

SEPT. 28, 2026

TIME

Dolly Parton
1946–2026



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The leaders, innovators, titans, and icons shaping the future of art, and our world

^
Dolly Parton in New York City in September 1976
Photograph by David Gahr—Getty Images

THE SKETCH THAT CAME TO LIFE

M. F. Husain's journey began far from the galleries that would one day celebrate him. He arrived in Bombay as a young artist, painting cinema billboards to make a living. From there, he would go on to become one of the most influential figures in modern Indian art.

In Qatar, where he spent his final years, his story now has a home: Lawh Wa Qalam: M. F. Husain Museum.

Bringing together works from across his life, alongside personal objects, archival material, and his final masterpieces, the museum offers a window into the ideas, experiences, and influences that shaped his artistic vision.

Discover
**Lawh Wa Qalam:
M. F. Husain Museum**
in Education City

Art history



With this issue, we launch a new list of the most influential people in fine art today

IF I HAD TO PICK MY FAVORITE COVER OF *TIME* since I started working here in 2013 (thanks for asking!), it would be from the April 27, 2020, issue, which features an image made by the French artist and *TIME* contributor JR. Created with Paris in quarantine at the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic, the 15-by-21-ft. artwork was formed by pasting long strips on the pavement of a quiet street in the 19th arrondissement at 5:30 in the morning. JR photographed the work at 9:30 that night after waiting for it to dry. It shows a person peeking through what look like window blinds, an image now both familiar and haunting. Feet away, a solitary woman walks by, her mask firmly in place. Looking at that photograph today brings me back to the uncertainty of that moment. It also reminds me of the creative spirit that pulled us through it.

That is what art can do, and *TIME* has been collaborating with artists like JR for over a century. Among the greats who have created *TIME* covers are Andy Warhol, Marc Chagall, Christo and Jeanne-Claude, and Robert Rauschenberg. Starting in 1978, *TIME* began donating many works in its collection to the National Portrait Gallery, which today holds more than 2,000 pieces first published by the magazine. Those efforts have helped secure *TIME*'s reputation as one of the leading popular visual storytellers of our time.

Still, it has been 50 years since a living painter has been solo on the magazine's cover. (In fact, Rauschenberg was the last, appearing in a self-portrait on the Nov. 29, 1976, issue of *TIME*.) Until this week. Painter Amy Sherald appears on the new cover following a blockbuster two-year, four-museum tour of her work. The predecessors she joins in that space include Pablo Picasso, Salvador Dali, Thomas Hart Benton, and Andrew Wyeth. Her presence announces the launch of *TIME*100 Art, our inaugural effort recognizing the most influential people in fine art today.

TO MAKE SHERALD'S PORTRAIT, we asked Tyler Mitchell, also on *TIME*100 Art, to photograph the painter. Working with stylist

Law Roach, Mitchell created images whose tone and color recall that of Sherald's own portraiture. This picture has layers: Sherald, as Belinda Luscombe writes in an accompanying profile, paints from photography herself, and it was Sherald who paid tribute to Mitchell when he was named to the *TIME*100 Next list in 2022. ("We found that we were kindred in spirit.")

The gap in our attention to the influence of fine arts on the cover makes us even more excited to debut this list. Over recent months, led by Merrill Fabry, we have been seeking out the leaders who shape art, with an eye to find those who are writing the field's most important headlines. Hito Steyerl and Refik Anadol help us understand the potential of new technology to change the world—for better or worse. Jenny Holzer and Maurizio Cattelan provoke us to ask

important questions.

JR and Sheila Hicks enable us to connect with our physical senses. And others, like Jeffrey Gibson and Simone Leigh, shape and share our cultural histories.

And artists don't work in a vacuum. They are supported by a massive ecosystem, from philanthropists and nonprofits who fund work, to gallerists and advisers who shape careers,

to curators, museum leaders, and beyond. Half of the people on this list are not artists themselves. They make art possible.

The past two years have been an inflection point for that pursuit. Multiple museums, including the Studio Museum in Harlem, LACMA, V&A, and MASP in Brazil, saw major expansions. They're working to find new ways to reach viewers and to conceive of the collections they steward. Leaders need to establish the value of what they're doing, and this reassessment can create new vision. At the same time, the global art market is starting to rebound after a few volatile years of turmoil in sales at galleries and auctions. A period of turbulence can be one of innovation and reinvention too. We are thrilled to be looking anew.

Sam Jacobs,
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



The April 27, 2020, and Nov. 29, 1976, covers of *TIME*



Photograph by
Andres Kudacki for TIME

TIME remembers

For the 25th anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, TIME gathered the experience of that day and what came after in the words of those directly affected—including Nancy Gibbs, TIME's former editor-in-chief, who wrote the initial cover story (*far right*) about the attacks, and who recalls that process as part of this issue's coverage. You can read that award-winning article at ti.me/sept11-2001-cover. The current cover (*left*) is one of several that marked an anniversary of that hinge in global history. In a 2011 project launched on the 10th anniversary (*near right*) and expanded in 2016, TIME shared the testimonies of 40 men and women whose lives were changed by that day and by what followed—including former President George W. Bush and current Senator Tammy Duckworth, who was a Black Hawk helicopter pilot in Iraq.



Future farming

In Kigali, Rwanda, at a Sept. 2 TIME event presented by AGRA, agriculture and climate were discussed by, from left, Ismahane Elouafi, executive managing director of CGIAR; Temiyeoluwa Alabi, head of corporate communications at ThriveAgric; Elizabeth Wathuti, founder of Green Generation Initiative; and Kingsley Moghalu, founder of the Institute for Governance and Economic Transformation Academy; with TIME's Justin Worland. Read more at time.com



Photograph by
Tyler Mitchell for TIME



Photograph by David
Gahr—Getty Images



Photograph by Susan
Wood—Getty Images

TIME Games

Play seven different daily puzzles at the new time.com/games, from classics like Sudoku to original concepts like Linked, the word-association game below. (*Find the answer on the side of this page.*)

Pick one word in each column to create a connection from **Squash to Grounds**

Vegetable	Soup	Spam	Coffee
Racket	Censor	Foundation	Estate
Suppress	Scam	Filter	Basis

Squash

Grounds

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TIME100

Creators

On July 30, TIME celebrated the influential creators shaping culture, conversations and communities around the world at the 2026 TIME100 Creators celebration.

Experience the highlights: time.com/time100creators2026



JESSICA SIBLEY CEO, TIME; ALIX EARLE CREATOR; CLEO ABRAM CREATOR; CYRUS VEYSSI CREATOR; OLANDRIA CARTHEN CREATOR

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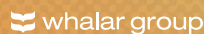
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The Brief



WHAT TARIFFS COULD DO
TO THE AUTO INDUSTRY

THE WORLD'S
BEST COMPANIES

MEET THE 2026
LATINO LEADERS

PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIC LEE

WHEN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES on Sept. 2 turned away a Republican-led attempt to permanently lock in the Supreme Court at its current configuration of nine Justices, the outcome wasn't a surprise. The proposed constitutional amendment by GOP Representative Andy Biggs of Arizona was widely seen as a long shot. Even if it had passed the chamber, it would have then required passage by the Senate, where the odds were also long, followed by ratification by 38 of the 50 U.S. states.

Still, as voters prepare to address the makeup of Congress in midterm elections, the effort spotlighted the other branch of government that has empowered President Donald Trump. Though the Supreme Court has handed down high-profile rulings thwarting Trump's agenda in tariffs and birthright citizenship, it has handed him victories on federal elections, his attempts to remake the capital, and his Administration's enforcement of a robust anti-immigration agenda.

The court has also been accused of "abusing" what is called the "shadow docket"—a process through which urgent relief can be sought, bypassing the usual system. The Trump Administration has applied for dozens of those emergency appeals in cases challenging the President's plans, and the court has, in most, ruled in its favor.

Democrats claim the court, where conservatives hold a 6-3 majority, is pandering to politics. In July, a Washington *Post*–Ipsos poll found 46% of all Americans believe the court is ruling on Trump's policies based on ideology rather than the law. The Chief Justice has acknowledged the perception, and rebutted it.

"I think, at a very basic level, people think we're making policy decisions, we're saying we think this is how things should be, as opposed to what the law provides," Chief Justice John Roberts said at an event in May. "I think they view us as purely political actors, which I don't think is an accurate understanding of what we do."

AND YET, DEMOCRATS clearly see a reason to intervene. The debate over the size of the court is driven by their talk of diluting the conservative majority by adding more members. The U.S. Constitution does not state how many Justices make up the Supreme Court, and the number of seats has changed over time, from as few as five Justices to as many as 10. Since 1869, however, the court has had nine.

In 1937, after the court struck down parts of his New Deal agenda, President Franklin D. Roosevelt tried to install as many as six additional Justices, but lawmakers foiled that effort to "pack" the court. The idea returned

after Trump appointed three Justices in his first term, giving conservatives their current supermajority.

In April 2021, four Democrats introduced a bill envisioning a 13-Justice Supreme Court, claiming it "would restore balance to the nation's highest court after four years of norm-breaking actions by Republicans." Former Vice President Kamala Harris, who lost to Trump in the 2024 presidential election, also said that Democrats should have a "real conversation" about changing institutions, including "expanding" the court. As recently as May, Representative Al Green of Texas filed a bill to increase the number of Justices to 13.

"A baker's dozen would be a good number to have on the court," Representative James Clyburn of South Carolina told NBC in August. "And I would hope we would get people on the court who will follow the constitutional underpinnings of this great nation of ours."

Other ideas are also being floated. In July, Senator Sheldon Whitehouse of Rhode Island led a group of Senate Democrats in proposing to limit new Justices' active terms to 18 years. Their bill states that a President would nominate two new Supreme Court Justices in the first and third years after a presidential election. Only the nine most recently appointed Justices would rule on cases under the court's appellate jurisdiction. After 18 years participating in those cases, Justices would be limited to cases filed directly to the high court (called "original

jurisdiction") and performing other duties.

"Term limits and regular appointments would make the court more representative of everyday Americans and help restore the Supreme Court to the proper independent body it was created to be," Whitehouse said. Polls dating back to at least 2014 show broad public support for such term limits.

The court's image has also been tarnished by ethics controversies. Justices Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito have faced allegations of conflicts of interest and questions over financial disclosures, including accepting undisclosed luxury trips—claims they have disputed. In July, Senator Chris Murphy of Connecticut reintroduced a bill mandating an ethical code of conduct for the Supreme Court, appointing an ethics investigations counsel, and requiring Justices to publicly disclose why they decided to recuse themselves from a case.

With prominent Democrats increasingly describing the court as mired in a legitimacy crisis, debate over its future is shaping up as an issue in the 2028 presidential election. □

'I think, at a very basic level, people ... view us as purely political actors.'

—JOHN ROBERTS,
CHIEF JUSTICE



Mourning a monarch

A crowd congregates in Palace Square, Oslo, to pay their respects to Norwegian King Harald V, who died on Aug. 28 at 89 after undergoing treatment for a bacterial infection affecting his blood. The popular monarch's reign—a mostly symbolic one—lasted more than three decades. He was succeeded by his son, King Haakon VIII.

THE BULLETIN

After 'Lake America,' Trump floats changes across the global map

WHEN PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP issued an Executive Order on Aug. 27 renaming Lake Ontario as "Lake America," it was just one of a series of cartographical commands handed down recently from the Oval Office—putting a number of neighboring countries in an uncomfortable position.

U.S. GEOGRAPHY The President's order on the Great Lake, which came amid a widening trade spat with Canada, applies only to U.S. federal references to the lake. It does not determine how Canada or others refer to the body of water, but Google Maps and Apple Maps have already started to display the newly decreed name. Many U.S. lawmakers and Canadian politicians criticized the move and vowed to continue using the name Lake Ontario.

"NEW AMERICA" Shortly after the Lake America news, Trump also appeared to float the idea of renaming New Mexico as "New America." On Sept. 6, he shared a "New America" map on Truth Social, and it was reposted by the main White House account. The White House hasn't announced any official effort to rename New Mexico, but Trump's posts prompted backlash from Democratic lawmakers representing the state.

ELSEWHERE The latest moves draw on a familiar playbook. After returning to the White House last year, Trump swiftly signed an Executive Order renaming the Gulf of Mexico as the "Gulf of America." Meanwhile, on Sept. 2, he suggested renaming the Strait of Hormuz in the Middle East,

posting: "Now that we have it under U.S.A. control, should we change the name Hormuz Strait to Trump Strait? Like America itself, it would be 'hotter' than ever before!"

Then, on Sept. 7, he posted an image of a map of the U.S. that appeared to include Canada, Mexico, Iceland, Greenland, and islands in the Caribbean covered by the American flag. Iceland's leaders publicly condemned the post. "It is an insult to Icelanders, Canadians, Greenlanders," Prime Minister Kristinn Frostadottir told reporters. "There is nothing funny or normal about making fun of the sovereignty of states, especially today, when sovereignty cannot be taken for granted." —CALLUM SUTHERLAND, TIAGO VENTURA, and MIRANDA JEYARETNAM

GOOD QUESTION

Have Trump's tariffs 'saved' the U.S. auto industry?

BY T. MICHELLE MURPHY

CANADA IS THE LARGEST EXPORT MARKET FOR U.S. AUTO products, accounting for more than the next 10 markets combined, according to the Royal Bank of Canada (RBC). Auto trade between the two nations totaled \$100 billion in 2026. But experts on both sides of the border say the escalating trade war between the U.S. and Canada will strain the \$1.2 trillion U.S. auto industry, weakening its global competitiveness.

President Donald Trump, however, says, "I've revived, and indeed saved, the Automobile Business in our America," as he wrote Aug. 31 on Truth Social. "That's because of what I've done with TARIFFS."

Trump's claim highlights a fundamental tension: tariffs intended to protect American automakers increasingly target Canada, whose factories and suppliers are deeply integrated with the U.S. The President plans to raise the auto tariffs facing Canada to 50%, effective Jan. 1. Canada responded with reciprocal tariffs of up to 50%, which went into effect Sept. 8.

Manufacturers, meanwhile, have already reported substantial tariff-related costs, and the auto industry's production, sales, and employment have all declined since Trump returned to the White House.

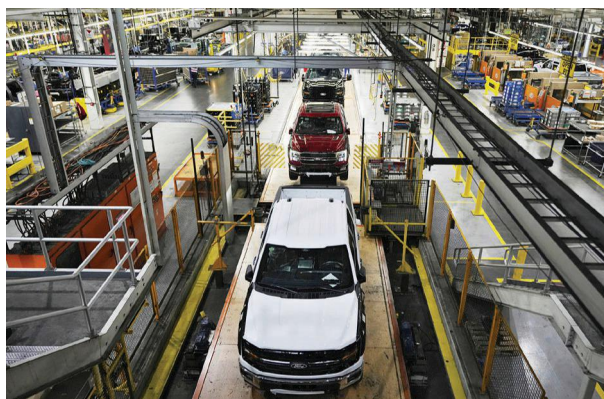
Central to the argument against auto tariffs is the idea that it is impossible to prevent harm to one country from being felt in the other. That integration is visible throughout the production process. Parts often cross the border up to eight times before a vehicle is assembled, per the RBC.

"If Trump goes ahead with a tariff on auto parts, the industry on both sides of the border would shut down," says Flavio Volpe, the president of Canada's Automotive Parts Manufacturers' Association. "President Trump can say the United States doesn't need Canada, but 60 years of industrial integration says otherwise. In autos, neither country can seriously damage the other without imposing significant costs on itself."

INCREASED TARIFFS COULD UNDERCUT what had been a promising trajectory for the U.S., according to Sam Fiorani, the vice president of global vehicle forecasting at AutoForecast Solutions.

"The North American automotive industry has evolved over the last three decades into a globally competitive machine," he says. "Without the resources that Canada and Mexico bring to the table, the U.S. has a

▼
F-150s at Ford's
Dearborn
Truck Plant in
Dearborn, Mich.



**Auto parts
often cross
the border
up to eight
times
before a
vehicle is
assembled**

tough time competing with the likes of the E.U. and definitely falls further behind China."

Key manufacturing states, like Michigan, stand to take the biggest hit. The state accounted for 18.1% of national vehicle production in the second quarter of 2026 and is home to the "Detroit Three"—Ford, General Motors, and Stellantis.

Trump has cited Ford as an example of how his influence has bolstered the auto industry. "When I announced that I was running in the 2024 Presidential Election, right at the beginning, Ford was getting ready to close their Big Factory," he wrote. "Now it's running 24/7, and it's one of the most profitable Car Plants in the World!"

His remarks appear to reference Ford's Dearborn Truck Plant. There is no evidence it was set to close in 2022. It added a third shift in January, expanding its operations to 24 hours a day, six days per week. But Ford, which declined TIME's request for comment, estimated it would incur about \$1 billion in tariff-related costs this year, according to Business Insider. It also reported a sales decline of 10% in the second quarter of 2026.

Ford's sales could soon face further pressure: Canadians spend about \$100 billion annually on imported vehicles, according to the RBC, and the Ford F-Series has been the country's best-selling vehicle for 15 years.

The U.S. auto industry already faces a difficult outlook. Sales growth is expected to plateau through 2030 because of "constrained consumer spending power and changing market preferences," PwC has reported.

Recovery is possible, but not with a trade war, says Fiorani.

"Expectations for a soft recovery of 1.2% next year are dependent on the balancing of relations with Canada and Mexico," he says. "If that does not happen, the forecast will need to be lowered as consumers react to higher prices and reduced choice." □



DIED

Tim Curry

Cult icon

THE ACTOR TIM CURRY, who died on Aug. 25 at the age of 80, was known for playing eccentric characters—none more so than Dr. Frank-N-Furter, the “sweet transvestite from Transsexual, Transylvania,” which he first took on in the stage version of *The Rocky Horror Show* in London in 1973. That paved the way to the famous screen adaptation from 1975, *The Rocky*

Horror Picture Show, which soon became an interactive midnight-movie phenomenon, with fans showing up to theaters in costume, shouting lines at the screen, and singing along in a communal celebration of camp.

The three-time Tony Award–nominated icon had a wide-ranging career spanning albums, voice work, and live performance that drew on his musical background and comedic chops.

In 1982, Curry starred in another stage adaptation—this time playing sleazy con artist Rooster Hannigan in the hit movie *Annie*. Acting alongside Carol Burnett and Bernadette Peters, Curry cemented himself as a scheming villain, the type of role he would continue to play in movies like *Home Alone 2*, *Muppet Treasure Island*, and *The Three Musketeers*. In the 1985 board-game adaptation *Clue*, Curry played the energetic butler Wadsworth, showcasing his physical comedy. One of the most memorable moments comes at the film’s end, when Wadsworth runs about the mansion, trying to summarize the night’s events and explain the identity of the killer.

Between those roles, Curry had his fingerprints all over pop culture—in movies and television and on the stage. His distinct theatrical voice made him a top choice for voice-over work, where his prolific career spanned hundreds of animated series, audio-books, and video games. After voicing Captain Hook in *Peter Pan & the Pirates*, he won a Daytime Emmy Award in 1991.

Rocky Horror, meanwhile, remains perhaps the definitive cult classic. And Curry, it’s clear, was a classic too.

—REBECCA SCHNEID

WON

Germany’s far-right AfD

In local election

German far-right party Alternative for Germany (AfD) claimed a historic election victory in the eastern state of Saxony-Anhalt on Sept. 6.

Though the win came in one of Germany’s smaller voting regions, it prompted consternation in the country, where a hard-right nationalist party had not been so successful since the fall of the Third Reich.

The anti-immigrant AfD fell three seats short of a majority in the state legislature. It had been aiming for an absolute majority to govern alone and overcome the so-called firewall of mainstream political parties that refuse to work with the AfD.

The result underscores the declining popularity of German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, whose center-right Christian Democratic Union (CDU) ruled out working with the AfD. Merz tried to ease concerns over the stability of democratic institutions, but also said the result was “the hardest defeat that the CDU has had for decades.”

—Miranda Jeyaretnam and Tiago Ventura

DIED

Yayoi Kusama (right), the **Japanese artist** who created globally popular “Infinity Mirror Rooms” installations, on Aug. 14 at 97.



DIED

Ratko Mladic, former Bosnian Serb general whose troops perpetrated the **Srebrenica massacre** in 1995, the Hague confirmed Aug. 27.

DECLARED

A mistrial, on Sept. 4 by the judge in the **trial of Lindsay Clancy**, who in 2023 strangled her three children. Her team sought an insanity defense.

CONVICTED

Duane “Keffe D” Davis, of coordinating the 1996 **killing of the rapper Tupac Shakur**, on Aug. 31. Davis was found guilty of first-degree murder.

ANNOUNCED

By the U.K., Canada, and France, on Sept. 8, that they would begin enforcing trade restrictions on **illegal Israeli settlements** in the West Bank.

COMPANIES

AI and E.U. defense drive a boom

BY CHARLOTTE HU

THE ECONOMY BUILT AROUND THE TECH HAS CONTINUED to boom even as experts hammer out AI's execution issues. Demand for chips remains strong, as Nvidia holds its top spot in TIME and Statista's 2026 statistical ranking of the World's Best Companies based on employee satisfaction, revenue growth, and sustainability transparency. New companies are entering the scene as the AI boom reaches down the supply chain.

Companies like Wistron (No. 16), Lenovo (No. 51), and Zurich Insurance Group (No. 70) are new additions to the 2026 list. Major Nvidia supplier Wistron reports that the demand for its AI servers exceeds supply, and it recently opened a plant in Texas to ramp up production. Chinese computer company Lenovo, known for PCs, smartphones, and tablets, saw annual profits rise to record sales driven by the newer AI-server part of its business. Plus, the wave of growing demand for physical infrastructure to support AI has created an opportunity for firms like Zurich Insurance Group to sell more coverage related to data-center construction.

Beyond AI, European defense-technology companies are seeing cash flow as a result of European NATO allies' committing in 2025 to spend €800 billion on defense readiness by 2030. "The increased defense spending in Europe is actually one of the largest demand signals we have seen in generations," says Hugues Lavandier, senior partner in McKinsey's Aerospace & Defense Practice. "The share of that money being spent on equipment is actually going up," especially on new technologies like drones and technical challenges like electronic warfare.

