

Research Article

How Emerging Female Artists Leverage Technology to Build Visibility and Challenge Traditional Art Spaces

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Abstract

This research examines how emerging female artists leverage digital technology to gain visibility, create art, and challenge traditional art spaces. While institutional barriers have historically limited opportunities for female artists, digital technologies-such as social media, virtual reality (VR), artificial intelligence (AI), and blockchain marketplaces-offer alternative pathways for exposure, financial independence, and artistic experimentation. Through a literature review and case study analysis, this study explores the role of digital tools in reshaping contemporary artistic careers. It identifies three primary ways in which emerging artists utilize technology: (1) establishing a digital presence through social media, (2) incorporating digital tools to expand creativity, and (3) using online marketplaces to monetize their work. Five case studies-Lethabo Huma, Ellie Pritts, Xinyi Zhang, Sungsil Ryu, and Green Recipe Lab-illustrate diverse strategies emerging female artists utilize to navigate the art world. Their experiences highlight the growing influence of decentralized platforms in providing artists with autonomy over their careers, bypassing traditional institutional gatekeepers. Findings suggest that while digital platforms create unprecedented opportunities for female artists, challenges still remain. Issues such as algorithmic bias, content oversaturation, and financial instability in the NFT market present ongoing barriers to sustainability. Nonetheless, the study demonstrates that digital technology is transforming how female artists engage with audiences, redefine artistic expression, and secure financial independence. This research contributes to discussions on the decentralization of the art world and highlights the diverse ways in which digital tools foster inclusivity and accessibility for emerging female artists.

Keywords: Female Artists, Digital Technology, Social Media, Virtual Reality, Digital Marketplace, Art Ecosystem.

1. Introduction

A successful art career is often defined by the ability to exhibit work, reach a broad audience, and earn a living through art sales (1, p. 305). However, for young emerging artists-those in the early stages of their careers-these achievements can be highly challenging. Traditional art spaces, such as museums and galleries, play a crucial role in bringing recognition and visibility to an artist's career. However, their selective nature often prioritizes more established artists, valuing certain artworks as more important. Within this competitive, hierarchical structure, young artists frequently struggle to access necessary opportunities and exposure (2). For female artists, this challenge is even greater, as historical gender barriers continue to limit their access to major institutions. As a result, emerging female talent remains underrepresented, making it difficult for these artists to secure exhibition opportunities, attract collectors, and gain recognition from critics (3).

In recent years, the rise of digital technology has transformed how emerging female artists create, distribute, and gain recognition for their work. For the purpose of this research, digital technology is defined in three key areas: social media platforms, digital art tools, and digital marketplaces. These technologies provide emerging artists with new opportunities to bypass institutional gatekeepers, increase visibility, and engage directly with audiences and collectors. Social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok enable artists to build a following and share their work globally, digital tools such as VR and AI expand creative possibilities, and online marketplaces, including NFTs, provide financial opportunities outside traditional gallery representation (4, 5, 6).

Despite these advantages, existing studies often focus on the general impact of digital tools on the art world rather than the specific ways in which individual female artists engage with them. This study aims to fill that gap by examining how emerging female artists strategically use digital technologies to overcome institutional barriers, build careers, and challenge traditional frameworks of the art world. The research is structured into three main components. First, it explores institutional barriers in the contemporary art industry through a review of existing literature. Second, it examines the role of digital technology in providing alternative pathways for visibility and career growth. Lastly, through case studies, it analyzes real-world examples of female artists leveraging digital tools to navigate challenges, establish themselves, and expand the possibilities of artistic engagement in the digital era.

2. Literature Review

2.1. The Struggles of Emerging Artists

According to Artsy, an “emerging artist” refers to young artists who introduce new energy and artistic styles that attract the attention of galleries and institutions (7). Exhibition opportunities serve as crucial stepping stones for these artists, as securing them can provide career momentum. Continuous showcasing helps emerging artists establish credibility, gain practical experience, and access external art markets, ultimately increasing their chances of long-term success in the industry. However, government and institutional support for recent art graduates is often lacking. As a result, many young emerging artists remain under-recognized in the early stages of their careers (2).

