



HOUSE of
LOBKOWICZ

Press Release

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House of Lobkowitz Demonstrates New Use Case for Applying Blockchain Technology to Cultural Heritage Practices

House of Lobkowitz has unveiled and reinstalled newly restored works of art in their exhibition spaces in the Czech Republic. These restored works are a result of successfully financing over 50 art restoration projects through the sale of NFTs created and exhibited by the Lobkowitz Collections as part of an event called Non-Fungible Castle in October of 2021. Thanks to generous patrons, who are now receiving original NFTs of the works post-restoration as a token of their patronage, beautifully restored pieces from the Collections can now be appreciated in renewed condition.

Examples include *A Wild Boar in a Landscape* (1694), a painting featured in Wes Anderson's award-winning film *The Grand Budapest Hotel* (2014) and *Portrait of Doña Margarita Teresa Infanta of Spain, Archduchess of Austria and Empress* (1662–1664), now reinstalled on exhibition at Nelahozeves Castle. One of the most highly demanding restoration projects, now complete, is the “Chinese Belvedere,” a room in the Lobkowitz Palace decorated with elaborate murals and stuccowork dating to c.1906.

While most museums have been entering the NFT space by creating digital replicas of physical works of art, the Lobkowitz Collections (managed by House of Lobkowitz) is pursuing a more nuanced approach. House of Lobkowitz is redefining cultural philanthropy by inviting creators and patrons on a journey of cultural preservation—one that not only shows the result of one's donation money, but also builds a growing community of people who care about culture and see the potential of using Web3 technology to preserve it.

Three categories of NFTs were created for the exhibition in 2021. One set was called the “Proof of Patronage” series, a unique philanthropic model created by House of Lobkowitz that sets the price of an NFT at the cost of the physical underlying work's restoration. Buyers subsequently receive an additional NFT post restoration to see the work's transformation as a result of their patronage. Additional “Proof of Patronage” NFTs from the Lobkowitz Collections are available for purchase on OpenSea.

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The second group of NFTs called “Digital Explorations” demonstrated how digital technology can be used not only to enhance the viewer’s experience with art, but also to see elements that are not visible in the real world. Examples included *Antaeus’s Contest*, depicting the degrading sgraffito rendering from the 16th-century façade of Nelahozeves Castle in the Czech Republic; *Forgotten Menuet*, an animated piece of music unheard for over 250 years; and *Unseen Gaze*, which uses X-ray and infrared imaging to reveal a hidden layer of history behind a painting.

The final series were NFTs created by contemporary artists made in response to the Collections. Creators were invited to draw upon the past to make thoughtful connections between historical works of art and their own creative pursuits. In doing so, they not only participated in the ongoing narrative of art history, but also revitalized the sources of their inspiration.

These were the notable successes of Non-Fungible Castle, which marked its debut last year as an experiment to bridge the traditional art world with the Web3 and crypto sector. The event demonstrated a replicable model for cultural institutions to increase accessibility, deepen relationships with a broader community of patrons and creators, and establish a creative platform to raise restoration funds.

The strides made by the unprecedented crossover between the traditional art world and Web3 community have encouraged House of Lobkowitz to host a second edition of Non-Fungible Castle taking place November 4–5, 2022. This year’s event aims to explore how blockchain technology can be used to rediscover, share, and preserve cultural identity.

Like last year, an NFT exhibition, which will be free to the public and exhibited at the Lobkowitz Palace in Prague Castle from October 27 to November 13, 2022, will precede the two-day event. On November 4, 2022, attendees will experience an interactive cultural program at Nelahozeves Castle and the adjacent birth house of Czech national composer Antonín Dvořák. The weekend will culminate in an international conference and evening gala on November 5, 2022, at the Lobkowitz Palace in Prague Castle to discuss and celebrate the future of blockchain technology and cultural preservation.

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