



ART FOR EVERYONE: THE MANY WAYS ART BECOMES ACCESSIBLE ONLINE



The rapid spread of the new [coronavirus](#) made the vast majority of cultural institutions across Asia, Americas and Europe close their doors. Fortunately for us, art lovers, most of the large museum and galleries have representations of their collections online. Moreover, they grant free access to them for the pandemic period.

Google Arts & Culture teamed up with over 2500 museums and galleries around the world to bring anyone and everyone virtual tours and online exhibits of some of the most famous museums around the world. The collection includes the British Museum in London, the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam, the Guggenheim in New York City, and literally hundreds of more places where you can gain knowledge about art, history, and science.



Another interesting case is 2020 Art Basel that was supposed to run in Hong Kong in March, but got cancelled for obvious reasons. However, they still carried out the Hong Kong edition – virtually, for the first time. Art Basel Hong Kong's online viewing rooms went live for guests, proving that online expositions are a successful measure in the time of the major disruptions that the coronavirus has wrought on the global art calendar.

This is but one of the many examples of how art market shifts from 'brick and mortar' to online existence. The total volume of the art market is growing every year by at least 6-7%, and the growth of the online art market over 5 years amounted to over 72%. Back in 2017 already, over 60% of all art sales took place online.

There is a tremendous rise of new collectors – the millennials – who are no longer driven by materialism as the primary goal of their investments, but are interested in the social impact of the art they are buying. That is why art collection is no longer the exclusive purview of the wealthy and well-connected. Thanks to the proliferation of online art platforms, building a personal art collection is within reach for anyone interested, including the young with regular wages.

"Going into a brick and mortar gallery can be difficult," says Rebecca Wilson, chief curator of the online gallery Saatchi Art, based in Los Angeles, where works range from \$50 to \$50,000. The environment can feel elitist, she adds, and *"you risk being not met with a very friendly response... or they tell you it's \$10,000 and you feel like a complete fool because you can't afford it."* Going online to peruse and purchase, on the other hand, is "a breath of fresh air," Wilson says, because not only does it take self-consciousness out of the picture, it also makes it easier to find art you can afford.

There are plenty of online options with a variety of prices. Platforms such as Paddle8 and Artsy feature works from well-known artists to unknown emerging creatives. Uprise Art is specifically geared toward matching emerging talent with a "new generation of collectors," as it says on the gallery's homepage, and maintains a body of available work for less than \$800. Tappan Collective hosts a growing body of emerging artists' work from all over the world, including a selection of pieces priced at \$300 or less.

Some of online art sales platforms follow the traditional auction path of established art dealers, and bids might climb into the tens of thousands sometimes; others feature works you can buy immediately at a fixed price that ranges from \$50 to \$50,000.



Browsing the web, you may find online art collections that are neither run by museums, nor trading platforms. BE OPEN Art is an online gallery that exists purely for philanthropic reasons of promoting the young talent who do not have their own resources to become visible in the market. They focus on socially-aware emerging artists who cover the most pressing topics and issues of today and offer artistic solutions for the wrongs of the contemporary world.

[BE OPEN Art](#) acts as a source of educational insight into the contemporary art landscape, it was developed by the eponymous BE OPEN foundation, and supported by billionaire Elena Baturina, alongside other educational charitable initiatives.