Traditional companies in the space, like French defense electronics maker Thales (No. 22; up from No. 224 in 2025) and Italian defense and aerospace company Leonardo (No. 25; up from No. 126 in 2025), are seeing an uptick in orders. At the same time, "nontraditional players are entering into the field, especially as suppliers," Lavandier says. "In particular, a number of automotive players have entered into the fray." Thales is partnering with French carmaker Renault (No. 42). Startups are also translating investment into innovations. German dronemaker Quantum Systems, currently supplying armed forces in Ukraine, announced significant investment from Deutsche Telekom (No. 7), which has a new partnership with Rheinmetall (No. 287) to co-create an antidrone shield.



Cigna will aim to lower drug costs after settling with the FTC on insulin pricing

McKesson

McKesson is one of the largest pharmaceutical distributors in the U.S.

Generali

Generali's 2025 finances were helped by fewer natural-disaster claims

TIME TOP 20 WORLD'S BEST COMPANIES 2026						
RANK	COMPANY	HEADQUARTERS	SCORE	SUSTAINABILITY TRANSPARENCY RANK	EMPLOYEE- SATISFACTION RANK	INDUSTRY
1	Nvidia	U.S.	97.51	43	55	IT, Electronics, Hardware, & Equipment
2	Cigna	U.S.	94.37	15	79	Insurance, Health Care, & Social Services
3	Apple	U.S.	93.16	24	3	IT, Electronics, Hardware, & Equipment
4	Meta Platforms	U.S.	91.80	271	20	Technology, Media, & Services
5	Astrazeneca	U.K.	90.64	23	116	Chemicals, Drugs, & Biotechnology
6	Microsoft	U.S.	90.50	691	1	IT, Electronics, Hardware, & Equipment
7	Deutsche Telekom	Germany	90.49	59	32	Telecommunications Services
8	Accenture	Ireland	90.30	4	29	Professional Services
9	McKesson	U.S.	90.26	75	361	Chemicals, Drugs, & Biotechnology
10	Advanced Micro Devices	U.S.	90.08	48	209	IT, Electronics, Hardware & Equipment
11	Schneider Electric	France	89.97	37	71	Engineering, Manufacturing, & Medical Technology
12	Alphabet	U.S.	89.79	581	6	Technology, Media, & Services
13	Barclays	U.K.	89.58	10	203	Banking & Financial Services
14	TD Bank Group	Canada	89.58	68	123	Banking & Financial Services
15	Humana	U.S.	89.44	114	103	Insurance, Health Care, & Social Services
16	Wistron	Taiwan	89.29	103	788	IT, Electronics, Hardware, & Equipment
17	Aviva	U.K.	89.24	41	157	Insurance, Health Care, & Social Services
18	Generali	Italy	89.17	49	178	Insurance, Health Care, & Social Services
19	Novartis	Switzerland	89.08	60	82	Chemicals, Drugs, & Biotechnology
20	Mastercard	U.S.	89.07	17	310	Banking & Financial Services

See the full list at ti.me/worlds-best-companies



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From entertainment to activism, sports to philanthropy, these 13 people are making their mark on their fields, the U.S., and the world. Meet the 2026 **Latino Leaders**

Jose Alvarado

BY SEAN GREGORY

AS THE NEW YORK KNICKS MOUNTED ONE OF THE GREATEST comebacks in sports history, erasing a 20-point fourth-quarter deficit in Game 4 of the NBA Finals in June against the San Antonio Spurs, Knicks reserve guard Jose Alvarado refused to overthink the moment.

Alvarado, who at a generously listed 6 ft. checks in as one of the shortest players in the NBA, electrified the celebrity-soaked Madison Square Garden crowd; his defensive effort, two critical three-pointers, and a driving layup down the stretch helped the Knicks chip away at San Antonio's seemingly insurmountable lead. "I kid you not, I was not once nervous in that game," says Alvarado, 28. "Not once. It was like, 'Let's do it, let's go have fun, and let's enjoy this moment.' And that's exactly what I did."

Three nights later, Alvarado fulfilled an impossible dream: he won an NBA title with his hometown team. The Knicks ended their 53-year championship drought, and Alvarado, a hard-nosed spark plug of Puerto Rican descent who grew up honing his game in the playgrounds of Brooklyn and Queens, came to embody the resilience of not only the team he suited up for but also the people of his city—especially his fellow Puerto Ricans, whom he's so proudly represented in the global spotlight.

At every stage of Alvarado's career, he was written off. "Everyone was telling me, 'Coach, you're in the ACC. You can't take this guy,'" says Josh Pastner, the former Georgia Tech coach who recruited Alvarado out of Christ the King High School in Queens. "He's too small. He's not quick enough. Come on, man." Alvarado was named conference defensive player of the year in 2021; Georgia Tech won the ACC tournament championship that season. "Winning is more important than breathing to him," says Pastner, who now coaches at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

"I don't pass the eye test," Alvarado admits. He knows he doesn't look the part. But he's now an NBA champion who signed a three-year deal, worth more



Alvarado, who represented Puerto Rico at the 2024 Olympics, won a title in New York

than \$14 million, with the Knicks this summer.

So: "I wouldn't trust the eye test."

ALVARADO CREDITS HIS SUCCESS to his New York City outer-borough upbringing. "I got my toughness and my grittiness from Brooklyn," he says. "I got a lot of my skills playing great opponents from Queens." Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, which

ALVARADO: NATHANIEL S. BUTLER—NBAE/GETTY IMAGES; CARSON: ELIAS TAHAN; GONZALEZ: ALLAN ZEPEDA



disrupted the seasons of many college players, in 2021 Alvarado could have returned to Georgia Tech for a fifth year of eligibility. He asked Pastner for \$60,000 in name, image, and likeness money—chump change in today's lucrative college sports economy. But five years ago, NIL rules hadn't been formally put in place, so Pastner didn't pay him. Alvarado bet on himself and went into the NBA

'I kid you not, I was not once nervous in that game.'

—JOSE ALVARADO,
NEW YORK KNICKS GUARD

draft. "Thank God I did," he says.

"I wish I paid him the 60 grand," says Pastner. "I mean, guys are asking me for a million dollars who average one point and can't win a game. I would maybe have a Final Four underneath my belt."

Although Alvarado didn't get drafted in 2021, the New Orleans Pelicans signed him to a contract: in the Big Easy, he carved out a role as a defensive specialist, earning the nickname Grand Theft Alvarado.

Then, in February of this year, Alvarado learned that the Pelicans had traded him to the Knicks. "I automatically got water eyes because it was like, 'Wow, I'm going to my hometown team,'" says Alvarado.

Leaving his teammates in New Orleans was bittersweet, but Alvarado fit right in with the Knicks: less than a week after the team acquired him, Alvarado scored 26 points, with eight three-pointers and five steals, against Philadelphia in just 19 minutes off the bench; he was the first reserve NBA player in history to record such sterling stats. These efforts, and the Knicks' title, now offer him cult-hero status in New York. "After the championship, I can't walk the streets," he says. In late June, Alvarado brought the NBA championship trophy to Puerto Rico, where fans snapped his picture as he arrived at the airport. The governor honored Alvarado at a ceremony.

Alvarado also led Puerto Rico to an appearance in the 2024 Olympics, and was named Athlete of the Year at the 2025 National Puerto Rican Day Parade in New York City. He plans on returning to the Olympics with Puerto Rico in 2028 in Los Angeles.

As for this upcoming NBA season? The reigning champion isn't planning to take it easy. "What makes the story better," asks Alvarado, "than to do it again?"



Sofia Carson

Carson is one of Netflix's most valuable movie stars, with four consecutive global No. 1 hits on the platform. The child of Colombian immigrants, she says it's essential for any role she takes on that her character's heritage is woven naturally into their everyday life, not treated as a barrier to overcome.

—Megan McCluskey

Julián Castro

Castro has a penchant for serving his community. After over a decade in politics, he's now CEO of the Latino Community Foundation, which funds Latino-serving and Latino-led nonprofits in the U.S. In March it announced a plan to raise a \$250 million endowment to expand its grant-making.

—Erin McMullen

Xochitl Gonzalez

Love for New Yorkers and her native city pulses through Gonzalez's work. The best-selling author and Pulitzer-finalist columnist is known for sharp and deeply felt novels, like her latest, *Last Night in Brooklyn*. In this *Great Gatsby* retelling set in 2007, she conjures the borough just before gentrification made it unrecognizable, depicting Latina and Black creatives working to make their mark on a changing world.

—Mahita Gajanan





Ronaldo Salgado and Lorenzo Salgado Jr.

BY LUCY FELDMAN

FOR YEARS, THE SALGADO HOUSE IN Houston has been where the family gathers for birthdays and holidays. “It’s a house that my dad built for all of us,” says Ronaldo Salgado, 29. His father Lorenzo Salgado Araujo moved to the U.S. from Mexico more than 30 years ago with his wife and began working in construction, saving up for a home large enough to host their three sons and any future grandchildren.

This summer, the house was full again. Not for a celebration, but to mourn Salgado Araujo, who was shot by an Immigration and Customs Enforcement agent while driving his crew to work on July 7. The Department of Homeland Security said in a statement after the shooting that Salgado Araujo, who was undocumented, posed a threat to officers, one of whom fired in self-defense. Salgado Araujo’s passengers have said no officers were in any danger when he was shot. The agents were not wearing body cams. A DHS spokesperson stated that Salgado Araujo was not the

person agents were looking for that day. Harris County District Attorney Sean Teare has said a grand jury will determine any charges. Houston ACLU attorney David Donatti, representing the family, says they intend to file a claim.

“It’s that fear that people go to work with every day, that they’re going to be detained and won’t be able to see their family that evening,” says Lorenzo Jr., 27. “That used to be our biggest fear: my dad would get picked up, and we’d have no idea where he was for a few days.” He hangs his head for a moment and exhales. The family’s reality is so much worse than they ever thought to fear.

The brothers are determined to use their voices to call for change. Ronaldo has spoken at press conferences beside politicians; he and Lorenzo Jr. have appeared on broadcast news and testified at a congressional forum. Ronaldo wants to work on state legislation that will protect immigrant communities. “I’m trying to use that anger and channel it in a more positive way,” says Ronaldo. “I feel right now that I can’t slow down, that I have to continue taking on these meetings, doing these interviews, doing anything I can just to get my dad’s name out there, to shine a light as to what happened, to who my dad was, and the injustices that my dad experienced—that we’re still experiencing.”

He visits the site where his father was killed at least once a day, and every day he finds someone there who wants to talk. Sometimes it’s a neighbor, but often it’s a traveler. They tell Ronaldo their immigration stories and about the loved ones they’ve lost, they say that he and his brothers remind them of their own kids, or that Lorenzo Sr. reminds them of their own fathers. A few community members have dedicated themselves to tending to the makeshift memorial, watering the flowers, bringing their dinners outside to watch over things as the day winds down. “This is all just to try to remember a man who worked all his life to give his family a better life,” Ronaldo says, “and to give his kids something to be proud of.”



Nelson German

German is known for the way he innovates traditional Afro-Latin dishes without compromising flavorful Caribbean spice. The Dominican American chef behind three San Francisco Bay Area restaurants has earned recognition from Michelin and the James Beard Foundation.

—Kaitlyn McNab

Luana Lopes Lara

Lara credits her Brazilian culture for her optimism. She says it’s served her well as chief operating officer of Kalshi, the prediction market valued at \$22 billion that has boomed and enjoyed support from the Trump Administration as people take up betting on everything from what words the President will use in his speeches to the price of a Costco hot dog.

—Alana Semuels

Cástulo de la Rocha

Over the past five decades, de la Rocha, president and CEO of AltaMed Health Services, has transformed what was a small medical clinic in East L.A. into a thriving health care system serving communities across Southern California.

—Veronique Greenwood





Ana Valdez

Valdez likes to subvert expectations of what a CEO looks like. Sometimes, when she walks into a room, she can tell people “were expecting someone different.” But as president and CEO of the Latino Donor Collaborative, a clearinghouse for what she describes as “data-driven Latino economic advocacy,” changing perceptions is her job.

—Jack Herrera

Marina Larroude

Larroude has always found value in her “different point of view” as a Brazilian woman in the New York fashion world. Thinking outside the box is what’s made her namesake shoe brand a success—from designing the construction in-house and a preorder-based business model to owning its own manufacturing facility in Brazil.

—Shannon Carlin

Mónica Ramírez

Ramírez, an attorney and the founder of Justice for Migrant Women, seeks to spread knowledge—not only to migrant women about how to organize and fight for their rights, but also to the rest of the U.S. about the important roles migrants play. —J.H.



Rachel Zegler

BY MEGAN MCCLUSKEY

WHEN RACHEL ZEGLER WAS ANNOUNCED the winner of Best Actress in a Musical at the 2026 Laurence Olivier Awards, she initially wasn’t sure she’d won. “It was one of those crazy things,” she says. “Vanessa Williams presented it, and she didn’t do the traditional ‘The winner is ...’ She just said, ‘Get up here, Rachel.’ So I didn’t know what was happening. Then my best friend was like, ‘Go, go, go!’”

As for the role that earned her that honor—playing Eva Perón in Jamie Lloyd’s West End revival of *Evita*—Zegler doesn’t mince words when it comes to how much those 12 weeks she spent performing at the London Palladium meant to her. “That production and having done it with the people I did is my proudest achievement,” she says. “It was the most incredible summer anyone could ever dream of.”

Zegler, 25, is now poised to bring her acclaimed portrayal of the former First Lady of Argentina to Broadway, with previews for the show beginning in February 2027. The musical’s highly anticipated New York City run will kick-start a chapter in which Zegler is also set to return to the big screen for the first time since starring in Disney’s 2025 live-action version of *Snow White*, and its assorted controversies—ranging from racist trolling about Zegler’s Colombian heritage to debates over her take on the 1937 animated original and heated commentary about the star’s political views.

“It’s a very important thing for all women, but particularly those in this industry, to learn that you’re never going to please everybody,” Zegler says of what she took away from that period of intense scrutiny. “If you are doing everything you can to be fulfilled and to do good work with good people, the rest of it is really just noise.”

Reflecting on how she was criticized for not being “enough of one thing” for her breakout role playing the Puerto Rican character Maria in



Steven Spielberg’s *West Side Story* and “too much of another” for *Snow White*, Zegler maintains she will always be grateful for the formative impact of both films, despite the turbulence. “I was thrilled with the response for *West Side Story*. I won a Golden Globe when I was 20,” she says. “And similarly for *Snow White*, I was so proud of my performance. It was ultimately a really soul-filling learning experience.”

With a slate of forthcoming features in the pipeline, including indie dramedy *She Gets It From Me*, psychological thriller *NDA*, and the Lin-Manuel Miranda-directed *Octet*, Zegler is now looking ahead to new horizons. “I had one mission this year, which was to work with women and Latinos,” she says. She’s excited for the doors those films will open—“Not just for me, but for the amazing people I got to make them with, who in the past have been disenfranchised in this industry.”

Ultimately, Zegler refuses to let anyone put her in a box. “I love playing fully formed humans with complexities,” she says. “Human beings deserve to be represented for their flaws as well as the things that make them wonderful—I kind of think they’re one and the same.”

Can't sleep? Try getting out of bed

BY ANGELA HAUPT

It's 2 a.m., and you've been awake for an hour—staring at the same patch of ceiling, counting the same sheep, and doing increasingly alarming math about how wrecked you're going to feel tomorrow. Your instinct is to stay right where you are and try harder. Surely sleep will come eventually. And even if it doesn't, at least you're resting, right? Not exactly. The better move, sleep specialists say, is the one that feels most counterintuitive: get up, leave the room, and do something else. The technique is called stimulus control, and it isn't new—psychologist Richard Bootzin introduced it in 1972, and it remains a cornerstone of cognitive behavioral therapy for insomnia.

Why lying in bed when you can't sleep makes it worse

The problem begins when you treat sleep like a task. “Effort is the enemy of sleep,” says Shelby Harris, a behavioral sleep medicine specialist in New York. The harder you work at it, the more frustrated and alert you become.

How long should you stay in bed before getting up?

People are often told to get out of bed after about 20 minutes awake. But timing yourself requires looking at a clock—which can make you even more stressed about not sleeping.

Instead, notice your mood. If you're calm, give yourself a few minutes to see what happens. But if your mind is racing, you're becoming annoyed, or you catch yourself trying to force sleep, get up. Do something else until you feel sleepy again.

Why getting out of bed helps

Michael Perlis, director of the behavioral sleep medicine program at

the University of Pennsylvania's Perelman School of Medicine, sums up his advice in a slogan: “Give up. Get up. Get out.”

Getting up allows sleep pressure, the biological drive that makes you sleepy, to build. Even if it doesn't rescue that night, Perlis says, it can improve your odds of sleeping better the next one.

It also preserves the positive association between your bed and sleep—and helps “give sleep a chance” later.

What to do when you can't sleep

The goal isn't to tire yourself out, Harris says. Choose something enjoyable to pass the time until sleepiness returns.

Harris collects old cookbooks and flips through them, earmarking family recipes. She has seen patients take up art projects and knit what she affectionately calls “insomnia scarves.” Whatever you choose shouldn't feel like a punishment—or particularly productive. “Don't do your work. Don't do taxes. Don't do bills,” Harris says. “The more you wake up and do work, the

more you're teaching your body to have those awakenings.”

A few other rules help:

Avoid screens when possible. Phones and laptops can pull you into messages and work—and make it difficult to put the device down. If a screen is your only realistic alternative to lying in bed with a racing mind, watch something you enjoy, but treat it as a backup plan.

Turn on a lamp. You don't need to sit in the dark. Use enough light to do your chosen activity comfortably.

Don't fall asleep on the couch.

When sleepiness hits, return to your bedroom so you don't train yourself to sleep elsewhere.

Prepare during the day.

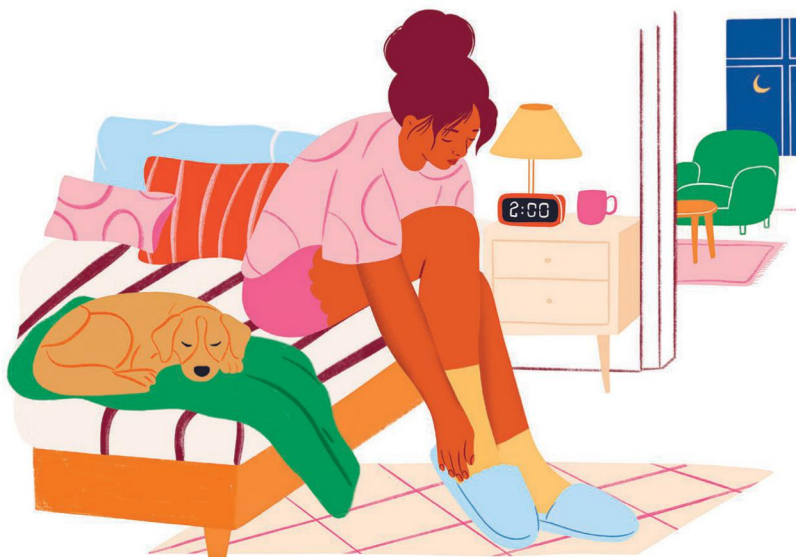
Decide in advance where you'll go and what you'll do, and leave a book, magazine, or art supplies ready.

Practice makes perfect

Once you feel sleepy again, return to bed. “See what happens,” Harris says. If your mind starts racing or you become frustrated again, “get back out, rinse, and repeat.”

If you've been practicing stimulus control for two or three weeks, while maintaining a consistent bedtime and wake time, and your sleep hasn't improved, Harris recommends seeing a sleep specialist. They can screen for conditions like sleep apnea and determine whether you might benefit from a fuller course of cognitive behavioral therapy for insomnia.

And the next time you're lying awake at 2 a.m., remember: “Change the narrative,” Harris says. “Trying to force it is only going to make it worse.”



The View

CLIMATE

A WARNING FROM NEPAL

BY SUMNIMA UDAS

We are still burying or cremating our dead. We are still searching for our missing people. We are still gasping at the emptiness where our homes stood. And we know something: the furious deluge that came crashing down from a mountain peak in northern Nepal, like a scene from an apocalyptic movie, and tore through the valleys of the Rasuwa and Nuwakot districts of our country, was not a freak accident. ▶

INSIDE

RESEARCHERS LINK
PERSONALITY TO GENES

THE ARGUMENT THAT AI
IS ACTUALLY UNDERHYPED

The devastation of Aug. 26 was a warning from the Himalayas. Our majestic mountains and their glaciers are warming because of climate change caused by greenhouse-gas emissions from industrialized nations that have been burning fossil fuels since the Industrial Revolution. We, in Nepal, produce a mere 0.1% of global greenhouse-gas emissions. And it is time for the industrialized nations to take responsibility for it.

As of Sept. 10, 1,420 people had been declared dead as a result of the floods in Nepal, Tibet, and China, and 5,649 people remained missing. More than 90,000 people have been affected. Around 600 of the missing people were foreign nationals from 39 countries.

The first reports, which pointed toward an earthquake setting off the glacial rage, were quickly reversed. What the seismometers registered was a warming glacier shearing off Langtang Lirung mountain peak and slamming into the valley floor with enough force to register a magnitude 5.2 shock, sending a wall of rock, ice, mud, and water thundering down the Bhotekoshi-Trishuli River valley at a ferocious speed that gave communities along the riverbanks almost no warning.

Chinese monitors clocked just six to seven minutes between the collapse and the moment the surge hit Gyirong Port at the China-Nepal border. In Rasuwa district, officials recorded the Trishuli River rising as much as 9 meters in 30 minutes.

Nepal is familiar with a pattern of extreme climate events induced by climate change. In July 2025, a smaller flood washed away the Friendship Bridge, which connected Rasuwagadhi in Nepal with Gyirong on the Chinese side of the border. In August 2024, a glacial lake let go near Mount Everest, tearing through Thame village and destroying homes, a school, and a health post overnight. These natural calamities are becoming more frequent and fierce.

Just as Nepal was turning a corner, under a reform-minded government promising good governance and attracting foreign investment,



The wreckage in Devighat, Nepal, on Aug. 29, three days after the devastating flash flood

this disaster could set this part of the country back by about a decade. Our Finance Minister, Swarnim Wagle, estimates that rebuilding will cost \$4 billion to \$5 billion, close to a tenth of our entire economy, against a national budget of around \$14 billion for the year.

