



19 March 2021 |  
Issue 155



*Apollon Terroriste* is among  
hundreds of artworks at  
Little Sparta.  
See ARTS NEWS.





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Catriona Mann *Orchids on a Persian Mat*



Helga Chart *Sleep*



Caroline Bailey *Skeabost in Autumn*



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Graeme McNaught  
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Image: Ken Bromley Art Supplies

The researchers at Bolton-based **Ken Bromley Art Supplies** have used Google search data to reveal the most Googled artists of 2020 in countries around the world, while their designers have created maps to display the results.

No prizes for guessing the world's most popular artist – Leonardo da Vinci, who topped the overall leader board in 82 countries – but he was not the No. 1 choice everywhere. For example, the UK favoured Banksy, as did Russia. Sadly, only two women artists were among the 13 top search targets, with Frida Kahlo coming out ahead in the USA, Mexico and Brazil and Artemisia Gentileschi topping the list in Australia and China.

Ken Bromley Art Supplies designers have also created a series of travel posters inspired by the artists who were born in the cities they depict, for example a Monet-style poster for Paris and a Klimt-influenced one for Vienna. For full Google search results, maps and posters go to [www.artsupplies.co.uk](http://www.artsupplies.co.uk)

**Please note:**  
Exhibitions are currently online only due to gallery closures during the pandemic.

This year's **Digital Craft Festival** (Mar 26-28) showcases the latest work by over 150 contemporary makers from around the world. There are also workshops, demonstrations and interviews with makers. Last year's event attracted over 20,000 visitors and featured over 400 makers from the UK and Europe.



Live sessions include a Q&A with Channel 4's Pottery Throwdown judge Richard Miller discussing his love for clay, a 'make along' with Wallace and Gromit animator Jim Parkyn and a conversation with textile designer and weaver Laura Thomas, whose work is in the permanent collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum. Also featured is – wait for it – Olympic diver Tom Daley, a keen knitter. Pictured: Work by paper artist Jennifer Collier  
[www.digitalcraftfestival.co.uk](http://www.digitalcraftfestival.co.uk)







**FORTHCOMING AUCTIONS**

A CELTIC VISION: A Private Collection of Scottish Paintings | 25 FEB

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Paintings & Works on Paper | 10 MAR

Contemporary & Post-War Art | 07 APR

Design since 1860 | 21 APR

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Lalique | 29 APR

Modern Made: Modern British & Post-War Art, Design & Studio Ceramics | 30 APR

African & Oceanic Art & Antiquities | 05 MAY

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Tickets go on sale on February 22 for Sound Stage, a season of eight new, audio-digital plays co-produced by Edinburgh's **Royal Lyceum Theatre** and **Pitlochry Festival Theatre** in association with **Naked Productions**. Running through October with a new production going online each month, the full series costs £80. Individual plays can also be booked. First up is *Angela* (Mar 26-28), the first autobiographical play by Mark Ravenhill written as a love letter to his mother and with a cast which includes Toby Jones and Pam Ferris. [www.lyceum.org.uk](http://www.lyceum.org.uk)




**THE MACLAURIN ART GALLERY**

**The Maclaurin Art Gallery**  
 Rozelle Estate,  
 Monument Road,  
 Ayr, KA7 4NQ

The Gallery remains closed just now in line with government lockdown restrictions.

The Maclaurin Trust  
 is a Scottish Charity No:- 12798

**1200**

*Bevy of Swans* by L Macdonald

**Online Exhibition**  
 1st February - 29th March 2021

The Ayr Sketch Club was founded in 1901 by local artists keen to share artistic knowledge and develop their skills, a tradition that 120 years on is continued by our artist members today. Our online exhibition offers a diverse and colourful selection of paintings for sale, with over 70 works on display.

The exhibition can be viewed on [www.themaclaurin.org.uk](http://www.themaclaurin.org.uk)

If you would like to purchase a painting from our online exhibition you will find a link on [www.themaclaurin.org.uk](http://www.themaclaurin.org.uk) to the Ayr Sketch Club.

**AYR SKETCH CLUB**  
 Founded 1901

*On the Edge* by S Ratcliffe

*Pair of Pears* by N Moroney

*Loch an Eilean* by C Mackay

There are almost 70 free and ticketed events available on Traverse 3, the online platform run by Edinburgh's **Traverse Theatre**. (Their physical stages are Traverse 1 and 2.) These include The Dream Frequencies, a series of podcasts in which musician and sound designer MJ McCarthy talks with a range of creative collaborators on the kind of dreams they have been experiencing during lockdown. McCarthy blends an original score in three movements with guests which include comedian Mark Thomas, storyteller Mara Menzies and theatre-maker sobel McArthur. New episodes are available every Wednesday. [www.traverse.co.uk](http://www.traverse.co.uk)



Image: Greg Rakozy





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# YOUR THEATRE NEEDS YOUR HELP

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THANK YOU!

Photo: Robin Mitchell



## ARTS NEWS

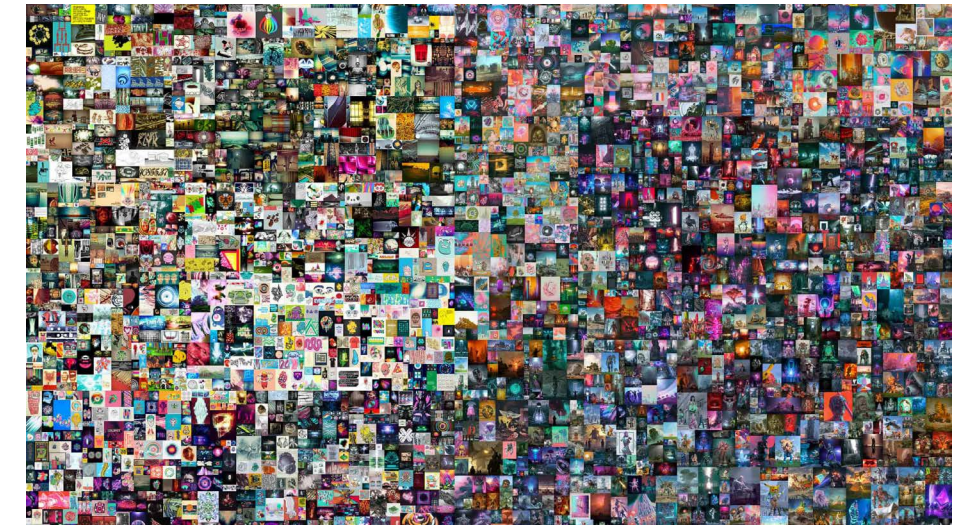
The first virtual Non-Fungible Token (NFT) artwork to be sold at a major auction house closed at \$69,346,250 (approx. £50 million) during an online auction by Christie's earlier this month. The sale of *Everydays: The First 5000 Days* makes the creator, Mike "Beeple" Winkelmann, one of the most expensive living artists to date, placing him just behind David Hockney, whose painting *Portrait of an Artist (Pool with Two Figures)* sold for \$90.3 million in 2018 and Jeff Koons, whose stainless steel sculpture *Rabbit* topped the list at \$91.1 million in 2019.

