

Can Digitization Create a More Sustainable Art World?

With many museums and commercial galleries still closed, art fairs cancelled or postponed and auctions almost all being conducted online, Talking Sustainability: Digitization for the Art Market will look at the trends – especially digitization and online selling – being accelerated by the pandemic

Until this year the digital space was largely treated as an afterthought by the art world. But the cultural sector has had to act rapidly to try and transform events and exhibitions into digital experiences. Meanwhile, digital-first artists, whose works are specifically designed to be experienced online, have finally come into their own.

But most people argue that online exhibitions in their current state leave a lot to be desired. Can art be presented and curated online to create enjoyable experiences that complement or even substitute for visits to museums, galleries and art fairs? Can fairs and galleries truly embrace the potential of the online realm to promote arts and culture to wider audiences?

Moderator Dinis Guarda, Founder and CEO Ztadium will be joined by Thaddaeus Ropac, Founder Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Kamiar Maleki, Collector, Patron, Philanthropist and Director Volta Art Fairs, Nadia and Rajeeb Samdani, Co-Founders Samdani Art Foundation and Dhaka Art Summit, Sophie Neuendorf, VP Strategic Partnerships Artnet and Ai-Da, a “robot artist”, to discuss the challenges of the pandemic and the opportunities presented by digitization. What is the potential of artistic robots and can they contribute to the existing art market ecosystem? Will online viewing rooms take off as sales platforms? How can we create a more accessible, successful and sustainable art market?

Talking Sustainability: Digitization for the Art Market will start with a discussion with Thaddaeus Ropac,

Founder, Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac. He will talk about the challenge facing galleries in translating art and exhibitions from the real to the digital world, including his gallery’s recent 360-degree online tour of its Daniel Richter exhibition. He will also talk about the gallery’s Instagram Live “Tea with Julia” series and its lockdown “From the Studio” newsletters.

Kamiar Maleki is a collector, patron and philanthropist and the Director of the Volta and Pulse art fairs. He will talk about Virtual Volta, which he describes as “a curated online art gallery” promoted across Volta’s website, social media and newsletters.

Nadia and Rajeeb Samdani are well-known collectors, Co-Founders of the Samdani Art Foundation, the Dhaka Art Summit and a new publicly-accessible sculpture park, the Srihatta-Samdani Art Centre and Sculpture Park, in Bangladesh. They will discuss how far digitization can compensate for a lack of real-world experiences. Can online platforms give Bangladeshi and South Asian artists – whose profiles they have been credited for raising—international exposure if events like the Dhaka Art Summit are curtailed because of the coronavirus?

Sophie Neuendorf is Vice-President, Strategic Partnerships at Artnet, one of earliest successful digital art businesses, with a history stretching back 30 years. Artnet provides online auctions, its Gallery Network, a sales and promotion platform for art galleries – a model subsequently copied by others, most recently Sotheby’s—as well as data and marketing tools. She will discuss ways of developing online selling, building trust and providing relevant information to help galleries build their business and take the art world forward.

Ai-Da is a robot that creates artworks and poetry. Ai-Da’s creators describe her as “the world’s first ultra-realistic AI robot artist” adding “her artist persona is the artwork, along with her drawings, performance art and collaborative paintings and sculptures”, positing the robot itself as a work of art. She is named after the Victorian mathematician Ada Lovelace, often described as a “prophet of the computer age”. Ai-Da will “discuss” the types of work she does and why she “likes” doing them. She will also do a poetry recital of one of the poems she wrote called “Poetry of Consolation”.

Art + Fintech 2.0 will hold a Pop-Up Music & Art Festival as a closing party, in collaboration with DAO Records and NIFTIES at the Cryptovoxels Sugar Club. The audience will be able to enter this virtual “world” in the form of avatars, so they can explore the space. Afro-beat, hip-hop artist Napoleon Da Legend and Africa’s foremost “cryptoartist” Osinachi have created limited edition audio non-fungible tokens (NFTs)—minted by Mintbase—specially for the event. The audience will be guided through the space and will be given assistance to buy the audio NFTs. These will be available in the cryptocurrency Ether, which can be converted to US dollars for those wishing to use a credit card. All proceeds will go back to the artists and DAO Records.

14:00-15:30 UTC

**PANEL DISCUSSION:
CRISIS VS OPPORTUNITY**

Is Digitization the Answer to a Sustainable Art Market Ecosystem?

