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Rea, Naomi. "Everyone Is in a State of Panic Right Now': 7 Mid-Career Artists on How They Are Facing the Enormous Challenges of the Coronavirus Pandemic." *artnet news*. April 15, 2020.

artnet® news

Nationwide lockdowns, closures of non-essential businesses, disruptions to supply chains: the impact of the coronavirus can be felt everywhere.

The art world is no different.

Cancelled exhibitions mean lost income for artists, while studio shutdowns leave assistants wondering when they will get their next paycheck. The obstacles seem endless.

To get a sense of the landscape, we asked seven artists how the crisis has affected them and what they expect its long-term consequences to be.

Janaina Tschäpe



Janaina Tschäpe at work in her home studio in April 2020. Photo courtesy the artist.

At the beginning of March, when a lot of galleries, collectors, and friends were in New York for the Armory Show, we were still going to openings, dinners, and

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visiting the fairs. Late Sunday, I remember my daughter saying there were something like 150 cases in New York State by that time. The next day, I drove her to and from school because I didn't want her to take the subway. By Wednesday morning, we came to the decision that my studio assistants should start to work from home and I made the decision to go to Brazil with my daughter before her school closed.

I am lucky to have a farmhouse in the mountains. We are pretty much self-sustainable here, and my daughter can attend school online and I have a studio where I can work.

It was a little traumatic, actually, when we first got to the farm. I didn't realize how much anxiety I would cause the locals due to the fact that I was coming from New York. An audio recording started circulating on social media spreading fake news that my daughter and I were sick and were the first cases of the virus in the countryside. It was quite painful because as you can imagine, I started getting phone calls from everyone and even had an ambulance show up to the farm. I couldn't install my internet or get gas or basic supplies because people were too scared to come near us. I finally sent around a video stating that we weren't sick and just quarantining in our house.

Everyone is in a state of panic right now, with the closing of borders, people succumbing to racist sentiments, and fear driving people towards horrible actions. It is so worrisome that both Brazil and the US are stuck with ignorant leaders who continue to guide us in the wrong direction, concerned only about the economy and not about people. This situation is revealing a lot of our mistakes, and that we are putting a little too much money and attention in the wrong places.

I have now started a project to produce 2,000 masks for the community here. The nearby town is completely unprepared to deal with the virus, there is no infrastructure and no support. We're trying to get someone from health services to go around the community and provide information to elderly people who are at greater risk of complications. We have already bought the fabric for the masks and recruited the help of local women to sew them. Hopefully, our efforts will make the town a little more prepared if the virus does spread to the countryside.