Winkelmann's collage of 5,000 images took 13 years to make. The starting bid was just \$100, but the auction drew bids from over 350 prospective buyers. The sale increased recent interest in NFT works, including digital art, GIFs and even tweets.

An NFT is a digital token encrypted with the artist's signature on the blockchain – a digital ledger which is the backbone of cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin – enabling sellers and buyers to verify authenticity and ownership. Virtual art faces unique challenges that

physical art does not, as it can be copied and disseminated any number of times on the internet, reducing its value. NFTs ensure that a buyer has bought the true original directly from the artist. They also enable artists to sell works directly to buyers, which some have asserted will democratise the art market.

Said Winkelmann: "Artists have been using hardware and software to create artwork and distribute it on the internet for 20-plus years, but there was never a real way to truly own and collect it. With NFTs that has now changed. I really feel like this is going to be the next chapter of art history."

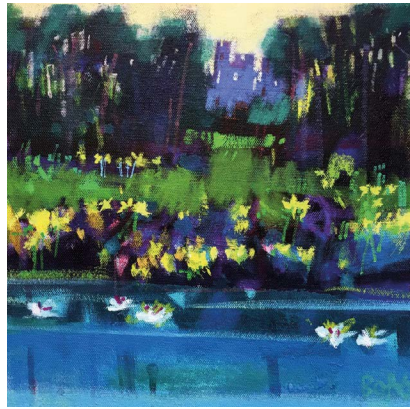


Daphne and Apollo

**Little Sparta**, the garden and work of art on a seven-acre moorland site in the Pentland Hills created by the late artist Ian Hamilton Finlay, is featured in a BBC Alba programme on iPlayer as part of a series in which host Murdo Macdonald visits some of the country's most important gardens to explore their design, plant life, setting and history. Little Sparta features 270 sculptures and artworks created by Finlay in collaboration with other artists and craftmakers exploring themes such as the sea, classical antiquity, the French Revolution and war. [www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000slcp](http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000slcp)



## MILTON ART GALLERY



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Autumn at Dalquahandy Farm – Deborah Phillips

## A TIME AND A PLACE

Scottish artist Alexander Millar's new portfolio of work places his romantic Youth and Young Manhood characters at the heart of iconic scenes in the cities he loves.



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The most expensive, unsolved art theft of all time is the subject of a forthcoming four-part Netflix documentary. In the wee hours of March 18 1990, a pair of thieves posing as policemen entered Boston's Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, tied up a night watchman and made off with 13 masterpieces by artists such as Rembrandt, Vermeer, Degas and Manet collectively valued at \$500 million.

No one has ever been arrested or tried

in connection with the case, leading to a number of theories about what happened and where the paintings are. Suspects range from the Italian mafia to the Irish mob, and efforts to recover the works have spanned continents. There is a \$10 million reward for information leading to their return.

In 2013 the FBI announced that it had identified the two thieves who carried out the break-in, but never released their names. They are both reported to have died

shortly after the robbery. The only living suspect linked to the crime, reputed New England mobster Robert Gentile, claims that allegations about his involvement are an "out and out lie."

This is a Robbery: The World's Biggest Art Heist airs from April 2. See the trailer at [www.netflix.com](http://www.netflix.com). For more information on the missing artworks go to [www.gardnermuseum.org/organization/theft](http://www.gardnermuseum.org/organization/theft).

Signy & Emma



Photo: Douglas Robertson

In lieu of its usual Monday night shows in the spacious bar of Edinburgh's Traverse Theatre, music promoters **Soundhouse** are presenting a series of online concerts. Coming up: the Cathal McConnell trio, led by the Boys of the Lough founding member on whistle and flute with Kathryn Nicoll (fiddle) and Karen Marshalsay (harp), from Mon Mar 22; Signy Jakobsdottir (percussion, live looping) and Emma Smith (double bass), from Mon Mar 29; singer/songwriter Iain Morrison, from Monday Apr 5. All shows stream from 20:00 GMT and are available for at least one week from the start date. 90 per cent of the ticket price goes directly to the artists. [www.soundhouse.org.uk](http://www.soundhouse.org.uk) ▶▶▶





*Online Spring Exhibition*  
13 March – 30 April

  
THE GLASGOW GALLERY

All works are available to purchase online. Own Art option available (interest free over 10 months).  
Due to the current coronavirus lockdown, the gallery will remain closed until 26 April  
– however we remain open online.


own art


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Pete Morrison *Bright Day, Sama Bay*



**ARTitude at Edinburgh Palette** (until Mar 25) features a mixture of styles and subject matter by Women with ARTitude, a group of artists who have been meeting monthly for the past two years to share support and encouragement in their artistic expression. They are Deb Ball, Sheena Berry, Gloria Henderson, Evie Jamieson, Barbara Moyes and Lorna Nisbet (pictured: *At the End of the Day*). [www.edinburghpalette.co.uk](http://www.edinburghpalette.co.uk)



  
White Fox Gallery

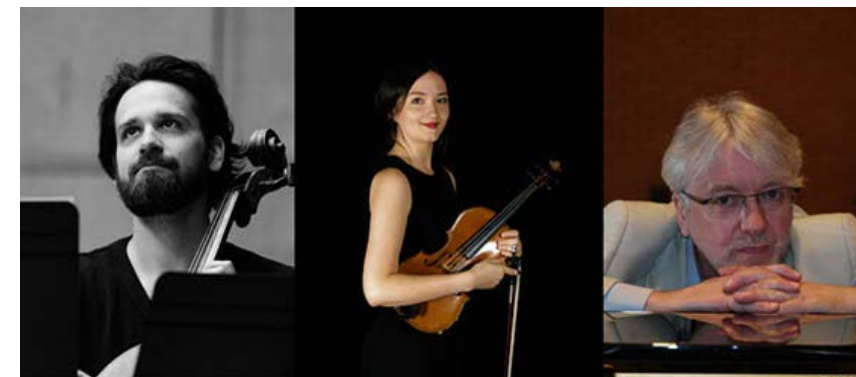
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Tues-Sat 10am-5pm. Wed by appointment

Shore Line Song Siobhan O'Hehir



**The Brunton** in Musselburgh continues its series of live-streamed lunchtime concerts with *The Magic of Mendelssohn* (from Mar 23), featuring Abigail Young (violin), Balazs Renczes (cello) and Graeme McNaught (piano). The programme includes Mendelssohn's D minor trio, Leo Weiner's *Romance* for cello and piano and *Reservoir*, a folk/traditional arrangement from Young and Renczes' latest album. The series is presented in partnership with the Royal Conservatoire Scotland and the Lammermuir Festival and the concerts are available for two weeks from each start date. [www.thebrunton.co.uk](http://www.thebrunton.co.uk)



# Analysing a Masterpiece



Bartolomé Esteban Murillo (1617-1682) was the leading painter in Seville in the late 17th century and remained one of the most admired and popular of all European artists into the 19th century. His early works were influenced by the early works of Velazquez, while visits to Madrid (one certainly in 1658) would have made Murillo familiar with works by Rubens, Van Dyck and contemporary Italian painters.

