

New affordable-art website Collectionair backed by curatorial big-hitters

Former director of Pompidou among names behind online platform, which sells works for under \$10,000



Olivier Varenne, co-founder of Collectionair

High-profile art professionals, including Jean-Hubert Martin—the former director of the Musée National d’Art Moderne at the Centre Pompidou—have thrown their weight behind a new website offering works for sale priced under \$10,000.

The new company, Collectionair, focuses mainly on established and emerging artists from “under-represented art scenes”, enabling buyers to browse more than 20 virtual exhibitions featuring artists from countries

such as Iran, Oman and Mozambique.



Valerie Konde, co-founder of Collectionair

Collectionair was co-founded by Olivier Varenne, the international curator at the Museum of Old and New Art in Tasmania, and the entrepreneur Valerie Konde who worked for the company Rocket Internet and Google.

The pair say in a statement: “Our online exhibitions [which run for 40 to 60 days] are organised by curators from around the world, that come highly recommended by our advisory committee, and select 20 to 30 works.”

The advisory board includes Jean-Hubert Martin, Philippa Adams, the senior director of the Saatchi Gallery in London, and Adelina von Fürstenberg, who curated the Armenian pavilion at last year's Venice Biennale. These committee members do not receive a fee for their services.

“Our advisors’ decision to join forces with Collectionair came as a commitment to help talented artists, who do not have access to the right professional network, shine globally,” say Varenne and Konde.

Paris-based Martin Guinard-Terrin and the photography specialist Rodrigo Orrantia are among the curators currently overseeing artist selections on Collectionair. Some shows are put together by an “in-house team”. Varenne has organised an exhibition of works on paper by the Japanese artist Chiharu Shiota, which includes *Net* (2015) priced at \$3,350.

Most of the works available on the website come directly from the artists’ studios, with the curators acting as intermediaries. In some instances,

curators select artists that have gallery representation.

“A commercial agreement is subsequently put in place between the gallery or dealer and Collectionair,” say Varenne and Konde. Varenne adds that “we are not a gallery and we are not trying to bypass galleries”. In an unusual move, the website will also offer works consigned by private collectors.