

The Definitive Guide to

Punks Voxels

What Are They – And Why Are They Important?



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Table of Content

1. Background	3
Why Punks?	4
So what's so special about PunksVoxels?	4
2. History of PunksVoxels	5
3. The PFP Revolution of 2017	7
To pfp-be or not to pfp-be	8
4. Why 10k Collections Matter	10
5. Intellectual Property and IP Rights	12
6. Derivatives And Its Role In Art	13
7. A Discussion on Historical NFTs	15

People asked us, "Do you read history?"

"No", we answered.

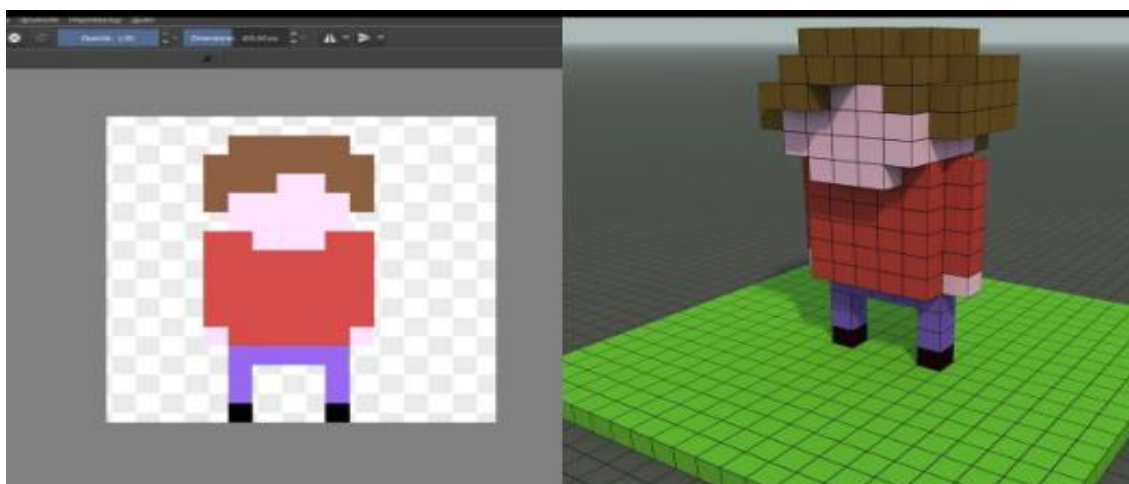
"We are too busy making it."

1. Background

PunksVoxels is a historical NFT collection created on 23 March 2021. Created by two Spanish friends – Marbur7 and Coscolillo – the collection consists of 10,000 avatars or “PunksVoxels” on the Ethereum blockchain, using the ERC-1155 token standard.



PunksVoxels is a unique NFT collection, and the reason lies very much in its two-worded name – perhaps specifically the latter part of it. For those somewhat unfamiliar with graphics, a “voxel” is the volume element as defined in the three-dimensional space and could easier be translated into 3D pixel.



Pixel art (2D) vs. Voxel art (3D)

Credits: Alex Voxels

Whereas most NFT collections up until 2021 were based on 2D pixel art, PunksVoxels, on the other hand, is using 3D voxel art. Even more interestingly, it was one of the first NFT collections to ever do so.

Why Punks?

Writing this in 2022, “Punks” needs no further introduction. The world-renowned 2017-project CryptoPunks pioneered the 10k profile picture (PFP) trend we witness everywhere today. Amazed by the power of the PFP movement in which the Punks started, Marbur7 and Coscolillo wanted to launch their own collection, using CryptoPunks as a source of inspiration. And on March 23 2021, the mission of the project – and the goal of the two friends – was to further develop the ecosystem of Punks.

So what’s so special about PunksVoxels?

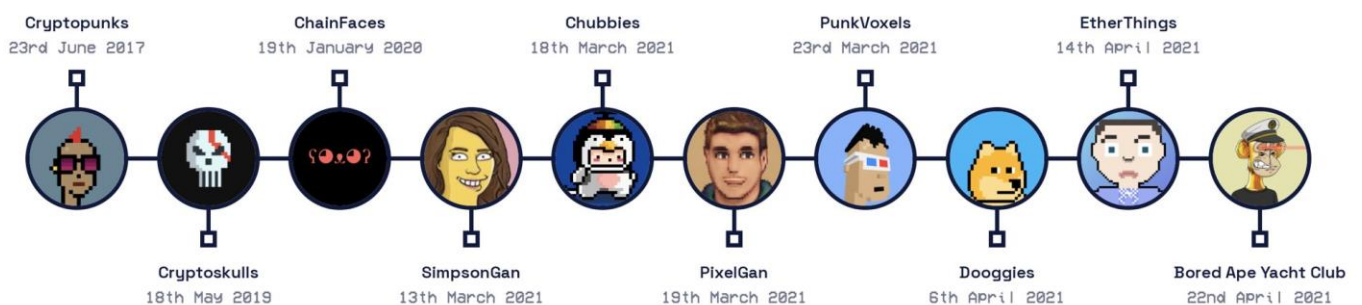
Well... in short. PunksVoxels is the **first 3D 10k** PFP collection in history.

