

ART | 5 DAYS AGO | BY [PEI-RU KEH](#)

# Jeppe Hein's global art action launches in New York

Opened at the UN headquarters and Central Park, the temporary public installation *Breathe with Me* invites audiences to create a piece of art together by painting their breath in the form of two blue downward brushstrokes

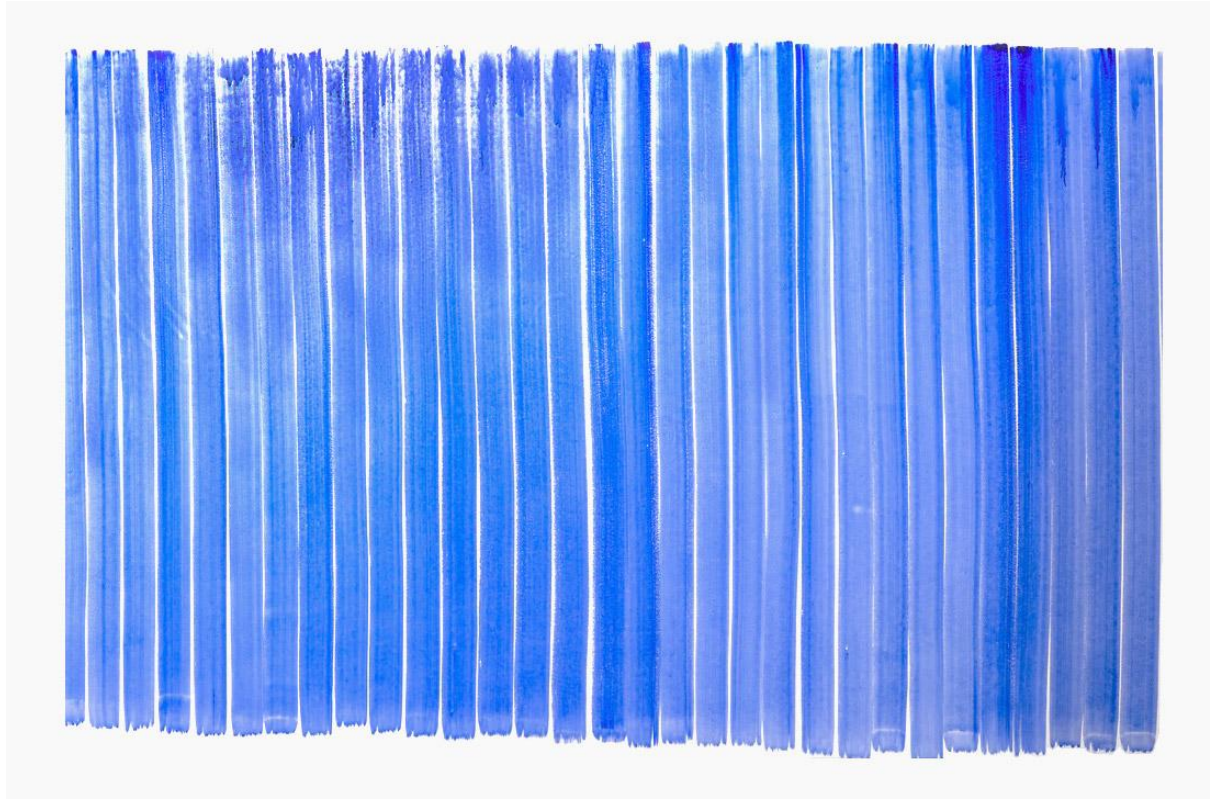


Visualisation of *Breathe with Me* in Central Park, New York City, by Studio Jeppe Hein. *Courtesy of Jeppe Hein and ART2030*

A fundamental breathing exercise is poised to become a global art movement, thanks to the efforts of the Danish-born, Berlin-based artist Jeppe Hein. Hein, who began the practice of conscious breathing about ten years ago after he suffered an emotional breakdown, has been steadily incorporating the technique in his work – first through a series of *Breathing Watercolours*, where the lengths and depths of his breathing guide the execution of his paint strokes, and subsequently, inviting visitors to his exhibitions to do the same.

‘After just two exhales of drawing these strokes, they would just look at me and say, ‘I have never felt my breath like this in my life,’ Hein recalls. ‘I’d been doing it for five to six years on my own, but to see other people reacting very strongly, when many

just take for granted that we're breathing, really made an impact on me.'



*Breathing Watercolour*, by Jeppe Hein. Photography: Frédéric Boudin. Courtesy of the artist


Inspired by that reaction, Hein unveiled *Breathe With Me*, a weeklong global art action in New York that invited audiences from around the world to paint their individual breaths. Launched together with Art 2030, a non-profit organisation that works with art to inspire action for a sustainable future, and achieve the UN Global Goals, *Breathe With Me* kicked off at the United Nations' Youth Climate Summit over the weekend, with the participation of dignitaries and diplomats who painted their breath on a undulating canvas wall weaving its way through the lobby of the UN headquarters.

Painted in ultramarine blue, which the artist chose for its a universal appeal, each linear brushstroke represents the exhale of an individual's breath. Largely variable, due to each participant's height and lung capacity amongst others, the result is a wonderfully diverse set of simple lines that powerfully stand together as a whole.

