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VIRTUAL PLATFORM LAUNCHED IN DUBAI PROMISES ART IS “NOT CANCELLED”

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<http://www.artasiapacific.com/News/VirtualPlatformLaunchedInDubaiPromisesArtIsNotCancelled>

With many galleries remaining closed and the postponement of annual art events becoming the new norm amid Covid-19, a number of virtual initiatives have been created as [art fairs](#) and other festivals move their operations online. The Dubai version of “[Not Cancelled](#)”—a series of virtual art weeks launched in cities around the world by digital creative agency [Treat Agency](#)—opens on May 19.

Vienna, Berlin, and Los Angeles-based Treat Agency initiated the week-long online program in Vienna to aid the local art community, with the participation of 14 small and medium-sized galleries. The inaugural presentation consisted of a showcase of artists, videos of discussions, and images and information of artworks which were available for purchase. After the project proved successful, it was subsequently rolled out in Berlin, Paris, and Warsaw, with other editions currently ongoing for regions in the United States including Chicago.

The Dubai iteration of “Not Cancelled” is another show of perseverance for a city with a slowing art scene, which earlier in March saw the [postponement](#)—and later, digital revival—of its major art fair [Art Dubai](#). Running until May 26, six galleries from the region will each showcase up to two artists on the “Not Cancelled” platform, staging guided tours such as studio visits, and conversations between the artists and gallerists. Asmaa Al-Shabibi, director of [Lawrie Shabibi](#), told AAP that “This event between the six of us marks a turning point in the way we work as it is highly collaborative. For most of us, it is our first virtual fair . . . While nothing replaces the physical experience . . . we hope this will encourage collectors to inquire, first online and then maybe carry on the conversation over Zoom with the galleries.” The gallery will present Shahpour Pouyan and Ishmael Randall Weeks, whose works being featured include wall sculptures about geological cuts and two-dimensional miniature paintings of empty city scenes without people, respectively.

Meanwhile, [Green Art Gallery](#) will show Berlin-based Venezuelan artist Alessandro Balteo-Yazbeck, who questions political systems with works that span a variety of mediums. [The Third Line](#) will present Syrian visual artist Sara Naim, who dissects notions of perception and boundary, and Kuwaiti-Palestinian artist Tarek Al-Ghoussein who examines issues of identity through photography and performances. [Gallery Isabelle van den Eynde](#) will feature Beirut-born and Mumbai-bred artist Vikram Divecha who addresses labor and socio-economic structures, and Turkish duo mentalKLINIK who practices a reactionary approach to the contemporary digitalized world. **The other participating galleries are [Carbon 12](#), which will spotlight Amir Khojasteh and Monika Grabuschnigg, and [Grey Noise](#)**, which is presenting the conceptual works of Charbel-joseph H. Boutros and Stéphanie Saadé.