

The Jameel Arts & Health Lab–*Lancet* Global Series on the Health Benefits of the Arts launches at Guggenheim Museum in New York with unveiling of Photo Essay



Lockdown, Paris, France, 2020, © Antoine d'Agata | Magnum Photos. Courtesy of the artist

- The first part of the **Jameel Arts & Health Lab–*Lancet* Global Series on the Health Benefits of the Arts** was launched today at the Guggenheim Museum with the unveiling of a curated photo essay visualizing relationships between the arts and health.
- The launch is part of UNGA Healing Arts Week, by the Jameel Arts & Health Lab, a New York City-wide celebration of the role of the arts in health, held alongside the 80th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, supported by the Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund and The Music Man Foundation.
- UNGA Healing Arts Week will include collaborations with Carnegie Hall, NYU Steinhardt, Juilliard/Lincoln Center, the Guggenheim, Federal Reserve Bank of New York, NYC H+H/Lincoln Hospital, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, alongside community events and workshops across all 5 boroughs of New York City.

NEW YORK — The first part of the **Jameel Arts & Health Lab–*Lancet* Global Series on the Health Benefits of the Arts** was launched today with the unveiling of a photo essay at the Guggenheim Museum in New York. The event was part of UNGA Healing Arts Week, a New York City-wide celebration of the role of the arts in health, held alongside the 80th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. The event in the museum’s iconic Peter B. Lewis Theater featured remarks from senior leadership at *The Lancet*, the Jameel Arts & Health Lab, the Guggenheim, the World Health Organization, and Community Jameel, as well as live musical performances, poetry readings and presentations from leading voices in health, arts, policy, and research.

The photo essay comes ahead of the publication of the full **Jameel Arts & Health Lab–*Lancet* Global Series on the Health Benefits of the Arts** later in 2025. The Series, which has involved more than 27 researchers, artists and curators from around the world, was led by **Prof. Nisha Sajnani** (Co-Director at the Jameel Arts & Health Lab and Director of Drama Therapy and Arts and Health at NYU Steinhardt) and **Dr. Nils Fietje** (Co-Director at the Jameel Arts & Health Lab and Technical Officer at the World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe). The lead curator of the photo essay was **Stephen Stapleton** (Co-Director at the Jameel Arts & Health Lab and Founder/CEO at CULTURUNNERS).

The Jameel Arts & Health Lab–*Lancet* Global Series builds on a [2019 World Health Organization report](#) highlighting the role of the arts in promoting health, preventing illness, and supporting the management and treatment of a variety of health conditions from infancy to old age. Examples include the integration of visual arts in public spaces, museums, schools, and in healthcare settings to promote wellbeing, dance programs for Parkinson’s, music therapy for pain management and dementia care, and the use of puppetry and theatre in public health. The series will provide an overview of this evidence base, existing economic analyses, and current policy frameworks that are already integrating arts interventions as part of clinical and public health guidelines, and recommend strategies to strengthen global policy, including scaling effective interventions through social prescribing and fostering collaboration across arts, health, education, and social care sectors.

The photo essay focuses on a wide range of global health initiatives that are supported by the arts. The 30 featured images exemplify stories of what can, or could be, achieved through creative approaches to health and wellbeing, such as the incorporation of visual art in a hospital, a creative aging program in a museum, or the psycho-social support of children in crisis zones. Each photograph is accompanied by a short description of the project. Many of them highlight underrepresented experiences and communities, where care is carried out in complex environments.

Nathalie Bondil, Museum and Exhibitions Director at the Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris, and one of the curators of the Photo Essay comments, “More than ever in our post-pandemic world, we see that art, culture, and creativity have the power to heal, comfort, restore... and inspire wonder. The arts offer undeniable physiological, psychological, and social benefits, making them an essential part of truly holistic, personalized medicine. From a public health perspective, art and creativity are practical tools that not only support our wellbeing but also help make care more equal and accessible for everyone.”

The premise for this remarkable photo essay has been to identify photographs that combine artistic quality with genuine impact in health and wellbeing. The curatorial team, which includes some of the leading professionals in the world of health and the arts, has followed three key methodological strands in their selection and annotation of the photographs: art as research (the artist/photographer-investigator drawing out new insights); art as engagement (photography documenting arts activities that support engagement, increase participation or foster interdisciplinary debates); and art as expression (where the photograph itself is critically evaluated as a component of contemporary art discourse).

The photographer Irving Penn famously described a good photograph as one “that communicates a fact, touches the heart and leaves the viewer a changed person for having seen it”. This photo-essay reminds us of the crucial importance of creativity within the sphere of health, and the evidence-based health benefits catalyzed by the human spirit and imagination.

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

Photo Essay Curators:

Stephen Stapleton (Lead), Founding Co-Director, Jameel Arts & Health Lab; CEO, CULTURUNNERS, London, UK; Kunle Adewale, Founder, Global Arts in Medicine Fellowship & Global South Arts in Health Initiatives, Nigeria; Yazmany Arboleda, People's Artist for New York City; Founder, People's Creative Institute, New York, US; Nathalie Bondil, Museum and Exhibitions Director, Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris and former Director, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Canada; Dominic Campbell, Co-Founder, Creative Aging International; Director, Creative Brain Week; Fellow Global Brain Health Institute; David Cotterrell, Artist; Professor of Fine Art, Sheffield Hallam University, UK; Founder, Empathy & Risk C.I.C.; Nils Fietje, Founding Co-Director, Jameel Arts & Health Lab; Technical Officer, WHO Regional Office for Europe, Copenhagen, Denmark; Solkem N'Gangbet, Head of Office of the Arts, King Abdullah University of Science & Technology (KAUST), Thuwal, Saudi Arabia; Jahnavi Phalkey, Director, Science Gallery Bengaluru, India; Nisha Sajani, Founding Co-Director, Jameel Arts & Health Lab; Professor, New York University, US.

About the Jameel Arts & Health Lab

Launched in January 2023 by the World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Office for Europe, the Steinhardt School at New York University, Community Jameel, and CULTURUNNERS, the Jameel Arts & Health Lab is a global initiative to measurably improve health and wellbeing through the arts. With a focus on overlooked and underserved communities, the Lab leverages scientific evidence, artist-led advocacy, capacity building, and a global Healing Arts outreach campaign to drive the integration of the arts into mainstream healthcare.

jameelartshealthlab.org

About The Lancet

The Lancet began as an independent, international weekly general medical journal in 1823, founded by Thomas Wakley. Its aim from the first has been to make science widely available so that medicine can serve and transform society as well as positively impact the lives of people.

For more than two centuries, *The Lancet* has sought to address urgent topics in our society, initiate debate, put science into context, and influence decision makers around the world. The Lancet Group has evolved as a family of journals but retains at its core the belief that medicine must serve society, knowledge must transform society, and the best science must lead to better lives.

thelancet.com

About UNGA Healing Arts Week

UNGA Healing Arts Week is an annual activation by the Jameel Arts & Health Lab that brings the arts into dialogue with public health during the annual United Nations General Assembly. The 2025 program spans performances, panels, workshops, and community events across New York City, offering an inclusive platform for advancing the Arts in Health movement.

healingartsnewyork.org

Additional Confirmed UNGA Healing Arts Week Partners Include:

Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund, Music Man Foundation, Carnegie Hall Weill Music Institute (a Jameel Arts & Health Lab *Healing Arts Center of Excellence*), Lincoln Center, Julliard Extension, Federal Reserve Bank of New York, The Guggenheim,

J.P. Morgan, NYC Health + Hospitals, Fountain House, Newport Global Summit

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