

It was only when humans ceased to be hunter gatherers, began to domesticate animals and settled down to live in large communities that it became worth the while of viruses to jump from animals to humans. They have certainly got the hang of it now.

With the latest virus (Covid 19) now attacking all continents bar Antarctica, governments in Switzerland and France have banned gatherings of more than 1,000 people for the former and 5,000 for the latter. Many other countries will doubtless follow suit.

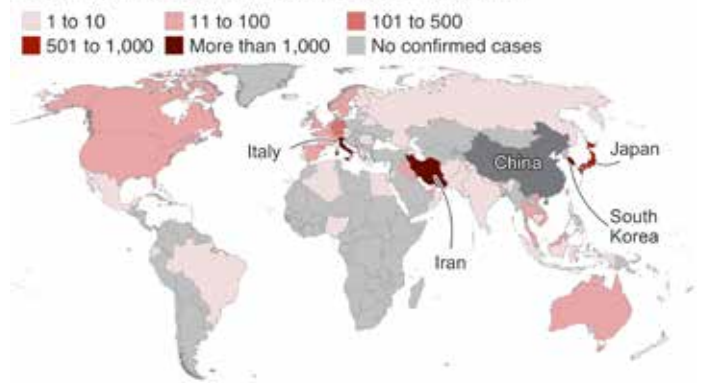
This is going to have an enormous impact on all businesses and life in general. The Art World has already felt the first effects. Art Basel Hong Kong has been cancelled, as has the Art Fair in Parma and Beijing's Jingart Fair. The Design Fair in Milan, Salon de Mobile, has been pushed back from April to June and Baselworld Watch Fair, scheduled to take place in January, is now chalked in for April. Sotheby's have switched sales from Hong Kong to New York and Bonhams have cancelled their March sales in Hong Kong altogether.

All Museums in Hong Kong and mainland China are shut, as they are in Northern Italy. With people in China being encouraged to work from home, supply chains have been severely disrupted and this will soon affect the whole world.

The major problem with Covid 19 is that for many people the symptoms are so mild they are undetectable, so these infectious people are on the loose unknowingly spreading the disease. It cannot be contained now, with one epidemiologist suggesting that between 40% and 70% of the world will have the virus by the end of the year. Who can tell what this will mean to the world economy? Nothing good, that's for sure.

Stay well and I hope to be able to write about the Art World again soon. If you don't hear from me, you know why...

#### Cases of coronavirus outside China



Source: WHO, health ministries. Updated: 2 Mar 16:00 GMT

BBC