

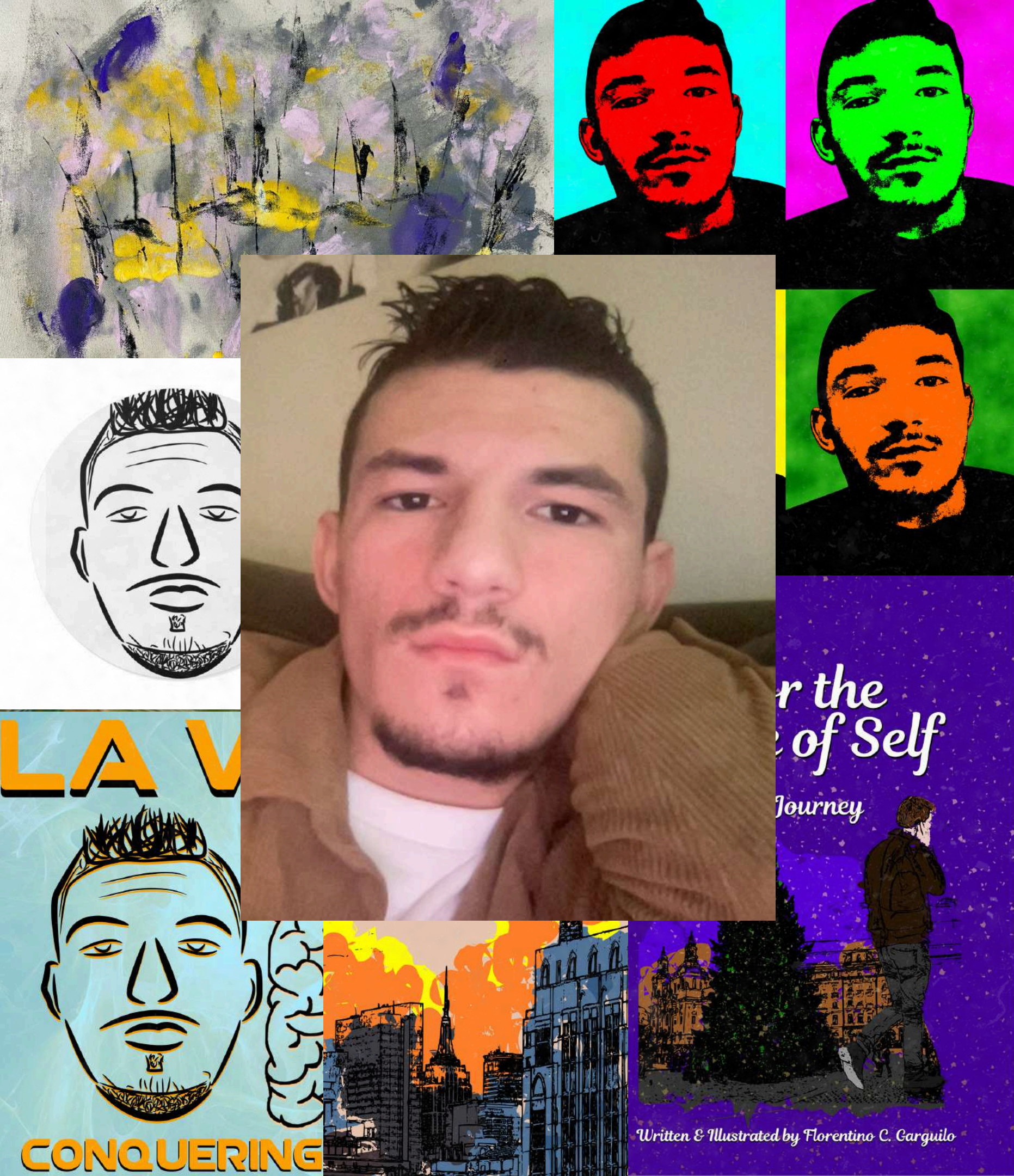
MASTERCLASS:

CREATIVE ROBBERY: SPOTTING SCAMS IN THE ART WORLD

FLORENTINO GARGUILO

ARTIST / AUTHOR / COACH





ABOUT ME

- Artist "Tino Art"
- Author
- Coach
- Art upholder

www.TinoArt.com

@_TinoArt

BY THE END OF THIS MASTERCLASS...



- Debunk myths about scams
- Understand the type of scams
- Uncover scammer techniques
- Effects of scamming
- Where scams exist
- Preventing scams
- Process after being scammed

FIRST: WHAT EVEN IS A SCAM

According to the Oxford Dictionary...

- "Dishonest scheme to gain money or possessions from someone fraudulently..."
- Online scams have been dominating the social world, including in the art industry.



DEBUNKING MYTHS

- MYTH: Art scams are done by technological geniuses
 - >Scammers can be ordinary people
- MYTH: Scams = taking over your computer/identity in grand scheme
 - >Motive is often just money
- MYTH: Art scams are rare
 - >Incredibly common
- MYTH: Art scams are obvious to spot
 - >Many scammers are great at what they do

DEBUNKING MYTHS CONT.

- MYTH: Scammers only target people with a large following/money
 - >Scammers LOVE creators w/ small following
- MYTH: If I get scammed, there's nothing I can do
 - >There are channels to report/compensate
- MYTH: Being scammed implies weakness
 - >Not a reflection of you
- MYTH: Scams are so savvy, there's nothing I can do to prevent scams
 - >Knowledge, caution, and digital literacy

DIGITAL LITERACY

- Debunking these myths helps understand how scams truly work, and how to avoid them.



TYPES OF SCAMS

1. Forgery:

- The act of selling "authentic" work that isn't real
- Scammers may create fake art to replicate someone else, put fake signature, or claim a piece is by a famous artist
- One of the biggest scams in the art world

TYPES OF SCAMS

2. Fake artist:

- Claim they can sell you art that doesn't exist
- You pay for the piece, and it never delivers to you
- Scammers often block you or delete account afterwards

TYPES OF SCAMS

3. Pricing Scams

- Scammers sells you a real piece, but way overpriced
- Or, may tell you one price, and charge you more (bait and switch)
- Or, charge on a secretive subscription-based foundation

TYPES OF SCAMS

4. Fake Buyers

- Scammers make you an offer to buy your art
- May then claim your art as their own
- Or, may send you payment link that gives them your bank info

TYPES OF SCAMS

5. Commission Scams

- Scammers send you photos they want you to draw/paint
- Similar to before, will then send you fake bank link
- They get your bank login, and take your money

TYPES OF SCAMS

6. Fake Employers

- Claiming to offer you a job in gallery, office, organization
- Hire you on the spot
- May make you purchase or give you fake check for supplies

TYPES OF SCAMS

6. Phishing

- Appears to be known artist or from legit company/org
- Claims to want to exhibit your artwork, collab, etc.
- Results in payments (even if made knowingly) that leads to nothing as promised

TYPES OF SCAMS

7. Social Media Promoters

- Claims to be part of social media strategy company
- Promises to increase your following and engagement for money
- Company is a sham. No actual promotion/engagement occurs

TYPES OF SCAMS

8. Social Media "Bloggers"

- Claims to be some large account that will mention you for a price
- Their "large following" is fake; bot accounts
- Zero gain for you

TYPES OF SCAMS

9. Recovery Scam

- Happens after actually being scammed
- Fake company claims they can help recover damage
- Results in more loss of money

TYPES OF SCAMS

BONUS: Crypto Scams

- Not necessarily art-related, but relevant
- Claims to triple an investment you make
- Blocks you after you make investment

TYPES OF SCAMS

BONUS: Friend Scam

- Not necessarily art-related, but relevant
- Claims to be a friend you know that needs help logging in account
- Sends you fraud link. Once you login, they have your account information

TECHNIQUES SCAMMERS USE

- Positive Emotions: Compliment-bombing, intimacy, inclusivity
- Fear: Claiming they have private photos, threats, copyright
>Extortion videos, sextortion videos
- AI: Deepfakes, pretending to be family, friends, etc.
- Pressure: "Hurry up!" "I don't want to be scammed"
- Psychology: Reward System, manipulation, dopamine rush
- Vulnerability Detection: Using age, experience, low-following count



EFFECTS OF SCAMMING

- Stolen money
- Time wasted
- Stolen Art
- Mental Health
- Stolen identity, privacy violations



WHERE ARE THESE SCAMS?

- Everywhere!
- Instagram
- Facebook
- Tiktok
- Linkedin
- Dating Sites
- Personal & Pro Emails
- Phone calls
- E-commerce Shops
- Even video games!



**Caution: Although not a scam, whenever you make payments for site fees, websites, etc., beware of auto payments!*

TIPS FOR SPOTTING SCAMS

If it's through Instagram...

- Check location
- Account creation date
- Are comments turned off?
- Followers? Bots? Locked acct?



TIPS FOR SPOTTING SCAMS

If it's through Email...

- Verify email address
- Verify company through google search
- Was it sent to others?
- Was it addressed to you?



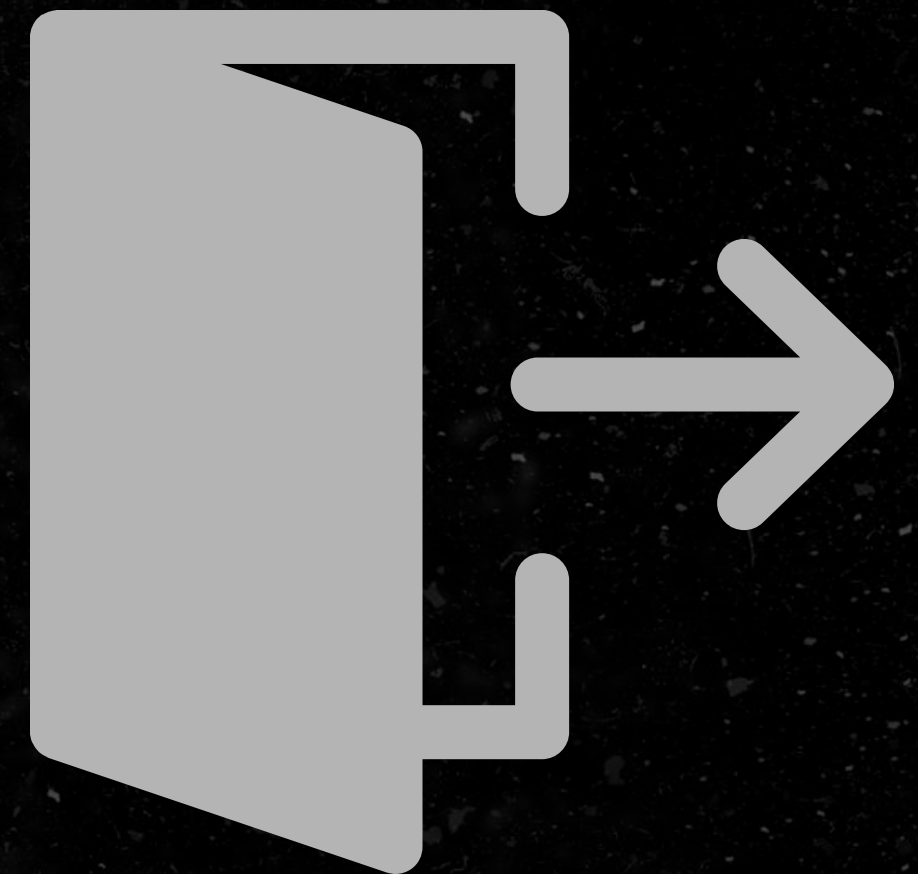
DO NOT CLICK ANY LINKS!

