



TRANSFORMING ART GALLERY FROM PHYSICAL TO VIRTUAL

Monisa Saha

Freelance Artist, MVA- University of Rajasthan.

Abstract

Art galleries invest a lot of time and money in branding artists at all phases of their careers in order to find and develop new talent, market their work, and sell it. By visiting artists' studios and offering suggestions, gallery producers actively contribute to the creation of their styles. They encourage artists to consider their work and how they want to proceed. Most cultural institutions around the world had closed indefinitely by March 2020, and in-person exhibitions, events, and performances had been canceled or postponed as a result of Covid-19. Under the power of the virus, people are defenseless. Adapting to the situation and rescuing people both require creativity. Face-to-face interaction is minimized in interactive venues for gatherings, such as buying and selling, public activities, and various other public facilities. As a result, intensive efforts were created to produce various or extra services via digital platforms, to take care of necessary activities with restricted resources, and document the events themselves through new acquisitions, as well as new artistic works impressed by the pandemic. The primary goal of this research is to determine how art galleries are transforming in today's world.

Keywords: *Art Gallery, Artist, Performances, Covid-19, Digital Platforms, Pandemic, And Transforming.*

Introduction

An art exhibition is traditionally thought of as an event. It's the area where art objects interact with the public. It requires time and resources, has a finite lifespan, and an afterlife through documentation, evaluation, and preservation, among other things. Physical exhibitions can be reproduced or moved, but their temporal lives are constrained by physical and logistical constraints. These art exhibitions are still among the most important events in the art world (Biennale, Documental, etc.) and generate a lot of money for cultural organizations, institutions, and host towns.

The corona virus has caused a worldwide crisis that has impacted every aspect of our life, including the arts. While the pandemic is still active, large-scale exhibitions are not possible. It's hard to say when the pandemic will end.

Virtual technology is a technique to bridge the gap between physical reality and the limitations of traditional display spaces. During this pandemic, virtual shows should be able to keep art enthusiasts' creative processes going. The virtual area in the form of an exhibition is also a crucial component for creators to adapt to their appreciating audience.

Physical Gallery

The term "art gallery" refers to an area dedicated to the preservation of collections of paintings or alternative works of art, also because of the exhibition and sale of paintings and alternative works of art, whether or not by the businessman or others.



There are physical galleries where exhibitions take place in a physical space.

Benefits of Physical Gallery

- Artists have the opportunity to show original work, express themselves, and connect in person with a variety of known and unknown art enthusiasts and buyers, as well as exchange immediate feedback/sales, and so on.
- A live exhibition provides a one-of-a-kind experience.
- The sense of scale, feel, and touch, among other things, is enhanced.

Some Disadvantages of Physical Gallery

- Exhibit space is limited.
- Time (long lines for well-known galleries) and expense (affordability) (cost of the gallery, exhibit logistics, and incidental risks involved) (i).

Virtual Gallery

A virtual art gallery is a website that displays images of an artist's work. It might be thought of as a well-organized and systematic collection of digital artifacts delivered via multimedia, allowing visitors to communicate and interact according to their requirements and interests. Pervasive computing makes objects available, and they don't have a physical location. It could be a digital aggregation of artifacts available over the internet or in digital format via PC, PDA, or CDROM

as a supplement to physical exhibits that are only available in virtual form.

Benefits of Virtual Gallery

- we can easily get around geographical and time zone restrictions with a virtual gallery. One of the most significant advantages of a virtual gallery is that it allows us to share our work with others.
- As the location is no longer a barrier, virtual galleries are likely to attract more visitors from all over the world. It provides a sense of personalization, which helps to satisfy the audience's interest.
- Buying / Buying Intent decisions can be made on the spot, allowing for appropriate communication with artists, including feedback, via many ways of communication, with the ultimate freedom of an Unlimited Time Window, where the entire globe is our gallery.

Disadvantages of Virtual Gallery

- The artwork's significance isn't fully appreciated or comprehended, and the artists' efforts aren't appropriately appreciated.
- Its technological advancements have propelled the company forward (and made us dependent on it.)
- Since the possibility of works being copied in a virtual gallery is increased, many artists choose not to exhibit their work in virtual galleries) (ii).

Problem and Aim

Around the world, art is getting more popular. Galleries are now making a concerted effort to promote and advertise their artists as well as their current exhibitions. As a new artist, gallery



representation can significantly boost public exposure and awareness. The majority of individuals have visited art galleries to attentively view famous artists' vibrant artwork on exhibit. Visual observation provides a sense of excitement, appreciation, and enthusiasm for created art. Some art galleries and museums, unfortunately, are still closed. Professionals in the art industry did their best to keep the market alive during those uncertain times, but it was no easy task. Art fairs that were canceled have shifted online, but sales favor blue-chip artists, while mid-level and established artists are losing a lot of money. This situation generates the aim of this research to identify the online art business and exhibitions all around the world during the pandemic.

