



Art21 Honors Paul Pfeiffer and Charles Gaines at 2026 Spring Gala as Organization Celebrates 25 Years of Championing Access to Contemporary Art

Benefit pays tribute to Agnes Gund and features a live auction of exclusive experiences, including a drawing workshop with Camille Henrot

(NEW YORK — March 26, 2026) — Celebrating 25 years of amplifying access to contemporary art, [Art21](#) will honor artists Paul Pfeiffer and Charles Gaines at its 2026 Spring Gala on Tuesday, April 14, at Tribeca Rooftop, alongside a special tribute to renowned arts patron and philanthropist Agnes Gund.

Bringing together artists, filmmakers, collectors, curators, educators, and longtime supporters, the Spring Gala will convene the community that has shaped Art21's work, as part of a year-long anniversary marking 25 years since its debut on the airwaves — reaching audiences in more than 50 countries through distribution platforms such as YouTube, PBS, Sky New Zealand, and Mexico's TV UNAM, and appearing at over 100 museums and arts institutions, including the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Getty Research Institute, Australia Centre for the Moving Image, the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery, the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art in Kanazawa, Guggenheim Bilbao, the Tai Kwun Culture and Arts Center, the Art Gallery of New South Wales, and Zeitz MOCAA.

“Art21 has always been about celebrating artists and sharing their ideas with the world,” said **Tina Kukielski**, Susan Sollins Executive Director and Chief Curator of Art21. “As we mark 25 years of bringing artists' voices to global audiences, this evening celebrates not only the remarkable figures we are honoring, but also the extraordinary community that has made this work possible.”

Since its founding, Art21 has earned two Peabody Awards and produced over 600 films featuring many of the most important artists of our time. Artists featured include [Firelei Báez](#), whose work draws from the colonial past to explore new possibilities for the future; [Amy Sherard](#), known for her portraits centering everyday Black Americans; [Ai Weiwei](#), whose work confronts issues of human rights and freedom of expression; and [Nick Cave](#), known for his immersive *Soundsuits* and performance works. Together, these programs create a living archive of artists' ideas, one that continues to inspire audiences, educators, and students around the world.

The 2026 gala will recognize [Charles Gaines](#) and [Paul Pfeiffer](#), two influential artists whose practices have reshaped the language of contemporary art and inspired generations of artists, educators, and thinkers.

Charles Gaines is widely recognized as a pioneer of conceptual art whose rule-based systems combine art, mathematics, language, and music. Through drawing, photography, and installation, Gaines has developed a groundbreaking body of work that interrogates perception, representation, and systems of meaning. Gaines is also a celebrated and influential educator whose teaching has inspired a new generation of artists to think critically and creatively about the world around them. Among his most recent works is *Hanging Tree*, a site-specific bronze sculpture created for the Freedom Monument Sculpture Park in Montgomery, Alabama, inspired by the legacy of racial violence and the history evoked in Billie Holiday's "Strange Fruit." In 2022, Gaines was the subject of an Art21 film documenting the creation of *Moving Chains*, his first major public sculpture, on Governors Island.

Paul Pfeiffer's multidisciplinary work examines spectacle, mass media, and collective memory, transforming widely circulated images, often drawn from sports and popular culture, to reveal the structures that shape how audiences experience visual culture. In 2024, he presented his first major retrospective, *Prologue to the Story of the Birth of Freedom* — an expansive survey of his 25-year career spanning sculpture, installation, photography, and video — to critical acclaim. The gala will culminate with a live marching band procession, a nod to *Red Green Blue* (2022), a video installation built from recordings of the University of Georgia Redcoat Marching Band, which was featured in Art21's *Extended Play* series.

The evening will also include a special tribute to **Agnes Gund**, whose extraordinary leadership and generosity have had a profound impact on the arts. A longtime champion of artists and cultural institutions, Gund played a vital role in supporting museums, artists, and arts education initiatives for decades. Her enduring commitment to artists and to expanding access to art exemplifies the values that have guided Art21 throughout its history. Notably, Gund delivered the tribute to Art21 founder Susan Sollins at the organization's first-ever gala in 2018, bringing full circle the vision Sollins established of extending contemporary art beyond the walls of major institutions.

The evening will include a live auction offering unique experiences with leading contemporary artists, including **Firelei Báez, Charles Gaines, Esteban Cabeza de Baca, Heidi Howard, and Camille Henrot**. Art21's gala will bring together art world and film luminaries, including **artists** Abigail DeVille, Raúl de Nieves, Josh Kline, Pat Oleszko, the collective CFGNY, Sara Cwynar, Camille Henrot, Shaun Leonardo, Rachel Rossin, Sable Elyse Smith, **filmmakers** Christine Turner, Ava Willand, Rafael Salazar Moreno, Marcia Smith, Stanley Nelson, **curators** Kate Fowle, Liz Munsell, and Lumi Tan, among others.

Event Details

Art21 Spring Gala
Tuesday, April 14, 2026
6–10 PM

6 PM Cocktails
7 PM Dinner
9 PM After Party

Tribeca Rooftop
2 Desbrosses Street
New York, NY 10013

Funds raised during the evening will support Art21's film production, digital programming, and educational initiatives, helping expand global access to contemporary art and artists' voices.

About Art21

Art21 documents the art of our time through the words and works of the most impactful artists working today. Operating at the nexus of contemporary art and film, Art21 produces intimate portraits of artists at crucial moments of creation, inviting audiences to see the world from an artist's perspective. From its award-winning public television series to in-person public programs, education initiatives, and film screenings, to broadcasting documentary films free, online, and across social media platforms, the independent nonprofit is dedicated to meeting audiences where they are and to making contemporary art accessible to all. For more information, visit Art21.org.