

THE FUTURE IS UNWRITTEN HEALING ARTS LONDON

Press Release

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THE HEALING ARTS 2021 CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED TO ADDRESS MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS CAUSED BY COVID-19

GILLIAN ANDERSON, ANTONY GORMLEY, WILLIAM KENTRIDGE, AGNES DENES AND
MARTIN CREED AMONG ARTISTS TO SUPPORT PROGRAMME

The **Healing Arts** 2021 campaign, a call to action by the world of the arts in response to the mental health crisis caused by COVID-19, is being launched in the UK on **22-26 March 2021** by CULTURUNNERS as part of the World Health Organization's (WHO) series of solidarity events. Healing Arts London brings together a cultural coalition of partners including University College London, Tate, The Art Newspaper, Community Jameel, Castello di Rivoli, Hospital Rooms, and the National Centre for Creative Health to present a five-day programme of events alongside a charity auction by Christie's on **25 March** of works donated by Antony Gormley, Ragnar Kjartansson, William Kentridge, Martin Creed, and Yoshitomo Nara.

The Healing Arts' online events begin on 22 March with an exclusive conversation between Gillian Anderson (known for her roles in Netflix's 'Sex Education' and 'The Crown, The X-Files and The Fall) and Christopher Bailey, a former actor and now Arts & Health Lead at the WHO, with special guests, sculptor Sir Antony Gormley and the WHO's Director General, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

Over the following four days there will be:

- virtual 'artists' house calls' exploring creativity in various places of confinement, including artists' studios, a hospital psychiatric unit, and a prison;
- a webinar with medical researchers, art therapists and policy-makers about the evidence for the efficacy of the arts improving mental health and the quality of life of people living with dementia;
- curators and activists giving practical examples of the role of art in improving mental, societal and environmental health on the frontline of global challenges like COVID.

As COVID-19 has confined our lives, the arts have emerged as an essential part of our mental wellbeing. Researchers have collected convincing evidence that they bring consolation and healing to people suffering in the mind*.

Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General comments: "Cases and deaths can be counted. Less easy to measure is the toll that the COVID-19 pandemic has taken on the mental health of so many people. We call on every country to include services to promote mental health and to prevent and treat mental health conditions as part of its plan to respond to and recover from the pandemic. I'm grateful to Healing Arts for drawing attention to mental health, and for highlighting the role that the arts can play in supporting and sustaining mental health."

* Daisy Fancourt and Saoirse Finn *What is the evidence on the role of the arts in improving health and well-being? A scoping review*. WHO HEALTH EVIDENCE NETWORK SYNTHESIS REPORT 67, 2019;
and Rebecca Gordon-Nesbitt and Alan Howarth *The arts and the social determinants of health: findings from an inquiry conducted by the United Kingdom All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing* ARTS & HEALTH, Volume 12, 2020 (published online 2019)

A recent report² by the World Health Organization (WHO) highlights the widespread concerns about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on people's mental health. The isolation brought about by lockdown, fear of infection, financial worries and bereavement have all contributed to increasing levels of stress and anxiety. In addition, mental health services have been severely disrupted during the pandemic; according to a WHO survey conducted in mid-2020, the pandemic had disrupted or halted mental health services in 93% of the 130 countries responding*.

The Healing Arts programme will highlight several projects supported by funds from the auction, including programmes in Iraq, in partnership with **Community Jameel**, documenting and sustaining traditional cultural practices to address mental health needs among the **Marsh Arab** and **Yazidi** communities, and in the **Navajo Nation**, Arizona.

The pioneering 90-year old Land-Artist **Agnes Denes**, who planted a wheat field around New York's Twin Towers in the 1982, has created a flag, "The Future is Fragile, Handle with Care", which will be flown from the roof of **Tate Britain** to mark the end of the London activation and launch of The Future is Unwritten Artists' Response Fund. This provides financial and production support to artist-led projects contributing to improved mental, social and environmental health in the wake of COVID-19.

The fund is administered by the London-based Blessed Foundation, with projects chosen by a committee consisting of Christopher Bailey of WHO, Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev of Castello di Rivoli Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Turin, Heidi Holder of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Stephen Stapleton of CULTURUNNERS, Cara Courage of Tate and John Blaffer Royall.

A portion of the money raised is for the newly-established WHO Foundation based in Geneva. The Foundation is an independent, grant-making body, and will use funds raised from the auctions specifically to benefit the WHO's programmes on the front line of the response to Covid-19 mental health problems.

Christopher Bailey of WHO says: "Art has a unique ability to help us comfort, confront, contextualize and create community. And when embracing science and evidence as bedrock, art and culture can help us imagine a better way forward to a positive future."