MODERATOR: DINIS GUARDA

PANELISTS: KAMIAR MALEKI, SOPHIE NEUENDORF, THADDAEUS ROPAC, NADIA & RAJEEB SAMDANI, AI-DA



NAPOLÉON DA LEGEND

OSINACHI

CLOSING PARTY

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DINIS GUARDA | FOUNDER & CEO
Ztudium, London, UK

Dinis Guarda is an author, academic, influencer, serial entrepreneur and leader in Society 5.0, 4IR, AI, Fintech, digital transformation and Blockchain. Having started his career in the literature, art, film and music world Dinis Guarda has collaborated with leading art and culture global organisations and personalities such as Gulbenkian Foundation, Tate Modern, Photo Espana, Serralves Museum, and George Pompidou, late David Bowie, Patti Smith, Chris Marker and much more.

Dinis is the founder citiesabc, a digital transformation platform to empower, guide and index cities organisations and institutions through society 5.0 technologies such as AI and Blockchain.

Dinis has created various companies and global platforms such as citiesbac.com, intelligenthq.com, Ztudium and techabc platforms among others.

He has been a guest lecturer at Copenhagen Business School, Group INSEEC/Monaco University, where he coordinates executive Masters and MBAs.

As an author, Dinis Guarda published the book 4IR: AI, Blockchain, FinTech, IoT, Reinventing a Nation in 2019, among others. His upcoming book, titled 4IR Magna Carta Cities ABC: A tech AI blockchain 4IR Smart Cities Data Research Charter of Liberties for our humanity is due to be published in 2020.

He is ranked as one of the most influential people in Blockchain in the world by Right Relevance as well as being listed in Cointelegraph's Top People In Blockchain in 2019 and Rise Global's The Artificial Intelligence Power 100. He was also listed as one of the 100 B2B Thought Leaders and Influencers to Follow in 2020 by Thinkers360. Dinis is a sought-after speaker, on AI, blockchain, Fintech, and digital transformation. He has been working with the likes of UN / UNITAR, UNESCO, European Space Agency, Davos WEF, Philips, Saxo Bank, Mastercard, Barclays and governments all over the world.

KAMIAR MALEKI | COLLECTOR, CURATOR, FAIR DIRECTOR, PATRON & PHILANTHROPIST
London, UK

Kamiar Maleki is a Collector, Curator, Fair Director, Patron and Philanthropist, with over 15 years experience in the Art World. Maleki has developed a significant interest in emerging artists, fostering numerous young artists careers from an early age.

He successfully ran Contemporary Istanbul from 2016-2018 and is now the Director of Volta Art Fair, which has three fairs based in NYC, Basel and its newest edition in Miami, which will launch in December 2020.

He is a founding member of the ICA's Young Patrons and co founder of the Agha Khan Museum UK Patrons. His inaugural exhibition as a curator was the critically acclaimed group show, Hashtag Abstract (2015) followed by Primary Colours (2016), the first UK solo exhibition of works by Richard Höglund, both at Ronchini Gallery.

NAPOLEON DA LEGEND | MUSIC ARTIST
New York, USA

Paris-born, to the Comoros Islands, then Washington DC raised, Napoleon is a Brooklyn-based artist who uses his voice as a weapon of hope, social-critique, conquest, and joy. NDL's song "Black Privilege" led him to be featured at the Essence Festival in 2017. He was then invited to perform live on FOX 5's Good Day DC.

NDL's message of empowerment, community, and self-determination through music doesn't stop there. He also works regularly with youth, running hip-hop workshops in Brooklyn's toughest schools and Rikers Island's juvenile programs.

2018 was a Jordan year, without a doubt. Napoleon released 10 projects- including four albums, four mixtapes, and two EPs released through various indie labels (Chopped Herring, Media Pop, Copenhagen Crates and Tuff Gong Records). This was followed by eight appearances in 2019 at Harlem Week's main stage (with acts like Donnie McClurkin and 112).

Since then, NDL has released 10 more projects, including the afrobeat/hip-hop fusion projects, "Afrostreet" & "Afrostreet 2". After creating a few anthems ("Poulet Maafe") for his French speaking African fans on the series, NDL decided to put his French powers into high gear. In September, 2019, he gave his 1st in interview in French with Mediapac (Watch it here), garnering over 100,000 views in less than a week. In May 2020, NDL featured on elite French rapper Akhenaton's (IAM) "Asteroïde" project, trading verses in French and English on groundbreaking songs like "Storytellers". He then released a groundbreaking EP, "Charles de Gaulle", with 2 versions of every song (French & English).