It will take us years to rebuild what Nepal has lost: 12 hydroelectric power stations that accounted for 10% to 12% of Nepal's power supply have been affected; at least 69 schools were destroyed or damaged, putting education at risk for nearly 19,000 children. In addition, tourism contributes roughly 6.7% to 8% of Nepal's GDP and supports around a million jobs across the country. Although the impact of this disaster remains concentrated in three out of 77 districts

of Nepal, many travel operators and hotels are reporting cancellations. I want to emphasize that Nepal continues to welcome every tourist. Traveling here is one of the most meaningful ways you can support us.

NEPALIS ARE RESILIENT. Every time a disaster hits, we mourn our dead, rebuild, and carry on. We call it karma, or fate, or the mountains doing what mountains do. But this isn't karma. The climate is changing, and human activity is changing it. Our resilience becomes a quiet abandonment, a way for the rest of the world to admire how well we absorb losses it helped create.



A riverside building in Trishuli, Nepal, on Aug. 27



In October 2023, U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres stood near Mount Everest and pleaded, “I am here today to cry out from the rooftop of the world: Stop the madness ... The glaciers are retreating, but we cannot. We must end the fossil-fuel age.”

The Hindu Kush Himalaya is warming faster than the global average. Go up to the mountains and you can see it: bare gray rock where there was snow and ice just a decade ago. The region is often called the Third Pole because it holds the largest volume of ice outside the two poles. It is also one of the planet’s most important water towers, feeding 10 major river systems and sustaining nearly 2 billion people downstream.

In March, the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), an intergovernmental

group working in the Himalayan region, confirmed what mountain people already feel: glaciers across the Hindu Kush Himalaya are now losing ice at roughly twice the rate they did before 2000, and have disappeared 65% faster between 2011 and 2020 than in the preceding decade. Nepal alone holds more than 2,000 glacial lakes.

An assessment by the Nepal government and ICIMOD identified 21 glacial lakes across the Koshi, Gandaki, and Karnali basins of the country as potentially dangerous and capable of producing a damaging outburst. In 2016, the government of Nepal and the U.N. Development Programme worked together to lower water levels in Imja Tsho, one of the largest and most closely watched glacial lakes in the Everest region. The initiative successfully drained Imja Tsho to a safer level and installed community-based

early-warning and response systems.

But new lakes keep forming, and old ones keep growing, faster than any single country can monitor them. It took years of international effort and millions of dollars to make Imja Tsho safe. Nepal has dozens of glacial lakes like it. We don’t have a fraction of the money required.

AND HERE IS the arithmetic of the injustice: Nepal is one of the smallest contributors to global greenhouse-gas emissions, yet its people, from remote villages to the Kathmandu Valley, keep paying the price for it. Nepal has grown its forest cover to nearly 46% of its land and draws around 90% of its electricity from clean hydropower. The climate disasters we face are the essence of climate injustice: those least responsible for the crisis are the first and worst affected, and too often the least equipped to recover.

Every major disaster forces the country to divert scarce resources away from education, health care, infrastructure, and development, and back into rebuilding what was lost. A country that spends its future paying for someone else’s emissions

**We need action
before more
mountains give way**

cannot develop. It can only tread water. Nepal doesn't need another pledge recited at another international conference. We need the international community to move from symbolic gestures to real action.

We need climate finance that actually reaches Nepal. We need a Loss and Damage Fund that pays out when a village needs it, not years after the water has receded. Nepal also needs investment in early-warning systems, continuous monitoring of glaciers and glacial lakes, and disaster preparedness that reaches the most remote mountain communities. Six minutes of warning is not a policy failure of Nepal alone; it is what underinvestment in mountain monitoring buys.

And finally, the people who live in these mountains and the billions who depend on the water flowing from them deserve a voice in climate policy. Nepal should be central to that conversation. We are not debating what climate change might do. We are already living it.

Nature has a way of reminding us just how interconnected and interdependent we are. A glacier destabilized in one country can, within minutes, devastate villages, infrastructure, and livelihoods in another, while the bodies of the dead are found hundreds of kilometers downstream in another country. Nepal, China, and India share not only mountains and rivers, but also a common exposure to the accelerating risks of climate change. We need more regional cooperation, and Nepal, sitting at the head of these shared watersheds, must play a central role.

Nepal's mountains are our identity. They feed our rivers, our tourism, our sense of who we are. Now they are also ground zero for the climate emergency. The world needs to heed this warning: we need shared, urgent, and just action before more mountains give way.

Udas is a Member of Parliament in Nepal and chair of the Parliamentary Committee on International Relations and Tourism

> Navigating a railing while attempting to recover lost items after the flash floods in Devighat, Nepal, on Aug. 29



▼ Looking out at the Trishuli River, which swelled in the floods, in Devighat, Nepal, on Aug. 29





People grieve missing loved ones who were symbolically cremated in Kathmandu on Sept. 2

Authorities bury bodies found after the disaster in Devighat forest in Bharatpur, Nepal, on Aug. 30



Images of missing people are displayed at a teaching hospital in Kathmandu on Aug. 29



Health Matters

By Veronique Greenwood

STAFF WRITER

PSYCHOLOGISTS RECOGNIZE THAT five dimensions of personality, often termed the Big Five, are reliable descriptors of temperament. Where these tendencies—which include neuroticism, extroversion, and agreeableness—come from is an area of active research. **Scientists who examined the genes of more than a million people who also took personality questionnaires have revealed in a new paper published in *Nature* a swath of genetic variants linked to each trait.**

Experts have long suspected some aspects of personality must be genetic, says Denis Bratko, a psychologist at the University of Zagreb in Croatia who has studied this question. Past efforts to look for these links, however, did not uncover clear correlations, likely because study sizes were small and the effects of each variant may be subtle. “Several decades of studies have seen failures because they [have been] looking for one or a few genes which will have a huge effect,” he says.

To overcome that, the new study’s authors reached out to scientists

around the world who manage repositories of data that include both genomic information and information about personality.

“We think that personality is super important for health,” says Michel Nivard, a professor of genomic epidemiology at University of Bristol in the U.K. and an author of the study. Scores on Big Five traits have long been associated with risk for mental-health diagnoses; neuroticism, in particular, is linked to anxiety.

THE STUDY REVEALED more than 1,000 genetic variants that appear to contribute to personality. Because the data came with all sorts of information about the people in the study, the researchers could see links between

‘We think that personality is super important for health.’

—MICHEL NIVARD, STUDY CO-AUTHOR

personality traits, genetic variants, and other parts of people’s lives as well.

Looking at genetic profiles, they found that people whose variants were linked to extroversion were more likely to be infected with COVID early in the pandemic, says Nivard. Personality was also linked to where people lived in midlife, the researchers found, using information from the UK Biobank that included home location. Those with genetic profiles linked to greater openness to new experience tended to end up in cosmopolitan cities, while those higher on neuroticism gravitated to affluent suburbs.

Overall, the study found that a relatively small but significant proportion of personality—up to around 13%—can be predicted by genetics, reinforcing the impression that personality is a combination of genetics and environment. And it’s not necessarily the case that personality is inherited: an extrovert, for example, may not have extroverted children. The system is clearly quite a bit more complex than that.

Understanding the genetic variants playing into each trait may help psychologists and neuroscientists further explore the basic neurobiology of personality. “There’s this endless debate on whether our body and our experiences shape our personality, or whether personality shapes our experience. I’m super excited to go and use these results to dig into those kinds of questions,” says Nivard.

If you’d like to find out more about your own personality, the best way is still an academically validated Big Five test, Nivard says—not a genomic test. “There is no better way to know about your personality than to take a personality test,” says Nivard. “They’re really good. They’re not perfect, but they’re way better than anything we could ever do with genetics.”



Stay up to date on the latest health and wellness news at t.me/HealthMatters



THE CEO MOMENT

The case that AI is an underhyped innovation

BY SAM JACOBS

THOSE WHO ARE BULLISH ABOUT THE FUTURE OF artificial intelligence imagine a day soon when consumer products finally match the potential capabilities of the technology. Among the companies determining that future is Qualcomm, the semiconductor leader whose chips power many of the devices in our lives, from smartphones to automobiles. Cristiano Amon, who marks his fifth anniversary as CEO this summer, is responsible for steering the 41-year-old communications company through a pivotal time. He recently joined *The CEO Moment*, our new interview series, to talk about where AI is heading next and how he plans to keep his company competitive.

You've said, "I tell my team, we are in the gladiator business." Do you honestly say that? The reason I use this analogy is because if you're a gladiator, you go to the Colosseum, there's going to be three outcomes: you're going to win, you're going to lose, or you're both going to lose. So you go in, you have a 33% chance of success. If you win, the only thing you accomplished, you can go to the Colosseum one more time.

You've also said that whatever people believe AI is going to be, it's probably going to be bigger. What makes you so sure? Back in the 2000s, people said the internet's going to be big. If you look now, 26 years later, the internet is way bigger than people thought—by an order of magnitude. It's probably been underhyped in the long run.

'The internet is way bigger than people thought.'

—CRISTIANO AMON,
QUALCOMM CEO

<
*Amon speaking in
June in Taipei*

You envision a world where humans interact with information that moves beyond smartphones. History makes me question this. So far these devices have failed to take off. Can you convince me now that that future we've been waiting for is finally here? I have 40 different designs today of people doing personal AI devices. There are companies doing glasses, which is obvious. There's jewelry, pendants, pens, bracelets, watches ... Will all those things pan out? I don't know. I tell you what, right now I'm very comfortable making one bet. Glasses will, because this is prime real estate. It's close to my eyes, to my ears, to my mouth.

You recently accompanied President Trump to his meetings with Chinese President Xi Jinping. What did the trip tell you about the future of the semiconductor supply chain? I came out of the trip optimistic. There's value in providing semiconductors in American technology stacks to companies in China.

Should Americans be concerned if you sell advanced chips to Chinese companies? Chips are in everything right now. Chips are in every consumer electronic device and in cars and appliances and everything. It's a pretty easy-to-understand statement if I ask people to answer the following question: Do you like American technology for America? Or do you like American technology for the world?

You present it as if there's one obvious choice, but there are lots of people who would disagree with you. At the end of the day, it's just math ... Every leading semiconductor company right now has exposure in business in China. That's a good thing.

Visit ti.me/ceo-moment to watch the full interview, or follow *The CEO Moment* podcast on Apple or Spotify

2751

NATION



1913 Roll Call
Engine Co. 2
Capt. Briggs
TF. May
TF. Gillis
TF. Egan
TF. Dolan
TF. Power
Capt. M.
TF. ...
TF. Ge.
TF. ...
TF. Hughes
TF. ...

D.N.Y.

Twenty-Five Years Later,

Sept. 11 remains a watershed moment. For some, it marks profound loss. Others know it mostly from history class. The attacks that changed the world also changed lives.

Colin McShane, whose father Terence was killed in the Sept. 11 attacks, is a member of Ladder 44 in the Bronx

PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDRES KUDACKI FOR TIME

Legacy firefighter

Colin McShane

I was 4½ when my dad died. I have only brief memories of that day. I remember my mom taking my twin brother and me out of preschool. I remember watching the TV at home and then going over to one of her friends', whose husband was also a firefighter, and watching it there. We were so young, we didn't really grasp what was actually going on. But as you get older, you start to realize what you've missed out on. It's not quite the same as being sad because you miss someone close to you. It's more like you're sad because you didn't really get to be close to them.

My dad was a cop for 12 years and a firefighter for only 18 months, but joining the FDNY was always his plan. For as long as I can remember, I also wanted to be a firefighter. I did the entry exam when I was 18, even though they don't take anyone until 21. I went to college, but I think I was just killing time. I dropped out after two years, as the process ramped up. My mom kept encouraging me to consider other things, but she knew I had put all my eggs in that basket. I loved the routine and discipline of the academy, and I really tried to earn my spot; I didn't want to feel like I was getting special treatment.

A lot of things about the fire department don't change, and I remember thinking my dad might have stood right where I was standing, worrying about getting yelled at by some drill instructor for having a button undone. I don't have many shared memories with him, but that came close. He worked in Brooklyn, just on the other

side of the tunnel from the World Trade Center. I wanted to go to a different firehouse, to let the guys make up their mind about me without having known his reputation, so I'm in the Bronx. The firefighters I meet that knew him, I feel like they're happy to see that I'm on the job.

On 9/11 I usually go to Mass at my firehouse and then drop by Ladder 101, where Dad worked. Last year for the first time I met someone who was actually riding that day, and he gave me the full rundown. They were staged at the mouth of the tunnel right under the towers, and as they sat there on the rigs, they watched the second plane come in. They could feel the impact and then they went straight in. From what I understand, his group went up a way, came back down, and were in the lobby when the building collapsed.

Dad was also a lifeguard at Overlook Beach in Long Island, and the lifeguards there put up a little memorial for him. My mom is not big on going to the firehouse or the ceremonies in the city on the anniversaries. I think it's just too overwhelming. So we do a more casual gathering in the afternoon. It's less somber, more a reason for everyone to just get together.

Sometimes the attention that comes with being a legacy firefighter is uncomfortable, but not for the reasons you might think. I don't have trouble talking about it; it was something that happened when I was young, but I had a happy childhood and a very fortunate life. I'm not looking for sympathy—I feel lucky to have had that role model of selflessness and self-sacrifice. On the other hand, I do miss having had a real relationship with my dad.

Do I wish he was still alive? Of course. I sometimes wonder if I'd be different if I'd known my dad. But that event shaped my way of thinking and shaped me. I'm very proud of what he did, and I think it's a very admirable and honorable way to die. And I wouldn't want someone else to have been in his place because I don't think that's what he would have wanted. —As told to Belinda Luscombe



Taking flight

Kelsey Griffin

My journey of becoming a pilot started when I was 14, when I went to a youth summer camp sponsored by the Organization of Black Aerospace Professionals (OBAP). When I first told my parents that I wanted to be a pilot, they were a little bit concerned about the dangers that come with flight training at a young age, but they were also very supportive.

Flight training is very expensive, but my parents made sacrifices to support me financially as I sought out scholarships and opportunities. I was drawn to the LeRoy W. Homer Jr. Foundation Scholarship, because of their mission to empower future aviators. He was an African American pilot, and a first officer for United Airlines on Flight 93. I wasn't alive when 9/11 happened, so my understanding comes from learning about it through documentaries and conversations with my parents and grandparents and others.

The tragedies definitely impacted not only the lives of everyday people, but also caused major disruption in the aviation industry. When my mentor started his career as a pilot, he got furloughed soon after 9/11, because the industry was devastated over Americans' fear of flying.

The scholarship exists because of somebody who lived with courage, professionalism, and commitment to serving others. Knowing that I'm representing his legacy motivates me to work harder and fly with integrity, and never take opportunities for granted.

African American women make up less than 1% of professional pilots in the U.S. I have had the privilege of connecting with several of them through organizations such as OBAP. Having this support gives me a sense of comfort and understanding that through hard work, I can also achieve it.

—As told to Philip Wang

Guantánamo lawyer

Alka Pradhan

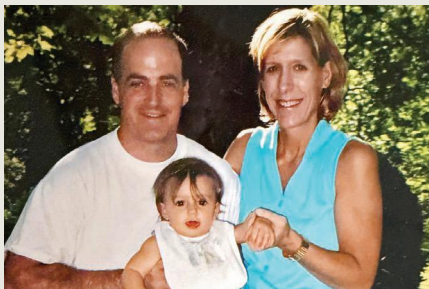
I was infamous as an undergraduate at Johns Hopkins for choosing classes in the afternoon so I could sleep all morning. My more diligent roommate would try to wake me so she'd have someone to talk to. On 9/11, I thought that's what she was doing. Maybe a minute or so after she got me to the TV, the second plane hit. It was terrifying.

Even at 19, I was on track to study the intersection of human-rights law and international humanitarian law. When it became clear in early October that we, the U.S., were going to strike Afghanistan in a way that seemed not entirely targeted and seemed to conflate the Taliban with al-Qaeda, that began my interest in all this. To me, our actions didn't seem to comply with the law of war that I had been studying.

I was already working with Guantánamo detainees when, in 2015, I got a call from a friend at the Department of Defense, who said the military commissions were hiring civilians. He asked if I'd be interested in representing Ammar al-Baluchi, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed's nephew. It is the biggest criminal case in U.S. history. I hold a top-secret security clearance, and I still don't have all the information I need about the torture at the black sites that impacted how Ammar is today and the statements he gave later. The trial has just been scheduled for June 2028, but I don't know if it will ever happen, and I think that is a very hard truth, particularly for the victims' family members.

However, I also think this is one of the most important things I will ever do because it shows fellow Americans that this is what dissent looks like. On 9/11 I will reach out to the victims' family members who I am in touch with and convey my very deep sadness and anger over what happened. I will watch the commemorations. I will contemplate. Then I will start speaking again about everything that we are continuing to do wrong. —As told to B.L.





A 9/11 baby

Keira Unterzuber, Eric Johnson, Freya Johnson

Keira: My first child was due on Sept. 3, and my doctor was going to induce me on the 13th. So the 11th was any other day, really. I was getting ready for work when my husband, who is a pilot and was home on family leave, said, "Keira, come here." He explained that a plane had crashed into the World Trade Center. As the morning went on, I started to feel unwell. But I don't think anybody felt well that day.

Eric: We live near the Pentagon, and suddenly, it was like somebody pushed over a piano in the room next to us. It shook the whole house. Sometime in there, Keira said, "I'm having the baby today." I drove 80 to 90 miles an hour all the way to the hospital. There was zero traffic.

Keira: In the delivery room, Eric started to say he was ready to join the military. He suggested several new names for the baby: Phoenix, America, Freedom, Liberty. I just said no, no, no. Eventually he picked Freya, who is goddess of war and love and a very strong woman.

Freya: When I was young, I didn't really understand the significance of the day. But around the 10th anniversary, I realized, "Oh, this is huge." I actually didn't celebrate my birthday from ages 10 to 13. It just felt inappropriate and weird. I can't tell you how many times I've told people my birthday, and it becomes a whole conversation. However, as I've gotten older, I've realized that I like my birthday. It's such a beautiful time of year. I'm at the point where I can acknowledge that it was sad, but I can also celebrate myself.

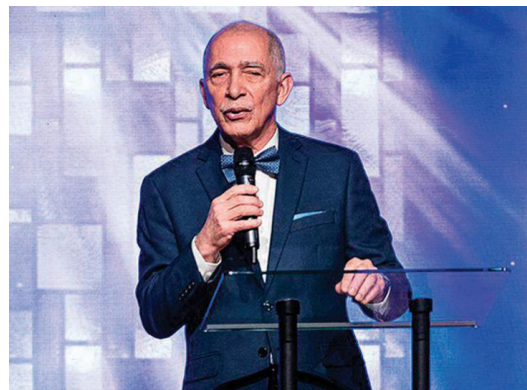
Keira: When something tragic happens, it's a beautiful thing to be around a newborn baby. My brother's wife lost her first husband on the 10th, and his funeral was on the 13th. She adores Freya because, in her world, she's a bright light at a dark moment. We have a lot of friends who say that year after year: She was the shining light that day. —As told to B.L.

Pastoral care

Marc Rivera

Primitive Church is within eyeshot of the towers. I had just dropped my younger son at high school a block away from the Trade Center, and I was going into the church office when I saw my secretary outside. She says, "Look." Sure enough, there was a gaping hole in the north tower. I could see what I thought was debris falling. Later on, I discovered it may have been people.

We established the Ground Zero Clergy Task Force, which was simply clergy of different faiths and traditions who gathered together to help at the site and to coordinate churches with FEMA and the New York City government. About a year afterward,



I established the Northeast Clergy Group, which was broader and longer-standing.

We closed those organizations eventually, but through them I saw the importance of not being so rigid in my theological training. When tragedy strikes, no one cares how much training you have, how many books you've written, how large your congregation is. Because the bottom line is love.

The most painful consequence for me personally was that my oldest son, Tim, was

diagnosed with Stage IV colorectal cancer. He fought it for three years, but September will mark one year since his passing. He would have been 46. We believe he probably got it because we live down here. One of my greatest concerns today is that there are people in our congregation who may qualify for assistance through the 9/11 fund that the government set up, but some remain reluctant to apply. They're more afraid of the system than they are of getting sick. —As told to B.L.



Memorial volunteer

Connie Stevanus

That day, I was working at a bank, and as I went from department to department, they were bringing this up on their computers. On my way home, it's just a two-lane country road, and there was so much traffic. Cars were passing me in either direction. They were state police cars. When I finally got home, I see my husband picking things out of the yard, and I didn't know what he was doing until I went to pull into our driveway. It was black, totally black,

with small pieces of burnt debris. And it just hit me then what I was looking at. Flight 93 carried mail. We had mail in our trees, in our yard. The neighbor across the road from us had a piece of the United Airlines magazine in her yard.

We started volunteering at the Flight 93 National Memorial in Shanksville, Pa., after my husband had retired from work, like five years after 9/11. People come from all over. They like to tell you where they were and their experiences of that day. I never get tired of talking about it. Probably 99% of them still feel the pain. Sometimes it's a little hard to be there, because I'm that person—I might not be able to say the right thing to you, but I can cry right alongside of you.

At the Visitor Center, we have those three phone messages. You know that some of the passengers on Flight 93 had to leave messages because they didn't get an answer? Those are very powerful. —As told to Karl Vick

Dreams deferred

Shams Frough

I was going into fifth grade when 9/11 happened. I remember, because it was two days after a famous Northern Alliance commander was assassinated. Obviously, there was no TV in Kabul, but our ears were wide open and we did hear about it on the radio. (From a very young age, I was listening to BBC Persian.) Then came the bombings, and life in Kabul became a bit hard, so for a short period, I went back to my village, Kapisa, which is 100 km from Kabul, where I had shepherding duties. I remember very well the big difference when we returned to school; girls were going too, and we no longer had to wear black turbans. Everybody wanted the Taliban to go, but we didn't know that eventually all these American soldiers would come and there would be a hot war again. We all thought the Northern Alliance would take over.

