



Original research

From Physical Studios to Digital Platforms: Young Indian Artists' Visual Practices and Cultural Communication during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly disrupted the visual arts sector, compelling artists to shift from physical studios and exhibition spaces to digital platforms. This study examines how young Indian visual artists adapted their cultural practices and modes of communication through digital media during the pandemic. Employing a qualitative research design, the study draws on in-depth interviews with practising visual artists to explore their experiences of using social media and virtual exhibition platforms. The findings reveal that digital technologies and platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, and artists' websites expanded opportunities for artistic visibility, professional networking, and audience engagement while enabling artists to sustain creative practice during periods of social restriction. At the same time, participants identified challenges related to digital accessibility, online representation, and the preservation of artistic authenticity. The study argues that digital media have complemented rather than replaced conventional exhibition spaces, fostering hybrid models of artistic production and dissemination. It concludes that the integration of digital technologies into visual arts practice has reshaped cultural communication and created new opportunities for the wider dissemination of contemporary Indian art.

Keywords: Young Indian visual artists, Cultural art practice, Digital Technology, Social Media, Pandemic.

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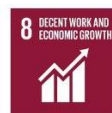
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1. Introduction

Art, as a means of communication, responds to a changing environment. Artists share observations and combine elements in their contemporary practices, fostering unique dialogue with spectators. This exchange allows artists to communicate meaningfully with society. It links individual perspectives to the collective experience of self-expression and innovation. Before 2019, India's expanding art institutions and a growing population of young artists contributed to the nation's sustainability. During the pandemic, this momentum shifted to digital platforms. The COVID-19 pandemic and economic crisis disrupted the Indian art sector. Institutions closed, exhibitions and festivals were cancelled, production dropped, and widespread unemployment affected artists. This paper aims to analyse the migration of art from physical spaces—galleries, museums, studios—to online platforms. It examines how Indian artists shifted their professional identities and livelihoods, especially via digital technologies and virtual platforms. Virtual exhibitions became key tools for visibility, creative exchange, and engagement, linking to broader concerns about sustainability and well-being. The study employs qualitative methods and in-depth interviews with active visual art professionals during the pandemic to examine the transformation of contemporary art practices. By combining thematic interview analysis with selected theoretical perspectives, the study provides a comprehensive understanding of the evolving relationship between art, technology, and digital communication in contemporary Indian visual arts. Finally, social media is emerging as a key platform for art presentation, artist promotion, and serving enthusiasts who cannot visit galleries or exhibitions due to constraints such as the pandemic.

2. Review of Literature

The selective literature review shows that during the pandemic, artists faced significant disruptions. Exhibitions and workshops were cancelled, which left the artists uncertain about their futures and financial stability. Despite these challenges, many established artists took on social responsibilities. They showcased their latest works online, reaching the spectator and building digital art communities that inspired hope during difficult times. Artists generated new ideas for a new life as the world struggled with the pandemic's effects. This section annotates literature on the impact of COVID-19 on the Indian artist community.

Kalita (2019) explores concepts of selfhood and autonomy through the works of Indian artists Bhupen Khakhar, Sonia Khurana, and Ranbir Kaleka. The study highlights the relationship between personal identity and cultural representation, demonstrating the significance of self-imagery in contemporary Indian visual art.

Sharma (2019) examines Paul Cézanne's artistic philosophy, arguing that his distinctive visual language emerged through continuous observation, experimentation, and engagement with Impressionism and scientific theories of colour and form, thereby contributing to the evolution of modern art.

Amorim and Teixeira (2020) investigate the digital transformation of the art world during the COVID-19 pandemic. Their study examines online exhibitions, audience engagement, and the implications of digital reproduction for the authenticity and aesthetic experience of artworks.

Manovich (2020) discusses how artists increasingly employ social media platforms and digital marketing tools to disseminate their work, expand audiences, and develop online artistic communities. The study highlights the growing importance of virtual exhibitions in sustaining artistic identity and cultural participation.

Bhadri (2020) analyses the future of the Indian art market during the pandemic, focusing on the emergence of collaborative virtual exhibitions organised by leading galleries such as Nature Morte and Vadehra Art Gallery. The study demonstrates how digital initiatives responded creatively to unprecedented social and economic challenges.

Markopoulos et al. (2021) examine the digital transformation of museums, galleries, and auction houses during the pandemic. They propose functional frameworks for digital exhibition design and conclude that technological innovation can improve institutional sustainability while enhancing audience engagement and learning experiences.

