

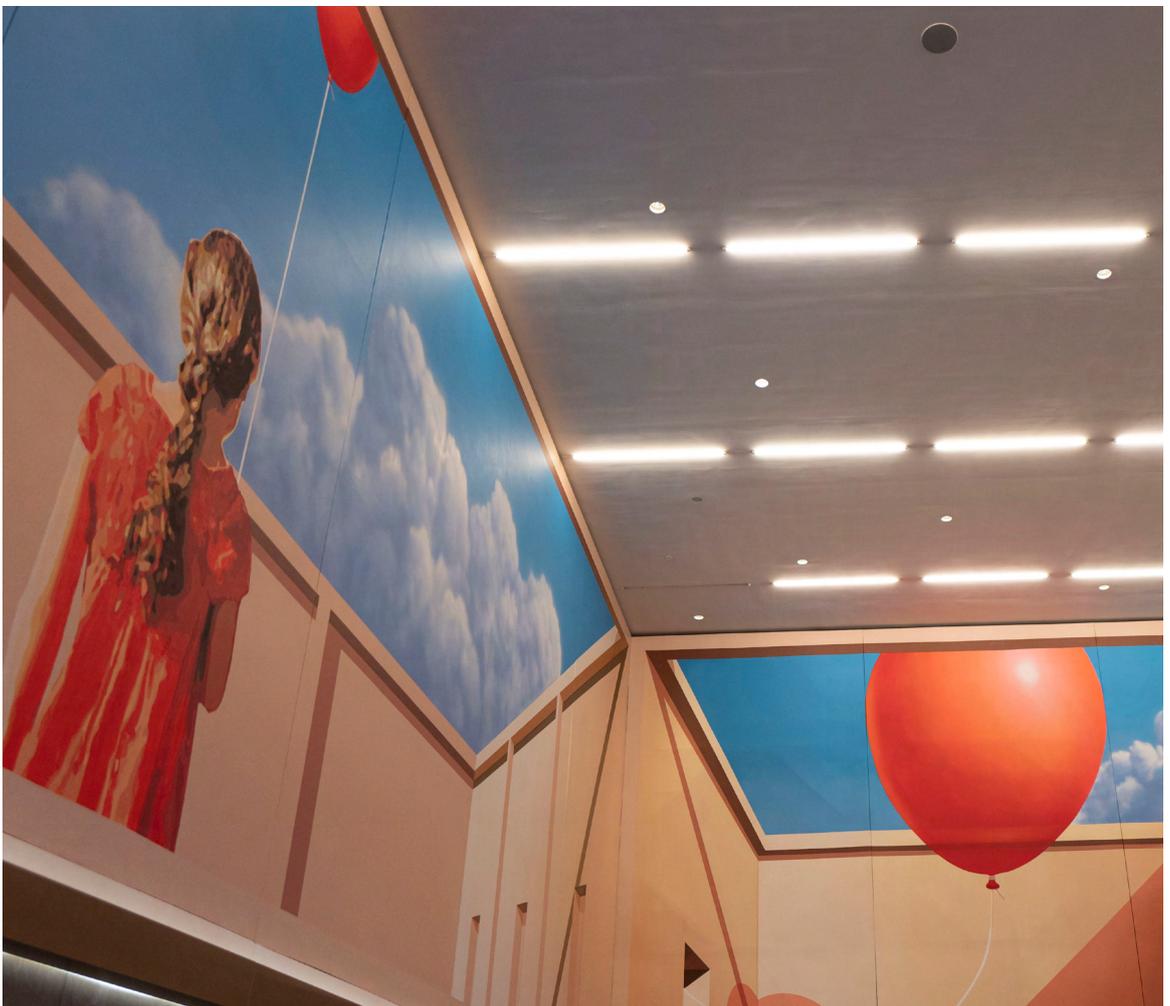
World Arts Forum Annual Report

JULY 2019 – JUNE 2020



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Finding Hope by **Mehdi Ghadyanloo** – Annual Meeting 2020

Context

Recent events, notably the coronavirus pandemic and racial tensions, have emphasized the critical role of the arts and culture to inspire, create solidarity, shape narratives and innovate for inclusive solutions. The World Economic Forum's continuous and devoted collaboration with Cultural Leaders and cultural institutions has deepened amidst a world in crisis and, despite the circumstances, allowed for a richer engagement.