*The Marriage Feast at Cana* (c.1672) by Bartolomé Esteban Murillo at the Barber Institute of Fine Arts, University of Birmingham

Some religious scholars have speculated that the marriage depicted is of a relative of Mary, mother of Jesus. It has also been suggested that the event was the wedding of Jesus himself to Mary Magdalene, while the bride and groom may even be the artist's patrons, the Flemish silk merchant Nicolas Omazur and his wife Isabel Malcampo.

The scene depicts the Bible story in which, when the wine is running low, Jesus intervenes by turning water to wine, thus saving Mary and her relatives the embarrassment of appearing to be inhospitable to the guests. The idea has also been raised that Jesus showing up with additional guests may have contributed to



the wine shortage, while the story has even been used as an argument against Christian teetotalism.

More than twenty figures crowd around a laden banquet table, with fine silks and glittering tableware adding to the abundant scene. The figures in the foreground of this imposing painting are roughly life-size. They are largely white European in appearance, but one exception is the young boy prominently positioned just right of centre, who appears to be black African or Afro-Hispanic. This is one of the few known paintings from early modern Spain to depict a black figure, yet his presence seems to have been of little scholarly interest.

It is likely that this boy was domestically enslaved, Seville being an important centre for the slave trade in the early modern period. Enslaved people were often dressed in expensive clothing, like the boy's red tunic and gold fastenings, to signify the wealth of the households in which they lived. However, his key position, individualised features and transfixed expression suggest that he is fundamental to Murillo's depiction of Christ's first miracle, when he reveals his divine identity, inspiring faith in his witnesses. The location of Cana has been debated among biblical scholars and archaeologists, with several villages in Galilee being possible candidates.

Race, social standing and religion were inextricably linked in the social consciousness of early modern Spain. Does the boy's inclusion reflect Spanish preoccupation with conversions to Catholicism? Enforced baptism was central to the Christianisation of Africans and Afro-Hispanics in Seville, and the water pots in Murillo's painting could arguably allude to baptism. This would frame the work as a positive image for 17th century white Christians, who would regard the boy's soul as innately sinful, but one which could be purified (even whitened) by conversion. Was the boy therefore used to reference and promote conversion, a practice central to societal control in early modern Seville?



# Stepping up in the art world

Philadelphia is becoming a “must see” for art-lovers.

The famous “Rocky steps” leading up to the Philadelphia Museum of Art are decked out for a Dali exhibition.

Once the largest city in “British North America”, Philadelphia was founded in 1682 by the English Quaker William Penn, who gave it the Greek name for ‘city of brotherly love’ to reflect his views on religious tolerance. Independence was declared in the city in 1776 and it served as the new nation’s capital while Washington D.C. was being built.

Unlike most US cities, Philadelphia has retained many of its original 17th and 18th century buildings, and in the Old City district some of the narrow, cobbled streets lined with red brick houses do a good impersonation of Edwardian England. Learning the lesson of the Great Fire of London of 1666, the city’s

founders introduced the classic grid system to prevent the spread of flames – the first time an American city was laid out in this now familiar pattern.

Stretching out from City Hall (and past the magnificent Swann Memorial Fountain, designed by Alexander Stirling Calder, father of the famous sculptor) the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, named after the American polymath and one of the nation’s Founding Fathers, is a broad, Paris-like boulevard which leads past two of the city’s main art museums before culminating at its grandest.

## Art museums

The first major addition to the Parkway in over 60 years, the **Barnes Foundation** debuted in its new home in 2012 after decades of controversy around the wishes of its late founder, Dr Albert C. Barnes, to keep it in its original home, a mansion in the suburbs. The new Barnes was conceived as ‘a gallery in a garden and a garden in a gallery’. The exterior is clad in fossilised limestone crowned by a luminous light box and set in an inviting public garden with an arboretum of cedars and Japanese maples. Approaching the entrance, visitors pass a 40-foot abstract sculpture by Ellsworth Kelly, which overlooks a reflecting pool.

Inside the rooms replicate the dimensions and shapes of the collection’s original home. Each artwork is in exactly the same place as before and a helpful brochure in each room identifies every piece on the walls.

The Barnes is home to one of the world’s finest collections of Impressionist, Post-Impressionist and early Modern paintings. It boasts a number of world superlatives, including the largest single group of Pierre-Auguste Renoir’s works (181), the largest single group of Paul Cézanne paintings (69) and the largest collection of Modigliani paintings (12, a number equalled only by the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.). Throw in 59 Matisse, 46 Picassos and works ▶▶▶





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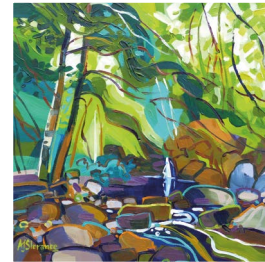


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The Thinker greets visitors to the Rodin Museum.

dockside  
GALLERY

Basia-Rozzak  
Run before Storm (Detail)  
01289 302437 | [art@docksidegallery.co.uk](mailto:art@docksidegallery.co.uk)  
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27 Feb – 3 April  
[tathagallery.com](http://tathagallery.com)

# The Graduates: Four Pillars

Updates Online

TATHA  
GALLERY

by (deep breath) Degas, Van Gogh, Seurat, Rousseau, Soutine, Monet, Manet, El Greco, Rubens, Titian and Veronese, among many others, and you have a collection numbering over 3,000 pieces fit to rival any art museum in the world.

The paintings are displayed alongside African sculpture, masks and tools, ceramics (including by Pierre-Auguste Renoir's son, Jean, the French film-maker), Native American crafts, medieval manuscripts and sculptures, ancient Egyptian, Greek and Roman art and American and European decorative arts.  
[www.barnesfoundation.org](http://www.barnesfoundation.org)

A short stroll further up Benjamin Franklin Parkway is the **Rodin Museum**, which with its elegant, light-filled, Beaux Arts-style building and formal French garden might have been transplanted from Paris.

