

Art21 Announces the Ninth Season of “Art in the Twenty-First Century” Premiering this September on PBS

Three-part series features artists working out of Berlin, Johannesburg, and the San Francisco Bay Area



(NEW YORK — May 2, 2018) — Last night, at a gala celebrating the **21st anniversary** of the nonprofit organization’s founding, Art21 unveiled a **new season** of its Peabody Award-winning “Art in the Twenty-First Century” television series, **premiering this September** on PBS. The new season is presented in three parts and reveals the stories of **twelve innovators** in visual art—and, in a series first, a nonprofit art center.

Now in its **ninth season**, “Art in the Twenty-First Century” is the **longest-running television series on contemporary art**, providing unprecedented access to the leading creative minds of our time. Continuing the thematic

focus introduced in the last season of the series, the new season draws upon artists' relationships with the places in which they work: **Berlin**, Germany; **Johannesburg**, South Africa; and the **San Francisco Bay Area**, California, USA.

"Berlin"	"Johannesburg"	"San Francisco Bay Area"
Nathalie Djurberg & Hans Berg	David Goldblatt	Creative Growth
Olafur Eliasson	Nicholas Hlobo	Art Center
Hiwa K	Zanele Muholi	Katy Grannan
Susan Philipsz	Robin Rhode	Lynn Hershman Leeson
		Stephanie Syjuco

"Place is an enduring anchor, for artists and for each of us," says **Art21 executive director and chief curator, Tina Kukielski**. "Our relationships to our surroundings capture a reverence to the history ingrained in our culture and the creativity that fuels our livelihood."

Motivated by stories both shared and personal, the artists featured in the new season channel a unique set of relationships to place, all while translating their experiences into lasting contributions that speak to broad cultural change. In addition to the season's eponymous focal regions of Berlin, Johannesburg, and the San Francisco Bay Area, artists are shown engaging with communities from around the world—including those in Amsterdam, Cape Town, Copenhagen, Kassel, Knislinge, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Munich, New York, Paris, Vienna, as well as San Francisco and the Bay Area cities of Berkeley and Oakland.

The artists in the new season draw inspiration from the culture and history that influence their surroundings, responding to the issues of our time—identity, migration, innovation, media, and legacy. These artists examine the complicated histories of colonization, war, and displacement; offer new perspectives on the ways that we interact with technology and the environment; critique our conceptions of gender, sexuality, and race; and ultimately inspire us to see our world in new ways.

Through nine seasons of its television series and over 300 episodes from its two original digital series, the Art21 video library is home to **over 50 hours of film** documenting the works and words of today's foremost

visual artists. “Artists learn from other artists, but the lineage of inspiration doesn’t end there,” said artist **Julie Mehretu**. “Creativity exists in everyone—it’s empowering to have direct access to artists’ voices in the way that Art21 provides it.”

Season 9 of “Art in the Twenty-First Century” premieres **September 21, 2018** on PBS. **Full episodes and segments** can be **streamed** from Art21.org, PBS.org, and through PBS streaming platforms following each episode’s broadcast premiere. The television and streaming broadcast will be preceded by a **world premiere event in New York City** taking place on September 19, 2018.

Major support for Season 9 of “Art in the Twenty-First Century” is provided by National Endowment for the Arts, PBS, Lambent Foundation, Agnes Gund, Ford Foundation, The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, The Anna-Maria and Stephen Kellen Foundation, The Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation, Toby Devan Lewis, Nion McEvoy, and The Phyllis C. Wattis Foundation.