Kamariotou et al. (2021) investigate digital strategies in museums and argue that technological innovation is reshaping museum practices by enhancing visitor interaction, expanding digital heritage services, and supporting new forms of artistic communication through advanced human-computer interaction.

Habsary et al. (2021) emphasise the importance of selecting appropriate social media platforms for digital art exhibitions. Their findings suggest that effective use of digital platforms has become central to exhibition management and audience engagement in contemporary art practice.

Nho and Lee (2025) employ Pierre Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital and Manuel Castells' concept of the network society to examine how digital technologies and artificial intelligence reproduce inequalities through new forms of digital cultural capital, thereby reinforcing regional and social disparities.

Furs (2025) critically examines participatory culture by arguing that Jenkins' concept differs substantially from participatory democracy because of corporate influence, platform capitalism, and the tendency towards digital escapism.

Ferreira (2025) develops the concept of digital genealogy as a framework for understanding identity formation in digital environments. Drawing on Walter Benjamin's notion of the "aura," the study analyses how digital technologies reshape authenticity, selfhood, and artistic experience.

Oğrak and Altıparmakogulları (2026) examine the relationship between technology and human agency through Actor-Network Theory (ANT). Their findings suggest that the logic of visibility in networked societies contributes to alienation and the erosion of cultural meaning, raising important questions about digital culture and communication.

3. Research Aim and Objectives

This paper aims to analyse how art has migrated from physical spaces such as art galleries, museums, and artists' studios to online platforms. It analyses how social media has influenced young Indian artists in presenting, sharing, and promoting their artworks.

Objectives

- The objective of the study is to examine the influence of social media and digital interventions used in exhibiting art online on young Indian artists.
- The study also explores the challenges artists face while adapting to online exhibitions and maintaining artistic value.

4. Future Scope

This study suggests that future art practices can combine physical artworks with digital tools, giving viewers easy access to information about the artist and the artwork. Social media helps Indian artists reach global audiences. It also explores a balanced approach between physical exhibitions and digital platforms, encouraging artists to improve gallery experiences while adapting to online presentations and addressing cultural and well-being challenges.

5. Research Methodology and Data Collection

This study uses a qualitative framework, including interviews, observations, and content analysis, to assess changes in the Indian artist community. The focus on technology to enhance audience experiences and artist engagement indicates a strategic adaptation to remain relevant during the pandemic. The Researcher conducted in-depth interviews with artists, focusing on various aspects of their lives and careers. The respondents for this study were selected from major Indian art centres—Delhi, Mumbai, Vadodara, and Chandigarh- which serve as significant hubs of artistic and cultural activity, hosting a wide range of events and venues, including art exhibitions, art fairs, workshops, artist talks, museums, galleries, and academic institutions. In total, 10 practising/ Academician visual artists' studios were visited. The Researcher wrote an email requesting an In-depth Interview on the university letterhead and sent the email to all participants. On average, each interview lasted between 1 hour and 30 minutes and 2 hours and was scheduled on a date and time that was convenient for participants. The interviews were recorded using a OnePlus 11R mobile voice recorder and handwritten notes. Additionally, photographs of paintings and artists were taken during the interviews in the artists' studio. For the interviews, paintings were selected across three phases: Before, during, and after COVID. This categorisation was based on available literature and structured in-depth interviews with artists. Data were manually coded using thematic analysis to identify recurring themes across artists' experiences before, during, and after the pandemic. Secondary data from published sources, such as scholarly articles and official websites, was also collected. The study used several data collection techniques; observation involved watching art videos on YouTube. Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube, as well as art galleries and personal websites, provide networking opportunities. The Researcher also designed a questionnaire exploring artists' journeys and their work. During the

COVID-19 pandemic, online cultural events have multiplied and taken a bigger place in our lives. Through this, they studied the cognitive processes behind the changing relationship between contemporary art and digital media over the past decades.

6. Expanding Art Institutions and Young Artists' Creativity in India

The traditional systems of *gharana* and *karkhana*, which had preserved indigenous crafts and design for centuries, were disrupted during the colonial period. Under British rule, the *gharana* system lost traditional patronage, faced Western education, and saw Indian artistic traditions marginalised. *Karkhanas*, or traditional workshops, struggled to survive due to competition from British industry, high taxes, and mechanised technologies. Despite these pressures, some *gharanas* and *karkhanas* adapted to changing socio-economic conditions, preserving parts of their cultural heritage. Others, however, declined.

