

ART AND ARTISTS DURING THE PANDEMIC

AKSHI BABBAR¹ & DR. GURCHARAN SINGH²

¹Research Scholar, Department of Fine Arts, Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra Haryana India
²Associate Professor, Department of Fine Arts, Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra Haryana India

ABSTRACT

'Art is a medicine that has the power to boast, unite, and connect in times of crises'. It has made life easy in times of pandemic before and now also brings people together, makes them calm, inspire, soothe, and aware. The world has become a restriction-easing place, perhaps the only thing that hasn't changed in the last few months is a sense of uncertainty. There are days of worry and days of hope. Through it all, people are lucky to remain connected with near ones and the outside world by an increasing advancement in technology (Digital World Internet). There is a significant meaning of art in people's life for various reasons: it makes them happy and even support them in difficult situations. Moreover, its importance grows exponentially during a challenging time. As the pandemic has worsened the lives of many, art has positively helped people understand the world and make them peaceful/calm anxiety. Since the pandemic covered the world like a storm art has given positivity and aspiration for difficulties in the situation of COVID-19. It allows people to process their experiences to promote a better understanding of the world. Coronavirus has exposed many social, political, and economic nuances of the world, where art helps us to compare properly. The artists created their works to express the true face of the world so that other people can receive a clear picture of events and technology helps it to spread. People are blessed that they have technology in their dark hours to get connected in isolation. This makes many people live.

Keywords: New Media Art, Technology, Digital World Internet, COVID-19, Pandemic, Contemporary Artists, Performing Art.

INTRODUCTION

Till now nobody has the exact answer of the birth of neither this deadly disease nor even its cure. It was a fatal disease that had its effect even reduced both physically and economically. The government has announced repeated lockdowns, social distancing, and other guidance to control the effect. This made people scared of disease and even worse was less income and loneliness. It was like everything was coming to an end and how fast it was affecting that haunted people more. There was a sudden closure of all venues and events. People were having disposable income, fewer resources, and diseases at their doorstep. For months it was complete silence and darkness then people noticed that Earth started recovering as they were in their homes. Which gave them hope and new inspiration to start fresh. In all this art even played a great role as it touches the heart which lights up and enthusiasts us with mental calmness. People even now have more leisure time than they need, this makes an individual effectively halt and cope with crises through a new version of a virtual world and anything that gives a piece in this situation.

Indeed, the emergence of COVID-19 has thrust the world into uncharted territory, impacting lives globally. The rapid spread of the virus and the subsequent declaration of a global pandemic emphasized the urgent need for coordinated international efforts to address the multifaceted challenges posed by the novel coronavirus. The ongoing response involves a combination of public health measures, scientific research, and societal adaptation to mitigate the impact of this unprecedented health crisis. Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is

defined as illness caused by a novel coronavirus now called severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2; formerly called 2019-nCoV), which was first identified in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China. It was initially reported to the WHO on December 31, 2019. On March 11, 2020, the WHO declared COVID-19 a global pandemic¹(Cennimo, D.).

Videos of the public turning to home-based art activities like singing and painting started becoming viral to spread hope and solidarity. More people who are not related to art started participating in digital art, writing, musical activities, crafts, wood-carvings, and even reading for pleasure.

The pandemic has caused global social and economic disruption, including the largest global recession since the Great Depression. It has led to the postponement or cancellation of sporting, religious, political, and cultural events, widespread supply shortages exacerbated by panic buying, and decreased emissions of pollutants and greenhouse gases. Schools, universities, and colleges have been closed either on a nationwide or local basis in 177 countries, affecting approximately 98.6 percent of the world's student population²(Tomkuria). In this critical time when we are uncertain about our thoughts and just hoping for what will be next; Art gives light in the dark, calm to anxious minds, and gives life to the dead.

DEPICTION OF PANDEMIC THROUGH ART IN HISTORY

Art is a creation of life. It is a source of bright stars on nights. It gives us the strength to fight, hope to achieve, and calmness to regain ourselves. Art is a mystery it affects our Physiology, Psychology, Environment, Education level, and Culture, how we are brought up, even to our species and the era we are living in. It gives us pleasure, relax our heart even calms our mind at curtailed times.

Art is the most powerful vision of the senses. From ancient times we can see people have shown their emotions, thoughts, and feelings through art. It is a state of intervention and development; it gives us new roads in stuck phases of life. Revolutions and destruction in the world are depicted by beautiful works of art. Art was used to protect and assist human life in back-till then. Every art object has a story of emotions attached to it, especially at the time of calamities and crises.

