

# art:21 ART IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

## SEASON 4 OF THE AWARD-WINNING SERIES *ART:21–ART IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY* PREMIERES OCTOBER 28 ON PBS

*Seventeen Artists Reveal the Inspirations and Methods Behind Their Work in Television's Only Series Dedicated Exclusively to Contemporary Art*

**New York, NY** – Visually captivating and intriguing, contemporary art is admired and appreciated by many in museums and galleries. Yet few are given access to the creative processes behind the work – the inspirations and ideas that translate into compelling finished objects. This fall, Art21 will provide that opportunity when its award-winning, biennial series *Art:21–Art in the Twenty-First Century* returns to PBS for its fourth season.

Season 4 of *Art:21–Art in the Twenty-First Century*, the only primetime national television series to focus exclusively on contemporary art and artists, will premiere with Episode One on **Sunday, October 28 at 10:00 p.m. (ET) on PBS**, with three remaining one-hour episodes airing over the next three consecutive Sundays: November 4, 11 and 18 (check local listings). Through in-depth profiles and interviews, the four-part series will reveal the inspiration, vision and techniques behind the creative works of some of today's most accomplished contemporary artists.

A companion book, *Art:21–Art in the Twenty-First Century*, Volume 4, will be published by Abrams this fall to accompany the series premiere.

Art21 travels across the country and abroad to film 17 contemporary artists, from painters and sculptors to photographers and filmmakers, in their own spaces and in their own words. The result is a rare opportunity for television viewers to experience first-hand the complex artistic process – from inception to finished product – behind some of today's most thought-provoking art.

The artists profiled in the series speak directly to the audience, describing their passions, impulses and methods. Viewers are invited behind-the-scenes to see artists at work in their studios, homes, communities, and in sites as diverse as an old-growth forest near Seattle, a military base in California, a theater academy in Warsaw, and a film set, in addition to galleries and museums.

"This series not only showcases the contributions of these artists, but also transcends the everyday art experience of a museum or gallery visit," says Susan Sollins, Executive Producer of the series. "Viewers can discover what goes on inside the minds of these dynamic and thoughtful people, and what they have to say can significantly expand our knowledge and understanding of the world."

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SEASON  
4

**Art:21**  
**Art in the**  
**Twenty-First**  
**Century**  
is a production of  
Art21, Inc. for PBS



As in the previous three seasons of *Art:21–Art in the Twenty-First Century*, each hour-long episode of Season 4 is loosely structured around a theme that unifies the individual artists – as diverse as their mediums may be. Season 4 episodes of *Art:21–Art in the Twenty-First Century* include the themes of **Ecology, Paradox, Protest, and Romance**.

## **EPISODE 1: *Romance* – Premieres Sunday, October 28**

The first hour of Season 4 of *Art:21–Art in the Twenty-First Century* features four distinctly different artists whose works pose questions about the role of emotion, regret, fantasy and nostalgia in contemporary art.

**Laurie Simmons'** first feature film "The Music of Regret" provided her with an opportunity to literally bring her photography to life. Staging scenes with puppets, ventriloquist dummies, and dancers costumed as everyday objects (a book, a clock, a cake), Simmons creates a nostalgic world that explores the sentiments of love and romance among family and neighbors. **Lari Pittman** draws inspiration from a childhood that allowed him to be creative and imaginative, as well as from an acute awareness of our country's attitude toward the gay community. His meticulously-layered paintings transform decoration, pattern and signage into elaborate scenes in which viewers get swept away by their dizzying complexity. Sculptor **Judy Pfaff** designed an exhibition around the sadness and loss she experienced following the death of several of her closest friends and family members. Balancing intense planning with improvisational decision-making on site, Pfaff creates a sprawling sculptural installation that explores the worlds of black and white, and blends landscape and architecture into an organic whole. **Pierre Huyghe** uses various forms of expression to create new worlds and investigate the circulation of stories. His films, installations and public projects closely examine culture and boundaries, and use playfulness and humor as a way to address complex social topics. From an expedition in Antarctica to a small-town parade, Huyghe thrives on the production and documentation of new and scripted realities.

## **EPISODE 2: *Protest* – Premieres Sunday, November 4**

The second installment of Season 4 examines the ways in which four artists use their work to picture war, express outrage, and empathize with the suffering of others.

Politics and the brutality of war underscore many of **Nancy Spero's** paintings. A pioneer of feminist art, she creates easily-read yet complicated work that makes an unapologetic statement against, and generates discussion about, the abuse of power, privilege, and male dominance. Landscape photographer **An-My Lê's** black and white images examine the impact, representation and meaning of war, as well as the relationship between military activity and the surrounding terrain. Lê draws on her own childhood experience as a refugee of the Vietnam War to capture compelling photographs reflecting our present-day involvement in the Middle East. Basing his work on research, reflection, and response to horrific events, **Alfredo Jaar's** installations, films and community-based projects communicate a specific experience to his audience, capturing beauty, but also confronting horror. Jaar identifies the gap between reality and its representation, and his work explores the limits of art to accurately represent tragic world events, from genocide to poverty and famine. **Jenny Holzer**, well-known for her subversive use of text and poetry, focuses on cruelty, devastation, consumerist impulses, death and disease in order to provoke a critical response from the viewer. Whether in an installation of declassified war documents or a large-scale projection of text from provocative essays, Holzer presents words in ways that are overwhelming, exacting, and illustrate the power of language to harm or heal, expose or conceal.