The Strategic National Arts Alumni Project (SNAAP), analyzing professional success of art graduates, reveals that only about 10% of visual arts graduates are able to sustain a career as working artists, highlighting the difficulty of securing opportunities and financial stability (8). Galleries and institutions often prioritize established artists, making it harder for emerging talent to gain recognition and attract collectors. The traditional art market is shaped by institutional networks, putting those without industry connections at a disadvantage and making it difficult to break into the professional art scene. Even when opportunities arise, artists frequently bear costs such as production and shipping, as artist fees are rarely provided (2).

2.2. The Struggles of Emerging Female Artists

For young female artists, the challenges are even greater as gender disparities have long been embedded in the art world. Collective efforts to diminish sexism in art have followed since the feminist art movement in the 1960s. However, gender inequality in media coverage, gallery representation, and art sales continues to persist today. According to *Smithsonian Magazine*, major museums continue to prioritize works by historically established male artists, reinforcing a male-dominated art canon. A study analyzing 26 major U.S. museums between 2008 and 2018 found that only 11% of acquisitions and 14% of exhibitions featured works by female artists (9).

In addition, Carrigan (3) from *Observe Magazine* highlights the structural imbalance within traditional art spaces as a key factor of underrepresentation. The industry has been historically controlled by male curators, collectors, and critics, shaping institutional values and decision-making processes. Ironically, women outnumber men in visual arts education, but the scarcity of female directors in higher positions has led to a lack of diverse perspectives in shaping the art ecosystem. As a result, young female artists continue to face limited opportunities and reduced visibility, experiencing greater difficulties to establish their careers in an already competitive field.

2.3. Leveraging Digital Technology Navigating Institutional Barriers

In recent years, how young emerging artists build visibility and establish careers has significantly transformed due to the rise of digital technology. Unlike traditional methods of entering art institutions and galleries, digital platforms have provided alternative avenues for artists to promote their work and gain public recognition (4). This shift became particularly prominent during the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced the global art sector to migrate online (5). The sudden closure of physical spaces disrupted art events, exhibitions, and networking opportunities, prompting artists, collectors, and institutions to adopt digital technologies for artistic production, distribution, and engagement (10). As a result, digital presence has become a fundamental asset for emerging artists, allowing them to reach audiences beyond geographical and institutional barriers.

Related studies note that social media platforms have played a crucial role in this transformation, enabling artists to share their work instantly with a global audience. Their direct-to-audience model allows artists to cultivate an online presence without external gatekeepers (4, 11). Instagram, in particular, has been

recognized as a vital space for self-branding, functioning as both an art portfolio and a marketing tool, attracting potential collectors, collaborators, and clients (5).

Digital tools-such as virtual reality (VR), generative AI, and digital design software-also have been transforming how artworks are created, distributed, and experienced. According to Boucher (12), artists have long been early adopters of new technologies, leveraging their creative potential to push the boundaries of artistic expression. Digital art tools such as Photoshop, Illustrator, and Procreate offer cost-effective and flexible alternatives, enabling young artists to explore new digital styles and techniques (11).

Particularly virtual reality (VR) is discussed as a revolutionary tool. Kong et al. (4) and Widjono (10) highlight the transformative impact it has on the art world. Unlike traditional gallery spaces that require physical presence, VR allows artists to construct immersive, three-dimensional environments that audiences can explore remotely. This is especially beneficial for individuals with limited access to contemporary art due to geographical constraints and for artists seeking to develop projects independently. By challenging conventional methods of artistic presentation, VR shifts the viewer's role from a passive observer to an active participant in the artwork.

Additionally, the emerging technology of generative AI is discussed as a digital tool that has increased digital art production, making it more compatible with and facilitating the digital art market. Artists are approaching this technology in innovative ways, collaborating with AI to produce more ambitious works (12). Digital-born artworks have historically faced challenges in the art market due to the absence of a clear ownership model and were often perceived as mere "copies." However, the introduction of blockchain technology, particularly non-fungible tokens (NFTs), has addressed this issue by providing authentication and proof of ownership, allowing digital art to gain recognition as collectible assets with verifiable scarcity (6).