The UN presentation is to be followed by a larger installation in Central Park opening today – the first major public art installation being staged in the park since Christo and Jeanne Claude's *The Gates* in 2005. From 25 – 27 September, *Breathe With Me* will welcome public participants to paint their breath with brushes and paint supplied by Hein and Art 2030 over six large canvas waves, spanning 600ft, that will wind their way through the heart of the park.

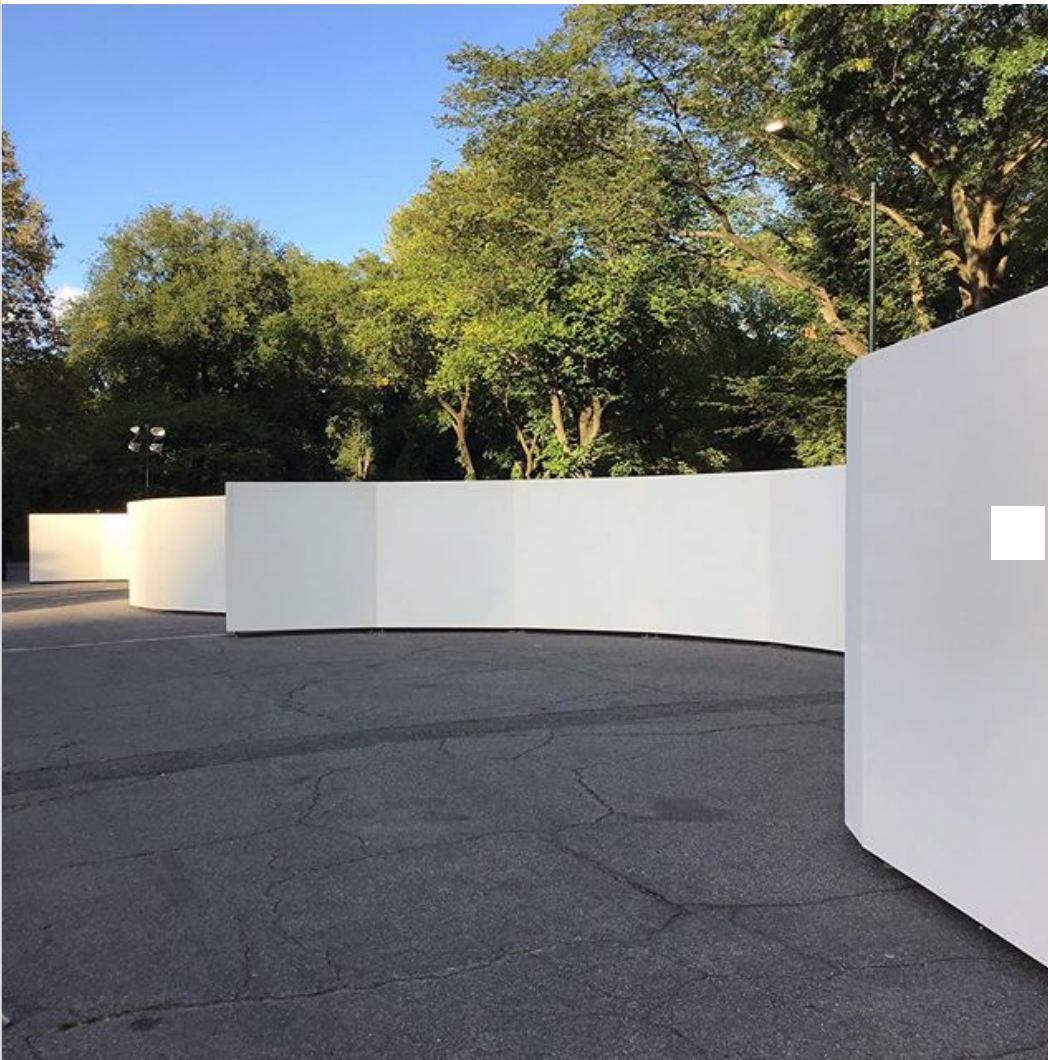


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*Breathe With Me* takes the form of *Breathing Watercolours* painted by the public that visualise the invisible – our breath and the resulting relation between us – reminding us to cooperate if we want to share this world together, today and in the future,' Hein explains. 'Ideally, it will encourage people to conspire, as in Latin "conspirare" means to breathe together.'

In the planning for over two years, *Breathe With Me* is a worldwide initiative that knows few limits. In addition to the two installations in New York, Hein has created a downloadable *Breathe With Me* manual that can be accessed by individuals, organisations, institutions, schools and communities around the world. Intended as an inspirational kit that can be subject to interpretation and achievable with whatever materials are available to hand, the art piece has already attracted great interest from technology companies, museums and educational bodies worldwide.

Hein has also enlisted a group of ambassadors, who he calls First Breathers, to drum up support for the project. By documenting the participation of figures ranging from architect Bjarke Ingels to artists Tomás Saraceno and Pipilotti Rist, musician Michael Stipe and chef Daniel Humm, in the form of short, intimate videos, he proves just how simple and impactful the act of conscious breathing can be. ✨

#### INFORMATION

'Breathe with Me', 25 - 27 September: [breathewithme.world](http://breathewithme.world)

#### ADDRESS

Central Park Center Road  
Frisbee Hill (located between the Sheep Meadow and Naumberg Bandshell)

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