Impact of Digital Technology on Art Gallery

At its most basic level, digitization refers to the transformation of analog data into digital data. With the advancement of digitization capabilities, nearly every part of life is being captured and saved in some digital form, and we are getting closer to the networked interconnectedness of everyday objects. The result is a real-time worldwide interchange of data among various connected devices (iii).

The introduction and expansion of information and communication technology (ICT) are among the most significant variables that have altered the competitive landscape of organizations in recent years. This is why it's dubbed "disruptive technology" (iv). Technological advancements have a huge impact on all types of enterprises. First, as a result of digitization and the expansion of digital channels, customers have easier access to information and can more quickly compare pricing and other information. Second, digital channels have transformed business communication from unidirectional to bi- or multi directional contact between customers and firms. Third, digital channels cut rivals' entry barriers, posing a serious threat to established businesses (v). These advancements have had a significant impact on all economic sectors, contributing to faster production, delivery, and consumption of goods and services. Digital advances are becoming increasingly important in the art world (vi).

Businesses have already learned that they must use digital platforms to communicate with their key stakeholders in order to stay relevant and influence the conversation. Few people comprehend, however, how quickly change must occur, or how revolutionary it must be (vii). The growing usage of internet platforms can assist galleries in attracting new clientele who would otherwise be difficult to engage due to geographic distance or fear of entering the gallery. As a result, it is thought to lead to an art market to which everyone, not just the wealthy, has access. More sensitive data, such as prices, is still unlikely to be found on the Internet (viii). Galleries, particularly in the upper market sector, retain an exclusive image, rarely display price tags, and generally only provide information upon request (ix). As a result, digital channels have

been seen as supplementary channels that are not (yet) significantly altering the existing gallery business model (x).

Several new businesses focusing on online art sales have developed in recent years. Several internet markets, art galleries, and auction houses are now attempting to make the purchasing of artworks easier. Overall, the potential for new business prospects created by the implementation of the Internet should not be ignored, especially given that younger generations are accustomed to acquiring goods and services through online channels.



Changing Perspective

As the cumulative influence of global shutdowns caused by COVID-19 enhances our exposure to virtual experiences and digital events, a subtle but crucial tendency emerges: the de-stigmatization of virtual existence. This pattern can be seen throughout the economy.

Similarly, as art fairs and auctions have gone online, bringing with them increased price transparency, ideals of experiencing art in virtual spaces and making price transparency prevalent in the trade is becoming more acceptable, despite years of resistance from gallerists. Even the most traditional-minded art consumers' viewing and purchase habits are likely to change as a result of this trend. As more people learn about art through virtual experiences and digital events, and as the value of digital art solutions becomes more acknowledged and appreciated, attitudes toward the digital revolution of the art world will improve. Finally, for the art world in the post-COVID-19 age, it could be the most significant and long-lasting effect of this catastrophe.

Findings & Discussions

Globalization and electronic commerce are undermining operating premises, marketing channels, client relations, and the industry's structure, putting art galleries' old economic model under severe strain. Professionals with cross-functional business degrees or substantial past business experience are less likely to be hired by galleries (xi).

The art market has a long history of resiliency in the face of changing economic and political conditions. However, the unpredictably constructed world in the first half of 2020 has confronted the market and the gallery sector in particular with some of its most significant problems to date.

According to annual research that tracks changes in the global art industry, sales of art and antiques would total \$50.1 billion in 2020, down 22% from the previous year's total. It's worth remembering, though, that prices have dropped by 27% since 2018. To put it another way, art sales have been declining across all media. Because Covid-19 produced such a massive disruption in the art market, the losses should have been much higher.

In 2019, online sales accounted for around 7.5% of global revenues, up only 4% from the previous year. The art industry has a "stubborn reluctance" to accept the digital art world, according to Hiscox, which has hampered expansion until now. Auction houses must promote innovation in order to retain sales and allow for online involvement to drive the art market's success in the near future (xii).

1. Assessing the Impact

- Compared to the same 4-week period in 2019, gross income decreased by 85% on average from March 15 to April 15, 2020.
- Galleries saw a 31% drop in real gross income in the first quarter of 2020, compared to the respondents' original predictions.
- In the second quarter of 2020, art galleries in the United States are forecasting a 73% drop in overall gross revenue.
- 80% of those polled rent their space and are frantically attempting to work out a deal with their landlord for rent reductions.
- In order to protect as many full-time employees as feasible, 78% of gallery respondents requested a PPP loan.



- While 85% of full-time gallery employees had kept their jobs as of April, 74% of contractors who had been hired on a regular basis before March 13, 2020, had lost their jobs.

The information presented above demonstrates not only the impact of COVID-19 on galleries but also the ripple effect that resulted from those galleries' issues. (xiii).

2. Challenges

Galleries have had to look for opportunities to support their own small businesses, additional as those adjunct small businesses that have faith in them, by embracing new modes of conducting business and attention-grabbing with purchasers and additionally the general public, demonstrating their ability in reality on beneath extraordinary circumstances.

