



THE FUTURE IS UNWRITTEN HEALING ARTS SYMPOSIUM

10:30am – 5:00pm, November 14, 2021

The Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

Press Release

Date of issue: November 9, 2021

Symposium presented in partnership with the World Health Organization and The Metropolitan Museum of Art is a “cultural call to action” to invest in the arts to improve physical, mental, and social health

On November 14, 2021, leading policy advocates, artists, and researchers from cultural organizations, healthcare centers, government, and the United Nations will convene at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York in a call to action to acknowledge and act on the evidence base for the health benefits of the arts.

The day-long [Healing Arts Symposium](#), presented in partnership with the World Health Organization, and produced by CULTURUNNERS in partnership with the Creative Arts Therapies Consortium at NYU Steinhardt, the NeuroArts Blueprint, an initiative of the International Arts + Mind Lab at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, and the Health, Medicine, and Society Program at The Aspen Institute, and the Open Mind Project positions the arts as necessary to physical, mental, and social health across the lifespan. The event will be live streamed.

Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General, commented about the symposium, “We are particularly pleased that Museums like The Met are rethinking their missions to see themselves not simply as repositories of valuable objects, but as centres of creative engagement with their communities in the pursuit of promoting the wellbeing, and health, of the public.”

The event will be centered around three themed panels exploring the intersection of **research, cultural practice, and global policy** in the arts and health. Opening remarks by **Max Hollein**, Marina Kellen French Director of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, **Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus**, WHO Director-General, and **Audrey Azoulay**, UNESCO Director-General, will frame the panels which are being hosted by **Heidi Holder**, The Met's newly appointed Frederick P. and Sandra P. Rose Chair of Education; **Nisha Sajani**, Founding Director of Arts & Health @ NYU; and **Susan Magsamen**, Executive Director of the International Arts + Mind Lab. Participating artists include soprano and arts and health advocate **Renée Fleming**; American singer, actress, and founding member of Black Theatre United, **Vanessa Williams**; and Syrian-American artist and architect **Mohamad Hafez**. Also participating are **Aduke Gomez**, Chairperson for Art4Health in the Ministry for Health in Lagos, Nigeria; **Patrick J. Kennedy**, former congressman and mental health advocate; **Sunil Iyengar**, Director of the Office of Research & Analysis at the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA); and **Emmeline Edwards**, Director of the Division of Extramural Research of the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health (NCCIH).

Christopher Bailey, Arts & Health Lead, World Health Organization, comments, “With a growing body of evidence that embedding the arts into systems and places of healing can improve health outcomes, lower costs and support recovery from illness and injury, now is the time for a ‘healing arts revolution’ that improves the wellbeing of millions of people worldwide.”

The program will shine a special light on arts and health interventions on the ground, and highlight projects on the “frontline” of the pandemic where the crisis has exacerbated pre-existing threats to the environment, equity and access, economy, public health, political stability, and human rights.

The Healing Arts Symposium marks the culmination of Healing Arts New York, the last of a series of 2021 city activations, produced by CULTURUNNERS, to convene global arts and health researchers, practitioners, and policymakers. As the world emerges from the greatest health crisis in a generation, Healing Arts aims to

affirm what artists have always known and research is now proving—that the arts can heal.

This program is made possible, in part, by donors to The Met’s Education Department in honor of the Museum’s 150th anniversary.

These events will be produced in accordance with institutional and City COVID-19 protocols to ensure the health and safety of presenters.

For the full Healing Arts New York program, visit [our website](#).

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About the **World Health Organization (WHO) Arts & Health Program**

The World Health Organization works with 194 Member States across six regions and from more than 150 offices to achieve better health for everyone, everywhere. The WHO's Arts & Health Program advances research on the physical, mental, and social health benefits of the arts through collaboration with academic, policy, and cultural partners around the world. <https://www.who.int/initiatives/arts-and-health>

About **The Metropolitan Museum of Art**

The Metropolitan Museum of Art presents over 5,000 years of art from around the world for everyone to experience and enjoy. The Museum lives in two iconic sites in New York City—The Met Fifth Avenue and The Met Cloisters. Millions of people also take part in The Met experience online. Since its founding in 1870, The Met has always aspired to be more than a treasury of rare and beautiful objects. Every day, art comes alive in the Museum's galleries and through its exhibitions and events, revealing new ideas and unexpected connections across time and across cultures. www.metmuseum.org

About **CULTURUNNERS**

CULTURUNNERS is an international arts agency—producing campaigns, exhibitions, media content and live events—promoting sustainable development through the arts. Founded at MIT in 2014, CULTURUNNERS prioritised artists-led projects that transform communities, societies and systems as part of the UN's Decade of Action. In 2020, CULTURUNNERS launched “The Future is Unwritten”—a global initiative to facilitate cooperation between the international arts sector and United Nations Agencies. www.culturrunners.com

About the **Creative Arts Therapies Consortium in NYU Steinhardt**

The NYU Creative Arts Therapies Consortium aims to advance public knowledge and research on the arts in healthcare and arts therapies. The Consortium leads an international research alliance of universities with robust research programs in the arts therapies: Alanus University, Drexel University, Edge Hill University, University of Haifa, University of Heidelberg, Lesley University, and University of Melbourne. This international community of researcher-practitioners and affiliates collaborate on

process and outcome research on the benefits of the arts across the lifespan in diverse contexts. As part of their collaboration with the WHO Arts & Health program, the consortium is mapping the evidence for the art therapies and arts with stated therapeutic intent, illuminating the therapeutic factors that contribute to how the arts facilitate change, and developing a resource for artist wellbeing.

www.steinhardt.nyu.edu/catconstorium

The NYU Creative Arts Therapies Consortium is located in the Department of Music and Performing Arts Professions in the NYU Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development. Founded in 1890 as the first school of pedagogy in the US, today NYU Steinhardt advances the education, health, and well-being of people and communities around the world by fostering knowledge, creativity, and innovation at the crossroads of culture, education, and human development.

www.steinhardt.nyu.edu

About the **NeuroArts Blueprint Initiative**

The NeuroArts Blueprint: Cultivating the Neuroarts Ecosystem to Advance Health and Wellbeing is a groundbreaking initiative at the crossroads of science, the arts, and technology. Its mission is to cultivate an ecosystem for neuroarts. This transdisciplinary field studies how the arts and aesthetic experiences measurably change the body, brain, and behavior, and how this knowledge is translated into specific practices that advance health and wellbeing.

A partnership between the Johns Hopkins International Arts + Mind Lab Center for Applied Neuroaesthetics and the Aspen Institute's Health, Medicine & Society Program, the initiative engages leaders across a wide range of disciplines, as well as people with lived experience. www.neuroartsblueprint.org

About **The Future is Unwritten**

The Future is Unwritten (TFIU) was established in 2020 by CULTURUNNERS as part of the UN's 75th Anniversary Program, UN75, to facilitate cooperation between the international arts sector and United Nations Agencies. TFIU founded Healing

Arts, under the auspices of the WHO Arts and Health Program, as a cultural call to action in response to COVID 19. Its 2021 program includes a major fundraising campaign with Christie's and city-wide activations in London, Venice, Paris, and New York. www.thefutureisunwritten.org