do you plan to continue in the new style exclusively for now or will you be mixing in work of other styles too? Also, the new work seems extremely well suited for traditional prints. What is your stance on this? Are you open to doing prints or combinations of NFTs and prints of your art?*

Shortcut: You're right, the feedback of the community is definitely the fuel that keeps me going. And although it certainly helps a lot when my art even sells, the most important thing has always been that people like my art, and that it gives them something to think about or even let them emotionally react.

I tried selling some cryptoart t-shirts at the beginning of this year that were printed with pattern based on my glitch-art, and I also combined the shirts with a NFT as a proof of authenticity. Although I sold two shirts, it was a lot of work and left me with almost no profit at all.

I might locally sell some limited edition prints when I do an exhibition or find a gallery, that wants to showcase my work, but it's not my main focus at the moment. As one of the advantages of digital art is, that you don't have to care for packaging and shipping, I generally have no problem when

NFT-owners create physical prints of my works for personal use, though.

Regarding my new style, it's a new experience for me to keep exploring one style for a longer time period. In the past I've gotten easily bored by a certain style or technique and was always eager to find and try out new ways of expression. So it's definitely an experiment to see how far I can go with it. But I'm quite sure, that it's kind of an intermediate step that will hopefully lead to a fusion of all my different styles and explorations one day.

Alpacawhal: *Cool, we are major fans of this experiment! Are there different media, like VR or similar that you have wanted to explore, but have not yet? Is there a chance that we will find more art in different media as well?*

In a similar vein, you have created art on multiple blockchains, correct? What do you think about future blockchain technologies and ecosystems? Are there any out there that you think could push crypto art in a new direction? Which ones come to mind for you if so?

Shortcut: Definitely VR-painting with [Tiltbrush](#) or something similar is on my todo list for quite some time. I adore the work of [JOY](#) and other pioneers in this space and I'm curious to try it out by myself. I still need to find the perfect headset for me, but it's only a matter of time until I will do it.

I also still have a thing for analog video and would love to get my hands on some old-school Video Painter (like the one, that Sarah Zucker used in some of her works) or similar geeky retro stuff. If I had enough money, I would certainly also do some installation works with old tube TV's, analog video mixers and stuff like that. Being a long time user of the predecessor of the Hive chain (called Steem), I was really excited to watch the development of the relatively new [NFT Showroom](#) marketplace.

A great advantage of Hive over Ethereum is certainly, that transactions don't cost anything and that they're still super-fast. I would love to see wrapped NFTs in the future, that could be traded across multiple chains, so that everybody could use their favorite chain for minting the token and still could sell it to collectors on every other chain. Another important development on the blockchain side will be to find an on-chain solution for permanent storage of the media-files. We saw some first steps in that direction with [Avastars](#) and [Pixelchain](#), but we will hopefully see a solution for all kinds and sizes of media files in the future.

SAME ARTIST

Here are some works by Shortcut which showcase his styles previous to this powerful new voice.





The amazing styles of Shortcut. Clockwise from top left: "[Scream](#)," 2019 (KnownOrigin), "[Vaporwave](#)," 2019 (SuperRare), "Insomnia," 2019 (KnownOrigin), "[Vincent](#)", 2020 (MakersPlace), "[GAN Bastet](#)," 2019 (SuperRare)

Alpacawhal: *Oh yes, it would be rad to have your analog Video Painter art on the scene. We are huge fans also of both Sarah Zucker and JOY! Please do let us know if you begin creating VR art also, we would really love a sneak preview of what you create with that medium. It's super*

exciting that you have new horizons still to explore.

One important thing that just sprang to mind— when it comes to viewing your art in a metaverse context, where would you recommend our readers visit to explore some of your best work?

Shortcut: That's a great question, because putting cryptoart in a virtual gallery is definitely one of the coolest things you can do with it right now. I'm very happy to say, that my art has been on display at several different metaverses already (Decentraland, SomniumSpace, VRChat) but my favorite platform is still Cryptovoxels, where you can probably find my artworks across 20 different places.

I have the great pleasure to have some really amazing collectors like Brookhawk, who even created a room for my art in his estate and is constantly updating it. Check out [Brookhaven Estate](#).

He's definitely one of my greatest supporters and also gave me the opportunity to set-up a gallery at one of his parcels near [Coldie's #buyartsavekittens charity venue](#).

Thanks to his suggestion, I also recently had the opportunity to create a conceptual "Color-Domes" build for [#pranksyland](#). The idea behind the probably "largest art collaboration in the whole metaverse" was to sell the

cryptovoxels parcel containing the build and all artworks, vox-models and wearables in an OpenSea bundle. Right now [the bundle is still waiting for its buyers](#).

I'm also super proud to have several of my artworks showcased in Basileus' [Villa \\$traylight](#) which was built by the one and only Alotta Money and is just amazing. Basileus has been a long time supporter of my art as well.

Last but not least, I own several galleries in cryptovoxels. You should definitely visit my main gallery called "[Unity of Multi](#)" and my wearables-shop "[We are Wearables](#)". The latter is leased from Conlan, one of the AsyncArt founders and a great supporter as well.

If I remember correctly, talking about this parcel initially got me in contact with Brookhawk and so the circle closes perfectly.

Alpacawhal: *That is amazing and we hope that readers will enjoy visiting all of those dope Cryptovoxels spots and take in your awesome artwork. We are so happy that you could share your story with us, Shortcut!*

As a parting shot, there are many "original gangster" crypto artists like yourself from before 2018 even, who have helped build this community and scene.

The talk lately is that we will blow up and famous artists will

*enter. We do not think that it is a matter of **if** this will happen, but **when**. It's a curious topic for sure, with some artists thinking that it will mean certain doom for existing artists and others reasoning that the influx of powerful artists (think Banksy themselves!) into our space would lift the values of all existing artists.*

As a last word to our readers, what do you think might happen when more big name artists enter our scene?

Shortcut: I suppose that every famous artist will bring not only several solvent collectors but thousands of fans into cryptoart. All these people will create a wallet and start collecting similar art as well. There will be a lot of media coverage and although we will also probably see more curated platforms and eventually even gatekeepers, I'm pretty sure that a lot of people will fall down the rabbit hole.

Cryptoart has definitely the potential to be the killer-app, that leads to mass adoption of crypto. A lot of artists will be able to make a living by doing what they love and artists will finally take the place in society that they deserve.

We hope you enjoyed A Couple Minutes on Crypto Art with Shortcut; if so, make sure to share this with a friend and [donate to Alpacawhal](#).

Tell them Alpacawhal sent you...

Shortcut

- [Shortcut website](#)
- [Shortcut Twitter](#)
- [Shortcut MakersPlace](#)
- [Shortcut AsyncArt](#)
- [Shortcut KnownOrigin](#)
- [Shortcut OpenSea](#)
- [Shortcut SuperRare](#)

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