PunksVoxels is the **first 10k derivative** in history (there had been earlier derivative projects, but not earlier 10k derivative projects).

PunksVoxels is **among the first 10k PFP** projects in history, predating the iconic game-changer, Bored Ape Yacht Club.

And as of early 2022, through the work of devoted historical collectors and archeologists in the NFT community, it was just rediscovered...

The story from **CryptoPunks** to **Bored Ape Yacht Club**



*Only eight 10k PFP projects between CryptoPunks and BAYC.
Credits: Lamborghini.eth*

2. History of PunksVoxels

Greetings,

I am Coscolillo, one of the creators of the PunksVoxels collection. I want to share the history of how and why the PunksVoxels collection was born in the early stages of NFT development.

My business partner MarbuR7, who is the other creative mind behind this project, and I, come from Spain. We met in 2009 through mutual friends at MarbuR7's birthday party. Through several conversations discussing our ideas on improving our own separate work situations, we quickly realized we are equally like-minded and ambitious.

Our different skill sets complemented each other and helped to curate great opportunities. We have since executed on several business ventures and have grown exponentially through these experiences.

Despite our efforts, we hadn't gained much traction in our many projects, which include robotics in the Forex market, building web portals/systems or even selling Iberian Jamon (typical in Spain). We've both agreed that one day something had to stick. Through years of no avail we began to take shots in the dark and explore areas we wouldn't have normally attempted to build a business.

In March of 2021, after seeing a news report about NFTs on TV, we recognized the massive potential in where NFTs could take us into the future. We didn't waste any time and immediately dove in to educate ourselves on the process to build a PFP project. Pulling some inspiration from other projects we came to enjoy the simplicity of CryptoPunks. We were driven to create something special as a derivative of the Punks by utilizing MarbuR7's computer engineering background. I distinctly remember how MarbuR7's children were laughing hysterically as the computer rendered each of the PunksVoxels profiles. It made me think of how the future generations will appreciate works of art like this. With much effort, the PunksVoxels collection was born in March 2021. This is when the business name Cripto3 was created.

The truth is we were pleasantly surprised they began to sell soon after listing and for a few days. Due to being a derivative coupled with several other large projects being launched, interest began to fade. We didn't have any support or coaching on what marketing requirements should follow for the project to be a success.

We watched the market move across several other projects that also struggled to gain momentum. At this point we went back to the drawing board and continued building on more of our project ideas.

In February 2022 we received an email from Opensea saying that it was necessary to migrate the contract if we did not want to lose the collection, but we ignored it since

we thought it was a loss. Then, seemingly out of nowhere, some purchases came in. We didn't understand why people kept buying, so last Sunday we saw the Dooggies' page and suddenly we understood that our project was now being viewed as a piece of NFT history.

Then they really started to sell. First only a few but after a few hours, the volume really picked up. For hours we were 3rd highest 1hr volume on www.thenftscore.com. This news has lifted our spirits and we are overjoyed to see our work and our ideas finally rewarded.

Witnessing the revival of this project has given us a second wind that has encouraged our vision of being destined to succeed through tireless efforts.

Something new and unexpected has also begun to unfold. That is the PunksVoxels community. It has come together at such a rapid pace and it is an honor to know our project was able to provide a platform for this to unfold. There are so many beautiful engagements and friendships growing here daily. Because of you, the collection was resurrected. With MarbuR7's capability he immediately built an automated system to migrate the entire supply to the new Opensea contract. Without this, we wouldn't have had the time or help to meet the contract deadline. The automation completed mere hours before the cutoff time and if it had not been so today 02/25/2022, the collection or its historic value, would not exist.