As part of the colonial agenda to propagate Western artistic values, the British established formal art institutions in cities such as Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay, including the Sir JJ School of Arts, Bombay, and the Government College of Art, Madras. The College of Art and Craft, Calcutta, and the Mayo School of Arts, Lahore, were among the four art institutions established by the Crown in India. Alexander Hunter was a surgeon in the East India Company's Madras Army and a skilled artist. In 1850, he founded the Madras School of Art, the first art and design school in India. After 1857, figures such as John Griffith and John Lockwood Kipling played significant roles in shaping institutional art education through their leadership at the Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy School of Art. These institutions created structured environments dedicated to the teaching and learning of creative disciplines, strengthening the relationship between formal artistic training and the development of creative practices.

The emergence of modern art in India was further influenced by the cultural momentum of the Bengali renaissance and the pedagogical frameworks of British art schools, with pioneering artists such as Rabindranath Tagore and Amrita Sher-Gil contributing to new artistic directions. This period also witnessed a significant shift toward experimentation and individualism during the 1950s and 1960s, shaping the trajectory of modern and contemporary Indian art in a newly independent nation.

7. Impact of COVID-19 on the Indian Artist community

The first COVID-19 case was reported in Wuhan, China, in 2019. The COVID-19 pandemic led to the closure of galleries, museums, and art centres worldwide in 2020. Throughout history, pandemics such as the plague, tuberculosis, and, more recently, COVID-19 have profoundly affected human society, often inspiring artists to reflect on societal suffering through creative expression. During the pandemic, artists faced significant disruptions, including art institution closures, event and festival cancellations, and the cancellation of exhibitions and workshops, leaving them uncertain about their futures and financial stability. Despite these challenges, many well-established artists took on social responsibilities by showcasing their recent works online, reaching new audiences, and creating digital art communities that offered inspiration and hope

during a turbulent period. The art sector was critically affected by the pandemic, restrictions on artistic creativity, and the need to work under social distancing, with limited materials, financial instability, and limited access to studios. The artist lost access to his regular studio due to unfavourable circumstances, and he was forced to work from home in a smaller space. He had to change the nature of his practice and return to painting after creating larger-scale installation pieces. This change benefited him artistically, enabling him to develop a new portfolio. For example, the eminent artist Atul Dodiya is known for large-scale paintings and installations but is versed in many formats and media. He attributes his adaptable temperament to his travel schedule and his experience living in residencies. Cut off from his studio, Dodiya got hold of watercolour supplies and sketch pads, converted the guest room of their apartment into a makeshift studio and started painting variations of an idea.

"a solitary figure in a landscape, roaming, moving, playing, making strange gestures in nature". (Ghoshal & Bhuyan, 2020)



Figure 1: Walking with the Waves, Atul Dodiya, 2022, Medium: Mixed Media, Display View at Kiran Nadar Museum, Saket, Image: Courtesy of KNMA, Source: mashindia.com

In response to the ongoing spread of COVID-19 and its effects on public health, the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art (KNMA) temporarily suspended public access to its galleries. The museum simultaneously promoted virtual engagement with art, encouraging audiences to explore creativity and cultural experiences from the safety of their homes (Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, 2021).

The Kiran Nadar Museum reopened in 2022 with a major exhibition featuring Atul Dodiya's works, reflecting the artist's creative response to two years of isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic. The museum remains committed to fostering cultural dialogue and artistic appreciation through alternative digital platforms and resources.

Madan Lal, an artist and curator, depicts the life cycle in his painting, reflecting his personal journey and the complexities of life through geometric patterns and symbols—such as cubes, stylised human figures, eyes, and teapots. In a discussion, he noted that while struggling artists suffered from higher living costs, established artists used this time to focus on creativity, expand their palettes, and improve their work without time constraints.

7.1. Comparison between Pre-Covid and Post-Covid Artworks

Artists who enjoyed a regular income during this pandemic had a better experience. According to an in-depth interview and a discussion with Artist Madan Lal, living costs have been reduced due to the unfavourable situation. The struggling artists had suffered greatly, but there was a twist: the established artists had no time constraints or deadlines to complete their work. The established artists focused on their creativity, changed their palettes, and improved their work. There are noticeable differences between the artworks, as mentioned in the table, pre-COVID and post-COVID. Before the pandemic, the artist used vibrant, bold colours like red and gold on canvas, which were symbols of cheerfulness, joy, and positivity. Post-pandemic, due to a lack of materials and financial challenges, the artist shifted to sketchbook drawings in pen and pencil colours, with pastel shades that were both muted and saturated, reflecting a change in medium, methods, and the artist's colour palette.



