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High-Technology NFTs Support Traditional Taiwanese Art Form

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Taiwanese **puppeteers** are bringing their traditional art form into modern times by using non-fungible tokens, or NFTs.

An NFT can be attached to a piece of digital artwork. The NFT can be used to provide proof that the pieces are real.

The prices of some NFTs rose so fast last year that buyers around the world sometimes re-sold them within days of purchase for a profit.

Pili International Multimedia makes Taiwan's longest-running television show featuring the puppets. The company says it wants to use NFTs as another way to make money.

Seika Huang is Pili's brand director.

"The sort of imagination everyone nowadays has for the online world is developing so fast that we are almost unable to **grasp** it," Huang said.

"Instead of sitting on the sidelines, the best **approach** is to go ahead and understand fully what's going on. This is the fastest way to catch up."

Sitting on the sidelines is an expression that means to be inactive and watch as something happens.

Pili has thousands of puppet **characters**, a traditional part of Taiwanese street entertainment culture.

The puppets are carefully created, and expertly moved around during the filming of shows. The puppets wear colorful clothes. They are used to tell stories of **courage** and romance. Many of these stories involve the martial arts.

Pili said four of their puppet characters were made into digital copies and 30,000 sets have been sold as NFTs.

The company said prices for each set started at \$40, creating at least \$1.2 million in earnings since their listing in early February. The company did not say how much of that money was shared with the marketing company that supervises the selling of the NFTs.

VeVe, the marketing company that sells the NFTs, said the stories of the puppet heroes are popular with young people. The company added that the NFTs could draw in foreign fans of superhero films, such as those based on characters from Marvel Comics.

"Westerners actually really like our martial arts heroes and kung-fu," said VeVe's brand manager Raymond Chou.

Kung-fu is a traditional Chinese form of self-defense, a martial art.

Huang said their first listings had sold out seconds after launching on VeVe. The company is now working on turning up to 50 other puppet characters into NFTs, possibly providing millions of dollars for the studio.

I'm John Russell.

Ann Wang reported this story for Reuters. John Russel adapted it for VOA Learning English.

Words in This Story

puppeteer – n. : one who manipulates puppets – a small-scale figure (as of a person or animal) usually with a cloth body and hollow head that fits over and is moved by the hand or strings

grasp –v. to understand (something that is complicated or difficult)

approach – n. : a particular manner of taking such steps

character – n. one of the persons of a book, play, or movie

courage –n. the ability to do something that you know is difficult or dangerous