THADDAEUS ROPAC | FOUNDER
Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Salzburg, Austria

Born in 1960. Klagenfurt, Austria.

Lives between Paris, London, Salzburg and New York.

In 1983, Thaddaeus Ropac founded his first gallery in Salzburg specialising in European and North American contemporary art.

The first exhibitions launched by Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac were projects by the German artist Joseph Beuys and the American artist Andy Warhol, but also with younger, then-emerging artists like Jean-Michel Basquiat, Francesco Clemente and Keith Haring.

From its origin in Salzburg, the gallery now holds five distinctive venues, two of which are located in the Paris region. Since 1983 Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac has established itself in Salzburg located in the Villa Kast, a 19th century townhouse in the picturesque setting of the Mirabell Garden and the historical centre. In March 2010, the gallery opened Salzburg Halle, an additional exhibition space spreading over 2,500 m² within an industrial building close to the city centre of Salzburg. In 1990, Thaddaeus Ropac opened his primary Paris space in the Marais. Today, the gallery space spans four floors with a 1000m² exhibition surface that also includes an extensive Drawings Department.

October 2012 saw the completion of the ambitious redevelopment of an early 20th century ironworks factory into an art space in Paris Pantin. Its location in the North East of Paris in the neighbourhood of the new Philharmonie de Paris has allowed for new perspectives for the gallery, fostering interactions and collaborations with the cultural community, and allowing for the unprecedented display of large-scale works. Spread over an area of 5000m² and several buildings, 2500m² serve as exhibition spaces.

Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac London opened to the public at the end of April 2017. Located at 37 Dover Street in Mayfair, the historical mansion, Ely House, is spread over five floors and over 1,500 m² (16,000 ft²), benefiting from four distinct gallery spaces. Major shows in its recent exhibition history include Georg Baselitz, Joseph Beuys and Robert Rauschenberg among others.

The gallery currently represents over 60 artists and a number of renowned artists' estates and shows at all major international art fairs. Active in both the primary and secondary markets, the gallery's role extends to curatorial work, where it acts as a consultant to public institutions as well as an advisor to private and corporate collections. The gallery runs its own publishing house, producing catalogues and books to accompany exhibitions, inviting prominent international art historians, curators and writers to contribute.

OSINACHI | CRYPTO ARTIST
Lagos, Nigeria

Osinachi is a Nigerian visual artist of Igbo descent. Unarguably Africa's foremost cryptoartist, his work explores personal experiences within a technological environment. He was a finalist for the Bridgeman Studio Award 2019. His work can be seen on cryptoart platforms such as SuperRare, MakersPlace, Nifty Gateway, Rarible and others. His debut solo exhibition, "Osinachi - Existence as Protest" features NFTs alongside physical prints, and is ongoing at Kate Vass Galerie, Switzerland.

NADIA & RAJEEB SAMDANI | CO-FOUNDERS

Samdani Art Foundation & Dhaka Art Summit, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Nadia and Rajeeb Samdani are the Founders of the Samdani Art Foundation and Dhaka Art Summit. In 2011, they established the Samdani Art Foundation to support the work of Bangladesh and South Asia's contemporary artists and architects to increase their exposure. As part of this initiative, they founded Dhaka Art Summit in 2012, which is a bi-annual event and has since completed five successful editions. The fifth edition has received a footfall of half a million visitors in nine days. They are members of the Tate's South Asian Acquisitions Committee, Tate's International Council, Art Dubai's Advisory Council and Alserkal Avenue's Programming Committee, and are among the founding members of the Harvard University Lakshmi Mittal South Asia Institute's Arts Advisory Council. Rajeeb Samdani is also a founding member and the Co-Chair of Tate's South Asian Acquisitions Committee.