Figure 2
Title: Untitled
Artist's name: Madan Lal,
Medium: Oil & Acrylic on canvas
Size: 24 in * 48 in,
'Lockdown', dated by the artist,
Location - Artist's studio, Chandigarh,
Image courtesy: Photo clicked by the Researcher
Researcher



Figure 3
Title: Untitled
Artist's name: Madan Lal,
Medium: Oil & Acrylic colour on Canvas
Size: 36 in * 48 in,
'Lockdown', dated by the artist,
Location - Artist's studio, Chandigarh,
Image courtesy: Photo clicked by the
Researcher

Pre-Covid Artwork	Post-Covid Artwork
Used vibrant, bold colours like red and gold on canvas.	Due to a lack of materials Financial challenges Change in medium, methods, and the artist's colour palette.
A symbol of cheerfulness, joy and positive things	Using pen and pencil colours, used pastel shades which were muted and saturated

Figure 4: Comparison between Pre-Covid and Post-Covid Artworks

"Writing and paintings are the outcome of the subconscious mind of the painter, poet, lyricist, author and melody of musicians that they give voice to, to express their feelings in their own unique ways." (Sharma, 2019, p.128)

8. From Physical to Virtual Exhibition of Art

The arts sector faced unprecedented challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic, prompting Indian artists and cultural organisations to rapidly shift from physical to digital platforms. This transition, driven by necessity, fundamentally changed how art is produced, shared, and experienced, highlighting the need for innovative engagement methods and foregrounding the central role of technology in the contemporary art world.

"The past is always tense, the future perfect" (Smith, 2000).

Social media emerged as a central theme in audience engagement, with the art-viewing public increasingly turning to Instagram and similar visual platforms. Artists have long used these platforms for networking, but during the pandemic, they became essential spaces for connections amid limited in-person interaction—especially for young artists. The digital shift affected career milestones, such as BFA and MFA students losing opportunities to present critical thesis exhibitions. To adapt, Professor Benjamin Cook created @socialdistancegallery on Instagram, which hosted hundreds of thesis shows from around the world and gained significant international traction. Despite limitations, digital platforms offer core benefits: increased accessibility, greater viewer autonomy, and expanded opportunities for artistic collaboration and feedback.

Building on this shift to digital platforms, the virtual exhibition 'Future is Not Fixed,' curated by Arjun Sawhney and jointly hosted by Nature Morte and Vadehra Art Gallery, demonstrates the growing importance of digital platforms in the contemporary art world. The exhibition featured 24 prominent artists, including Bharti Kher, Anju Dodiya, Jitish Kallat, Subodh Gupta, Thukral & Tagra, and Dhruvi Acharya.

Anju Dodiya is known for her expressive 'fictional self-portraits' and inventive use of watercolours. During the pandemic, she used the solitude to nourish her practice, recalling the experiences of historical artists during pandemics, such as Tintoretto and Edvard Munch.



Figure 5: Edvard Munch, Self Portrait with the Spanish Flu, 1919, Medium: Oil on canvas, Dimensions: 59.06 in x 51.57 in, National Gallery, Oslo, Source: commons.wikimedia.org (Public Domain)

The Spanish flu (1918–1920) affected about 500 million people, including Norwegian artist Edvard Munch. After recovering, Munch created the painting 'Self Portrait with the Spanish Flu'. The painting depicts Munch in a worn, layered appearance, wrapped in clothing and linens, symbolising his illness. Munch discussed the artwork with his physician, describing the "odour of death" captured in the image.

Drawing inspiration from history, Anju Dodiya planned to create some joyous paintings. Munch gives her joy; Edward Munch's painting inspires her. Through this forward-looking perspective, artists shape and prepare their aspirations across the professional, personal, and private aspects of their lives.

"This show is an attempt to illustrate these feelings as we live through this point in history. This is the reality of today, and this is the truth. The future is not fixed. Not at all anymore" (Sawhney, 2020).

This exhibition underscores a central argument: the pandemic made virtual platforms vital for sustaining artistic engagement and dialogue when physical gatherings became impossible. The ability to present art virtually not only maintained connections between artists and audiences but also demonstrated how the sector adapts to uncertainty, using digital collaboration to reflect and respond to contemporary realities.

Dhruvi Acharya, noted for psychologically complex paintings, responded to the pandemic by painting daily watercolours and using Instagram to connect with audiences and raise funds for those affected by lockdowns.



