The “I got up at” snapchat (Figure 1a) presents a digitalized version of On Kawara’s commentary of place and time, done by marking the passage of days and locales with postcards and paintings. The temporary nature of the snapchat reflects the quickness with which information comes into our lives and then leaves again, the temporariness and fragility of relationships that exist solely through wireless connections. The image of the sender’s face as she wakes up, though, emphasizes the emotional intimacy between sender and receiver, which complicates our analysis as emotion appears absent in Kawara’s work.

By taking a screenshot of the snapchat and then displaying it, this temporary nature comes permanent again. We become curators of our own museum, and wonder how much of what we share is art. The writing of this short essay becomes the bullshit-y tag next to the artwork telling the unknowing museum observer what is in the painting in front of her. A collection of facebook statuses becomes the digital world equivalent of Kawara’s binders containing lists of people he met for each day, and the existence of tagging and four square check-ins negates the artistry and novelty of his work, making it mundane and unremarkable. We wonder why this is worth putting in a museum in the first place and if it was worth the dollar spent on admission.

The postcard, marking the time in which the sender arose and giving reference to Kawara’s exhibit, is almost ironically sent on Van Gogh’s cypress trees (Figure 1b). The placement of mock conceptual art on a historical piece parallels snapchats next to postcards.

We could wonder, does the postcard become art again as a novelty in the world of snapchats? The answer is no for at least three reasons. No, because the postcard’s anachronism does not make it art, but physicalizes its reference and evokes its whimsical content more strongly for being out of place. The postcard of today, usually abandoned for months on the door of a refrigerator, does not settle under our skin as snapchats do. And no, because the time taken to write on the postcard by hand (Figure 1c), the careful planning to obtain a stamp (yet to be procured) show that the sender’s fondness and connection to the receiver, rather like the original snapchat in this series. Conceptual art has little place for emotional expression. And no, because then this might be serious, and we wouldn’t get to laugh at ourselves.