

ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

Art Basel is hosting a virtual art show with more than 4,000 new works

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Art Basel's new Online Viewing Rooms are showing more than 4,000 new works online from June 19-26. Image credit: Art Basel

By DIANNA DILWORTH

Art Basel has updated its Online Viewing Rooms in its recently launched online platform, bringing more than 4,000 new works online June 19-26.

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The art show has been pivoting to a more digital strategy to keep the shows alive in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic. The digital approach will likely last beyond the pandemic, as digital art sales have been growing during lockdown.

"I think we're at an inflection point and people are open to trying out new channels," said Alban Fischer, digital director of Art Basel, Basel.

"At the same time, we strongly believe that digital platforms cannot replace the experience of viewing art in person or visiting the fair," he said. "But digital offers an exciting additional platform for our galleries to present their creative curatorial concepts."

Art Basel Online Viewing Rooms

Welcome to Online Viewing Rooms, our digital platform connecting the world's premier galleries with collectors around the world. Log in now with your Art Basel account and discover a wide array of curated rooms featuring thousands of high-caliber artworks.

Art Basel launched its Online Viewing Rooms in March. Image credit: Art Basel

Virtual galleries

Art Basel debuted its first-ever **Online Viewing Rooms** platform in March. In March, Art Basel presented more than 2,000 works from more than 230 galleries with an estimated value of \$270 million.

The upcoming edition of the Online Viewing Rooms will run June 19-26 on Art Basel's Web site and its corresponding app, both of which were developed by **Digital Management Industries** (DMI).

"We've worked with Art Basel ever since creating the organization's mobile app in 2015 and it has always been part of the vision to incorporate a digital element for Art Basel," said Jay "Sunny" Bajaj, founder/CEO of DMI, Bethesda, MD. "The pandemic accelerated the sense of urgency for this initiative and fortunately we were ready."

The collection includes more than 4,000 works from 282 global galleries. The collection comprises art from the modern to post-war and contemporary periods including paintings, drawings, sculptures, photography, installation, digital and video works.

Consumers can browse the works, engage in virtual studio visits and have online conversations.

"This is Art Basel's second virtual fair, after moving its Hong Kong edition online in March as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic," Mr. Bajaj said. "Early indications from some major galleries presenting at the June show is that sales are brisk."

To market the events, Art Basel is reaching out to its customers and doing publicity.

"The Online Viewing Rooms in March and June generated a tremendous amount of international publicity, as this is an innovative approach for Art Basel that was borne out of necessity," Mr. Bajaj said.

"DMI is taking the many best practices and learnings from both of these virtual events to continue to perfect and enhance the customer's online journey to introduce these masterpieces to a broader audience," he said.



Art Basel's Online Viewing Rooms includes 282 galleries participating. Image credit: Art Basel

Growing market

Auction houses **Christie's** and **Sotheby's** are seeing record online sales as they have adapted their business for pandemic times, not expecting this momentum to end any time soon.

Following bumper revenue during coronavirus lockdowns, both firms have announced new summer sales and are making it easier than ever to bid from the world over through live streaming and online bidding ([see story](#)).

"Art knows no boundaries," Mr. Bajaj said. "We strongly believe that digital platforms cannot replace the experience of viewing and appreciating art in a physical sense. But not everyone is able to visit Miami or Hong Kong.

"Digital offers an exciting additional channel for galleries to present their works to a much broader international audience," he said.

"We see the online component driving more global interest and engagement. The pandemic has presented an opportunity to shift from a purely physical event to a virtual fair. Interest level is high and we only see that growing as the art community becomes more accustomed to appreciating and purchasing art in this way."

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