

CHECKOUT

If you want to view or buy original photography, you don't always have to visit a bricks and mortar gallery. Online exhibition spaces are flourishing says **Daniel Calder**, as he surveys six of the best.



ALBUMEN GALLERY

BEST FOR...*emerging talent*

The Albumen Gallery typifies the new breed of online exhibition spaces invigorating the market. By dispensing with the white walls of a gallery the shows are open to all and free of any sense of exclusivity. It's early days for the gallery, but it's slowly growing a roster of fresh, young talent to complement the print sales of established practitioners including Brassai and Colin Jones. At the moment, there's a definite slant towards black & white documentary photography among the 18 represented artists.

'By dispensing with the white walls of a gallery the shows are open to all and free of any sense of exclusivity'

The website is cool yet functional, allowing you to access the images by photographer or view the online exhibition, which tends to feature a project from a single artist. The number of images for sale is generous, without being flabby, and prices are remarkably good, ranging from £200-£500.

That said, it's disappointing

not to find any information on edition numbers and you need to contact the gallery by email or phone to make a purchase. Customers based in the UK can order framed prints or obtain free delivery on unframed photographs, while overseas buyers must spend over £500 to receive free delivery.

CONTACT

▶ albumen-gallery.com
020 8742 7708

LIKES

- ▶ Good prices
- ▶ Handsome website
- ▶ Young, relatively unknown talent
- ▶ A steadily growing roster of photographers

DISLIKES

- ▶ Need to phone or email to purchase
- ▶ No information on print editions



The online exhibition at the Albumen Gallery showcases emerging talent.



EYESTORM

BEST FOR...*exclusive limited editions*

Eyestorm has been selling contemporary art online since 1999, specialising in exclusive limited editions from some of the biggest names in the art world. Photography is strongly represented, with more than 500 images for sale, including prints by Bill Owens, Bob Carlos Clarke and Helmut Newton. Most of the photographs have a contemporary art world angle, but there's a good showing of black & white material too.

'The website is slick and boasts some great features, such as a magazine, live chat, gift vouchers and a wish list'

The website is slick and boasts some great features, such as a magazine, live chat, gift vouchers and a wish list. Browsing through so many images is made easier by applying the various filters and then sorting the results. Clicking on an image brings up all the information you need, including edition numbers and a lengthy biography. You can also see

the scale of the piece in relation to an illustrated figure.

Financially, Eyestorm is pretty innovative too, as you can make an offer on a print and pay in interest-free instalments over two to four months. This flexibility is welcome, as prices are on the high side, ranging between £200 and £10,000.

CONTACT

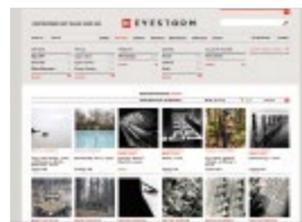
▶ eyestorm.com / 0845 643 2001

LIKES

- ▶ Fabulous quality of work
- ▶ Instant, automated checkout
- ▶ Pay in interest-free instalments
- ▶ Make an offer option

DISLIKES

- ▶ Expensive
- ▶ Not the best place for classic B&W prints



The various filters on Eyestorm help to sift through the hundreds of high quality photographs.



MICHAEL HOPPEN GALLERY

BEST FOR...*classic photography*

The Michael Hoppen Gallery continues to keep up with the times by opening an online gallery to complement its prestigious photography space in London. Selected works by stellar names such as Robert Frank, André Kertész, Eadweard Muybridge and Garry Winogrand can be viewed online and purchased in the traditional way by contacting or visiting the gallery.

Alternatively, the online exhibitions at Michael Hoppen are as carefully considered as the gallery's real world shows. The advantage, of course, is that these prints are available to buy instantly from the online shop.

The three online exhibitions so far show the diversity of photography. First up was the conceptual colour work of Matt Henry, then black & white shots of a 1978 Rolling Stones concert by Joseph Szabo and most recently a set of 1920s first edition photogravures by Karl Blossfeldt.

The exhibitions remain online in the archive, available for all to see even after the event, and the prints also remain for sale in the shop until they are sold out. Prices to date range from £240 for a small Blossfeldt to £1,200 for a limited edition work by Matt Henry.

'The exhibitions remain online in the archive, available for all to see even after the event'

CONTACT

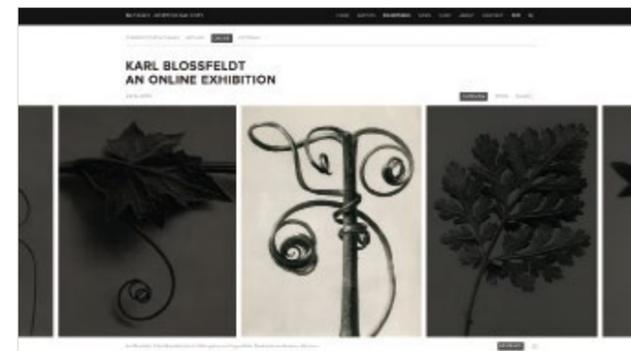
▶ michaelhoppengallery.com / 020 7352 3649

LIKES

- ▶ Competitive prices
- ▶ Considered online exhibitions
- ▶ Instant, automated checkout
- ▶ Attractively designed slideshows
- ▶ Option to collect print from gallery

DISLIKES

- ▶ Unknown delivery costs until you pay



The online exhibitions at Michael Hoppen are as carefully considered as the gallery's real-world shows.