My mother died when I was young, and my father really worked to make sure his children did not have to work on the farm. I went to an elite Turkish-run high school; out of 6,000 applicants, only 100 were accepted—and some of those places were reserved for the children of government ministers. Most lessons were in English, but we also learned Turkish. I wanted to go to medical school, but I was young and male and I believed the hype, and in the last year of school I began working with the U.S. Army. I was sent to Kandahar as an interpreter. After I was nearly killed twice, I was transferred to the Department of Procurements in Kabul and ended up doing simultaneous translation for colonels and generals who were advising the Afghan military and police. I reported what looked like corruption in the Afghan procurement process, and then I knew I had to leave. It took three years, until 2014—a week or so after I resigned—for my Special Immigrant Visa to be processed.



My wife and I were initially assigned to Albuquerque, N.M., which was funny, because my Army friends always made fun of the mud huts in Afghanistan and there they were in America, only it was called adobe. When we moved to Chicago, I went to community college, and so I took up driving taxis and Ubers. I'd study all week and then sleep in my taxi at the airport, because there was always a three-hour wait for a fare. Then in 2021, I started a

business called Kapisa Rugs; it was rebranded as Rugistan in 2024, and we directly source hand-knotted rugs from Afghanistan. It's not easy with Amazon and other competition, so to keep prices down, I'm here seven days a week. Right now we have two locations, but this is not the goal.

I love rugs. I'll always cherish them. But hopefully, in about a year, it will be profitable enough, and my wife will have taken over and I will be

able to fire myself. Some of my high school friends who didn't join the Army are already doctors here, so I sometimes feel like I haven't lived up to my capacity in the way I could have in Afghanistan. I am currently completing my master's of public health at Southern Illinois University Carbondale, and I hope to start medical school in 2028. I joke with my wife that I'll probably graduate alongside our sons. —As told to Belinda Luscombe

Living and teaching history

Sari Beth Rosenberg

My first day of student teaching was supposed to be 9/11. I was 26, planning to observe a teacher teaching U.S. history at LaGuardia High School. My alarm-clock radio played *Z Morning Zoo*, a show known for its goofiness, but the hosts were talking about a plane crashing into the Twin Towers and I thought, "That's not funny." I turned on the TV, and that's when I was like, "Oh my, no, this is actually real."

The next semester, I was placed at Stuyvesant High School by what was once the Twin Towers. The air was constantly being tested in the cafeteria. And yet 9/11 never came up in the classroom. In the years that followed, I would have students interview a friend or family member about that day as a lesson in how history is remembered, showing them that they just collected primary sources.

Nowadays, students are more clued into current events on their devices and TikTok, so they're asking interesting questions about 9/11, like "Why did we attack Afghanistan?" Many students don't understand the difference between why we went into Afghanistan in the early 2000s vs. Iraq. How do you understand what's going on in Iran now if you don't understand the history of Iraq, Iran, the Middle East?

Kids don't talk about the fear of terrorists coming from the Middle East. The thing that kids are more scared of today is what they see as domestic terrorism coming from ICE agents. I've had to explain that ICE was created in 2003 as part of the new Department of Homeland Security, which was established in response to 9/11, and now it's being used to, in my opinion, terrorize communities.

I'm definitely going to bring up the 25th anniversary. They were born so long after 9/11, it's history to them. We need to find ways to cover more recent history. In a U.S. history class—or any history class—there's so much to cover, and we don't get to the recent history, from 1980 to the present, because it's not emphasized on tests and also you run out of time. —As told to Olivia B. Waxman



Compensating victims

Allison Turkel

On Sept. 11, I was outside of Albuquerque, N.M. I worked for a not-for-profit then called the National Center for Prosecution of Child Abuse, and we were running a conference. And the receptionist said a plane just hit the World Trade Center, and you could go into our break room to watch it on TV. I went in just in time to see the second plane hit.

I lived in the D.C. area at the time, but I grew up in Manhattan. I worked down in the Manhattan district attorney's office. So all of it translates well into why I've been the special master of the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund for the last 3½ years.

We want as many people as possible to know, one, we have as much funding as is necessary to pay every eligible claimant. And two, we serve people beyond first responders. We serve people that lived, worked, went to school in the New York exposure zone, who were at Shanksville and at the Pentagon.

Remember "America Strong"? "Let everybody return"? People went back into the New York zone, and the consequence, of course, is they were exposed to these toxins. On that day, 2,977 people perished at all three sites and on the planes. Since we reopened in 2011 [after closing in 2004], we've had 6,100 of our claimants die from exposure to the toxins. Today, 63% of our claimants have a cancer.

Every Sept. 11, the memorial and museum in New York City does the reading of the names of the victims, and there's six moments of silence, to mark the four moments of impact and two tower collapses. This year, they're adding a seventh, to honor the people that have become ill from the toxins. I think that'll help spread awareness that so many are still suffering and that the 9/11 VCF is here to help. —As told to Karl Vick

Healing through art

Christopher Ashley

I actually didn't behave that great that day. I almost got into a fistfight.

It was the first day of rehearsal for the play *Wonder of the World*, which I was directing. We canceled rehearsal for that day and the next, and I ended up walking back home to the West Village. Late that night, there was a very drunk man who put himself in front of me and asked if I was an Iraqi. He kept putting himself in front of me, and I kept trying to get away. Then he took a swing at me, and I punched him in the face.

It's not automatic that people are their best selves in these moments. I think one of the things people do with traumatic situations is move on, so it was really meaningful to me to dig back into the feelings that that day created while directing *Come From Away*, a musical about 38 planes grounded in Gander, Newfoundland, and the people who took care of strangers at this moment of real terror. Telling that story around the world, onstage, on Apple TV helped me heal.

In 2011, the play's authors, David Hein and Irene Sankoff, went to a 10th anniversary event reconvening a lot of the people who had been diverted there on 9/11. They expected to be there for a couple of days and ended up staying for weeks and weeks. Claude Elliott, the mayor of Gander, used to joke, "Wait, you guys are making a musical about making sandwiches?"

In the current world we're living in, it almost seems mythical that people would take this good care of each other because there are just so many things that pull us apart. We're all going to have to figure out how to share the world and the space together. The world keeps changing, but the show remains about the responsibility we have to each other and the value of kindness and connection. Twenty-five years ago, if more people thought like the people in Gander—"These people are my problem, my responsibility, and I will take care of them, despite the fact that I didn't meet them until today"—I think we'd be in a better place. —As told to O.B.W.





Storyteller

Nancy Gibbs

Moments after 8:46 a.m., attention fixed on one incomprehensible event. At *TIME*, editor Jim Kelly launched a reporting army: correspondents around the world tracked the attacks and reactions in real time. My job was to curate and condense it all into a single story for a special issue of the magazine. “I just want you to tell the story of today,” Jim told me. “Think of it as a time capsule.”

In one sense we all saw something different. If you lived in New York City, you saw the smoke, smelled it, tasted it. Elsewhere, the alerts jolted large towns and small. But at a deeper level, we all saw the same thing, a once unimaginable attack on what we soon started calling the Homeland, as though we were all residents of the same reality. By October, 60% of people said they trusted the government to do the right thing all or most of the time, a three-decade high.

It's easier to put a puzzle together when you can see the whole picture on the lid of the box. Yes, there were toxic conspiracies even without the yet-to-be-invented Facebook and X. But compared with what has transpired since then, the information landscape looks practically pristine. The demolition of the business model for traditional news sources corresponded with sinking institutional trust across the board. Journalism's self-inflicted wounds and technological upheaval radically changed how people make sense of the world. Trust in government now sits around 17%. Trust in the media has hit an all-time low.

If you had told me 25 years ago that

we would manage to avoid further terror attacks, I would have found it hard to believe. But I also couldn't have imagined the maceration of the media as our news channels filled with content of all kinds streaming in from all corners. This year for the first time, more people globally rely on social and video platforms for news, rather than TV or news websites. As audiences migrate to creators on TikTok and YouTube, the very notion of a shared reality feels quaint. Eight in 10 of us say Democrats and Republicans can't even agree on basic facts.

Twenty-five years ago, I focused on how to tell this story, in the belief that stories are stickier than bloodless fact. But what has happened since makes me wonder if I missed the actual war. Sept. 11 did not cause 21st century truth decay, but it coincided with it. Jolted out of the snug 1990s, people went searching for answers they could trust, tribes they could join, distraction as an antidote to alarm. We no longer hear the same stories, and too many leaders are counting on that.

Communities benefit from shared stories. On Sept. 11, many of those stories were of quiet heroism, sacrifice, service. First responders and random strangers modeled courage under fire, and we were swept up in a wave of gratitude that helped drain the fear. Those are stories worth retrieving now.

Gibbs is a former editor-in-chief of TIME and the director of the Shorenstein Center at Harvard University

Called to service

Jukay Hsu

I was student-body president at Stuyvesant High, three blocks from the World Trade Center. I had an early meeting that day with the principal about the plans for the year. So normally I'd be walking to school when the first plane hit. We evacuated, I think, just as the first tower fell.

I grew up in Queens. My mother was a social worker. I was lucky to get full financial aid to Harvard, and signed up for ROTC, then went to Iraq. I always thought service was public service. I was a second lieutenant leading a platoon of 40 men in Salahuddin province, kind of at the mid-end of the surge.

When I got out of the military, all my classmates were going into tech. I was like, If New York is going to become a tech sector, how can more people be included in that? All the soldiers I worked with never went to college. Even though my platoon sergeant was 20 years older than me, I was in charge because I went to college. It really got you thinking: All these companies and jobs and wealth are being created, but two-thirds of Americans and two-thirds of New Yorkers don't have a four-year college degree. In 2011 I ended up creating Pursuit. Our idea was to train working-class people in the skills tech companies tell us they need. The average student arrived making \$16,000 and a year later has a job paying \$94,000.

I left Pursuit to start a research organization called Bright Futures to focus on AI alignment for the benefit of humanity. There's this idea that AI is going to be so dominant, so superpowerful—not just tools, but creating a being. So what does that mean for humans? Perhaps the future is not college vs. noncollege. Perhaps it's going to be AI and non-AI. But hopefully, there's a way to enable cooperation.

Early on in high school, it was imprinted on me that what's most important is what happens to all of us. And the ability to have agency in that. 9/11 helped cement that. Important critical junctures really can bring out the best in humanity, if we choose to respond. —As told to Karl Vick



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The missing pieces we carry after 9/11

By Tom Roston

EARLY DAWN. A SLICE OF LAST NIGHT'S CHOCOLATE cake. Watching the rays of the sun spread over the city. Stealing a moment like this was a coveted morning ritual for some of the breakfast staff at Windows on the World, the restaurant that was on the 107th floor of the North Tower of the World Trade Center.

This was the meeting place where New Yorkers and out-of-towners went to celebrate birthdays and anniversaries; to revel with food and drink and to mark life milestones. And for many of the staff, it was a dream job.

"I would have worked there just for the insurance," says Windows sommelier and waiter Paulo Villela, who immigrated from Brazil in order to get medical care for his son, who had a rare medical condition. "It was the best job." He would tell his friends on staff, who hailed from dozens of countries—Bangladesh, Ivory Coast, Peru, China—"I'm never going to leave this place."

On Sept. 11, 2001, so much changed. So much was lost. Most tragically, there are the 2,977 people who were killed, including 79 workers from Windows, and 91 of its guests. Those victims and their families are at the heart of this dark moment in history, which millions of us experienced from close or afar.

How one feels is at least partly determined by one's proximity to the event. On that day, I was covering the Toronto Film Festival as a journalist. As a native New Yorker, I felt like I'd left my post. I was watching an 8:30 a.m. screening of *Monsoon Wedding*, a movie directed by Mira Nair, the mother of then 9-year-old Zohran Mamdani, who is now New York City's mayor.

It's a tenuous connection I mention because that's what happened on 9/11; the attack cast in stark relief the myriad connections that are otherwise invisible in this city. Suddenly, we found out that our daughter's fifth-grade teacher's cousin worked at Cantor Fitzgerald, or a neighbor's brother was a fireman who worked at Engine 54. On that day, the connections were rippled with panic. And then, for too many, grief. That manifested with the MISSING posters that filled the city for weeks; desperate pleas that became heartbreaking tributes.

Those posters were an early act of collective mourning. The city was still an open wound. You could smell the smoke almost everywhere for weeks. The randomness of the event—we were flooded with stories of those who died and those who didn't by happenstance—draped over the city like an uncomfortable, existential veil.

One story was that of Michael Lomonaco, the chef at Windows on the World. He was in the basement of the World Trade Center, having decided at the last second to get his glasses fixed before he took the elevator to work.



▲
*Diners at
Windows on
the World in
February 2001*

He felt the ground shake, saw debris raining from the sky, watched United Airlines Flight 175 crash into the South Tower, and observed people stranded above the 91st floor waving large sheets that were probably tablecloths from his restaurant.

"The memories are so vivid," says Lomonaco, who helped start a fund for the families of his staff and who has gone on to run several successful restaurants in the city. "A generation has grown up since then, but it still seems like yesterday to me."

A 25th anniversary marks a swath of time that can be illuminating because, to someone who is younger than 30, it feels like an eternity. Or a lifetime, which to someone who actually is 25, it is. But to someone who is over 50, as I am, it feels like a chapter. A long one, perhaps. But, still, a part of something else.

9/11 is a hinge of time that separates generations. It shouldn't be surprising—but it always is—when I ask young folks about 9/11, and they just can't get their hearts around it. It's something that they learned about in class or saw on YouTube. They



**'It still
seems like
yesterday.'**

—MICHAEL LOMONACO
CHEF, WINDOWS ON
THE WORLD

don't feel it like I do. Like we do.

Those of us who are moved by this anniversary—no matter how close we were to the actual tragedy—should find some way to talk about it. “We have an obligation,” Lomonaco says. “When we talk about the people who died, we’re acknowledging the significance of their lives.”

But there’s a delicate balance. Many of us want to avoid the sadness: say “Never forget,” and move on.

OVER 25 YEARS, Lomonaco says he’s gone through the five stages of grief—denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance—and I would contend he has wisdom to share. “When we mourn with someone else, we’re actually mourning our own loss at the same time,” he says. “That creates a human bond.” He emphasizes the connections between us, which were so palpable in the days after 9/11, when lines of New Yorkers wanting to donate blood wrapped around the block.

For me, the interminable years that it took to clear Ground Zero and eventually build the new World Trade Center felt like a void. I won’t overstate it.

It did not consume me. But it was there. And, at least partly to fill that hole, I wrote a book, in 2019, *The Most Spectacular Restaurant in the World: The Twin Towers, Windows on the World, and the Rebirth of New York*. It has been turned into a documentary created with TIME Studios, *Top of the World*, which is streaming on the CNN app.

I wanted to tell the life of the restaurant and the people who went there and who worked there. It was a way of honoring the people and a part of New York City that was erased. And, as Lomonaco indicates, it was also my way of working through my own personal grief: I lost my father when I was 10 years old, in 1980, when he was killed in an automobile accident.

I recently read William Styron’s book *Darkness Visible: A Memoir of Madness*, which introduced me to the concept of “incomplete mourning,” which is pretty much what it sounds like. I can see myself wrestling with incompleteness in the way that my books—one is about the bygone video-store era, and another is about how author Kurt Vonnegut sought to reconcile his World War II experiences by writing his masterpiece, *Slaughterhouse Five*—share a theme of loss.

But is there even such a thing as complete mourning? I stumbled upon a 2023 eulogy by Park Avenue Synagogue’s Rabbi Elliot Cosgrove, in which he refers to *The Missing Piece* by children’s author Shel Silverstein. In the book, a circle goes looking for a wedge of itself that is missing. It rolls around and has adventures. And when it finally finds its missing piece, it is delighted—at first. But when it is complete, the circle rolls too fast and it is no longer able to talk to the bugs and other passersby and have the experiences it enjoyed during its journey. So, the circle decides to release the piece, preferring to live without it.

Cosgrove was commemorating the passing of another rabbi, Harold Kushner, who first made the connection between grief and *The Missing Piece*. In Kushner’s words, “We’re more complete if we’re incomplete.” I think that’s a beautiful way to approach grief.

We need to see the light in the darkness. “In the face of loss, we must see the preciousness of life,” Cosgrove says. Lomonaco agrees: “My appreciation of individual lives, of life, has grown,” he says.

It’s a bit of a trick to both grieve and grow, like keeping two contradictory thoughts in your head, except in your heart. I hope to be getting better at it. I’d contend that the city has managed pretty well with the 9/11 Memorial and its reflecting pools. They’re solemn and reverential and, at the same time, thriving with tourists. (A New Yorker’s sense of irony, and humor, helps with the grieving.)

And the Tribute in Light, those awesome spotlights that pierce the sky each Sept. 11, are a pitch-perfect way to memorialize the day.

“It’s like going into a church and lighting a candle,” Lomonaco says. “It’s an act of mourning. But a light also literally lights our path forward.”

Roston is an author of several books and a New York City high school teacher

REMEMBRANCE

*Parton
performs at the
Roxy in West
Hollywood,
Calif., in 1977*

PHOTOGRAPH BY
NANCY BARR BRANDON

Dolly Parton

1946–2026

BY SHIMA OLIAEE





TO HER FANS AROUND THE WORLD, SHE WAS SAINT DOLLY—the American godmother who channeled the sorrows of everyday life into song, wrapping ugly truths in pretty packages. Though she was described by music journalist Robert Oermann as “the Mozart of our times,” her larger-than-life hair, coupled with an excess in rhinestones, surgical implants, and cosmetic work, concealed the iron will through which she confronted the day’s realities with her craft.

I saw Dolly Parton, who died on Aug. 25 in Nashville at 80, during her Pure & Simple Tour in October 2016, a month before the most divisive election in American collective memory, and a year before I began reporting a podcast about her life called *Dolly Parton’s America*. At the time, it seemed as if hatred from both sides of the political aisle had never been more grotesque. But at Parton’s show, we all sang together.

When I asked her what “Dolly Parton’s America” meant to her, she responded that her perspective wasn’t limited by borders, that it was Dolly Parton’s World: “I just think we need to love one another. I think we need to try a little harder. We need to be a little kinder. We need to be a little smarter. We need to have more love and compassion.” The last time I saw her, she told me she was planning a comedy album. She also said that unlike other artists for whom posthumously released music has been a point of contention, she’d recorded many more songs of hope she’d put away in a vault, to be released throughout the hundred years following her death.

Many wealthy folk prefer to be compassionate from on high, if at all, never getting their feet wet or hands dirty. Parton rolled in the mud. She claimed she modeled her look on “the town trash whore.” It was her idea of glamour: yellow hair piled atop her head, bright red lipstick and nails, high-heeled shoes, and a tight skirt. “I thought [that woman] was the prettiest thing I’d ever seen,” she once said on *Ellen*. “So I grew up to look just like her!”

Once she achieved a certain level of fame, her body became a punch line. When two male scientists made the world’s first cloned sheep, in 1996, they named it after Parton for its “large mammaries.” Parton laughed the cracks off with quips of her own. For the podcast, I asked her whether she thought her look stopped journalists, mostly men when she was coming up, from taking her work seriously. She shrugged off the question: “Sometimes you have to look like Jezebel in order to get some angelic things done in the world.”

THERE ARE COUNTLESS EXAMPLES of remarkable women erased by history, but Parton survived her own story long enough to tell it. Her cycle of resurrections didn’t seem to change her much over the years, even as the highs garnered her over half a billion dollars and an eternal legacy.

Dolly Rebecca Parton arrived on Jan. 19, 1946, in an unheated cabin without indoor plumbing or electricity, about an hour outside of Knoxville, Tenn., atop the Great Smoky Mountains. Her parents paid the doctor who trekked to their home to deliver her with a sack of cornmeal. The fourth of 12 children, she and her siblings slept three or four to a bed. Their only modern convenience was a battery-powered radio.

She grew up surrounded by pines, butterflies, creeks, and neon green moss. As her father worked from sunup to sundown as a farmer, her mother sang the children Irish and Welsh folk songs. One day, Parton fashioned a makeshift microphone from a tobacco stick and a tin can and performed a show. By 5, she had written her first song, “Little Tiny Tasseltop,” about a corncob doll. By 8, her uncle Bill Owens, who wrote songs and performed across East Tennessee, began to teach her the guitar. They sang together at supermarket openings, rallies, fairs, and talent contests. By age 10, he’d arranged for her to appear on a local radio cum television program. This was Parton’s first big break. At 11, she got her first recorded song, “Puppy Love,” co-written with Owens, on the radio, and at 13, she told Johnny Cash she wanted to sing at the Grand Ole Opry. So when an older Opry performer gave up his spot one Saturday night in 1959, Parton got her chance. Cash himself introduced her to the crowd of 2,000 as “a little girl here from up in East Tennessee.” That night she received three encores.

The day after she graduated from high school, Parton took a Greyhound 180 miles to Nashville. For weeks she lived off soups made of ketchup and mustard and food left in the halls of hotels. But these scrappy days quickly paid off. She landed a record deal at 19, and soon after, a husband: Carl Dean, whom she met at the Wishy Washy Laundromat and would remain married to until his death in 2025. When her record company encouraged her to delay marriage to keep her appeal to a male audience, she married Dean anyway. Parton moved like perfume, wafting through the world of men while doing things her own way.

When her prophetic single “Dumb Blonde” hit the airwaves in 1966, it captured the attention of a star with the No. 1 syndicated country-music TV show in the nation. Porter Wagoner, known for his rhinestone suits, had been looking for a new “girl singer.” The pair’s love-hate working relationship kicked off quickly. On her first stint on the show, Wagoner cut off a shy Parton before she had finished singing. Alternately fighting and writing, they produced hit after hit, and a bolder, louder Parton began to emerge. Wagoner made her a better performer, and she made him a better songwriter. She also sharpened her already acute sense of humor as a kind of defense mechanism.

Early in her career, she’d been panned as the ditz with “a Minnie Mouse voice,” but she came into a new level of mastery. Recording “The Mule Skinner Blues” in 1970, Parton sang the first note so long that the



band could not begin to play until they followed her lead. The record earned her her first individual Grammy nomination in 1970; she received 11 Grammys over the course of her career.

During her partnership with Wagoner, she wrote many of her signature hits, including “Coat of Many Colors” and “Jolene.” When Parton decided it was time to leave his show, he sued her for \$3 million, claiming breach of contract. Famously, “I Will Always Love You” served as her way of letting him know how much she appreciated him, even as she would be paying him a settlement of \$1 million for years.