Opened in 1929, the museum houses the largest Rodin collection outside Paris, with nearly 150 bronzes, marbles and plasters representing every career phase of the artist widely regarded as the father of modern sculpture.

Visitors are first greeted by *The Thinker*, the six figures of *The Burghers of Calais* appearing to walk to their seemingly imminent martyrdom and *The Three Shades*, depicting ghosts from the underworld. The towering bronze doors at the entrance are *The Gates of Hell*, which Rodin was originally commissioned to create for a decorative arts museum in Paris which was never realised. Left in plaster at Rodin's death, the first two bronze casts were made for Jules Mastbaum, the museum's founder. The second was given to the Musée Rodin in Paris.

Themed selections explore different aspects of

Rodin's work such as his intimate depictions of romantic love. Couples embracing, kissing and tumbling fascinated Rodin. His most famous pair of lovers, *The Kiss*, exemplified these fleeting, erotic moments.

[www.rodinmuseum.org](http://www.rodinmuseum.org)

For a long time Philadelphia's unrivalled premier art museum – it is now getting a run for its money from the Barnes Foundation – the monumental, Greek-style **Philadelphia Museum of Art** stands proudly at the top of the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, its three adjoining 'temples' with fluted columns supporting a blue-tiled roof topped by bronze griffins. (Film fans may recognise it as the finishing point of Sylvester "Rocky" Stallone's training regime.)

One of the country's largest art museums, the PMA has 200 galleries showing nearly 250,000 works spanning 2,000 years ▶▶▶



**EION STEWART**  
FINE ART

*Serendipity*  
Mixed Spring Exhibition

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**FRAMES GALLERY**

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Spring 2021 Mixed Exhibition  
10th March—10th April

OWN ART

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**Goldfinch Gallery**  
COMRIE

Liz Kemp  
Solo Exhibition  
5 March - 14 May

www.goldfinchgallery.co.uk  
info@goldfinchgallery.co.uk  
Drummond Street, Comrie, Perthshire, PH6 2DS



and every continent and including painting, sculpture, decorative arts and architectural settings. These include an Indian Hindu temple, a Japanese Buddhist temple and entire American Period rooms furnished from historic houses.

The modern and contemporary collections include works by the likes of Picasso, O'Keeffe, Matisse, Duchamp (the world's largest collection), de Kooning and Pollock, while in the 19th century European and Impressionist galleries you will find Brancusi, Degas, Renoir, Manet, Van Gogh and many more. Other galleries are devoted to American Art, Prints, Asian Art and Drawing and Photographs. There is also an ongoing series of special exhibitions.

Don't forget to walk around the one-acre Anne d'Harnoncourt Sculpture Garden or visit the nearby Perelman Building, the Art Deco annex with its own exhibition programme and the first phase of a master plan to expand and modernise the museum under the famed

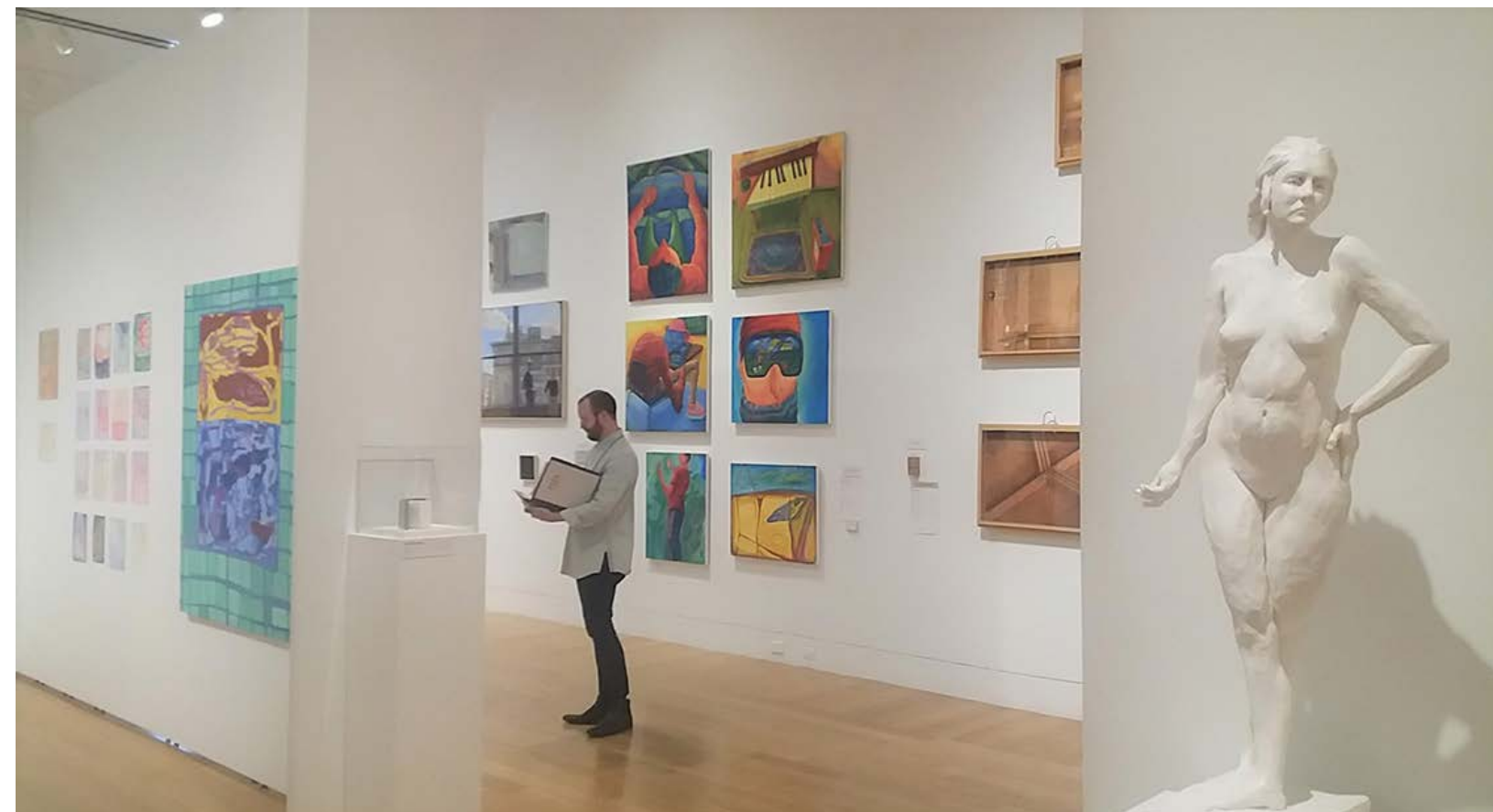


architect Frank Gehry.  
[www.philamuseum.org](http://www.philamuseum.org)