Works from their collection have been lent to institutions and festivals including: Kunsthall Trondheim, Norway (2019), Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (2019); Para Site, Hong Kong (2018); Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw (2018); documenta 14, Kassel and Athens, (2017) among others. Nadia Samdani has been a guest speaker at Art Basel Hong Kong, Frieze London, India Art Fair and Pinta London among others. Together they have spoken at the Royal Ontario Museum of Art, UC Berkeley, Harvard University and the Private Museums Conference in Hong Kong. Through the foundation they have supported international exhibitions and art projects such as the 56th International Biennale di Venezia, supporting the projects of artists Naeem Mohaiemen and Raqs Media Collective in Okwui Enwezor's exhibition: All the World's Futures (2015); the Kunsthalle Basel's first exhibition of a South Asian artist, Naeem Mohaiemen (2014); Bangladeshi-British artist Rana Begum's first major institutional solo exhibition at Parasol Unit, London (2014). Other supported exhibitions are the Kochi Muziris Biennale (2014), Shanghai Biennale (2016), Speak Lokal, Kunsthalle, Zurich (2017). In collaboration with Alserkal Avenue, the foundation organized the exhibition 'Fabri(cated) Fractures' in Concrete, Dubai in 2019 which featured works from the Samdani collection as well as works produced for previous editions of Dhaka Art Summit. They have also donated works by the Bangladeshi modern artist Rashid Choudhury from their collection to Tate and Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Nadia and Rajeeb Samdani are the first and only South Asian art patrons to receive the prestigious Montblanc de la Culture Arts Patronage Award in 2017. They have been recognized on Artnews' Top 200 Collectors list and Art Review's Power 100 list every year since 2015. Rajeeb Samdani is the Managing Director and Nadia Samdani is a Director of Golden Harvest Group - one of the leading diversified conglomerates in Bangladesh.

Their new initiative is the Srihatta—Samdani Art Centre and Sculpture Park, is the forthcoming permanent art space established under the Samdani Art Foundation. Srihatta will be the first permanent dedicated space for the Foundation's programming and exhibition activities. The architecture for the centre is designed by Kashef Mahboob Chowdhury, who won the Agha Khan Award in 2016. This is also the country's first sculpture park and dedicated art space for international modern and contemporary art.

AI-DA | ROBOT

London, UK

Ai-Da is the world's first ultra-realistic AI robot artist. As a machine, with Artificial Intelligence capabilities, her artist persona is the artwork, along with her drawings, performance art and collaborative paintings and sculptures. As conceptual art, Ai-Da encourages us to re-consider our self-perception through the lens of a humanoid.

Extraordinarily complex, our online worlds are pushed and pulled by forces and powers that are sometimes apparent but largely oblique. Ai-Da, the machine with AI capacities, highlights those tensions: is she an artist in her own right? Is she an avatar, or a fictional character? These considerations bring to the forefront the questions coming up rapidly in our future.

Ai-Da addresses the question of creativity. Professor Margaret Boden states: "Creativity is the ability to come up with ideas or artefacts that are new, surprising, and valuable". Under this definition, Ai-Da is creative - what does it mean for our self-evaluation when Ai-Da, a machine robot, creates drawings and art?

Ai-Da uses a mix of human and AI created speech to communicate through spoken word and text. This forms the base of much of her performance art.

She uses cameras in her eyes and AI algorithms to draw portraits, which she creates in physical form through her robotic arm.

Ai-Da uses AI algorithms to produce artwork contributions for works in which she collaborates with humans - such as her paintings and sculptures. These collaborative works use traditional artist practises, such as oil painting and bronze casting, as well as cutting edge 3D printing and scientific scans. The artworks involve multi-layered processes, which reflect the complexities of our lives, where we interact with technology and large, interdependent global supply chains on a daily basis.

Her work considers complex tensions, such as environmental degradation, and the treatment of captive animals. Her next show will address consciousness and suffering, and how sentient creatures respond to trauma.

Ai-Da aims to get us re-formulating absurdity, reminiscent of Dada. As Aldous Huxley's Brave New challenges knock on our door, Ai-Da aims to remind us that new technologies bring power. In human hands, this power is at risk of being abused - something we collectively need to watch out for and guard against. Through art, Ai-Da takes the space to re-imagine our futures with us all.

Ai-Da was devised in Oxford, and built in Cornwall. Programmed internationally, she exists within a team of cross-disciplinary skills and philosophies, called the Oxfordians. This team includes, amongst others, digital creators, computer programmers, engineers, mathematicians, biologists and painters.

Her first show at the University of Oxford, June 2019, was titled Unsecured Futures: The Pan sapien tragedy of the competitive "Other". It encouraged discussions on transhumanism and creativity, and considerations of the environment and animals in captivity. Her persona blurs the lines between human and machine interactions, providing an acutely relevant reflection on current societal trends.

Highlights of 2019 include being part of European ARTificial IntelligenceLab exhibition at Ars Electronica, Linz, and a workshop at the Tate Exchange, Tate Modern, London. In December 2019 she was interviewed by Tim Marlow (artistic director of the Royal Academy) at the Sarabande Foundation, London, and she did a TEDx talk in February 2020.

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