In spite of the high-end art world's long-standing wariness of on-line commerce, galleries adapted quickly, developing on-line viewing rooms and an additional subtle virtual presence to create positive international collectors might still have dynamic access to their programming. Clare McAndrew's recent 2020 mid-year survey found that, within the half of 2020, 72% of galleries surveyed had multiplied their efforts within the digital realm (xiv). Over at the ADAA, we partnered with Artlogic to create online viewing rooms for our members, free of charge, from June through November of this year, giving those who were new to the technology an immediate and robust online presence.

3. Following

Despite the fact that the art market has been slow to adopt new technologies and online e-commerce strategies over the last two decades, the online art market has come a long way since Sotheby's early attempts to build an e-commerce platform for art and collectibles in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Global online art sales grew from \$1.5 million in 2013 to over \$4.8 billion in 2019. Auction houses have been increasing their internet sales, with So the by's and Christie's reporting annual increases of 16 percent in online sales between 2015 and 2019.

Online sales, on the other hand, accounted for only 6% of overall auction sales in 2019, indicating that they are merely a sideshow. Galleries, dealers, and art fairs have all been slow to adapt to new technology. In 2018, Art Tactic conducted a poll for the His cox Online Art Trade Report, which revealed that 39% of galleries surveyed had no e-commerce strategy. Furthermore, according to the most recent Art Basel Art Market Report, online gallery sales only accounted for 10% of total sales in 2019.

The truth is that no one has felt compelled to replace old operating models because they have served them well for a long period. There was also a nagging worry that Silicon Valley-inspired

business models will disrupt the established art market by using technology as a lever to quickly democratize and grow it. However, not everyone saw democratization as the answer, preferring instead to rely on the exclusive relationship-based approach that had previously been the norm. The online art market has struggled to achieve the same prominence as the traditional, offline art market, and was mainly regarded as an inferior (sometimes low-value) route for selling art until the outbreak of COVID-19. Traditional sales channels including physical gallery shows, art fairs, and auctions have all been canceled or postponed, leaving the art world with no choice but to adopt digital platforms and online sales (xv).



Conclusion

In comparison to other consumer products marketplaces, art galleries have been slow to embrace digitization. However, the global outbreak of COVID 19 has compelled art galleries to rethink the role of digital media. Based on our findings, we believe that digital technology has consequences for every gallery's traditional economic strategy. The results show that people are becoming more open to digital platforms for innovation. For promotion and visibility, we found that all galleries today use fundamental online digital platforms including their own website, social media, and newsletters. These findings suggest that even more exclusive art can be sold online if the gallery and artist have a global reputation, the purchase environment is not overtly commercial, and the given content is well-curated and presented in a compelling way.

References

1. Tatkar, Sunil. "Matter of Art - Real v/s Virtual!", September- 2014
2. Tatkar, Sunil. "Matter of Art - Real v/s Virtual!", September- 2014
3. Ernst & Young. 2012. The digitisation of everything: How organisations must adapt to changing consumer behaviour.
4. Cortimiglia, Marcelo Nogueira, Gregório Ruck Varvaki Rados, and Angela de Moura Ferreira Danilevicz. 2013. Business model innovation: A case study in a value network operator. Paper presented at the 22nd International Conference on Management of Technology, Porto Alegre, Brazil, April 14–18
5. Ernst & Young. 2012. The digitisation of everything: How organisations must adapt to changing consumer behaviour.
6. Habelsberger, Beatrix E. M., and Pawan V. Bhansing. 2021. Art Galleries in Transformation: Is COVID-19 Driving Digitisation?
7. Ernst & Young. 2012. The digitisation of everything: How organisations must adapt to changing consumer behaviour.
8. Van Miegroet, Hans J., Kaylee P. Alexander, and Fiene Leunissen. 2019. Imperfect data, art markets and internet research. *Arts* 8: 76. [CrossRef]
9. Fillitz, Thomas. 2014. The booming global market of contemporary art. *Focaal* 69: 84–96. [CrossRef]
10. Van Miegroet, Hans J., Kaylee P. Alexander, and Fiene Leunissen. 2019. Imperfect data, art markets and internet research. *Arts* 8: 76. [CrossRef]
11. Smith, H. L., Discenza, R., & Baker, K. G. (2006). Building Sustainable Success in Art Galleries: An Exploratory Study of Adaptive Strategies. *Journal of Small Business Strategy*, 16(2), 29–42.
12. Barclay Rachel, Pizzo, A.D The Impact of a Global Pandemic on the Art Market 2022.
13. The Global Art Market & Covid-19- Citi GPS: Global Perspectives & Solutions- art report, Dec-2020
14. Dr. Clare McAndrew, "The Impact of COVID-19 on the Gallery Sector", Art Basel and UBS, September 2020, p.40
15. The Global Art Market & Covid-19- Citi GPS: Global Perspectives & Solutions- art report, Dec-2020.