TIPS FOR SPOTTING SCAMS

If they are asking to chat through WhatsApp, Telegram...

If they try to get you off the original platform they met you on...

SCAM!

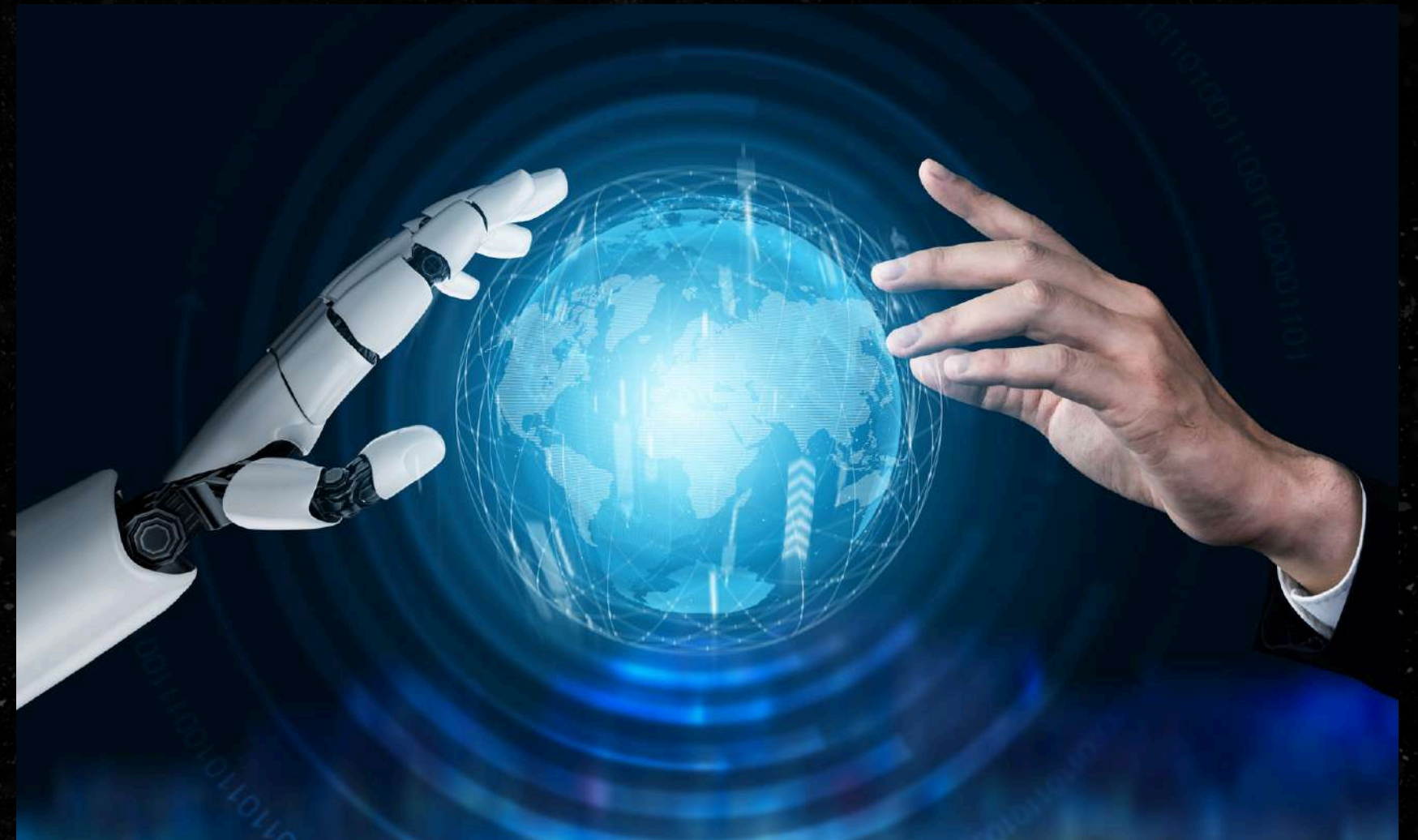


TIPS FOR SPOTTING SCAMS

If language is generic, lacks personability...

If they ask for private information...

SCAM!



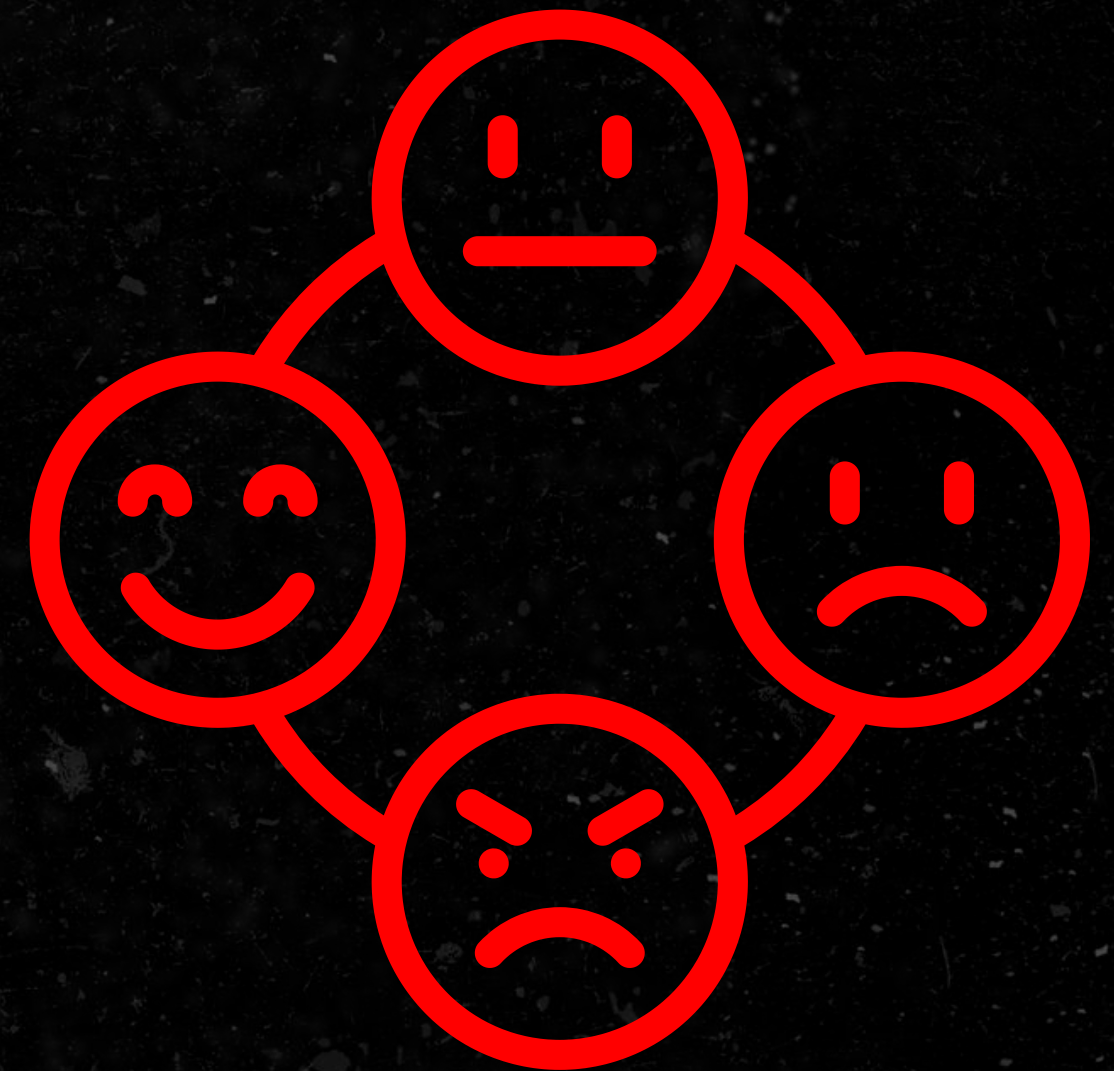
TIPS FOR SPOTTING SCAMS

If they shower you with compliments, praise...

If they rush you, force you to make quick decision...

If they are hostile, rude, annoyed...

SCAM!



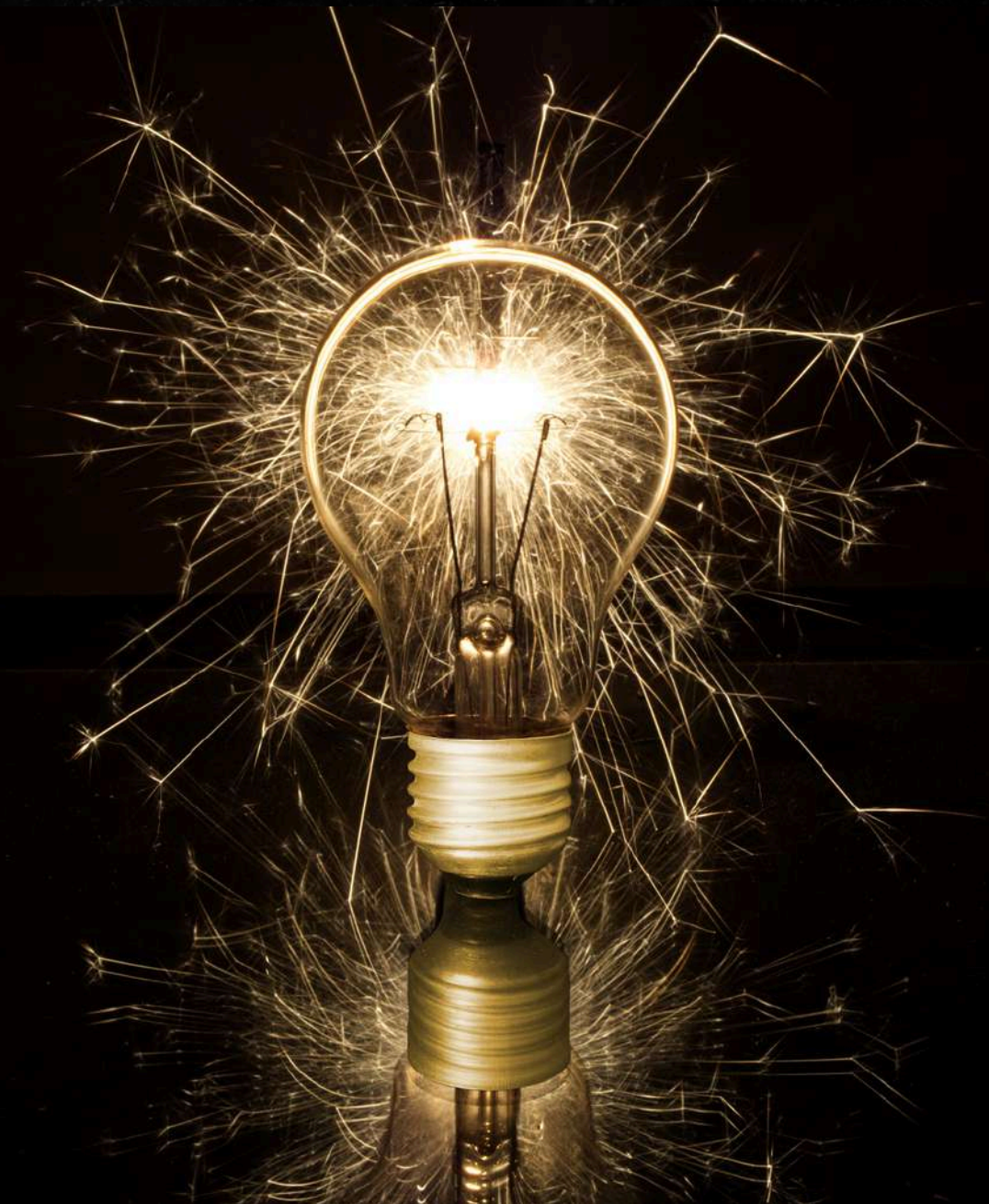
TIPS FOR SPOTTING SCAMS

If it seems too good to be true...

