

Art21 Opens its 21st Year with Five New Film Premieres

Featured artists include Barbara Kruger, Raúl de Nieves, Doreen Garner, Abigail DeVille, and Jack Whitten

(NEW YORK — January 24, 2018) — **Art21** launches its 21st anniversary by unveiling **five artists** slated to be featured in a series of **new film premieres**. Opening with a film featuring artist **Barbara Kruger** and culminating with a film featuring artist **Jack Whitten** (produced throughout 2017, before his recent passing), Art21 will premiere five consecutive new films from its two digital series, *Extended Play* and *New York Close Up*—including, as well, original films featuring artists **Raúl de Nieves**, **Doreen Garner**, and **Abigail DeVille**.

Each film will premiere on Art21.org every other Wednesday from **January 24 through March 21, 2018**. The films will simultaneously premiere on the Art21 YouTube channel (youtube.com/art21org).

This winter film series demonstrates Art21's ongoing commitment to **digital-first video programming**, underscoring the nonprofit organization's position as the leading producer of films documenting the creative processes of today's artists. "For over 20 years now, we have committed ourselves to storytelling about artists both established and emerging," said Tina Kukielski, Art21 executive director and chief curator. "What better way to launch into our 21st year than to look at our past, present, and future in a single gesture by once again working with an artist from our very first year on television, Barbara Kruger."

Premiere Schedule

New films premiering every other Wednesday through March 2018

Barbara Kruger (*Extended Play*) — January 24
Raúl de Nieves (*New York Close Up*) — February 7
Doreen Garner (*New York Close Up*) — February 21
Abigail DeVille (*New York Close Up*) — March 7
Jack Whitten (*Extended Play*) — March 21

Five Artists, Five Films

Kicking off the winter programming is Art21's first collaboration with **Barbara Kruger** since the 2001 inaugural season of the Peabody Award-winning *Art in the Twenty-First Century* television series. In this rare new interview, Kruger reflects on her development as an artist, tracing her roots back to working class Newark, New Jersey, then through joining Condé Nast as a designer—the role that would equip her with design fluencies employed throughout her career. The film is bookended by two of the artist's most recent projects: a site-specific installation in a New York City skatepark commissioned by Performa and an immersive full-room-wrap at Sprüth Magers gallery in Berlin.

Explorations of friendship and collaboration run through the second film from Art21's acclaimed *New York Close Up* series to feature artist **Raúl de Nieves**. Working in partnership with artist **Colin Self**, the film tracks the pair as they prepare for *The Fool*, a 2017 performance at The Kitchen in New York City.

Artist **Doreen Garner** makes her Art21 debut through a new film from the *New York Close Up* series. Shown preparing for her recent exhibition at Pioneer Works in Brooklyn, the artist explores the history of Dr. J. Marion Sims, the controversial figure canonized as “The Father of Modern Gynecology” despite the savage procedures he performed on enslaved women without anesthesia or consent.

Perceptions of space and time are challenged in a recent project by **Abigail DeVille**, as seen in the artist's third feature from the *New York Close Up* series. Through exhaustive research and planning, the artist transforms Baltimore's former Peale Museum into a venue for investigating the

extensive and, in some cases, untold history of the first building in the Western Hemisphere to be built and designed as a museum.

Closing the winter series is a film from the *Extended Play* series featuring renowned artist **Jack Whitten**—the second artist to make an Art21 debut in 2018. Filmed in late 2017, months before his passing, the artist is shown at work in his Queens studio, contemplating the decades-long career that brought him from Alabama to New York City in the 1960s. The film also features a recent body of work by the artist shown at a solo gallery exhibition at Hauser & Wirth in New York City.

***Extended Play*: an original Art21 film series**

Art21's *Extended Play* (formerly known as *Exclusive*) digital series provides unmediated, behind-the-scenes access to today's leading artists. Through process-revealing footage and intimate interviews, these curatorially-driven films chronicle a diverse scale of international projects, ranging from major commissions to exploratory sketches. Produced in close collaboration with artists, *Extended Play* uncovers the provocative ideas, timely cultural influences, and biographical anecdotes that inspire the artists featured throughout the series.

Launched in 2008, *Extended Play* is the first and longest-running digital film series committed to documenting contemporary artists. *Extended Play* provides unparalleled access to the processes and lives of over 100 artists, including Julie Mehretu, Kara Walker, Sarah Sze, William Kentridge, Do Ho Suh, Cindy Sherman, Nancy Spero, Gabriel Orozco, Mike Kelley, and Carrie Mae Weems, among others. Together, the films in this ongoing series create a dynamic group portrait that illuminates what it means to be a working artist today.

Extended Play is presented by Alta Art. Additional support provided by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council; the Art21 Contemporary Council; and by individual contributors.

New York Close Up: an original Art21 film series

Art21's *New York Close Up* digital series is devoted to artists in the first decade of their professional career, living and working in New York City. Providing an intimate look at the next wave of artists, Art21 collaborates with artists to imagine new ways of telling stories about their creative processes, political and aesthetic philosophies, personal backgrounds, and community perspectives.

With the potential for each artist to be profiled in multiple complementary short films published over several years, the series offers a rare opportunity for viewers to experience today's most intriguing young artists as their works, ideas, and lives evolve over time. Exploring themes of collaboration, improvisation, personal autobiography, history, and political responsibility, *New York Close Up* films are a snapshot of a distinct time and place, explored from the unique perspective of an emerging generation of artists.

Launched in 2011, the series has profiled over 30 artists to date, including Diana Al-Hadid, Lucas Blalock, Jamian Juliano-Villani, Kalup Linzy, Rashid Johnson, Keltie Ferris, LaToya Ruby Frazier, Mika Rottenberg, Jacolby Satterwhite, Erin Shirreff, and Mika Tajima, among others.

New York Close Up is supported, in part, by The Lambent Foundation; public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council; VIA Art Fund; and by individual contributors.

21 years of Art21

Since 1997, Art21 has been recognized as a celebrated global leader in presenting thought-provoking and sophisticated content about contemporary art. It is the go-to place to learn firsthand about some of the most interesting working artists today—from the artists themselves—and is responsible for introducing millions of people to contemporary art and artists. Founded on the belief that artists are role models for creative and critical thinking, Art21's mission aims to inspire a more creative and tolerant world through the works and words of contemporary artists.

Art21.org provides an unparalleled year-round, always-on look at working artists, a continuous digital presence for an organization that is widely recognized for a biennial television series. The Art21 video library houses over 50 hours of original video content—over 500 videos all open and free to the public. Reaching audiences of over 5 million a month, Art21’s digital initiatives continue the organization’s long-standing tradition of using the power of digital media to inspire audiences worldwide by exposing them to contemporary artists.

Through its education program, Art21 engages audiences in dialogue about the contemporary art and artists featured in Art21 films. Art21’s educational initiatives include the Art21 Educators learning community, the production of interpretive resources, professional development workshops and lectures, and participatory programs and screening events.

To date, Art21’s short form films have had over 50 film festival acceptances across the world and have been nominated for a Webby Award and won a Cine Golden Eagle.

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