Many pandemics almost ended human civilizations in history. The medieval Black Death was one of the most devastating pandemics in human history³(STANŠKA, Z). It resulted in the deaths of an estimated 75 to 200 million people in Eurasia which is almost 30%, peaking in

¹ Cennimo, D., (2021), 'Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)', Medscape Magazine. P 17-18.

² Tomkuria, (2020), 'Coursera Capstone Project — clustering countries based on Corona cases and clustering common venues', Source: <https://medium.com/@tomkuria64/coursera-capstone-project-clustering-countries-based-on-corona-cases-and-clustering-common-venues-50ce0c3001a9>, Web: 22-Jan-2021.

³ STANŠKA, Z., (2020), 'Plague in Art: 10 Paintings You Should Know in the Times of Coronavirus', Source: <https://www.dailyartmagazine.com/plague-in-art-10-paintings-coronavirus/>, Web: 17-Dec-2020.

Europe from 1347 to 1351. In the time of the Black Death artists used to depict their artworks through themes such as skeletons, death, and Dance of Death. Giovanni Bocaccio in his Decameron (1353)



Image: The Citizens of Tournai, Belgium, Burying the Dead during the Black Death of 1347-52. Detail of a miniature from *The Chronicles of Gilles Li Muisis (1272-1352)*, abbot of the monastery of St. Martin of the Righteous, Bibliothèque royale de Belgique, MS 13076-77, and f. 24v.

Source: <https://www.worldhistory.org/image/12033/citizens-of-tournai-bury-their-dead/>. Web: 17-Sep-2022.

The historical depictions of mass burials during events like the Black Death vividly capture the profound impact of pandemics on society. The Dance of Death, reflecting encounters between the living and the dead, served as a stark reminder of mortality, transcending societal status. In the face of such calamities, individuals were confronted with the inevitability of death, emphasizing the fragility of human existence and the shared vulnerability that transcends social hierarchies.



Image: Giacomo Borlone de Burchis, *The Triumph of Death with The Dance of Death*, 15th century, Oratorio dei Disciplini in Clusone, Italy.

Source: <https://www.wondriumdaily.com/the-dance-of-death-during-the-black-death/>. Web: 19-Sep-2022.

Clusone's 'Dance of Death,' within The Triumph of Death scene, vividly portrays a diverse array of characters, spanning different social classes, joining the inevitable dance with skeletons. The crowned skeleton queen, representing Death, holds a commanding presence, indifferent to the powerful figures offering valuables beneath her. The symbolism of a marble coffin with an emperor and a pope, surrounded by poisonous animals, underscores the

universal nature of mortality and the futility of worldly possessions in the face of death's relentless march.¹(Bichell, R.).



Image: Paulus Furst of Nuremberg, *Doctor Schnabel von Rom*, 1656, British Museum, London.
 Source: https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_1876-0510-512. 22-Sep-2022.

The persistent return of the Black Death over the following three centuries cast a dark and recurrent shadow on European life. Cities faced periodic devastations from terrible outbreaks, shaping the entire narrative of Europe from the 14th to the late 17th century. Notably, artists like Hans Holbein and Titian succumbed to the plague, while others, including Tintoretto, sought to confront and combat the scourge through their art. The 'Scuola Grande di San Rocco' in Venice, dedicated to a plague-protective saint, became a canvas for Tintoretto's impactful works during this challenging

The 17th-century protective costume depicted in the etching reveals the haunting measures taken during the plague outbreak in France and Italy. The bird-like beaked mask, with glass openings, served as an early respirator, filled with aromatic substances to counteract bad smells or miasma, believed to be the cause of the disease at the time. While it terrified people as a symbol of imminent death, germ theory, later on, disproved the notion that miasma was the primary source of the disease, marking a shift in understanding infectious diseases. A period marked by the regular occurrence of death from the plague.²(STANSKA, Z.).