The pandemic has devastated the cultural sector globally, forcing the closure of museums and cultural spaces, the cancellation of events and festivals, and putting an immediate stop to productions. The knock-on effect has had a severe impact on the livelihood of millions of artists and cultural workers. The situation calls for the need to reassess the health of the sector, fix perennial issues and to innovate for the long term. In this time of crisis, the Forum has played a major leadership role in bringing together the global cultural sector to share information and lessons learned across disciplines and geographies, and to create a sense of global solidarity.

Role of Cultural Leaders

As part of the World Economic Forum's multistakeholder platform, Cultural Leaders play a critical role: they raise awareness of societal issues, speak truth to power, open up new avenues for leaders to imagine a better shared future, shape narratives, and create coalitions across sectors that lead to more inclusive and sustainable action.

The Platforms

Cultural Leaders use the following Forum platforms to create impact:

- Forum global and regional physical and virtual events with world leaders
- Ongoing Arts and Culture initiatives, such as the New Narratives Lab fellowship and the Arts and Culture Global Solidarity Network
- Ongoing Forum initiatives and projects, on issues ranging from gender diversity to sustainability, where they are integrated with leaders from other sectors
- Forum governance boards, including Yo-Yo Ma serving on the Forum's Board of Trustees
- The Forum's immensely influential social media platforms, reaching 17.2 million followers

2019 - 2020

Overview

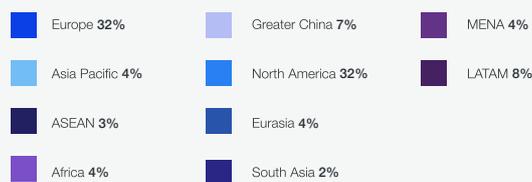
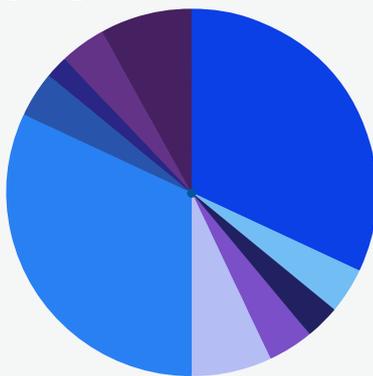
Cultural Leaders

There are currently 240 active Cultural Leaders, including 58 who engaged with the Forum for the first time in the past fiscal year. These include international diversity advocate and model **Thando Hopa** (South Africa), classics professor **Mary Beard** (United Kingdom), artist **Qiu Zhijie** (China),

YouTube star **Molly Burke** (Canada) and transgender advocate **Geena Rocero** (US/Philippines).

Several Cultural Leaders serve on Forum governance boards, including **Yo-Yo Ma** on the Forum's Board of Trustees, **will.i.am** on the Fourth Industrial Revolution Advisory Committee and **Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy** on the Global Shapers Foundation Board.

Cultural Leaders by region



Cultural Leaders by gender



Cultural Partners

Cultural partnerships development with artists and institutions has included:

- Ongoing collaboration with the **Smithsonian Institution**, through another major collaboration around the Annual Meeting 2020 Main Exhibition, “Partnering with Nature”, with the Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum; ongoing curation of the Arts and Culture Transformation Map; and engagement of Smithsonian experts in Forum events and networks, including the Cultural Leaders network, Young Scientists community and Global Future Councils network.
- A new partnership with **Lynette Wallworth** and the **Ford Foundation** for the New Narratives Lab fellowship for a two-year period and launched at the Annual Meeting 2020.
- Ongoing collaboration with the **Natural History Museum, London**, through the second presentation of the Wildlife Photographer of the Year Award exhibition at the Annual Meeting 2020; and ongoing integration of museum network experts into Forum events and communities, including the Young Scientists community.