The digital art marketplace is also transforming how art is traditionally sold. By eliminating gallerists, dealers, and auction houses as intermediaries, it has created a new paradigm that allows artists to reach buyers directly. These intermediaries previously took a significant portion of commissions on sales, but the digital market now provides alternative pathways, enabling artists to sell their work independently to a global audience. Online platforms such as Saatchi Art, Artsy, Singulart, and UGallery serve as dedicated digital art marketplaces where artists can list and sell their works without institutional gatekeeping. Additionally, e-commerce channels and artist-driven initiatives-such as personal websites with built-in shop features or selling prints through Etsy-have further democratized access to buyers, expanding opportunities for emerging artists (13, 14).

These technologies offer new creative possibilities to emerging artists, moving beyond or expanding traditional materials and physical exhibition spaces (4). While these studies provide a broad theoretical and comprehensive overview of digital technologies as democratized tools to navigate barriers, they often lack an in-depth examination of their influence on specific groups, particularly gendered or marginalized artists. Recognizing this gap, this research takes a case study approach to analyze how emerging female artists actively leverage digital technologies. Through direct observation and research of female artists who use these tools in innovative ways-whether to challenge traditional norms, expand conceptual frameworks, or navigate institutional barriers-this study aims to contribute to furthering the discussion by providing examples from the female sector. The following methodology section outlines the criteria for selecting case studies and the analytical framework.

3. Methodology

3.1. Case Study Approach and Data Analysis

This study builds upon the in-depth literature review, which explored the impact of digital technologies in the art world, to analyze how emerging female artists engage with these tools. The literature review established three key areas-Digital Presence, Creative Use, and Online Marketplaces-that highlight the broader role of digital technology in artistic visibility, creation, and financial sustainability. These areas serve as a guideline for examining how female artists integrate digital technologies into their work, assessing their effectiveness, distinctiveness, and contribution to the empowerment of female artistic expression.

By employing a case study approach, this study examines specific emerging female artists and their artworks to provide real-world insights into their challenges, strategies, and successes. The case study analysis is structured around the following three key areas from the literature review:

- 1) Digital Presence–How artists use social media and online platforms to build visibility and engage with audiences.
- 2) Creative Use–How artists incorporate VR, AI, and digital design software into their creative process to expand artistic expression.
- 3) Online Marketplaces–How artists utilize NFTs, digital marketplaces, and direct sales platforms to achieve financial sustainability.

Case study sources were collected online through artists' websites, interviews, social media, and other external channels. The key categories above serve as the framework for data analysis, enabling a comparative approach to identify different and similar strategies used by the case study artists.

3.2. Inclusion Criteria

For the case study, artists who actively utilize digital technologies-such as social media, VR, AI, or digital curation-to promote, distribute, and sell their work were selected. These artists have gained online visibility, received media attention, participated in online exhibitions, or achieved critical recognition within the past five years. Additionally, their work, regardless of whether they explicitly identify as female, challenges traditional structures and contributes to discussions on gender, identity, and institutional barriers in the art world.

3.3. Exclusion Criteria

The case study excludes artists who do not actively use digital technologies and those whose artistic practice does not contribute to the discourse on emerging female artists and digital technology.

4. Results

4.1. Case Study: Lethabo Huma-Leveraging Digital Presence and NFTs

4.1.1. Introduction

Lethabo Huma is a South African digital artist who established her career independently, without relying on traditional art institutions. Specializing in African portraiture, she blends classical painting techniques with digital media to explore themes of identity and self-expression. Based in South Africa, she lacked direct access to the global physical art market and turned to digital art as a means of professional development. After discovering illustration software like Procreate, she expanded beyond traditional art forms, using social media and online art markets to build visibility and financial security. Her early adoption of crypto art further helped her gain media attention, enabling her to navigate the art world without institutional gatekeepers (15, 16).

