Art in the Twenty-First Century: New Season Premieres Tonight

Featuring Alex Da Corte, Daniel Lind-Ramos, Amy Sherald, and Rose B. Simpson, “Everyday Icons,” airs at 10pm on PBS

New York, New York (April 7, 2023) – Tonight, Art21 is thrilled to premiere the eleventh season of the Emmy-nominated, Peabody Award-winning documentary series Art in the Twenty-First Century. Airing on PBS at 10 PM ET, “Everyday Icons,” will be the first of three one-hour episodes, ushering in the latest season of the longest-running television series on contemporary art.

“Everyday Icons” poses two fundamental questions: Who and what gets to represent a culture? Why do we exalt some symbols and icons, while ignoring others? The episode profiles four artists who challenge culturally-ingrained monuments and icons, and have developed their own visual worlds to reflect a changing society. Portraitist Amy Sherald meticulously remixes iconic American images, while reflecting on her past and the past of a nation. Alex Da Corte welcomes viewers into his dreamlike studio, as he finds new depth in familiar icons from pop culture, mythology, and art history. In Loiza, Puerto Rico, Daniel Lind-Ramos collects debris from Hurricane Maria for a sculpture, interweaving the sublime and terror of the hurricane with the Caribbean immigration experience. Rose B. Simpson incorporates the stylistics of the Santa Clara Pueblo into her work, empowering herself through her ancestry and inheritance. As each one confronts everyday symbols and questions of American identity, what emerges are intimate portraits of four unique, and yet distinctly American, artists.

WATCH THE TRAILER

“When setting out to make this episode, we looked to artists who question the visual traditions and values codified into our culture,” explains Tina Kukielski, Susan Sollins Executive Director and Chief Curator of Art21. “These four artists show us alternate paths toward a more accurate picture of our world. Together they develop an iconography that promotes deeper
modes of empathy, connection, and critical thought to reflect a shared reality across diverse identities and experiences.”

The rest of the season continues to grant unprecedented access into groundbreaking artists’ studios and piercing insight into their creative process. “Bodies of Knowledge,” airing on June 23, explores little-known truths about society and its workings, featuring Guerilla Girls, Anicka Yi, Tauba Auerbach, and Hank Willis Thomas. The third and final episode, “Friends and Strangers,” airing on October 20, finds power and beauty in grassroots activism, personal stories, and collective response, with artists Linda Goode Bryant, Miranda July, Christine Sun Kim, and Cannupa Hanksa Luger. In these episodes, filmmakers were able to capture an in-the-moment Guerrilla Girls demonstration, an impromptu art activation by Miranda July, and the process and ideation behind Hank Willis Thomas’ sculpture The Embrace.

Catch “Everyday Icons” tonight, April 7, on PBS at 10 PM ET. A dual media player on the Art21 website will accompany the premiere of “Everyday Icons,” offering a descriptive audio option to improve accessibility for viewers with vision impairments. Check your local PBS station’s schedule to see “Everyday Icons” after its premiere. The episode will also be available on Art21.org and across PBS digital streaming platforms beginning in Fall 2023.


ABOUT ART21

Art21 is the world’s leading source to learn directly from the artists of our time. A nonprofit organization, the mission of Art21 is to educate and expand access to contemporary art, producing documentary films, resources, and public programs. Learn more at Art21.org.

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