

The New Narratives Lab

Developing the next generation of Cultural Leaders



COMMITTED TO
IMPROVING THE STATE
OF THE WORLD



The Lab

The New Narratives Lab is a year-long fellowship dedicated to fostering a new and diverse generation of Cultural Leaders.

Through one-to-one mentorship by experienced members of the World Economic Forum's network of Cultural Leaders, Fellows will develop leadership skills to use the Forum's and other platforms to navigate circles of power in order to make their voices heard and bring about change.

The New Narratives Lab brings together three Fellows each paired with a dedicated Mentor. Lab Fellows are supported by a bespoke network of allies, including the Lab Artistic Director, advisors and Forum staff.

Fellows and mentors are selected by the World Economic Forum in consultation with the Lab Artistic Director and the Ford Foundation, who provides major support for the Lab.

The New Narratives Lab is directed artistically by award-winning Australian artist **Lynette Wallworth** who has first-hand experience in leveraging the Forum's assets to create extraordinary social impact.

Fellows Profile

Fellows are artists in any medium who have shown excellence in their creative work, promise in narrative-shaping and are deeply committed to societal issues. They are on a trajectory of leadership but may not have yet had the access to opportunities afforded to others.

Special emphasis is 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.

Resources

Fellows benefit from the following resources:

1. A six-month Online Leadership Curriculum
2. Ongoing access to their Mentor, including their Mentor's advice, networks and resources, and to the Lab Artistic Director
3. Participation as Lab Fellows at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting in Davos
4. Targeted introductions to business leaders, policy makers and media influencers
5. A coordinated social media, media and documentation strategy
6. Potential participation in other Forum events
7. A \$15,000 stipend and coverage for travel

Why This Matters

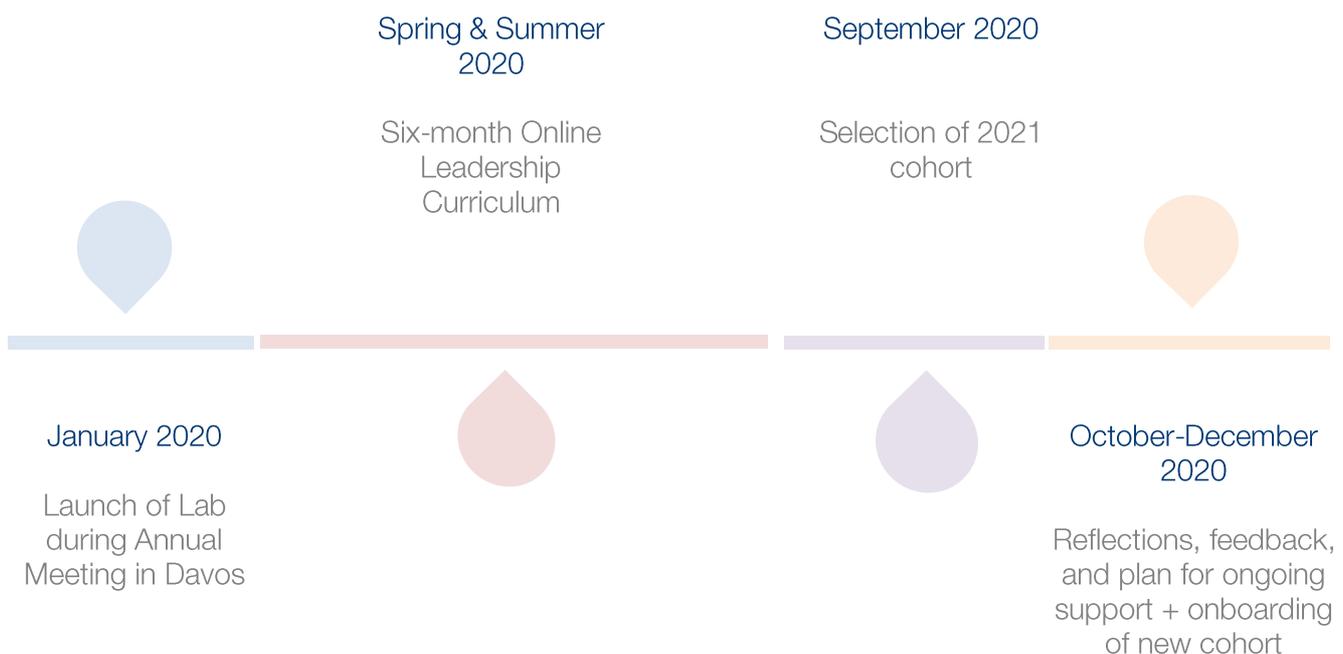
All the intractable issues we face today, from inequality to climate change, have central cultural dimensions: they may be rooted in prejudice, entrenched beliefs, a collective failure of the imagination, or exclusionary narratives.

