



The **ART** of **MUSEUMS**

Eight Countries, Eight Museums and their Masterpieces

8 x 52 min. documentary series & crossmedia
Shot in 4K

An emotional art experience featuring international museums, told from the perspectives of artists and celebrities. This eight-part documentary series presents world-famous museums through their iconic artworks. As renowned stars of the creative industry discuss some of the most celebrated paintings in history, our viewers get an exclusive glimpse of the museums' lives and into the hearts of celebrities like Vivienne Westwood, Karl Ove Knausgård, Marina Abramović, Ólafur Eliasson, Norman Foster, Joyce DiDonato and many more...

»Our economic system is based on consumption. In an art gallery, that's not consumption—that's culture. You have the responsibility to your life to understand the world. The best thing is to look at paintings.«



Vivienne Westwood at the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna

found on gallery walls. Meanwhile, creatives like Marina Abramović, Ólafur Eliasson and Norman Foster connect the exhibitions and paintings with their own artistic pursuits, combining emotive storytelling with years of expert knowledge.



The Guggenheim, New York, museum for abstract art

SYNOPSIS

This is not your classic museum film. THE ART OF MUSEUMS presents a unique portrait of the world's most distinguished galleries through the eyes of a stellar cast of creatives. Fashion designers, artists, literary greats and famous musicians stand in front of artistic masterpieces whilst stories of love, passion and death unfurl across time and space. In the empty halls of eight monumental museums, we experience the raw power of art.



The Uffizi, Florence, Europe's first museum

Our museums span Europe and reach across the Atlantic, housing paintings from the Middle Ages to the present day:

- Museo del Prado | Madrid
- Kunsthistorisches Museum | Vienna
- Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum | New York
- Musée d'Orsay | Paris
- Uffizi Gallery | Florence
- Rijksmuseum | Amsterdam
- Alte Nationalgalerie | Berlin
- Munch Museum | Oslo



Restoration room at the Prado, Madrid

Each museum has stood the trials of history. World wars, depressions and political upheavals have moulded their very identities. Nowhere is this more clearly represented than in their collections and curatorial choices—selections of iconic masterpieces that engage with their pasts. We discuss these these turbulent histories with those who know them best—the people behind the scenes, the museums' directors, curators and restorers. Not only this, they scrutinize the future challenges facing their museums in a fast-changing digitized world.

We also bring our viewers on a journey through restoration rooms and studios, documenting rarely-glimpsed spaces and discovering how they influence the art

EPISODES

In each episode our celebrity host explores the artworks through the lens of their own experiences. In Vienna activist and fashion designer Vivienne Westwood relates the paintings in the Kunsthistorisches Museum to her advocacy for social justice and female empowerment, triggering a profound confrontation with Velazquez's tragic Infantas.

Over in Oslo, best-selling author Karl Ove Knausgård tours the Munch Museum. He faces one of the most expensive paintings in history—Munch's 'The Scream'—and contemplates its uncanny portrayal of modern anxiety. Marina Abramović goes one step further, inviting local residents to stand on the very spot where the painting was created... and to scream into the abyss.

In other episodes, fashion designer Wolfgang Joop finds Renaissance beauty in Florence; painter Katharina Grosse traces the German soul at Berlin's Alte Nationalgalerie; Vogue photographer Erwin Olaf revisits his childhood at the Rijksmuseum and abstract artist Julie Mehretu examines the radicality of New York's Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum.



Karl Ove Knausgård at the Munch Museum, Oslo



Joyce DiDonato at the Museo del Prado, Madrid



Marina Abramović explores female empowerment



Wolfgang Joop discusses Renaissance beauty

Such emotional extremes are famously tackled in Goya's works, on display in Madrid's Prado, as well as in the performances of multi-Grammy award-winning opera singer Joyce DiDonato. As she stands alone in front of Goya's paintings, Joyce recognizes a kindred spirit reaching beyond the frame and speaking to her own artistic endeavours.

