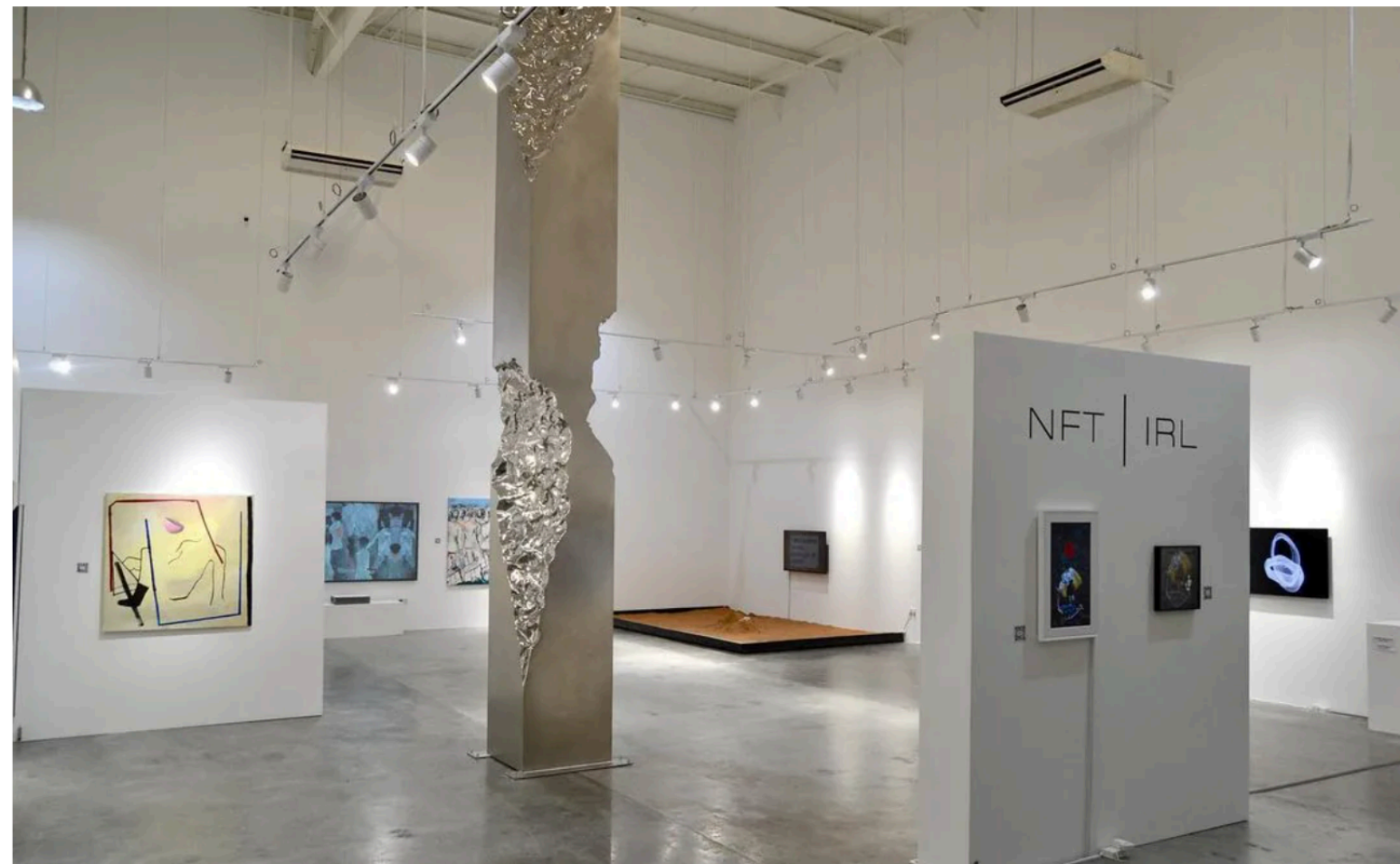


Culture

An experimental display of NFTs and physical artwork side-by-side at this art exhibition in Dubai