Revisiting this project for a second time, we want to do it right. We've recognized our shortcomings and ways to improve the success of this community. I would like to personally thank our new collaborators (Diamond, Lambo, Atimus and Mowin) for offering your support as an integral and necessary part of this project's growth. By their administration, knowledge of the essential NFT market and deep seeded social connections I am confident we will take this to the next level. We not only want it to succeed for our own behalf but for the community as well and have big plans in place for the future growth of this project!

There is a deeper potential than we could have ever imagined for PunksVoxels. This collection was built through friendship, trust and a dream. That dream is to see the boundless joy on the faces of its holders as I once saw on the faces of MarbuR7's children. Thank you for being part of this crazy adventure!!!



Coscolillo



MarbuR7

3. The PFP Revolution of 2017

CryptoPunks, being one of the earliest examples of Non-Fungible-Tokens on Ethereum, was the project that inspired the modern digital collectibles and crypto art movement.

Why did a project, which one originally could claim for free, skyrocket in value a few years later? What differentiated this collection from its predecessors? And how on earth did some 24x24 pixel art images change the art industry forever? Depending on whom you'd ask, there could be multiple answers to the questions above. That being said, one answer would likely be repeated: **CryptoPunks were not just a digital collectible – it represented your digital identity.**

This separation is what changed everything. This separation is what allowed (and allows) entrepreneurs, software developers, artists – even “regular” people – to pay hundreds of thousands of dollars for digital pixel art.

Because buying these digital images wasn't any longer about pure economic speculation – buying these images was suddenly buying a digital presence, an avatar... a digital identity. And if there is one thing we humans value deeply, it's our identity.

The society, our friends and family, our ethnicity and culture, our values, experiences and beliefs are all factors that shape our identity. And being humans, with different backgrounds, experiences and values, our identities differ.

CryptoPunks (at least while still affordable) allowed you to browse through its collection of thousands of different Punks to find one that best represented **your identity**. Male or female, different skin colors, various hairstyles, beards, hats, glasses, in addition to buck teeth, mole, lipstick, smile or frown – there were almost certainly looks, traits or a personality you resonated with. **And when found and purchased, your digital identity was born.**



6529
@punk6529



150 CryptoPunks – Can you find your digital self?

Credits: Larva Labs

To pfp-be or not to pfp-be

Now that the revolution of PFP projects is explained, and now that we have established why digital avatars are so important to us humans, let us now address the value dimension. More specifically, what is the value in PFP projects as opposed to non-PFP projects?

Acknowledging that this is a difficult question, let's try to give an answer. But before doing so, here is a story about an art collector named Tom.

Tom is an avid collector of traditional art. The last few years he has been purchasing quite a lot of contemporary art, street art and pop art. He collects works of Hirst, Basquiat, Banksy, Warhol and others. He owns canvases, fine art prints and statues/busts. However, it has come to the point where Tom doesn't have enough wall space in his home, and must therefore store excess art in his attic or in a storage room. This has led Tom to buy *less* art, because he knows that every new art purchase will either remove one piece from his walls, only for it to be locked/stored away, or that the new purchase immediately will be locked/stored away.

So why does Tom collect art? Why do I collect art? Why do people buy and collect art?

I'd argue it's because of three things:

1) Aesthetics

You want nice things to look at. You want beautiful/cool/thought-provoking art and interior to light up/decorate your walls and home.

2) Show-off

You want something cool you can show off to your friends, family, neighbors, or colleagues. You want something unique, something not everyone else has, and by showing/displaying the artwork you get a feeling of pride, status or excitement.

3) Investment

You want a good investment. You want two things: a safe store of value, and you want to see your investment increase in value over time.

Personally, every art purchase I've ever made can be described and explained by the three factors above, with varying grading to each. Some purchases were solely due to the investment aspect, and some purchases were mostly due to aesthetics.

Now consider art being locked or stored away: **you're out of wall space.** You won't get to observe and enjoy the art, nor will any of your friends, family or visitors – your bragging rights have effectively vanished.

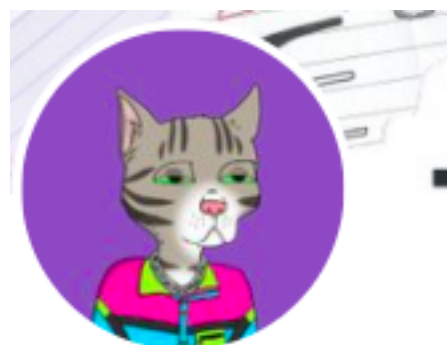
With no visibility, the aesthetics and show-off dimensions are basically gone, and every new art purchase now must be solely investment driven. That is, at least until you buy a bigger house.

