

ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

## Saatchi Art reveals how prolific social media, online has been for art

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Saatchi Art's photograph of artist Taylor White

By BRIELLE JAEKEL

Online art dealer Saatchi Art is showing just how pervasive digital technology has become in all sectors after it found that online sales grew 24 percent in one year.

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Affluent consumers are becoming more comfortable with buying art online, with 42 percent of galleries claiming customers are willing to purchase more art priced at more than \$5,000 online. The online sector has paved the way for more up-and-comers to be noticed and reach a broader audience, but also is also changing decision-making process, with social media becoming a significant influencer.

"Social media and online marketing is playing a huge part in helping people make decisions about the art they buy," said Rebecca Wilson, chief curator of **Saatchi Art**. "Hiscox reported that over 30 percent of the collectors they consulted in 2015 said that social media had informed their purchase decision."

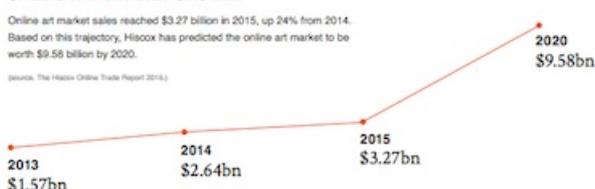
### Digital growth

**Saatchi Art's Annual Invest in Art Report 2016** revealed that 19 percent of first-time art buyers, aged 18 to 35 years, purchase from online sources. Online art buyers are not going the inexpensive direction either, with 86 percent of those first-time purchasers having spent in the \$1,300 to \$6,500 range.

#### ONLINE ART MARKET GROWTH

Online art market sales reached \$3.27 billion in 2015, up 24% from 2014. Based on this trajectory, Hiscox has predicted the online art market to be worth \$9.58 billion by 2020.

(Source: The Hiscox Online Trade Report 2015.)



### Saatchi Art's graph

Despite the growth in online purchasing, the global art market as a whole has dropped \$4.4 billion since 2014, down

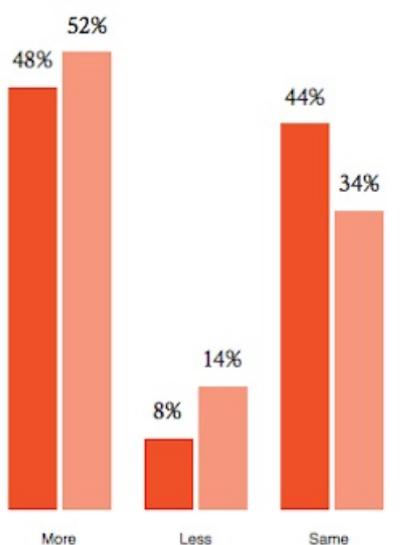
to \$63.8 billion from \$68.2 billion. The drop is likely due to lower auction and gallery sales.

Online art buyers are likely to be frequent purchasers, with 48 percent claiming they will buy again within the next year.

Saatchi Art is seeing the most art being shipped from the United States at 41 percent, with the United Kingdom trailing behind at 21 percent. Europe makes up 12 percent of sales and the Asia Pacific region makes up 19 percent.

**48% of online art buyers expect to buy more art online in the next 12 months, and 60% of those buyers are motivated by 'investment value.'**

In the next 12 months, do you think you will buy more art and collectibles online than in the previous 12 months?



### Saatchi Art's graph

The Annual Invest in Art report showcased findings from Hiscox, that showed social media is becoming a big driver in purchase decision-making, increasing to 31 percent interest up from 24 percent in 2015. Saatchi Art reaped the benefits from this surge in art interest on social media with a 70 percent increase in a year, including a 33 percent traffic conversion from social to its Web site.

### Social media importance

Auction house Christie's took advantage of the social media art frenzy by enabling consumers to take on the role of auctioneer in a New York display.

As part of its 250th anniversary efforts, Christie's stationed a rostrum outside of its Rockefeller Plaza location in Manhattan, allowing passersby to snap a photo of themselves behind the podium. Creating a physical set for consumers' photographs spurred participation from even those outside the brand's immediate social network ([see more](#)).

Fine art is at the top of the luxury pyramid, and today's luxury brands should strive to be modern-day Medicis by becoming patrons, says an Artsy senior executive.

At Luxury Interactive 2016's "Supporting the Arts: How Artsy is Opening its Storytelling Doors for Brands" keynote, the platform's president and COO worked to demonstrate why advertising dollars should be allocated toward the support of the arts. Aside from being a public good, advocating for the arts enhances a brand's stature and allows it to tap into an audience that is dedicated, involved, knowledgeable and financially established ([see more](#)).

"The most significant takeaway is that in 2015 online art sales grew by almost 25 percent," Ms. Wilson said. "What is clear is that not only do more and more people want to purchase art, but they are finding online galleries (rather than traditional brick and mortar galleries) an increasingly rewarding way of discovering and buying art."

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