It is!

WHAT TO DO IF YOU WERE SCAMMED

- Do NOT send anything more out of fear/promises of money back
- Take screenshots of everything and write report
- Contact bank ASAP
- File complaint w/ IC3 and [ReportFraud.ftc.gov](https://www.ftc.gov/complaint)
- Report to local authorities
- Report on platform scam happened
- Change passwords, remove card, secure info
- Report to scammer's country's system if known



PRACTICE

The following are real-life examples of scammy messages, offers, and patterns...

EXAMPLE 1

- Not addressed to me
- Generic message



Kira Prince

kira.n.prince



Kira Prince

kira.n.prince · Instagram

[View profile](#)

2/15/24, 3:01 PM

Hi! Love your content 🥰

I'm working with a petwear brand called @scarfandtail!
I think you'd make a great fit for our influencer program. We would love to work with you and send over some complimentary merchandise!!!

If you would like to be one of our ambassadors, just reach out by DM to @scarfandtail & they'll take it from here 🐕

xoxo!




- Account says Tuscon, AR
- Arizona is AZ not AR
- Superficial photos




kira.n.prince ...

Kira Prince

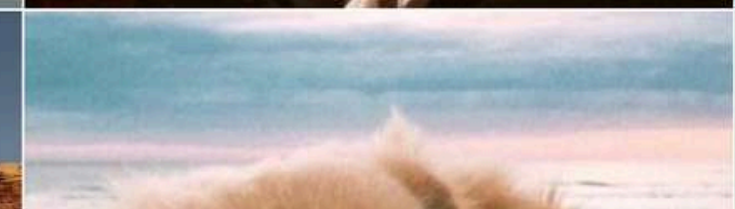
212 posts 4,584 followers 120 following

 Puppy Blogger

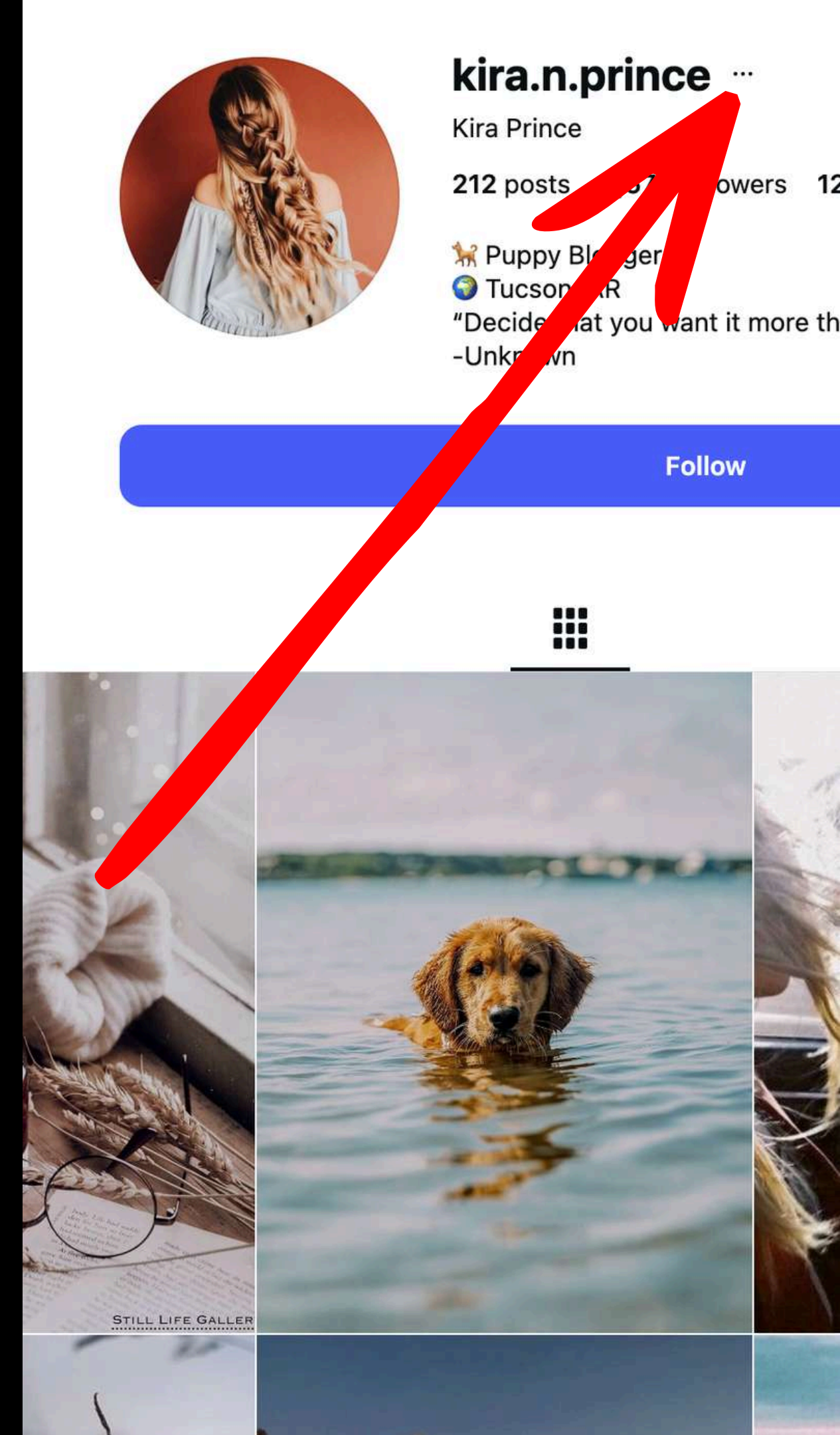
 Tucson, AR

"Decide that you want it more than you are afraid of it."
-Unknown

Follow



- Let's see real location
- Click three dots



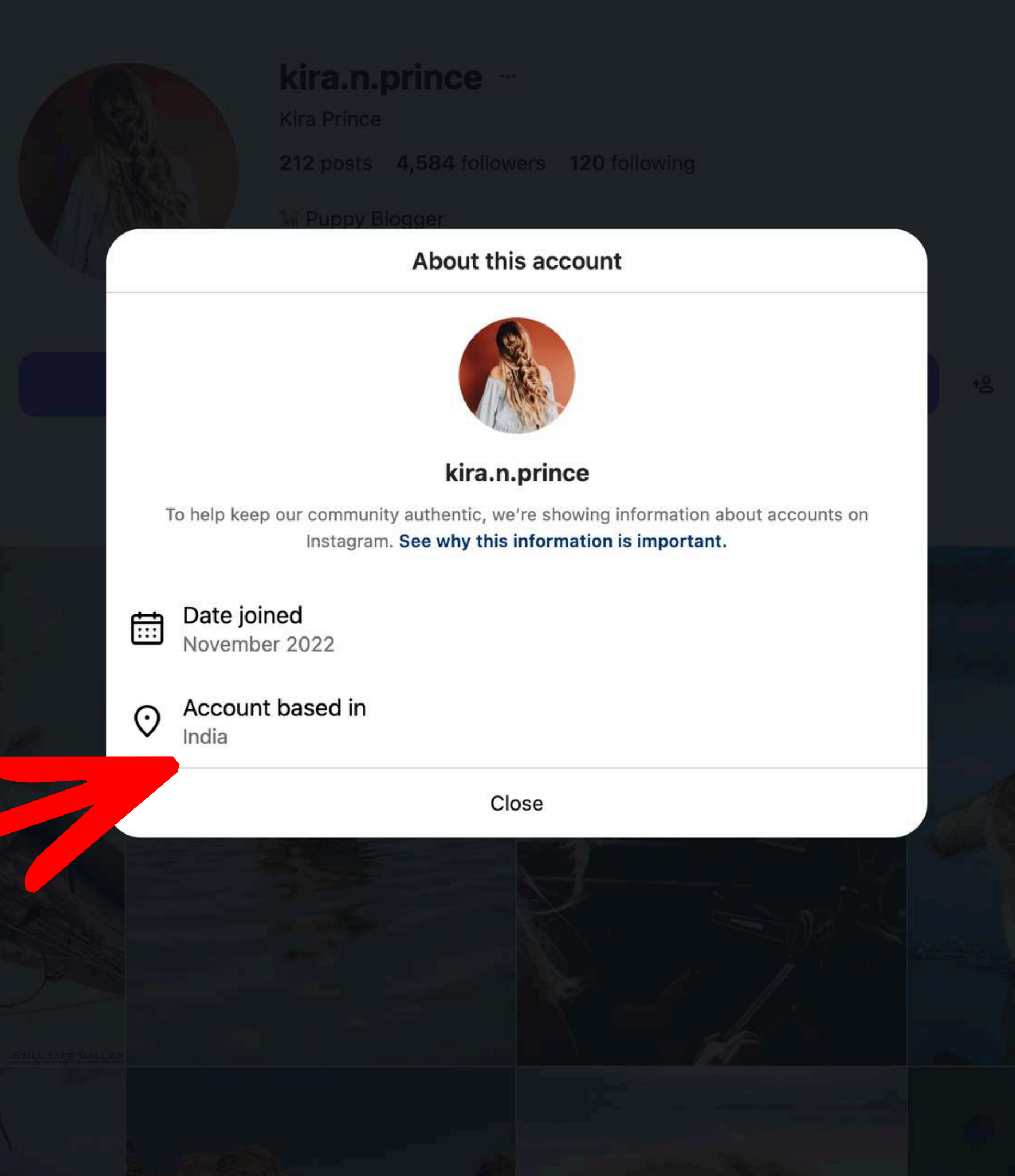
- "About this Account"

 **kira.n.prince** ...
Kira Prince
212 posts 4,584 followers 120 following
Puppy Blogger

- Block
- Restrict
- Report
- Share to...
- Embed
- About this account
- Send message
- Cancel



- Located in India



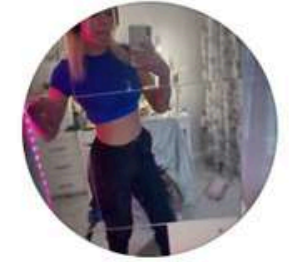
SCAM

EXAMPLE 2

- Instagram DM
- Greeting
- Heart?