Figure 6: Strike, Dhruvi Acharya, 2020, Medium- Watercolour, Gouache and Collage on Paper, Dimension- 10.24 in × 6.69 in, Nature Morte, Delhi, Source: naturemorte.com (Image courtesy of artist Dhruvi Acharya. Reproduced with permission from the artist)

In her watercolour titled "Strike," we see women wearing masks to protect their health, while Saraswati, the goddess of knowledge, is blindfolded and lashing out at random with her sword.



Figure 7: Lockdown, Dhruvi Acharya, 2020, Dimension- 14 in × 20 in, Medium- Watercolour on Paper, Nature Morte, Delhi, Source: naturemorte.com (Image courtesy of artist Dhruvi Acharya. Reproduced with permission from the artist)

In the work "lockdown," a single figure is lost amid clouds. Words, thoughts, and viruses blur together, creating confusion, anxiety, and fear. Dhruvi Acharya's paintings in the series "Painting in the time of Corona" will be sold. With her canvases depicting people wearing masks, self-isolating, and even connecting deeply with the animal world around them, the artist has

received a heartwarming response from her social media followers. People have been calling her work a bright spot on their Instagram feed.

The pandemic required art institutions and galleries to rethink how they operate, making digital transformation the central strategy for resilience. By shifting to online exhibitions, increasing remote collaboration, and leveraging technology for broader outreach, the sector demonstrated that adapting to digital models is now essential for survival and growth, even as long-term stability depends on a broader economic recovery.

“Painting is poetry that is seen rather than felt, and poetry is painting that is felt rather than seen”
- Leonardo Da Vinci

9. Social Media Platforms for Presenting and Preserving an Artist’s Identity

The first COVID-19 case was reported in Wuhan, China, in 2019. The art sector was critically affected by the pandemic, which led to the closure of galleries, museums, and art centres worldwide in 2020. The pandemic has forced individuals to remain inside and refrain from social activities for months. Significant engagement with the arts has been mainly through digital technologies and virtual formats during the lockdown period. These unfavourable circumstances have prompted the emergence of virtual exhibitions as a promising medium for presenting art and preserving artists' identity. Social media plays an important role in introducing works of art to the wider community, both domestically and internationally.

Communication has evolved from traditional methods like pigeon post to modern digital platforms, with internet-based technologies dramatically expanding reach and speed since the 1990s. The history of communication, from ancient methods such as fire signals and telegraph lines to modern digital communication methods like SMS, email, and WhatsApp, has improved fluency. It highlights the evolution of communication methods from primitive to more sophisticated technologies, aligning with the search query's focus on communication history.

The sources document this progression across multiple eras. Traditional methods included pigeon post and telegraph systems (K. Lutz, 2021). The digital revolution began with email in the 1960s, though public internet access didn't arrive until 1991 (Simeon Edosomwan et al., 2011). Mobile SMS emerged as a critical communication channel, followed by internet-based platforms.

Social media platforms—including Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram—represent the latest evolution, enabling synchronous and asynchronous communication across geographic distances (G. M. Giammatteo et al., 2017). The central argument is that social media has become essential for artists to present and preserve their identity, especially during the pandemic. Instagram, WhatsApp, and Facebook, with their varied features, now offer artists direct interaction and broad visibility, fundamentally changing the way art is shared and experienced in the digital Era.

9.1 Historical Evolution of Communication Methods

The historical evolution of communication methods demonstrates the transition from primitive visual expression to advanced digital communication technologies. Early forms of communication, including cave paintings, smoke signals, and carrier pigeons, enabled the exchange of information

across communities and generations. The invention of the printing press in the fifteenth century revolutionised the dissemination of knowledge, while the telegraph, telephone, radio, and television transformed long-distance and mass communication. The emergence of satellite communication, email, mobile phones, SMS, and social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram further accelerated global connectivity. Today, video conferencing technologies support real-time virtual interaction, reflecting the continuous evolution of communication towards increasingly interactive, visual, and technology-driven forms.

9.2 Facebook

Facebook serves as a primary social media platform for artists to promote their artwork, engage with audiences, increase visibility among spectators and potential followers, and create opportunities for professional exposure and recognition. D. S. Kapoor is an Indian art historian and educator. The educationist designed posters to promote public awareness and help prevent the spread of the coronavirus. Prof. Kapoor deeply appreciates nature and finds beauty in all its forms. His nature-inspired artwork takes on diverse expressions and serves multiple purposes, capturing the vastness of the natural world in unique ways. D. S. Kapoor actively uses Facebook to create and share posters to promote social awareness within the community.