- Engagement with more than 100 artists and cultural institutions through the newly formed **Arts and Culture Global Solidarity Network**, including the Serpentine Galleries (United Kingdom), Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (China), Arts at CERN (Switzerland), Abu Dhabi Department of Culture and Tourism (United Arab Emirates), Pro Helvetia (Switzerland), State Hermitage Museum (Russia) and University of Johannesburg (South Africa).



Opening Concert – Annual Meeting 2020

- Ongoing collaboration with conductor and 2019 Crystal Awardee **Marin Alsop** as part of a three-year engagement as music director of the Annual Meeting Opening Concert (2019-2021 events); and collaboration with up to eight orchestras and choirs from around the world for the production of a virtual concert for 2021.

Events

Cultural Leaders participated in 14 major events, including seven virtual events in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak:

- Young Global Leaders Annual Summit 2019, Dalian, People’s Republic of China
- Annual Meeting of the New Champions 2019, Dalian, People’s Republic of China
- World Economic Forum on Africa 2019, Cape Town, South Africa
- Sustainable Development Impact Summit 2019, New York, USA
- India Economic Summit 2019, New Delhi, India
- Annual Meeting of the Global Future Councils 2019, Dubai, United Arab Emirates
- World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2020, Davos-Klosters, Switzerland
- Five monthly Town Halls, Arts and Culture Global Solidarity Network
- Virtual Ocean Dialogues 2020
- Great Reset Initiative Dialogues 2020



Qiu Zhijie, Mapping the World – Annual Meeting of the New Champions 2019

Annual Meeting 2020

2020 Crystal Awards

On the occasion of the *26th Annual Crystal Awards* and the opening night of the 50th Annual Meeting, the World Economic Forum celebrated the leadership of four outstanding personalities: artist **Theaster Gates** (USA), for his leadership in creating sustainable communities; choreographer **Jin Xing** (China), for her leadership in shaping inclusive cultural norms; actress **Deepika Padukone** (India), for her leadership in raising mental health awareness; and artist **Lynette Wallworth** (Australia), for her leadership in creating inclusive narratives.



Theaster Gates receives the Crystal Award from **Hilde Schwab** at the 26th Crystal Awards

The “Festival”

More than 40 Cultural Leaders took part in a “festival” at the Annual Meeting 2020 around the theme *Stakeholders for a Cohesive and Sustainable World*, participating in more than 20 performances, installations and exhibition aimed at spurring meaningful dialogue around key issues. In addition, Cultural Leaders had 73 speaking roles in 51 sessions across the overall Annual Meeting programme and shared the stage with chief executive officers, civil society leaders, policy-makers and young change-makers.

Programme Highlights

Nature and sustainability featured high on the agenda and were included in the main exhibition “**Partnering with Nature**” in collaboration with the Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum. Four interactive installations encouraged participants to create, rethink and re-explore the human relationship to nature. Partners included Atelier Luma/Luma Arles, the Department of Seaweed, Totomoxtle and Sam van Aken.

Tree VR, by Milica Zec and Winslow Porter, was a great success again and spurred meaningful dialogue around the climate crisis. Crystal Awardee **Lynette Wallworth**'s deeply moving and poetic [acceptance](#) speech on Australia's bushfires received nearly a million views and moved audience to tears.



Caroline Casey, Closing the Disability Inclusion Gap – Annual Meeting 2020

Disability inclusion continued to be a focus. Several prominent Cultural Leaders joined the conversation on closing the disability inclusion gap, and The Valuable 500 initiative, launched at the Annual Meeting 2019, became a Platform Initiative of the World Economic Forum. In addition, a panel addressed disability for the first time at the Open Forum for a local audience.

Programming also focused on the role of youth and young change-makers in shaping a more sustainable and inclusive future, on the importance of shaping inclusive narratives, and on the fast development of technology, communication and innovation in the Fourth Industrial Revolution.



Mary Beard, A History of Feminism – Annual Meeting 2020

Media and Social Media

Cultural Leaders were highly visible throughout the Annual Meeting on the Forum's media and other media outlets as well as on social media platforms. The Cultural Leaders reached a total of 1.7 million livestream views online, 2,300 global media mentions, 29,000 views of the Forum's Agenda blogs and 163.5 million reaches on social media.