Hanne
hannehjm57pi



Hanne

hannehjm57pi · Instagram

[View profile](#)

11/3/23, 12:27 AM

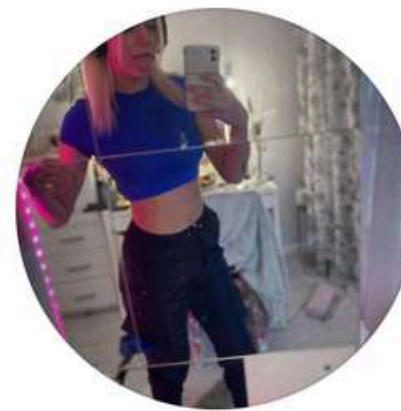


hey Florentino how do you do, hows it going? 💜



Message...

- More generic photos
- Weird username

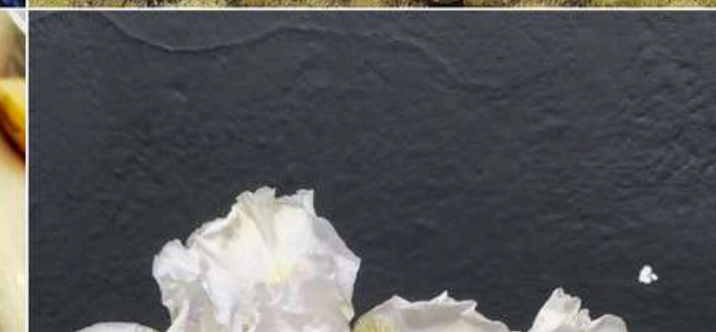
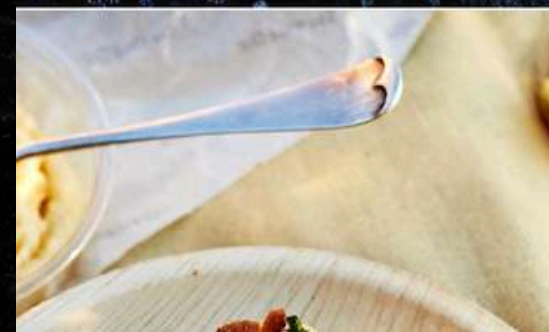


hannahjm57pi ...

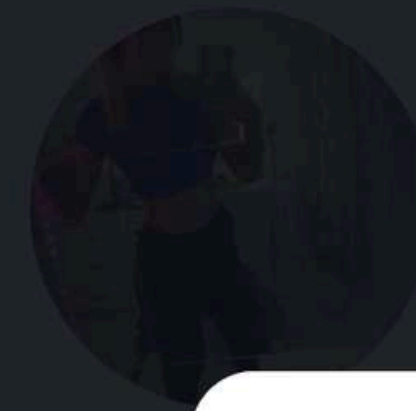
Hanne

153 posts 359 followers 1,732 following

Follow



- Location says Thailand
- Despite photos clearly portraying differently

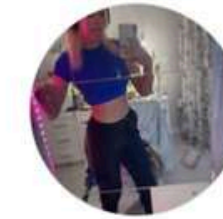


hannehjm57pi ...

Hanne

153 posts 359 followers 1,732 following

About this account



hannehjm57pi

To help keep our community authentic, we're showing information about accounts on Instagram. [See why this information is important.](#)



Date joined

June 2023



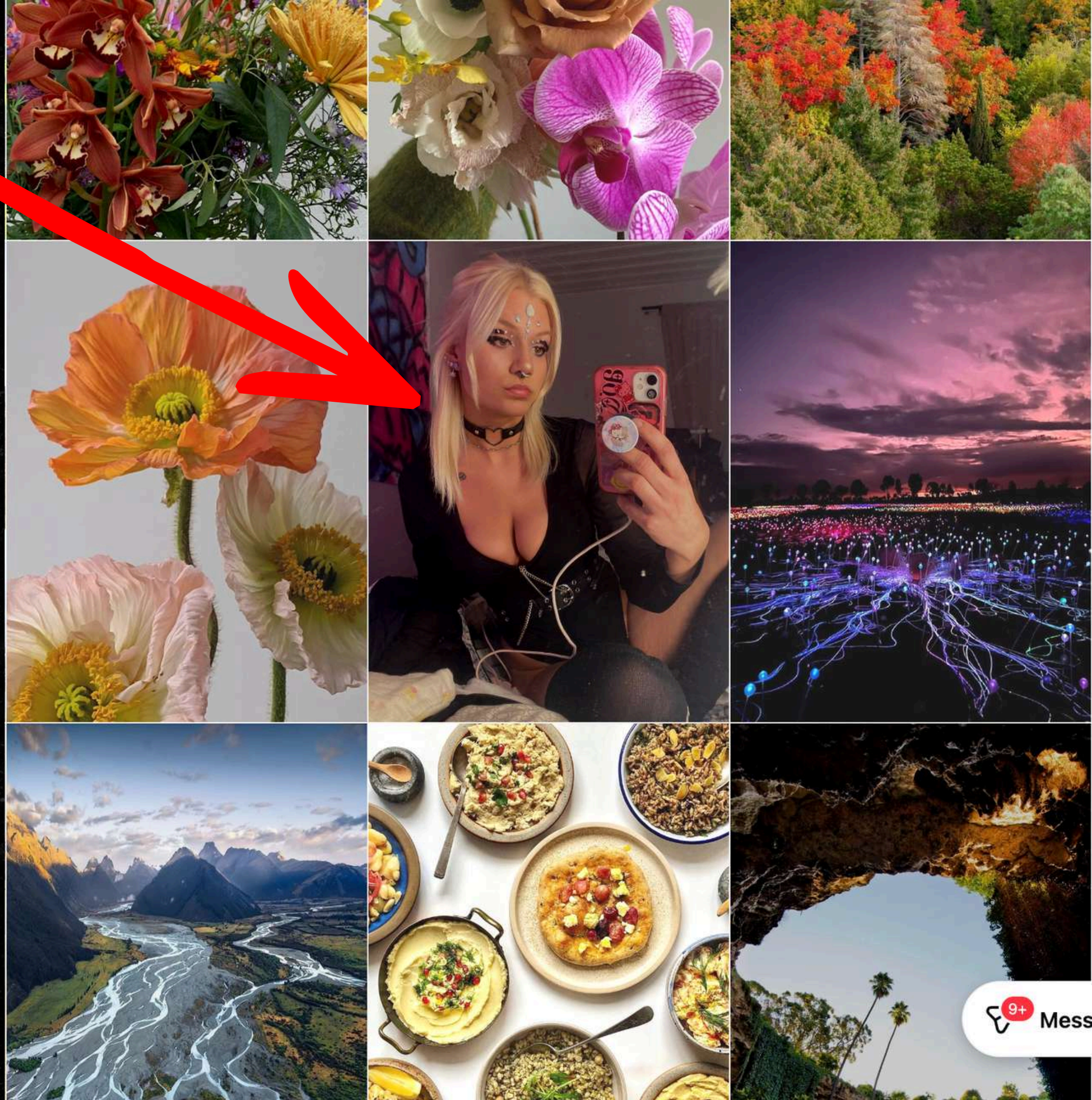
Account based in

Thailand

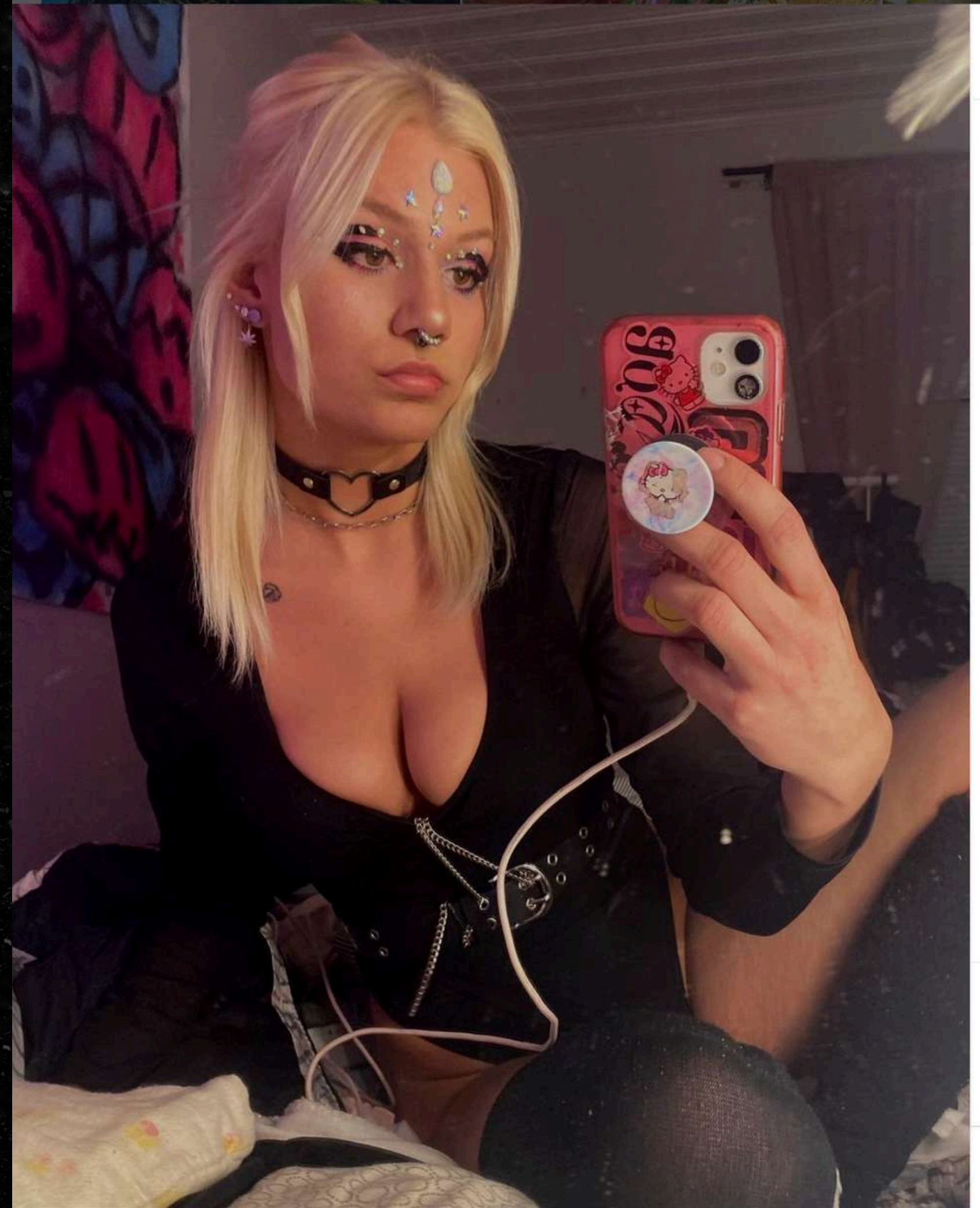
Close

*BONUS

- Let's take a photo from this account




- We can use Google Reverse Image Search tool to see if it really is hers



- Go to Google
- Search by Image
- Upload the Image



Search any image with Google Lens ×

 Drag an image here or [upload a file](#)

OR

Paste image link

- The same exact photo appears on Reddit

The screenshot shows a Google search interface. At the top left is the Google logo. To its right is a search bar containing a small thumbnail of the image and the text "Add to your search". Below the search bar are navigation tabs: "AI Mode", "All" (which is selected), "Exact matches", "Products", "Visual matches", "About this image", and "Feedback".