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### **EPISODE 3: Ecology – Premieres Sunday, November 11**

This program introduces viewers to four artists whose works pose questions about the relationships between nature and culture.

**Ursula von Rydingsvard** works primarily with cedar to create large scale structures. Drawing from her childhood memories of growing up in WWII Polish refugee camps, she creates massive wooden sculptures, which often resemble bowls, tools, and walls, and echo the raw, wooden barracks in which her family was forced to live. **Iñigo Manglano-Ovalle**'s technologically sophisticated sculptures and video installations employ natural forms such as clouds and icebergs, as well as objects including an umbrella and bullfight ring, as metaphors for understanding difficult social issues from immigration and gun violence to human cloning. For photographer **Robert Adams**, inspiration comes from the American West. Through his compelling black and white images, he documents scenes and landscapes – from a stripped forest to a sprawling suburban neighborhood – that are beautiful yet disturbing and strike a balance between sober documentation and somber indignation. **Mark Dion** lives amongst “the world of stuff,” collecting materials from flea markets and yard sales for his installations and public projects, many of which explore our ideas and assumptions about nature. Inspired and intrigued by scientists, natural history museums and laboratory procedures, Dion's works include an elaborate Vivarium in Seattle for which he constructed a greenhouse to protect and keep alive a fallen tree and its surroundings – a tribute to and appreciation for the complexities of our natural system.

### **EPISODE 4: Paradox – Premieres Sunday, November 18**

The final episode of the series showcases five artists who, through uniquely different styles of work, address and respond to contradiction, conflict and ambiguity, and examine the relationship between mystery and meaning in art.

**Mark Bradford** uses signage and advertisements scavenged from the street to create wall-sized collages which respond to the impromptu networks that emerge within a city, such as underground economies, immigrant communities, or the use of abandoned public space. In his films, Bradford captures and documents the cultural, political and racial conditions of an urban environment. **Catherine Sullivan**'s anxiety-inducing films and live performances reveal the degree to which everyday gestures and emotional states are scripted and performed, questioning the border between innate and learned behavior. Influenced by the work of artists such as Mark Rothko and his own love of jazz and bebop, **Robert Ryman** is well-known for his work with white paint on square forms, which reveals the nuances of the surface. His paintings are characterized by their subtlety, as they explore the distinction between art as an object or surface, sculpture or painting, and emphasize the role that perception and context play in creating an aesthetic experience. Collaborators **Jennifer Allora** and **Guillermo Calzadilla** draw inspiration from their belief that art can function as a catalyst for social change, and their works – which include sculpture, video documentation and public installations – often solicit active participation and critical responses from their viewers. They approach visual art as a set of experiments that test whether concepts such as authorship, nationality, borders, and democracy adequately describe today's increasingly global society.

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A rich companion website, [www.pbs.org/art21](http://www.pbs.org/art21), will re-launch in September and compliment the series with additional, in-depth information on the seventeen featured artists in Season 4. Art21 will also launch its own website, [www.art21.org](http://www.art21.org), which will serve as a unique resource for the art community. In addition to detailed Educators' Guides for all four seasons of *Art:21–Art in the Twenty-First Century*, [www.art21.org](http://www.art21.org) will feature downloadable online tool kits and dynamic rich media that will allow art organizations, museums, and universities to bring the series into local communities across the country, extending the power of *Art:21–Art in the Twenty-First Century* beyond the small screen.

*Art:21–Art in the Twenty-First Century* Season 4 was produced for PBS by the non-profit contemporary art institution Art21, Inc. Executive Producer and Curator: Susan Sollins; Series Producer: Eve Moros Ortega; Associate Producer: Migs Wright; Consulting Directors: Charles Atlas (Paradox and Protest) and Catherine Tatge (Ecology and Romance); Series Co-Creators: Susan Sollins and Susan Dowling.

Major underwriting for Season Four of *Art:21–Art in the Twenty-First Century* has been provided by The National Endowment for the Arts; The Public Broadcasting Service; Agnes Gund and Daniel Shapiro; The Nathan Cummings Foundation; Bloomberg; The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts; The Bagley Wright Fund, and the Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation. Lead sponsorship of Season Four education programs has been provided by JPMorgan Chase.

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## PRESS CONTACTS

Beth Olsen  
Goodman Media International, Inc.  
212.576.2700, x243  
bolsen@goodmanmedia.com

Meghan Clinton  
Goodman Media International, Inc.  
212.576.2700, x223  
mclinton@goodmanmedia.com