Media coverage of Cultural Leaders and the arts and culture at the Forum has featured in [The New York Times](#), the [BBC](#), [Reuters](#), [CNBC](#), [Independent Online](#) and several social media platforms, including [TikTok](#), [Facebook](#) and [Weibo](#).

Exhibitions, Installations and Special Experiences – Highlights

The Forum worked with Cultural Leaders and institutional partners to produce numerous exhibitions, installations and special experiences during 2019-2020.



Partnering with Nature

Developed in collaboration with the Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum, the main exhibition at the Annual Meeting 2020 was a restaging of four projects from the [Nature—Cooper Hewitt Design Triennial \(2019\)](#). The exhibition was an invitation to experience the symbiotic relationships in nature, think about how adopting a different mindset can hold new promise for approaching the climate and biodiversity crises, and imagine how we can all be partners and collaborators in creating a more cohesive and sustainable world. With Jan Boelen (Atelier Luma), Christophe Danzin (Atelier Luma Arles), Julia Lohmann (the Department of Seaweed), Fernando Laposse (Totomoxtle), and Sam and Cathleen van Aken.



Tree VR

The award-winning Tree VR, a multisensory and virtual reality experience by artists Milica Zec and Winslow Porter (New Reality Co.), invited participants into the rainforest to become a tree and experience the tree's growth from a seedling to its fullest form and witness its fate. Tree VR returned to the Annual Meeting 2020 and was experienced by more than 1,000 participants, adding to its great success and wide engagement at the Annual Meeting of the New Champions 2018, Annual Meeting 2019 and World Economic Forum on Africa 2019.



Deepfaked

After its success at the Annual Meeting of the New Champions 2019, an enhanced version of this [interactive installation](#) at the Annual Meeting 2020 presented the implications for business, politics and society of the fast-developing technology of deepfakes and how participants can go about knowing true from false. With Hao Li (Pinscreen, Inc.).



Wildlife Photographer of the Year

In collaboration with the Natural History Museum, London, a selection of images from the [2019 Wildlife Photographer of the Year](#) competition were presented at the Annual Meeting 2020 in a large-scale projection mapping, raising awareness of the threat humanity poses to the natural world and reminding participants of their crucial role in its protection.



Finding Hope

A site-specific, monumental artwork by artist Mehdi Ghadyanloo at the Annual Meeting 2020 invited participants to consider the shared universality of our existence and to reckon with the complexity and contradictions of society while remaining hopeful.

Sensory Dinner in the Dark

Back by popular demand after its success at the Annual Meeting 2019, the dinner in total darkness at the Annual Meeting 2020 gave a powerful collective experience led by visually impaired guides and transformed the participants perception about ability and disability. With Gina Badenoch (Capaxia and Sight of Emotion).

Performances – Highlights

Throughout the year, the Forum produced event opening and closing performances that served to highlight excellence and diversity as well as act as inspiring gateway experiences.



On the occasion of the 250th anniversary of Beethoven's birth, conductor **Marin Alsop** led the European Union Youth Orchestra with the São Paulo Symphony Orchestra Choir and four exceptional soloists in a powerful rendition of Beethoven's Ode to Joy for the Annual Meeting 2020 [opening concert](#). Sung with a newly created text in Portuguese, it presented 120 people from five continents. The Orchestra Choir also interpreted pieces by contemporary Latin American composers at the [Open Forum](#). The concert was developed in collaboration with Intemusica and supported by Intesa Sanpaolo.



At the [closing performance](#) of the Annual Meeting 2020, artist **Reeps100** performed an original work, Voices of Light, together with members of the London Contemporary Voices Choir, powerfully demonstrating the universality and limitless potential of the human voice.



Coming in the midst of his Bach Project, cellist **Yo-Yo Ma** gave [six pop-up concerts](#) during the Annual Meeting 2020 to inspire a conversation about how culture helps us to seek truth, build trust and act in service of one another.