Founded in 1805, the **Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts** was the first art museum and school in the US. Many prominent American artists trained there, including Mary Cassatt, Maxfield Parrish, Thomas Eakins, the film-

maker David Lynch and Alexander Calder. The Academy occupies two buildings. Its former Victorian Gothic home is an architectural jewel admired for its floral motifs, stained glass, exposed iron beams, marble and coloured sculptural features (polychromy). It is now a museum housing a collection of 19th and 20th century American paintings, ▶▶▶

**Annual Student Exhibition at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts**





sculptures and works on paper. Next door is the modern school. [www.pafa.org](http://www.pafa.org)

The only institution in the US devoted to creating work in new materials and media, the **Fabric Workshop and Museum** presents a series of exhibitions by invited artists from a variety of disciplines, including sculpture, installation, video, painting, ceramics and architecture. There is also a major artist in residence programme which enables artists at all stages of their career to experiment with new materials in the well equipped studios and workshops. These are accessible to the public to see artwork from conception to completion. The 5,000-piece permanent collection includes works by Louise Bourgeois and Anish Kapoor.

[www.fabricworkshopandmuseum.org](http://www.fabricworkshopandmuseum.org)

Part of the University of Pennsylvania, the **Institute of Contemporary Art** is Philadelphia's premier contemporary art museum. Founded in 1963 by a visionary dean of the school of architecture who wanted to expose students to what was "new and happening" in art and culture, ICA

The Institute of Contemporary Art exposes students to what is "new and happening" in art.



Barnes Foundation

is a non-collecting museum along the lines of the European 'Kunsthalle'. As part of its aim to bring under-recognised artists to the attention of the broader world, it organised Andy Warhol's first solo museum show in 1965 and also presented early shows by artists such as Laurie Anderson and Robert Mapplethorpe. [www.icaphila.org](http://www.icaphila.org)

Spanning half a block on Philadelphia's hip South Street, the **Magic Gardens** is an immersive, labyrinthine outdoor art installation using non-traditional materials such as folk art statues, found objects, bicycle wheels, colourful glass bottles, hand-made tiles and thousands of mirror fragments.



Magic Gardens

The eye-popping display is the life's work of Philadelphia-born mosaic mural artist Isaiah Zagar, who said: "My work is marked by events and is a mirror of the mind that is building and falling apart, having a logic but close to chaos, refusing to stay still for the camera and giving one a sense of heaven and hell simultaneously." Zagar's work is also held in the permanent collections of the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts.

[www.phillymagicgardens.org](http://www.phillymagicgardens.org) ▶▶

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## Mural art

Philadelphia is home to the the country's largest public arts programme. Dubbed "the mural capital of the world" or "the world's largest outdoor art gallery," the city's vacant lots are often overlooked by huge murals covering the whole side of a building.

Originally begun as part of an anti-graffiti programme, Philadelphia murals are community projects, with 50 to 100 new pieces commissioned each year. When a space becomes available, permission to paint on it must be obtained from the wall owner, who also becomes the owner of the mural. The local neighbourhood then decides what kind of art they would like to see, whereupon artists are invited to submit ideas, with the community having final approval of the design.

Locals even help to create the mural, working under the artist's direction using a kind of 'colour by numbers' system. The murals are 35 per cent City-funded (it's an expensive process, what with scaffolding, cherry-pickers and the materials themselves) and no political messages are permitted.

Both established and emerging artists are commissioned, while their helpers can be low income persons, the unemployed or ex-offenders keen to learn basic work skills to make themselves more employable.

Over the years some 4,000 murals have been created, of which around 3,200 still survive. The average life of a mural is 10 to 15 years, although more recent ones last longer due to newer paints which better withstand the

elements and a special solvent which both cleans and refreshes the colours. Reassuringly, there is virtually no graffiti or other defacement. The little which does occur is reported immediately and removed.

There are mural tours of various neighbourhoods, when guides share stories about the people and communities which inspired and shaped each project. The Mural Mile Center City Walking Tour is a particular favourite. Self-guided tours are made easier with the help of plaques attached to the wall next to each mural with a telephone number visitors can call to listen to its story.

[www.muralarts.org](http://www.muralarts.org)



**Meg Saligman,**  
*Philadelphia Muses*



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### Public art

In 1959 Philadelphia pioneered the Percent for Art programme, which requires developers to include site-specific public art in new construction projects. Replicated in cities across the country, this ground-breaking model has resulted in over 600 indoor and outdoor public artworks, possibly the largest collection in the United States.

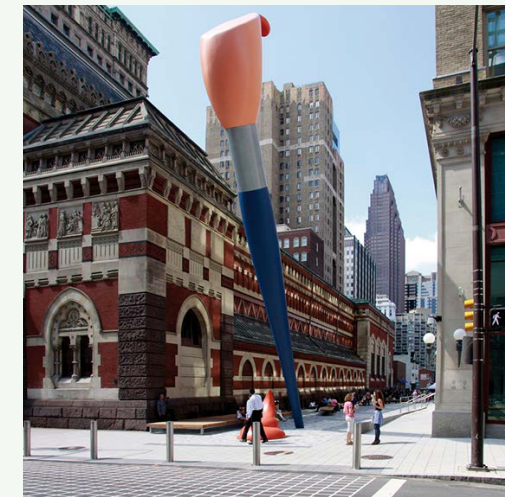
One of Philadelphia's most imposing buildings, City Hall, reflects Philly's extraordinary love for public art. No fewer than 250 sculptures adorn it, none of military figures (respecting city founder William Penn's pacifism) and all created by Scottish-born Alexander Milne Calder, whose grandson, also named Alexander and known as Sandy, became one of America's most important 20th century sculptors, particularly famed for his mobiles.

City Hall is topped off by a 37-foot high statue of Penn, the tallest on any building in the world.

Other highlights include: Robert Indiana's *Love* sculpture, an icon of American pop culture, at JFK Plaza; Claes Oldenburg's huge *Clothespin* (or is it lovers embracing?) opposite City Hall; Jordan Griska's *Grumman Greenhouse*, a decommissioned Grumman S2F Tracker airplane, which seems to have crashed into the ground next to the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (and now houses plants); and, also next to the Academy, Claes Oldenburg's 51-foot high *Paint Torch*, a giant brush dripping 'paint' onto a huge blob below. At night it lights up and changes colours.

