

# Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

## Streaming Platforms Expanding Global Art Ecosystem

Our Friends · Thursday, August 27th, 2026

For quite a long time, once an exhibition closed or an installation came down, that was often the only chance to see it. However, the streaming model is rewriting that concept, taking art beyond the exhibition hall, much like streaming made music and film accessible beyond physical formats and locations.

The current shift is slightly confirmed by numbers. According to the Art Basel and UBS Global Art Market Report 2026, online art sales fell to \$9.2 billion in 2025 – 15% of the global art market, down from a pandemic-era peak of 25% in 2020, because collectors returned to fairs and live auctions for big-ticket buying, while online activity stayed concentrated in the middle market (for example, 63% of online auction value was for artworks under \$50,000). What's grown instead is access: the creation of digital platforms for new media art using streaming as a model – a parallel infrastructure for exposure running alongside, not instead of, the traditional market. Platforms such as **CIFRA**, **Niio**, **Sedition** and Daata are not only reshaping the global art ecosystem but also expanding its boundaries, opening up new ways for art to be created, distributed and experienced.

### Giving artists a stage that doesn't come down

Streaming platforms are changing the infrastructure of contemporary art from both the inside and the outside. The shift is perhaps most visible among artists. Unlike traditional exhibition circuits, where an art show ends and the artwork typically disappears from view, streaming platforms offer artists an opportunity to have an ongoing space for visibility. Their work can remain accessible and continuously reach new audiences through curated playlists, thematic selections and other streaming formats adapted to the contemporary art world.

As a digital platform entirely dedicated to new media art, CIFRA is a permanent archive, showcasing more than 1,000 artworks across 50+ genres by hundreds of artists from Brazil to China. Its streaming-based catalogue makes engaging with art easier and more intuitive, adapting the experience to the media consumption habits of contemporary audiences, highly influenced by streaming and social media.

In doing so, CIFRA also opens the door to emerging and non-Western artists who might otherwise need gallery representation or a fair invitation simply to gain visibility. Partnerships with Art Dubai, Ars Electronica and ISEA extend this logic further: CIFRA is not trying to replace physical artworks or exhibition spaces, but rather to add another layer to the existing art ecosystem, providing more career opportunities to the artists and expanding their exposure.

## A wider streaming economy for art

It is also necessary to mention that CIFRA is part of a growing ecosystem of platforms, each developing its own approach to how art can be streamed and experienced digitally.

Speaking of other platforms that have successfully adopted the streaming model, Niio positions itself as an art equivalent of a music or video subscription service, allowing users to stream curated digital artworks directly to TVs and connected screens in high resolution. Its catalogue brings together works by thousands of artists, galleries and museums, while its tiered subscription model makes digital art accessible not only to collectors but also to anyone who wants to display gallery-quality work at home, in an office or in a public space. Part of the subscription revenue is then shared with the artists whose work is streamed.

Another example is Sedition, one of the earlier platforms to enter the digital art space. Its model is built around limited digital editions, combining the accessibility of a streaming catalogue with the idea of collecting art. Users can access and display works by established and emerging artists across their screens, while individual editions remain available for purchase until they sell out.

Daata took a similarly hybrid approach, combining artist editions with dedicated streaming programs and even television-style segments, explicitly framing itself as a “bridge” between people who already understood how to buy music or film online and an audience that was still unsure how (or whether digital art could be “owned” and placed in the collection at all).

More experimental efforts like Wrong TV, spun out of the online Wrong Biennial, have pushed the model toward something closer to broadcast: a free, continuously running set of curated channels that removes the burden of choice altogether and simply plays a curated stream, the way a radio station once did for music.

Museums and art fairs have moved in a parallel direction as well. Livestreamed talks, virtual walkthroughs and hybrid programming, initially accelerated by necessity a few years ago and retained because they proved effective, now allow institutions to reach audiences who may never travel to see an exhibition in person. As a result, a single art show can extend far beyond its physical location, becoming content that can be watched, paused and revisited from anywhere.

## What exactly it does to the ecosystem

The wider impact of streaming goes far beyond simply making art available online. It is gradually changing the structure of the contemporary art ecosystem itself. Traditionally, the visibility of an artwork has been closely tied to a physical exhibition, gallery representation or festival participation, and moreover – limited by location, duration and institutional access. Streaming introduces a different type of model, in which artworks can remain in circulation continuously, reaching audiences long after an exhibition has ended and far beyond the place where it was originally shown.

This changes the relationship between artists, institutions and audiences. A collector in a market without a strong gallery scene can encounter an artist through a streaming platform, get back to their artwork over time and potentially develop an interest in collecting it without ever entering a physical gallery. For artists, particularly those working with video, digital or other time-based media, streaming creates an ongoing channel of visibility rather than a brief exhibition window. Smaller institutions can similarly extend the life and reach of their programmes without the cost of

physically touring an exhibition.

In this sense, streaming adds a new layer to the existing art infrastructure. It does not eliminate galleries, museums or physical exhibitions. Instead, it connects these temporary physical moments to a more continuous system of distribution. An artwork can move from an exhibition to a platform, where it remains in circulation through curated playlists and algorithmic recommendations, as on CIFRA, potentially connecting an artist with collectors whose interests closely align with their art practice.

This is where the comparison with music and film streaming becomes particularly relevant. Streaming changed those industries not simply by putting content online, but by changing how it circulates, how audiences discover it and how long it remains accessible.

Contemporary art platforms are beginning to introduce a similar logic: shifting art away from a model built primarily around temporary, location-specific encounters toward an ecosystem where art pieces can remain visible, discoverable and in circulation over time.

*Photo: Han Zibar via Pexels*

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