In a nutshell, this is an analogy to the PFP vs. non-PFP project

discussion: An NFT you have as your profile picture is a digital artwork you not only get to see and enjoy for yourself (aesthetics) – everyone else gets to see it as well (show-off).

A non-PFP NFT is stored away, either in a vault, a ledger or in your "Items tab", and although you can upload it in a NFT museum – basically telling everyone you own it – it still feels somewhat insignificant compared to your digital identity. Its visibility is severely reduced.

A PFP project can be purchased for many different reasons: aesthetics, show-off, and investments. A non-PFP project is purchased primarily for one: investment.



PUMA.eth 
@PUMA

This does not take away anything from early NFT projects such as EtherRocks, PixelMap, Curio Cards, TwitterEggs, and others – it merely states that it is much easier for PFP collections (and other highly visible collections) to obtain and assert value. **And effectively, making the earliest PFP collections a source of high potential future value.**



4. Why 10k Collections Matter

Humans like order. Humans like symmetry. And humans like even numbers. But why distinguish or discriminate NFT projects based on their supply? Why does it matter whether a project has a fixed supply of 90, 2,000 or 10,000? Scarcity and limited supply should call for higher prices and more exclusivity, right?

Well, not necessarily. Looking at empirical data, most successful NFT projects have also managed to create an active and big community of its holders – its investors. Getting a project to trend on Twitter or creating a winning Discord community is exponentially harder with 123 NFTs distributed across 52 holders than with 10,000 distributed across thousands...

Additionally, by allowing a big enough community you also allow for multiple relationships and friendships to be built. There will be a sense of belonging for many holders.

By belonging, a sense of value is created, and by that, you create utility. **The utility of owning the digital artwork is the luxury of being in a “club” with your co-investors.**

For a collector of traditional art such as Tom, it is much harder to chat and meet with all fellow Jean-Michel Basquiat co-investors. Getting thousands of Andy Warhol collectors in an online chat room, discussing last night’s football game, seems rather unlikely too.

One of the clear advantages digital artwork has over traditional artwork is the act of being digital: talking, communicating, and connecting with all joint owners. And the larger the edition size, the larger this benefit is – at least up until a point. It is harder to argue for the utility of a member’s club of 45 other owners, where 25 of them is living in the opposite side (and time zone) of the world.

There are no magical explanation as to why 10k are preferable over 6, 7 or 9k, but 10k seems to be somewhat of an optimum: it allows for thousands of unique holders, usually from 3,000-5,000 individuals as the project matures, **effectively working as micro influencers and marketers of the project.** It allows for a diverse and big club of personalities, characters, and conversations – yet without feeling too big, which could dilute the club’s exclusivity. And the 10k edition size is big enough that you are more than likely to find the NFT that perfectly represents **you** and **your identity**. In contrast, a perfect digital representation of you would be quite the challenge with an edition of 400.

With this we’re not saying 10k NFT editions are superior to 1k editions. We’re not saying 10k editions are the go-to-edition-size, and everything else is second rank. What we are saying is that when it comes to *PFP* projects, the 10k edition size has been favored.

Ever since the release of CryptoPunks, the 10k collection has been a gold standard for PFP projects. CryptoPunks pioneered digital identities, it pioneered the ERC 721 token standard, and it pioneered the 10k edition size.

For that reason, the 10k collections matter.

For that reason, the 10k PFP collections are important.

And for that reason, early 10k PFP collections are historical.

5. Intellectual Property and IP Rights

Few things have been debated more than IP rights in the NFT community the last few years. And few things have caused more “FUD” and drama than intellectual property.

Whether you believe everything in web3 should be decentralized, or whether you’re an advocate for intellectual property rights and protecting one’s artwork, addressing one’s stance and view on IP rights is paramount to the success of an NFT collection.



PunksVoxels IP rights

PunksVoxels holders have **full** commercial rights to the artwork associated with their NFT. If not negative or destructive to the PunksVoxels and its community, holders are allowed to use their NFT in any way they want: including, but not limited to, licensing, leasing, marketing purposes, creative and artistic use etc. Hence, the owner of the PunksVoxels NFT owns the underlying intellectual property rights associated with the NFT. It is PunksVoxels’ opinion that a blockchain transaction satisfies the legal requirement for a copyright transfer – and upon transfer or sale of the NFT to a new owner, the previous owner gives up all claims to the copyright.