The Healing Arts was launched in 2020 as part the United Nation's 75th anniversary celebrations. The program benefits from an unprecedented collaboration with Christie's, hosted Healing Arts first auction in November 2020, with the record-breaking sale of Ahmed mater's Magnetism for \$120,000 that will continue throughout the year. The initiative is being produced by CULTURUNNERS, directed by Stephen Stapleton, and Christopher Bailey of WHO, together with John Blaffer Royall and Anna Somers Cocks, and with the support of the Blessed Foundation and Community Jameel.

*WHO Report *Mental health preparedness and response for the COVID-19 pandemic* presented by Director General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, 8 January 2021 https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/EB148/B148_20-en.pdf

[Link to Press Image Folder](#). For the full programme, see following pages or visit [our website](#).

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Healing Arts London Programme 22-26 March, 2021

Day 1: 22 March

4PM GMT

Frame of Mind: A Conversation about Art and Healing

No part of the world has been untouched by the pandemic, which has not only affected the health of millions and caused massive social and economic disruption but has taken a silent toll, through the isolation, anxiety, financial hardship and grief it has inflicted on every community. In this event, TV and movie actor **Gillian Anderson** and **Christopher Bailey**, the World Health Organization's arts and health lead, discuss personal stories of how art can help comfort, confront difficult social problems and build community. They will also be talking to special guest, **Antony Gormley**, who was one of the first to donate a work to the auction, and WHO director general **Dr Tedros Ghebreyesus**, as well as introducing some of the community-based art projects being supported through the initiative.

Day 2: 23 March

4PM GMT

Artists' House Calls: Videos of Creation in Confinement

The Healing Arts invites the public into rarely seen places of creation. Visit the spaces of leading artists, architects and frontline workers to hear firsthand how they know that practicing art can heal, especially during this period of global confinement. Then join us as we bring you into the psychiatric ward of a hospital to hear accounts how murals can improve the healing environment for patient and care givers.

Hosted by **Ben Luke** (The Art Newspaper Podcast), with **William Kentridge** and **Phala Phala** (The Center for the Less Good Idea); **Ragnar Kjartansson**; **Susie Hamilton** (Hospital Rooms); **Hani Rashid** (Asymptote Architecture) in conversation with **Hans Ulrich Obrist**; **Jonathan Aitken** (chaplain at HMP Pentonville) and **Dan Brown** (prison reform advocate); and **Thomas Hughes-Hallett**, non-executive chair, Chelsea and Westminster Hospital NHS Foundation Trust.

Day 3: 24 March

2PM GMT

Does Art Heal? What is the Evidence? What should the Policy be?

The WHO hosts this discussion between researchers, practitioners and policy makers to ask the question: what is the verifiable evidence that art heals? What does that mean? What are the implications for health care and the arts community? Lord Vaizey, Dr Daisy Fancourt and other specialists explore what is currently known about the health benefits of the arts and how society can best take advantage of them.

Moderated by **Dr Alexander Van Tulleken**, British doctor and TV presenter, with **Helen Chatterjee**, professor of biology at University College London (UCL); **Dr Daisy Fancourt**, associate professor, psychobiology and epidemiology, UCL; **Harold Offeh**, artist and participant in the Hospital Rooms; **Christopher Bailey**, art and health lead, World Health Organization (WHO); **Dévoira Kestel**, director, department of mental health and substance use, WHO; **Lord Vaizey**, former UK Minister of Culture; and **Alexandra Coulter**, acting director, National Centre for Creative Health.

4PM GMT

Patterns in the Fog:

A panel discussion on Dementia and the Arts

As the global population ages and life expectancy increases, cases of dementia are on the rise. For those who have this condition and those who care for them, the journey into dementia can be harrowing at the best of times, but it is particularly heartbreaking during the current pandemic as the feelings of isolation common with the condition are aggravated by social distancing. In this discussion, hosted by University College London's (UCL) school of pharmacy, caregivers, patients, pharmacists and neurologists share current treatment and understanding of the neurology of types of dementia, and how art can be used as a therapy to ease the condition for patient and caregiver alike.

Introduced by **Dr Sara Garfield**, co-chair of the UCL school of pharmacy equality, diversity and inclusion public engagement group and moderated by **Christopher Bailey**, art and health lead, World Health Organization, with **Dr Claudia Manzoni**, lecturer in translational neuroscience, UCL school of pharmacy; **Anne Child**, consultant pharmacist for older people; **Keith Oliver**, person living with dementia together with friend **Jen Holland**; **Diane Waller**, arts therapy professor emeritus, Goldsmiths, University of London; and **Veronica Franklin Gould**, president, Arts 4 Dementia.