[www.associationforpublicart.org](http://www.associationforpublicart.org)

Claes Oldenburg's *Paint Torch* towers over passers-by.



## Spring Awakening

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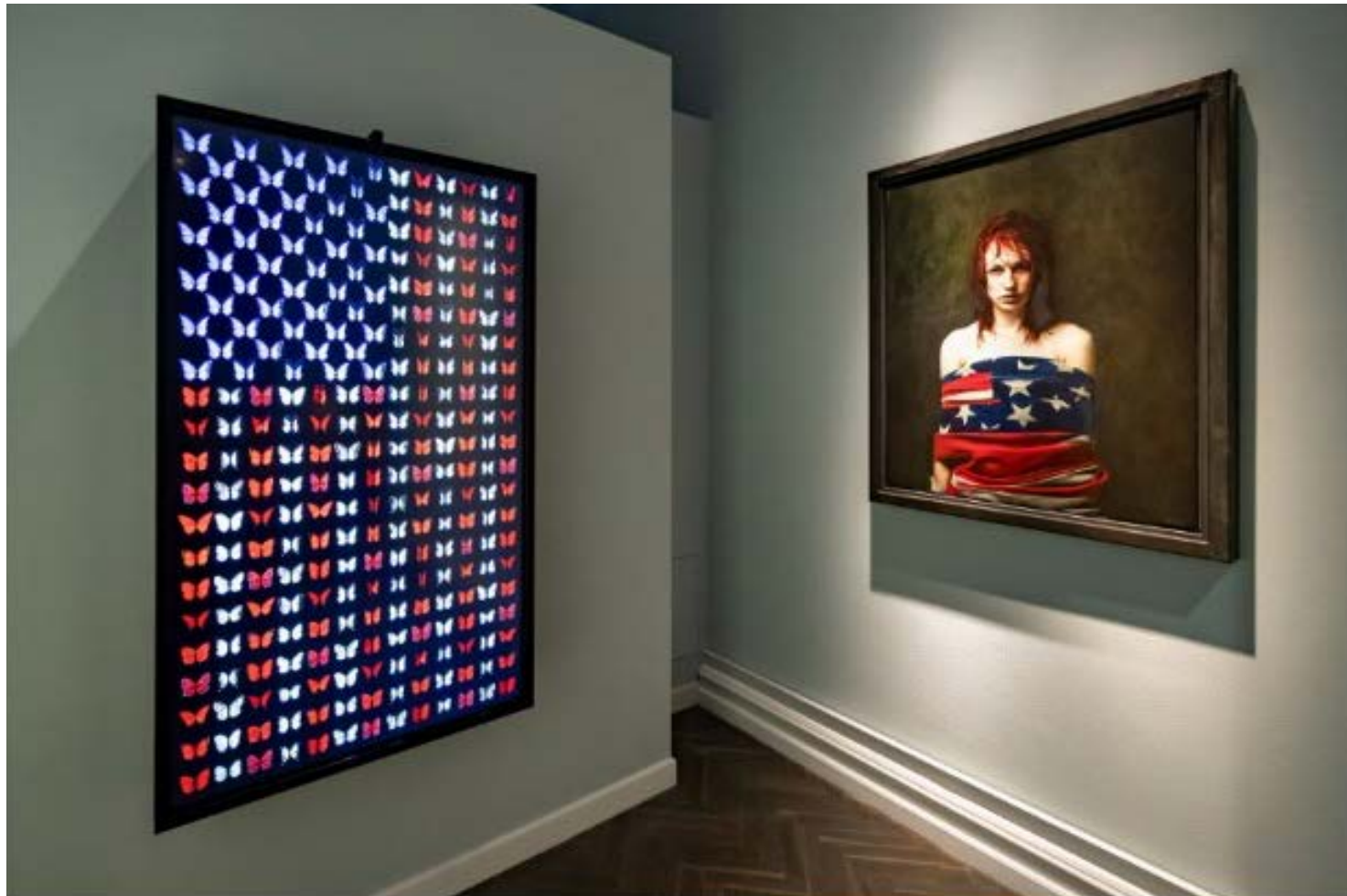


# Virtual reality check

How to visit an art gallery during lockdown

In Part 2 of our Technology feature we look at further examples of 'virtual' art exhibitions and events. To see Part 1 go to: [www.artmag.co.uk/magazine/artmag-153/#page=23.a](http://www.artmag.co.uk/magazine/artmag-153/#page=23.a)

Part of the Us Now exhibition by London's Halcyon Gallery



The pandemic has forced art galleries and event organisers to up their game digitally. Just as virtual meeting software providers such as Zoom have seen a boom in the number of users, similarly technologies which enable virtual art exhibitions have also seen tremendous take-up by galleries and art promoters. Here are a few more examples of how these new tools are enabling the art world to reinvent itself.

Glasgow's **Modern Institute** is among galleries and institutions around the world who use the **Vortic XR** (Extended Reality) platform to present virtual exhibitions to complement the physical experience of viewing art. Galleries are also able to use Vortic's apps and web platform to host live and pre-recorded talks as well as private tours to offer collectors and art-lovers added insight into artworks and exhibitions.

[www.themoderninstitute.com](http://www.themoderninstitute.com)  
[www.vorticxr.com](http://www.vorticxr.com)

**FIAC** (the French acronym for International Contemporary Art Fair, which has been running annually in Paris since 1974) turned to **Artlogic**, which combines website design, database integration, CRM (Customer Relationship Management) and built-in sales management tools.

Showing over 2,000 works by exhibitors from 28 countries, this year's inaugural FIAC Online Viewing Rooms enabled users to search for specific works or filter selections according to price, size, year and medium, while the Chance Encounter feature proposed works on a random basis, thus replicating the sense of surprise and discovery of a physical fair.

In a session called Through The Eyes Of, five guest curators, including representatives of the Centre Pompidou

and Palais de Tokyo in Paris and the Guggenheim in New York, offered viewers their personal take on some of the works on offer. The Pompidou also presented an online display of works which have recently entered its collection, while the Louvre showed a short film on its work with contemporary artists.

Said fair director Jennifer Flay: "We are convinced of the immense potential of the digital space for widening the reach of our physical fairs to new audiences."