Figure 9: Coronavirus & Digital world of Prof. D.S Kapoor, published in a newspaper, Source: Facebook profile of the artist

This awareness poster campaign received wide coverage in both state and national print media. Also, Prof. Kapoor crafted 'Corona and Ladder'- a fun, engaging game that turned safety rules into a playful challenge, published in local papers, which brought the families together, teaching pandemic precautions with smiles.

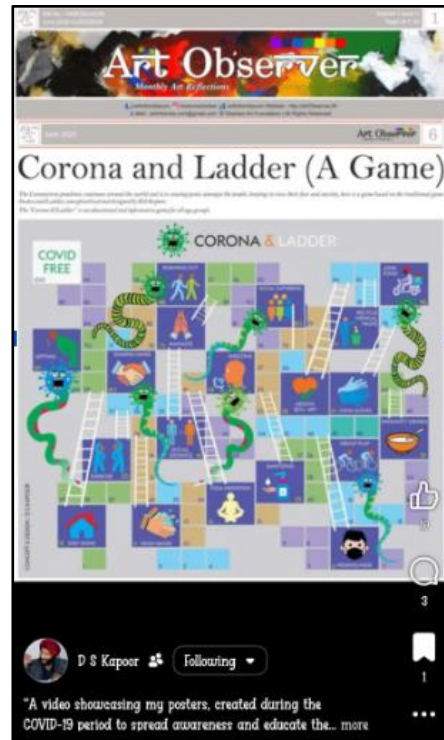


Figure 10: Corona and Ladder (A game), Designed by Prof. D.S Kapoor, Source: Facebook profile of the artist

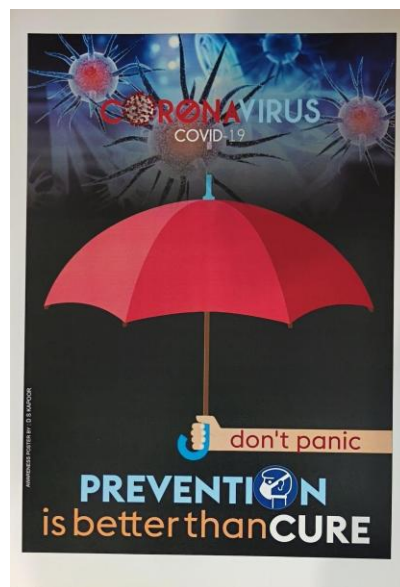


Figure 11: Title: Untitled (Prof. D.S Kapoor), Medium: Print on paper, Dimension:11.7 in x 16.5 in, Lockdown, dated by the artist, Location - Artist's studio, Chandigarh, Image courtesy: Photo clicked by the Researcher

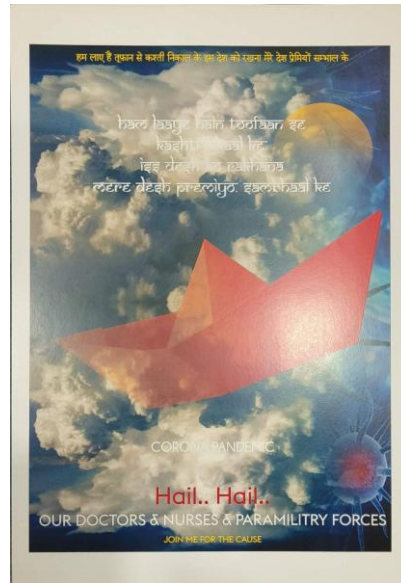


Figure 12: Title: Untitled (Prof. D.S Kapoor), Medium: Print on paper, Dimension: 11.69 in * 16.54 in, Lockdown, dated by the artist, Location - Artist's studio, Chandigarh, Image courtesy: Photo clicked by the Researcher

In this poster, Prof. Kapoor translated urgent messages into simple and accessible imagery that was widely shared on social media. These visuals became small yet meaningful tools in public awareness efforts, educating people about how to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. Using clear, powerful visual language, the poster reached both the hearts and minds of viewers and introduced new visual approaches, especially for rural audiences.

9.3. Instagram

Instagram has become an increasingly important social media channel for artists, particularly due to its high engagement with visual-centric content, making it effective for quick, impactful consumer interactions. Unlike other platforms, Instagram excels in showcasing visual works and ongoing activities directly to followers. On Instagram, contemporary Indian artist Pradosh Swain actively shares his paintings, concept notes, details of upcoming exhibitions, professional experiences, gallery visits, conversations with artists, and interviews, thereby keeping audiences informed about his art practice. Pradosh Swain is also an active member of Galleria VSB, an art space promoting artistic expression through Instagram-based visual exhibitions. The gallery utilises Instagram's visual storytelling capacity to celebrate diverse cultures and artistic heritage from around the world.