When Elvis’ manager told her that Elvis would record “I Will Always Love You” if she’d give up half the publishing rights, she refused. “I wanted to hear Elvis sing it, and it broke my heart—I cried all night,” she said in 2021. She attributed this stubbornness to her father’s business sense as a farmer: her songs were like crops; if she didn’t own the harvest, her family would go hungry.

PARTON’S LIFE PLAYED OUT as a constellation of experiences in sync with American history. She entered the working world around the time the first workplace sex-discrimination law passed. Her decision to leave her creative partnership with Wagoner coincided with women leaving unhappy marriages in droves following the passage of no-fault divorce laws.

She starred alongside Jane Fonda and Lily Tomlin in *9 to 5*, the 1980 movie based on a real-life grassroots movement of female office workers, for which Parton penned the title tune. Both song and film were overwhelming hits. Perhaps Parton’s most countercultural act was her decision to work and not have children at a time when President Reagan’s push for traditional family values took hold of the country.

Over the years, Parton’s music evolved from heart-wrenching “sad-ass songs” to female-power anthems like “Light of a Clear Blue Morning” to spiritual tunes like “The Seeker.” In the mid-’80s, she opened up about her depression following the end of an “affair of the heart,” family issues, and a negative experience filming *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*. She was dealing with health problems, ultimately undergoing a partial hysterectomy and struggling to lose weight. She documented her loneliness in “Two Doors Down” and started over professionally. She trimmed her band, started her own label, and founded her amusement park, Dollywood. She came to embody her moniker, the iron butterfly.

Amid cultural and social upheaval, Parton grew accustomed to coming under fire. In 2017, when her Dolly’s Dixie



Stampede, a dinner show with teams from the North and South battling, met with protests during a national reckoning regarding monuments glorifying Confederates, Parton dropped the word *Dixie*. Her nephew and bodyguard Bryan Seaver described Parton's way of navigating American politics as "dollitics," noting her habit of evading party-line questions. As she put it, "My daddy was a Republican and my mama was a Democrat, so that makes me a hypocrat." When she took the stage at the 69th Emmys in 2017 for a *9 to 5* reunion alongside Tomlin and Fonda, she refused to join in their skewering of then President Donald Trump. Instead, she used her weapon of choice, a tit joke.

But if you listen, her opinions can be heard in the music. She recorded a song based on a tragic true story of a plane filled with deportees crashing into California's Los Gatos Canyon, another spotlighting the danger of a coal miner's life and the necessity for workers to unite, and yet another telling the story of a girl forced into sex work. Parton received death threats after contributing the song "Travelin' Thru" to the soundtrack of the 2005 film *Transamerica*, about a transgender woman. She also got threats from the KKK over "Gay Day," an annual day of visibility for her gay fan base. Still, Parton, the self-proclaimed "patron saint of drag queens," continued to champion the LGBTQ+ community loudly, saying, "If you're gay, you're gay; if you're straight, you're straight. And you should be allowed to be, you know, how you are and who you are." She once showed up to a drag-queen competition, only to lose the Dolly look-alike contest to a man in drag.

PARTON LIKED STANDING ALONE. She never jumped on a bandwagon or punched down. Though she never openly called herself a feminist, she explained to me that she just shunned labels outright. Her radical acceptance of all kinds of people earned her the nickname the Great Unifier. In one of the last interviews for *Dolly Parton's America*, looking back on her life, she said, "I don't practice my faith; I live it."

To get back to her "God space," Parton would leave Nashville for the Smoky Mountains, to fast and come up with new music. Eventually, her 3 a.m. prayers for songs became prayers for creating hope that would

last longer than her lifetime.

Reflecting on how her father never learned to read or write, she provided \$15,000 scholarships to high school students, and to improve middle-school literacy rates in her home county, she gave each child \$500 upon graduation. In 1995 she started the Imagination Library, which donates books—more than 300 million of them so far—to children under 5. She invested proceeds from Whitney Houston's towering 1992 cover of "I Will Always Love You" into a Black Tennessean community. When the Gatlinburg fires broke out in 2016, she raised millions for victims. She made another significant donation in 2024 to support the victims of Hurricane Helene, donated \$1 million toward finding a vaccine for COVID, and began offering full college scholarships to Dollywood employees.

Inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame in 2001 and awarded the National Medal of Arts in 2005, an honorary doctorate from the University of Tennessee–Knoxville in 2009, a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award in 2011, and an honorary Oscar in 2025, Parton piled up accolades as high as the Smokies themselves. But her greatest feat may have been her devotion to other people, most of them complete strangers. "I just love people," she said. "When I look at the audience, I see my family. I see the God light, the goodness, in everybody, even if they can't see it." Perhaps that spirit is how "Jolene" came to be covered more than 400 times—my father first heard it sung by Leila Forouhar in the late 1970s in Iran—or what inspired Nelson Mandela to ask his prison guards at Robben Island to play her music over the loudspeakers. It's tempting to think of Parton's life as a fairy tale. But her story is a testament to how a person of humble origins can accomplish extraordinary feats, when they pray for, write with compassion about, and take action for others.

And she did this while remaining the butt of the joke, the girl in the wig with a bosom, doing what she believed was right. In the fax she sent me after the first of what would become 11 interviews, after I came to her with four hours of intrusive questions, she ended with: "I had a nice time with you. Hope you got everything that you wanted. I look forward to hearing from you or seeing you again somewhere down the road. Love, Dolly." What a teacher. I hope we get the lesson. □

Bookended by Jane Fonda and Lily Tomlin on the 1979 set of 9 to 5; at Dollywood in Pigeon Forge, Tenn., in 1988; and performing in 2023

Oliaee, a writer, created the podcast Dolly Parton's America

We
Shall
overcome



REMEMBRANCE

Gloria Steinem

1934–2026

BY MEG WOLITZER

IN THE BEGINNING, THERE WAS THE FAMOUS story about the young journalist Gloria Steinem, going undercover in 1963 as a Playboy Bunny, all décolletage and rabbit ears, in order to expose a culture of degradation and misogyny. The Bunny episode is certainly the Steinem anecdote most often cited, but it's such an early story that it's just a canary, really, hinting only a little at what would become a lifelong commitment to feminism.

Steinem, who died Sept. 2 in her home in New York City at the age of 92, was an icon of second-wave feminism. As one of the co-founders, in 1971, of both *Ms.* magazine and, along with many other feminists, the National Women's Political Caucus, Steinem advocated fiercely and vocally on behalf of women's rights. She was also involved in the fight for the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment.

But she didn't consider her life as an "active feminist" to have started until 1969, when in her mid-30s she attended an abortion speak-out in a church basement. Steinem was there as a reporter for *New York* magazine, but found herself struck by the stories the women told, and the truths that they were willing to reveal in front of other people. She had her own truth, which she came to share.

Some years ago, she personalized the story

further, in the dedication of her 2015 book, *My Life on the Road*, which reads:

This book is dedicated to:

Dr. John Sharpe of London, who in 1957, a decade before physicians in England could legally perform an abortion for any reason other than the health of the woman, took the considerable risk of referring for an abortion a twenty-two-year-old American on her way to India.

Knowing only that she had broken an engagement at home to seek an unknown fate, he said, "You must promise me two things. First, you will not tell anyone my name. Second, you will do what you want to do with your life."

Dear Dr. Sharpe, I believe you, who knew the law was unjust, would not mind if I say this so long after your death:

I've done the best I could with my life.

This book is for you.

What is it that makes these words so moving? There was always something real and approachable about Steinem, visible in this dedication as well as in the interviews she gave and the speeches she delivered. You felt you knew her, or you wished you did. You even imagined being her, just a little.

Later on, I was excited to win the *Ms.* magazine college fiction contest; and still later the writer

< Steinem posed for a photo to accompany a 1965 story she wrote for *Life*

Mary Gordon invited me to attend Steinem's 50th-birthday party with her. In addition to being overstimulated and thrilled at seeing Steinem, I am pretty sure I also saw Carol Burnett, Sally Ride, and Rosa Parks—if that tells you anything about Steinem's reach. Beyond that, it was so heady that I can't tell you much of anything.

"In my old age—really old age, since I'm going to live past 100, I hope," Steinem once said in an interview with *New York* magazine, "I would love to have a diner." She envisioned it as having "blue gingham curtains" and being "by the side of the road," and she went on to explain: "Diners are the most democratic places. Everyone goes—truck drivers go, people from the neighborhood, people in their tuxes after parties go ... And in the back room," she said, "we could have a little revolutionary meeting from time to time."

Steinem never actually had a diner, although you could make the case that she did have a sort of symbolic one, because her life's work involved bringing all kinds of people together to talk, often to touch on matters of radical societal change. She seemed to be everywhere, from the nightly news to a mention on *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*. The warmth and genuineness of her personality, as well as her convictions, breadth of knowledge and experience, and talents both as a writer and speaker, helped make her a reliable figure over all the decades she spent working for women's equality. In 2013, Barack Obama presented her with a Presidential Medal of Freedom.

THE EXPRESSION "the personal is political" easily comes to mind when thinking of Steinem, whose own origin story strongly shaped her inclination toward activism. Born on March 25, 1934, in Toledo, Ohio, Steinem lived with her mother Ruth after her parents' divorce, becoming, at 10, the sole caretaker for her mother, who struggled with mental illness. Among Ruth's many other challenges was keeping a job. Feminism was in Steinem's DNA (her father's mother was involved with women's suffrage and was the first woman elected to the Toledo board of education), but Steinem later realized that witnessing

the contempt and disregard that people in power expressed toward her mother—seeing how she was treated as invisible—became a formative social-justice experience for her.

She took her percolating consciousness off to Smith College, the all-women's school in Northampton, Mass., where she studied government. But Smith in the 1950s, while academically rigorous, was also sometimes described by its critics as a place where students went to get their "MRS" degrees. This, Steinem knew, was not something she wanted for herself. As she once told *People* magazine, "In the 1950s, once you married you became what your husband was, so it seemed like the last choice you'd ever have." She added, "I'd already been the very small parent of a very big child, my mother. I didn't

Her life's work involved bringing all kinds of people together to talk

want to end up taking care of someone else." (Steinem did eventually marry, but not until her 60s.)

Being responsible for her mother not only molded her convictions about what she didn't want, but also seems to have allowed her to figure out, earlier than other people, what she did want. And one thing she apparently wanted was experience. Steinem got that, traveling to India on a fellowship; then, later, at Ms., and as a journalist, mentor, and speaker to audiences around the world. Along the way, the glamorous Steinem had a well-documented love life that sometimes involved relationships with powerful men. Her stylishness—the signature aviator glasses and great hair—combined with her intelligence and political engagement, challenged retrograde and insulting ideas about graceless, unappealing feminists.

It would not be an overstatement to call Steinem the "face" of second-wave

feminism, whether it was her preference or not to be known that way. Steinem believed that her personal formation as a feminist had been importantly shaped by Black women. "I thought that they invented the feminist movement," she said in 2015. "I realize that things being what they are, the white, middle-class part of the movement got reported more." Throughout her life, both personally and politically, she was sensitive to the needs of various groups whose interests had been sidelined.

Steinem seemed to capture the feminist imagination in profound ways across decades, often acting as a conveyor of women. She was known for the "talking circles" frequently held in her home. In 2009, I received an invitation to her house in New York City for a reception to celebrate the filmmaker Jane Campion. Various women in the arts had been invited, and Steinem went around and briefly described everyone's work, one by one. I suppose "networking" took place that night, but that seems too corporate a term for what I experienced, which was a series of good conversations with women I admired, in the home of someone who mattered to us all. She somehow had time for all of this—more time, even as the clock sped up the way it seems to do as you get older, before it inevitably slows down, then stops.

I had cause to think of Steinem again some years ago when talking to a friend, the novelist J. Courtney Sullivan, who in fact I met for the first time that night at Steinem's. Sullivan was a core member of the all-volunteer group Immigrant Families Together, which worked to reunite mothers and children who had been separated at the U.S.-Mexico border. In 2018 she sent out a mass email, looking for housing for immigrant women and their children. She told me she sent 50 emails, and at that point received only one response in which the person volunteered her own home. It was from Steinem, who told Sullivan, in effect: Any of those mothers and their children are welcome to stay in my house for as long as they need.

Wolitzer is a novelist. She is the author of The Female Persuasion, The Interestings, and The Wife, among other books

TIME

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PEOPLE
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FUTURE
OF
ART
AND
OUR
WORLD



Amy Sherard

PEOPLE PAINTER

NOBODY KNOWS THE moment that will change everything, but some of Amy Sherard's friends sensed it. The artist had been called to meet Barack and Michelle Obama as they decided who would paint their official portraits. A friend's mother insisted on buying her a taupe sheath and kitten heels. When she walked into the Oval Office, the President and First Lady were wearing the same color. The

President quipped that she must have gotten the memo. Sherard did not get the joke. But she did get the job that changed her life: a portrait of Michelle Obama that is the highlight of "American Sublime," the blockbuster show of Sherard's work that is just finishing a 22-month, four-museum tour.

Color has always been important to Sherard, as anyone with even a brief acquaintance with her paint-

ings can tell. She paints all her canvases red before she paints them gray. "I think color lives whether you can see it or not," she says in her Jersey City, N.J., studio, a few feet from a giant pegboard filled with hundreds of paint tubes held up by bulldog clips. "So I consider the red kind of like the blood behind the figures there." Maybe that's why, even though she paints everyone in gray tones, Sherard's people pulse with life. Sometimes they float off dirt bikes, or balance on tractors, or hold an outside teacup, but mostly they command at-

tention, looking evenly at the viewer, wearing bright clothes in front of a vivid background. "Color is my natural language," says Sherard, 53. "Using my voice is only the third best way that I communicate." Despite her most famous painting, Sherard isn't really a portraitist. "Once I take the photograph, the model becomes a character in the world that I'm trying to create," she says.

SUCCESSFUL ARTISTS ARE the product of their gifts, but as Sherard proves, they are also products of what they lack. Sherard grew

up in a home led by the teachings of the Worldwide Church of God, which did not look kindly on birthdays, Halloween, movies, and most dancing. Not that Sherald minded. “For me as a child who was self-conscious and introverted, I would choose to stay in and draw rather than go outside,” she says. “It was like a safe way to play that was not with other people.”

Famously, it was on a school trip that Sherald saw Bo Bartlett’s painting *Object Permanence*, centered on a Black man in a tool belt, which inspired her to depict Black people as she saw them. “It was just about looking. Looking back at our history and painting the things that I didn’t see,” she says. “Art history tells me that I’m elevating my people, but I’m not. They’re already there.”

‘I think color lives whether you can see it or not.’

—AMY SHERALD

Recognition for Sherald’s work came slowly, then all at once. Just before she had her heart transplant, at 39, after she stopped waitressing to look after her brother, she sold a painting for \$3,000. Her friends set up a GoFundMe page for her medical costs. In 2019, a year after the Obama portrait was unveiled, her work *Innocent You, Innocent Me* sold for \$350,000 at Christie’s. A mere 18 months later, *The Bathers* netted \$4.26 million at auction. She found the sudden uptick in wealth and fame

difficult. “People don’t think you’ve earned it,” she says. “And there’s pressure to do more because you have this success.”

The heart transplant has made Sherald, who has books about overcoming anxiety in her office, more cautious. She lost her father when she was 27 and her brother to lung cancer when he was 38. Her sister also recently had a heart transplant. But if those health crises have made her wary, they did not make her scared. In 2025, after officials at the Smithsonian’s National Portrait Gallery, the institution behind the Obama portrait, got skittish about her painting *Trans Forming Liberty*, which features a trans woman, she pulled the show. “‘American Sublime’ has its own narrative,” she says. “Deviating from that narrative would be deviating from the core person of who I am.” The show was snapped up by the Baltimore Museum of Art, where it broke attendance records.

Sherald wouldn’t take nothing for her journey now. “There’s only one person I’ve ever been envious of in my life, and that was Oprah Winfrey when she was giving away cars,” she says. “I want to be able to do that. I want someone to give me enough money that I can set up a big foundation where there’s rolling grants for artists. Because that’s all we need to become who we want to be: time and money.” In the meantime, she’s delighted by the life she has been given. “I think,” she says, “art definitely chose me.”

—BELINDA LUSCOMBE



Hoor Al Qasimi

ART AMBASSADOR

Driven by a belief that “culture bridges gaps and brings people together,” Al Qasimi, 46, has promoted contemporary art as president and director of the Sharjah Art Foundation in the UAE emirate her father rules, and turned the Sharjah Biennial into a closely watched global exhibition. Her willingness to platform diverse ideas has

projected an intellectually progressive image for a principality that is often viewed as the most conservative of the region, earning her fans and detractors alike.

In an unstable region, “the more we can try to connect, the better,” she says. It’s a philosophy she channels into her expansive public work. In July, she became president of Sharjah Museums Authority, overseeing the network of 16 museums and heritage houses. —Naomi Rea

Charles Stewart

TRANSFORMING AUCTIONS

When he became CEO of the now 282-year-old auction house Sotheby’s in 2019, Stewart had never worked in the art world. Under Stewart, Sotheby’s has opened a Hong Kong flagship featuring a retail boutique and, in November, relocated its New York headquarters to a landmark Madison Avenue

building. He’s expanded ties to the Gulf, securing around \$1 billion of investment from Abu Dhabi’s sovereign wealth fund in 2024 and launching live sales in Saudi Arabia in 2025. The firm’s offerings have diversified too, expanding further into collectibles. It seems his outsider thinking has paid off: Sotheby’s sold nearly \$50 billion of art and collectibles under Stewart.

—Tim Schneider



Anne Imhof

REBELLIOUS PERFORMER

Imhof has introduced a new era of performance art with slow-moving, bass-pounding tableaux that captivate even today's media-addled attention spans. The German artist had one of the most talked-about artistic projects of 2025 with *Doom: House of Hope*, her three-hour epic performance loosely based on *Romeo and Juliet*. It drew 9,000 visitors in 10 dates at New York City's Park Avenue Armory. Imhof's angsty-cool aesthetic has made her a darling of fashion brands and European museum curators alike. In September, her first solo show in Asia will open: a survey exhibition in Hong Kong, where signature works will be shown alongside a new performance in collaboration with the Hong Kong Ballet. —Naomi Rea

Olugbile Holloway

REPATRIATION ADVOCATE

Last year, Holloway, the head of Nigeria's National Commission for Museums and Monuments, facilitated one of the largest repatriations of looted Benin Bronzes to date: 119 objects from the Netherlands. This year saw the return of over 100 artifacts from the University of Cambridge. —Isa Farfan

Noah Horowitz

ART-FAIR EXECUTIVE

As Art Basel CEO, Horowitz has doubled down on the brand's core business—allying with the Qatari royal family on its fair in Doha and shepherding its Paris show to the Grand Palais—while expanding in forward-looking ways. —Tim Schneider

Ken Griffin

TROPHY COLLECTOR

"My first love in art was the proverbial one that got away," says Ken Griffin, CEO of the hedge fund Citadel. In 1999, he lost out on a sculpture of a dancer by French Impressionist Edgar Degas. Griffin has rarely let it happen again. Over the past two decades, he has emerged as one of the world's most dogged, deep-pocketed collectors. His treasures include Abstract Expressionist paintings worth nine figures, rare historical documents, and a Madonna and Child attributed to Leonardo da Vinci. While he previously lent many of his most valuable works to museums anonymously, he has become more public about his activities over the past year. —Julia Halperin



Dana Awartani

MEMORIALIZING LOST HERITAGE

Saudi Arabian artist Dana Awartani creates immersive installations of silk panels by ripping and repairing the fabric. She also works with experts in ancient craft traditions to build installations that double as memorials.

At this year's Venice Biennale, she covered the floor of Saudi Arabia's pavilion with 29,000 clay bricks, handmade by 32 master artisans, which referenced 23 damaged sites across the Levant. The floor was designed to crack over the course of the show's run in acknowledgment of the fragility of cultural heritage. —Sarah Cascone

Myriam Ben Salah

STAR SPOTTER

If you want to find the next art star, you'd be wise to start at the Renaissance Society, a small but influential space at the University of Chicago. Since Ben Salah took over in 2020, the institution has staged shows by a litany of artists who went on to acclaim. —S.C.

Matthew Affron

BUILDING NEW SCHOLARSHIP

The Philadelphia Museum of Art curator has helped make Surrealism, a century-old artistic movement, a hot topic as co-curator of the touring exhibition "Dream-world: Surrealism at 100" and author of the book of the same name. —Julie Davich



Wolfgang Tillmans

REDEFINING PHOTOGRAPHY

Tillmans has relentlessly pushed the boundaries of photography. A decade before camera phones, he recognized the power of capturing unguarded portraits of LGBTQIA+ people and their

communities, helping to destigmatize queer life during the AIDS crisis. The German artist also pioneered a style of colorful abstract chemical prints that have become among the most sought-after

contemporary photographs, with auction prices surpassing \$750,000.

Tillmans' images have infiltrated pop culture, gracing more than 50 book and album covers, including Frank Ocean's *Blonde*. Following a critically lauded 2025 survey at the Centre Pompidou

in Paris, "Nothing Could Have Prepared Us—Everything Could Have Prepared Us," Tillmans won the \$185,000 Roswitha Haftmann Prize, Europe's largest monetary art award, in May, affirming his status as one of today's most potent photographers. —N.R.



Vanessa Horabuena

QUICK ON THE DRAW

Described by President Donald Trump as "one of the greatest artists anywhere," Horabuena is a leading speed painter, an art form that values both velocity and virtuosity. A recent 10-minute painting of Jesus sold at a charity auction for \$2.75 million. She boasts over 1 million TikTok followers. —Belinda Luscombe

Hank Willis Thomas

CIVICALLY ENGAGED

The conceptual artist often subverts the iconography of pop culture and mass media to, as he likes to say, "re-right" history. With art in prominent public spaces like the Boston Common and downtown Brooklyn, he embodies what civic engagement can look like for an artist. —Caroline Goldstein

Jennifer Rubio

SHARING THE WEALTH

"Collecting has really just been about what I want to live with," says the Away luggage founder and art donor, who gave the Met \$23 million in April. "Philanthropy is about what I want to outlive me." Her collecting habits have helped elevate historically undervalued figures and women, but she says her choices come from the heart. "The art is just so good." —B.L.