[www.fiac.com](http://www.fiac.com)  
[www.artlogic.net](http://www.artlogic.net)

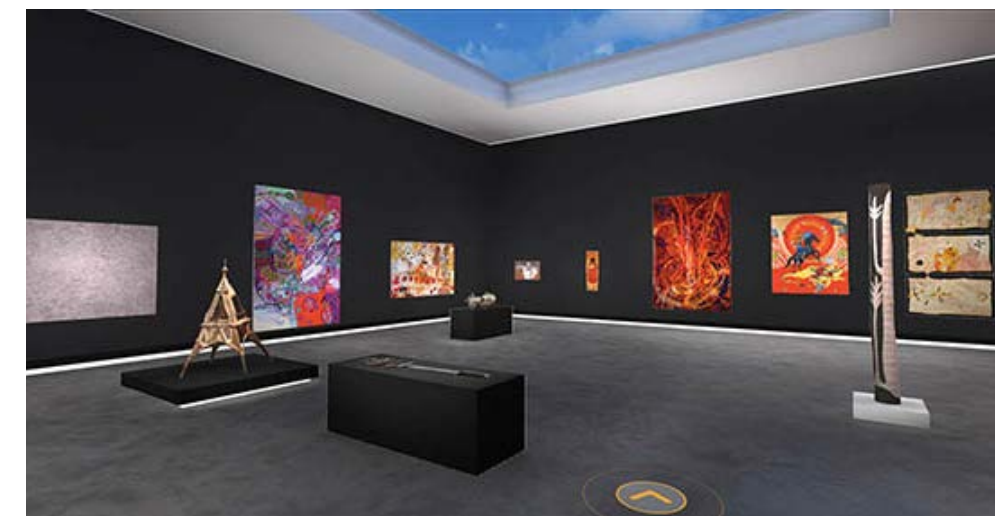
One of the best digital presentations we have come across is for the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards (NATSIAA) hosted by the Museum and Art Gallery Northern Territory in Darwin and sponsored by the Australian telecomms company Telstra.

This high definition, 3D-like experience takes you on a walk-through of the exhibition, where you can click on an artwork and find yourself standing in front of it with an accompanying info box on the art and artist. You can then scan the room and move on to your next choice or through to an adjoining space. It's all the work of **Ortelia Interactive Spaces**, who specialise in software for the 'GLAM'

Helen Acklam, *Taigh Beag* (Dancing Light Gallery)



A digital section of the the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards (NATSIAA) exhibition hosted by the Museum and Art Gallery Northern Territory in Darwin





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Joyce Kyle Boat on the Shore

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Glasgow's Modern Institute used the Vortic platform for a digital presentation of its Michael Wilkinson exhibition.

(galleries, libraries, archives and museums) sector.  
[www.virtualmagnt.net.au/](http://www.virtualmagnt.net.au/)  
[telstranatsiaa](http://telstranatsiaa)  
[www.ortelia.com](http://www.ortelia.com)

A similar virtual gallery visit was offered by London's **Halcyon Gallery** for last year's Us Now exhibition, which featured

new works by British digital artist Dominic Harris as well as a large collection of works by Andy Warhol and photography portraitist Mitch Griffiths exploring issues of national identity.

The virtual tour made a pretty good job of recreating the experience of being in a gallery, with interactive links enabling visitors to watch videos by the artists. The US Now exhibition was powered by **Matterport**, which creates a 'digital twin' of a room using a special 3D scanner.  
[www.usnow.halcyongallery.com](http://www.usnow.halcyongallery.com)  
[www.matterport.com](http://www.matterport.com)

You don't have to be a major museum or Mayfair gallery to use the growing array of technology tools. For last year's Helen Acklam solo show Echoes of Existence, Scotland's **Dancing Light Gallery** turned to the **Art Visualiser** app, which enables potential buyers to see how a ▶▶▶

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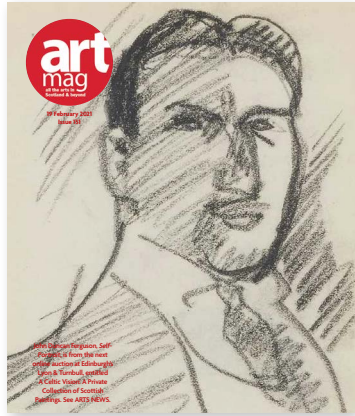
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Jennifer Mackenzie Teagart and Tulips

prospective purchase might look in situ and in perfect scale on a wall at home or in the office.

After downloading the app (free to users) to a phone or iPad, collectors could visit the Dancing Light Gallery website, go to a painting of their choice, click on the Visualise on your Wall button and follow a few simple instructions.  
[www.dancinglightgallery.co.uk](http://www.dancinglightgallery.co.uk)  
[www.artvisualiser.com](http://www.artvisualiser.com)

The virtual 'walkaround' at Kilmorack Gallery




Yet another twist on the virtual exhibition comes from **Kilmorack Gallery**, which is charmingly located in a converted church near Beaulieu in the Black Isle. Gallery in a Box shows visitors a bird's eye view of the overall floor-plan then takes them on a 'walkaround' of the exhibits. Each artwork

is marked with a dot to click on for a close-up view. You can also move the cursor up and down and from left to right for alternate views or do a 360° around the work, while there is an option to view in VR (Virtual Reality) with the necessary headset. [www.kilmorackgallery.co.uk](http://www.kilmorackgallery.co.uk)

The physical FIAC takes place in the Grand Palais Ephémère in Paris.



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A member of Edge Textile Artists Scotand, **Liza Green** works with contemporary stitched and constructed textiles, mixed media stitched paintings, artist books and photography. Her work is inspired by social and political landscapes and the impact of human presence on the environment. [www.lizagreen.com](http://www.lizagreen.com)



Working in her studio overlooking the Moray Firth near Inverness, **Julia Smith** makes ceramic pieces influenced by the natural environment around her, with glaze colours reminiscent of seascapes with light reflected on the water or mist rolling in. Drawings of mountains, forests, animals and trees often feature in her work. Pictured: Gold moon [www.juliasmithceramics.com](http://www.juliasmithceramics.com)

Inspired by the rugged landscape and soft muted colours of Skye, **West Coast Weavers** work on traditional looms, using natural fibres to create quality heirloom pieces, including blankets, scarves, throws, bags and wall-hangings. Pictured: 'Quiraing' blanket scarf – seaspray [www.westcoastweavers.co.uk](http://www.westcoastweavers.co.uk)



Steven Graham of **...In Glass** produces mainly architectural, leaded stained glass panels, including windows, sun catcher roundels and light box housed panels. He also makes cast sculptures which capture moments in time as well as exhibition pieces based on theological, historical and environmental subjects. [www.in-glass.uk](http://www.in-glass.uk)



**Love from Skye** is a family jewellers working in all precious metals to create contemporary, Celtic-inspired pieces. The mixed metal version of their Cuillin Ridge 'Skye from the Sea' ring (pictured) has a main body and mountains made from silver and the sky section in either 9-carat yellow gold or 9-carat rose gold. [www.lovefromskye.co.uk](http://www.lovefromskye.co.uk)