Narratives can lead a nation to war and keep communities in poverty, but they can also dismantle discrimination and energize movements for justice.

As we reach the 10-year mark before the 2030 deadline for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, the world needs new narratives. We need more artists as leaders who can shape new narratives, and we need more diverse leaders to better represent the world.

There is arguably no more influential leadership platform on the world stage than the World Economic Forum to generate new narratives, create coalitions and advance sustained change.

Timeline



Impact

In the past years, we have seen the tangible benefits the World Economic Forum can offer storytellers whose works engage the international community on crucial issues.

We have observed how collaboration with the Forum not only opens channels of ongoing opportunity, it also provides an unparalleled platform for Cultural Leaders to emerge as next generation leaders.

Read [here](#) about the Emmy-Award winning VR documentary *Collisions* by Lynette Wallworth, commissioned and executive-produced by the Forum and world-premiered at the Annual Meeting 2016.

Explore [here](#) the first international tour of Zohra, the Afghan Women's Orchestra, produced by the Forum and launched at the Annual Meeting 2017.

Find out more [here](#) about the Forum's collaboration with the Smithsonian Institution and several other partners to make disability inclusion a major focus at the Annual Meeting 2019.

2020 Fellow & Mentor Pairings

FELLOW

Thando Hopa

From South Africa
Lives and works in Johannesburg



Thando Hopa is a model, diversity activist, and lawyer. In 2018 she was the only South African on the BBC's list of the 100 most influential women. That year she was included in the 2018 Pirelli Calendar becoming the first South African person of color to appear in it. In April 2019 she made history by becoming the first person with albinism to appear on the cover of Vogue. She participated in the World Economic Forum on Africa in 2019.

Hopa's entire life has been dedicated to unearthing a humanity that she was not finding in media. The history of one of Thando's identities – albinism – is the most underrepresented in historical archives and media. Her career and voice have challenged the fashion industry's values and notions of diversity and inclusion.

Context: In comparison to other communities with longer histories of social progress, Hopa has less of an archival base to rely on previous generations of people with albinism, having instead to blaze a trail for inclusive representation with limited access or resources.

Fellowship Goal: Hopa will be supported by Angelique and the Lab family in her development as a leader in advocating for more inclusive representation in media to benefit and support all bodies and identities.

MENTOR

Angelique Kidjo

From Benin
Lives and works in Paris and New York



Three-time Grammy Award winner Angélique Kidjo is one of the greatest artists in music today. She is the recipient of the World Economic Forum Crystal Award and the Amnesty International Ambassador of Conscience Award.

Kidjo has cross-pollinated West African music with elements of American R&B, funk and jazz, as well as influences from Europe and Latin America. She has worked with some of the world's leading orchestras.

Kidjo works tirelessly to support girls' education in Africa in her role as UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador and through her Batonga Foundation. In 2019 she accompanied President Macron of France to the G7 to launch a \$251 million fund to support women entrepreneurs in Africa.

2020 Fellow & Mentor Pairings

FELLOW

Rena Effendi

From Azerbaijan
Lives and works in Istanbul



Rena Effendi is an award-winning photographer whose work portrays the socioeconomic effects of globalization on marginalized communities around the world. Through her photography, she gives a voice to the unheard and sheds a light on the fragile balance between tradition and modernity in post-conflict societies. Effendi's work has been exhibited at the Venice Biennale, Art Basel Miami Beach and the Istanbul Biennial. She has worked on assignment for National Geographic, The New Yorker and The Wall Street Journal, among others.

Effendi has participated in the Annual Meeting of the New Champions and the Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum. Her current work is focused on the plight of children of European nationals who joined Isis and are now left behind in Syria.

