



After 15 months of darkness, live music returned. In New York, Foo Fighters reopened Madison Square Garden. Photograph by Tim Barber for The New York Times

## Our Favorite Arts Photos of 2021

These are the pictures that defined an unpredictable year across the worlds of art, music, dance and performance.

By **Laura O'Neill, Jolie Ruben and Jessie Wender**

A crush of vaccinated fans pumping their wristbanded hands in the air as rock music returned to Madison Square Garden after 460 days. A masked standing ovation as “Hadestown” became one of the first musicals back on Broadway. A sweaty, pulsing Brooklyn party — social, not distanced.

It was a year of reopenings, with an almost palpable darkness-to-light feeling in its giddier moments, many of which were captured by photographers for The New York Times.

There were revelatory portraits: a regal André De Shields taking a break from “King Lear”; the pioneering conceptual artist Lorraine O’Grady getting her first retrospective at age 86; the provocative artist and performer Martine Gutierrez on the streets of New York City; Daniel Craig just as his license to kill was expiring.

There were ambitious statements: Asian and Asian American photographers explored what love looks like in a time of hate. And there were some images that simply mesmerized or delighted: a horseback ride in California, steam clouding Lower Manhattan, a snail named Velveeta surrounded by miniature groceries.

Now — as 2021 ends dimly, with our photographers once more adjusting their apertures to the circumstances — let’s look back at some of the powerful images from a year to remember. MICHAEL COOPER



At age 86, the pioneering conceptual artist Lorraine O'Grady had her first retrospective, in March at the Brooklyn Museum. Lelanie Foster for The New York Times

She was fine art on a gallery wall. I remember taking a few test shots then showing her before photographing on film — her response: “Ohhhh, I look GOOOD!”

— Lelanie Foster on photographing Lorraine O'Grady