

Can selfies really be art? London's Saatchi Gallery thinks so

By Steven McIntosh 23 January 2017

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Getty Images

"Selfie" was named Oxford Dictionaries' word of the year in 2013

The next time you snap a selfie with your friends on holiday or a night out - you might just be creating the next artistic masterpiece.

London's Saatchi Gallery is planning a new exhibition to explore the importance of selfies as an art form.

It will feature not only self portraits by the likes of Vincent Van Gogh, but also more recent celebrity selfies.

Members of the public will also be invited to submit their own photos for inclusion in the exhibition.

The popularity of the selfie has rocketed since the invention of smartphones and in 2013 Oxford Dictionaries named "selfie" as their **word of the year**.

Walking past someone with a phone in their outstretched arm trying to find their best angle is now a common sight - and something that has led to the **invention of the selfie stick**.

The Saatchi Gallery said the exhibition will showcase a selection of well-known pieces as well as "selfies that have quickly become icons of the digital era".

Self-portraits by artists including Van Gogh and Rembrandt will feature in **From Selfie to Self Expression**.

Nigel Hurst, chief executive officer at the Saatchi Gallery, described the smartphone selfie as an example of a shift in society using technology as a means of self-expression.

He said: "In many ways, the selfie represents the epitome of contemporary culture's transition into a highly-digitalised and technologically-advanced age as mobile-phone technology has caught up with the camera.

"The exhibition will present a compelling insight into the history and creative potential of the selfie."

As part of the project, Saatchi plans to commission 10 young British photographers to make their own creative contributions.

The gallery will also include the launch of the #SaatchiSelfie competition, asking people around the world to post their most interesting selfies on social media for a chance to be featured in the exhibition.

Glory Zhang, of Huawei - which is partnering with the Saatchi Gallery for the exhibition - said: "The smartphone has become a tool of artistic expression.

"The selfie generation is becoming the self-expression generation as each of us seeks to explore and share our inner creativity through the one artistic tool to which we all have access: The smartphone."

From Selfie To Self-Expression will open at the Saatchi Gallery on 31 March.