4.1.2. Building Visibility Through Social Media

A significant factor in Huma's success is her strategic use of social media platforms. She built a global audience by curating her Instagram profile into a virtual gallery, showcasing her digital portraits while engaging with followers through interactive content. Early in her career, paid promotions and organic engagement helped her expand her reach, leading to commissioned projects and collaborations. Huma uses social media not only to showcase her work but also to actively engage with her audience. She shares content such as *Draw with Me* and *Digital Art for Beginners* to present her artistic process and career insights. Also, she fosters an interactive relationship with young, aspiring digital artists. In an interview with *Vodafone*, she noted that many younger female artists seek her guidance online, looking for advice and encouragement. She also acknowledges gender disparities in mainstream media recognition in her country, an issue she experiences culturally and reflects in her work (17). By expanding her content beyond simply displaying her artwork, Huma strengthens her online presence and influence within the digital art community.

4.1.3. Navigating the NFT Market

Huma's career trajectory shifted significantly when she entered the NFT (non-fungible token) space. In 2021, her piece *Gogo (Grandmother) and Me* was featured in Christie's sale, bringing her global recognition. Before NFTs, Huma had limited access to a large art market. She was introduced to blockchain technology through an online connection, which helped her to resolve issues related to the authentication of digital artwork and expanding her sales opportunities (18).

4.2. Case Study: Ellie Pritts-AI, NFTs and New Business Models

4.2.1. Introduction

Ellie Pritts is a multidisciplinary artist whose work explores the intersection of analog photography, video, AI-generated imagery, and digital synthesis. Her vibrant digital works evoke nostalgia, memory, and

technological evolution. She began her career as a professional photographer at 19 before expanding into experimental color grading, glitch video editing, and generative AI art. She is one of female artists who actively leveraged online engagement, such as founding the online collective *Racer Trash* and exploring digital art, to build visibility. As an early adopter of NFTs, she leveraged blockchain platforms to achieve financial independence (19).

4.2.2. Learning Digital Tools from an Online Collective

Pritts' journey into glitch video editing, which eventually led to significant opportunities such as entering the early NFT space and participating in major international exhibitions, began with the online radical editing collective *Racer Trash*. She co-founded this collective during the COVID-19 quarantine to foster creativity and collaboration among artists and filmmakers in a digital space. In her blog, Pritts reflects on how this collective became a catalyst for her artistic growth, allowing her to explore new technologies, produce more work, and gain visibility both online and offline. This progression ultimately led to the creation of her widely recognized digital art series (20, 21).

4.2.3. Experimenting with AI and Digital Synthesis

In 2022, Pritts released her renowned *Divine Recursion* series, using generative AI. In a video interview, Pritts described this early AI series as deeply personal, explaining that her journey into AI art accelerated due to physical limitations she was experiencing at the time. Suffering from a rare disease that caused muscle issues in her hands, she was unable to draw or paint, leading her to embrace image-generating AI as soon as she discovered its potential and adapted it into her workflow. For *Divine Recursion*, Pritts used a self-portrait as the input image and selected prompts from her journal that held personal significance (22). Generative AI remains a subject of ongoing debate in the art industry, particularly regarding artistic authorship and craftsmanship. However, *Divine Recursion* successfully demonstrates how AI can be used as a tool for deeply conceptual and autobiographical storytelling.

4.2.4. Selling Art Through Blockchain-NFTs as an Income Source

As an early adopter of the NFT marketplace, Pritts has successfully established financial stability through NFT (non-fungible token) sales. Her experimentation with digital art gained critical recognition from both crypto art enthusiasts and major NFT platforms such as *SuperRare*, *Foundation*, and *OpenSea*. Leveraging her background in directing, Pritts has also curated several NFT exhibitions, helping other emerging artists gain visibility.

Her online success also led to opportunities in larger international NFT exhibitions and events, increasing media coverage of her work. In an early interview before her digital art career took off, she spoke about the financial struggles she faced as a photographer, particularly regarding unfair payment practices compared to her male counterparts. Coming from a non-traditional art background and overcoming these challenges, Pritts' career serves as a compelling example of an emerging female artist securing both opportunities and financial stability without relying on traditional art institutions (23, 24).

4.3. Case Study: Xinyi Zhang-Expanding Artistic Boundaries with VR

4.3.1. Introduction

Xinyi Zhang is an interdisciplinary artist based in Honolulu, Hawaii, whose work explores themes of transformation, spirituality, and healing. Originally self-taught in painting, Zhang later integrated virtual reality (VR) into her practice to construct digital landscapes that resonate with and expand upon her traditional works (25). Her virtual reality piece is an exemplary work which leverages external digital platforms which pursue independence and experimentation beyond traditional art space.