The 20th century indeed witnessed unprecedented challenges, including two World Wars, the Holocaust, and the devastating Spanish Flu. The scale of the flu pandemic was staggering, infecting 500 million people globally and claiming an estimated 100 million lives. Remarkably, this death toll surpassed the combined casualties of both soldiers and civilians during World War I, underscoring the immense impact of the pandemic on a global scale.³

¹ Bichell, R., (2017), 'Iconic Plague Images Are Often Not What They Seem'. GOATS AND SODA. P 22

² STANSKA, Z., (2020), 'Plague in Art: 10 Paintings You Should Know in the Times of Coronavirus', Source: <https://www.dailyartmagazine.com/plague-in-art-10-paintings-coronavirus/>, Web: 17-Dec-2020.

³ (12-Nov-2020), 'The Family', Daily Art Magazine. P 78

The symptoms of the 1918 flu, initially resembling normal flu, took a severe turn for many. Beyond fever, nausea, aches, and diarrhea, individuals often develop severe pneumonia. Distinctively, dark spots on the cheeks and a bluish discoloration marked a critical stage, indicating oxygen deprivation as the lungs filled with a frothy, bloody substance. Unlike typical flu patterns, the 1918 flu exhibited a unique and alarming trend by disproportionately affecting young, healthy adults, contributing to its devastating impact.¹



Egon Schiele, *The Family*, 1918, Belvedere, Vienna
 Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Family_%28Schiele%29. Web: 27-Jan-2021.

Egon Schiele's poignant artwork, *'The Family,'* left unfinished due to his untimely death from the Spanish Flu, portrayed himself with his wife Edith and their unborn child. His last letter revealed deep concern for Edith, who had contracted the flu and developed pneumonia. Tragically, Edith succumbed to the disease in the sixth month of her pregnancy. Egon Schiele, heartbroken and grieving, passed away just three days after his wife. Their deaths underscore the devastating impact of the Spanish Flu on individuals and families during this tumultuous period.



Image: Edvard Munch, *Self-Portrait after Spanish Influenza*, 1919, Oslo, at the National Gallery.
 Source: https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Edvard-Munch-Self-portrait-with-the-Spanish-Flu-1919-Image-courtesy-of-fig1_362033124. Web: 17-Jan-2021.

¹ *'Flu Fighters: The 1918 Flu Pandemic in Oxnard, Museum Volunteer Andy Ludlum'*. Source: <https://venturamuseum.org/research-library-blog/flu-fighters-the-1918-flu-pandemic-in-oxnard/>. Web: 17-Dec-2020.

The Spanish Flu claimed the lives of several renowned artists, including Gustav Klimt, Amadeo de Souza Cardoso, and Niko Pirosmani. Notably, Edvard Munch contracted the flu but managed to survive. In 1919, Munch created a series of studies, sketches, and paintings reflecting his profound experience with the illness. In one such work, Munch depicted his closeness to death, portraying thinning hair, a jaundiced complexion, and himself wrapped in a dressing gown and blanket. By the summer of 1919, the flu pandemic had subsided, leaving those who were infected either deceased or with acquired immunity. ¹(Klein, B.).

The HIV and AIDS epidemic, emerging in the 1980s and early 1990s, had a profound impact globally. Despite its origins dating back decades, the virus has since infected over 70 million people, with approximately 35 million succumbing to AIDS. Initially stigmatized as a '*Gay Disease*' or '*Gay Plague*,' the public perception evolved as awareness increased.

Historically, HIV transmission occurred through unprotected sex, sharing needles for drug use, and from mother to child during birth. Public awareness campaigns and advancements in medical understanding have played crucial roles in addressing and mitigating the impact of HIV and AIDS, emphasizing prevention, and treatment, and reducing stigma surrounding the disease.



Image: Keith Haring, *Ignorance = Fear*, 1989, Poster Collection Noirmontartproduction, Paris
Source: <https://www.economist.com/1843/2019/06/13/how-keith-harings-art-forced-us-to-talk-about-aids>. Web: 19Jan-2021

Keith Haring's 1989 poster, created after his own AIDS diagnosis, powerfully captured the dire situation during that period. With one American diagnosed with HIV every minute and four deaths from AIDS every hour, the poster depicted three figures embodying 'See Nothing, Hear Nothing, Say Nothing.' This imagery symbolizes the struggles faced by those living with AIDS and the challenges arising from the lack of acknowledgment and respect for the epidemic.