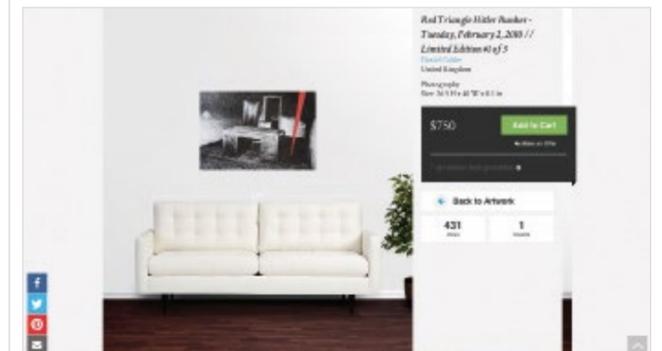
SAATCHI ONLINE

BEST FOR...*the thrill of discovery*

Finding photographic gems on Saatchi Online is akin to a pleasant stroll through a flea market. As any artist can add their work to the site, you'll need to use your own critical judgment as you scan through heaps of images to discover something amazing. Editorial features on the website – including New this Week, One to Watch, Featured Collections and Inside the Studio – help to shed light on the collection.

With more than 93,000 photos online, the detailed search filters are a blessing, allowing you to search by style, subject, media (including black & white) and price. Pictures are given every chance to shine, and sell, with enlarged views, detailed information on size, materials

'With more than 93,000 photos online, the detailed search filters are a blessing'



Being able to see prints in a virtual room is a handy feature on Saatchi Online.

and editions, and the ability to see the chosen piece in a virtual room for a sense of scale.

Buying is fully automated, and Saatchi Online offers a money-back guarantee if you're not satisfied with your purchase. Though prices vary wildly for the original limited edition works, Saatchi Online provides an open edition service where it prints and frames pictures at smaller sizes, resulting in much lower prices.

CONTACT

▶ saatchionline.com

LIKES

- ▶ 93,000+ photos for sale
- ▶ Illuminating editorial features on the website
- ▶ Affordable open edition prints available
- ▶ Instant, automated checkout
- ▶ Any print can be returned for a refund

DISLIKES

- ▶ Variable standard of work



LENSMODERN

BEST FOR... *a variety of styles*

Lensmodern was originally conceived by a group of photographers wishing to sell fine art prints alongside a traditional picture library. The Fine Art Gallery section tends to show personal work from the jobbing photographers, who are all members through invitation only. With 145 photographers involved, approaches are understandably diverse and sometimes experimental, but the majority of images are polished and fairly commercial.

With such a huge number of images the site rewards patient browsing, especially as there are no filters except for an alphabetical list of photographers. The Exhibitions section provides a good introduction to the collection, which shows selected solo projects and, handily, a four-part retrospective of Lensmodern photos.

The website displays work beautifully, but actually buying

a print is slightly awkward. Once you have signed up, the desired image must be added to a virtual Lightbox and from there you can request a price estimate, choose the dimensions and decide whether you want it signed or not. Customer care is excellent though: you can return any print you don't like and Lensmodern will reprint any picture that deteriorates over time.

CONTACT

▶ lensmodern.com / 020 7639 0424

LIKES

- ▶ Incredibly diverse range of photos
- ▶ Images are beautifully displayed on the website
- ▶ Exhibition pages give an insight into the collection
- ▶ Prints can be returned for a refund

DISLIKES

- ▶ Awkward process for buying
- ▶ No prices, sizes or edition information listed online



With 145 photographers selling prints, the diversity of styles on Lensmodern is amazing.



DEGREE ART

BEST FOR... *young photographers*

Founded in 2003, Degree Art provides a commercial platform for artists who are currently in education or have recently graduated. Alongside painting, sculpture and ceramics there are around 1,000 photos for sale, of which 100 or so are black & white. In general, the work is of a high standard, often original and with an element of risk-taking. It's a great place to discover young photographers, especially as the prices are so reasonable (mostly £100-£500).

The website is not quite so impressive, but it is possible to sift through work by category (including black & white), price, colour and size. There's also plenty of information on individual artists and photographs. One excellent feature is the ability to request a viewing at the

gallery in London, although it's not strictly necessary as all the artwork has a 14-day money-back guarantee. This feature, along with the chance to commission work, or buy a print, is simply achieved by the click of a button.

To tempt you further, Degree Art offers 0% finance on prints from £100 to £15,000 to be paid back in 10 monthly instalments.

CONTACT

▶ degreeart.com / 020 8980 0395

LIKES

- ▶ Great platform for discovering young talent
- ▶ Affordable prices for quality work
- ▶ Instant, automated checkout
- ▶ 0% finance for 10 monthly repayments
- ▶ 14 day money-back guarantee

DISLIKES

- ▶ Uninspiring website

It's a great place to discover young photographers, especially as the prices are so reasonable'



The Black & White Photography category on Degree Art is a great shortcut to view the monochrome work of graduates.