

THE NATIONAL ARTS CLUB

Dear Members,

Oh, what a year! A year where we finally made peace with QR codes, remote learning led to the cancellation of “snow days” in New York City schools and we whiplashed from Meghan and Harry to #freebritney.

This year has felt a little like that experience you sometimes have waiting for a train. It finally pulls in and you see a roulette wheel of full car, full car, full car and then strangely... an empty car? Believing you have found the oasis in the MTA desert, you enter to discover the car filled with last night's party remnants and that essential MTA essence. A transitory transit mirage of hope, dashed. That's sort of what life feels like right now. So, here's to hoping that we return to life as we knew it (complete with packed subway cars) soon and that the year ahead comes up a winner.

Despite all, many good things have happened this year and to commemorate, we have assembled, for the second year, our “Best of the National Arts Club” list. A highly opinionated and unscientific survey of all the best, most interesting and unusual events at, and related to, the Club this year.

1. Most popular online programs

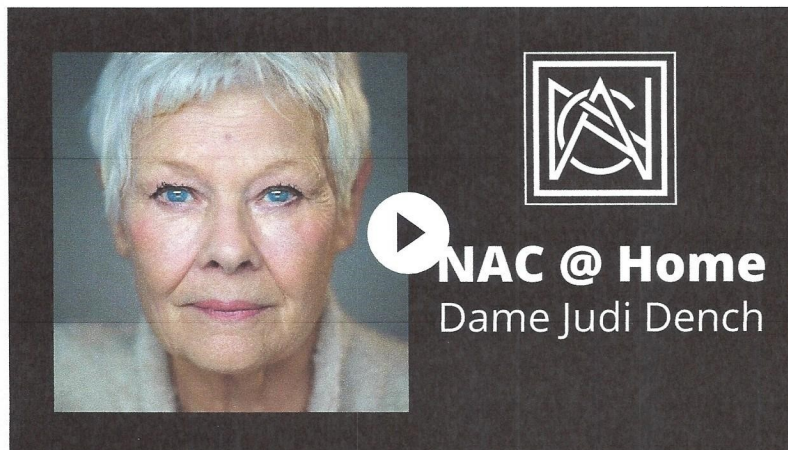
In a year when the Club provided over 80 free programs online, reaching 120,000 people in more than 40 countries it was our programs around theater and archeology that reached our broadest audiences. Enjoy (again) our three most popular programs of the year with Dame Judi Dench, Sir Ian McKellen and visit the UNESCO World Heritage site of Hadrian's Villa in Tivoli, outside Rome.

[1. Dame Judi Dench in Conversation](#)

[2. Sir Ian McKellen in Conversation](#)

[3. Visiting Hadrian's Villa](#)

As we move to the year ahead, we remain committed to providing at least a third of our programs online, while sharing the rest in person live from Gramercy Park for our Members and the public.



2. The Most Popular Cocktail and Meal

Did you know that our most popular meal is the sirloin with fries and the classic martini is our most popular cocktail? Two years ago it was salmon and a glass of Sancerre. What does that say about our let the good times roll Members? In a year that saw us welcome the first (and second) female Executive Chef of any club in New York, we're thrilled to have Chef Lynn providing us with some amazing food and special in-person presentations. Did you catch the holiday cookie making and Egg Nog class or how to make a perfect tangy, sweet cranberry sauce?



3. The Most Popular Images posted on our Instagram

We're pretty social and after a couple of Tim's martinis we're everybody's. Here are a few other things that are also popular – our top three images on Instagram this year.

#1 - [Congratulations, Christian McBride!](#)

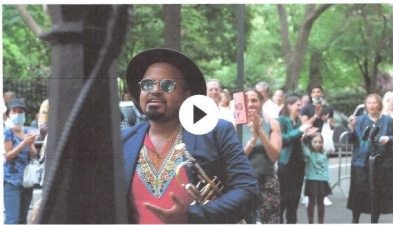
#2 - [Grand Gallery shot by Architectural Digest's Durston Saylor](#)

#3 - [View from Gramercy Park, circa 1910](#)



4. Best outdoor performances on the Stoop

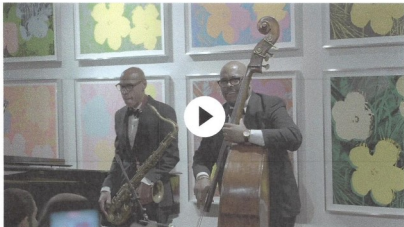
In a year that included a half dozen live performances from our front stoop, it was the New Orleans sounds of Alphonso Horne that got everyone moving as we enjoyed a return to summer.



