



ART IS SO GOOD AT ADAPTING TO QUARANTINE-IMPOSED DIGITAL ERA

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Over the past months, cities around the world have asked people to curtail all sorts of travel, practice social distancing, and work from home in an effort to stop the spread of the coronavirus. Staying home, whether you're self-quarantining or just avoiding public spaces is the right thing to do, but it can be very depressing and emotionally isolating.

Most governments around the world have temporarily closed cultural and educational institutions in an attempt to contain the spread of the pandemic. We always turn to the arts to get through difficult times, so it has been hard to grapple with social distancing, cancelled events, and the closure of venues during the outbreak.

Fortunately, governments, public and private institutions do their best to mitigate the immediate impact of these closures – from virtual museum tours to educational conferences, private master classes and online concerts, there are multiple ways to get connected to interesting people and incredible cultural treasures from the comfort and safety of your home.

Creative people are very adaptable, especially when facing challenges. It has been heartening to see how quickly artists and arts organizations have turned their canceled events into digital events.

[Google Arts & Culture](#) has partnered with over 2500 museums and galleries around the world, including Amsterdam's Van Gogh Museum, London's National Gallery, and the Whitney Museum of American Art. The featured collections vary depending on the museum, but most include online exhibits, a "street view" that lets you explore inside the institution itself, as well as galleries of the artwork, where you can deep dive into paintings such as Vermeer's *The Milkmaid* (at the Rijksmuseum) or da Vinci's *Adoration of the Magi* (at Florence's Uffizi Gallery).

[The Louvre](#), which recently reopened after a coronavirus-prompted closure, offers its own virtual tours. And if you know what you're looking for, many museums offer robust virtual catalogs of their collections, such as Minneapolis's Walker Art Museum. Some, like the Metropolitan Museum of Art, have taken their online content a step further by enhancing what you'd see IRL with offerings such as The Artist Project, a YouTube series in which artists such as Nick Cave or the late John Baldessari talk about a particular work in the museum. Similarly, MoMA's [The Way I See It](#) has creatives such as Steve Martin or Roxane Gay discussing themes from the museum's collection. MoMA's YouTube page also has short videos on their current exhibitions, which include additional commentary.

Elena Baturina's [BE OPEN](#) set up Explore Art Online website section with a selection of both well and lesser-known art and design-themed expositions, tours and exhibits made available online and free of charge by the world's leading galleries and museums. The think-tank also runs an online educational platform as way to support education and self-development for the period of necessary self-isolation.

[Google's The Open Heritage](#) series is another way to explore lesser-known and endangered historical and cultural gems from around the world. The up-close look offers incredibly detailed visuals and historical accounts of sites that are difficult to access, coronavirus or no—including 12th-century Syrian baths, Native American cliff dwellings at Mesa Verde, and the Peruvian ceremonial site Chavín de Huántar.

While many museums already had virtual resources in place, the coronavirus is also forcing some institutions to react quickly and digitize their offerings for visitors who can no longer experience the art in person. Castello di Rivoli in Turin, Italy is creating new virtual tours after Italy restricted travel and public gatherings. Florence's Uffizi Gallery is expanding their social media presence as a way to maintain public access to some of the world's most renowned art collections.

If you are in the mood for some audio inspiration from the comfort of your own personal isolation chamber, podcasts such as Design Matters, 99% Invisible, and the Design of Business are great wells of design inspiration. You can also watch curated video series and lectures from top design schools such as the School of Visual Arts.