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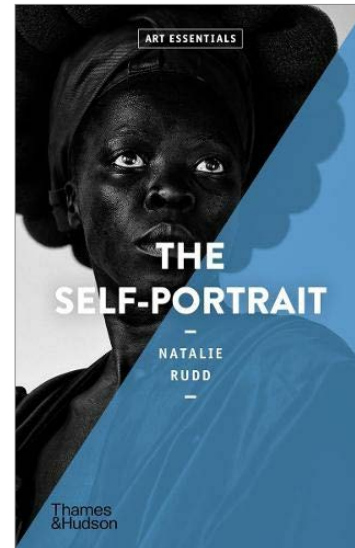
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**Art Essentials: The Self-Portrait, by Natalie Rudd, pub. Thames & Hudson**

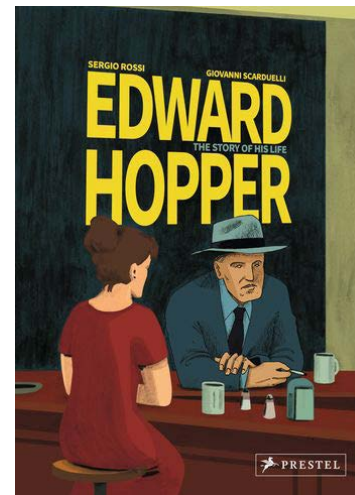
With our apparent obsession with snapping and sharing 'selfies' showing no signs of fading, it should be no surprise that artists are no exception. Casting fresh light on the self-portrait's appeal, the book puts the genre into historical context with commentaries on works by artists ranging from Jan van Eyck, Artemisia Gentileschi and Francisco Goya to Pablo Picasso, Frida Kahlo and Jenny Saville in an age when we are questioning notions of personal identity more than ever before.

**JAN VAN EYCK**  
active 1422–died 1441

Jan van Eyck was a Flemish painter renowned for his technical mastery of oil paint and for his significant contribution to Early Netherlandish art. A leading figure of the Northern Renaissance, he combined symbolic imagery with meticulous realism to create 'camera vicinis' of heaven and earth. Blood is Drinker, Van Eyck enjoyed the support and companionship of Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, who gave him a generous income for his work as court painter and allowed him space to develop his ideas. In addition to producing major religious scenes and altarpieces, Van Eyck also worked as a portraitist, receiving numerous commissions from the growing merchant classes.

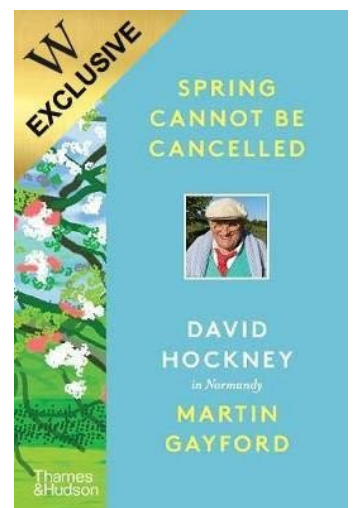
The *Arnolfini Portrait* (1434) is one of the earliest surviving portraits of non-royal subjects and the first to depict a domestic setting. It represents Giovanni Arnolfini, a wealthy merchant of textiles and luxury goods, holding hands with his betrothed, Giovanna Cenami. They stand side by side in a bedroom in an undivided location and appear to be in the process of getting married. Giovanna kneels up her elegant garments to create an upright bump, suggesting fertility rather than pregnancy. Other symbolic objects are positioned strategically around the room: a small dog occupies a central position to represent fidelity, while the apples on the windowsill warn against sinful temptations. Every detail, every surface is illuminated with Van Eyck's mystical representation of light. This couple bask in the radiance of God. In the fifteenth century, the presence of a priest was not necessary for marriage; the joining of hands was sufficient if recorded by a witness. Just above the couple's joined hands lies the self-portrait. 'Jan van Eyck was here, 1434' is written on the wall, in ornate calligraphy, below the character. Beneath, a circular convex mirror hangs in the centre of our field of vision. Here, in miniature, we find the reflected image of the artist standing alongside another witness. This double portrait therefore operates as a group portrait, a self-portrait and a signed certificate of marriage.

Flat, full-backed mirrors were not widely available outside of Venice until at least the 1520s. Curved convex mirrors were much easier to obtain and it is likely that Van Eyck owned one. To create a self-portrait using a primitive mirror of this kind would have involved considerable skill. The artist would need to look beyond the cloudy surface to search for his likeness, and to make substantial adjustments to correct distortions similar to those found when staring into a fisheye lens. *Portrait of a Man* (1433) is thought to have emerged from precisely this process. Although this man remains unidentified, many experts consider him to be Van Eyck, making this the surface autonomous self-portrait (one with the



**Edward Hopper, by Sergio Rossi & Giovanni Scardavelli, pub. Prestel**

This graphic novel traces the life and work of one of America's most acclaimed artists, whose iconic works, including *Nighthawks*, *Hotel Lobby* and *Morning Sun*, depict quintessentially American scenes – although the artist himself rejected much of the lyricism and romance that his audience imposed on his paintings. Using Hopper's own words as a starting point, the book traces his roots as an art student and commercial illustrator, his life-changing time in Europe and his incredible success later in life.



**Spring Cannot be Cancelled: David Hockney in Normandy, by David Hockney & Martin Gayford, pub. Thames & Hudson**

On turning 80, David Hockney sought out a place to watch the sunset and the change of the seasons, to live a life of simple pleasures, undisturbed and undistracted. So when Covid-19 and lockdown struck, it made little difference to life at the centuries-old Normandy farmhouse where he had set up a studio. In fact, he relished the enforced isolation as an opportunity for even greater devotion to his art, as seen here in over 140 illustrations.





## PHOTO-SPREAD

Organised by the World Photography Organisation and now in its 14th year, the Professional competition for the Sony World Photography Awards 2021 has attracted a remarkable body of work for subject matter, composition and technical excellence. The Photographer of the Year will be selected on April 15 in a live-streamed programme. Here is a small selection of short-listed and finalist entries. [www.worldphoto.org](http://www.worldphoto.org)

1. Alessandro Pollio (Italy), Still Life
2. Lorenzo Pennati (Italy), Still Life
3. Ilka & Franz (Germany), Portfolio
4. Michelle Watt (USA), Creative
5. Peter Franck (Germany), Portfolio
6. Arvind Jayashankar (Belgium), Architecture & Design
7. Jan Prengel (Germany), Still Life
8. Levon Biss (UK), Wildlife & Nature



1



4



7



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