Below the tabs, there is a section titled "AI Overview" with a blue star icon. The text below it reads: "This image shows a person styling a black top with sheer sleeves, a heart-shaped choker, and facial gems." Below this text is a light blue button that says "Dive deeper in AI Mode".

At the bottom of the AI Overview section are four social sharing icons: a copy icon, a share icon, a like icon, and a comment icon.

Below the AI Overview section, there is a heading "Results for people are limited" with an information icon. Underneath are three image thumbnails. The first thumbnail shows a person with blonde hair, a black top, and a heart-shaped choker, holding a pink phone. Below it is the text "Reddit pizzabullen15 (u/pizzabullen15) - Reddit". The second thumbnail shows the same person in a similar outfit, looking slightly to the side. Below it is the text "Instagram living in a cloud recently things are happening though! it ...". The third thumbnail shows the person in a black top with sheer sleeves and a heart-shaped choker, looking towards the camera. Below it is the text "Facebook Beatriz Braun (@chernobylbarbie) • Facebook".



Google



Add to your search

AI Mode

All

Exact matches

Products

Visual matches

About this image

Feedback

AI Overview

This image shows a person styling a black top with sheer sleeves, a heart-shaped choker, and facial gems.

Dive deeper in AI Mode



Results for people are limited



Reddit

pizzabullen15 (u/pizzabullen15) -
Reddit



Instagram

living in a cloud recently things
are happening though! it ...



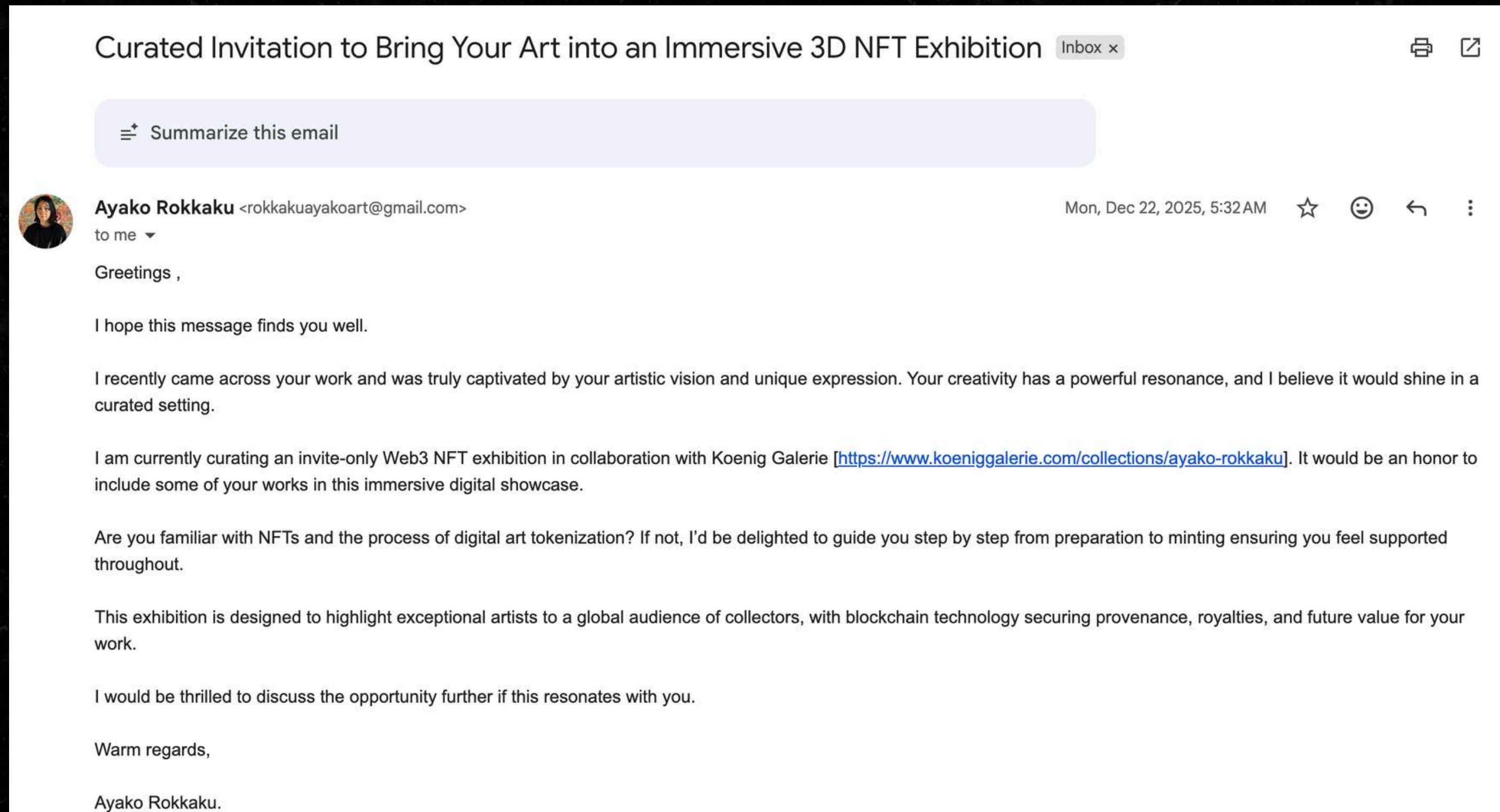
Facebook

Beatriz Braun
(@chernobylbarbie) • Facebook

SCAM

EXAMPLE 3

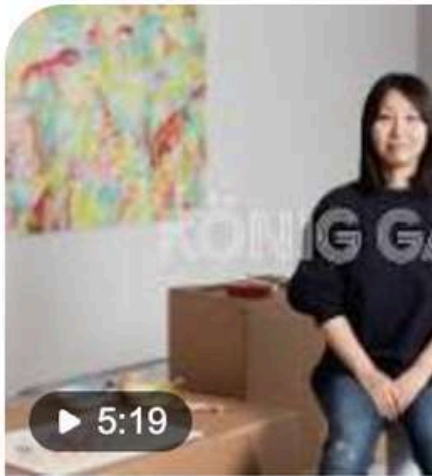
- Highly legit-looking email
- Not addressed to me
- Sent from Gmail (Red Flag)



- Google search shows she's a legit artist

Ayako Rokkaku

Artist



YouTube • KÖNIG G
AYAKO ROKKAKU | P
Feeling | Inside the A
At the beginning of 202
visited **Ayako Rokkaku**
3 days ago

Artsy
<https://www.artsy.net> › artist › ayako-rokkaku

Ayako Rokkaku - Art & Prints for Sale

Ayako Rokkaku's exuberant paintings, which feature cartoonish characters adrift in rainbow-tinged fields, have won her fans across the globe. [Read more](#)



Instagram · rokkakuayako
39.5K+ followers

- Instagram page
- Does not follow me
- No reference anywhere to the email address sent to me anywhere



rokkakuayako ...