Day 4: 25 March

The auction will go live at 1pm GMT on 25 March.

Christie's Post-War and Contemporary Art Sales

Dirk Boll, President of Christie's, Europe, Middle East, Russia and India, introduces the Healing Arts section of Christie's Post-War and Contemporary London sale, featuring contemporary masters including **Antony Gormley**, **William Kentridge**, **Martin Creed**, **Ragnar Kjartansson** and **Yoshitomo Nara**. Proceeds will benefit the WHO Foundation and The Future is Unwritten Artists' Response Fund to support the mental health response to the pandemic through the arts. Come and bid or just follow the online action live.

Day 5: 26 March

4PM GMT

Artists on the Frontline – Art's Role in Community Healing

This pandemic is making us question everything from our economic systems to the role of the state, and the purpose of art is no exception. What are artists doing to help and what is their responsibility? The pandemic has affected everyone everywhere from all walks of life, but hardest hit are those communities living at the edges of society, suffering social, economic or conflict-driven hardship. This panel will discuss how artists are working on the frontlines of the current crisis and how the pandemic might change the art-world systems and values of the past decades.

Panel discussion chaired by **Anna Somers Cocks**, founder editor, The Art Newspaper; **Dr Cara Courage**, Head of Tate Exchange, Tate Museums; **Phyll Opoku-Gyimah**, co-founder, UK Black Pride; and **Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev**, director, Castello di Rivoli Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Turin.

The Future is Unwritten Artists Response Fund Launch

DATE TBC

'The Future is Fragile, Handle with Care' by Agnes Denes

To mark the conclusion of Healing Arts London, **Agnes Denes's** flag, "The Future is Fragile, Handle with Care", will be raised on the masthead above **Tate Britain** to commemorate the launch of The Future is Unwritten Artists' Response Fund, including several projects being supported by the Artists Response Fund in Iraq, in partnership with **Community Jameel**, documenting and sustaining traditional cultural practices to address mental health needs among the **Yazidi** and **Marsh Arab** communities, and on the **Navajo Nation** in Arizona.

About **The Future is Unwritten**

The Future is Unwritten is an initiative by [CULTURUNNERS](http://www.culturunners.com) to facilitate cooperation between the international arts sector and United Nations Agencies in order to accelerate implementation of the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals. It was launched in 2020 as part of the UN's 75th Anniversary Program, UN75. The Future is Unwritten established the Healing Arts initiative in November 2020 under the auspices of the WHO Organization Arts & Health Program and in partnership with Christie's.

www.thefutureisunwritten.org

About the **World Health Organization (WHO)**

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. WHO's Arts & Health Programme looks at the research agenda around the health benefits of the arts, in everyday life as well as an instrument in the field. www.who.int

About **Christie's**

Christie's held auction sales in 2019 that totalled £4.5 billion / \$5.8 billion. It offers around 350 auctions annually in over 80 categories, including all areas of fine and decorative arts, jewellery, photographs, collectibles, wine, and more. It also has a long history of conducting private sales for its clients in all categories, with emphasis on Post-War & Contemporary, Impressionist & Modern, Old Masters and Jewellery. Alongside regular sales online, Christie's has a global presence in 46 countries, with 10 salerooms around the world including London, New York, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Dubai, Zürich, Hong Kong, and Shanghai. www.christies.com

About **CULTURUNNERS**

CULTURUNNERS is as an independent platform for cross-cultural campaigns, exhibitions, films and live events - promoting pluralism, peace-building and sustainable development through art. Launched at MIT in 2014, CULTURUNNERS' first project was a multi-year artists' road trip between the the Middle East and the USA. Since then, it has prioritised artists-led projects that transform communities, societies and systems and foster greater empathy across ideological and geographical borders.

www.culturunners.com

About the **WHO Foundation**

The WHO Foundation is an independent grant-making foundation that addresses the most urgent current and futures global health challenges. Headquartered in Geneva and legally independent from WHO, the Foundation works with individual donors, the general public, and corporate partners to build a healthier world for future generations. It supports global public health needs, from prevention, mental health, and non-communicable diseases, to emergency preparedness, outbreak response and the strengthening of health systems.

www.whofoundationproject.org

About the **Blessed Foundation**

The Blessed Foundation is dedicated to the support and promotion of socially engaged art, aiming to develop and sustain a range of marginalised perspectives through projects and residencies. Blessed Foundation is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, registered by the Charity Commission for England and Wales. Charity No. 1193612.

www.blessed-foundation.org