

A F I E L D

THE AFIELD
NETWORK
ANNOUNCES
2023 FELLOWS

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AFIELD was established in 2014 as **an international network of cultural changemakers**. Anchored in the fundamental belief that artists are essential to the fabric of society, AFIELD grants **3 annual fellowships of US\$10,000** to artists and cultural practitioners who have initiated social projects, catalyzing change and empowering their communities.

These **“AFIELD Fellows”** have been selected from 24 nominations through a collective process by the AFIELD network (approx. 50 members). In addition, 2 shortlisted candidates are also invited to join the network as “AFIELD Peers” and will take part in all future events, and gatherings. This year’s peers are Joana Hadjithomas (Lebanon) and Sébastien Thiéry (France).

AFIELD Fellows primarily come from the field of arts and culture : visual and performing arts, literature, cinema, design, architecture, fashion, or gastronomy. While being recognized for their practice, they have also decided to start **a social project, delivering impact in a long-term and tangible way**. Their initiative usually takes the form of a school, a nonprofit organization, a festival, or a small business responding to the needs of a community. The first fellowships were awarded to choreographer Lia Rodrigues and photographer Zanele Muholi.

30 FELLOWS SINCE 2014

30 NATIONALITIES

15 DISCIPLINES

THE THREE 2023 FELLOWS ARE

LOUIS OKE-AGBO (PORTO-NOVO, BÉNIN)
VIE ET SOLIDARITÉ

ELISA SILVA (CARACAS, VENEZUELA)
LA CASA DE TODOS

NECATI SÖNMEZ (ISTANBUL, TURKEY & BERLIN, GERMANY)
MAVI KUŞ DAYANIŞMA

MEET THE FELLOWS

LOUIS OKE-AGBO (PORTO-NOVO, BÉNIN) VIE ET SOLIDARITÉ



Visual artist and photographer Louis Oke-Agbo generates empathy through his practice by exploring social issues relating to history, race, culture, gender and identity. Beside his artistic career, he has devoted himself to **helping people with disabilities by training in the field and creating an NGO**. He believes in photography as a tool for healing, uncovering histories, creating connections, building awareness and nurturing communication between people.

‘Vie et Solidarité’ (Life and Solidarity) Art Therapy Center is an NGO that facilitates the social rehabilitation and professional integration of mentally, physically and visually impaired people, in Porto-Novo, Benin. Established in 2015, **the initiative runs workshops for artistic expression** in dance, music, photography, painting, pottery, and literacy-building. It aims to also raise awareness among medical, social, and cultural communities about Art Therapy as a logical extension of medical treatment.

VIE-SOLIDARITE.ORG

MEET THE FELLOWS

ELISA SILVA (CARACAS, VENEZUELA) LA CASA DE TODOS



American-Venezuelan architect Elisa Silva centers her work around **raising awareness about spatial inequality within urban environments** through innovative public space projects, the integration of informal settlements, and community engagement in rural landscapes. She is the director and founder of Enlace Arquitectura and Enlace Foundation, two established organisations dedicated to promoting urban integration, particularly in the barrios (self-built neighborhoods), through participatory design processes and cultural programs.

‘**La Casa de Todos**’ (Everyone’s House) is a community-led cultural space in the barrio La Palomera, in Caracas, Venezuela. Through workshops and courses in the art, theatre, cooking, dance and more, the initiative aims to create a permanent space for diverse audiences, bridging the gap between barrio and non-barrio residents. It strives to be **an inclusive and participatory model for city development** favouring integration across socioeconomic and geographic borders.

LAPALOMERA.ORG

MEET THE FELLOWS

NECATİ SÖNMEZ (ISTANBUL, TURKEY & BERLIN, GERMANY) MAVI KUŞ DAYANIŞMA



Turkish critic, journalist and documentary filmmaker, Necati Sönmez is **a key figure in the film scene**. Having frequently published writings on culture and politics, regularly served as juror for film festivals, and won several awards, he is perhaps most recognised for having co-founded and programmed the prominent film festival 'Documentarist' since 2008; a destination and community that screens films beyond the taste of main-stream festivals and institutions.