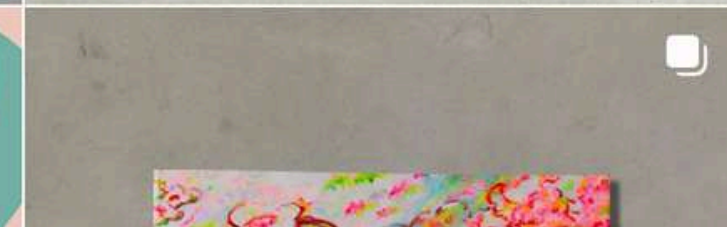
Ayako Rokkaku

146 posts 39.6K followers 899 following

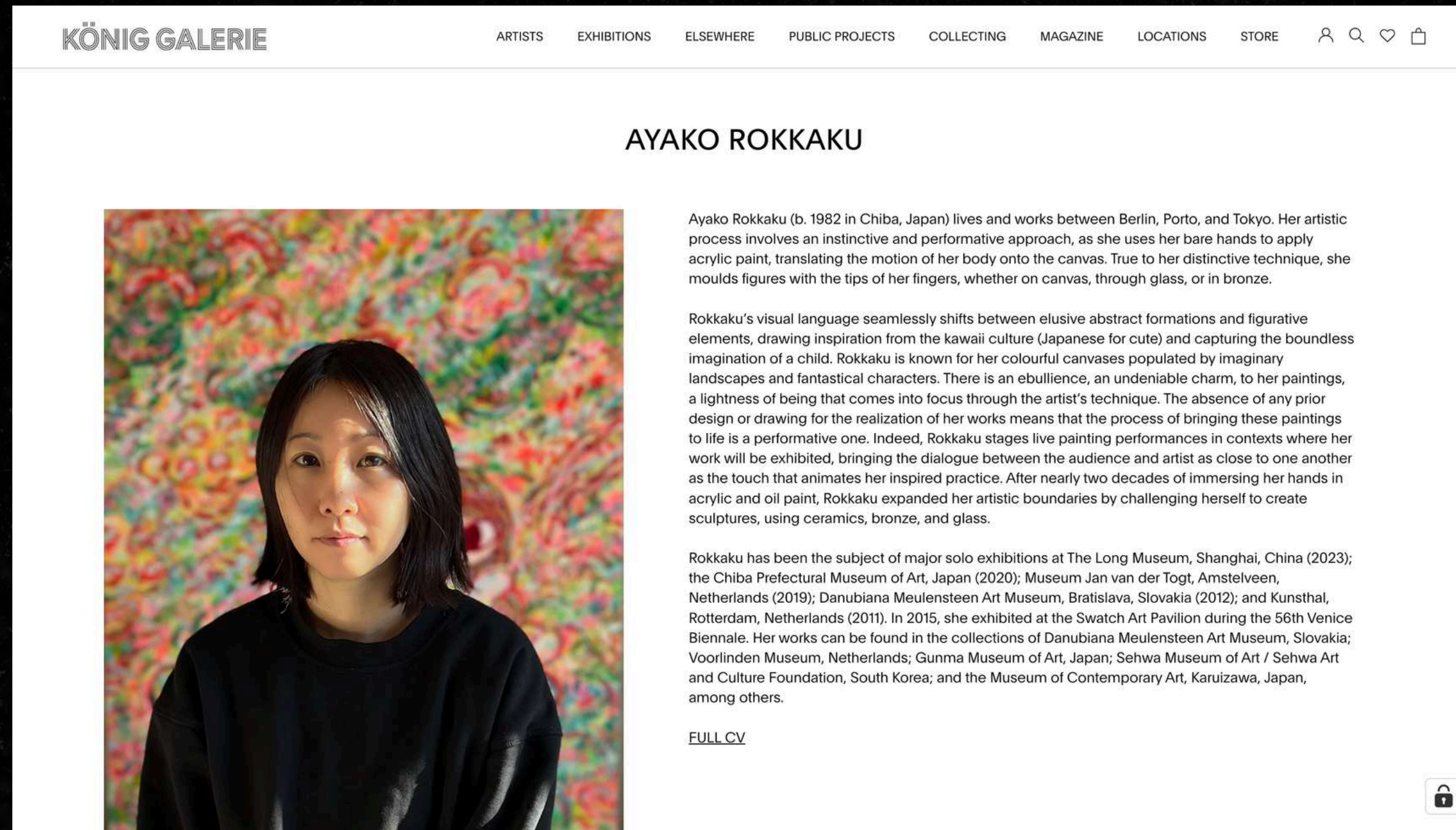
rokkakuayako.com

Followed by [grgallery_ny](#), [thierrynoir](#) + 2 more

Follow



- Found the “König Galerie the email referred to



The image shows a screenshot of the König Galerie website. At the top, the logo "KÖNIG GALERIE" is on the left, and a navigation menu with links for ARTISTS, EXHIBITIONS, ELSEWHERE, PUBLIC PROJECTS, COLLECTING, MAGAZINE, LOCATIONS, and STORE is on the right. Below the navigation, the artist's name "AYAKO ROKKAKU" is centered. To the left of the text is a portrait of Ayako Rokkaku, a woman with dark hair, wearing a black top, standing in front of a colorful, abstract painting. To the right of the portrait is a block of text describing her work and exhibitions. At the bottom right of the page, there is a small icon of a padlock.

KÖNIG GALERIE

ARTISTS EXHIBITIONS ELSEWHERE PUBLIC PROJECTS COLLECTING MAGAZINE LOCATIONS STORE


AYAKO ROKKAKU

Ayako Rokkaku (b. 1982 in Chiba, Japan) lives and works between Berlin, Porto, and Tokyo. Her artistic process involves an instinctive and performative approach, as she uses her bare hands to apply acrylic paint, translating the motion of her body onto the canvas. True to her distinctive technique, she moulds figures with the tips of her fingers, whether on canvas, through glass, or in bronze.

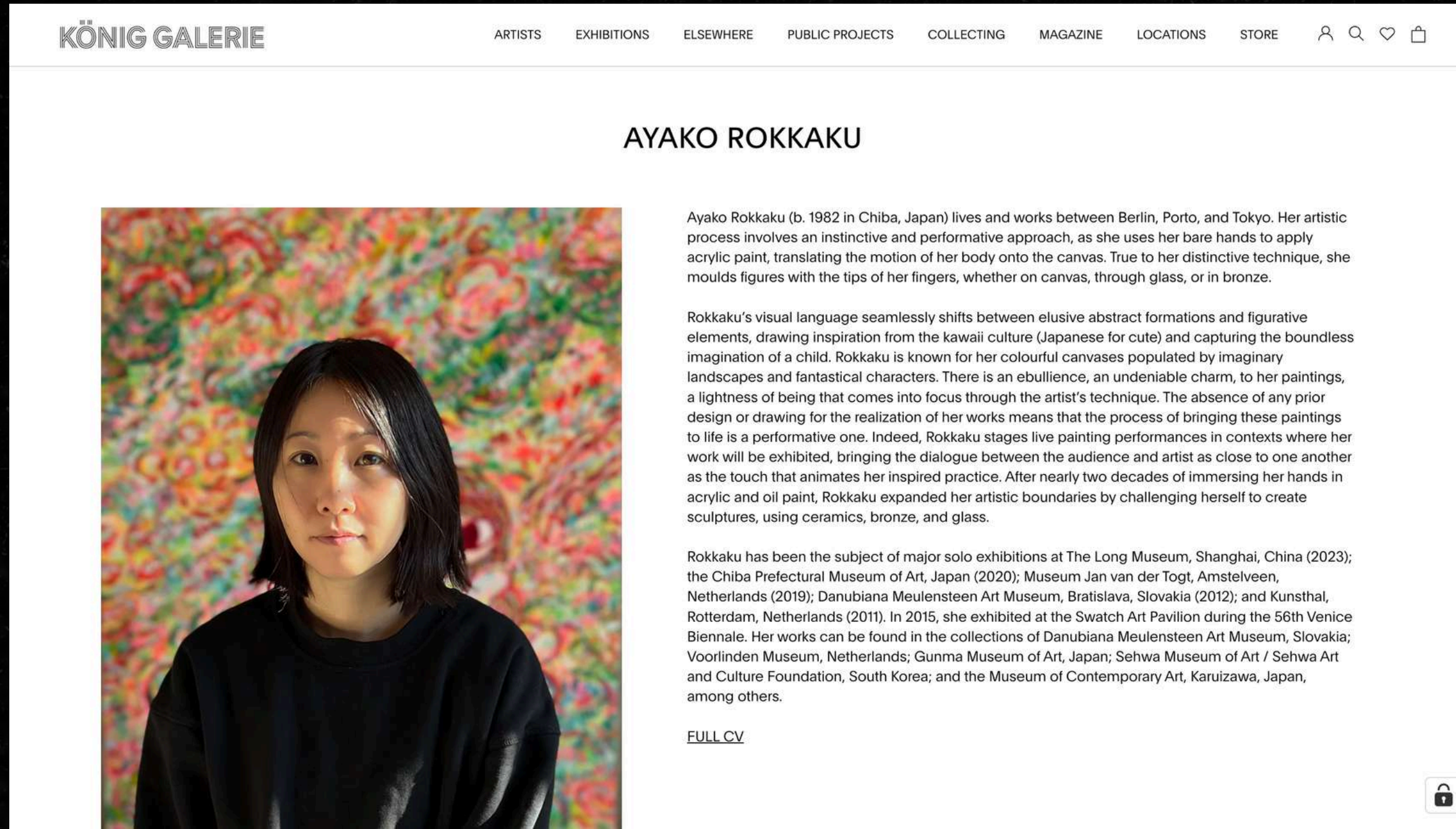
Rokkaku’s visual language seamlessly shifts between elusive abstract formations and figurative elements, drawing inspiration from the kawaii culture (Japanese for cute) and capturing the boundless imagination of a child. Rokkaku is known for her colourful canvases populated by imaginary landscapes and fantastical characters. There is an ebullience, an undeniable charm, to her paintings, a lightness of being that comes into focus through the artist’s technique. The absence of any prior design or drawing for the realization of her works means that the process of bringing these paintings to life is a performative one. Indeed, Rokkaku stages live painting performances in contexts where her work will be exhibited, bringing the dialogue between the audience and artist as close to one another as the touch that animates her inspired practice. After nearly two decades of immersing her hands in acrylic and oil paint, Rokkaku expanded her artistic boundaries by challenging herself to create sculptures, using ceramics, bronze, and glass.

Rokkaku has been the subject of major solo exhibitions at The Long Museum, Shanghai, China (2023); the Chiba Prefectural Museum of Art, Japan (2020); Museum Jan van der Togt, Amstelveen, Netherlands (2019); Danubiana Meulensteen Art Museum, Bratislava, Slovakia (2012); and Kunsthall, Rotterdam, Netherlands (2011). In 2015, she exhibited at the Swatch Art Pavilion during the 56th Venice Biennale. Her works can be found in the collections of Danubiana Meulensteen Art Museum, Slovakia; Voorlinden Museum, Netherlands; Gunma Museum of Art, Japan; Sehwa Museum of Art / Sehwa Art and Culture Foundation, South Korea; and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Karuizawa, Japan, among others.

[FULL CV](#)



- The website spells it "König"



The screenshot shows the website for König Galerie. The header includes the logo "KÖNIG GALERIE" on the left and a navigation menu with links for ARTISTS, EXHIBITIONS, ELSEWHERE, PUBLIC PROJECTS, COLLECTING, MAGAZINE, LOCATIONS, and STORE. On the right side of the header are icons for a user profile, search, heart, and shopping bag. The main content area features the name "AYAKO ROKKAKU" in a large, bold, sans-serif font. Below the name is a portrait of the artist, Ayako Rokkaku, with her hair and eyes highlighted in a vibrant, multi-colored, abstract pattern. To the right of the portrait is a block of text describing her work and exhibitions. At the bottom right of the page, there is a small icon of a padlock.

KÖNIG GALERIE

ARTISTS EXHIBITIONS ELSEWHERE PUBLIC PROJECTS COLLECTING MAGAZINE LOCATIONS STORE


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[FULL CV](#)



Curated Invitation to Bring Your Art into an Immersive 3D NFT Exhibition

Inbox x



Summarize this email



Ayako Rokkaku <rokkakuayakoart@gmail.com>

Mon, Dec 22, 2025, 5:32 AM



to me ▾

Greetings ,

I hope this message finds you well.

I recently came across your work and was truly captivated by your artistic vision and unique expression. Your creativity has a powerful resonance, and I believe it would shine in a curated setting.

I am currently curating an invite-only Web3 NFT exhibition in collaboration with Koenig Galerie [\[https://www.koeniggalerie.com/collections/ayako-rokkaku\]](https://www.koeniggalerie.com/collections/ayako-rokkaku). It would be an honor to include some of your works in this immersive digital showcase.