During the 1980s, the state of information about AIDS/HIV in the United States was indeed distressing. Disinformation was widespread, the government response was criticized as inadequate, and medical care, along with the associated medicines, was prohibitively

¹Klein, B., (2020), '*Art in the times of Crisis*', CARNEGIE MUSEUMS OF PITTSBURGH. Source: <https://carnegiemuseums.org/carnegie-magazine/summer-2020/art-in-the-time-of-crisis/>. Web: 17-Dec-2020.

expensive. People infected with HIV often find themselves isolated and lacking the necessary support structures. The era was marked by a critical need for improved understanding, awareness, and compassionate action in the face of the growing epidemic



Image: David Wojnarowicz, *Untitled (Falling Buffalos)*, 1988-1989, National Gallery of Art, Washington.
Source: <https://www.nga.gov/collection/art-object-page.139455.html>. Web: 19-Jan-2021

David Wojnarowicz's 'Untitled' (Falling Buffalos) stands as a poignant and haunting artistic response to the AIDS crisis in the 1980s. This photo montage, featuring a herd of buffalo falling off a cliff, conveys a sense of doom and hopelessness, capturing the emotional gravity of the epidemic. Created after Wojnarowicz's HIV-positive diagnosis, the image draws a compelling parallel between the AIDS crisis and the historical mass slaughter of buffalos in America during the nineteenth century. Through this powerful work, Wojnarowicz sought to convey the profound impact and urgency surrounding the AIDS epidemic, intertwining personal experience with broader social and historical narratives.¹(Laing, T.).

HOW ART HELP PEOPLE IN TIMES OF PANDEMIC?

Darkness can only be shattered by a happy and peaceful mind in which art plays an important role. People connect with art like they started watching old recorded shows of comedy, dance, music, food preparation, and even online tours to museums and galleries, creating their reels and making arts like dancing, singing, painting, poetry, and many more. Galleries, museums, and small charities launch art workshops online for people to divert their minds.

As proved by doctors during crisis art reduces stress and enhances well-being. In social-distancing art influences the life of people by bringing them together as a community and impacting their lives. Art helps people to feel and care more for their loved ones and surroundings (nature) and not be selfish which makes them good human beings. COVID-19 was tremendously challenging for everyone on Earth but plays a significant role in boosting people's lost hope and enthusiasm. Through art one can trigger physiological, psychological

¹Laing T., (2019), 'How Keith Haring's art forced us to talk about AIDS', THE ECONOMIST, Source: <https://www.economist.com/1843/2019/06/13/how-keith-harings-art-forced-us-to-talk-about-aids>. Web: 20-Dec-2020

behavior, and social responses that cause health problems. Art helps in the well-being of a person reduces mental health, stress level, and level of loneliness, and makes them engage in other health-promoting activities. Not only young people children and adults also took part in artistic activities: painting, creative writing, woodwork, etc., for the sake of wellness and calmness. This helps in decreasing depression and anxiety and even gives a great level of satisfaction during lockdowns. This helps people to fight against COVID-19 but also reduces their past problems. As social support, social interactions, and healthcare survival were disrupted art played a key role in overcoming this situation. Even a few people who just started doing art for the sake of entertainment at times of COVID have now made it their actual profession they are so liked by people. Online activities have increased more as compared to before COVID-19 ¹(KASZUBOWSKA, J.).

Art not only calms mental health but builds emotional as well as physical health. It distracts the mind from bad thoughts, gives self-reflection to be strong, and it's an exercise that boosts one to gain skills and connect with others. Art activities help to feel relaxed, give an experience of escaping the world, cheer up the mood, cope with confinement, and develop a greater level of strength and confidence. A person feels more self-develop which enhances self-esteem and meaning in life. Even frontline health and social care professionals proactively used art to cure their patients and themselves to decrease their sadness, fear, tiredness, and worry. Art is a soul of emotions that stimulates our hormones and brings hope and enthusiasm energy, it reduces negative energy to generate positivity which helped people in the dark waves of a pandemic.

IMPACT ON THE ART WORLD

It was a desire of the future but had to become a need of the present in 2020. A blanket pandemic forced the art world to become digital for its survival. There were organizations in the art world that used technology before 2020 but a disaster development was created at the time of COVID-19, the online experience was just like an afterthought to manual which suddenly changed. COVID accelerated the art in a new direction which was just planned. All resources were concentrated on personal programming and physical exhibits of events which suddenly changed into digital in no time.