At the Musée d'Orsay in Paris, choreographer and first female artistic director of the Berlin State Ballet, Sasha Waltz, travels through the Fin de Siècle. She is captivated by its obsession with death, sexuality and hedonism, and finds a dialogue with today's society. She begins to dance amongst the sculptures in the d'Orsay's elegant hall—her poignant response to a unique art experience.

Overview of the museums and main protagonists:

- Museo del Prado | Joyce DiDonato
- Kunsthistorisches Museum | Vivienne Westwood
- Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum | Julie Mehretu
- Musée d'Orsay | Sasha Waltz
- Uffizi Gallery | Wolfgang Joop
- Rijksmuseum | Erwin Olaf
- Alte Nationalgalerie | Katharina Grosse
- Munch Museum | Karl Ove Knausgård

ART LAB

Art is no longer confined to the walls of museums. Nowadays, anyone with access to a screen and the internet can view high resolution images of artworks. To explore the possibilities of this new art experience, we have created a laboratory with multiple screens displaying high resolution images of our paintings. Through detailed enlargements, we conjure up the colorful world of each painting, sparing no drama or detail. This is our purpose built Art Lab.

We also use the Lab to present interviews with our celebrity guests—bringing them into the debate and hearing their wide-ranging and often controversial opinions.

The Lab is curated by Dr. Matt Lodder, our art historian. While he describes the drama behind each painting, we zoom in to discover subtle gestures, colors and expressions. Imagine an elegantly poised Toulouse-Lautrec dancer or the haunting eyes of Caravaggio's severed head of Goliath. Art is brought to life before our very eyes.



The art historian in his Art Lab

Dr. Matt Lodder is a professor of art history and Director of American Studies at the University of Essex.

His work as a public historian has included a number of appearances on national and international television and radio to discuss his own research, as well as wider issues concerning the discipline. Through these appearances, Matt seeks to popularize art history and the world of museums by exploring the intersection between academia and pop culture.

An active social media presence, his tweets reach nearly 7,000 followers daily, and he's particularly interested in using to his public profile to get young people enthusiastic about art and its possibilities.

Matt also connects with audiences outside of the academic world by giving public lectures and writing for popular journals. He has given talks at venues such as the V&A, the National Museum of Scotland and the Museum of London, as well as contributing articles to the *The Guardian*, the *Royal Academy Magazine*, *History Today* and others. He is currently working on a book entitled *Tattoo: An Art History*, which will be published in 2019.

At the University of Essex, Matt teaches undergraduate and postgraduate courses in art history that examine the intersections between art, visual culture and politics, as well the role of the body in artistic practice. His research also focuses on the wider applicability of art historical study to more esoteric forms of visual culture, such as pornography.

Through his university teaching, his curatorial work and his life as a public historian, Matt initiates conversations around less popularized forms of artistic practice, placing them in a wider and more accessible social context. His work is also underpinned by an interrogation of established cultural institutions, such as public museums, exploring their role in a fast-changing digital landscape.

PROTAGONISTS

Selection of Confirmed International Celebrities



In 2010, the MoMA presented Eliasson's oeuvre in a solo exhibition—the culmination of his life work. The artist is most famous for his Weather Project at London's Tate Modern, which attracted two million visitors in the space of six months, and for constructing four huge waterfalls across New York City.



Ever full of the spirit of rebellion and a spearhead of the punk movement, Dame Vivienne Westwood expresses her unconventional views to nearly half a million Twitter followers. While her designs continue to grace catwalks all over the world, she's also become the leader of a climate revolution.



Marina Abramović is a true radical. She acts between the lines of torture and passion, crossing boundaries to uncover the true emotions of human beings and their relationships in an increasingly anonymized society. She will talk about art that carries the potential for performative interpretation.



Neuro-psychiatrist Eric Kendel was awarded the Nobel Prize in 2000 for his work on memory. A passionate art collector himself, his pioneering research on the psychology of perception changed our understanding of the link between abstract art and science.



