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ARTS

56 metro Detroit galleries host an online exhibition and art sale this summer

By Ryan Patrick Hooper Special to the Detroit Free Press

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A virtual tour of the Dabls Mbad African Bead Museum is part of the public programming to help kick off the Art Mile citywide digital gallery exhibition. *Dabls Mbad African Bead Museum*

A massive digital art exhibition featuring more than 50 galleries, collectives and institutions from around metro Detroit is scheduled to launch later this month.

The sweeping initiative is called Art Mile, and it opens July 29.

Each arts-focused entity involved in the free, online-only project will have their own digital gallery where guests can view artwork and make purchases. Participants range from the Northville Art House to the Paint Creek Center for the Arts in Rochester to the 333 Midland gallery in Highland Park. The major local museum involved is the Cranbrook Art Museum.

The opening celebration of Art Mile will stretch from July 29 to August 5, and will include virtual museum tours, panel discussions, a film series and musical performances. The opening night reception will be produced by Omar-S.

Art Mile is organized by Corktown-based contemporary art gallery Reyes Finn, the New York-based arts consultant and PR firm Cultural Counsel and Red Bull Arts, who are making the online platform free to use to participating local art institutions.

“It’s a way to support the small businesses and artists who are working here,” says Reyes Finn gallery co-owner Bridget Finn, who is a founding partner in Art Mile. “Clients of ours might be totally unfamiliar with other spaces in the city, but with just the motivation to get to the site, they might be able to find something new and open up their purview of what goes on here.”



Bridget Finn and Terese Reyes teamed up last year to open their gallery Reyes Finn in Corktown. They are both founding partners in the new Art Mile initiative. *Jeff Wegner*

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12pm–6pm

Finn describes Art Mile as a “giant online art fair” modeled after other virtual citywide exhibitions like Gallery Platform L.A. in Los Angeles, which features a rotating cast of galleries each week on its website.

It follows a wave of cultural institutions around the country finding ways to engage with audiences online and turn a profit at the same time to keep their businesses open during the COVID-19 global pandemic.

“I was talking to people about how they were managing to keep their businesses going,” says Finn. “The conversations I was having with Detroit art spaces were so different than conversations with L.A. or NYC-based art spaces. There weren’t as many options of viable support.”

Through an online point-of-sales system, any sales that participating art institutions make won’t be charged a service fee.

Art Mile will also include a fundraising initiative for a trio of local non-profits with a creative focus including 482Forward, Inside Out Detroit and Living Arts.

Art Mile is overseen by an advisory board of local community leaders in the art world including art collector Dr. Charles Boyd, Kresge Arts in Detroit director Christina deRoos, curator Jova Lynne and Kresge Arts in Detroit founding director Michelle Perron.