There was no choice which was only a future that becomes the present of the art world, the trendy furious digital world. With global lockdown art institutions and creative organizations were left with no choices, they had to turn to digital access to exhibit, education, and fundraiser events. Online platforms provide a silver lining in the world. There was a major development to access virtual reality, the darkness of diseases made cloud paramount. We suddenly started finding new digital ways of our problems, COVID just created the virtual

¹ KASZUBOWSKA, J., (27-March-2020), 'Theatre Plays, Opera and Music Online to Keep you Entertained during Lockdown', Daily Art Magazine. P 63

world as real. Even big productions like Disney launched its first major motion picture online to encourage telehealth.

After converting to the future digital world art hadn't left its traditional reality, art took traditional art (old masters' works of drawing, painting, printmaking, and sculpture) with itself. Online made it easy to assess the art world through a switch but it was a lot more difficult, as employees were working from remote areas. There should be relevance and had to maintain dignity and class of work. Needed accessible and low-budget cloud-based tools for managing as budgets were cut down and staff was laid off.

As all museums started the online tour, they profited even from those places where visitors were fewer, due to the internet's increased number of social media followers. Even digital access provided viewers to see their unique collection which was not possible physically.

COVID DEMOCRATISE ART

This lonely world of COVID forced people to adopt new ways, which collapsed traditional structures (which were not inclusive) for the first digital community that had a new audience. Now people are no longer restricted by geographical area, cost, or time, to visit online events and exhibitions. They can now take pleasure in enthusing art performances from the comfort of their couch. Even become easy to roam in the galleries of popular museums like *'The Metropolitan Museum'*, via augmented reality. Now people don't have to line up or take leave to visit any art place which provides them energy. Big events like the Art Biennale, Art Basel, and Art Fair were viewed online.

Digital technology became a hallmark of 2020, everyone become an artist in some sense. It responded to the most challenging time of the pandemic and unrest world through creative public art which played a prominent role in entertainment and education. Pajama pants become a new trend to visit any event and online become the new normal now face-to-face interactions don't exist. Everyone was using digital platforms like Zoom, Google Meet, etc. to attend events. Artist lectures, workshops, gallery and museum tours, exhibitions, and art fairs were attended from home. There was no worry about airfare or hotel room to attend any art events.

SOCIAL DISTANCING MADE US VIRTUALLY CLOSER

Before galleries used to organize art even that had little knowledge of lectures and a lot of socializing while drinking a glass of wine. Now they have to engage people more as the virtual world provides more interactive dialogue and discussions because of fewer crowds and distractions. More conversations, discussions, and lectures on art, its history, and other events along with art were recorded and shared. Many artists gave studio tours showed their work and inspired people all of which made the artworks come alive.

Social media was the place that had been bringing the world together for many years. So when nature has closed its doors people, art groups and organizations focused on online and digital promotion of content especially on trending platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube. They shared images of work, reels, videos, live events, and conversations with hashtags like #MUSEUMFROMHOME. These platforms have developed a lot in times of COVID which made it a great marketplace. Artists creatively illustrated and read their books live, connected with patrons by hashtags. Showcase their time-lapse videos of the process, studio tour, and flash sales just a button away. Lisa McShane's commitment to sharing her paintings on Instagram and Facebook reflects a commendable effort to bring art into people's lives during challenging times. Despite the current difficulties in making a living through art, her initiative aims to alleviate the stress of confinement and contribute positively to the community. It highlights the power of art to provide solace and inspiration, even amid uncertainty.¹

People also started challenges that even unite more artists like MUROS, a global art agency that uplifts the community through digital initiative called #MAKEWITHMUROS where many artists around the world take their challenge by posting their recorded processes, inspiring pieces, and welcome viewers to their studios virtually. Hashtags become platforms to buy art. Tricia Binder, Co-Founder and President at Muros expresses a humbling experience witnessing people unite, inspired, and uplifted, to collectively face global challenges. It reflects the resilience and strength that emerges when communities come together during difficult times.

As art is the pleasure of how someone feels while observing the artwork, there was an argument that virtual reality could not replace the in-personal experience. The virtual world will not have the aura of depths and ridges of brushstrokes, inspect minute details of miniature, and step back in awe. But COVID changed it all and moots the argument. Both virtual and physical artwork access have their values: one is a live experience and the other is easy to see. That means when you are there you can only experience it.

This experience is even like a dreamy world without brick-and-mortar space. People gave their artwork historical context, magical, and sometimes futuristic environments. Not only brands and named museums and galleries started promoting their works but small open studios, public art, and individual artists had even participated in it. Even before 2020, some savvy groups showcased their artwork online but didn't become that popular.