With a fan base comparable to that of Harry Potter, the Norwegian writer Karl Ove Knausgård drives the zeitgeist of a huge international audience. His controversial Magnum Opus, *My Struggle*, exposes his own life and the lives of the those closest to him to intense public scrutiny.



New York based artist Julie Mehretu's work covers the walls of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and is a perfect metaphor for the complexity of the 21st century. Though it has long been part of MoMA's collection, Julie still uses her work to criticize the West's cultural imperialism.



Multi-Grammy award-winning opera singer Joyce DiDonato's brave and masterful performances have captivated audiences the world over. She has over 40,000 Twitter followers, and regularly appears on television to discuss the relevance of opera to our everyday lives.



Vogue photographer Erwin Olaf is not only known for his fashion photography, but for his solo exhibitions in world famous galleries like the Rijksmuseum and the Hague. He also works with film, has formulated exhibitions, and designed the Dutch euro coins for circulation in 2014.



Perhaps the most well-known architect to come out of the UK, Norman Foster is behind the creation world famous buildings like the City of London's Gherkin and the restored Reichstag Dome in Berlin. He is currently remodelling the Salón de Reinos (Hall of Realms) at the Prado.



Wolfgang Joop is an international fashion designer and passionate art collector. Constantly challenging the expectations of the fashion industry, he nevertheless engages with pop culture. He also curates exhibitions, supports the rising stars of the art world and is an artist himself.



Katharina Grosse's work is held in modern art galleries all over the world, including MoMA and the Pompidou Centre in Paris. Comparable perhaps only to Christo, she is one of the few women on the art scene producing large-scale works—spray-painting buildings, parks and public spaces.



Ballet dancer and choreographer Sasha Waltz will be the first ever female artistic director of the Berlin State Ballet. Her talent has propelled her through companies in New York and Berlin, and her contribution to dance has been recognised through the prestigious Order of Arts and Letters.

COMPANY PROFILE

Beetz Brothers Film Productions produces high-quality and feature-film documentaries for the international market and, according to the leading industry publication Realscreen, is one of the top 100 most important independent production companies worldwide. The company's documentaries focus on history, culture, science, and society, and range from feature-film and television documentaries to docudramas, TV series and cross-media formats. The company's productions compete regularly at international A-festivals and have won numerous respected awards, including three Grimme Awards, the Cinema for Peace Award, three British Independent Awards, the Prix Europa, the HotDocs Filmmakers Award, and the IDFA Special Jury Award. In 2013, the Beetz Brothers' co-production OPEN HEART was even nominated for an Academy Award®, and in 2014, the documentary THE WAGNER FILES was nominated for the International Emmy® Award for Best Arts Programming.

CREDITS

Directors: Julie Kirchhoff, Sylvie Kürsten, Ralf Pleger, Kurt Mayer

Creative Producer: Tuan Lam

Series Concept: Christian Beetz, Georg Tschurtschenthaler

Produced by: Christian Beetz

Commissioning Editors: Dieter Schneider (ZDF|arte), Martin Traxl (ORF), Sharon Nuni (ORF)

PARTNERS

THE ART OF MUSEUMS is a co-production with ZDF in collaboration with arte, ORF and Navigator Film.

The Madrid episode is in co-production with the Museo del Prado. The Paris episode is in co-production with the Musée d'Orsay.

Development supported by Creative Europe MEDIA. Production supported by Fernsehfonds Austria, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg and Filmfonds Wien.

World Sales

Autlook Filmsales GmbH

Spittelberggasse 3/14

1070 Vienna

T +43 (0)72 034 69 34

welcome@autlookfilms.com

Press Contact

Tuan Lam

Gebrüder Beetz Filmproduktion Berlin GmbH & Co. KG

Heinrich-Roller-Straße 15

10405 Berlin

T +49 (0)30 69 56 69 18

F +49 (0)30 69 56 69 15

t.lam@gebrueder-beetz.de

<http://www.gebrueder-beetz.de>

For more information and regular updates, visit

<http://www.gebrueder-beetz.de/produktionen/best-of-museum>