

Stephen Friedman Gallery

Time Out

London's small art galleries are reopening next week

Katie McCabe

10 June 2020

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You won't have to wait much longer to visit an art exhibition (but you might need an appointment)



Image: Crushed, Cast, Constructed: Sculpture by John Chamberlain, Urs Fischer, and Charles Ray, installation view, 2020. © Urs Fischer. Prudence Cuming Associates. Courtesy Gagosian

By Kmccabe Posted: Wednesday June 10 2020, 1:36pm

Last month, we reported that a number of London's small commercial galleries had won the right to be recognised as 'non-essential retail' under government guidelines for businesses, which meant

they could reopen as early as June 1. Now it's actually happening. A dozen central London galleries will be open to visitors from Monday June 15, but you may need to book an appointment to get in.

The galleries scheduled to reopen next week include Gazelli Art House, all the Gagosian galleries (Grosvenor Hill, Britannia Street and Davies Street), David Zwirner, Goodman Gallery, White Cube Mason's Yard and West End, Stephen Friedman Gallery, Hauser & Wirth, Marian Goodman and Pace Gallery.

Most of these slick commercial spaces can be found on quiet Mayfair streets, and are a little intimidating to enter when you've never been before. But some have big-name artists on their books, and hang impressive exhibitions that don't attract the same crowds or attention as public gallery shows. When David Zwirner's gallery on Grafton Street reopens next week, so too will its exhibition of Bridget Riley paintings, *Bridget Riley – 'Studies: 1984-1997'* (appointment only). Just a three-minute walk away is Stephen Friedman Gallery, which will be reopening its exhibition of 'existential landscapes' by Swedish artist Andreas Eriksson. Yinka Shonibare's 'Justice for All' sculpture will be displayed in its main window.

Over in Soho, Marian Goodman Gallery will be reopening on Tuesday June 16 (its normally closed on Mondays) with a solo show from Dutch photographer Rineke Dijkstra. Only 12 visitors will be allowed at a time, through one-hour slots that can be booked on the Marian Goodman website.

Each gallery will put in place its own specific safety measures. At Gagosian, appointments are recommended but not essential. All visitors are required to wear a mask and maintain at least a two-metre distance from others. Hand sanitiser will be provided at the front desk.

Gazelli Art House doesn't require an appointment, but its sales director George Baker says it'll be managing crowds carefully, 'Only three visitors will be allowed at the gallery at a time: two on the gallery's ground floor and one on the first floor.' Its opening exhibition is 'The New Verge', a joint show between Azerbaijani artists Ashraf Murad and Farhad Khalilov, which will run until July 6.

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Image: Gazelli Art House by Deniz Guzel

Neil Wenman, a partner at Hauser & Wirth gallery says it will also have restrictions on numbers, 'When we reopen our two galleries on Savile Row next week, visitors will be able to experience art upfront. We're showing two exhibitions, by artists Alina Szapoznikow and Isa Genken. Genzken's exhibition, "Window", features a sculptural installation of found elements of an aeroplane interior. We hope that the visitor will feel transported, even if real-life

travel is not so easy! We'll be monitoring the volume of visitors at any one time to stay within guidelines, so there has never been a better time to view the exhibitions.'

The most important thing these galleries have in common is their exhibitions are free to visit. You can get a slice of those pre-lockdown days, when you could lose an afternoon wandering around an echoey gallery space. Although there will be a time limit on the wandering, the restricted numbers should make for a calm (if slightly surreal) art experience. And as the Mayfair galleries are within walking distance of each other, you can be smart about it and book a string of appointments for your own personal gallery tour. All you have to do is pack a face mask and some hand sanitiser – and work out how you're supposed to get to central London without using public transport.