



# Sotheby's EST. 1744 Museum Network

A BRIGHTSPOT CASE STUDY

## A Digital Passport to the Arts

In three months, Sotheby's expanded its online Museum Network site from a video-centric experience to include several content formats such as articles, events, calendars and image galleries.

Sotheby's is a leading broker of art, jewelry, real estate and collectibles, and is known globally for its fine art auctions and private sales. The company has been uniting collectors with works of art for more than 250 years.

Sotheby's desired to offer a digital "passport to the arts" to stakeholders by delivering a rich, online showcase of the world's best exhibitions, collections, videos and stories from hundreds of museums across the globe. Thus, the idea of the Sotheby's Museum Network was born.

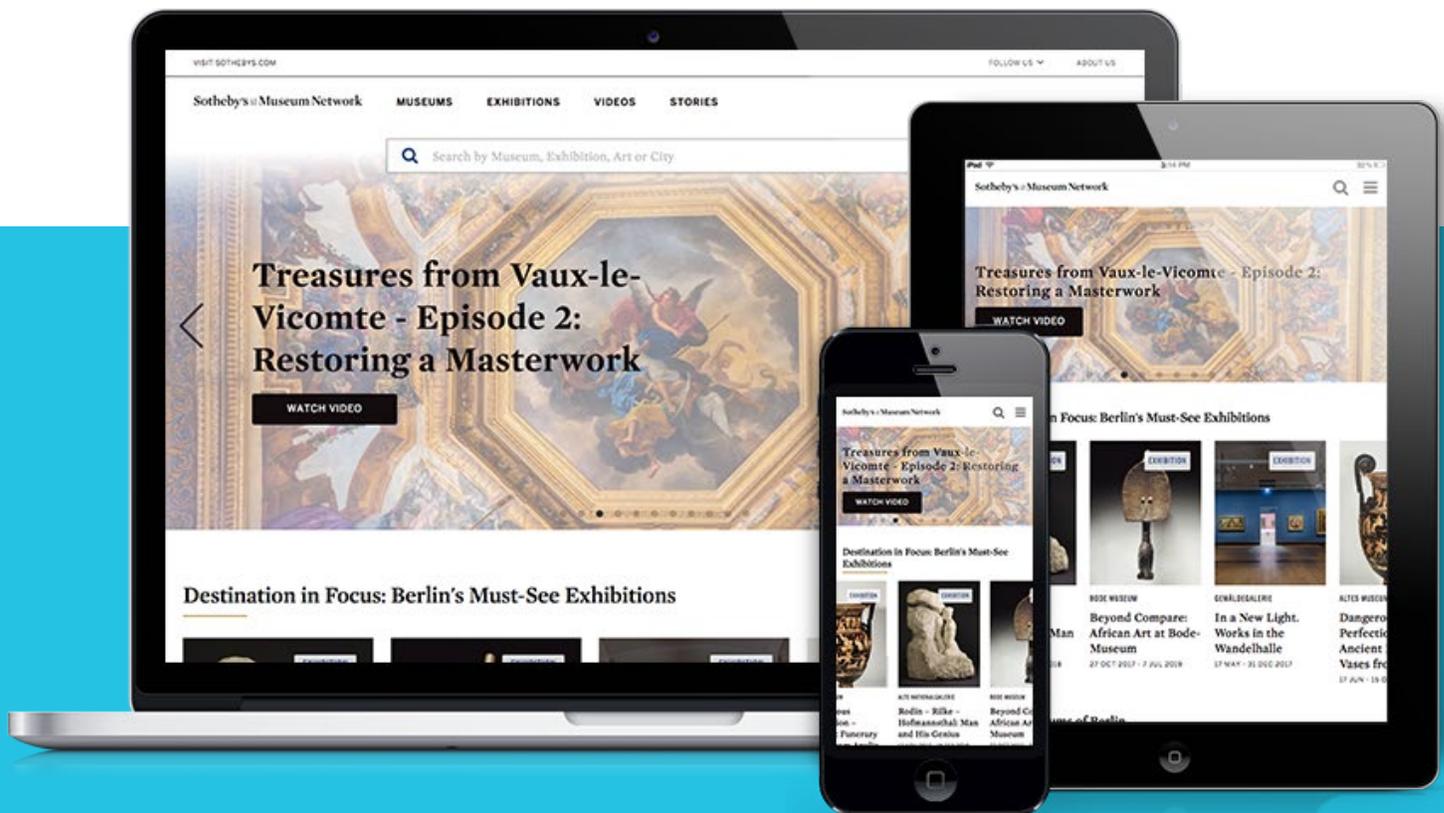
Sotheby's launched its second iteration of the Museum Network on Brightspot. This launch was the kick-off to several additional digital initiatives supporting Sotheby's most important revenue streams, as Sotheby's forward-looking team dives into an exciting digital transformation.