6. Derivatives And Its Role In Art

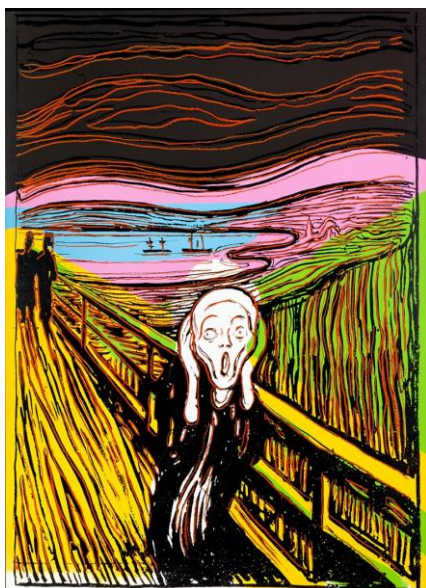
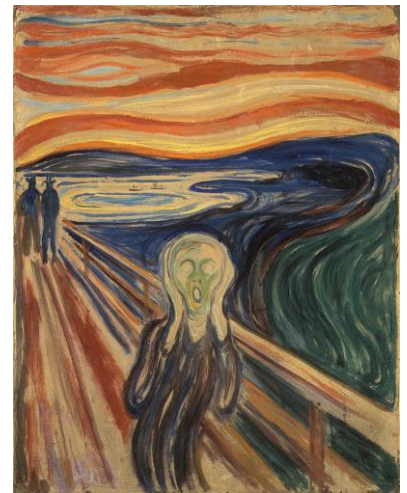
Ever heard of CryptoPhunks, the mirrored CryptoPunks collection that decided to “face left”?

What about 0xApes, the “extended” BAYC collection with the characteristic yellow backgrounds? Granpa Ape Country Club? Mfer chicks?

You get where this is going. And there’s a reason why we’re going there.

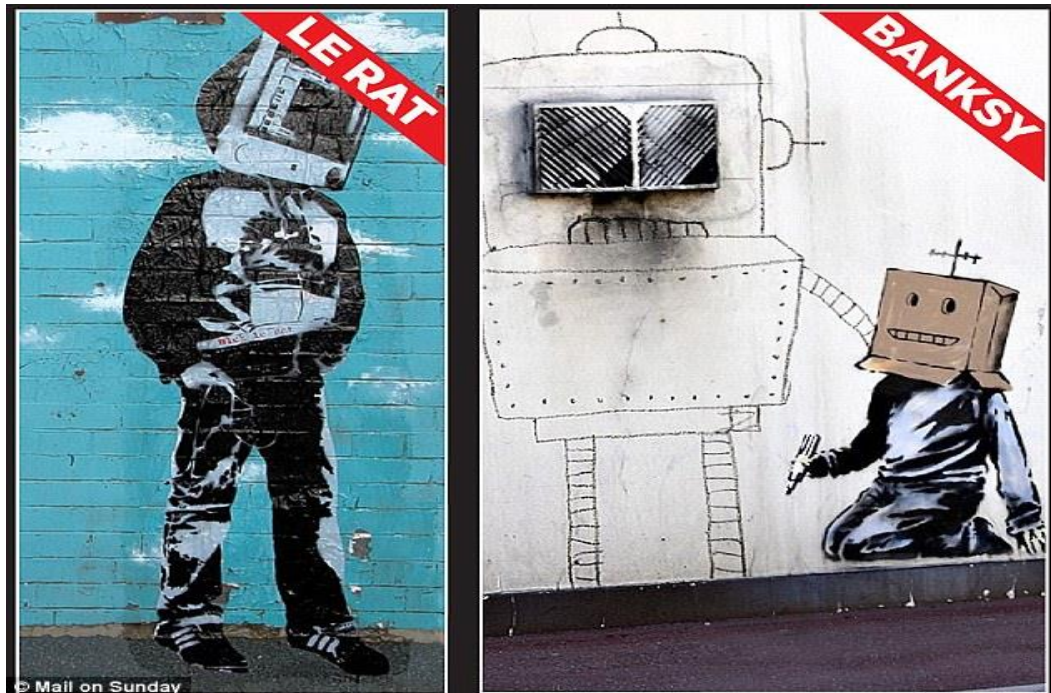
The reason is all that artwork since the dawn of time has drawn inspiration from **something** or **someone**. Many of the famous artists we talk of today were heavily inspired by their seniors.