'**Mavi Kuş Dayanışma**' (Blue Bird Solidarity) organises free workshops with artists, activists and educators to create safe spaces and provide psychosocial support for children, in Hatay, Turkey. Launched in February 2023, just after the devastating earthquake that struck southern Turkey and northern Syria, the initiative provides **long-term care and creative support to thousands of children** deprived of education and social services.

[INSTAGRAM.COM/MAVIKUSDAYANISMASI](https://www.instagram.com/MAVIKUSDAYANISMASI)

MEET THE PEERS

JOANA HADJITHOMAS (BEIRUT, LEBANON & PARIS, FRANCE) CINÉMATHÈQUE BEIRUT

Lebanese visual artist and a filmmaker, Joana Hadjithomas, works in an artistic duo with Khalil Joreige, **exploring representation, the construction of imaginaries, and the (re)writing of histories**, through various artistic mediums, including film, photography, and installation. Together, they have written, directed and produced numerous feature- and experimental-films, and co-founded About Productions, winning awards at the most prestigious international film festivals.

‘Cinémathèque Beirut’ serves as a media library, resource center, screening space and hub that aims to become an innovative and dynamic facility dedicated to the art and conservation of cinema in Lebanon. It organizes festivals, screenings, workshops and a program for young audiences. Through research and archival efforts, it addresses the historical neglect of cinema heritage to **create a contemporary archive and preserve digital copies of films** produced in Lebanon between the 1990’s and today.

CINEMATHEQUEBEIRUT.COM

SÉBASTIEN THIÉRY (LYON, FRANCE) NAVIRE AVENIR

Political scientist, educator, and author, Sébastien Thiéry works **at the intersection of art and activism**, and in 2012, with land architect Gilles Clément, he co-founded PEROU, a hub for the exploration of urban resources. The organisation carries out action-research responding to urgent needs due to migration, by recording and creating new ‘gestures of hospitality’ for displaced people in shanty towns and refugee camps.

‘Navire Avenir’ (Ship of the Future) is **the first vessel specifically conceived for ‘mass rescue’ on the high seas**. This 69-meter catamaran has been designed in collaboration with rescue workers, survivors, caregivers, artists, and architects. Its aim is to amplify the impact of those involved in rescue operations. In collaboration with SOS Méditerranée, they are striving for the recognition of ‘acts of hospitality’ as part of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

NAVIREAVENIR.INFO

PREVIOUS FELLOWS

2022

Analida Galindo (Panama)
Yasmeen Lari (Pakistan)
Basel Nasr (Palestine)

2021

Karrabing Film Collective & Elizabeth Povinelli (Australia)
Vivien Sansour (Palestine)
Nirwan Arsuka (Indonesia)

2020

Rojava Film Commune & Sevinaz Evdike (Syria)
Shawon Akand (Bangladesh)
Renata Carvalho (Brazil)

2019

Yazan Khalili (Palestine)
Imani Jacqueline Brown (United States of America)
Jamela Alindogan (Philippines)

2018

Sana Na N'hada (Guinea - Bissau)
Marine Mandrila and Louis Martin (France)
Yabebal Fantaye (Ethiopia)
Ana Vargas (Venezuela)
Filipa Cesar (Germany)

2017

Massimiliano Mollona (Italy)
Zeyno Pekunlu (Turkey)
Samuel Riera (Cuba)

2016

Yassin Al-Haj Saleh (Syria)
Fernando Garcia-Dory (Spain)

2015

Ali Almasri (Jordan)
Hussein Alazaat (Jordan)
Alejandra Ballon Gutierrez (Peru)

2014

Zanele Muholi (South Africa)
Lia Rodrigues (Brazil)

ABOUT AFIELD

AFIELD was conceived in 2014 as a fellowship for social initiatives from arts and culture. AFIELD also provides other resources in the form of discussions, mutual aid, incubation and community building to help fellows deepen and strengthen their work in their particular contexts. Through its active network, AFIELD facilitates mutual support and collaboration across the globe. This network is consulted on matters related to new members election, the annual fellowship and its related programs. It includes important international advisors such as Dora Garcia, Walid Raad, Pio Abad, Binna Choi or Farid Rakun.

In the long run, AFIELD enables discourse, theory and the development of infrastructures for socially-engaged practice, through an expanding set of examples of practice "in action". AFIELD amplifies creative voices and solutions, with the aim to bring arts and culture to the foreground of social experimentation.

AFIELDORG
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