

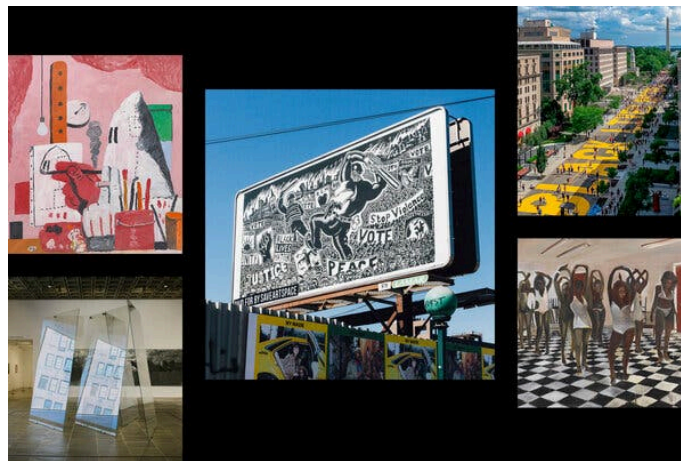
GAGOSIAN

The New York Times

The Most Important Moments in Art in 2020

This was a year of protests and pivots. Monuments fell, museums looked inward. On the bright side, galleries persisted despite the pandemic's grip and curators rolled out magisterial retrospectives.

Roberta Smith



Clockwise, from center, the “We Are Many. They Are Few,” billboard in Brooklyn by Sue Coe; the “Black Lives Matter” mural painted on 16th Street near the White House; Noah Davis’s “The Casting Call” (2008); Gerhard Richter’s “House of Cards (5 Panes),” at the Met Breuer; and “The Studio” (1969). by Philip Guston, whose retrospective was postponed because of disagreement over the interpretation of his hooded figures. Credit...Clockwise from center: Sue Coe, via SaveArtSpace and Art at a Time Like This; Carlos Vilas Delgado/EPA, via Shutterstock; The Estate of Noah Davis; Charlie Rubin for The New York Times; The Estate of Philip Guston and Hauser & Wirth

Persistence in the Face of a Pandemic

The main story everywhere this year was the coronavirus: how it disrupted or reshaped specific spheres of activity, or left parts of them largely unscathed. The art world witnessed dizzying combinations of these outcomes, which are still unfolding. One surprise was the almost instantaneous financial fragility of museums and the stalwartness of art galleries of all shapes and sizes. When the virus arrived, an especially strong art season had been underway.

4. ‘Festival of Judd, New York’

Opening just weeks before the shutdown, the Museum of Modern Art’s magisterial retrospective of Donald Judd’s objects was so impeccably selected and installed, it seemed that even that famously exacting Minimalist would have approved. His sense of color, scale and materials has rarely been so clear. The retrospective inspired a cluster of Judd shows in galleries around town. Most notable was Gagosian’s exhibition of one of Judd’s largest, least-seen efforts, an untitled 1980 installation piece in unfinished plywood that had not been exhibited in New York since

1981. It presented a grid of horizontal compartments subdivided by inserted planes, most on the diagonal, that divided the piece into a series of rhythmically contrasting volumes, planes and edges. They implied some kind of musical instrument delivering an exultant blast of sound.