4.3.2. Creating Art in Virtual Reality: The Healing Garden

One of Zhang's most notable projects, *Healing Garden*, is a virtual sanctuary designed to facilitate personal and collective transformation. Utilizing VR, Zhang constructed an interactive environment where visitors can engage with the space and contribute to its evolution. Participants are invited to submit prompts describing their experiences of transformation using symbolic imagery. These submissions are then processed through generative AI and rendered into 3D objects, becoming part of the digital landscape (26, 27).

Zhang highlights the expanded possibilities offered by digital technology in *Healing Garden*. The symbolic objects serve as visual manifestations of personal experiences, made tangible through digital media. Traditionally, the artist assumes the role of sole creator, but in this work, Zhang repositions herself as an enabler-designing a system where audiences can experience their inner thoughts and emotions translated

into visual form. This approach fosters a more democratic relationship between artist and viewer, placing the public at the center of the creative process. The interactive nature of VR enhances the emotional depth of her work, allowing audiences to navigate and interpret the space in a way that is personally meaningful to them.

4.3.3. Expanding Audience Reach with Digital Exhibitions

Healing Garden was also hosted on *New Art City*, a 3D virtual exhibition platform that provides accessibility for artists to create immersive and interactive spaces with technical support and toolkits. By collaborating with this platform, which attracts innovative digital artists, tech-based creators, and institutional curators, Zhang's work gained increased visibility and conceptual engagement. Leveraging alternative platforms tailored for digital media artists is an effective strategy for connecting with art professionals and audiences with shared interests (28).

4.4. Case Study: Sungsil Ryu-Digital Satire and Breaking Institutional Barriers

4.4.1. Introduction

Sungsil Ryu is a Seoul-based interdisciplinary artist whose work critically examines hypercapitalism, digital consumerism, and societal expectations in South Korea. She broke through the barriers of traditional art institutions with her ongoing project *BJ Cherryjang*, an online persona created to critique the contradictions of contemporary digital culture. Expanding her audience beyond museums and galleries, Ryu engages the public directly, blurring the lines between fiction and reality. She is one of the few female artists who uniquely leverage technology to subvert its own usage and influence, crafting a narrative deeply rooted in cultural context. Her aesthetic is shaped by mass media visuals, internet culture, and shamanistic beliefs (29, 30).

4.4.2. Live Streaming as an Alternative Art Space

A key aspect of Ryu's artistic strategy is her use of social media live streaming as a primary tool for artistic expression. She has created an online persona named *BJ Cherryjang*, who preaches fake news and exaggerates the commodification of emotions, influencer culture, and the relentless pursuit of material success. Through satirical storytelling, Ryu-performing as BJ Cherryjang-blurs the boundaries between fictional performance and real-time interaction with her live audience (31).

In an interview with *Frieze*, Ryu explained her decision to use live streaming as a medium: "*The audience isn't limited to the visitors who go to art museums... One of the reasons why I decided to work online was to reach a wider range of the public, including people indifferent to art.*" Her work engages a broad, non-traditional art audience-viewers who may not actively seek contemporary art but encounter her work through algorithm-driven recommendations and viral media trends (29).

4.4.3. Challenging Institutional Gatekeepers

By embracing digital platforms, Ryu challenges the exclusivity of traditional gallery spaces and engages with audiences on her own terms. Her approach experiments with artistic expression outside conventional institutions, only to reintroduce it into traditional art spaces, questioning their role in legitimizing contemporary art. By doing so, she brings an interesting merge of different cultures which are often regarded as minor, cybernetic, and subcultural. Her work demonstrates how digital spaces can function as alternative venues for artistic critique and engagement, expanding the boundaries of where and how art is experienced.

4.5. Case Study: Green Recipe Lab-Leveraging Digital Technology for Sustainability and Visibility

Green Recipe Lab is a South Korea-based female artist collective redefining art-making through environmental sustainability. By challenging traditional art production, which often relies on industrial materials and chemical-based supplies, they promote eco-conscious practices such as biodegradable materials, organic dyes, and sustainable sculpting techniques. Through digital platforms like Instagram and *Louise the Women*, as well as artist-run workshops, they educate, connect, and support artists committed to sustainability. They are one of emerging female collective groups in Korea, which challenges institutional structures and creates alternative spaces for female artists through digital engagement and collective action (32, 33).

