

Kurz i Brud

Kurz (Polish for “dust”) is a cryptocurrency devised by the art-parasite *Brud*. Anyone can make *Kurz*, they will tell you. Take a piece of paper. Fold it in half. Do this three more times. Now you have a book with thirty-two pages, known during the Renaissance as a *sedecimo*, a “fourth of a fourth”, or, a *quarto-quarto*. Each page is called a *Kurz*.

Cryptocurrencies work on a mathematical breakthrough known as *proof of work*, in which networked computers go about solving algorithmic puzzles. Every transaction is public & freely accessible in an online ledger called the *blockchain*. Think of it as a giant bookkeeping system, recording all that passes through.

Kurz swaps the blockchain with other genres of books: cookbooks, notebooks, travel-guides; *Zibaldone*, *Sammelbande*; the Bible. *Kurz* is analog cryptography, slow & cumbersome. *Proof of work* is replaced by proof of *art-work*, by drawing, writing, painting, printing, by *book-work*.

Cryptocurrencies are tools for creating distributed trust. This is also called *federated consensus*. Value is gained by those who solve puzzles, i.e., *those who work*. Those who don't, gain no currency. *Trust* is created by keeping *fraud* at bay. Those who work are trustworthy. Those who don't are frauds.

Kurz relates to art production. Is art work? Do artists work? The artist as trickster is a cliché a bit long in the tooth. Should Calvinist severity apply to creative labour?

The Internet is a child of the archive. The Web was borne of books. Its lexis remains the *page*. *Kurz* speaks reflexively to this provenance, to Paul Otlet & Henri la Fontaine's *Mundaneum*, Vannevar Bush's *Memex*, & Ted Nelson's *Xanadu*. *Brud* sees *proof of work* systems as the future of governance & social choice. *Kurz* predicts this future by inventing it.

The images you see here are from a *Kurz* called *Podręcznik*. This is a *handbook*, literally so. We see the artists Evil Krow & Ada Pola counting in binary, from a closed fist (a zero) to an outstretched hand (a thirty-one). Each page is tautological, each page signifies its own value.

Familiar gestures taken on new meanings. A fuck-you is toothless. V is for Victory & a perfect number, the number six. A power salute is a zero. The Vulcan Hello is the greatest of all.

Slit-scanned atop clothes, towels, bed linen, & garbage bags, *Podręcznik* posits a deeply personal, even quotidian currency. *Brud* has created domestic money; *Kurz* is homespun gold.