Figure 13: Publishing a page for the upcoming show 'Raga Rasa' of artist Pradosh Swain on November 21, 2025. Source: Instagram profile of the artist

Artist, teacher, and curator **Pradosh Swain's** spontaneous, unplanned approach to painting yields highly expressive, colourful works that captivate viewers. Nature frequently features in his paintings, where the artist blends imagination and reality to create strange and surprising images that challenge conventional perceptions.



Figure 14: UNTITLED, Pradosh Swain, Dimension- 60 x 42 inches, Medium- Acrylic on Canvas, Location - Artist's studio, Delhi, Image courtesy: Photo clicked by the Researcher

Pradosh's childhood in Odisha has profoundly influenced his work. In his paintings, he evokes a dreamy, magical quality, merging deep feelings and thoughtful observation with realistic depictions.

9.4. YouTube

YouTube is the most effective platform for driving both engagement and brand recall, offering a distinct advantage through its support for long-form video content. Compared to Instagram's focus on visual imagery, YouTube enables more in-depth artistic documentation and storytelling. For example, the YouTube channel **Apni Kahani Apni Juwani,** conducted by contemporary artist Govind Viswas during the pandemic, provided a platform for artistic dialogues and personal narratives through recorded conversations with artists, illustrators, teachers, sculptors, and curators.



Figure 15: Conversation With Founder /Director Taniya Dharani at Artany Art Gallery, London; Channel: Govind Vishwas, Published on: October 18, 2022, Source: YouTube Podcast

For example, a conversation with Taniya Dharani, founder and director of Artany Art Gallery, London, explored her professional journey. She discussed the complexities of the COVID-19 crisis, examining relationships, the human mind, and the importance of Indian contemporary art practice in London. The channel highlighted Indian and Islamic artists, Indian Folk and Traditional art, Terracotta art, and also promoted and curated Korean and African artists.

In addition to social and video platforms, digital archives also play an important role in supporting art research and accessibility. JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary-source materials. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organisation that supports research, learning, and the preservation of knowledge.



Figure 16: 'The Paris Salon of 1877' is an article from The Art Journal (1875-1887), Volume 3. View more articles from The Art Journal (1875-1887). Source: archive.org

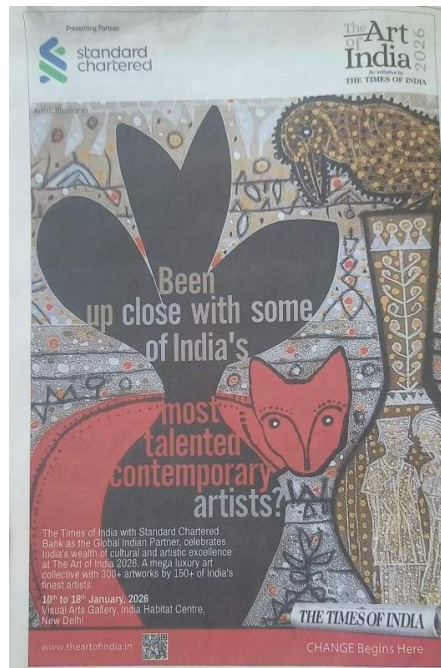


Figure 17: Published a poster of mega luxury art collective with artworks and artists, from 10th to 18th January, 2026, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi, Source: timesofindia.indiatimes.com

Turning to traditional media, newspapers today play a significant role in informing the public about developments in contemporary art, including exhibitions, artist initiatives, and major events such as the India Art Fair. Compared with earlier periods, when art coverage was limited to print reviews, current reporting provides broader and more immediate insights into the evolving landscape of Contemporary Art in India. This increased media attention raises public awareness of artistic practices, gallery activities, and cultural events. Newspaper documentation also serves as an important source for understanding trends and developments in the Indian contemporary art scene.

10. Findings

Virtual exhibitions cannot fully replace physical gallery experiences, but they offer new opportunities for audience interaction, greater accessibility, and innovative ways to view art. The success of online shows organised by Nature Morte—evidenced by increased visitor engagement, online sales, and personalised consultations—demonstrates how digital exhibitions can expand the reach of contemporary art. Such initiatives highlight the evolving role of virtual platforms in sustaining cultural exchange, fostering artistic communities, and redefining the presentation and consumption of art in the digital Era. The importance of choosing the right social media platforms to optimise distribution and participation in art exhibitions in this digital Era. This study contributes to the development of art exhibition management, especially in the digital context, which is increasingly becoming the main choice for many artists after the pandemic.



