

ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

Artsy intersects art, technology and design at The Armory Show

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Microsoft's HoloLens

By JEN KING

Online art destination Artsy is teaming with Microsoft for an immersive mixed-reality experience at The Armory Show 2017 March 2-5 in New York.

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Held on Piers 92 and 94, The Armory Show is an annual art fair displaying important works from 20th and 21st century artists. During The Armory Show, organizers use technological innovations to showcase artist's works through events and exhibitions throughout New York.

"We believe in the power of technology to expand access to art to new audiences and connect buyers and sellers from around the globe," said Elena Soboleva, curator of special projects at [Artsy](#), New York.

"By bringing art online and experimenting with the latest technology, including VR/AR, Artsy connects a global network of collectors and art enthusiasts to art from thousands of galleries, museums, auction houses and art fairs located around the world," she said.

"We see this project as an experiment, exploring how art might be viewed in the future, where you could hang an artwork in your home virtually before buying or walk through an exhibition halfway across the globe through the experience. It will enable a rich new layer of interaction and discovery where more people will have access to see art."

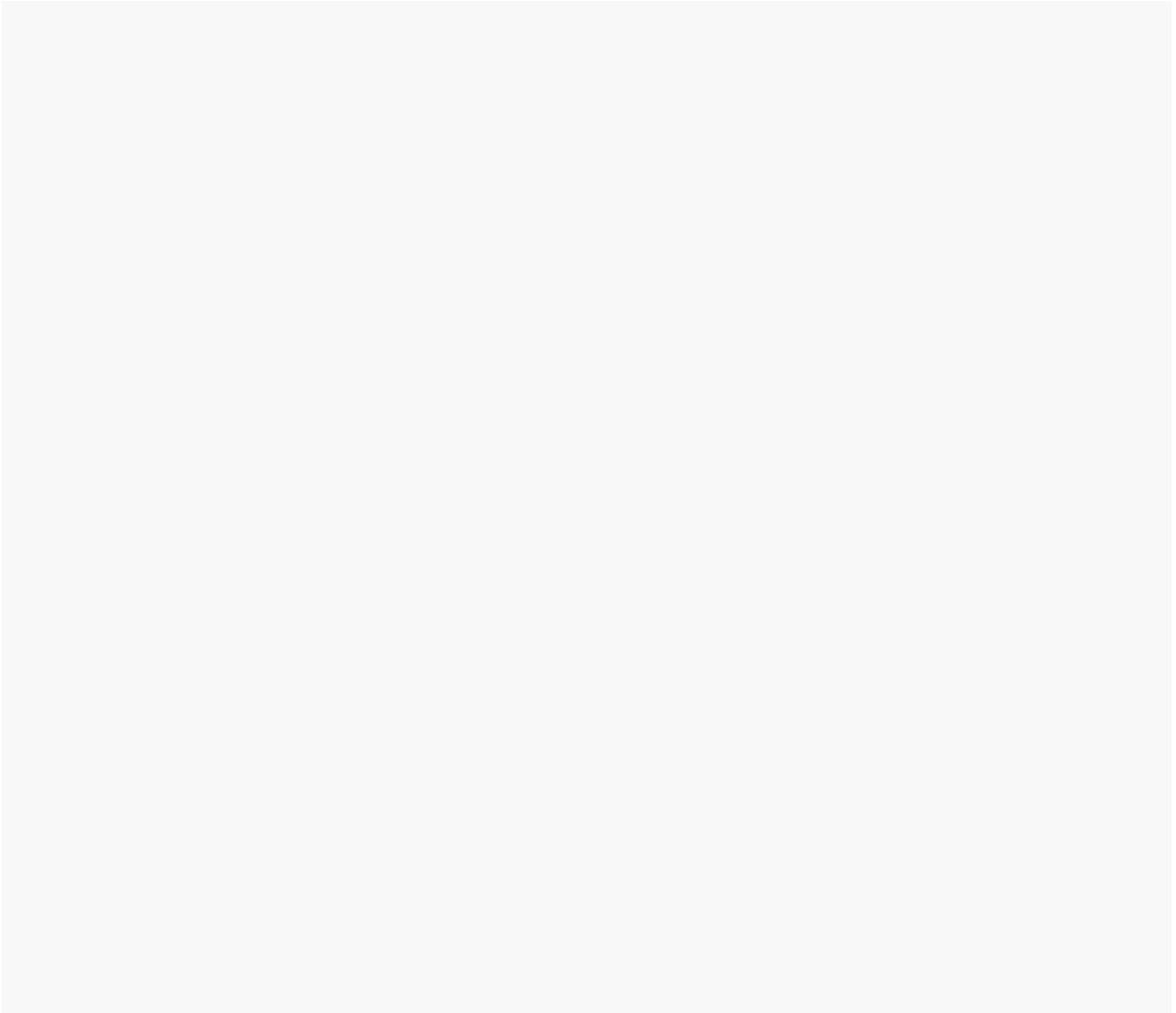
Environment for art

For the 2017 Armory Show, Artsy has partnered with Microsoft to create a digital environment that intersects art, technology and design. Artsy has been a partner of The Armory Show for the last five years.

Part of the ongoing series Artsy Projects, the brand's series of installations and activations in the world's art spaces, Artsy has developed an immersive mixed-reality experience using Microsoft's HoloLens.

Hailed as the world's first self-contained holographic computer, the HoloLens was introduced by Microsoft as a development edition in March 2016.

The overall project is also in collaboration with Pace Gallery's Drift, an art collective based in Amsterdam.



News | In celebration of our fifth year of partnership with @Artsy, we are pleased to announce their on-site booth activation featuring @Microsoft's #HoloLens, providing visitors with a cutting-edge mixed reality experience. More details on the collaboration to follow.

A photo posted by The Armory Show (@thearmoryshow) on Feb 6, 2017 at 3:27pm PST

Drift's efforts often sees collaborations between scientists and technologists to create immersive, interactive realms. Drift achieves these large-scale efforts by merging the physical and technological with art and design.

