

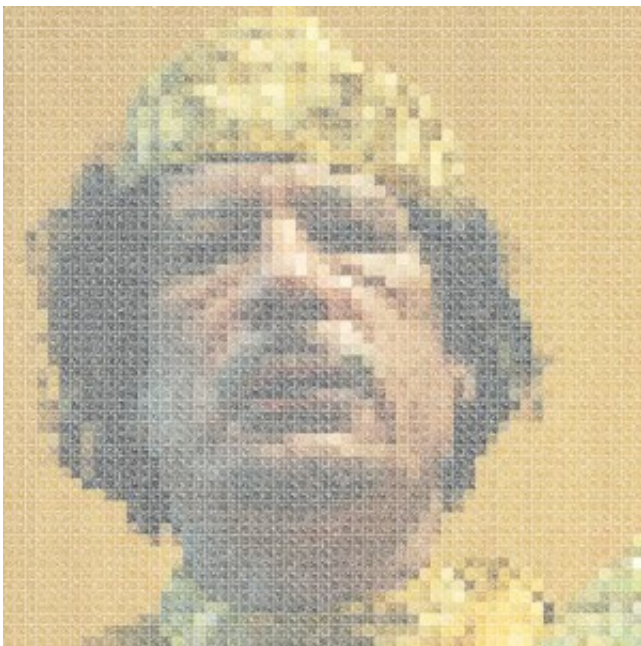
QR Code Art Makes Its Way Into the Galleries

by [An Xiao](#) on March 23, 2012



The installation view of Kyle Trowbridge's *The Politics of Time* at Dorsch Gallery. Image courtesy the gallery.

LOS ANGELES — QR codes are on the rise. I've spotted them everywhere, from subway ads (yes, we have subway ads in Los Angeles) to billboards to movie posters to business cards. And so they've inevitably cropped up in art.



DataSpaceTime's QR code portrait of Qaddafi points to YouTube videos. Image courtesy Microscope Gallery.

I was recently pointed to the work of [Kyle Trowbrdige](#), who is exhibiting in Miami's [Dorsch Gallery](#). Trowbridge painted 8 foot square QR codes in the vein of abstract geometric paintings. The objects themselves look interesting, like Mondrians meeting pixellation, but they also point to quirky conceptual phrases. "qr.7947423," for instance, tells me: "I've Never Enjoyed the Price of Freedom." "qr.2697401" offers more prosaic advice: "A picture is worth a 1000 kilobytes." But only if they're web-ready.

And then I stumbled across the [QR code portraits](#) of DataSpaceTime (Ray Sweeten and Lisa Gwilliam), who showed their work this past December at [Microscope Gallery](#) in Brooklyn. The semantic content of their works, which includes wallpaper prints of QR codes, is composed of five-word combinations least used in the English language, according to Google's NGRAM Book Project. The most eye-catching, at least from my computer, is a portrait of late Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi, made entirely of QR codes that point to YouTube videos.

With the [QR Stenciler I just looked at](#), I have to wonder if we're reaching a tipping point with QR code art. Indeed, I see them now in placards at galleries and museums and in artists' business cards. It only makes sense that they should appear in art. We're already so busy snapping pics of art with our iPhones — why not get QR code data as well?

Tagged as: [DataSpaceTime](#), [Dorsch Gallery](#), [Kyle Trowbrdige](#), [Lisa Gwilliam](#), [MICROSCOPE Gallery](#), [QR codes](#), [Ray Sweeten](#)

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