

Joint Press Release: 17 December 2023

## Jameel Arts & Health Lab and WHO highlight the impact of the arts on human and planetary health at COP28



Pictured at Afikra x Community Jameel COP28 Live Conversation on Arts Health & Climate: Mikey Muhanna, founder and executive director of Afikra; Nadia Christidi, PhD candidate at MIT; Stephen Stapleton, co-founder of the Jameel Arts & Health Lab; Uns Kattan, deputy director, Head of learning and research, Art Jameel; Cléa Daridan, curator at Community Jameel.



Pictured at the Lab's COP28 Arts, Health & Climate Reception hosted by Community Jameel, L-R: George Richards (Community Jameel), Lisa Larsen (UN Climate Change High Level Champions), Fady Jameel (Community Jameel), Dr. Tedros Ghebreyesus (WHO), Christopher Bailey (WHO), HE Toyin Saraki, Anil Soni (WHO Foundation), COP28, Dubai, UAE. Photo courtesy of Community Jameel.

COP28 DUBAI—The Jameel Arts & Health Lab in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO), NYU Steinhardt and CULTURUNNERS have championed the role of the arts in tackling climate change and the global health crisis at COP28.

From Dec. 1-3, the lab presented COP28 Healing Arts Week, a global dialogue to promote the role of the arts in supporting human and planetary health, including a high-level panel in the COP28 Green Zone, participation by Lab Co-Director Christopher Bailey in the COP28 Blue Zone, a youth-focused live dialogue at the Jameel Arts Centre, and a private reception hosted by Community Jameel and the WHO Foundation to recognize the Jameel Arts & Health Lab's work on arts, health and climate.

At the reception, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director General of the World Health Organization remarked, "The arts can be a powerful ally in our quest to improve health for all. I have seen the impact of the arts on community well-being, and I'm very pleased that this collaboration (with the Jameel Arts & Health Lab) will help us understand the science of that impact in order to improve the lives of people from all backgrounds."

The Lab's program at COP28 represented the culmination of a three-month series of 'listening sessions' on the theme of arts, health and climate which began with a roundtable at the Lincoln Center in New York City during UNGA Healing Arts Week, and included participation in MENA Climate Week and a panel within AEON Collective's tree library as part of Healing Arts Arabia Week in Riyadh.

On December 1, a live recording session of the Community Jameel x Afikra Conversation Series for COP28, which amplified the voices of those working at the intersection of the arts, health and climate action, is available here. The lively panel discussion explored the impact of the arts on human and planetary health and the role of the arts in translating science into powerful stories that shape our values and shift our behaviours. This session was moderated by Cléa Daridan, curator at Community Jameel, and Mikey Muhanna, founder and executive director of Afikra. The panelists were: Stephen Stapleton,



CEO of Culturunners and co-founder of the Jameel Arts & Health Lab; Dr. Nisha Sajjani, Associate Professor at NYU Steinhardt and co-founder of the Jameel Arts & Health Lab; Nadia Christidi, PhD candidate at MIT, Researcher, writer and arts practitioner; Uns Kattan, deputy director, Head of Learning and Research, Art Jameel; Dr. Marina Romanello, executive director of Lancet Countdown.

“We need to leverage available evidence on the health benefits of engaging in the arts to address the health impacts of climate change. The science tells us that artists and creative arts therapists are valuable partners in communicating the health impacts of climate change, facilitate coping with eco-anxiety and reconnection with one’s environment, and coalition building towards a culture of sustainability.” - Nisha Sajjani, Associate Professor, NYU Steinhardt School of Culture Education and Human Development, New York University and Co-Director of the Jameel Arts & Health Lab

On December 2nd, a panel discussion titled: Safeguarding Our Planet: Biodiversity, Climate, And One Health featured Lab Co-Director and WHO Arts & Health Lead, Christopher Bailey, alongside Princess Mashaal AlShalan, Co-founder Aeon Collective; Prince Sultan bin Fahad, chairman of the Saudi Water Sports and Diving Federation; Princess Hala bint Khaled, president of the Khaled bin Sultan Living Oceans Foundation; Raquel Peixoto, associate professor of microbiology at King Abdullah University of Science and Technology; Richard Bush, chief environment officer at NEOM; and Catherine Cone environment and sustainability director at the Royal Commission for AIUa.

On December 3rd, COP’s first designated Health Day, the Jameel Arts & Health Lab and Aeon Collective, in collaboration with Impact One, co-hosted a high-level panel at the COP28 Green Zone to explore the role of the arts in translating the science of climate change, and its impact on human and planetary health, into compelling stories that might shape our values and behaviour for years to come. Panelists included the world-renowned media artist, Refik Anadol; Princess Mashaal bint Saud Al-Shalan, Co-founder of Aeon Collective; Manal Ataya, Advisor to Sharjah Museums Authority; Christopher Bailey, Co-director, Jameel Arts & Health Lab, Arts & Health Lead at WHO; and Elizabeth Markovitch, Founder of Ikono TV.

"One of the most profound experiences in life and the most intelligent things we have as humanity is nature. The data in nature can be used for bringing awareness and context and discourse to the beauty and the complexity of nature. I think we can find ways of looking at similarities and I believe that artists like myself, working with technology, data and algorithms, have a significant responsibility to create awareness through exhibitions and profound performances and beyond." - Refik Anadol, Director / Media Artist at Refik Anadol Studio, Visiting Researcher & Lecturer at UCLA's Design Media Arts Department

## **WHO75 Healing Arts Program**

The Jameel Arts & Health Lab’s COP28 Healing Arts Week is one of the global events marking the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of WHO. It is implemented under a broader WHO75 Healing Arts programme that has been running since January 2023, with events in Dublin (Creative Brain Week), Lagos (National Arts and Health Week Nigeria), Geneva ([WHO75 Healing Arts Concert](#)), Cairo/Alexandria (Global South Arts and Health Week), Copenhagen (Music and Motherhood Meeting), Riyadh (Healing Arts Arabia Week) and culminated in Dubai (COP28 Healing Arts Week).

## **Collaboration for Health**

The Jameel Arts & Health Lab was launched in January this year following the signing of agreements between the WHO Regional Office for Europe, [NYU Steinhardt](#), [Community Jameel](#), and [CULTURUNNERS](#). Focused on overlooked and underserved communities, the lab coordinates and amplifies scientific research into the effectiveness of the arts in improving health and well-being to drive policy implementation across 193 UN Member States. The lab coordinates and amplifies scientific research into the effectiveness of the arts in improving health and wellbeing by leveraging data, artist-led advocacy and a global ‘Healing Arts’ campaign.



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**Related links:**

[Jameel Arts & Health Lab](#)

[WHO75](#)

[NYU Steinhardt](#)

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