## Sotheby's Challenge

Sotheby's first launched its Museum Network as a video-centric site via Adobe Experience Manager. Though Sotheby's videos were generating high engagement, its digital team wanted to deliver a richer, more engaging experience for fine art and history enthusiasts by adding articles, still photographs and event calendars.

After struggling to onboard its team and leverage AEM for its non-video content, in addition to the decision to shift its goals, the digital team decided to search for a new CMS that could support additional content types, push content out faster, and engage users on mobile and desktop platforms. Sotheby's evaluated and chose Brightspot as the new CMS for the Museum Network. Sotheby's also contracted Perfect Sense's development and design experts for help with the project.

"We didn't have a fully fleshed-out series of mockups for the site when we started engaging with Perfect Sense," said Jonathan Pytell, Sotheby's Vice President and Director of Digital Product. "We were under time pressure to get something live that represented a high quality user experience, which is often a recipe for trouble. That's one of the reasons why it was very important that we had to have flexible technical partner and platform to work with."



## The Brightspot Solution

For Sotheby's, offering a digital "passport to the arts" required a platform that enabled the company to deliver a variety of rich, creative and innovative digital experiences to its audiences. Sotheby's found the platform in Brightspot and has leveraged it to:

- **Create and publish content faster:** Brightspot enables the Museum Network's editors and UX designers to quickly and easily publish articles, images, videos and descriptions of art and antiquities. To optimize the editorial process and publish content for multiple devices, Sotheby's uses Brightspot's editorial workflows and multi-channel distribution capabilities. The digital team also leverages Brightspot's personalization capabilities to tailor visitor experiences based on where they are located, or their personal content preferences.
- **Manage digital assets more efficiently:** Brightspot provides the Museum Network with powerful digital asset management features, which are integrated into the administrative functions of Sotheby's auction application. Sotheby's digital teams can access a broad set of content types, such as articles, video, and images for both desktop and mobile devices. These assets can also be organized by type, group or gallery, or tags (e.g. artist, artistic era, etc.). Brightspot's digital asset classification and metadata management allows for different perspectives on the relationships among the Museum Network's thousands of artifacts.
- **Find and discover digital assets more quickly:** Brightspot's powerful search functionality has a flexible data model, which can accommodate a broad set of content types, and manage taxonomical relationships. Site administrators can easily search for and find art and antiquity content based upon the content's metadata, descriptions and related images. Additionally, related pieces of art can be linked by attributes such as the artists that created them, the museum where they are located and exhibitions where they are featured. These relationships are tracked internally at Sotheby's, and they're well known by museum curators and art lovers.

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Jonathan Pytell, Sotheby's Vice President and Director of Digital Product

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Sotheby's Museum Network

MUSEUMS EXHIBITIONS VIDEOS STORIES

## Bode Museum

BERLIN | DEU | SHARE

### About the Museum

**Bode Museum**

Am Kupfergraben, Berlin, 10027  
49 (0)30 266 42 42

**MUSEUM WEBSITE**

**ADMISSION**  
Adults: €10  
Concessions: €5  
Museum Island all exhibitions: Adults: €18  
Museum Island all exhibitions: Concessions: €9

**MUSEUM HOURS**  
Mon: 10 am - 6 pm  
Tue: 10 am - 6 pm  
Wed: 10 am - 6 pm  
Thu: 10 am - 6 pm  
Fri: 10 am - 6 pm  
Sat: 10 am - 6 pm  
Sun: 10 am - 6 pm

ANTIQUEs COINS AND MEDALS  
EUROPEAN SCULPTURE & WORKS OF ART

**Collection Highlights**

- Gold Medal with a Portrait of Alexander the Great
- Martin Zürn, St. Sebastian, c.1650-59
- Ape mosaic from Ravenna
- DONATELLO Donatello, Pieta