Art enthusiasts who visit the Artsy booth during The Armory Show will be able to experience Drift's interactive initiative only through Microsoft's HoloLens.

"This project with Artsy and The Armory Show marks Microsoft's first collaboration in a commercial art context, and we're thrilled to see how mixed reality will allow HoloLens users to experience art in a new way," said Lorraine Bardeen, general manager for Microsoft HoloLens and Windows Experience, in a statement.

"We're excited to showcase the HoloLens, which serves as a medium for developers and makers of all kinds to experiment in mixed reality, to a new audience of art enthusiasts through this partnership with Artsy," she said.

Eyeing digital

Prior to Microsoft's development of HoloLens, in 2014 Google debuted its Google Glass, a wearable technology that

was embraced by beauty brands, automakers and hoteliers.

For example, French atelier Saint Laurent Paris' beauty brand YSL Beaut enhanced product demonstrations at its cosmetic counters with the introduction of Google Glass tutorials. The beauty brand rolled out Google Glass tutorials at retailers such as Bloomingdale's and Selfridges in late 2014 to temporarily personalize the in-store experience through technology ([see story](#)).

Although interest in Google's technology fizzled, it is not yet known if Microsoft's version will take off. But, as more efforts integrate the technology, consumers may grow comfortable with the idea.

The art world has been especially in-tune with the digital landscape. In 2015, for instance, international auction house Sotheby's partnered with Artsy for the first time to create an online-only marketplace for contemporary art.

Artsy's search engine and database is used to find artworks, which users can then bid on via Web site or mobile applications. The Sotheby's partnership has given the Web site, founded in 2009 and made public in 2012, a boost in visibility while granting the centuries-old auctioneer a chance to connect with a new, younger audience ([see story](#)).

"We are in a moment of resurgence of relational aesthetics, where many contemporary artists are interested in experiential and time-based projects that interact with the viewer and allow for a more holistic experience," Artsy's Ms. Soboleva said.

"While there are a number of factors contributing to this, including the rise of multi-disciplinary modes of making, higher production value and conceptual aims of involving the viewer," she said. "An artist no longer limits their practice to one mode of output [Yayoi Kusama](#) is a painter, performer, and installation artist of immersive infinity rooms.

"Additionally, the rise of social media and digital culture has contributed to the appeal and proliferation of art as an experience and has had a new reach to a much broader audience."

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