CLOSED DOORS OF GALLERIES INCREASED ONLINE SALE

Before COVID there were online sales and transactions due to technological innovation which increased comfort levels and economic transparency. Few democratic platforms give art aficionados to artists like Artsy and Artwork Archives. Now when the doors are closed all

¹ University of Demo, (2021), 'How COVID Accelerated the Evolution of the Art World', ARTWORK ARCHIVE, Source: <https://www.artworkarchive.com/blog/how-covid-accelerated-the-evolution-of-the-art-world/>. Web: 22-Sep-2021.

art dealers, galleries, auction houses and artists directly doing online sales through websites which is their new showroom.

The art market is expanding online, which has its sales at all price points, artist even started creating smaller and more affordable artworks that shouldn't cover the gallery walls but fulfills buyers' need. A new era just began with new challenges of 2020.

EMERGING ARTISTS GOT CHANCE

Before COVID, artists connected to collectors in exhibitions like art fairs or big galleries and studios but now they can show their work from home. Emerging artists were left out if they didn't have an invitation or representation. The pandemic hurt the galleries, it was not possible to visit any art fairs and studios which gave an opportunity to emerging artists even buyers to adapt to discover artists with works not only tags/brands. Not only we saw emerging artists but even there were new collectors and buyers who were restricted to areas.

Auction houses were the key players of democratization which previously used to do winter and summer auctions but they did not rethink their schedule, offerings, and how to sell their art. Online sale wasn't new to the art world but due to closer, they started weekly and monthly auctions. This made great points for small and affordable lots this made online purchases bigger in the future even for emerging collectors.

Traditionally catalogs were only sent to those who have previously bought or sold, just not to take the risk of losing qualified buyers and collectors. However, the virtual world provides greater access to existing bidders and opportunities to search new collecting categories, artworks, and artists.

When COVID attacked the world there was a direct hit to the art organizations and artists in generating revenue. Sales of tickets were down, and the cancellation of workshops and fundraisers was a great problem that made the budget cut. Due to all this staff was laid off/furloughed. Even small business loans could not be funded, and artists were unemployed which was darkness for the art world in this darker time. Even there was shocking news that one-third of museums will be closed by the end of the pandemic and sadly never recover. This was a ripple effect on society as museums and art are the cultural heritage of any place. But soon to breathe the art world shifted online to a virtual world. Organize creative fun events to attract and engage viewers, and enthusiasts not only to known audiences but worldwide. Now artists are even able to showcase their work since they are not confined to any space. Online Archive helps many emerging artists, organizations, and collectors, to showcase, manage, and sell their artworks. Even with a limited budget and staff art organization started working smoothly with proper internet rules and tools. So, that investment order works properly without any hacks. Artists documented themselves in the meantime, their artworks, process, materials, and inspiration to leave their paramount legacy behind which will inspire new generations. They told their stories to the world about COVID.

Without art fairs and exhibitions, artists had time to explore and devote themselves to projects like self-inventory management. The pandemic was like a rainy day which is cleared and brightened as a rainbow by online use.

COVID-19 AND THE FUTURE OF INDIA'S ART INDUSTRY

It was like a flood everything was closed, shut, and canceled. There was dark silence which scared people who had untold questions: from where, why, till when, how, etc. COVID lockdown just stopped people from where they were. Events were canceled, stalled programs and sales were in limbo, and the Indian art industry came to the crisis of facing a silver lining.

As summers were a great time to exhibit. A hustle-bustles of artwork with boozy openings, high-headed auctions, private viewing, etc., everything was shut in seconds. Usually, the art calendar is meant to be packed worldwide and it's the best time for business and social networking in the physical art world but ended all in the virtual world. The novel coronavirus hit the Indian and world art industry, global sale was valued at roughly \$64.1 billion (around ₹4.83 trillion) as of 2019 (according to a report by Art Basel and UBS), leaving its future uncertain ¹(Ghoshal, S.).

Due to COVID world was pushed into loneliness and lockdown which canceled and replaced the big art events like Art (Dubai), and Art Basel (Hong Kong) which were scheduled in March but accessed online. Many Indian museums, galleries, art residencies, and auction homes were closed or put a halt to their shows and programs.