**Exhibitions**

ALL RECENTLY OPENED CLOSING SOON

**Beyond Compare: African Art at Bode-Museum**  
27 OCT 2017 - 7 JUL 2019

Sotheby's Museum Network

MUSEUMS EXHIBITIONS VIDEOS STORIES

## Turner: why global museums are still rapt by the Romantic

RACHEL POSTS | 15 DEC 2017

SHARE

**J.M.W. Turner, Origin of a Porter Boat Evening (1840). The Frick Collection, Photo: Michael Beddoon.**

London. This week, museums across the world will commemorate the anniversary of the death of the great British Romantic painter, J.M.W. Turner. Professor Ann Fenlon, co-curator of a major Turner exhibition in 2014 at Tate Britain in London – which houses the most important collection of the artist's work – says Turner “utterly transformed” his genre, elevating landscape into a site to tackle the intellectual challenges of his age, from science to history.

Turner was born in 1775, the son of a barber, but despite this inauspicious start, he had become a Royal Academician – an official member of the artistic elite – at the age of 26. By the time he died at the age of 76 on 19 December 1840, the celebrated art critic John Ruskin had called him “the greatest of his age”, although others questioned his radical experiments in paint.

His popularity has continued to grow over the years, with a string of major exhibitions in the past decade (North America's largest ever Turner retrospective opened in London in 2007-2008; Turner from the Top: The Making of a Master broke attendance records in Australia in 2010; Tate Britain has hosted the two major touring shows Turner and the Masters in 2009 and Late Turner: Painting Set Free in 2014), and, by popular demand, his portraits is being printed onto the British £10 note.

**J.M.W. Turner, Rain, Steam, and a Great Bridge (1844), Swedish National Gallery.**

**A Modernist before Modernism?**

Critics in 1819 called Turner an “imitating imitator” after seeing his watercolour, *Charles Turner: A Career at the National Gallery*, says in *Turner: The Man and the Landscape* are “covered with insouciant, downy lines from grubby optics and modern life. Technology merges the elements in Turner's *Shenstone – Steam Boat off a Harbour's Mouth*, “it's just the most

## Business Impact

Since implementing Brightspot, Pytell noted the Museum Network's increased user engagement. Visitors spend more time on the Museum Network website than the first iteration of the site, and they've found the site through “side door” indexed pages which are rich with text, images and videos. The improved visitor experience and navigation helps to retain visitors on the site longer.

Since Sotheby's had an aggressive timetable to roll out the next iteration of the website, Pytell said they took a “start finished, then customize” strategy. Instead of waiting until all site functionality and content was complete, they relaunched their website with a long-term vision of continuous enhancements over time.

Additionally, Brightspot has enabled Sotheby's product team to improve their existing agile methodologies, and its editorial team can get content approved and published rapidly, when it's relevant and in demand. Similarly to bidding on a piece of art at auction, Sotheby's knows it must stay ahead of the competition and, as Pytell described it, know when to “double down on what's working, and walk away from what's not, as quickly as possible.”

## Conclusion

The Museum Network website delivers a highly engaging user experience with vivid images, powerful search, compelling stories and engaging videos. Sotheby's has created a digital experience that mimics the finest galleries and museums in the world with beautiful imagery and mesmerizing video that captivates interest to browse longer and return often.

The Museum Network launch is the first in several Brightspot-based initiatives for Sotheby's. Future initiatives will include projects that will increase lead generation, enable single sign-on and offer direct sales of wine, and other retail experiences. Sotheby's head-first dive into digital transformation with the Museum Network will not only offer art and artifact lovers a "passport to the arts," but richer digital experiences for all of Sotheby's audiences in the future.

The screenshot displays the Sotheby's Museum Network website interface. At the top, the navigation bar includes 'Sotheby's Museum Network', 'MUSEUMS', 'EXHIBITIONS', 'VIDEOS', and 'STORIES', along with a search icon. The main content area features the title 'LACMA Reimagined: Vera Lutter's Transformative Photographs' and a 'SHARE' button. Below the title is a video player showing a woman standing in front of two large-scale black and white photographs. The left photograph depicts a classical building with columns, and the right photograph shows a large satellite dish antenna. The video player includes a progress bar at the bottom left showing '0:43 / 6:25' and a volume icon at the bottom right.

### LACMA Reimagined: Vera Lutter's Transformative Photographs

Earlier this year, LACMA engaged artist Vera Lutter – through a commission sponsored by Sotheby's – to create a series of works using camera obscura, her signature technique. Her large-scale photographs depict two-dimensional works from the permanent collection and memorialize the museum's original buildings, three of which are scheduled to be replaced in the near future.