Figure 18: Location - Artist's studio, Chandigarh, Image courtesy: Photo clicked by the Researcher

Comparison between the Physical and Virtual Exhibition

Aspect	Physical Exhibition	Virtual Exhibition
Experience of Colour	Colours appear more accurate due to natural/gallery lighting and direct viewing	Colours may vary depending on screen quality, resolution, and digital display
Material Presence	Viewers can observe real textures, layers, and material depth of artworks	Material qualities appear flattened and limited to digital representation.
Sense of Touch	Physical proximity creates an awareness	No tactile sense; interaction is

(Tactile Awareness)	of texture and dimensionality, even without touching.	limited to visual navigation on screen
Eye-Witnessed Experience	Direct, immersive viewing allows movement around the artwork and spatial understanding.	Viewing is screen-based, often restricted to fixed angles or curated digital views.

Figure 19: Comparison between the Physical and Virtual Exhibition

The digitisation of artworks on YouTube documents the entire creative process, from initial concept to the finished product, and also offers tutorials and techniques that audiences can learn directly from artists. YouTube has emerged as a significant platform for the digitisation and dissemination of artistic practices, enabling artists to document and share their creative processes from conception to completion. Through tutorials, demonstrations, and process-oriented content, the platform facilitates direct knowledge exchange between artists and audiences. By comparison, Instagram primarily serves as a visual-sharing platform that highlights finished artworks and real-time updates, placing greater emphasis on presentation and audience engagement than on documenting artistic production. Additionally, 3D virtual tours for art collections were generally accepted as functional digital resources for remote access during the pandemic.

This study is grounded in established theoretical perspectives that explain the digital transformation of contemporary art practices during the COVID-19 pandemic. Castells' (1996) Network Society theory explains how digital networks reshaped artistic production, communication, and exhibition practices. Jenkins' (2006) concept of Participatory Culture highlights increased interaction between artists and audiences through social media and virtual platforms. Bourdieu's (1986) theory of Cultural Capital emphasises the importance of artistic reputation, education, and digital competencies in enhancing professional visibility. Latour's (2005) Actor-Network Theory views artists, digital technologies, galleries, and audiences as interconnected actors, while Benjamin's (1936/2008) concept of "Aura" provides a framework for examining how digital reproduction transformed the authenticity and experience of artworks.

An exhibition titled "Dream Vision" is in India for the first time. A solo exhibition by the National Artist of the Russian Federation, Safronov Nikas. The exhibition is being held in the Galleries of Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi. The unique project titled "Dream Vision" combines painting, modern multimedia and elements of AI technology, creating a space where each viewer can participate in the plot conceived by the artist. At his exhibition in Delhi, he employs multimedia projections, LED and volumetric screens, neuro-mirrors, animated paintings, and smart lighting to create an immersive experience.

11. Conclusion

Art schools in India were established during the colonial Era under British rule, marking the beginning of formal artistic education in the country. The art sector was critically affected by the pandemic, with closures, event cancellations, restrictions on creativity, limited materials, financial instability, and limited studio access. These challenges were addressed through digital media and virtual exhibitions, which became vital for sustaining artistic practice, preserving artists' identity,

and ensuring continued engagement. The evolution of social media has led to a shift from physical to virtual exhibitions, a diversification of artistic influences, and an increase in individualistic expression among artists. Urgent messages were translated into accessible imagery widely shared on social media, becoming meaningful tools in public awareness efforts. Using clear visual language, the poster reached viewers' hearts and minds and introduced new approaches, especially for rural audiences. Many artists developed stronger digital skills, enabling them to use digital media more effectively. The findings demonstrate that digital technologies, social media platforms, and virtual exhibitions have become integral components of artistic production, communication, and professional engagement. The study also extends theoretical understanding by applying concepts such as Network Society, Participatory Culture, Cultural Capital, Actor–Network Theory, and "Aura" to interpret the digital transformation of artistic practice. These findings offer valuable insights for researchers, cultural institutions, policymakers, and practising artists navigating an increasingly digital art ecosystem. The integration of digital and physical practices, along with the balanced use of offline and online platforms, enhances accessibility, engagement, and global reach, signalling a resilient shift shaping contemporary Indian art and its future.

Note: The two images reproduced in this article are included with permission from the artist Dhruvi Acharya (2026), granted via email. Ms Juhi from Nature Morte Gallery was cc-ed in the correspondence confirming approval for academic purposes.

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