The last major event of Art in India was the annual Indian Art Fair 2020 (IFA) a three-art event from 30th Jan to 2nd Feb was a highly noted art event, after which within a couple of weeks pandemic took over as a storm, and locked everyone and everything. This edition had great works of art that exhibited strong sales, there were public programs like talk and discussion sessions on art, Performance art, workshops, and new bookshops that highlighted the ambiance. The last great physical South Asian and Indian art scene of 2020 before COVID.

The most expensive work of 2020 was a 2004 piece titled '*The Seashore*' by Kolkata-based figurative artist Arpita Singh for Rs. 5.28 crore, Krishen Khanna and Rameshwar Broota very renowned New-Delhi shot up to second and third place. Others like Jogen Chowdhury, Nalini Malani, and Anjolie Ela Menon contributed. Not everyone was lucky that was the last big art event of 2020 after all big art galleries and museums were closed with pending exhibitions and events, due to the pandemic. Named galleries like Vadehra Art Gallery of Roshini Vadehra confirmed that their scheduled shows for May will not be open. That elongated according to the lockdown which she was not even aware of. Few canceled, some were

¹ Ghoshal, S., (2020), '*Covid-19 and the future of India's art industry*', Art and Cultural, Mint Lounge, Source: <https://lifestyle.livemint.com/how-to-lounge/art-culture/covid19-and-the-future-of-india-s-art-industry-111637082449486.html>. Web: 17-Jan-2021.

closed, others renege on commitments like the annual show Embark which coincides with the final exhibition of the year at the Faculty of Fine Art (MS University). In the capital art organizations like Latitude 28 run by Bhavna Kakar and the KNMA founded by philanthropist Kiran Nadar completed their 10 years in 2020, but the celebration was darkened by a long wait of endless silence.

After the art fair started in 2010 a new trend of art was developed in India where the art of old masters and even new contemporary artists were in high demand. The art market was estimated at \$14.6 million as of 2017 (according to a FICCI-KPMG report) which was a huge up in the art world. After surviving many storms Indian art market was going great till COVID arrived. The decision of the government to demonetize high-value currency notes followed by imposing goods and services tax, the financial meltdown of 2008 was better than the blows that were inflicted by the pandemic.

As soon as people got to know that it would not be going to end, they started finding solutions to this problem and a new trend came in that shifted reality into a virtual world. This event changed the concept of galleries and museums. A distance exhibition that has its distance viewers and buyers. In urban India, artists created an online audience with great enthuases with virtual exhibitions, art events, performances, talks, and art that was walked by social platforms like Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Zoom, YouTube, etc. Soon after the government announced the lockdown in March 2020, all the big names in the art world started shifting to digital platforms; Mumabai's National Center for the Performing Arts (NCPA) has created NCPA@home a digital website that shows a series of signature performances from the archives. Thespo is a youth theatre festival full of the energy of tech-savvy live-streamed performances and created its online podcast community network. The Museum of Art and Photography (MAP) in Bengaluru, which was in progress showcased its collection digitally rather than physically launching. Even Jaipur showcased its Literature Festival to 27 million virtual views.

The shift to virtual art experiences has not only created equal competition for female artists but has also introduced a new, joyous wave of engagement through music festivals, online exhibitions, and live performances. This trend, driven by safety and cost-effectiveness, is likely to persist even post-COVID, forming a hybrid model with in-person events. While online platforms provide accessibility, the irreplaceable tangible experience of viewing art in person will endure, fulfilling the public's desire for in-person connections with collectors, curators, and experts. The arts have proven to be a resilient source of inspiration, providing solace and entertainment during isolating times

During the global pandemic, art emerged as a beacon of inspiration, thanks to dedicated artists, administrators, and enthusiasts. The resilience of the art community in creating, sharing, and supporting during challenging times has been truly commendable. As we move into 2021, the anticipation for the continued evolution of the art world is high, with a focus

on accessibility and shared experiences. Origin stories, highlighting the journey behind artworks, add another layer of appeal to the rich tapestry of the art world.

HOW PERFORMING ARTIST OF INDIA HELP DURING COVID-19

Indian performing artists have played a crucial role during the COVID-19 pandemic by leveraging their talents to support various initiatives. Many have organized virtual concerts and live-streamed performances to entertain and uplift people confined to their homes. These events often serve as fundraisers for COVID-19 relief efforts, with proceeds going towards providing medical supplies, supporting frontline workers, and assisting vulnerable communities.