Taryn Simon

PHOTOGRAPHING THE UNSEEN

In recent years, Simon has expanded her photographer's tool kit to include video, text, and sculpture as she dives deeper into the invisible structures of power that shape our lives, hiding in plain sight. In September, at the Guggenheim in New York City, she will present her largest show to date, featuring artworks that follow the life of an unidentified federal agent. —Taylor Dafoe

David Zwirner

SELLING GOOD TASTE

Known for championing a museum-approved cross-section of postwar and contemporary artists, German second-generation dealer Zwirner's megagallery—with 10 locations in four countries—has recently shaken up its image by not just luring blue-chip names away from rivals, but also signing ascendant millennial and Gen Z talents.

—Tim Schneider



Kerry James Marshall

HISTORY PAINTER

If old-fashioned-seeming genres like history painting and portraiture have begun to feel fresh again, you can thank Kerry James Marshall.

Growing up, Marshall was

acutely aware of the absence of Black artists and subjects in visual culture. His paintings, which riff on masterpieces by artists ranging from Velázquez to Manet, offer a correction to

such erasures. Set in barber-shops, parks, and amusement parks, and populated by figures with deep Black skin, his images illustrate how the tools and concepts of art history can be adapted to offer fresh insight into contemporary

life. "You have to demonstrate that black is richer than it appears to be, that it is not just darkness but a color," he has said. In 2018, his painting *Past Times* (1997) sold at auction for a record-breaking \$21.1 million.

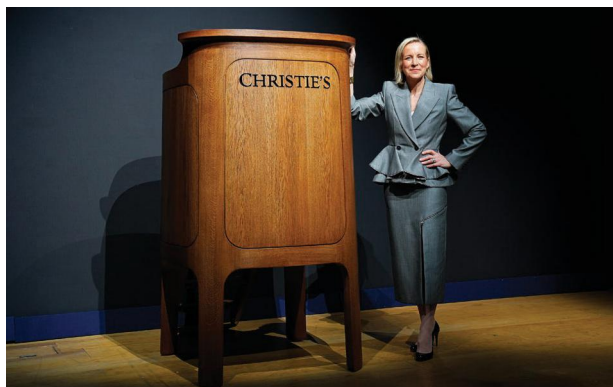
That painting recently appeared in the largest presentation of Marshall's work outside of the U.S., a major survey that traveled from London to Zurich and heads this fall to the Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris.

—Katie White

Bonnie Brennan

AUCTION CHIEF

A longtime auction executive promoted to CEO of Christie's in 2025, Bonnie Brennan is guiding the 260-year-old house through a protracted art-market slump. Under her watch, Christie's saw sales rise 71% over the prior year in the first half of 2026, following three years of uneven returns. In May, Christie's New York sold a record \$1.45 billion worth of art from the estates of prominent collectors, including media mogul S.I. Newhouse and



philanthropist Agnes Gund. Brennan, 53, has taken a particular interest in supporting the market for works by women, giving pride of place

to examples by Joan Mitchell and Alice Neel, and is bullish on the appeal of auctions to the next generation of art buyers. —Belinda Luscombe

Luke Nikas

ART ATTORNEY

As the amount of money sloshing around the art world has risen, the number of lawsuits—over botched business deals, alleged fakes, and Nazi loot—has grown in tandem. Luke Nikas has emerged as the go-to lawyer for some of the most bitter disputes. In April, he secured a \$102.2 million jury verdict for his client, Robert Indiana's former business partner, after an eight-year-long dispute with an art publisher over who controls the late artist's legacy and can profit off his work. —Julia Halperin

Christopher A. Marinello

HUNTING STOLEN ART

Lawyer Christopher Marinello founded Art Recovery International to provide due diligence, dispute resolution, and art-recovery services to private collectors, governments, and art businesses. He works with clients, private investigators, and underworld sources to track down stolen work by the likes of Warhol, Matisse, and van Gogh. —Naomi Rea

Suhanya Raffel

MUSEUM COLLABORATOR

The director of M+ in Hong Kong, Raffel opened the institution during the COVID pandemic. Despite that challenge, she's since established the museum's global credibility, inking 15 major collaboration agreements, including with MOMA and Paris' Centre Pompidou, to create exchanges of resources and research beyond one-off shows or loans. —N.R.



Cao Fei

MAPPING THE FUTURE

If artists help us see the future, few have had a better track record than Cao Fei, one of China's best-known artists and a new-media pioneer whose nearly

30-year catalog of films, virtual reality experiences, and installations fuels a survey on view through October in Switzerland. Her latest body

of work, showing at Milan's Fondazione Prada through September, probes how smart tech is both enhancing efficiency at farms in China and South-east Asia and displacing traditional knowledge. —N.R.



JR

OUTSIZE TALENT

This summer, JR wrapped Paris' oldest bridge in a monumental installation designed to invite the city to slow down, and on Sept. 14, Pope Leo XIV will inaugurate his installation of a wave inside a Vatican library, a commentary on the threats of war and climate change to knowledge. —Isa Farfan

Stan Prokopenko

THE PEOPLE'S TEACHER

Carrying Bob Ross's spirit into the digital age, Ukraine-born Prokopenko offers free art tutorials on his YouTube channel, Proko, with nearly 4.4 million subscribers, and created a platform to host lessons from more than 160 arts educators. —I.F.



Dayanita Singh

DOCUMENTING CHANGE

Dayanita Singh's photos of shopkeepers, strangers, and friends and family offer a dynamic and evolving portrait of India over nearly 40 years. She's likened her waist-level, medium-format Hasselblad camera to a "third breast," noting her tendency to shoot from her core, "dancing around" her subjects, rather than standing still and looking down through the viewfinder. She's been equally innovative in the presentation and

distribution of her work, often displaying photographs in what she calls "mobile museums," folding wooden structures that are portable, or on towers of cubes that can be continuously rearranged. She also works with nontraditional art-market approaches: beyond selling limited-edition prints at high prices through a gallery, she creates more affordable books and collections. This spring, her works were presented in a headline-making exhibition in Venice, and this fall she will open solo museum exhibitions in Rome and Turin. —K.W.



Maurizio Cattelan

POWERFUL PROVOCATEUR

FEW HAVE MASTERED the art of going viral better than Maurizio Cattelan. The Italian artist has made headlines for subversive conceptual works that infuriate the masses and sell for eye-popping prices. Highlights include a life-size depiction of Pope John Paul II being struck down by a meteorite (which sold at auction for \$2.7 million in 2004) and a fully functional gold toilet called *America* (Ripley's Believe It or Not! bought a version for \$12.1 million in November). One of his most famous provocations,

a banana duct-taped to a wall that last sold for a cool \$6.2 million at auction, is on view at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum's exhibition "Pop: 1960 to Now," in New York City.

Having grown up in Padua, Italy, in a working-class family, Cattelan entered the art world without formal training. He attributes his nose for inciting conversation—and debate—to his outsider background. His perspective is a "bridge between the elite world and the normal world," he says.

He imbues his sculptures

with humor and surprise designed to spark conversations about serious themes, including mortality and contemporary systems of value and social order—"insanities," he says, that haunt him. Cattelan's works have been called sacrilegious, but he insists the shock factor of his work is overblown: "Reality is always more provoking than what I do."

Cattelan announced his retirement from artmaking after a Guggenheim retrospective in 2011. That lasted only five years, but it wasn't until 2024 that he returned to traditional gallery exhibitions, with a show at Gagosian that included 17-ft.-tall gold-plated panels, pockmarked

with holes: in a commentary on guns in America, he hired licensed marksmen to fire more than 20,000 rounds of ammunition into the panels. "I only recently started to feel like an artist," he says. "It's as if suddenly I had a maturity that probably other artists had out of school or always had."

THE EPIPHANY COMES just in time. In September, following Cattelan's win of the 2026 Preis der Nationalgalerie, Germany's top contemporary art prize, Berlin's Neue Nationalgalerie opened his biggest show in years. Uninterested in putting together a "greatest hits" compilation, Cattelan insists the show

is not a retrospective. The exhibition, titled “Night,” invokes the events of German history to probe universal concepts of power, defeat, life, and death. It features transgressive new commissions including *Dust*, a fire extinguisher that, in accordance with the deceased’s wishes, contains the ashes of a friend of Cattelan’s, and *Purgatory*, a site-specific reconstruction of the Brandenburg Gate. These are shown alongside conversation-starting historical works like Cattelan’s diminutive 2001 sculpture of Adolf Hitler on his knees in prayer, as if asking for forgiveness, which takes

‘Reality is always more provoking than what I do.’

—MAURIZIO CATTELAN

on heightened meaning in Berlin.

With shows forthcoming in Mexico City, Buenos Aires, and Sydney, Cattelan no longer sees retirement in the cards. Instead, he will continue his mission to shake both himself and his audience from complacency. And as he turns 66, he is also ready to shed the “court jester” moniker that has dogged his career. The forthcoming Berlin exhibition, he says, “is a show that will finally demonstrate that the label someone gave me some years ago might be excessive and that there is some seriousness and depth in what I do.”

—NAOMI REA

Gus Casely-Hayford

WINNING OVER YOUNG VIEWERS

As inaugural director of London’s V&A East, which opened fully in April, Gus Casely-Hayford deploys experience in museums, education, and broadcasting to win over the elusive Gen Z. Having visited over 100 schools and consulted 30,000 young people on what they wanted in a

museum, he delivered the Storehouse, an open-storage depot that allows visitors to view—and sometimes handle—some of the museum’s 280,000-object collection. Since May 2025, it has drawn nearly 450,000 visitors, on par with Kensington Palace. —N.R.



Anne Kraybill

SPREADING THE JOY

Does art really exist if nobody ever sees it? This question drives Anne Kraybill, the CEO of Art Bridges, an art-sharing enterprise that helps extract works from viewer-free storage rooms so they can be displayed at museums (often rural, often underresourced) around the U.S. The concept is more complicated than it sounds because of insurance, shipping costs, and issues around preservation—as well as

the general tendency for art institutions to operate in silos. Art Bridges, with funds provided by Walmart heiress Alice Walton, helps clear obstacles to the free exchange of art, with training, logistical help, and funding. One bugbear of Kraybill’s, for example, are the standards big galleries impose on small institutions before lending works. Art Bridges is currently working with 253 museums. “Collectively,” says Kraybill, “there’s more than enough art to bring these new experiences to the public across the country.” —Belinda Luscombe

Marie Watt

UNDER-THE-RADAR STAR

A citizen of the Seneca Nation, Marie Watt creates sculptures, installations, and textiles with materials significant to her community, such as tin jingles, and often in collaboration with other artists. Over 20 museums have hosted shows of her work in the past five years, and in 2027, the ICA Boston will mount a midcareer retrospective. —Taylor Dafoe

Mazdak Sanii

COLLECTING FOR ALL

As co-founder and CEO of the fast-growing Avant Arte, Mazdak Sanii works with top artists to create prints and editions of their work that sell online for a fraction of the price of buying an original work from a gallery. He says he wants “to help bring a new generation of people into discovering and collecting art for the first time.”

—Tim Schneider



Wael Shawky

REIMAGINING ARAB HISTORY

The Egyptian artist served as the artistic director of Art Basel's first fair in the Middle East, drawing 17,000 visitors to Qatar in early February. His own art reimagines history through Arab perspectives, often in film and puppetry. —Kate Brown

Devon Rodriguez

TIKTOK PORTRAITIST

Equal parts gifted artist, enterprising showman, and lightning rod for debate, he rose to fame (and 34 million TikTok followers) thanks to a slick drawing-people-on-the-subway routine. Now he interviews and sketches the famous too, and has a memoir out this month.

—Belinda Luscombe

Michael Armitage

MERGING VISUAL TRADITIONS

The Kenyan British painter's lyrical compositions draw on and revive East Africa's cultural history: he paints on an ancient local material—bark cloth—fusing African and European visual traditions as he melds real-world events with dreamlike landscapes. —Naomi Rea



Lauren Halsey

LOS ANGELES' ARTIST LAUREATE

Halsey is funneling the art world's largesse back into the South Central Los Angeles community that raised her. In March, her nonprofit Summa-everythang opened sister dreamer, an

18-month-long sculpture project celebrating the neighborhood. The initiative will stay in the area, moving into a permanent home—featuring classrooms, an art gallery, and an outdoor sculpture garden



and sports court—in 2028. Halsey's sculptures take inspiration from all forms of Black cultural expression, melding the styles of ancient Egypt and Afrofuturism. Her 10-ft.-long reclining sphinx and wall relief depicting local community members as ancient deities presides over

the Egyptian galleries at the newly expanded Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Having shown at the Venice Biennale and the Met, she is one of a growing cohort of artists using the establishment's validation to build cultural institutions outside the art-world system. —N.R.

Cecilia Alemani

PUBLIC-ART CURATOR

Hosting a sculpture series at New York City's elevated park, High Line Art curator Cecilia Alemani has shown public art can be both cutting-edge and accessible. Iván Argote's towering sculpture of a pigeon, *Dinosaur*, proved so popular that over 7,000 people signed a petition started last December protesting its replacement. It was widely adored, she says, because "many people recognized themselves" in the scrappy bird. —Isa Farfan

Cameron Rowland

TRUTH IN CONCEPT

Cameron Rowland's work pushes audiences to consider how the law, the prison system, and the legacy of slavery have structured the world. To make their point, Rowland often positions objects in ways that seem innocuous, but are carefully chosen and situated, like five benches they quietly (and surreptitiously) set in a New York City park to honor its unmarked Black burial grounds. —Julia Halperin



Atsuko Ninagawa

LEVELING THE FIELD

With their surging participation costs and growing control over collectors'

calendars, art fairs can put galleries in a bind. The ante is high, and so is the risk; a payout is by no means a guarantee when it can cost tens of thousands of dollars to enter a fair.

This predicament drove gallerist Atsuko Ninagawa to co-found Art Week Tokyo, a decentralized, citywide event with the rare distinction of having no exhibitors' fees. "In contrast to an art fair, where commercial pressures inevitably shape decisionmaking, doing away with participation fees helps to level the playing field for galleries," says Ninagawa. "It sends a clear message that we want to shift the metric for evaluating an art event of this scope from making sales to making connections."

The five-day event, produced in collaboration with Art Basel and Japan Contemporary Art Platform, has proved instrumental in putting Japan's once insular contemporary art scene on the global map.

Returning for its fifth edition in November, it will unfold across 53 Tokyo venues connected by a free bus service. Among the participants is Ninagawa's own Take Ninagawa gallery, known for bringing work by Japanese and Western artists together in inventive ways, which will stage a show by the 91-year-old Japanese Polish artist Koji Kamoji. —Taylor Dafoe



Alison Luchs

GEN Z'S FAVORITE CURATOR

As museums all over the world work to broaden their reach through social media, the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., has broken through online with a little help from Alison Luchs, its 77-year-old curator of early European sculpture. Luchs, who previously used Instagram only to keep tabs on her grandniece and nephew, went viral last winter

for using Gen Z slang—like "chopped," "yoinked," and "bussin'"—to explain sophisticated 16th century European artworks. After watching Luchs give a "deadpan" gallery tour, Sydni Myers, the museum's senior manager of social media, hatched the idea for the videos and enlisted social media producer Mary King to write scripts.

Since her side-splitting short-form series, *The Museum Rizzler*, went live in December, Luchs has

brought in over 32 million views to the National Gallery's social media accounts and 175,000 new Instagram followers.

Hoping that Luchs' social media popularity translates to increased attendance, the institution is developing a comedic museum tour starring the curator, titled "Lore Drop." Luchs has no plans to stop entertaining Gen Z so long as she and the team continue to low-key buss it down together. —I.F.

Alex Da Corte

SEEING ANEW

Alex Da Corte's room-size installations brim with Benetton-colored walls, paintings, and sculptures that turn familiar things strange and new. In his films, symbols of American culture, both mass and niche (even Big Bird), become mysterious and uncanny. The goal, he says, is to "invite a new interpretation of what you see and how you see." He is co-curating the Whitney's upcoming Roy Lichtenstein survey. —Taylor Dafoe

Danielle McKinney

PAINTER OF LEISURE

Once a street photographer, Danielle McKinney took up painting amid pandemic lockdowns. Her new works, domestic scenes of Black women relaxing solo in dim, richly decorated rooms, draw on the history of interior scenes in art. Her solo show, "Shelter," opened at Florida's Norton Museum of Art this spring and will travel to the Studio Museum in Harlem. —Sarah Cascone



Trevor Paglen

VISUALIZING MASS SURVEILLANCE

Trevor Paglen is part detective, part hacker, and part poet. Raised in a military family and holding degrees in the seemingly disparate fields of art, geology, comparative religion, and music composition, the artist

is fascinated by the way mass surveillance and AI shape perception. In March, Paglen added the LG Guggenheim Award, a \$100,000 cash prize, to his list of accolades. He has launched a diamond-shaped

satellite into space, photographed secret prisons and military bases, and made a cube-shaped sculpture out of radioactive material from the nuclear exclusion zone in Fukushima, Japan, and the Trinity atomic bomb test site in New Mexico.

—Isa Farfan



Lawrence Abu Hamdan

INTERROGATOR OF SOUND

A fascinating mix of artist and activist, Abu Hamdan uses sound to investigate human-rights abuses and puts his findings into immersive audio-based installations, incorporating film and objects. In a nod to the detective-like nature of his work, he calls himself a "private ear."

—Belinda Luscombe

Tyler Mitchell

PHOTO PHENOM

Mitchell was just 23 when he photographed Beyoncé for *Vogue* in 2018, igniting his career. Now 31, he creates warm, tender portraits of Black people, moving fluidly through the worlds of fashion, magazines, and art, from advertising campaigns to exhibitions at museums and galleries. —T.D.

Christine Sun Kim

TRANSFORMING REALITY

The California-born, Berlin-based artist Christine Sun Kim makes visible society's relationship to sound—and the realities of Deafness. With humor and poignancy, Kim dismantles assumptions about hearing, language, and access through musical notation, infographics, and American Sign Language. Her charcoal series *Degrees of Deaf Rage* transforms geometry-

class angles into everyday frustrations, from "obtuse rage" (uncaptioned videos) to "full-on rage" (museums hosting Deaf programming without employing Deaf staff). In 2020, she signed the national anthem in American Sign Language at the Super Bowl. A drawing she made of the experience is among nearly 100 pieces in a survey exhibition at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis this year, and Mudam in Luxembourg will open an exhibition of Kim's work in September. —Kate Brown





Sarah Arison

MILLENNIAL PATRON

Millennials have a reputation as tepid arts philanthropists, but Sarah Arison, 41, is an exception. She serves on the boards of nine non-profit arts organizations and leads two significant ones: New York City's Museum of Modern Art and YoungArts, a Miami-based group that supports young artists of all stripes at the beginnings of their journeys. She comes by her philanthropic interests naturally—her grandparents, Ted and Lin Arison, founded YoungArts in 1981, having made a fortune with Carnival Cruise Lines. From her several perches, she has nurtured the careers of artists from many fields at a crucial early stage. She has also learned what emerging artists need most: creative mentorship and financial support. —B.L.



Petra Collins

ESTABLISHING AN AESTHETIC

Collins introduced a visual language—an analogue blend of muted '70s hues and '90s teen cues—that was novel, then everywhere. Once associated with the Tumblr-era internet, she now straddles the worlds of fine art, fashion, and pop culture. —T.D.

Max Teicher

DEALMAKER

With brands, sports teams, and entertainers vying to work with visual artists, Teicher made himself a new kind of art-market professional, helping broker sponsorships, partnerships, and publishing deals for his clients—though he does not sell art, which remains the purview of traditional galleries. —Julie Davich

Leo Villareal

LIGHTING UP CITIES

The Mexican American light artist created an installation that flashes waves of 1.5 million monochromatic LED lights at the top of the new 60-story JPMorgan Chase headquarters in Manhattan. It opened last October. —Olivia B. Waxman

Loïc Gouzer

RE-ENVISIONING AUCTIONS

Loïc Gouzer has made a career shaking up the once staid and stuffy auction business. While hundreds of objects can be sold in a single afternoon at Christie's or Sotheby's, Gouzer's app, Fair Warning, allows a select group of collectors to bid on one carefully chosen work at a time. In November, Fair Warning sold a 1974 Andy Warhol portrait of French film icon Brigitte Bardot for \$16.7 million, the highest auction price recorded for the artist that year. His flair for showmanship continued in May with Fair Warning's sale of Banksy's *Girl and Balloon on Found Landscape* at Tiffany's Fifth Avenue flagship in New York City, where it fetched \$18 million. —Julia Halperin



Tuan Andrew Nguyen

RESURRECTING LOST HISTORIES

Tuan Andrew Nguyen traces the ripples of colonialism, displacement, and war. In film and sculpture, the Vietnamese American artist uses materials—including bomb remnants, family photographs,

and singing bowls—that embody his interest in examining the legacy of violence and the potential for healing. This spring, he debuted a 27-ft. sandstone sculpture on New York City's High Line. It pays homage to the 6th century Bamiyan Buddhas in Afghanistan that the Taliban destroyed in 2001. —T.D.



Diya Vij

FUNDING FOR CULTURE

WHAT DO ARTISTS NEED to survive—and dream big? These questions guide curator and arts administrator Diya Vij, who has spent years supporting artists at

institutions including the Queens Museum and the nonprofit Creative Time, where she commissioned public art.

Now, Vij is working to build arts infrastructure that can sustain artists on a much larger scale as the new commissioner of New York City's department of

cultural affairs (DCLA). Since Mayor Zohran Mamdani appointed her in February, Vij has carved out a space for artists in the broader affordability agenda. She envisions a New York City that nurtures artists from their first art class to the “big stages and all the places in between.”

This goal appears harder than ever. Public grants for cultural activities across the country are caught in political cross fires, and artists are leaving New York. The city's artist population, from actors to painters, has dropped by over 4% since the beginning of the COVID pandemic, according to a 2026 report from the Center for an Urban Future, a nonprofit that works to reduce inequality. It's the first sustained decline in decades.

VIJ AND HER TEAM are well positioned to tackle the challenge. She has a track record of establishing civic programs that treat artists as collaborators, having worked on special projects in Bill de Blasio's DCLA, where she launched a residency program that embeds artists in municipal agencies like the sanitation department.

