



Reena Makes Lists

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The Ongoing Muddle Of Art Fairs

Major art fairs, art world discourse, deaccessioning and more.



Reena Devi

Mar 11, 2021

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You're reading Reena Makes Lists, a weekly newsletter by [arts journalist Reena Devi](#). This post will go out every Thursday, unless said writer is swamped with commissioned assignments or life in general. If you like this, subscribe [here](#).

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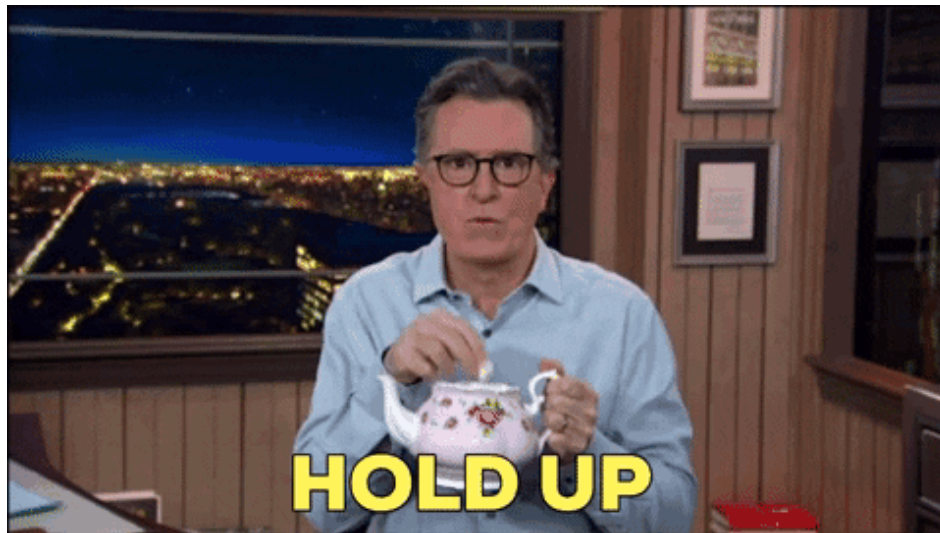
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If art fairs were a person. (Via giphy.com)

Physical art fairs are an ongoing muddle of will-they-won't-they-happen since the onset of Covid-19, along with a monthly dose of love-me-love-me-not when it comes to online editions.

- **Art Dubai's** physical edition has been pushed from 17 to 29 March, with a change in venue and a reduced number of exhibitors.
- Slated for May, **Art Basel Hong Kong** faces extended quarantine measures and a shortage of supply containers increasing shipping costs and delays for goods purchased from China.
- **KIAF** organisers announced that South Korea's primary art fair is in talks with **Frieze** about running concurrently in Seoul. (Possibly in 2022.)
- **KIAF** is also interested in holding an edition in Singapore, alongside **ART SG**, the four-times-postponed inaugural art fair scheduled for 2022.
- Collectors are into renowned French art fair **FIAC's** recent online edition, thanks to a bunch of new features including a "chance encounter" button. (No, it's not Tinder for the art fair crowd.)
- **Art Basel's** latest OVR, launching on 24 March, highlights artists who have "broken new grounds, for example, aesthetically, conceptually, or socio-politically." Maybe I'll write about it, maybe I won't, stay tuned.



You staying tuned for my writing. (Via giphy.com)

Curious: Art World Discourse

- Unabashedly tone-deaf **puff pieces** continue to reign. The recent Forbes interview with Guggenheim director Richard Armstrong does not discuss the museum's fumbling responses and measures addressing racial tensions in the country and related toxic behaviour within the museum itself. There is also no mention of furloughed or laid off staff, both widely reported.



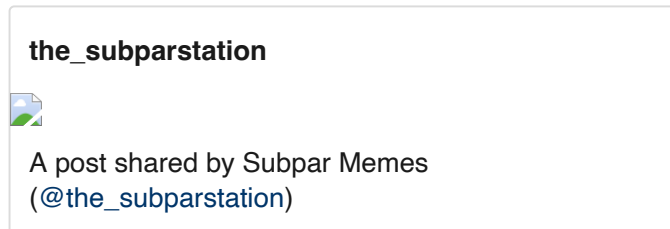
Me coming across yet another tone-deaf puff piece. (Screenshot via Twitter/CBS)

- **Mega galleries** are pushing out their own magazines and **public relations firms** continue to “manage relationships between galleries, writers, and editors to ensure high visibility placements for exhibition reviews and artist profiles.”
- The shift towards **online panel discussions and talks** via Zoom or similar video platforms due to the pandemic has been beneficial in terms of increased accessibility. (Unless said talks are scheduled at 2am HKT but I digress.)
- Yet, they seem to only be effective when the panelists are proficient public speakers and/or in possession of remarkable clarity in thought. Case in point - the **excellent panel** below on deaccessioning by US Southeastern Art Museum Directors (SEAMD) consortium. Otherwise, these talks mostly infuriate viewers.

Deaccessioning: Myths, Misconceptions and Missed Op...



- The bane or boon of contemporary discourse, **meme culture** is ever present and pervasive, even infiltrating Singapore's art scene with a whole new IG account poking fun at the closure of the city's oldest independent art space.



- There is clearly a hunger for more **variety in discourse**, be it satirical, analytical or more.
- No matter the appetite, **authenticity** should not be undermined, as oft happens these days even by those with the best intentions.
- Personally, reinventing how we write and talk about art and the art world has always been important to me but this is not about one person's desires or actions. This is a **movement** seeking ignition and long-term evolution.



Curiouser: Deaccessioning

- The two Twitter threads below encapsulate the behind-the-scenes chaos of US museums figuring out the controversial dilemma of **deaccessioning** vs. **monetising their collections**. Also shows the divide between major New York museums and other museums in the country.

Tyler Green



@TylerGreenBooks

Two major things will happen in/around US art museums today.

First:

Today at 10:15 the Met will host a virtual "press event." It is unclear if it's just a presentation that treats journo's as stenographers, or if the Met's two leaders will take questions. 1/x

March 9th 2021

11 Retweets 27 Likes



Tyler Green

@TylerGreenBooks



Today's second major news item



The Association of Art Museum Directors will meet today at noon and on Thursday to consider making the temporary, two-year collection monetization policy approved in April 2020 permanent. 1/x

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Content worth perusing for their prescience in describing contemporary issues and developments beyond the insularity of the art world:

- This is the stuff of dystopian nightmares and I'm not sure why more people aren't talking about it: Nevada legislation allowing tech companies to **create governments**.
- Jon Allsop's latest newsletter is an incredibly honest take on what it means to mark specific **milestones** of the current pandemic and how quickly or slowly we grasped the ramifications of this public health crisis, especially in media.
- My only takeaway from the whole Meghan-Harry-Oprah interview is that John Oliver is right about everything. On that note, he started the latest season of his show talking about the **next pandemic** so I think it's a segment worth watching.

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