

Art21 receives gift in memory of Susan Sollins from arts patron and social justice champion Agnes Gund

The “Susan Sollins Executive Director” is the first endowed position at Art21



Susan Sollins, founder of Art21

(NEW YORK — December 1, 2020) — Art21, the non-profit organization and producer of the longest-running documentary series on contemporary art, announced today the receipt of a **major gift** by arts patron and social justice advocate, **Agnes Gund**. This gift will support Art21’s executive director position, to be re-titled as “**Susan Sollins Executive Director**” in honor of the organization’s late founder, effective immediately. The Susan Sollins Executive Director is the **first endowed position at Art21** and is held by **Tina Kukielski**.

Sollins founded Art21 in 1997, leading the organization for seventeen years until her passing in October 2014. Kukielski was appointed by the Art21 Board of Trustees in January 2016.

“I am delighted to support this emblematic organization recognizing its role in democratizing access to contemporary art and artists,” said Gund, a **longtime friend of the organization and among its earliest supporters**. “Under Tina’s leadership, Art21 continues to educate millions through the voices and innovations of today’s great artists.”

“This transformational gift will strengthen Art21’s future and leadership for years to come,” said **David Howe**, Art21 Board Chairman. “Aggie Gund is an exemplar of the transformative power of art as a vehicle for social change. Art21 is proud to count on her generous support and to continue the mission of this pioneering organization under Tina’s guidance.”

“Throughout these unprecedented times, Art21 has prided itself on serving an increasingly wide-ranging audience, from students to teachers, children to parents, neophytes to lifelong learners, all seeking inspiration,” said **Kukielski**. “We remain committed to amplifying the voices of artists, who have and always will lead in conversations about creativity and innovation.”

In September, Art21 premiered the landmark **tenth season** of its **Peabody Award-winning series**, *Art in the Twenty-First Century*, with **three new episodes** charting artmaking in London, Beijing, and the regions around the United States-Mexico border. “A social and political context of pressing importance, while never explicitly stated, steadily emerges,” said art critic **Christopher Knight** in a review for the *Los Angeles Times*. “It makes the grouping of these three shows unusually well-timed.”

The organization’s digital platform at Art21.org is home to the **most comprehensive documentary film collection** on today’s foremost artists, providing unparalleled access to an ever-growing library of films, editorial content, and educational resources.

About Agnes Gund

Agnes Gund is president emerita of the Museum of Modern Art and chair of its International Council. She is also chair emerita of MoMA PS1. Ms. Gund joined the MoMA Board in 1976 and served as president from 1991 until 2002.

Ms. Gund is founder and chair emerita of Studio in a School, a non-profit organization she established in 1977 in response to budget cuts that virtually eliminated arts classes from New York City public schools.

A philanthropist and collector of modern and contemporary art, Ms. Gund serves on the boards of the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Foundation for Art and Preservation in Embassies, and the Morgan Library & Museum. She is co-founder and chair of the Center for Curatorial Leadership, as well as an honorary trustee of the National YoungArts Foundation, Independent Curators International, and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Cleveland. In June 2017, she launched the Art for Justice Fund in partnership with the Ford Foundation and Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors to support criminal justice reform in the U.S.

About Tina Kukielski

Tina Kukielski joined Art21 in 2016 after more than thirteen years as a contemporary art curator. She was a co-curator of the acclaimed *2013 Carnegie International*, bringing together 35 established and emerging artists from 19 different countries. As lead curator on the Hillman Photography Initiative at the Carnegie Museum of Art, Kukielski launched a number of digital initiatives and films series. During her time at the Whitney Museum of American Art from 2002–2010, she worked to acquire and mount exhibitions by a wide range of celebrated contemporary artists. She is presently a curator on the Artistic Team of the *FRONT International: Cleveland Triennial for Contemporary Art* set to open in 2022.

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 film library houses over 65 hours of original video content—over 500 videos, always free and always on view—on demand at Art21.org and around the clock at Art21.live. 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, professional development workshops and lectures through its Art21 Ambassadors program, the production of interpretive resources, and participatory programs and screening events.

To date, Art21’s digital films have been accepted in over 50 film festivals across the world, with screenings at DOC NYC, BlackStar, Brooklyn Film Festival, DC Shorts, and Flickers’ Rhode Island International Film Festival. Other achievements for Art21’s digital films include multiple Vimeo Staff Picks, two Webby Award nominations, and a Cine Golden Eagle award.

Art21 programs are made possible through the generosity of Agnes Gund, The David S. Howe Foundation, The Anna-Maria and Stephen Kellen Foundation, Lambent Foundation Fund of the Tides Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, PBS, B+M Wright Foundation, The Andreas Foundation, Jane and James Cohan, The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, and Brenda Potter.

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

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