



**MAK**

Press Release

## **MAK purchases digital art work by Harm van den Dorpel with Bitcoin**

MAK Vienna purchased *Event Listeners* (2015) by Berlin based Dutch Artist Harm van den Dorpel for Bitcoin. The work, a screensaver in a limited edition, is currently exhibited on the online gallery [www.cointemporary.com](http://www.cointemporary.com) (founded and run by the artists Valentin Ruhry and Andy Boot), where further editions can be bought with Bitcoin only (and only still this week). The artwork was created on occasion of the MAK NITE Lab *Digital Superposition - The File as an Object* (MAK FORUM, 31 March 2015) where experts from different fields, such as contemporary art, artificial intelligence and art law were invited to speak on a panel.

*Event Listeners* is one of the first artworks, authenticated through the Blockchain, the same technology behind the digital currency. The cryptographic authentication enables the precise attribution of artworks and determination of provenience, edition, etc.

To date, the MAK – Austrian Museum of Applied Arts / Contemporary Art, is the first museum in the world to have acquired a decentrally authenticated digital artwork with digital currency. The museum sees this as a new form of collecting in the digital age and will exhibit van den Dorpel's work in an upcoming show called *24/7 - The Human Condition* as part of the first VIENNA BIENNALE 2015: IDEAS FOR CHANGE (11 June – 4 October 2015).

Two startups are significantly involved in the acquisition: The Austrian company Coinfinity, in technical consultation with the museum, and the Berlin company Ascribe.io, which provides the infrastructure for cryptographically authenticated certificates through their website.

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