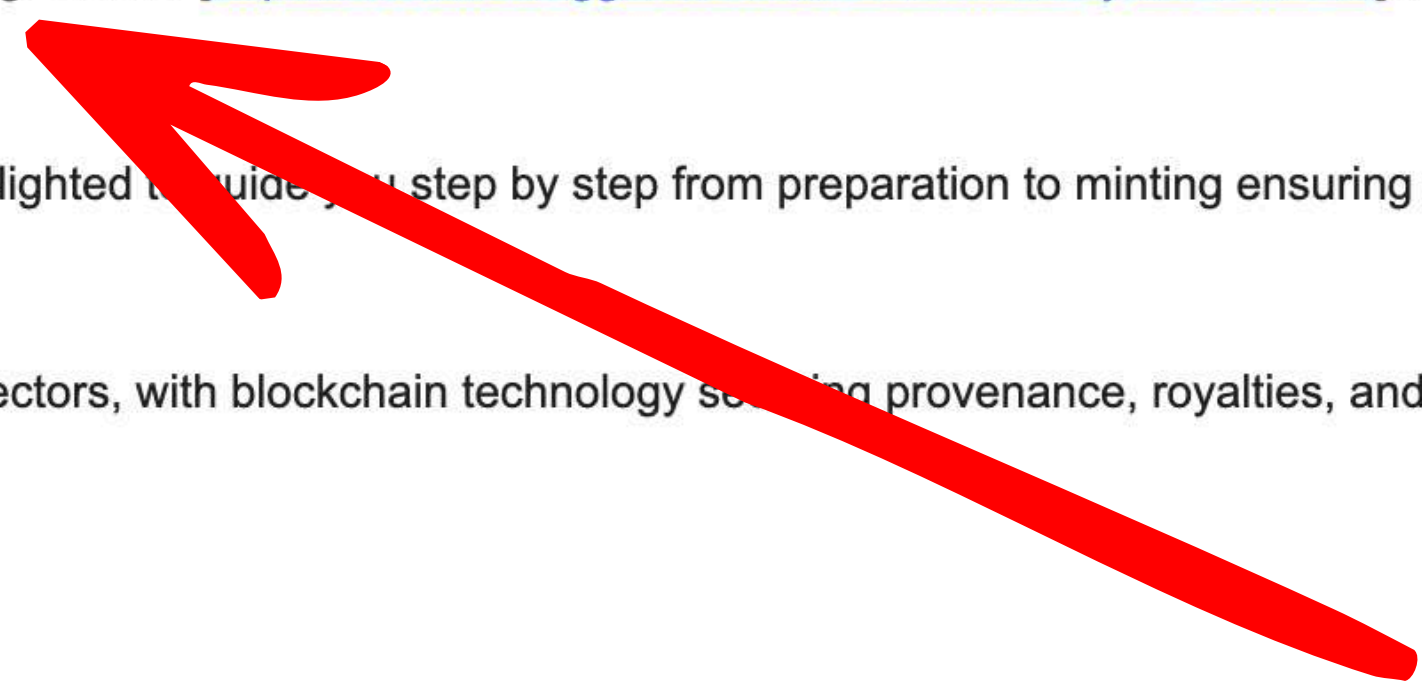
Are you familiar with NFTs and the process of digital art tokenization? If not, I'd be delighted to guide you step by step from preparation to minting ensuring you feel supported throughout.

This exhibition is designed to highlight exceptional artists to a global audience of collectors, with blockchain technology securing provenance, royalties, and future value for your work.

I would be thrilled to discuss the opportunity further if this resonates with you.

Warm regards,

Ayako Rokkaku.



- The website spells it "König"
- The email spells it "Koenig"

KÖNIG GALERIE

Koenig Galerie [<https://www.koeniggalerie.com/collections/ayako-rokkaku>].

SCAM

EXAMPLE 4

- Another decent email

- Still not directly addressed to me



Stefan Brüggemann <steffanbruggemann@gmail.com>

to me ▾

Mon, Dec 22, 2025, 6:32 AM



Greetings Mate,

I hope you're doing well. I recently came across your work and was truly captivated by your artistic style and unique expression. It's clear that your creativity would make a strong impact in any setting.

I'm currently curating a Web3 exhibition in partnership with HAUSER & WIRTH [<https://www.hauserwirth.com/artists/2855-stefan-bruggemann/>], and I'd love to include some of your pieces as NFTs in the upcoming show.

Are you familiar with NFTs or digital art tokenization? If not, I'd be happy to walk you through the process and provide more details about how it works, as well as what to expect from the exhibition.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

All the best,

STEFAN BRÜGGEMANN

- Sent from a Gmail address (red flag)

- Legit artist via Google search

The image shows a Google search interface for 'stefan bruggemann'. The search bar at the top contains the text 'stefan bruggemann'. Below the search bar, navigation tabs include 'AI Mode', 'All', 'Images', 'Videos', 'Shopping', 'News', 'Short videos', 'More', and 'Tools'. The search results are displayed on the left side, including a snippet for 'Stefan Bruggemann' with a website link, a news article snippet from Hauser & Wirth, and an Artsy profile snippet. On the right side, a knowledge panel for 'Stefan Bruggemann' is visible, identifying him as a 'Mexican conceptual artist' and providing a brief biography, source (Wikipedia), and key information such as his birth year (1975) and location (Mexico City, Mexico).

Google

stefan bruggemann

AI Mode All Images Videos Shopping News Short videos More Tools

Including results for **stefan bruggemann**
Search only for **stefan bruggemann**

Stefan Bruggemann
<http://www.stefanbruggemann.com>

News — Stefan Bruggemann
Stefan Bruggemann is an artist working in a wide variety of disciplines between London, Ibiza and Mexico City.

Instagram · stefanbruggemann1975
13.8K+ followers

Stefan Bruggemann (@stefanbruggemann1975)
Bruggemann's works touch on symbolic notions of faith and offer a sociological reflection on the human condition within contemporary society. The materials he ...

Hauser & Wirth
<https://www.hauserwirth.com> › 2855-stefan-bruggemann

Stefan Bruggemann
Stefan Bruggemann's work deploys text in conceptual installations rich with acerbic social critique and a post pop aesthetic. [Read more](#)

Artsy
<https://www.artsy.net> › artist › stefan-bruggemann

Stefan Bruggemann - Biography, Shows, Articles & More
Spanning – and sometimes combining – sculpture, video, painting, and drawing, Stefan Bruggemann's work deploys text in conceptual

Stefan Bruggemann
Mexican conceptual artist

Stefan Bruggemann is a Mexican conceptual artist who works in different media such as painting, installation, video and sculpture.

Source: [Wikipedia](#)

Born
1975 (age 51 years),
Mexico City, Mexico

Books
Stefan Bruggemann
2008

Period: [Contemporary art](#)

