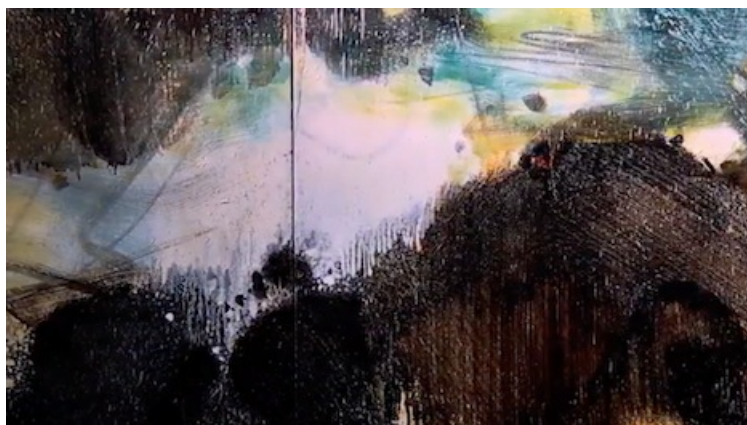


ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

Sotheby's leverages emotive vignettes to reach global art buyers

March 31, 2021



A short film from Sotheby's auction house highlights the work of artist Chu Teh-Chun. Image credit: Sotheby's

By KATIE TAMOLA

Auction house **Sotheby's** is appealing to art collectors through immersive online shorts as the world looks to the future of returning to in-person opportunities.

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A multifaceted approach with short films, tweets and other means has been effective for Sotheby's as the house has managed to capture consumer attention during the COVID-19 pandemic. Continuing this immersive virtual approach could also aid in maintaining consumer attention even when auctions and other events are later offered in person at full capacity.

"Twitter and YouTube are tools that allow Sotheby's to set the drama, tell the narrative and communicate the value," said Chris Ramey, president of Affluent Insights, Palm Beach. "Viewers set the mood and heighten engagement for the object and auction which is a benefit for consumers and the auction house."

A virtual invitation

Whether the promoted event is an online-only sale or an appointment-only in-person auction, Sotheby's continues to produce captivating virtual experiences to attract consumers to spend money.

At the beginning of March, Sotheby's posted a short film on social media, highlighting work that will be offered at its upcoming Modern Art Evening Sale on April 18 in Hong Kong.

How an Alpine Train Journey Propelled Chu Teh-Chun to New Heights

In this short film, viewers take a train journey through the Swiss Alps and into the mind of artist Chu Teh-Chun. With breathtaking snowy visuals and the cinematic delivery of the narrator, the film makes viewers feel like the artist is speaking directly to them.

The vignette splices scenes of snowfall amid a train ride with glimpses of Mr. Chu's work. At one point, the camera's shot is zoomed in close enough to see the texture and the artist's thick brushstrokes.

The visual is so clear that it is as if the viewer is in the same room as the artwork.

Nicholas Chow, chairman of Sotheby's Asia and international head and chairman of Chinese Works of Art department, directed another short to promote the same auction. This vignette also opens with snow and what appears to be colorful closeups of Mr. Chu's work.

This shorter video is more indeterminate, as a soundtrack of jittery tempo laced with sharp violins sets a suspenseful tone. Similar to the film prior, the short immediately elicits feelings of interest and curiosity from the viewer.

Sotheby's Hong Kong will soon unveil one of the top lots to be offered at our upcoming Modern Art Evening Sale. Feel the power of the work with this short video, directed by Nicolas Chow, Chairman, Sotheby's Asia, International Head and Chairman, Chinese Works of Art.

pic.twitter.com/pTNdAWA5mp

Sotheby's (@Sothebys) **March 8, 2021**

Another video promoting the upcoming auction in Hong Kong

The 2021 Hong Kong Spring Sales Series will take place between April 16 and 23 and will be held in the Hong Kong Convention Center welcoming the public from April 16 to 21. The categories include fine art, Chinese works of art, modern and classic Chinese painting, modern and contemporary art and additional areas of luxury in jewelry, watches and wine.

Due to limited seating, Sotheby's is asking that bidders pre-register to reserve a spot and to email RSVPHK@sothebys.com if they would like to attend an auction in person. "Harmonie Hivernale" by Mr. Chu's starting estimate is at 80 million Hong Kong dollars, or about \$10 million at current exchange.

The auction house is also offering online-only sales including Sui Generis: Bejewelled Treasures of Time on April 15 and a handbag and accessories sale on April 16.

Thriving during difficult times

Last year, even amid a pandemic, Sotheby's experienced record sales.

The auction house went online as the pandemic shuttered bricks-and-mortar sale rooms. Spring auctions drew new buyers which led Sotheby's to extending its digital auction program with collections ranging from jewelry and Old Masters to Contemporary Art and design ([see story](#)).

Also last year, with its virtual advertisements and offerings, Sotheby's found that online auctions were successfully replacing in-person events with affluent collectors staying at home ([see story](#)).

Now, the auction house is in a position to continue offering short films and a social media presence that will not only continue consumer interest in online-only events but also gauge interest for returning to in person auctions.

Time will tell how Sotheby's continues to use social media and virtual expression to market its online and in person events in a post-pandemic landscape.

"Digital is measurable and marketing is now science," Mr. Ramey said. "Luxury brands plant seeds to create desire, which is important because you don't sell to the affluent but instead, you fascinate and match values.

"Twitter, by design, allows you to plant seeds with best prospects," he said.