



Reflections on Arts during Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

This paper presents reflections on the changes in arts during the Covid-19 epidemic. By attending concerts, festivals, and events, visiting museums and galleries, studying the arts formally or informally, or creating art professionally or as a hobby, the arts contribute to developing a sense of individual and collective identity. The COVID-19 pandemic deprived global societies and audiences of opportunities to engage with the arts in live settings. However, it has also profoundly affected the arts sector, with institutions closing their doors and cancelling festivals and events. The production of art is severely restricted, in hibernation, or abandoned in the worst cases. Given the short-term, informal, and project-based nature of much of the arts industry, millions of artists and arts workers are currently unemployed. Many cannot access government support programs built for more conventional business structures. There have been substantial engagements with the arts throughout lockdown periods, primarily using digital technologies and virtual formats, even though the epidemic has presented the arts with numerous problems. This continuous participation with the arts suggests that if COVID-19 is brought under control, the sector will recover and prosper.

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1. Introduction

As a result of the onset of the covid-19 epidemic, which disrupted all aspects of political, economic, and social life in every country on earth, a period of instability and confusion ensued. Taking the field of literature, art, theatre, singing, culture, education, sports, and the media as an example. Social distance was one of the most significant pressures imposed on groups of people due to the health reality and the need for prevention. Consequently, all performances, literary, artistic, dramatic, cinematic, and athletic festivals, as well as book and art fairs organized by these creative

sectors, were cancelled, restricted, and postpone. To further note, because these areas cannot be creative and present their presentations and masterpieces in isolation from what was happened around them; that its actions were only reactions to emergency changes that occurred in the world and its environment as a result of the effect and influence that appeared in its characteristics. Certainly, because these creative fields lived the reality of shock as did all societies on earth; Until the notions generated by the consequences of the corona pandemic on the international system and what it will bring about, as well as what will occur in society changes and political systems, the reactions may not be apparent in the innovations offered at this time. Then, inevitably, it will have real repercussions, feelings, actions, and reactions that define the characteristics of the created trends and approaches, such as the creative art and literary movement that accompanies these changes. Because any reading of the history of art and literature reveals that the creative activities that exploded through modern art schools are a result of social, political, and economic changes; Which resulted from the industrial revolution that exploded in the enlightenment in the mid-seventeenth century and beyond; Which played a significant role in bringing about radical changes in the international system. Artists, authors, and producers fought against the traditional ways of art and literature and produced conceptions that accompanied urbanization and its goals by establishing numerous artistic sects and schools.

The changes brought about by the corona pandemic found a reflection in art and literature and their methods. These innovations were an echo of this trauma that societies in the world have experienced and will live with, which will be developed after the epidemic of covid-19. Because the suffering that is rooted daily in the souls of societies, and the resulting pain of the soul and body, torture, torment, and loss of millions of human beings after a journey of pain and misery with the disease that the person lived through while suffering from slow breathing asphyxiation applied to his breath; He sees these horrific scenes with thousands and millions of people infected with the epidemic of corona daily; To the extent that his life is threatened at every moment by an invisible enemy that roams around and encircles his life and threatens it at every moment and second.

So that the matter of muzzling the mouths today is a reality wherever you go so that the secure place - the space of life in our world - becomes a disgusting place in which it is unbearable to live, so the pain and suffering will open the horizons of art and literature by creating new horizons in form and content after the corona pandemic, and it will be an entry gate in the creations of expression accompanied by rituals And in various ways of creativity; In the time that will result in the post-coronavirus era, with intellectual inventions and plastic works; Meditating on it will be the

travails of a harrowing experience that a person lived with the corona pandemic, with all its annoyances.

2. Covid-19 Pandemic Crisis

The COVID-19 epidemic had a terrible influence on worldwide society, and the long-term future of numerous nations, economies, and cultures was uncertain. Contemporary life's social, cultural, and economic aspects have had mild to severe effects. The immediate effect of COVID-19 was devastating for the arts industry, which has often struggled for attention (Boland, 2020). Many of the world's most prestigious music, theatre, art gallery, and museum institutions have shuttered their doors or ceased operations. Numerous music festivals, art fairs, outdoor sculpture exhibitions, film and television studios, and other art institutions had to be partially or entirely shut down in the contemporary art space. Millions of artists around the globe are unemployed. They face a grim future, with current and future generations experiencing substantial professional setbacks and an increased risk of mental health issues. This gloomy outlook was supported by the uncertain total economic cost of COVID-19 and its continued impact on all industry sectors. As global societies seek to recover and rebuild, there may be a drastically diminished resource base to sustain the arts given the arts sector's reliance on audiences, the public purse, and private and corporate sponsorship (Midgette, 2020).

