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Little Sun Launches *Fast Forward*, A Series of Short Films Exploring Artists' Dreams of a Regenerative World



Image: From Jessica Segall's "Say When," highlighting our ability to manifest a world powered by the sun.

Commissioned and produced by Little Sun, and stewarded by Co-Founder Olafur Eliasson, the series features five short films from artists from Ethiopia, Senegal, and the U.S

July 15, 2021 —The artist-founded renewable energy organization **Little Sun** has launched ***Fast Forward***, a series of short film artworks exploring artists' dreams of a regenerative world. Established by artist Olafur Eliasson, the nonprofit organization has commissioned five artists and artist collaboratives from Ethiopia, Senegal, and the United States—where Little Sun operates health, education, livelihood, and citizen engagement programs—to imagine a regenerative, renewably-powered future and our capacity to create it. A continuation of Little Sun's expanding cultural work to engage creatives in climate action, *Fast Forward* involves the voices, perspectives, and work of over 300 people globally and is stewarded by an advisory board of leaders in art and sustainability. The series, hosted on Little Sun's website and social media channels, is also available to view on arts film channel **NOWNESS**.

Fast Forward turns an often data-driven and technically heavy conversation surrounding the global energy crisis into an open, intimate dialogue, creating accessible stories and new motivation for global change. The series of film artworks from **Ezra Wube**, ***Ghost of a Dream***, **Naod Lemma**, **Jessica Segall**, and **Selly Raby Kane**, explore a future that is fair and regenerative, realized through global connectivity and the centering of historically marginalized groups. The project intends to reframe the prevailing political rhetoric on climate change, instead grounding the narrative in the lived experiences and voices of global citizens.

The series opens with *Possible World*, an animated film from Ethiopian artist **Ezra Wube**. Inspired by interviews with over 100 individuals across Ethiopia—from teachers, brokers, and farmers to students and soldiers—the project realizes subjects’ dreams for a regenerative world in painted animation. Beginning with existing community practices, Wube presents the collective’s vision to audiences as a model for a shared future. Of *Fast Forward’s* potential to spur climate action, Wube said: “Artists can be highly perceptive of the world, allowing them to predict future outcomes. They can contribute creative endeavors to tackle challenges. Through their emotive reflections, artists can translate and communicate abstract ideas such as scientific statistical data into a relatable experience.”

“Fast Forward presents a poignant vision for a future grounded in equity and made possible by shared social responsibility and political will. The films embolden audiences to expand their notion of the possible,” said Little Sun CEO **John Heller**: “We believe that art can create possibilities for climate action, inspiring global connectivity, promoting positive action, and enhancing citizen engagement. Little Sun’s work with artists helps us imagine a regenerative future that we can’t yet fathom.”

Ghost of a Dream, an artist collective comprised of American artists **Adam Eckstrom** and **Lauren Was**, presents *Aligned by the Sun*, which compiles footage of the sun captured by artists in over 200 countries and autonomous zones across the world. The project is an unprecedented collaboration among international artists, underscoring, said the artists, “a singular truth: that we inhabit a single planet that is sustained by the light and warmth of the sun.” *Aligned by the Sun* invites viewers to imagine a future charted by our interconnectedness. “We hope that by focusing on the sun—a resource to which we have universal access, and which is unrestrained by our artificial borders—the film will inspire us to reflect on our shared humanity and galvanize action against global climate change and climate injustice,” said Eckstrom and Was.

The focus of the series shifts again to Sub-Saharan Africa. *Daregot* from Ethiopian artist **Naod Lemma** follows a family living in a community without electricity in Awabel, Ethiopia, as they prepare and eat dinner. After the meal, footage of world leaders discussing climate change and energy poverty is screened for the family for the first time. Lemma records their reactions; the result is an unsettling portrait of the alienation of vulnerable communities from the global rhetoric on climate change, not least the 800 million still without electricity, and the glaring disconnect between decision makers and those most significantly impacted by their decision-making.

American artist **Jessica Segall’s** *Say When* is set throughout the United States’ Solar Energy Zones—250,000 acres of public land designated for solar infrastructure that is almost entirely unused. There, Segall walks through the desert landscape holding a mirror to the sky, personifying a heliostat, a centuries-old technology that generates energy from the sun. *Say When* reminds us of our ability to manifest a world powered by the sun in the Solar Energy Zones and far beyond.

Advisory Board member **Seble Samuel** said of the films: “The artworks span the world, juxtaposing rhetorics of scarcity with imagery of abundance, tracing our connectivity by the rhythms of the boundless sun. The pieces dare to counter the mainstream bombardment of planetary dystopias by echoing ancient voices of planetary healing and collective endurance.” A geographer and climate justice campaigner, Samuel serves as Global Cities Campaign Lead at The Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative, an organization accelerating the global transition to renewable energy.

Finally, Senegalese artist **Selly Raby Kane** presents *Jant Yi*, a fantasy film that culminates in a real-world call to action. Set in a dystopian Dakar, in which humans must generate electricity from energy expended with their own bodies, *Jant Yi* invites audiences to reconsider their conception of the living and to inhabit the imaginary as a space for sowing potential futures.

The project attempts to tackle the “imagination gap” in the global effort to stop climate change, said Advisory Board member and Chief of Staff at Grist, **Caroline Saunders**: “For too long, the prevailing narrative around climate change has been ‘it’s too late.’ But that is far from the truth, and we need new narratives to inspire action on the scale that is needed.” Saunders continued: “That is where artists come in. By bringing to life what a more sustainable and just future could look like, these artists are writing a new story of possibility

that shines a light on a path toward a better future.” The five films comprising *Fast Forward* will also inform an experimental curriculum for students aged 16–18 in Ethiopia, Senegal, and the United States, to be rolled out in September 2021.