Musician **Wu Tong** led a multimedia experience for the [closing performance](#) at the Annual Meeting of the New Champions 2019, fusing the sounds of traditional Chinese instruments with electronic music and visual effects.

The [closing concert](#) at the World Economic Forum on Africa 2019 invited Standard Bank's Young Artist Award Winner **Mandla Mlangeni** and the Tune Recreation ensemble for a short jazz performance. With the support of Standard Bank.



Artist **Lynette Wallworth**

The New Narratives Lab

In collaboration with 2020 Crystal Awardee **Lynette Wallworth**, who serves as Artistic Director, the Forum launched the New Narratives Lab, a year-long leadership fellowship dedicated to fostering a new and diverse generation of Cultural Leaders. Major support is provided by the Ford Foundation.

The Lab puts special emphasis on artists from under-represented communities, including but not limited to, women, people with disabilities, LGBTI people, young people, indigenous people or people who have faced discrimination based on their race, ethnicity, political or religious identity. The selected fellows are artists in any medium who have shown excellence in their creative work, promise in narrative-shaping and are deeply committed to social issues. They are on a trajectory of leadership

but have not yet had the access to opportunities afforded to others. The Forum aims to bridge that gap, supporting this next generation of Cultural Leaders in navigating circles of power and decision-making.

The 2020 New Narratives Lab brings together three fellows each paired with a dedicated mentor:

- Fellow and award-winning photographer **Rena Effendi** (Azerbaijan) with mentor and photographer **Platon** (USA)
- Fellow, diversity advocate and international model **Thando Hopa** (South Africa) with mentor and artist **Angélique Kidjo** (Benin)
- Fellow and filmmaker **Wanuri Kahiu** (Kenya) with mentor, choreographer and TV host **Jin Xing** (China)



Rena Effendi and Platon



Thando Hopa and Angélique Kidjo



Wanuri Kahiu and Jin Xing

Activities

In January 2020, the cohort participated in the [Annual Meeting 2020](#). Their presence and contributions at this high-level meeting constitute a key component of their leadership journey. At the Annual Meeting, fellows presented their work, participated in a number of community sessions, met with leaders from across sectors, spent time with their mentors and gave numerous media interviews.

Due to the global pandemic, the planning for spring and summer activities shifted from an initial focus of one-on-one residencies at the mentors' creative space to a six-month online leadership curriculum, along the following approach:

- **Leadership Modules**, including women in leadership: increasing your impact; communicating with leadership: navigating the media landscape; negotiating in leadership: building your narrative.
- **Mentoring**, accelerating the fellows' leadership development by offering dedicated touch points and ongoing access throughout the fellowship.

- **Peer coaching**, allowing for knowledge sharing, mutual growth and empowerment among the fellows as a natural result and continuity of their Annual Meeting experience.

Each module is built around a carefully curated balance of expert masterclasses, lessons from the mentors and a Meet the Leader series. Building from the cohort's agenda at the Annual Meeting, the latter invites outstanding women leaders from outside the arts world in a conversation with the fellows for them to learn, embrace and apply their own leadership style, leveraging and benefiting from the Forum's unique network and platform.

Highlights of the curriculum to date have included a Meet the Leader session with **Mina Al Oraibi**, editor-in-chief of The National, a class on the art of resilience with **Jin Xing**, a media trainer series with **Charlotte Hume**, and a class on *shaping your narrative*, with **Lynette Wallworth**.

The first year of the fellowship will end in November 2020, and the Forum is currently in the selection process for the second cohort.

Arts and Culture Global Solidarity Network

- “ This is a time when we are all humbled because we realize our previous successes weren't as relevant as we thought. What we're left with is our compassion for each other and our capacity to tell stories... perhaps it's as artists and cultural leaders that we can be fundamentally useful to correct the challenges that young kids face in the future.

Platon, world-renowned photographer, at the May 2020 Town Hall meeting of the World Economic Forum's newly formed Arts and Culture Global Solidarity Network, which met to discuss the theme "What could we do now that we could not do before?"