As a result of the initial lockdown in societies worldwide, various economic sectors, including the airline, entertainment, education, tourism, sports, retail, and hospitality industries, were utterly paralyzed. The arts sector in many countries faced near-total extinction except for organizations or individuals who already had a robust digital presence and a connection with online audiences. Keller (2020) worries that the pandemic has muted the world's symphony halls and opera houses (para. 1). Several of the world's most prestigious art organizations cannot resume live performances and exhibitions (Bedell, 2020; Brown, 2020a).

3. Arts in Times of Crisis

For centuries, Art has given societies and communities solace and relief from catastrophic tragedies such as war, recession, epidemics, starvation, and natural disasters. Artists throughout history have created memorable works in response to some of the most tragic occurrences in the world. Lockdowns have occurred countless times throughout history and have impacted the Art of the moment. For instance, during the "Black Death" period between the 14th and 17th centuries, the Flemish painter Anthony van Dyck created the well-known piece *St. Rosalie Interceding for the Plague-Stricken of Palermo* (1624). Many of the greatest composers

composed works as a response to significant world events. For example, Haydn, whose *Mass in Time of War* (1796) was written during the European War; Tchaikovsky, whose *1812 Overture* was composed to commemorate the Battle of Borodino in 1812; and Chopin, whose *Military Polonaise* was composed at the beginning of World War II and frequently played on Polish radio to rouse national protest against Germany's invasion (Classic fM, 2018). In literature, *The Decameron*, a collection of novellas written by Boccaccio in the middle of the 14th century, tells the stories of a group of young women and men who seek refuge in a country home from the plague. In the theatre, Shakespeare's works from the early 1600s, such as *The Winter's Tale* (Shapiro, 2015) and *Measure for Measure* (Kelsey, 2016), were impacted by the tremendous European pandemic. This masterwork of Italian writing is considered his most significant achievement (Britannica.com, 2020). These and other creative artefacts associated with global tragedies serve as lasting historical records and a means for humanity to reflect on and consider the significance of global occurrences.

Undoubtedly, people from all walks of life and in all parts of the world are looking to the arts for much-needed connection and solace (Hoe, 2020, p. 1). A reflection by Netter (2020) on how the arts and their contribution to our welfare are visible and, in some respects, fundamental to our containment against the coronavirus for those of us who are cooped up at home. Individuals seek comfort in the modern era – anything to calm our heart rates and resist the suffocating dread and quiet of self-isolation. And we always look to the arts to provide us with that solace (Law 2020, p. 7). In their study of the effects of the ongoing epidemic on older people, Kelly (2020) reveals how older people are turning to the arts, with a boom in creative arts such as poetry, dance, music, and visual arts, all of which are inspired by this unprecedented moment in historical context (p. 337). Numerous art institutions, museums, and opera houses worldwide have expanded their digital offerings to offer virtual experiences and extend their reach geographically so that confined people can still participate in the arts. This allows people to engage with the arts even though they are confined (Keller, 2020).

Moreover, artists today have responded to the current pandemic in various ways. For example, graffiti artists and muralists created many works, like a road mural emphasizing the significance of staying home to save lives; a healthcare worker praying; and one depicting a lady with injuries on her face, underlining the risk for domestic violence to rise during lockdown (Billock, 2020). In Italy, one of the countries hardest hit by the virus in its earliest stages, thousands of people flocked to their balconies during lockdown to play music and sing to

improve morale (Thorpe, 2020). Other amusing artistic creations have appeared, such as LUSHSUX's mural, which depicts "Chinese President Xi Jinping wearing a hazmat suit while proclaiming, "Nothing to see. Carry on "(Mitman, 2020, p. 6). The use of art to document the pandemic has been a characteristic of the global shutdown and will most likely continue for some time. The Smithsonian Museum in the United States and the National Museum of Australia, for example, both asked their audiences to contribute their experiences of the pandemic through artistic work in order to provide future generations a better understanding of how it changed society (UNSW Art & Design, 2020).

4. *The Impact of Covid-19 on Arts*

The crisis of the emerging Covid-19 Virus pandemic that struck the world and caused significant economic losses worldwide also affected the cultural and artistic sector. So, cultural and artistic events and activities, exhibitions and auctions of some international paintings and artefacts decreased, as some reports confirmed that sales last year fell by more than 30%. Museums have become suffering due to the cessation of support from sponsors and donors, which prompted them to sell many works and artefacts in an emergency to avoid closing museums. Auctions also turned to the virtual world, which negatively affected workers in this field.