Led by Heller, Little Sun designs and delivers clean energy solutions to communities in sub-Saharan Africa. The nonprofit organization has to date enabled 3.2 million people to access clean, affordable light, reduced 800,000 metric tons of CO₂ emissions and saved households living beyond the energy grid \$150 million in energy expenses. *Fast Forward* comes as part of Little Sun’s growing cultural program to catalyze climate action through creative discourse and informed decision making. Recent commissions include an open-source digital guide, *Reach for the Sun*, illustrated by *New Yorker* cover artist Diana Ejaita, for individuals and organizations to the key ten steps required to create a solar powered world.

The films can be viewed on www.littlesun.org/fastforward

The *Fast Forward* film series will be screened at Governor’s Island by the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council (LMCC) as part of the [Take Care](#) public program series on Saturday, July 17th from 12PM–5PM. Exhibitions and presentations are free and open to all. COVID-19 health protocols will be in place for visitors.

Fast Forward Advisory Board

Jaime Yaya Barry, Director of Environmental Projects, [Le Korsa](#)

Olafur Eliasson, [Artist](#) and Co-Founder of [Little Sun](#)

Marie Hélène Pereira, Director of Programs, [RAW Material Company](#)

Bird Runningwater, Senior Director of Indigenous Program and DEI, [Sundance Institute](#)

Seble Samuel, Global Cities Campaign Lead, [The Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative](#)

Caroline Saunders, Chief of Staff, [Grist](#)

Rakeb Sile, Co-Founder, [Addis Fine Art](#)

Adam Vaughan, Chief Reporter, [New Scientist](#)

-ENDS-

“If we are to take meaningful action to protect our planet, we need positive, hopeful visions of the world to come. Art can help us conceive of alternative, more-than-human approaches to the climate crisis. Little Sun’s *Fast Forward* film series offers a vital new space for artists to reimagine the future.”

Olafur Eliasson, Artist and Co-Founder of Little Sun

About Little Sun

Established in 2012 by artist Olafur Eliasson and engineer Frederik Ottesen, Little Sun is a nonprofit organization working to deliver affordable clean energy and inspire climate action. Little Sun distributes energy tools, designs and implements renewable energy programs, and leads citizen engagement campaigns globally; partnering with solar experts, artists, companies, governments, communities, and nonprofit organizations to achieve universal access to clean energy.

Little Sun works primarily in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Senegal, Rwanda, and Zambia, drawing on the expertise of in-country staff. Through close partnerships with local organizations, Little Sun operates in Nigeria, Tanzania, Kenya, and South Africa. Little Sun has offices in New York, Berlin, Addis Ababa, and Lusaka.

www.littlesun.org

About Ghost of a Dream

Ghost of a Dream is the collaborative of artists Adam Eckstrom and Lauren Was. They make work about people's hopes and dreams using the ephemera that is created trying to attain them. Ghost of a Dream has received grants from the Rauschenberg Foundation and the Joan Mitchell Foundation and was a 2018 Facebook Artist in Residence.

About Selly Raby Kane

Selly Raby Kane is an artist and fashion designer based in Dakar. Her work is a tribute to Senegalese mythology and Dakar's hidden stories. In 2017 Kane was appointed the first external Creative Director of Design Indaba, and in 2019 *Time Magazine* named her a Next Generation Leader. Her film *Tang Jër* recently won the Grand National Prize at Dakar Court Film Festival.

About Naod Lemma

Naod Lemma is a photographer and filmmaker based in Addis Ababa. His works depict a society undergoing deep transformation by capturing ordinary, almost invisible details of his city and the way people inhabit it. Lemma has several times exhibited at Addis Foto Fest, and his work recently has appeared alongside Aida Muluneh's photography in the exhibition *Homebound* at The Africa Institute, UAE.

About Jessica Segall

Jessica Segall is a video artist, performer, and sculptor from Brooklyn. Hostile and threatened landscapes are sites for her work, where she plays with both the risk of engaging with the environment and the vulnerability of the environment itself. Segall has received grants from the Pollock Krasner Foundation and New York Foundation for the Arts and attended residencies at MacDowell and Skowhegan.

About Ezra Wube

Ezra Wube is a mixed-media artist raised in Ethiopia and currently living and working in Brooklyn. Wube's work references the notion of past and present, the constant changing of place, and the dialogical tensions between *here* and *there*. Wube is a veteran of Times Square's Midnight Moment series, and his exhibition *City Stories* was recently on view at The High Line, NYC.

About NOWNESS

A global video channel screening the best in culture, NOWNESS is a movement for creative excellence in storytelling celebrating the extraordinary of every day. Launched in 2010, NOWNESS' unique programming strategy has established it as the goto source of inspiration and influence across art, design, fashion, beauty, music, food, and travel. Their curatorial expertise and award-winning approach to storytelling is unparalleled. They with exceptional talent, and both established and emerging filmmakers, which connects their audience to emotional and sensorial stories designed to provoke inspiration and debate. NOWNESS launched a Chinese-language site in 2012 and NOWNESS ASIA in 2020. Since 2013, their videos are available in up to 10 languages—including English, Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Spanish, and Russian (simply turn on Subtitles on their player).

www.nowness.com



Media Contacts

FITZ & CO

Elizabeth McNamara | emcnamara@fitzandco.art | +1 (646) 589-0926

May Mansour | mmansour@fitzandco.art | +1 (646) 589-0923

Matthew Tom | mtom@fitzandco.art | +1 (646) 589-0945