Context: Effendi is poised for her work to generate more impact coinciding with the emotional effect of her storytelling; however, she does not yet possess the know-how to connect narrative with action and to call for accountability from targeted audiences.

Fellowship Goal: Effendi will be supported by Platon and the Lab family in her quest to combine powerful storytelling with real-world impact through the creation of multi-stakeholder coalitions.

MENTOR

Platon

From the United Kingdom
Lives and works in New York



Platon is one of the great photographers of our time. His iconic pictures of world leaders have appeared regularly in and on the covers of the New Yorker, Rolling Stone, the New York Times Magazine, Vanity Fair, Esquire, GQ and the Sunday Times Magazine amongst others.

For the past 10 years he has focused his efforts on the power of photography and storytelling to celebrate human rights advocates and those who fight for equality and justice, first with Human Rights Watch, and since 2013 with his NGO, the People's Portfolio.

A brilliant communicator, Platon speaks regularly around the world and has participated on numerous occasions in the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting. He serves on the board of the World Arts Forum.

2020 Fellow & Mentor Pairings

FELLOW

Wanuri Kahiu

From Kenya
Lives and works in Nairobi



Wanuri Kahiu is a filmmaker, speaker and science fiction writer. Her short award-winning science fiction film PUMZI (2009) about futuristic Africa premiered at SUNDANCE Film Festival (2010) and received international acclaim including the ‘Citta di Venezia’ award at the Venice Film Festival 2010. Her futuristic views have been the source of articles, African futurist journals, masterclasses and dissertations. Kahiu speaks globally about AFROBUBBLEGUM – the advocacy for images of fun, fierce and frivolous African images and was named TIME’s 100 Next in 2019.

Kahiu’s award-winning film RAFIKI, a joyful lesbian love story about two girls was the first Kenyan film to be invited to Cannes Film Festival (2018). The film was banned in Kenya, after which Kahiu sued the Kenya Film Classification Board for the infringement of her constitutional rights to freedom of expression. The constitutional case is ongoing.

Context: Kahiu has been thrust into the national spotlight in the debate on creative rights and freedom of expression, however she does not have expertise nor the networks or resources to advocate effectively.

Fellowship Goal: Kahiu will be supported by Jin Xing and the Lab family in navigating the legal landscape and developing the narratives that will empower artists in Kenya and beyond to advocate effectively for their freedom of expression.

MENTOR

Jin Xing

From China
Lives and works in Shanghai



Jin Xing is a choreographer, media personality and China’s most popular TV hostess. She is a former male ballet dancer and army colonel, who was the first person, publicly, to undergo gender reassignment surgery in her country. She is the founder of the award-winning Jin Xing Dance Theatre, the country’s first independent dance company. Her television shows, which have included Venus Hits Mars, The Jin Xing Show and Chinese Dating, draw more than 100 million viewers a week and create a space for discussion on contemporary life in China.

She is a Chevalier de l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres of the French Government and received an Honorary Doctorate of Dance from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. She has participated in the Annual Meeting and Annual Meeting of New Champions of the World Economic Forum.

LAB ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Lynette Wallworth

From Australia
Lives and works in Sydney



Lynette Wallworth's immersive video installations, virtual reality and film works reflect on the connections between people and the natural world. Her past work includes CORAL, Evolution of Fearlessness and the virtual reality films Awavena and Collisions, which the World Economic Forum premiered and executive-produced. Collisions won an Emmy Award for Outstanding New Approaches to Documentary and was used in an outreach campaign to impact global efforts for a ban on nuclear tests.

Wallworth has been awarded a UNESCO City of Film award, the Byron Kennedy Award for Innovation and Excellence and was named as one of the "100 Leading Global Thinkers" by Foreign Policy magazine. She is a member of the World Economic Forum's Global Future Council on Virtual and Augmented Reality and a member of the Board of Trustees for the Sundance Institute and has been an advisor on numerous Sundance Labs. She has participated in various World Economic Forum events. She is a recipient of the World Economic Forum 2020 Crystal Award.

Contact and More Information

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Arts & Culture at the World Economic Forum
<https://www.weforum.org/communities/cultural-leaders>

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