Episodes

“Berlin”

Berlin has become a haven for artists from all over the world—a free zone where experimentation, individual expression, and international influences converge. From creating large-scale public projects to intimately personal ones, the artists in this hour demonstrate the diversity of practice and sensibilities in the German capital. With the support of his interdisciplinary studio, **Olafur Eliasson** (b. 1967, Copenhagen, Denmark), produces epic, technically sophisticated sculptures and installations, using natural elements like light, water, and air to alter viewers’ sensory perceptions. Expanding the role of the artist, Eliasson contemplates how art can function as a “civic muscle,” offering solutions to global problems like climate change and renewable energy. Sculptor-musician duo **Nathalie Djurberg** (b.1978, Lysekil, Sweden) and **Hans Berg** (b. 1978, Rättvik, Sweden) create playful and bawdy clay-animation films and installations that riff on fables, allegories, and myths. Together, they build elaborate immersive environments that marry moving images with hypnotic musical scores. **Hiwa K** (b. 1975, Sulaymaniyah, Kurdistan, Iraq) questions his role as an artist within the ever-shifting political landscapes in Europe and the Middle East. The sculptures, videos, and performances by the Iraqi-Kurdish

artist slyly mix his biography with the larger story of migration and East-West relations in Europe. **Susan Philipsz** (b. 1965, Glasgow, Scotland) treats audio as a sculptural object, using historically-resonant sources—like an orchestral work by a composer who was interned in a German concentration camp in the 1940s—to create unexpectedly haunting and lyrical installations.

“Johannesburg”

Since the dramatic fall of apartheid in 1994, Johannesburg has emerged as the artistic capital of sub-Saharan Africa. Collectively, the artists in this hour use their work to empower marginalized communities, reexamine history, and pursue their visions for South Africa’s future. **Robin Rhode** (b. 1976, Cape Town, South Africa) and his team of assistants create vibrant, temporary outdoor murals that serve as backdrops for photographed performances. Working in the neighborhood where he grew up—a mixed-race community plagued by drug and gang wars—Rhode leads a team of local young men in creating a new mural and shares his hopes for what participation in an art project can offer. Considered the dean of South African photography, **David Goldblatt** (b. 1930, Randfontein, South Africa) chronicles and critiques the country’s tumultuous modern history. His earliest projects captured the desperate lives of African gold miners and critically probed white Afrikaner privilege, and his more recent series examines the country’s changing politics through the evolution of its architectural structures. Joyful and courageous, **Zanele Muholi** (b. 1972, Durban, South Africa) photographs Black lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex individuals in South Africa, driven by her intense dedication to increasing the visibility of one of the country’s most vulnerable communities. Muholi photographs LGBTI individuals in the hopes of eradicating the stigma and violence that has pervaded queer communities in South Africa. **Nicholas Hlobo** (b. 1975, Cape Town, South Africa) creates gorgeously handcrafted paintings, sculptures, and performances to quietly and subversively examine his sexuality, masculinity, and Xhosa heritage within South African culture. Hlobo weaves together symbolic bodily innuendos and historical references in his work, examining and exposing the challenges of the country’s young democracy.

“San Francisco Bay Area”

The San Francisco Bay Area is a magnet for artists who are drawn to its experimental atmosphere, countercultural spirit, and history of

innovation. The artists in this hour are united by their steadfastness and persistence in creating; their art serves as an essential expression of their experience of the world. **Stephanie Syjuco** (b. 1974, Manila, Philippines) makes research-driven photographs, sculptures, and installations that explore the tension between the authentic and the counterfeit and challenge deep-seated assumptions about history, race, and labor. As a flashpoint of social and political protest, the Bay Area spurs Syjuco's investigations of colonialism, capitalism, and citizenship. Photographer and filmmaker **Katy Grannan** (b.1969, Arlington, Massachusetts, USA) develops long-term relationships with the residents of western American cities and towns, which generate beautiful and unsettling images. **Lynn Hershman Leeson** (b. 1941, Cleveland, Ohio, USA) is at once a pointed critic and a sly practical jokester, as she explores the roles that technology, media, and artifice play in society. Overlooked for the better part of her decades-long career, Leeson is now recognized as a pioneering multidisciplinary artist and critiques the gender biases that excluded her and other women artists. Established at the height of the disability-rights movement, **Creative Growth Art Center** (founded 1974, Oakland, California, USA) is a nonprofit organization serving artists with physical and cognitive disabilities. Predicated on the belief that art is fundamental to human expression and that all people are entitled to its tools of communication, Creative Growth is an incubator of artistic activity that has fostered exemplary artists such as Dan Miller, Judith Scott, William Scott, and Monica Valentine.