In recognition of the Club's commitment to jazz, access and artists, the Department of Cultural Affairs has provided the Club with a grant to continue this program in the coming year.

5. Most amazing Jazz event in history

Ok, perhaps that is a little hyperbolic, but the Medal of Honor ceremony for jazz musician Christian McBride was one of those special nights, where the stars aligned. With jazz greats, Joshua Redman and Ron Carter, joining other performers and stars, it was a spectacular celebration of an incredible musician. The event, supported by Member Arthur Barnes, featured jazz performances, moving speeches and the presentation of the Medal of Honor (with four diamonds placed in the medal to make it even more special). Have a look at this exuberant performance of "The Sunny Side of the Street" by Christian McBride and Joshua Redman. I dare you not to sing.



6. Best Club reaching out to the World

Did you know that we have more than 45,000 social media followers? That's not all, the media are really starting to notice changes at the Club—we've been covered more than 100 times in 2021! Here are a few links to stories about the Club that you may've missed:

- [The Art Newspaper - National Arts Club opens new galleries renovated during the pandemic](#)
- [CBS New York - Protest Art On Display At Manhattan's National Arts Club](#)
- [No. 3 Magazine - New York's National Arts Club Hits Refresh](#)
- [Playbill - Matthew Freeman Named Winner of 2021 Kesselring Prize](#)
- [am New York - Elegant and contemporary: National Arts Club exhibits Andy Warhol](#)

As a result of increased interest in the Club, [we now have new reciprocal relationships with Clubs in Dubai, Gleneagles \(Scotland\), Mumbai and Hong Kong](#). Let's get traveling again!

7. Best Dressed at the Club

Club Members really know how to dress up. While some of us (ok, me, but only while exercising) reverted to MAMIL (Middle Aged Man in Lycra) attire when not at the Club, others really made an effort to look spectacular or just plain unusual. From the Halloween Ball to the Bonnet Bash and beyond, Club Members really look good.

Top photo: Gina Gershorn, Arthur Barnes; Middle photo: (L to R) Christian McBride, Alice Palmisano, David Greene; Bottom photo: Halloween Ball revelers.



Lest you feel left out, this year we also [partnered with downtown designer Timo Weiland](#) to provide fashionable guest jackets for our visitors. I even noticed that some Members "forgot" their jackets so that they could get a chance to try on one of the chic jackets. I can't blame them, they look great.

8. Best Reason for Governor Tilden to Come Back to the Grand Gallery

Did you know that following Governor Tilden's defeat in the 1876 Presidential election that he turned the Grand Gallery space from a chandelier filled ballroom to a more somber dining room, with

life? Over 140 years later, we've given Governor Tilden a reason to come back. With a stunning renovation by renowned architect (and Member) [David Scott Parker](#), financial support from over 80 Members and other funders, and an on time and on budget summer sprint, President Alice Palmisano, Council Member Carina Rivera and Assembly Member Harvey Epstein, and our Members inaugurated our new Grand Gallery and gorgeously restored double door in early September.

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I've even been told that the ghost of Tilden's niece (who occasionally wanders the rooms of the mansion during full moons and post martini specials) approves.



9. Most popular exhibition EVER

It was the iconic artist and celebrity, Andy Warhol who said "good business is the best art" so it's no surprise that our Andy Warhol exhibition of over 70 works from the Bank of America collection proved to be our most successful exhibition ever. From our opening week activities, hosting Members, the community, arts leaders, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and Governor Kathy Hochul, we had over 7,000 visitors to the exhibition filling our Grand and Lower Galleries.



10. The Five Lessons of 2021

1. Practicing gratitude daily never goes out of style
2. "Normal" doesn't exist
3. Alone does not equal lonely
4. The person who invented autocorrect should burn in hell
5. The National Arts Club has the best Members

What a year. Thank you to President, Alice Palmisano, our Board of Governors, our staff, our arts committees and you, our wonderful Members. Here's to a bright and special year ahead.