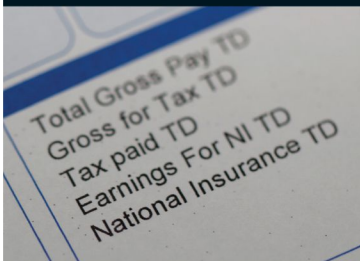




Living memorials Remembering the Holocaust in the 21st century



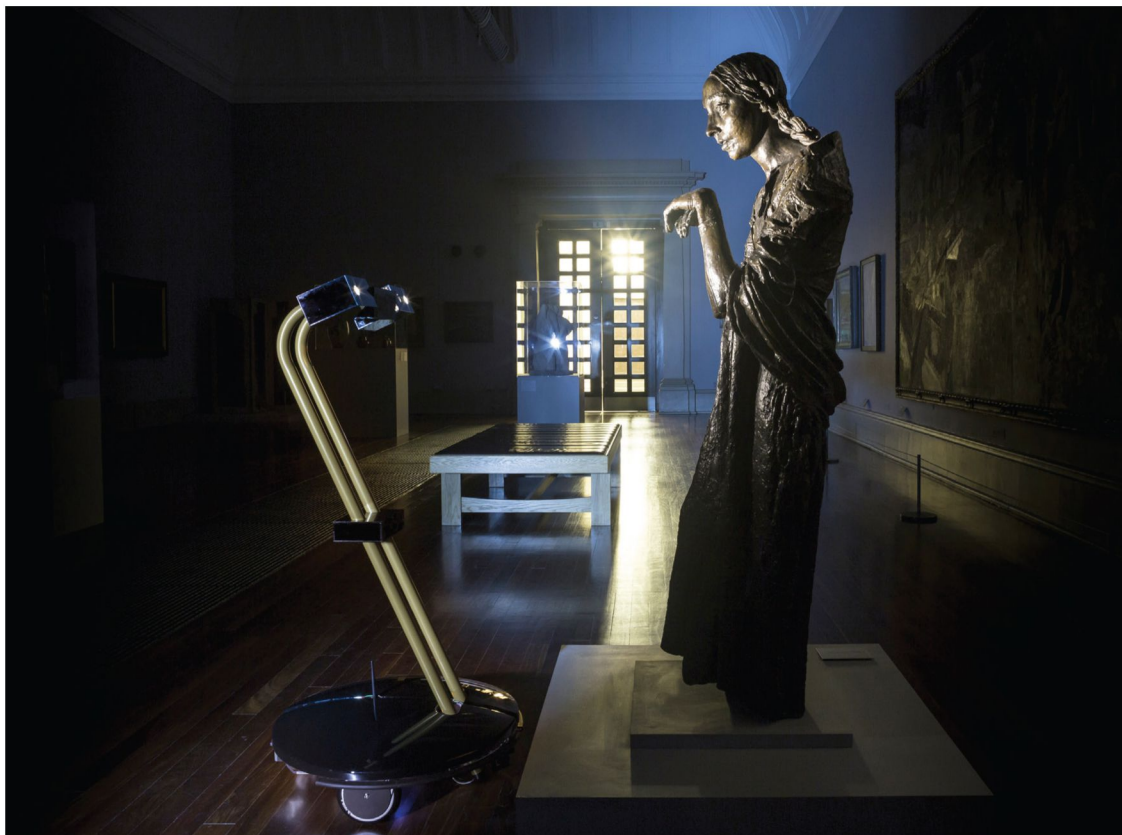
News
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Reviews
Postal Museum, London



Features
The finds liaison officers





Trendswatch

Live streaming

For a relatively modest outlay, museums can now widen their audience reach and ensure visitors no longer have to fear missing out on events, says *Laura Rutkowski*

Fomo – fear of missing out – grips society today, which is why we are seeing a rise in the use of live-streaming services, including in museum spaces.

In 2015, Twitter launched Periscope, a live video-streaming app developed by a start-up it bought, while Facebook Live was introduced last year.

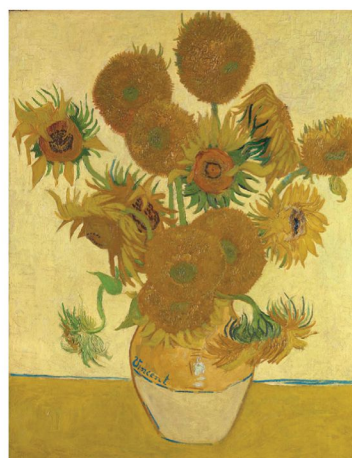
And before live streaming was the norm, London's Tate Britain hosted its After Dark event in 2014. The Workers, a London-based art technology studio, built four robots that streamed video footage from the empty museum. For five nights, 100,000 people around the world were able to take control of the robots and view different parts of the venue from their homes.

Ross Cairns, a creative technologist at the Workers, says: "Only when a video is live does the consumer become part of the event with the feeling of being

present when the action unfolds – and the fear of missing out if they are not. The event becomes less of a simulation and more a digitally augmented live experience."

The idea of introducing video streaming in museums was born out of performing arts organisations, such as opera houses, concert halls and theatres, wanting to widen their reach. As a result, people have been able to experience live productions in cinemas and online.

Live streaming has increased people's interest in museums. In August, the National Gallery, London; Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam; Philadelphia Museum of Art; Neue Pinakothek, Munich; and the Seiji Togo Memorial Sompō Japan Nipponkoa Museum of Art, Tokyo, participated in Sunflowers Live on Facebook. It consisted of five 15-minute broadcasts from the institutions with commentary



Top: one of the robots in the After Dark event at Tate Britain, London

Above: Vincent van Gogh's Sunflowers at the National Gallery in London was live streamed with commentary on Facebook, along with the other four versions of the painting in institutions around the world

from curators and experts. They were set against the backdrop of a different Sunflowers painting by Vincent van Gogh, none of which have ever been displayed together.

Collectively, the broadcasts brought in nearly six million global views. The Sunflowers 360 virtual tour of the paintings has received almost seven million views on Facebook and can be watched on the social media platform or by using a Gear VR headset.

Chris Michaels, the digital director at the National Gallery, says Facebook Live elicits an emotional response from audiences. "You recognise the thrill of seeing and hearing about these works in the comments of viewers, who use it as an opportunity to share memories of viewing the works or to dream out loud about future visits."

Streaming also provides access for those unable to visit museums. The Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery live streamed its recent I Want! I Want! Art & Technology exhibition into a care home via Periscope. A museum enabler filmed the show, while another team member showed the live stream to the residents, who gave feedback on the private tour.

While some video providers charge for streaming, Facebook Live is free. All that's required is a smartphone or small camera and an internet connection.

"Compared to commissioning a short film, a live stream is quick to produce and has an immediate effect," says Elaine Macintyre, the digital media content manager at National Museums Scotland, which broadcasts one or two live streams each month. "We've invested in various bits of equipment – an iPhone, lights and microphones – but it's a relatively modest investment and we use the equipment regularly."

While the format leaves room for uncontrollable elements, such as background noise or a lag in the connection, live streaming is a lot like the creative process. It involves trying new things, making mistakes and learning from them. It also safeguards against those "you had to be there" moments because we were all there – with no sign of Fomo.

Laura Rutkowski is a freelance writer