Series Credits

Executive Producer

Tina Kukielski

Series Producer

Nick Ravich

Directors & Producers

Ian Forster ("Johannesburg")

Rafael Salazar & Ava Wiland ("Berlin")

Christine Turner ("San Francisco Bay Area")

Editors

Thomas Niles ("Berlin")

Morgan Riles (“Johannesburg”)
Mary Ann Toman (“San Francisco Bay Area”)

Title & Motion Design
Matt Eller / Afternoon Inc.

Composer
Joel Pickard

A Gala in Celebration of Art21’s 21st Birthday

On May 1, Art21 hosted its first-ever gala—a birthday party in honor of its 21st anniversary. In the first of two honors given throughout the evening, **Agnes Gund** paid tribute to the lasting legacy of the late **Susan Sollins**, who founded Art21 in 1997. Sollins led the organization through seventeen years of innovation in art programming, including the first seven seasons of the flagship “Art in the Twenty-First Century” television series.

“Susan Sollins was an innovator in every sense of the word, who provided the public with unparalleled access to contemporary artists and their practices through her founding of Art21,” said Gund. “By showcasing artistic contributions in a filmic series, Art21 paved the way for broad education and accessibility into the world of contemporary art.”

Artist **Julie Mehretu** was also among the evening’s honorees in recognition of her long-standing history with Art21. Guests from throughout the organization’s vast history, such as **Carrie Mae Weems**, **Arlene Shechet**, **Claire Danes**, **Jason Moran**, and **Mel Chin**, underlined the far-reaching community that Art21 has inspired around its programming.

Artist involvement played an essential role throughout the 21st Birthday Gala celebration. A birthday cake designed by **Pedro Reyes** was on display and served to guests, while original artwork created by **assume vivid astro focus** bolstered the festive environment through birthday hats and invitation design. A silent auction included unique artworks—presented as birthday gifts—contributed by **Creative Growth Art Center**, **Raúl de Nieves**, **Leonardo Drew**, **Daniel Gordon**, **Katharina Grosse**, **Rashid Johnson**, **Aki Sasamoto**, **Sarah Sze**, **Ursula von Rydingsvard**, and **The Estate of John Chamberlain**. The event was sold out with over 300 supporters in attendance.

Screening Society Offers Free Programs

Worldwide

In conjunction with the premiere of the new season, Art21 will partner with organizations around the world to present **free community screenings** as part of Art21's Screening Society program.

Screening Society is an international free screening initiative created to increase knowledge of contemporary art, spark dialogue, and inspire creative thinking for a global audience. Art21 invites a wide variety of partners—schools, universities, libraries, museums, nonprofit organizations, galleries, arts and cultural spaces, community centers, and more—to host screenings from the latest season of “Art in the Twenty-First Century” that are **free and open to the public**. Screenings will take place from September 21 to December 31, 2018.

Art21 provides all Screening Society partners with a toolkit containing helpful information for hosting a screening, including a guide designed to help facilitate a public event through discussion questions and group activities.

Over the previous two seasons, over 250 Screening Society partners hosted more than 1,300 screenings across the United States and in over 30 countries around the world.

Interested partners can sign up to be notified when registration opens at art21.org/screeningsociety.

About 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 through exposure 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.

Art21 programs are made possible through the generosity of The Anna Maria and Stephen Kellen Foundation; Agnes Gund; PBS; the Lambent Foundation Fund of the Tides Foundation; the National Endowment for the Arts; The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts; The Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation; and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

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For a full list of Art21 supporters, please visit Art21.org.

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