One of the most famous artworks in the world, “**The Scream**” by Norwegian artist Edvard Munch, was heavily inspired of a flaming sunset, while Munch was taking a walk with some friends. The agonized face has become a symbol of pain and anxiety of the human condition, and the truth behind the artwork is merely that a deeply troubled artist had a panic attack co-incidentally while watching a sunset. Not so mystical anymore – even for “a genius”.



Let’s introduce an “extension series” with exaggerated colors. A derivative. Now, who is the artist behind this? It must be a “try-hard” that is leeching onto other’s success. It cannot be a famous artist. Right? Well, quite the opposite. The artist is no other than the king of pop art, Andy Warhol. Warhol, one of the most important artists of the 20th century, seemingly copied Edvard Munch’s famous image. Do we think less of the king of pop art today? Well... probably not.

What about “the king of street art”, Banksy? The anonymous, guerrilla-style stencil artist whose artwork sells at the top auction houses, and whose prices continue to skyrocket? According to Sotheby's, the latest Banksy artwork for sale has an estimated selling price between \$5 million and \$8 million. An artist of that stature surely must be brilliant. Surely his ideas must be his own.



Looking at the picture above – not necessarily. Even Banksy was heavily inspired by someone before him. In this case, the stencil artist pioneer, Blek Le Rat. Banksy is the web2 equivalent of CryptoPunks and Bored Ape Yatch Club, and even the top-tier artists get inspired.

However, it shouldn't come as a surprise. Most of what you do as an individual has been done before, and everything you do is inspired by someone or something else. We are not as unique as we like to believe.

Inspiration, homage series and “derivatives” have always been an integral part of art. Digital art are no different in this regard. Derivatives are nothing new, nothing controversial and nothing special.

The only thing that *is* special, is that PunksVoxels was first (10k) out.

7. A Discussion on Historical NFTs

We've all heard the old saying "beauty is in the eye of the beholder".

Does this apply for value too? Is value in the "eyes of the beholder"?

According to Gary Vee, most definitely. In a now [famous CNBC interview](#) he said the following:

*"People thought that Andy Warhol's and Jackson Pollock's should not have value. People thought that sports cards should not have value. People thought that sneakers should not have value. The thought of people deciding [...] what **should** or **shouldn't** have value, has made me laugh my entire life..."*

Listening to Gary, obviously this makes sense. No single individual or group can dictate what should or should not have value to others. The beauty of capitalism and free markets is that **the market decides** what has value, just as the market decides what doesn't.

Now, taking this argument one step further. Could someone say: "*being historical is in the eye of the beholder*"? Would Gary agree that being historical is up to the free market to decide? I most certainly think so.

If the market decides that an artwork from a significant époque or era is historical, then no individual or group can claim otherwise.

The debate on historical NFTs the last few months has been a derailment because certain parts of the historical NFT community – "the gatekeepers" – has claimed that a "significant époque or era" has almost everything to do with dates, and almost nothing to do with cultural shifts. I strongly believe this to be wrong, because being historical is not factual and clear-cut. And although the history is given, the assessment of it is not. The assessment of history is subjective and dynamic.

Dates are meaningless. Dates are merely a human construction trying to create a pattern of time. If NFTs predating a certain year (i.e. 2020) are historical, what calendars systems are we talking about? The Gregorian calendar? Why not the Chinese or the Hebrew calendar?

Writing this in March 2022 (using the Gregorian calendar), we have seen a monumental increase in both investor interest and NFT supply the last year or so – almost magically aligning around the launch of Bored Ape Yatch Club. Ever since the launch of the apes, the market has seen huge upswings in trading volume, as well as a huge increase in unique investors entering the market.

A recent [article from the Cointelegraph](#), calling Bored Ape Yatch Club a “huge mainstream hit”, states that BAYC became one of the “main reasons Wall Street should take the NFT market seriously”, and that the collection “changed the NFT landscape for good”.

An event that made something go mainstream, changing the landscape for good, is not only significant, but also historic.

Considering that the launch of BAYC led to an explosion in supply, especially for PFP projects, it must be posited that the launch of the project was a defining “before and after” moment in NFT and PFP history. And given that there’s only around ten 10k PFP collections predating the apes, it becomes evident why many considers those collections to be both significant and historical ones.

To conclude, if the market decides that something launched prior to a significant and cultural shift – one that permanently changed the market – is historical, then it is indeed so.

That is why being historical is in the eye of the beholder.

That is why being historical is in the eyes of the market.

And that is why PunksVoxels is a historical NFT and PFP collection.

