

HESSE FLATOW

Benzine, Vittoria. 'Artist Johanna Robinson dropping 170 "wishing" coins as NFTs with NYC exhibition.' *Metaverse Post*. Online. May 27, 2022.



Artist Johanna Robinson dropping 170 "wishing" coins as NFTs with NYC exhibition

 Vittoria Benzine

1 hour ago



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Many artists try their hand at NFTs with stars in their eyes—inspired by success stories like [Beeple](#) and [French art collective, Obvious](#). Brooklyn-based [Johanna Robinson](#) encapsulates that wide-eyed hope with her own genesis drop of 170 NFTs in conjunction with "[Wish Fulfillment](#)," her latest solo show at [Hesse Flatow](#) in Chelsea, New York City.

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"Wish Fulfillment" NFT still. Courtesy of the artist.

Robinson's paintings present wishing wells and fountains created mostly in oil and cheesecloth on canvas—some sourced from anthropology, others conjured from imaginary realms. One water feature titled "Fountain (Animate Structure)" is built from a nude human with hands and feet on four floating ducks, turtles stacked on their back with one glass of water perched precariously on top. Others, like "Wishing Well (Migration)" could easily live in your local public park.



Two paintings on view at "Wish Fulfillment." Photo by Vittoria Benzine.

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"Of interest to Robinson is this [teleological](#) question arising between wishing and the fulfillment of wishes, the causes and goals for which, like the closed circuits of wells and fountains, redouble on each other in continuous feedback loops," the show's press release says.

People once thought that throwing a coin in a fountain or well brought good health. As the release notes, "perceived medicinal powers may have been the result of the coins themselves, whose purifying chemical properties made water safer to drink."

Robinson's 170 NFTs depict every single coin tossed in the wells across her solo show, captured with a macro lens attached to the artist's phone and then animated so the water ripples, the light softly flashes, and the coins themselves spin. Most NFTs only feature one coin, but there's a rare few clusters on offer.



"Wish Fulfillment" NFT still. Courtesy of the artist.

"Think of it as whatever you can scoop up with one hand while dipping it into the fountain," Robinson said. "Many of the coins look like abstract mark-making when taken out of context from the whole painting—it's been a lot of fun playing around with the way they look so close-up."

The only way to get your hands on one of these lucky talismans is to visit the exhibition while it's on view through June 24th and add your email to a numbered line on the sign up list—each one pegged to a different NFT, yet to be revealed. "It was important to me that NFTs are only available to those who physically come to the gallery because it's like reaching into an actual fountain and taking a coin," Robinson said. As of this week, there's about 90 NFTs left.

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"I don't have a lucky number," Robinson said. "but it was interesting to see many people sign up for a specific numbered line on the sign-up sheet, so I have a feeling that many people do!" She'll send each recipient instructions to set up their digital wallet before "Wish Fulfillment" closes so she can transfer the artworks—inadvertently onboarding Hesse Flatow's more traditional clients for future drops.



"Fountain (Animate Structure" by Johanna Robinson. Photo by Vittoria Benzine.

She's minting each work on the Palm blockchain, through Portion.io. "I chose this platform because it is 99% more energy efficient than Ethereum, which is the most common blockchain for NFTs," Robinson said. That "also means that minting an NFT isn't cost prohibitive – there is no need to pay for massive amounts of energy consumption."

Inspiration for this genesis springs from the pandemic, when Robinson befriended activists and organizers. "I was so inspired by the mutual aid networks I saw people around me setting up, as wealth disparity became a major topic of conversation," the artist said. "Although it may be a longshot that mine gain any value, I wanted to use this opportunity to disperse a self-made currency free of charge to those around me."

Robinson's work is like [exonemo's NADA showcase](#) in the sense that both prove pairing new media's capabilities with well-placed psychological flourish engages viewers more effectively

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than all the flash in the world. "I expect painting to remain at the core of my practice because I find it the most direct route to create and imagine new worlds," Robinson said, "but if other elements can enhance this, why not use them?"



"Wish Fulfillment" NFT still. Courtesy of the artist.

"I've composed sound pieces to go with specific paintings," she continued. "I've experimented with projecting moving images onto paintings, but never ended up with a result I really liked. The NFTs allow both things to happen at once – the final NFTs will have a sound component, and I can create movement in them as well."

Robinson will keep experimenting with new tools to push her craft as they're made available—she's even gearing up to create a painting that viewers can walk around and explore in virtual reality with an Oculus Headset. For now though, see "Wish Fulfillment" if you can and put your name on the list. Dare to dream, to leave the stars in your eyes.