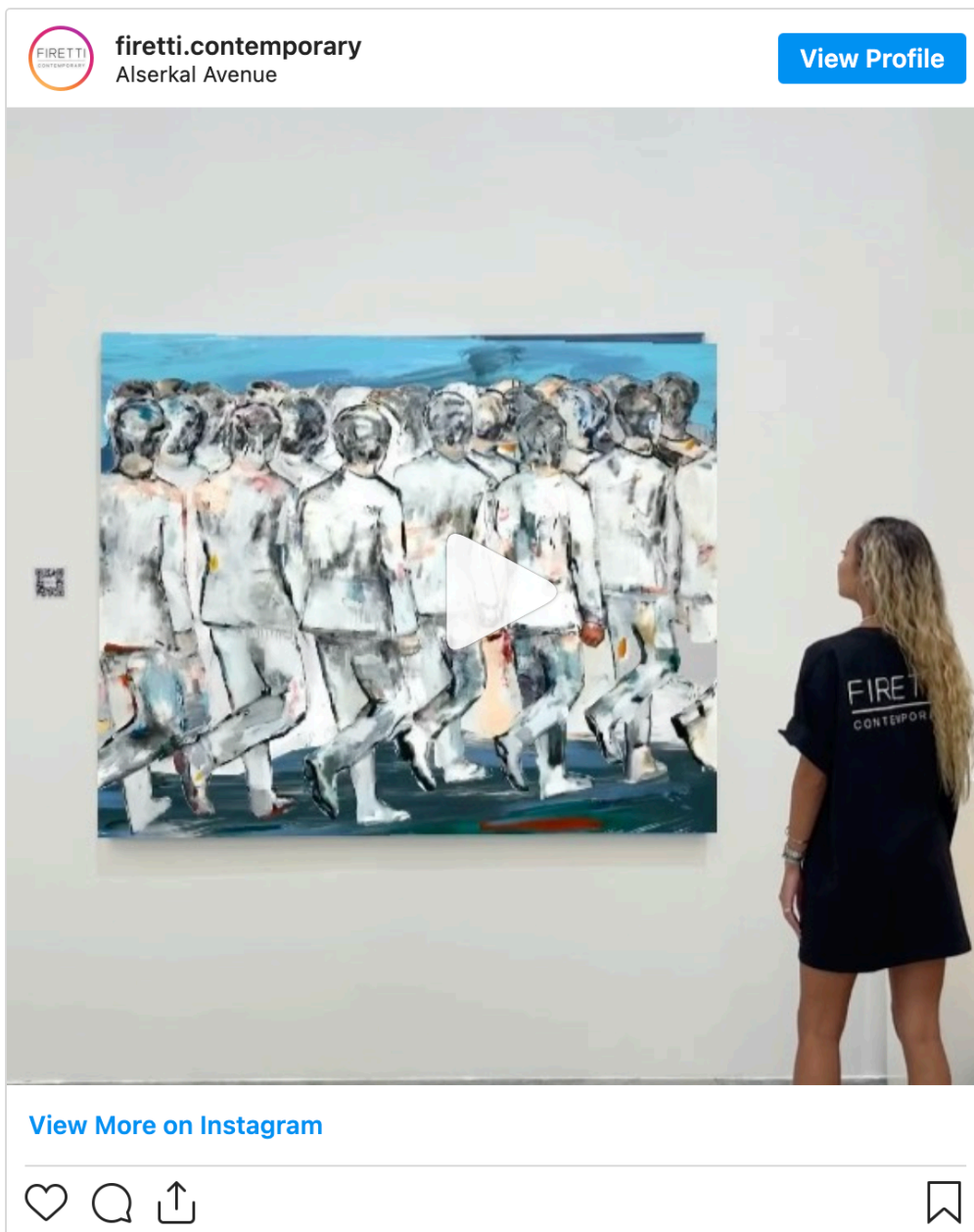


NFTs or non-fungible tokens are a new thing that has taken the world by storm. NFTs –data stored on a digital ledger, called a blockchain, can be used to represent items such as photos, videos, audio, and other types of digital files. While these digital artworks are the modern-day art craze when it comes to physical art, can the screen compete with a canvas?

The same question has been asked at this Dubai art exhibition where physical artworks have been displayed next to digital ones, or non-fungible tokens.

Titled 'NFT | IRL' (the second half of which stands for 'in real life', internet slang for anything that exists offline), the group exhibition features artworks of seven artists whose original pieces – paintings, sculptures, and installations have also been photographed, digitised, animated and converted into crypto art.

Along with the traditional mediums of artworks, on the same wall are mounted TV screens showing the NFTs, featuring the same subjects and elements, only now they are animated, accompanied by sound, and played on a loop.



For instance, in Ahmed Emad's painting *Time Passes Through Five Senses*, the NFT version takes its subject of a haunting figure with mouth agape and transforms it into an almost grotesque cartoon character, its eyes reeling left and right.

These and many such interesting artworks have been put to display at the exhibition. Amazing works by artists Kadara Enyeasi, Josh Rowell, Jacques Vartabedian, Helidon Xhixha, and Fatiha Zemmouri, will be on display until September at Firetti Contemporary Art Gallery in Dubai.

Taking a hybrid approach for the first time, the gallery's founder, Mara Firetti has collaborated with NFT curator Morrow Collective for the exhibition. Proceeds of the sales from the physical works will go entirely to the gallery, whereas Morrow Collective will keep all the cryptocurrency from the NFTs.

Cover Image: Firetti Contemporary | Instagram