The Forum identified early on in the pandemic a gap in information flowing from one country to another, and one discipline to another, in how to deal with the global health crisis in the cultural sector. As a result, we launched the [Arts and Culture Global Solidarity Network](#) to connect artists, cultural institutions, arts funders and the broader cultural community, in the shape of virtual monthly Town Hall meetings, to create a supportive community, share lessons learned for navigating the coronavirus crisis and create new partnerships.

The first **Town Hall** took place in March 2020, and since then we have organized

five additional virtual meetings, unpacking the theme *What can we do now that we could not do before?* To date, we have engaged more than 100 artists, designers and mission-aligned cultural institutions from across the globe, including State Hermitage Museum General Director Mikhail Piotrovsky (Russia), Artist and Stage Designer Es Devlin (United Kingdom), Serpentine Galleries Artistic Director Hans Ulrich Obrist (United Kingdom), Artist Proof Studio Executive Director Kim Berman (South Africa), Secretary of Culture and Creativity Enrique Avogadro (Argentina) and Cultural Foundation Director of the Abu Dhabi Department of Culture and Tourism Reem Fadda (UAE).



The monthly Town Hall has become a fixture of the global cultural sector, demonstrating the Forum's leadership in the arts and culture world, and providing a major service of generating peer support, learning and collaboration at this time when it is most needed.

Additional COVID Response Activities

At the onset of the pandemic, the Forum reached out to several Cultural Leaders to collaborate around virtual content that could be spread through our social media platforms and could raise the spirit.

Highlights include:

- World's best teacher Andria Zafirakou gives advice on [how to stay creative and sane during lockdown](#)
- Conductor and 2019 Crystal Awardee Marin Alsop on [finding joy in times of crisis](#)
- World Economic Forum Board of Trustee, 2008 Crystal Awardee and Cellist Yo-Yo Ma launched the musical

- series [#songsofcomfort](#) to help people during lockdown; 2015 Crystal Awardee Angélique Kidjo, Musician Wu Tong and Artist Harry Yeff contributed to the initiative with their own performances
- YouTube star Molly Burke described [living under the threat of COVID-19 as a blind person](#) on the World vs Virus podcast



Molly Burke speaks on the World Vs Virus podcast of the World Economic Forum

- A blog series with the **Schwab Foundation** and the Wellbeing Project, exploring the link between well-being and transformational social change
- The Great Reset Dialogues, with the contribution of Cultural Leader Thando Hopa on the topic of [Ending Systemic Racism](#)

World Arts Forum

The World Arts Forum is a Swiss non-profit foundation, which was co-founded in 1991 by Klaus and Hilde Schwab to produce a World Arts Summit in Venice, Italy. The event brought together leaders from the arts, government, business and civil society in the spirit of cross-cultural understanding and global citizenship. After the success of the World Arts Summit in Venice, the World Arts Forum decided to integrate artists and the arts into the World Economic Forum's Annual Meeting in Davos-Klosters, Switzerland, and into the Forum's activities more broadly. Today its members meet bi-annually to provide support for the arts and culture at the Forum, and to nominate the recipients of the Crystal Awards.

Foundation Board members

Hilde Schwab, Chairwoman and Co-Founder, World Arts Forum, Switzerland

Irene Chu, Senior Adviser, First Eastern Investment Group, Hong Kong SAR, China

Martin Engström, Founder and Executive Director, Verbier Festival, Switzerland

Angélique Kidjo, Musician and UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador, France

Platon, Photographer and Founder, The People's Portfolio, USA

Several staff members of the World Economic Forum contribute to the success of the arts and culture at the Forum. They include:

Nico Daswani, Head of Arts and Culture

Linda Peterhans, Cultural Leaders Specialist

Olivia de Dreuzy, Programme Specialist, Arts and Culture

Stéphanie Nassenstein, Project Lead, Design and Interaction

Natalie Hendro, Executive Assistant to Lee Howell, Managing Board

Find out more about the Cultural Leaders network:

<https://www.weforum.org/communities/cultural-leaders>



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IMPROVING THE STATE
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The World Economic Forum, committed to improving the state of the world, is the International Organization for Public-Private Cooperation.

The Forum engages the foremost political, business and other leaders of society to shape global, regional and industry agendas.

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