- His legit portflio site

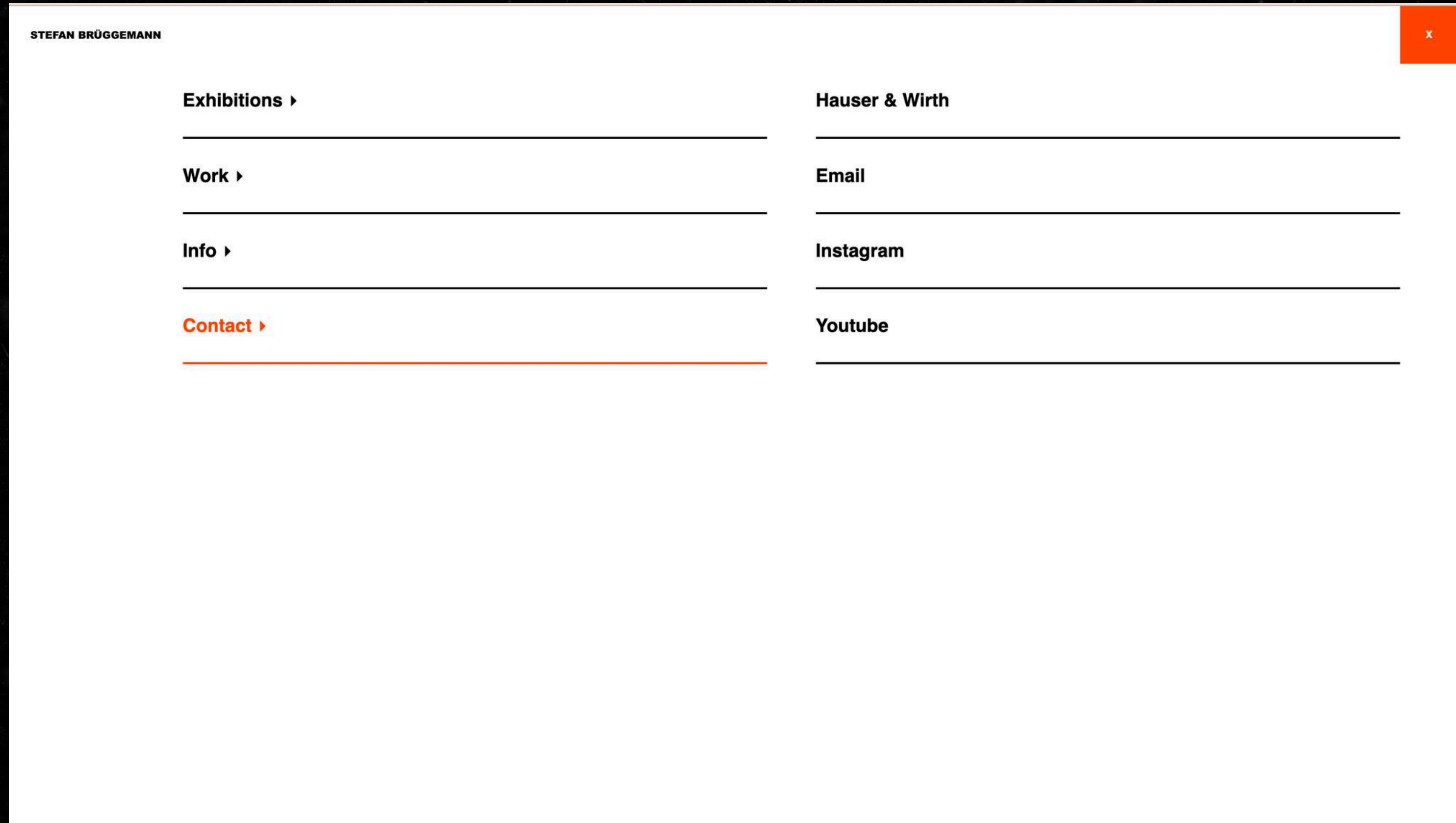
STEFAN BRÜGGEMANN

M

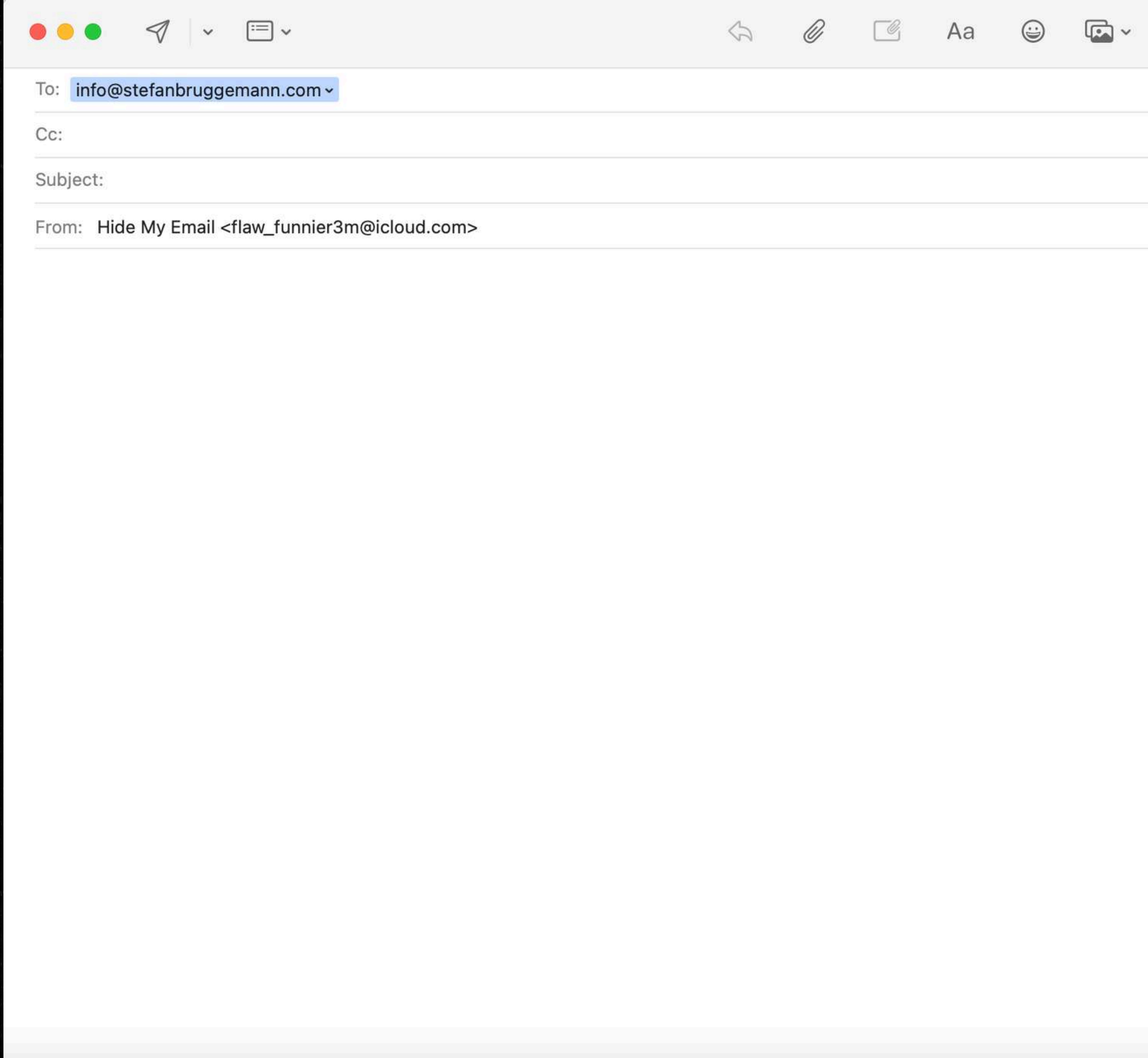
STEFAN BRÜGGEMANN



- Let's click on his contact page



- His legit contact page shows his email to be info@stefanbruggemann.com



- The email that was sent to me was steffanbruggemann@gmail.com
- Not identical to info@stefanbruggemann.com

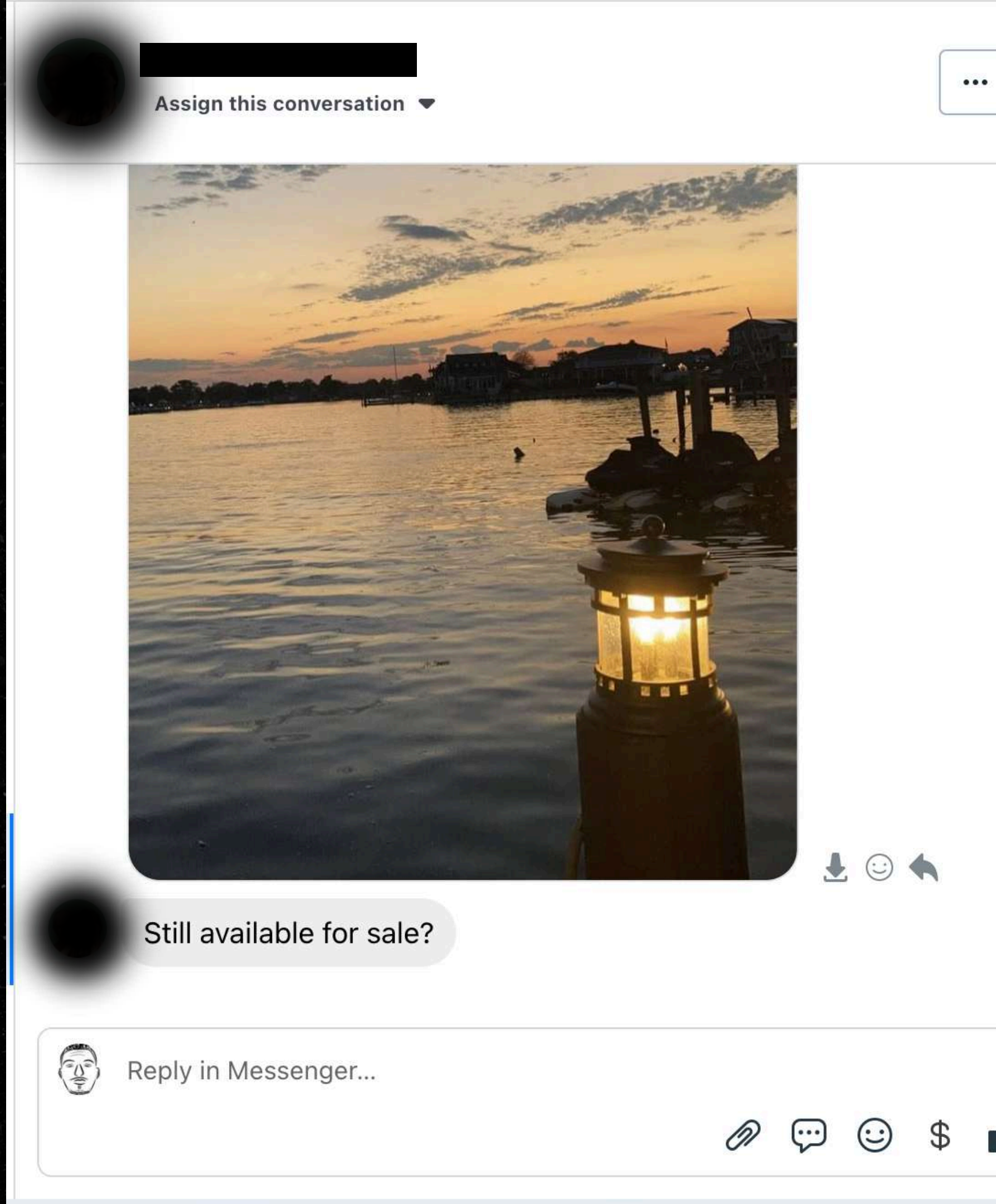
To: info@stefanbruggemann.com ▾

Stefan Brüggemann <steffanbruggemann@gmail.com>

SCAM

EXAMPLE 5

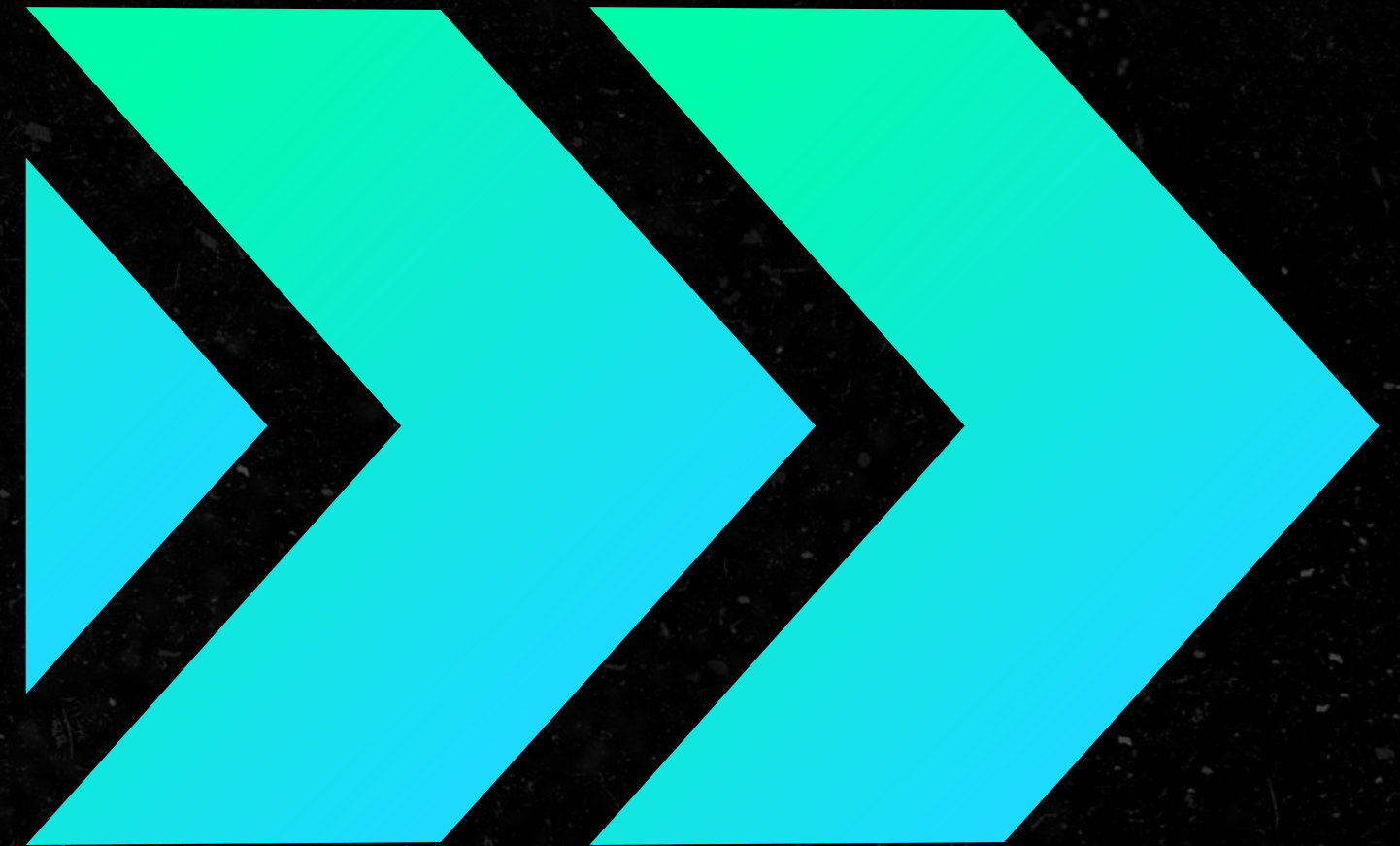
- Facebook Message
- Never said I was selling this piece
- A common tactic
- Picture and name blurred because the account itself seems legit
- Most likely a hacked account



SCAM

RECAP

- Scams are common, and everyone is at risk
- Many different types of scams
- Scammers use variety of techniques
- Scamming can have serious effects
- Ways to spot scams
- What to do if scammed



SCAMMED NO MORE

- We understand scams can be difficult to identify
- That is why Creative Consulting is here. Book now if you are given an offer/message and want to get a professional opinion on the validity of it

www.CreativeConsultingny.com/consulting

Creative



Consulting

Florentino Garguilo

THANK YOU



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