4.5.1. Social Media as an Educational and Networking Hub

As a growing collective, Green Recipe Lab actively leverages digital platforms-particularly Instagram, online forums, and newsletters. Their social media presence serves as an educational hub, sharing tutorials on eco-

friendly art techniques, highlighting artists committed to sustainable practices, and fostering discussions on environmental responsibility in creative fields. Their carefully curated Instagram feed not only raises awareness but also serves as a promotional space, ensuring their message reaches a wider audience. Additionally, their affiliation with *Louise the Women*, South Korea's largest online platform for emerging female artists, expands their reach and network, providing greater visibility for both their work and the broader conversation on sustainability (32).

4.5.2. Challenging Institutional Structures

Green Recipe Lab exemplifies how female-led initiatives can diversify the contemporary art landscape, providing an alternative to the male-dominated institutional structures. By forming a self-sustaining artistic community, they offer a model for other female artists seeking to establish their own platforms. Their work not only expands the scope of contemporary art but also fills gaps in traditional art spaces, demonstrating the power of collective action and digital engagement in fostering meaningful change.

5. Discussion

These five case study artists represent diverse approaches to leveraging digital technologies for independence, creative innovation, and community building. Recognizing the lack of institutional support for female artists, case study artists reflect and bridge this gap through their initiatives and artistic practices. Using digital platforms, they reshape the art ecosystem in more inclusive and dynamic ways.

Lethabo Huma and Green Recipe Lab demonstrate how female artists use digital platforms to access art communities and connections that are otherwise lacking in their regions. Based in South Africa, where media coverage for female artists remains limited, Huma built her career through Instagram, YouTube, and NFT marketplaces, using these platforms not only for visibility but also for financial sustainability. Similarly, Green Recipe Lab leverages Instagram and online forums to connect like-minded female artists in South Korea, addressing the lack of visible female collectives online. By creating a supportive network, Green Recipe Lab serves as a hub for emerging female artists, fostering collaboration and visibility. Both cases highlight how social media functions as a crucial alternative to institutional resources, helping artists overcome geographic and systemic barriers in the art world.

Through independent online projects, Xinyi Zhang, Sungsil Ryu, and Ellie Pritts exemplify how female artists leverage digital tools to expand conceptual creativity. They use digital media as a means of breaking away from traditional limitations, redefining artistic expression, and empowering their personal and conceptual narratives. While they may not explicitly identify as female artists, their work reflects philosophies, lived experiences, and satirical critiques that contribute to discussions within a female context. Their engagement with digital media positions female artists as active initiators in shaping new artistic frontiers.

For example, Ellie Pritts co-founded a radical video editing collective and became a leading female artist in the NFT market, Xinyi Zhang collaborated with New Art City to transform digital landscapes into immersive spiritual spaces, and Sungsil Ryu created a live-streaming channel as a platform for social experimentation. Their work collectively demonstrates how they harness digital technologies to manifest their visions, push artistic boundaries, and lead experimentation, contributing to greater diversity and female innovation in the art world.

Through financial independence via digital marketplaces, Ellie Pritts and Lethabo Huma demonstrate viable pathways for emerging artists. They are early adopters of NFTs, which favored their visibility; however, their efforts in actively leveraging various social media platforms and online marketplaces also took a part in their success. Through active communication and sharing her work in corporate-sponsored platforms, Huma got featured in major brands such as Times, Vodafone, and Visa. Meanwhile, Pritts has expanded her career by curating NFT exhibitions for other artists and sharing career insights through blog posts and writings.

For Xinyi Zhang, Sungsil Ryu, and Green Recipe Lab, while their online presence, connectivity, and creative use of digital tools do not always result in direct financial income, digital platforms have enabled them to initiate independent projects that later led to institutional funding, grants, and awards. Their cases highlight how digital engagement can serve as a stepping stone to broader opportunities, offering alternative models of success beyond direct sales.