DCLA is the largest city-level arts funder in the U.S., distributing even more cultural funding than the congressionally supported National Endowment for the Arts. “This is a super important position in a very experimental and progressive administration,” says Tom Finkelpearl, who worked with Vij in his previous roles as DCLA commissioner and director of the Queens Museum. “There's a lot at stake.”

In her first budget season, Vij helped secure a \$323.8 million allotment from the city, the largest the agency has ever managed. The majority of those funds will go to New York City cultural organizations—including its most famous museums, the Metropolitan Museum of Art among them—as well as local arts councils that support individual artists and grassroots

groups. These councils facilitate programs including one that places artists at senior centers to teach free classes.

The agency also manages the Percent for Art program, distributing 1% of the city's construction budget to commission site-specific art, including a forthcoming monument to the jazz singer Billie Holiday. In addition to its portfolio of visual and performing arts initiatives, DCLA supports

'How do we ensure that an artist can have a full career here?'

—DIYA VIJ

the city's botanic gardens, Bronx Zoo, and New York Aquarium.

To make life as an artist in New York more sustainable, Vij is also establishing a \$10 million emergency fund for artists in unexpected circumstances. People facing onetime emergencies—including health care costs and federal arts-funding cuts—will be able to apply for assistance in the coming months.

Vij plans to build her policies with input from the cultural workers most affected by them. "I have a practice of listening," she says. "Even as a curator, I was really interested in making gathering spaces where people could surface the ideas of what it looks like to kind of live together differently, to govern differently, to build a different world." —ISA FARFAN



Magdalene Odundo

PIONEERING CERAMIST

As a younger generation of artists embrace ceramics, many look to Magdalene Odundo, 76, for inspiration. The Kenyan-born British potter makes vessels by hand, burnishing them so highly they look as if they are lit from within. Her work has been collected by top institutions for decades, but

her market has grown recently as tastemakers fire up enthusiasm for contemporary ceramics. Her auction record, set in 2025, is nearly \$1 million. And Dior's Jonathan Anderson used her curvilinear forms as a starting point for a line of sculptural accessories at his couture debut in January.

—Naomi Rea

Emily Wei Rales

REORIENTING VIEWING

Glenstone, the gallery that Wei Rales co-founded and directs, aims to demystify the art-viewing experience, so it has some unusual features. Its 300 acres offer space for contemplating nature alongside the art; it's in suburban Maryland rather than a city center; and its guides are instructed to ask questions rather than answer them.

—Belinda Luscombe

Josh Kline

MAKING ART ABOUT CLASS

Josh Kline has managed to build a celebrated career by making astute art about class, a subject most people would prefer not to talk about. Kline's imaginative, haunting, and sometimes funny sculptures and videos explore the way companies exploit their employees and technology transforms our relationship to work and one another. —Julia Halperin

Banksy

ART'S ROBIN HOOD

The street artist Banksy has interrogated issues ranging from immigration to war to government corruption—all while denouncing the commercialized art world. Among his most recognized works are his 2003 West Bank stencil *Love Is in the Air*, of a masked man hurling a flower bouquet; a series of murals drawing attention to destruction in Ukraine; and a painting that shredded itself during a

Sotheby's auction in 2018. The stunt only made it more valuable: the same work sold for a record-breaking \$25.4 million in 2021.

Though he has long operated anonymously, a Reuters investigation in March claimed to unmask him as a Bristol native named Robin Gunningham. The apparent exposure did not slow him down: less than two months later, Banksy unveiled a sculpture in London featuring a man walking forward, his head obscured by a flag he holds high. —I.F.



Gabriel Orozco

ENGINEER OF THE EVERYDAY

An oval billiard table, an organized array of debris, photographs on 300 city bus shelters: Mexican artist Orozco's pieces are subtle yet monumental. He turns the everyday into the extraordinary. —Kate Brown

Hito Steyerl

DIAGNOSING DIGITAL ILLS

The German artist, theorist, author, and professor creates videos that investigate how digital systems—from the internet to AI—reshape politics, labor, and what it means to be human. —K.B.

Catherine Opie

PORTRAITIST OF QUEER LIFE

Opie's photographs of LGBTQIA+ people—alternately intimate, empowering, and playful—made her a queer icon. After opening five shows last year, she's now leaning into her role as a generational mentor. —Taylor Dafoe



Ronald Lauder

LASTING LEGACY

Billionaire Ronald Lauder founded the Neue Galerie in 2001 to showcase his 20th century Austrian and German artworks, including Gustav Klimt's 1907 *Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer*

(a.k.a. *The Lady in Gold*). In May, he surprised the art world by announcing a merger with the Metropolitan Museum of Art, offering a model for how a private museum can survive several

generations while maintaining its character. He and daughter Aerin are planning to kick-start a \$200 million endowment and to donate 13 more works to help ensure the Met Ronald S. Lauder Neue Galerie's longevity. —Belinda Luscombe



Philomene Magers & Monika Sprüth

CHAMPIONING CREATIVITY

The German dealers have championed politically engaged female artists, playing a key role in making the German market less male-dominated than when they started out 40 years ago. From their origins in Cologne, Germany, they operate galleries in Berlin, London, Los Angeles, and New York, working with 80 artists and estates. —Julie Davich

David Hammons

ARTISTIC ENIGMA

Hammons' recusal from the art-world hype machine—representation, openings, interviews—has magnified the influence of the sculptor and performance artist. His popularity has proved that compromise is not the only way. —Tim Schneider



Jeffrey Gibson

KALEIDOSCOPIC VISION

Jeffrey Gibson's paintings, sculptures, textiles, and performances joyfully foreground groups long marginalized in American life and history, particularly Native and queer people. A member of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians and of Cherokee descent, his signature aesthetic fuses kaleidoscopic colors, geometric patterns, and text sampled from sources as diverse as pop

music, protest mantras, and historical documents. Gibson's larger-than-life animal sculptures enlivened the facade of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City for nine months in 2025 and 2026. He also unveiled *Yet With a Steady Beat*, an installation featuring images of traditional hand drums inscribed with slogans inspired by civil rights movements, at the Obama Presidential Center in June. In Gibson's brilliantly colored world, resistance looks irresistible. —T.S.

Sheila Hicks

TEXTILE PIONEER

Sheila Hicks has been a driving force behind fiber art's shift to the center of the art world in the past decade. Now 92, she has been committed to the form since the 1960s, creating works ranging from diminutive geometric weavings to mountains of multicolored yarn that reveal the expressive potential of the material. Having studied fiber for decades with artisans from Mexico to Morocco, she has shown how the same material can be used to create an exuberant waterfall unfurling from the ceiling and a taut experiment in warp and weft the size of a paperback book. Her work continues to find new and disparate audiences; she is developing a site-specific installation for the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, opening in December. —*Julia Halperin*



Maxwell Graham

SMALL BUT MIGHTY

The New York dealer is bucking the challenges facing small and midsize galleries in an increasingly winner-takes-all art market. Since 2011, he has managed to thrive while presenting challenging conceptual art. This fall he is inaugurating a bigger space in Tribeca. —*J.D.*

Sarah Lewis

DOCUMENTING CULTURE

In her quest to ensure recognition for Black artists' contributions, Lewis wears many hats. The professor and author is also curator of "If Emmett Till Lived," a new exhibition of work by 110 artists imagining a world where the 14-year-old was not lynched. —*Sarah Cascone*

Komal Shah

BACKING FEMALE ARTISTS

In under a decade, the Silicon Valley-based Shah has collected over 400 artworks by women. An exhibition of highlights is touring U.S. museums. This year she hosted a forum in Washington, D.C., to address gender disparities in the art world. —*J.D.*

Theaster Gates

CIVIC LEADER

Gates models how artists can help build and preserve civic infrastructure. Fusing his background in Japanese ceramics and urban planning, he uses art to inspire community engagement and cultural exchange through his foundation based on Chicago's South Side. —*T.D.*

Salman Toor

PORTRAYING INTIMACY

Liberation and loneliness are sides of the same coin for Toor, 42, a Pakistani American who paints young brown men in states of convergence—swirled in eddies of love and lust—and in states of isolation, unmoored and adrift. These scenes recall Toor's early experience of, in his words, "coming out through painting" and dealing with the fallout. Toor's prominence in a growing

movement to depict queer intimacy on canvas has endeared him to both curators and collectors. Since his breakthrough show at the Whitney in 2020, his paintings have sold at auction for over \$1 million, toured four museums in a solo show, and been in the Venice Biennale. His first solo European exhibition will open in October at the Courtauld Gallery in London. —*T.D.*



Amalia Mesa-Bains

TURNING ALTARS INTO ART

Mesa-Bains celebrates Chicano culture, both as an artist and educator. Her installations are based on the Día de los Muertos altars known as *ofrendas*, and incorporate talismanic personal effects. —Sarah Cascone

Annabelle Selldorf

REFINED ARCHITECT

The art world's go-to architect, Selldorf recently completed an elegant renovation of the Frick Collection and won the contract for the over \$315 million redesign of the Louvre's Grande Colonnade. —Julia Halperin



Florentina Holzinger

PERFORMANCE PROVOCATEUR

Standing out at the Venice Biennale requires a strong commitment to causing a stir. This year, the Austrian choreographer-performance artist Florentina Holzinger did just that. For *Sea World Venice*, she had naked women drive jet skis in circles for hours, climb a rotating weather vane, and use their bodies as the clapper in an enormous bell. In a city full of water and historic painted images of nude women, visitors waited in snaking lines

for the chance to see what all the fuss was about. Holzinger, 40, has also made works featuring roller-skating nuns and live body modification. Having set out to be a dancer, she is taking art to a new and yet familiar artistic medium: the human body.

—Belinda Luscombe



Lorna Simpson

PLUMBING AMERICA'S ARCHIVE

Simpson has raised evocative questions about the nature of perception and how forces like racism and sexism shape our ways of seeing. For a recent show at the Met, she found inspiration for her compositions in vintage magazines and historical archives.

—Katie White

El Anatsui

MATERIAL ALCHEMIST

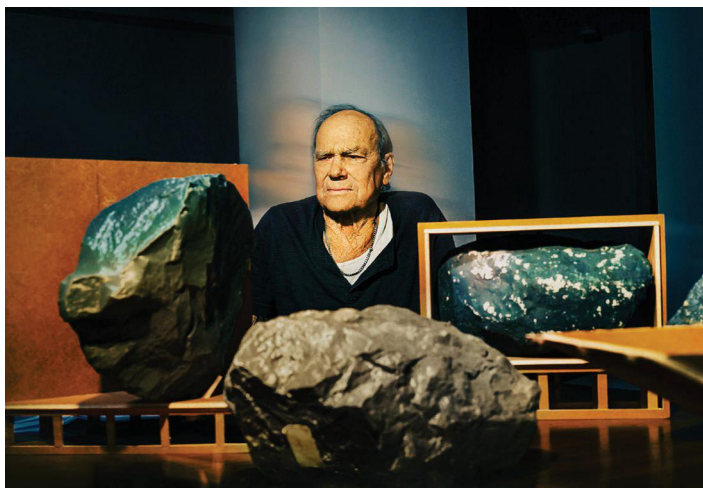
The Ghanaian artist, 82, is most famous for colossal wall hangings made of tiny, linked pieces of metal. In 2024, he had works in 20 cities as geographically and culturally far-flung as Shanghai, London, Dubai, and Lagos. And one of his quiltlike works went for \$2.2 million at an art fair in May. —B.L.

Michael Heizer

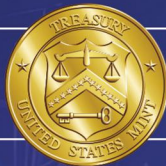
REDEFINING THE CANVAS

For Michael Heizer, art is closer to architecture: monumental constructions and engravings into the land that people can walk around and explore. With an archaeological father, Heizer naturally took to excavation as the subject of his art and to natural terrain as his canvas. In 2022, the 81-year-old finished *City*, a mile-and-a-half-long by half-mile-wide complex of

earth and concrete forms in the Nevada desert that he began building in 1970. "He is an innovator of this idea of a monumental negative as being powerful," says Michael Govan, the CEO of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, who has worked with Heizer since the 1990s. Heizer isn't resting on his laurels. This spring, he installed two sprawling sculptures—which look like elegantly curving lines carved into the gallery floor—at Gagosian in New York City. —Isa Farfan



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Swizz Beatz & Alicia Keys

THINKING BIG

WHEN ALICIA KEYS AND Kaseem “Swizz Beatz” Dean first started collecting art together well over a decade ago, they were mostly just doing it for the love of the game. “We started

collecting without a mission, to be honest,” Dean says. “We were collecting because we love art.”

Now, more than 130 pieces from what the married couple refers to as

the Dean Collection are being shown in museums across the U.S. in a traveling exhibition called “Giants.” As the name suggests, the featured works loom large, both literally and figuratively: a hulking tire wrapped in chains by Arthur Jafa, a painted diptych of BMX bike riders popping wheelies by Amy

Sherald, vibrant photography from the streets of New York City shot by Jamel Shabazz. The selected works make up only a small fraction of the thousand-plus holdings the couple has acquired over time.

Since opening at the Brooklyn Museum in 2024, “Giants” has made stops in four other American cities, with still more planned across the globe through 2031. The show broke records at the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego in August by attracting more than 25,000 people in the almost four months it was there.

KEYS AND DEAN are giants themselves. She is a 17-time Grammy-winning singer-songwriter; he is a DJ, rapper, and producer with a Grammy of his own.

“Art and music are brothers and sisters,” Dean says. It was the connection between these two creative universes that allowed the couple to zero in on a mission for the Dean Collection: they would use it to celebrate and uplift living visual artists, especially those who are Black, by creating a collection that felt like a family.

Keys and Dean visited artists’ studios and brought their five children along; they answered late-night phone calls; they offered advice. “What got us a lot of love and credibility was being human and not transactional,” says Dean. Keys adds, “We’ve always been in a different state of mind just because we are also artists. So the way we relate to artists is going to naturally be different than anybody else.”

Their music knowledge

has also allowed Keys and Dean to bring fresh perspectives to the business side of art. Visual artists do not typically receive royalties, at least in the U.S., when their work is resold through an auction house, gallery, or private sale. If a collector buys a painting for \$10,000 and sells it for \$1 million one year later, the artist never sees a penny of the windfall. “We never could understand that,” Dean says.

‘Art and music are brothers and sisters.’

—KASEEM “SWIZZ BEATZ” DEAN, COLLECTOR

Musicians typically receive royalties anytime their work is reproduced or used commercially. “Why should the rules apply for us and not for the visual artists?”

On Sept. 9, the couple announced Deans’ Choice, a groundbreaking elective program through Bonhams auction house that allows U.S.-based sellers to direct a percentage of proceeds to the living artist behind a sold work. Even if only a handful of sellers choose to participate, “we won already,” Dean says. “This is the beginning of something amazing.”

“The ideal industry for any creative person should be a place where they are completely empowered,” Keys adds. “The Dean Collection is by the artist, for the artist, with the people.”

—ERIN MCMULLEN

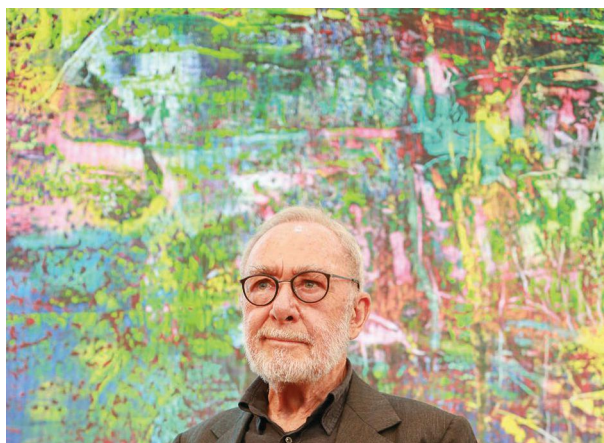


Thelma Golden

CHAMPION OF BLACK ARTISTS

Golden has arguably done more than anyone else to promote Black artists in the U.S. For over two decades, the director and chief curator of the Studio Museum in Harlem has forged the institution into a leading incubator and showcase for

artists of African descent. In November 2025, she made a permanent mark on New York City’s cultural landscape when the museum opened its \$160 million new building. The 82,000-sq.-ft. facility, which looks like a charcoal-colored Jenga tower, doubled exhibition space and created classrooms, artist studios, and meeting spaces for community organizations. Alongside fundraising for the new building, Golden created a \$52 million endowment, ensuring the museum’s 9,000-work collection will be cared for well into the future. —Naomi Rea



Gerhard Richter

TIRELESS PAINTER

“People won’t stop painting,” Gerhard Richter told *TIME* in 2012, “just as they won’t stop making music or dancing.” Five years later, he announced he would in fact stop painting, citing his age.

But the 94-year-old continues to create, drawing in pencil every day in his studio. (“I don’t believe in God,” he told *TIME*. “So for me, art is a substitute.”) Richter, who was educated both in strictly figurative techniques in former East Germany and a more

expressionist style after he defected to West Germany in 1961, is revered for both his blurred photorealistic works and his abstract pieces. While prominent artists cite Richter as an influence, his legacy is less about a particular style than a set of beliefs: that realism and abstraction can coexist, and that photography can be both source and subject. As demonstrated by recent shows in Paris, New York City, and Arles, the appetite for his work hasn’t slowed. In May, one of his iconic photorealistic candle paintings sold for \$35 million at auction. —Belinda Luscombe



Jenny Holzer

TEXT MASTER

Jenny Holzer makes art out of language. Merging sculpture and poetry, she reconfigures words to reveal hidden truths, showing phrases on LED screens or carved into marble. This fall, the Musée d’Orsay in Paris will open an exhibition of her work, and she’s planning an installation in Times Square for World AIDS Day featuring text by artists affected by the disease. —Isa Farfan



Max Hollein

LEADING THE MET

As director and CEO of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Hollein is a novel mix of diplomat, executive, and fundraiser. The Austrian art historian has attracted monumental donations, expanded contemporary art programming, and overseen more than 100 exhibitions, including the largest-ever show of works by Raphael in the U.S., which earned rave reviews this spring. —I.F.



Rashid Johnson

MULTIMEDIA MAVERICK

Some artists spend their lives honing their skills in one medium. Rashid Johnson's oeuvre spans paintings, sculptures, assemblages,

mosaics, photographs, performance, films, and magazine covers. It's as if, after centuries of the stifling of Black thought, it takes

a lot of avenues to explore the complexities of existence in 21st century America. "I'm not invested in medium specificity," Johnson told *TIME* in 2025, on the eve of an exhibition in the Guggenheim

rotunda that, after a stop in Fort Worth, will travel to his hometown of Chicago in November. He trusts his audience to follow along. "I think whoever convinced the viewer they should feel

insecure ... is at fault," he says. He hasn't taken his stratospheric success lightly, using his influence to shine a spotlight on the Black artists who came before him.

—Belinda Luscombe

Adriano Pedrosa

BUCKING TRADITION

The artistic director of Brazil's Museu de Arte de São Paulo has broken out by elevating work previously dismissed as "outsider." In 2025, the museum expanded its exhibition space by 66%. —Naomi Rea

Bernard Arnault

MERGING ART AND LUXURY

As public funding for the arts in France shrinks, the popularity of the Fondation Louis Vuitton, launched by LVMH chair Arnault, exemplifies the growing influence of privately backed art institutions. —Julie Davich

Elizabeth Alexander

FORCE FOR FUNDING

As president of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, poet Alexander created a \$15 million emergency fund for state-level humanities councils affected by Trump Administration funding rollbacks. —Isa Farfan

Tracey Emin

OUTSPOKEN ORIGINAL

Ever since she emerged alongside the bad boys of the so-called Young British Art movement in the '90s, Tracey Emin has been famous for making art and conversation that equal each other in frankness. Even the names of her works, such as *My Bed* (1998), in which she turned her real, trash-filled bed into art, and *Everyone I Have Ever Slept With 1963–*

1995, a tent filled with the names of former lovers, were unapologetic. "My work isn't necessarily going to make you feel good, but it might make you re-evaluate and slow down," Emin told *TIME* just before the opening of a monumental Tate Modern retrospective earlier this year thrust her back in the spotlight and drew more than 350,000 visitors. Emin now operates a foundation in her hometown of Margate to provide studio space and support to help artists on their way. —B.L.





Naomi Beckwith

GLOBE-TROTTING CURATOR

The 16th edition of Documenta, the 71-year-old controversy-prone German festival, will open next summer under Beckwith—a Chicago-based curator known for exploring how ideas traverse borders—and an all-woman team. —*I.F.*

Larry Gagosian

GALLERY EMPIRE

Gagosian is widely recognized as the world's most powerful art dealer, with a key role in transforming collecting from a niche pursuit into a status symbol. His newest NYC space opened in April. —*Olivia B. Waxman*

Simone Leigh

TOWERING SCULPTOR

Leigh, who channels the accomplishments of Black women into sculpture, video, and installations, is preparing for her largest exhibition yet: a 2027 show at the Royal Academy of Arts in London. —*Katie White*

Susan Freedman

BRINGING ART TO THE STREET

The director of the nonprofit Public Art Fund leads work to embed public art in the streets of New York City, pulling off ambitious installations by some of the world's most visionary artists.

—*Sarah Cascone*

KAWS

COMMERCIAL CROSSOVER

Brian Donnelly, better known as KAWS, is the rare artist to command both mainstream popularity and respect from the elite art world. The artist, who rose to prominence as a graffiti writer, makes toys, paintings, and sculptures starting a moody cast of characters drawn from pop culture, like a figure inspired by Mickey Mouse. He has also found success across the price spectrum; his paintings have sold for up to \$15 million at auction, while his \$50 Uniqlo T-shirts caused stampedes in China.

