

GAGOSIAN

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Gagosian Goes Netflix? The Mega-Gallery Is Creating Original Content That Pairs Artists With Luminaries Like Malcolm Gladwell and Jeff Tweedy *Gagosian Premieres looks to celebrity programming to replace the buzz of physical openings.*

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Malcolm Gladwell speaks onstage during OZY FEST 2017 Presented By OZY.com at Rumsey Playfield on July 22, 2017 in New York City. Photo by Bryan Bedder/Getty Images for Ozy Fusion Fest 2017.

As galleries continue to adapt to life under social distancing, Gagosian is launching a brand new livestreaming event series. Gagosian Premieres, as the new initiative is called, that will feature virtual gallery tours, discussions, and musical performances pairing gallery artists such as Titus Kaphar with high-profile cultural figures such as author Malcolm Gladwell, former Sonic Youth frontman Thurston Moore, and Wilco's Jeff Tweedy.

The new initiative was devised as a way to create buzz about Gagosian exhibitions even as the gallery faces an extended period with limited in-person attendance. The online celebrity programming also helps to keep artists from feeling shortchanged by the moratorium on glitzy opening parties and swanky artist dinners that traditionally help woo collectors.

"Maybe we can't have 2,000 people at the opening," Gagosian director Sam Orlofsky told Artnet News, "but we can create some kind of experience that approximates what people are looking to get out of the opening. Maybe in exchange for a thousand in-person visitors, we can share the show with somewhere between 10,000 and 100,000 digital viewers."



Still from Gagosian Premieres trailer. Artwork ©Mary Weatherford. Video: Little Dot Studios. Courtesy of Gagosian.

To find the high-profile cultural figures to participate, the gallery turned to people who were already in the artists' orbit—"the creative peers of the artists who were probably going to be at the opening already," as Orlofsky put it.

The exact details on the livestreamed events are still coming together and remain subject to change. Among the already-announced inaugural programming will be a discussion between Gregory Crewdson, Tweedy, and Gladwell. The photographer will also give a live tour of his current show at Gagosian Beverly Hills with American film critic Elvis Mitchell.



Mary Weatherford Still from Gagosian Premieres trailer. Artwork ©Mary Weatherford. Video: Little Dot Studios. Courtesy of Gagosian.

And at the gallery's Grosvenor Hill location in London, Mary Weatherford has invited Moore to perform against the backdrop of her "Train Yard" paintings, which are "inspired by early the 20th century American blues and folk music that gave birth to rock and roll," said Orlofsky. "The thought was to have a musician based in London but who was totally fluent and well-versed in that tradition of music play the exact songs that she is inspired by and reinterpret them in relation to the show itself."

Weatherford will also livestream a conversation with art critic Hunter Drohojowska-Philp. Each event will feature a live chat on YouTube, allowing online audiences to interact with the artists in real time.



Jenny Saville, Virtual (2020). The oil painting is the most expensive work sold during the first 14 weeks of Gagosian's Artist Spotlight series, according to the gallery. ©Jenny Saville, courtesy of Gagosian.

Gagosian Premieres builds on the weekly Artist Spotlight that the gallery launched in April, offering a work by a single artist. The online series, which helped showcase artists in the Gagosian stable while physical gallery locations were closed and art fairs were on hold, has featured the likes of Theaster Gates, Jenny Saville, and Damien Hirst.

The gallery sees the new series as a stopgap, until normal operations can resume. “Hopefully, we will be able to go back to having traditional openings and dinners,” said Orlofsky. But until then, he added, “it’s really important that we make the exhibition as tangible and accessible to the audience as possible.”