Across all five case studies, digital technology plays a pivotal role in expanding visibility, enabling artistic experimentation, and providing financial opportunities. These artists demonstrate that digital tools are not

just promotional assets but essential platforms for self-branding and creative autonomy. By actively sharing their work, initiating projects, and directing their own artistic careers, they have redefined the role of the artist as both a creator and an entrepreneur. Their drive to innovate and challenge traditional methods has allowed them to expand their artistic practice, leading to greater recognition and career opportunities.

However, leveraging digital technology comes with challenges for emerging female artists. Not all artists possess the skills required to maximize digital opportunities, especially in an era where digital art content is oversaturated. While gaining initial exposure may be relatively easy, maintaining long-term visibility is far more difficult. Constant engagement is necessary to remain relevant, and social media algorithms often favor highly engaging content, pressuring artists to prioritize virality over artistic integrity. This raises concerns about whether digital platforms truly democratize visibility or if they create new forms of digital gatekeeping that favor those with marketing expertise and algorithmic advantages.

Financial sustainability is another major challenge. While NFTs offer alternative revenue streams, the digital art market is highly speculative, with success often depending on market trends, community engagement, and shifting demand. This volatility makes financial stability uncertain, leaving many artists struggling to sustain their careers. Although digital platforms create new opportunities, they do not guarantee long-term security, making financial sustainability a persistent concern for emerging female artists in the digital age.

6. Strengths of the Study

This study provides a comprehensive exploration of how digital technology empowers emerging female artists by analyzing both theoretical frameworks and real-world case studies. It draws a diverse range of digital impact from the recent studies to establish a strong foundation on the role of digital tools in shaping artistic careers.

Another strength is an in-depth case study approach of real case artworks. The selected case studies explore the conceptual aspects of the artists' work, demonstrating how digital tools influence both the artistic process and public engagement. This approach highlights not only the practical benefits of technologies but also their impact on the creative directions of emerging female artists.

Lastly, this study contributes to discussions on the decentralization of the art world, demonstrating how digital spaces enable young female artists to gain exposure, expand their narratives, and challenge institutional barriers.

7. Limitations of the Study

Despite its strengths, this study has several limitations that affect its scope and findings. One major challenge was identifying emerging female artists, particularly those from regions with limited media coverage. Since digital visibility often correlates with existing recognition, discovering young female artists with minimal exposure proved difficult. This limitation highlights a broader issue within digital spaces-artists who already have some level of visibility continue to gain recognition, while those without representation remain largely overlooked.

Additionally, the case study artists in this research are all highly skilled in digital technology, with their practices extending beyond traditional mediums such as painting and sculpture. As a result, this study does not fully explore how female artists working in more traditional art forms engage with digital tools. This limitation narrows the perspective on how digital technology is leveraged across different artistic disciplines, leaving room for further research on the experiences of female artists who integrate digital platforms into more conventional practices.

8. Conclusion

The rise of digital platforms does not signify the end of traditional art institutions but rather a shift in how artists navigate and engage with them. Many artists now adopt a hybrid approach, integrating both digital and physical spaces into their careers. This shift is particularly significant for emerging female artists, who often face gender disparities in traditional art spaces. By leveraging digital technologies-such as social media, virtual reality, generative AI, and online marketplaces-these artists gain independence from institutional gatekeepers, shaping their careers on their own terms. Their use of digital tools is not only a means of artistic expression but also a reflection of their personal and professional journeys. Rather than replacing traditional institutions, digital platforms are reshaping power dynamics within the art industry. Museums and galleries are no longer the sole arbiters of artistic success; instead, emerging female artists can build

their own visibility, secure financial opportunities, and cultivate supportive communities through digital means. However, these opportunities come with challenges, including platform dependency, content oversaturation, and the need for strong initiative skills, which can make it difficult for artists to sustain long-term visibility and financial stability.

As digital tools continue to evolve, the next generation of female artists will explore new ways to empower themselves and their communities. Ongoing research is essential to track these shifts and identify strategies that support emerging female artists in navigating the digital landscape. By continuously examining how digital platforms transform the art world, we can better understand their impact and create recognition of future artists thriving in an increasingly hybrid art ecosystem.

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