KAWS' rabid fandom fueled his crossover to museums eager to capture the attention of his 4.2 million Instagram followers. His 2026 traveling survey drew over 163,000 people to the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. —*N.R.*



Michael Govan

MUSEUM BUILDER

This spring, Michael Govan, CEO and director of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, unveiled the David Geffen Galleries, a 347,500-sq.-ft. expansion. The curving concrete-and-glass building has its detractors, but it is as

open as L.A. itself, embodying Govan's commitment to deconstructing hierarchies between artistic mediums and cultural geographies. "It was really about taking the constraints off of the model and setting it free," he says. Govan has been working toward this \$724 million expansion since he took the job in 2006. —*Taylor Dafoe*

Amy Cappellazzo & Yuki Terase

MARKET MATCHMAKERS

Art Intelligence Global sounds vaguely like an international spy ring. That's not entirely a coincidence. Amy Cappellazzo and Yuki Terase spent years handling high-profile art sales at more conventional emporiums before founding a consultancy in 2021. They've become instrumental art whisperers for high-net-worth individuals, family-wealth funds, artists, and elite collectors, advising on acquisitions, private sales, appraisals, and long-term strategy. The duo has been especially successful in integrating Western and Asian markets by zeroing in on what makes a work of art valuable to a potential collector. —*T.D.*

Kymerly Pinder

PRACTICAL INSTRUCTION

The Yale School of Art dean wants M.F.A. students to be able to graduate debt-free. In her five years steering the most prestigious art school in the U.S., she's raised \$13 million toward the ambitious goal. —*Isa Farfan*

Matthew Bogdanos

ART-CRIME PROSECUTOR

The head of the Manhattan district attorney's Antiquities Trafficking Unit is waging war on the black market for ancient art. His office has recovered some 6,350 artifacts worth nearly \$500 million. —*Tim Schneider*



Refik Anadol

ARTIST OF THE AI AGE

What impact will AI have on art? Anadol offers an answer in the form of Dataland, the ambitious museum of AI-generated art he opened in June. The Los Angeles attraction has been applauded for its scale

(35,000 sq. ft.) and ambition (to prove AI can be as generative a tool for an artist as a paintbrush or a camera—an argument that's not without dissenters). The inaugural show, inspired by the Amazon

rainforest, changes in real time based on visitors' movements and other data. He is best known for his MOMA "data sculpture," an undulating wave of morphing shapes and colors created with a custom machine-learning algorithm, which debuted in 2022.

—*Naomi Rea*



Jessica Morgan

CHANGEMAKING DIRECTOR

In July, the art historian was named director of Tate, which oversees some of the world's most-visited art museums. She made her name as director of the Dia Art Foundation, where she diversified a collection of overwhelmingly white, male artists.

—*Julia Halperin*

Joe Hage

POWER BROKER

The most powerful man you've never heard of in the art world, Hage helps shape the careers of artists like Damien Hirst and Peter Doig by, for example, advising them on sponsorship deals, partnerships, and contracts with galleries. —*N.R.*

Carmelo Anthony

BRIDGING SPORTS AND ART

Athletes often draw comparisons to artists, and basketball Hall of Famer Carmelo Anthony counts as a master craftsman. So it's only fitting that professional athletes are starting to make their mark as art collectors. Anthony—who owns works by the likes of Ernie Barnes, the former NFL player who went on to become a noted painter; South African portraitist Nelson Makamo;

and the urban contemporary artist Cryptik—moved out of his New York City apartment into a suburban house in 2022 to give his vast collection more breathing space. How many pieces does he own? "I've stopped counting," he says. "I'm not one that goes out there to try to look for the trends, or to see what everybody else is doing." His love for art came early, his taste shaped by the graffiti and album covers he noticed growing up in Brooklyn and Baltimore. —*Sean Gregory*



Time Off

FAMILY MATTERS

BY ELIANA DOCKTERMAN

Zoe Kazan adapts *East of Eden*, a tale of inheritance, 71 years after her grandfather's version



PHOTOGRAPH BY RUVÈN AFANADOR

IN JUNE 2024, ZOE KAZAN BOARDED A FLIGHT TO New Zealand. She was excited. For a mother of small children, a quiet solo flight is a vacation unto itself. She scrolled through the in-flight movies. “They had *East of Eden*, and I was like, ‘I guess the gods are conspiring,’” she says. She pressed play.

Until then she had been avoiding rewatching her grandfather Elia Kazan’s 1955 masterpiece. She was flying half-way across the world to scout locations for her own version of *East of Eden*, a seven-part adaptation of John Steinbeck’s novel that premieres on Netflix on Oct. 1. She hadn’t wanted the film to influence her. But her script, which she’d begun working on in 2020, was finally turned in.

As the end credits rolled, she sighed in relief. “It was less like the book than I remembered,” she says. The film, which introduced a brooding James Dean to cinema, is more inspired by the novel than a direct adaptation of it: it covers only the last third, crucial characters have been excised, and famous lines are missing. “For me,” says Kazan over cold brew, extra ice on the side, at a Brooklyn café on an August morning, “the power of the story is how, over 50 years, it shows history repeating itself—or not.”

Her faithful adaptation covers the entirety of the multi-generational saga, which reimagines the tale of Cain and Abel twice over. Cyrus (Tracy Letts in the new series), a self-mythologizing Civil War veteran, prefers his gentle son Adam (Christopher Abbott) to the violent one, Charles (Mike Faist). A generation later, Adam’s twin sons Aron and Cal (Joe Anders and Joseph Zada) vie for the affection of their emotionally absent father. Kazan wrangles with the novel’s central question: whether those boys can escape the shadows of their family history and forge their own paths—and whether America, carrying the sins of slavery, campaigns of violence against Native Americans, and racism against immigrants building a future in the West, can do the same.

Both versions are, in Kazan’s estimation, self-portraits of the artists who made them. Renowned for directing *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *On the Waterfront* and co-founding the influential Actors Studio, Elia Kazan was also called before the House Un-American Activities Committee in 1952. The Hollywood blacklist was in effect and, faced with the possibility of never being able to work in Hollywood again, he named names. His granddaughter has never read his autobiography, though she has tried. “There’s some very young part of me that’s like, I still want my grandpa to be my grandpa and not have access to all of this adult stuff,” she says. But she believes that Elia Kazan, who died in 2003 when she was 20, saw himself in the black sheep of the family: “He had this cold and demanding father, and I think he was projecting onto Cal.” Made during a period when the director was facing significant backlash, his version focuses on guilt, rejection, and alienation.

What most intrigued Zoe Kazan, a new mother when she started on the script, were characters her grandfather rewrote or omitted: Cathy (Florence Pugh), a mother who walks out on her infant sons and whom Kazan calls “irredeemable, irresistible, and so full of agency,” and Lee



▲
Faist, Abbott,
and Pugh as the
trio at the center
of *East of Eden*

(Hoon Lee), a Chinese American servant who steps in to raise the boys.

Kazan may live closest to Cathy and Lee in her script. But perhaps the reason she was drawn to the project is the notion of living and working in her grandfather’s shadow. One cannot help but draw the parallel between her and the grandchildren in *East of Eden*, struggling with whether to embrace or break away from a burdensome legacy. “The irony was not lost on me. There’s a literal way that I’m following in my family’s footsteps,” Kazan admits. “I don’t think I’d be doing my job as an artist if I weren’t thinking about my family while making this family story.”

ZOE KAZAN WAS a teenager when she fell hard for Steinbeck. At 15, the Los Angeles native embarked on a Steinbeck-themed road trip up the California coast with her parents, dog-eared *East of Eden* in hand. Years later, she asked her agents to contact her if anyone purchased the rights. The call came in December 2019, while Kazan was shooting in Australia. She emerged bleary-eyed from a flight back to L.A. with her 15-month-old to pitch her idea to the buyers. “I talked about America and the way that



we don't want to look at our shadow, and how the book argues that embracing your shadow, all of yourself, the good and the bad, is the only way to change," she says.

By then she had built a career not just as an actor in *The Big Sick* and *She Said* but also as a screenwriter with *Ruby Sparks*, a satirical take on the manic pixie dream girl, and *Wildlife*, a drama she co-wrote with her partner, Paul Dano. She landed the *East of Eden* job and spent the next six years in Steinbeck's world, and much of that time in the head of one of literature's most complicated female characters, Cathy.

Cathy appears mysteriously on Adam and Charles' doorstep, badly beaten. From there, she vacillates between a mesmerizing seductress and evil incarnate. She's a manipulator or a survivor, depending on your perspective. "I don't think anything in her background excuses her behavior," says Kazan, laughing. "At the same time, there's something really compelling about her insistence on her autonomy and selfishness, especially as a woman. I was such a good girl, reading that felt very exciting."

Cathy became the center of Kazan's adaptation. Often accused by

the narrator of being a liar, Cathy in fact often tells the truth. It's just not a truth the men around her want to hear. She says she does not want to move to California. She says she does not want kids. She says she does not want to stay once Cal and Aron are born. Today's readers may be appalled by the way she earns her freedom, but we can also sympathize with a woman whose wishes are so blatantly ignored.

Not even Steinbeck could decide. In letters to his editor, "He starts out like, 'You've never read a monster like this,'" says Kazan. "Then he starts referring to her like, 'I'll finally get back to my dear Cathy.' He seems very seduced by her." Kazan relied heavily on the book to flesh Cathy out. This is not some girlboss version of one of literature's great antagonists. "I think the text supports my reading," she says. "I don't like historical fiction that imposes modern values on the past. I don't think Cathy is a feminist. I don't think she cares about other women. I think she cares about herself."

Pugh was the only actor Kazan named in her script. She's made a career of morally complex characters in *Lady Macbeth*, *Midsommar*, and even the Marvel movies. As Cathy, she's transfixing. "Florence looks like a doll, but she has this steel rod inside," says Kazan. "Cathy is all action, like a shark that always has to be moving forward."

EAST OF EDEN has aged so well in some respects that Kazan might get accused of making modern updates by those who haven't read the text. After Cathy leaves Adam, the story centers on two men, Adam and Lee, platonically raising a family and navigating the complicated gender-role implications of that arrangement.

Lee's parents were brought from China to build the railroads. He spends his life being the smartest

man in any room but feigning broken English to make the white men around him comfortable, revealing his intellect only to those he trusts. When Adam checks out psychologically for the better part of a decade, Lee raises Cal and Aron, deliberately trying to prevent in this new generation the fractures and violence of the previous one. Steinbeck's narrator observes Lee's domestic and emotional work with admiration and grants Lee an unexpected dignity given the time period. The Netflix series doubles down, lingering on Lee's face to capture a flicker of resigned sorrow at moments when Adam claims ownership over the boys and their accomplishments.

"A lot of this caretaking, doing the invisible work, my experience of becoming a mother, is embedded in Lee," Kazan says. But so, too, is she Cathy. "There's also a part of me, as there is for many mothers, that's like, 'I love my children more than anything, and I wish I could disappear.'"

Early in our nearly two-hour conversation, Kazan asks a server to lower the music so we can dig our teeth into Lee's famous monologue on *timshel*, a Hebrew word that translates to "thou mayest" in the Cain and Abel story. It offers Cain and others the choice to triumph over sin. It frees younger generations from repeating the mistakes of their forebears. One can guess why this may ring true for Zoe Kazan. "The overlap with my personal history in this was all very conscious, and made more conscious the longer I worked on it," she says. "But it's not the explicit subject of it."

She hopes the story opens doors inside viewers, the way it did for her. "I think we have tendencies as humans to feel the weight of our nation's original sins, or our family's original sins, that they are so shameful and heavy that anything good we do is going to be insignificant," she says. "And then I think we have this other, very Trumpian impulse, of whitewashing the past. I think the thing the book is arguing for, and that I find very moving, is this idea that we actually have to carry both things. The weight of our original sins, and the idea that we are not defined by them." □

'The irony was not lost on me. There's a literal way that I'm following in my family's footsteps.'

CHINA WATCH

PRESENTED BY CHINA DAILY 中国日报

How pickleball diplomacy is scoring points

Sister city and other partnerships connect countries through people-to-people links involving sports, education, and culture

BY LIA ZHU

Jeffrey Sullivan, director of systemwide athletics for Montgomery County Public Schools in Maryland, has not taken off a bracelet since February. A Chinese student from a visiting delegation knotted and tied it around his wrist and told him that it would bring luck for the entire year. Sullivan has no intention of removing it.

In Utah a young woman named Ellie Phelps said she once sat in a Chinese-language class and was ready to quit for lack of a personal connection to the language. One summer camp in China changed everything. Today Phelps is on a Fulbright Scholarship at Tianjin University.

In Tacoma, Washington, more than 200 students from Lincoln High School and its sister school in Fuzhou, East China's Fujian province, have taken part in mutual exchanges since 2008. Among them was a young woman whose single trip sparked a lifelong love of immersing herself in other cultures.

In a park in Liuzhou, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, couples have their wedding photos taken on a replica of a bridge located in Cincinnati, Ohio.

An expanding network of subnational partnerships, spanning states including California, Maryland, Ohio, Oregon, Utah and Washington, is quietly growing stronger.

Since Nanjing and St. Louis forged the first China-U.S. sister city bond in 1979, the two countries have built 238 such

pairings and 50 sister province-state relationships.

In the Chinese Reconciliation Park in Tacoma, an ornate pavilion, the Fuzhou *Ting*, was donated by the city of Fuzhou.

"We're so proud and grateful for the relationship with our beautiful sister city of Fuzhou," said Jamika Scott, a member of Tacoma Council. "It's been a privilege to nurture this relationship for more than 30 years, and we continue to learn and grow from our ties."

The *ting*, a traditional Chinese structure built to provide shelter, rest and viewing points, has since been the site of dragon boat races, welcomed musicians from Fuzhou for the sister cities international music festival, and served as a stage for film screening and cultural celebrations, Scott said.

In Liuzhou a different kind of monument has taken on an unexpected role. A replica of the John A. Roebling Suspension Bridge that spans the Ohio River was built in a collaboration of Liuzhou and Cincinnati.

The sister city relationship between the two, established nearly 40 years ago, has touched thousands of lives through teaching and professional exchanges, said Janet Huston, Ohio state representative for Sister Cities International.

More recently, Joe Hamrick, a pickleball enthusiast and sister city committee chairman, recruited seven couples to travel to Liuzhou and present the sport. They visited high schools, universities and recreation centers. However,



the games were never really the point, Huston said.

"The real purpose of any sister city exchange is to foster peace and understanding between two cultures, and what both sides came away with was just this overwhelming sense of kindness and love, changing attitudes, literally one person at a time."

Much like how Ping-Pong Diplomacy helped reopen China-U.S. ties in the 1970s, Sullivan is betting on pickleball as a universal language connecting young people across cultures.

His philosophy of the pickleball initiative is that international relations are built "one relationship, one rally at a time."

The initiative began in April last year when more than 30 Montgomery County student-athletes visited Beijing, Shenzhen, Guangdong province, and Shanghai for 12 days of shared play, school visits and cultural exchanges. Shenzhen made the return visit four months later.

In February a Shanghai delegation arrived in Maryland, followed by a group of students from Montgomery County Public Schools traveling back to China, visiting Shenzhen, Shangyou, Jiangxi province, Hebi, Henan province, and Beijing.

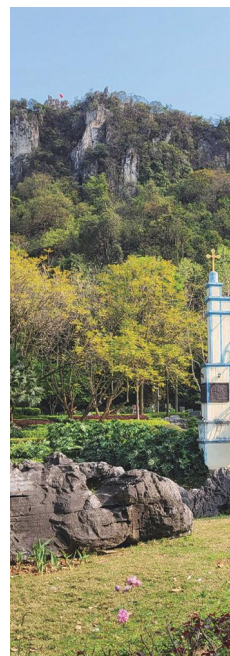
These cities have either established sister city ties

A youth from Utah (right) experiences Chinese painting in Xining on May 29.

MA MINGYAN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE



A replica of the John A. Roebling Suspension Bridge stands in the Cincinnati-Liuzhou Friendship Garden in Liuzhou, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY





Students from Qinghai and Utah participate in a fun activity during an exchange visit on May 29 in Xining, China's Qinghai province. This year marks the 15th anniversary of the sister province-state relationships between Qinghai and Utah. MA MINGYAN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE



with U.S. counterparts or taken part in people-to-people exchange initiatives, particularly youth and sports diplomacy.

"What was so amazing about this trip was it occurred during Spring Festival," said Sullivan, adding that the students watched robots dance in Shenzhen and were fascinated with what they experienced. He also told the students what Shenzhen represents: a small fishing village transformed into a global technology center.

"I believe in the power of sport and the power of pickleball to bring people together," Sullivan said.

The program is already drawing interest from other Chinese cities. At a recent China-U.S. Sister Cities Summit in San Francisco, representatives of Guilin, Guangxi, and Xi'an, Shaanxi province, extended invitations to explore pickleball exchanges of their own.

In Tacoma, Lincoln High School forged a partnership with the Affiliated High School of Fuzhou Institute of Education in 2008.

"We have been very proud to host students from Fuzhou at Lincoln High School every summer and introduce them to Tacoma," said Scott of the Tacoma Council. She said her younger cousin was one of those students and the experience helped her discover a lifelong passion for the world.

A former teacher and artist, Scott envisions deepening the relationship through creative fields. "Students in Tacoma are especially engaged in the arts, including glassblowing, painting, photography, filmmaking, dance and so much more. Sharing these creative passions with their Chinese counterparts and learning more about the creative work in China will enrich the lives of our young people," she said.

"When youth share their perspectives through art, I believe they can deepen their understanding of each other and find ways to imagine a bright future working together in collaboration," she added.



International tourists pose for photos on the rooftop of Pearl Club in Beijing on July 15, with the Temple of Heaven in the distance. ZOU HONG / CHINA DAILY

A capital idea: seeing Beijing from the heights

BY ZHENG JINRAN

Many first-time visitors come to Beijing looking for its famous landmarks. Some leave captivated instead by the rooftops they discovered.

That was the case for Nancy Nielsen, a teacher from Michigan. While visiting the Pearl Market last year she noticed another floor above the building. Curiosity drew her upstairs, where she found herself gazing out at the Temple of Heaven.

"It was just so beautiful," she said.

She has since returned at least five times, bringing friends back with her this summer to share the view.

Like Nielsen, a growing number of visitors are discovering a different view of Beijing — a bird's eye one.

Following the inscription of Beijing Central Axis on UNESCO's World Heritage list in 2024, Dongcheng district established the Breeze Terrace Project to bring heritage closer to everyday life.

More than 70 selected rooftops now offer new public spaces above the old city, preserving its historical streetscape while opening up fresh perspectives.

The terraces invite visitors to explore not only the landmarks, but also surrounding neighborhoods, cafes and shops, and do so at a more leisurely pace.

That slower rhythm is exactly what Ming Jing, general manager of the rooftop Pearl Club at the Pearl Market, hopes visitors will find on the terrace, where Nielsen first stumbled upon Beijing's bird's-eye views.

Many visitors arrive after touring the Temple of Heaven.

Instead of rushing to the next attraction, they order coffee or a special, thematically shaped mousse cake, waiting for sunset to watch the light shift over the centuries-old complex, Ming said.

That broader perspective also shaped the first impression of Beijing for Leilani and David from Perth, Australia.

Having only just arrived in the capital, they skipped the usual tourist trail and instead headed to Gui Temple, a rooftop restaurant atop the western hall of the 700-year-old Hong'en Temple near the Bell and Drum towers. Leilani said she had expected a bustling metropolis, but was surprised by the slower pace of life in the ancient *hutong*.

"I imagined it would be much busier, but it was very calm."

The rooftop felt surprisingly familiar. David said outdoor dining is common in Australia, and the relaxed atmosphere made it all the easier to savor Beijing's famous Peking duck.

Wan Yulin, general manager of Gui Temple, said that panoramic view is exactly what makes the rooftop special.

"What they see is not one building. They see everyday life and the passage of time — the past and present."

For Han Wei, deputy director of Dongcheng's culture and tourism promotion bureau, the project reflects changing expectations among visitors and residents.

"People no longer want to see only a landmark. They want to experience the neighborhood around it and spend time there."

Yang Cheng contributed to this story.

Colin Kaepernick The activist—and exiled NFL quarterback—on revisiting his national-anthem protests, an alternative to policing, and staying game-ready

You've released a book, *The Perilous Fight*. Why tell your story now? It's 10 years since the protest. I've gotten so many questions about why did I protest, what led up to it, the details behind the scenes. Then also just the work that we're doing directly in communities. It was a great time to answer some of those questions and give insight into how we move forward together.

That book starts with a harrowing incident of racial hostility involving the N word that you experienced as a child—one you weren't comfortable sharing with your parents, who adopted you and are white. Why start there? Starting with that moment of going through the neighborhood, being tied to a rose tree, really sets the stage for the rest of my life. I had to navigate the realities you face when you are Black in predominantly white spaces.

Were you physically or psychologically threatened while protesting? Threats became so normalized that I didn't really think about them too much. You get attacked from the President of the United States. You're getting attacked from Senators. You have people trying to send bombs to your home, online threats, and mail threats. That ultimately led to me staying at [manager Tony Ng's] house for the rest of that 2016 season, so people didn't know where I was.

You last played in the NFL in 2016. Has agreeing to stand for the anthem, in order to get signed, ever even crossed your mind? No. The conditions in our society have not changed. There is never going to be a moment where I take a position of, hey, I'll stand up so I can get my career back. Because that then becomes a moral concession: If you threaten my career or my money,

At 38, and not having played in the NFL in nine seasons, why do you think you can play in the NFL right now?

Because I train for it. I've shown that the training works. Next is to gain the opportunity to be able to go out and show that in real action.



I will actually say I don't care about the people and I will look at this just from an individual perspective. That was a line I was not going to cross.

The NFL reports giving millions to social-justice organizations over the past decade. Do you see that as a sincere response to your protest, or a PR play? A PR play. If it was actually to try to create change and benefit Black communities, the NFL's response holistically from the start would have looked drastically different. I would have a job.

Do you still support abolishing policing? Yes. I think that's the work that we should be doing. Re-allocating resources. Give communities the resources that they need to be able to thrive.

Are you surprised that DEI is under fire? I'm not surprised it's being attacked by this Administration. But I am surprised by the capitulation by corporations. Collectively we should be very aware of the organizations and leaders who are willing to capitulate in this moment. Because that tells us a lot about who they are, and the level of trust that we should have in them.

Did you make any mistakes over the past 10 years? The one I think about a good amount is I had intentionally taken an approach of, I'm going to do my best to not call out or attack people who I disagree with. I did not want to create an environment or narrative that was centered around Black people fighting and distracting from the intention of the protest. I don't know if that created additional space for people to take the narrative places that it shouldn't have gone. But it's one of those things that I'm very mindful of as I move forward. —SEAN GREGORY



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