Some artists have also collaborated on virtual projects to spread awareness about safety measures and promote mental well-being. Additionally, several performers have actively participated in charity campaigns, contributing to the distribution of food and essential supplies to those in need. Some names like: Dr. Jagmohan Sharma (Patiala) through his tabla, Dr. Rajesh Kelkar (Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda), Dr. Harwinder Singh, Dr. Ashok Kumar Prof. Shuchisimita of Dept of Music & Dance Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra, and Dr. Mritunjaya Sharma, Dept of Music, Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla, and Pratibha Spandan Society, Shimla had contributed in these drastic times through their talent, and postiveness.

Overall, the performing arts community in India has demonstrated resilience and solidarity, using their creativity to make a positive impact during these challenging times.

CONCLUSION

COVID-19 made people realize that the source of their joy is the process of thinking and reflecting on life. They should begin the process of slowing down, not to opportunities that would have fueled a more jet-setting lifestyle. This will feel so relieved that we don't have to force her body or mind for anything. After COVID-19 people get to know that they are just pre-civilized people or animals, just need to search for food for the day to survive. It's a new beginning, a new life, and it's very empowering for everyone who survived this time.

Art and technology is the key source to overcoming the pain, loneliness, and darkness of the pandemic. It connects the people and gives hope in life. Not only artists but everyone were becoming art lovers which they showcase on social platforms so that other people get inspired or participate in it. People sit on their balconies playing guitars for society to record and post on the internet, people are experimenting with new recipes of food, experimenting with different art materials, and posting with challenges so that others get diverted from the effect of COVID. This is how art inspired people with the help of technology.

REFERENCES

1. Cennimo, D., (2021), 'Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)', Medscape Magazine. P 17-18.
2. Tomkuria, (2020), '*Coursera Capstone Project — clustering countries based on Corona cases and clustering common venues*', Source: <https://medium.com/@tomkuria64/coursera-capstone-project-clustering-countries-based-on-corona-cases-and-clustering-common-venues-50cc0c3001a9>. Web: 22-Jan-2021.
3. STAŃSKA, Z., (2020), '*Plague in Art: 10 Paintings You Should Know in the Times of Coronavirus*', Source: <https://www.dailyartmagazine.com/plague-in-art-10-paintings-coronavirus/>, Web: 17-Dec-2020.
4. Bichell, R., (2017), '*Iconic Plague Images Are Often Not What They Seem*'. GOATS AND SODA. P 22
5. STAŃSKA, Z., (2020), '*Plague in Art: 10 Paintings You Should Know in the Times of Coronavirus*', Source: <https://www.dailyartmagazine.com/plague-in-art-10-paintings-coronavirus/>, Web: 17-Dec-2020.
6. (12-Nov-2020), '*The Family*', Daily Art Magazine. P 78
7. '*Flu Fighters: The 1918 Flu Pandemic in Oxnard, Museum Volunteer Andy Ludlum*'. Source: <https://venturamuseum.org/research-library-blog/flu-fighters-the-1918-flu-pandemic-in-oxnard/>. Web: 17-Dec-2020.
8. Klein, B., (2020), '*Art in the times of Crisis*', CARNEGIE MUSEUMS OF PITTSBURGH. Source: <https://carnegiemuseums.org/carnegie-magazine/summer-2020/art-in-the-time-of-crisis/>. Web: 17-Dec-2020.
9. Laing T., (2019), '*How Keith Haring's art forced us to talk about AIDS*', THE ECONOMIST, Source: <https://www.economist.com/1843/2019/06/13/how-keith-harings-art-forced-us-to-talk-about-aids>. Web: 20-Dec-2020
10. KASZUBOWSKA, J., (27-March-2020), '*Theatre Plays, Opera and Music Online to Keep you Entertained during Lockdown*', Daily Art Magazine. P 63
11. University of Demo, (2021), '*How COVID Accelerated the Evolution of the Art World*', ARTWORK ARCHIVE, Source: <https://www.artworkarchive.com/blog/how-covid-accelerated-the-evolution-of-the-art-world/>. Web: 22-Sep-2021.
12. Ghoshal, S., (2020), '*Covid-19 and the future of India's art industry*', Art and Cultural, Mint Lounge, Source: <https://lifestyle.livemint.com/how-to-lounge/art-culture/covid19-and-the-future-of-india-s-art-industry-111637082449486.html>. Web: 17-Jan-2021.