The impact of the covid-19 pandemic on fine art during the epidemic period, art experts said, as reported by some sources, that the movement of buying and selling paintings declined after the Corona pandemic due to the continued closure and distance measures. However, they also confirmed that the art market maintained its position in light of the ongoing interest from art collectors. Wealthy people to invest. In addition to an influx of younger, tech-savvy buyers whose showrooms and agents have built a robust online presence.

During the first quarter of 2020, arts and cultural organizations gradually reduced the scope of their public activities and closed their doors due to the coronavirus pandemic. Most cultural heritage organizations closed by late March and art events were postponed or cancelled, either voluntarily or by government mandate. The wave of closures started in China and East Asia and then spread worldwide. With exhibitions, events and shows cancelled or postponed. On the other hand, intensive efforts were observed to provide alternative or additional services through electronic platforms, maintain the basic activities with the least amount of resources, document the same events through new acquisition contracts, and anticipate the emergence of innovative works inspired by current events.

Many workers in the sector have lost work contracts or jobs, either temporarily or permanently, with several warnings issued and financial aid available. Likewise, governments and artist charities have offered their support through financial incentives and other forms of support, depending on the sector and country. It was expected that the public demand for cultural events would return without specifying a specific time for this return, increasing the popularity of different types of experiences.

5. New Creative Ways for Arts during Covid-19 Pandemic

COVID-19's isolation tactics have thrown artists and cultural institutions into disarray. However, they also employ their creativity to develop unique ways to create and display their work in the digital realm. From online performances to collaborative virtual museums, artists employ technology and social media to interact with audiences confined at home by the pandemic. They even discover ways to earn money from it. It is remarkable how adaptable artists are and the creative outpouring of artists from all disciplines who have moved to virtual platforms. Artists have had to discover means to preserve their practice, which is easier for some than others. People primarily utilise video conferencing technologies to have simultaneous live experiences that they can observe, interact with, and even innovate on. Performance artists have established methods for audiences to pay for online concerts, and studio artists use this possibility while closing their studios to conserve resources. There is considerable introspection and individuals' creation of these routines. Currently, a significant number of artists are doing extraordinary new works. One example is The Isolation Museum, a brand-new virtual museum that invites individuals to submit artefacts that illustrate their isolation experience during the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic supports the notion that the social media sphere's online environment has served as a forum for visual artists. The pandemic may precipitate a shift in the art world toward digital channels. The concept, though, is not novel. The museum and gallery industry has a long history of what was referred to as "museums on the web." Thus, this is not new. It is new to many individuals who are... moving into this space at this time. Similarly, there is a long history of artists who have worked in the digital domain, and their work is now more influential than ever. Now we have this substantial update on these technologies and the scope of their creative potential.

6. *The Arts after Covid-19 Epidemic*

Regarding the future of the arts, there are numerous unknowns. According to Fairley (2020), there is a thorny path away, citing the need for new rules regarding live interaction in art

spaces, the loss of employment opportunities due to years of ongoing economic hardship, and a future with unknown challenges for the next generation of artists who may have fewer options for presenting their work. Additionally, in the visual art fair market, many events have been postponed or cancelled, and attendance at events that have taken place has declined dramatically (McAndrew, 2020). It may take years for this subsector to recover. Given the enormous unknowns about implementing sufficient social distancing measures, the future of large-scale public events is uncertain.

As the crisis begins to subside, Hands (2020) suggests rethinking the significance of the arts and how we measure their financial and artistic success. This would be an essential step forward, considering that artists have long been recognized for their ability to bring new ideas, solve problems, and develop communities, for instance, as part of urban renewal (Clark & Madgin, 2017). The arts consequently provide a tool for aiding and sustaining communities during and even after the current crisis. The arts will be required for individual and collective healing, community building, inspiring discussion and free thought, and the creation of permanent artistic representations of one of the most traumatic moments in recent history. According to the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), creativity fosters the resilience required during times of crisis Azoulay (2020). Without a doubt, artists worldwide will investigate and create profoundly significant work in response to the current pandemic, providing a tremendous mechanism for the world to reflect, seek consolation, and hope for the future.

7. Conclusion

History demonstrates that the arts will remain due to artists' passion, perseverance, and initiative in their work, although the global art world has suffered greatly. During lockdowns, millions of individuals worldwide may have engaged with the arts more than before; the capacity of the arts to bring solace is tremendous. The arts will be required as part of the rescue package to construct the "new normal," whatever that may be, with the sector poised to play a leading role in revitalizing the global economy and the health of rich and developing nations. Armed with persistence, passion, and a connection to the human spirit, artists are willing and able to face the world's toughest challenges. We need our artists, art workers, and the arts sector now more than ever. Artists and the arts will continue to bring light and hope for a better future, even though they face many problems.

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