

BUSINESS OF HOME



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A digital block party for Greenwich Village galleries



By [Fred Nicolaus](#)

We're in a disorienting period—a time in which some are still bleaching their groceries, while others are crowding into bars like nothing ever happened. New York especially is feeling schizophrenic these days, as residents (and designers) are tentatively figuring out what's "OK." Visiting showrooms by appointment seems to be all right, but parties, gallery openings and cocktail receptions feel a long ways off. No surprise, then, that a new decorative arts show, organized by venerable Greenwich Village gallery [Bernd Goeckler](#), is to be held entirely online.

A digital art show is not a new phenomenon in the age of [COVID-19](#), but it is a departure for a famously old-school category. When *Business of Home* asked Bernd Goeckler's director, **Katja Hirche** (the niece of **Bernd Goeckler** himself, who [passed away](#) last year), what online-only arts events she enjoyed during quarantine, she laughed and gave a simple answer: None. "Instagram Live is overwhelming, and everyone starts at the same time," she says. "I sat back and said, I'll leave this to others."



A 'light sculpture' by Niamh Barry, sold at Maison Gerard Courtesy of Maison Gerard

The show, themed around bronze, will not debut on Instagram Live. Instead, pieces will be shown on Bernd Goeckler's site in a digital "viewing room" developed specifically to showcase antiques and decorative furniture online. Hirche says she and the gallery's staff will supplement by taking individual videos and pictures for curious clients.

She began organizing the show earlier this year, before the pandemic exploded in New York, when family in Italy was issuing dire warnings about what was to come. The choice of bronze as a material started with the work of one of Bernd Goeckler's artisans, **Paula Swinnen**, who makes intricate bronze furniture constructed from lost wax casts of painstakingly assembled tree branches and twigs. "Once we had bronze as the inspiration, the rest fell into place quite easily," says Hirche.

Interestingly, she invited the competition along. Other antique and decorative arts dealers, most of whom are physical neighbors of Bernd Goeckler's gallery on 10th Street, will be joining the show, making it a kind of virtual block party. [Cristina Grajales Gallery](#), [The Future Perfect](#), Hostler Burrows, Magen H Gallery, [Maison Gerard](#) and Galerie Régis Mathieu will all participate with bronze pieces of their own.

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Save the date! On June 16 at 1:00 p.m. EST, BOH editor in chief **Kaitlin Petersen** will host a weekly community discussion. This event is free for [BOH Insiders](#). Community Discussions take place every Tuesday at 1:00 p.m. EST. Click [here](#) to learn more.

"The more, the merrier," says Hirche. "The brick-and-mortar stores have mostly died out, so we're one of the last blocks left where there's a strong sense of design and community about us."

Hirche is hopeful that, if it goes well, digital shows can become a recurring feature for Bernd Goeckler, even as restrictions ease and cocktail parties return to Manhattan. But she is certainly looking forward to welcoming designers back into the showroom, and for the gallery's supply chain to ramp back up to full speed. There's a renewed interest in vintage pieces, she says, and the gallery has been doing a brisk business with its already-made modern pieces—both categories that the gallery can deliver right away, without a COVID-extended lead time.

"We've done pretty well considering the circumstances, with our modern pieces in inventory," says Hirche. "Now we just need to order them again so we actually have stuff in the store!"

Homepage photo: A dresser by Paula Swinnen | Courtesy of Bernd Goeckler