

## "VIRTUAL FAIR" WOPART THE NUMBERS OF A SUCCESS

It's a wrap!

The fifth edition of Wopart, the International Fair of Lugano, dedicated mainly to works of art on paper that was held in "Virtual Fair" due to the restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 containment standards, was a great success for the public, for sales and for negotiations.

Moving to digital platforms was a decision that organizers made both in response to the success that the fair has continued to enjoy throughout its five-year life, and to allow a wider audience to access the virtual booths of the best Italian and international galleries during this period of lockdown.

The numbers don't lie. The numbers demonstrate the success of the virtual exhibition initiative created by Wopart, which ran from 26th November 2020 to 10th January 2021, with 44,735 visits to the website [www.wopart.ch](http://www.wopart.ch) and 6,474 views of the 40 international exhibitors' pages, which presented over 400 works.

The best-selling and most sought-after works by modern and contemporary historicised authors were offered with prices ranging from 20,000 to 80,000 CHF. In second place the works of emerging contemporary talents who have attracted attention with prices ranging from 10,000 to 50,000 CHF. The interest in some of the great masters' works offered at considerable amounts (from 100,000 to 500,000 CHF) has resulted in the gallery owners being contacted to arrange physical post-fair appointments to examine the works in person. The collectors connected to the online platform from 11 countries around the world (China, Colombia, Egypt, France, Germany, England, Italy, Russia, Spain, United States and Switzerland).

This year, in addition to the stands, Wopart presented a series of associated exhibitions.

First amongst these was one dedicated to the masterpieces on paper currently part of the international collection of BNP Paribas, the Main Sponsor of the event. BNP Paribas, in a critical moment such as the year just past, wanted to increase their sponsorship of the Fair

demonstrating their belief in the Wopart project with the intention of supporting it in future developments.

Also very popular were The Virtual Rooms of Eberhard watches, which were set up together with Mersmann, the prestigious Lugano retail showroom, and Swiss Logistic Center, a company with a wide range of storage services, transport and promotion of works of art aimed at international collectors. Finally, the personal exhibition of Michele Ciacciofera (Nuoro, 1969) that presented a series of his works in a Virtual Room with the curatorship of the Parisian art historian and critic Ami Barak.

These initiatives attracted an excellent audience with an average of over 1600 visits by users who entered the virtual exhibition halls directly or through the page The Show. These visitors stayed for over an hour and a half on average.

"We never imagined such a success" says Paolo Manazza, director of Wopart "for a Virtual Fair that, to tell the truth, we had to create at the last moment in less than a month. We must thank the Digital staff of WeWeb Company, the Italian company that publishes the art newspaper Artslife, which has performed a real miracle in terms of the timescale and quality of the virtual exhibition. Of course, online sales of works of art can never match those made in person, but from the final results it is clear that something important is taking place on the front line of online sales in the art sector".

"For the sixth edition of Wopart" continues Paolo Manazza, "scheduled for the end of September 2021, we are going to add a virtual version alongside a physical edition. We would like to create a new model of hybrid Fair where the physical and the virtual can intertwine and strengthen each other. We are also working to find a manager for the development of international collectors to manage and develop the assets acquired during the Virtual Fair through registrations, sales and negotiation. We also plan to strengthen the Fair's Scientific Committee and the commercial sector, coordinated by Irene Giardini. One thing is certain, the sector of works on paper continues to extend its appeal to a horizontal audience of collectors, from newcomers to highly refined collectors. Wopart is the most important event in the world dedicated to Works on Paper. And Lugano, with the beauty of its landscape, accompanies our adventure".

"Summing up at the end of this fifth edition of Wopart" says Irene Giardini, responsible for relations with the Galleries "made exclusively in virtual reality, we can be satisfied with and pleasantly surprised by the results. Being a novel experience, not only for us organizers but also for gallery owners and their collectors, we knew we were facing a great challenge. However, the participation of important galleries allowed Wopart to enter an international circuit, recording numerous sales, important negotiations and a surprising number of visitors".

Lugano, January 2021

WOPART LUGANO VIRTUAL FAIR

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#Wopart

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