

# Stephen Friedman Gallery

Wallpaper\*

Leading UK arts institutions digitally revive landmark exhibitions

Lea Teuscher

21 April 2021

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Non-profit exhibitions platform theVov has created a digital arts and culture hub to entertain and educate a global audience

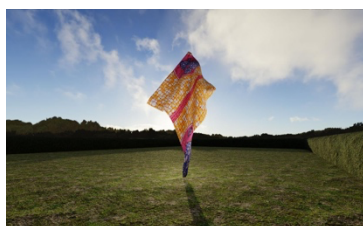


Image: TheVov's virtual presentation of Yinka Shonibare's Wind Sculpture VII (2016), as part of Yorkshire Sculpture Park's digital revival of 2013 show 'FABRIC-ATION'

It's always a treat to experience art in real life, but sometimes navigating a crowded museum to catch a glimpse of an artwork behind a throng of visitors can leave us wanting more. Now a new initiative by Outset and Visualogical brings together 15 leading British arts institutions, including Tate, National Galleries of Scotland and Yorkshire Sculpture Park, and is seizing the digital opportunities offered by the pandemic to create a very different, complementary viewing experience for gallery-goers around the world.

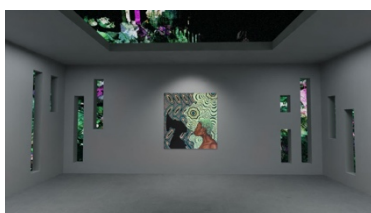
A non-profit platform for virtual exhibitions that combines a new micro-philanthropic model with cutting-edge technology, theVov aims to make culture accessible to a truly global audience thanks to a series of digital spaces hosted by tech specialist Vortic Art. Some of these spaces are exact replicas of real locations, some are otherworldly galleries, but all the bespoke digital extensions will be able to host live and pre-recorded talks and tours.



Image: TheVov's virtual presentation of Chris Burden's 14 Magnolia Doubles as part of the South London Gallery's digital revival of his solo exhibition (2006)

TheVov launched on 19 April with a talk by curator Ralph Rugoff, who led viewers through a virtual rehanging of Andreas Gursky's 2018 retrospective at London's Hayward Gallery. Thanks to the new platform, viewers can not only visit the online exhibition, taking in Gursky's unique way of framing the world in their own time, but also have access to Rugoff's presentation and essay as well as behind-the-scenes images, articles and reviews.

Also kick-starting the ten-week programme of theVov's first season are two other exhibitions, the 2019 'Tony Cokes: If UR Reading This It's 2 Late: Vol 1' from Goldsmiths CCA; and the 2020 'Pacita Abad: Life in the Margins' from Spike Island. With three seminal shows launching every Monday, future releases include the return of Chris Burden's iconic 14 Magnolia Doubles to South London Gallery after 15 years; Yinka Shonibare's open-air installation at Yorkshire Sculpture Park from 2013; and Lisa Brice's 2018 'Art Now' exhibition at Tate Britain.



TheVov's virtual presentation of Shannon Bono's Untitled (Mangbetu) and Sian Fan's Seeping Out Skybox, as part of Sarabande's digital exhibition 'Corpus Mentis', curated by Hikari Yokoyama and Trino Verkade (2021)

Supported by the Outset Contemporary Art Fund, theVov also offers an innovative social interface by art-science collective Visualogical and the option of a new funding stream for the art world, which has been so impacted by the various lockdowns. 'If harnessed sensitively and ethically, online

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experiences can not only complement the physical art world but actually further enrich it,' say Visualogical's co-founders Natasha Hershman and Victoria Westerman. Users are invited to donate when viewing the online galleries, with funds raised being distributed equally between the participating institutions.

With the country's top curators and experts sharing their knowledge, and unprecedented virtual access to important contemporary artworks, theVov is set to redefine our gallery-viewing experience, and help 'the physical and digital realms coexist symbiotically side-by-side, making the arts more accessible globally than ever'.