

How To with John Wilson Wins the 2021 Brendan Gill Prize

Award to be presented on Sept. 21 at Museum of the Moving Image

(September 7, 2022 | New York, New York) The Municipal Art Society of New York (MAS) has named filmmaker John Wilson as the winner of the 2021 Brendan Gill Prize for his HBO television series [How To with John Wilson](#). The 2021 Prize deliberations were postponed last year because of COVID-19.

“We are delighted to honor John Wilson with the 2021 Brendan Gill Prize,” said MAS President Elizabeth Goldstein. “Equal parts hilarious and heartfelt, *How To* captures the city’s eccentricities and celebrates its unique character in a way that few works of art manage to do. The series deftly conveys what Brendan Gill himself called ‘the energy coming up out of the sidewalks.’”

The award will be presented at [Museum of the Moving Image \(MoMI\)](#) on the evening of **Wednesday, September 21**. As part of the festivities, Wilson and members of the Brendan Gill Prize Jury will participate in an engaging conversation about the show, which captures the spirit and unique characters of New York City. Refreshments and light bites will be served.

[Learn more about the event >](#)

Members of the press interested in attending may contact Meaghan Baron, MAS Vice President for Communications & Public Affairs, at mbaron@mas.org.

About *How To with John Wilson*

John Wilson, documentary filmmaker and self-described “anxious New Yorker,” made his HBO debut as writer, director, cameraman, executive producer and narrator in 2020 with “How To with John Wilson.” The second season debuted in 2021 to critical acclaim and the show has been renewed for its third season at HBO. The series is a uniquely hilarious odyssey of self-discovery and cultural observation, as Wilson covertly and obsessively films the lives of his fellow New Yorkers while attempting to give everyday advice on relatable topics. The awkward contradictions of modern life are eased by Wilson’s candid, unpolished commentary and his distinct take on a range of deceptively simple topics. Building upon Wilson’s previously released “how to” short films, the episodes take wildly unexpected turns, but are grounded in John’s refreshing honesty.

Following his graduation from college, John Wilson took an unorthodox path by spending a year working for a private investigator, an education that inspired his “documentary memoir” shooting style. Equal parts ethnography and autobiography, his films are all shot from the first-person perspective and underscored by his distinct, wry narration style. While Wilson’s anxieties flared amongst large film crews, he found his groove making hilarious “how-to” videos that he released for free on the internet. His short films “Los Angeles Plays New York” and “The Road to Magnasanti” were official selections of the 2016 and 2017 New York Film Festival.

[Learn more about the show >](#)

[View trailer for *How To with John Wilson, Season One* >](#)

About the Brendan Gill Prize

The Brendan Gill prize was established in 1987 by fellow MAS board members Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, Helen Tucker, and Margot Wellington to honor the creator of a book, essay, musical composition, play, painting, sculpture, architectural design, film, or choreographic piece that best captures, “the energy, vigor and verve of our incomparable city.” Past recipients include Ang Lee, Louis Malle, Sufjan Stevens, Kara Walker, and Lin-Manuel Miranda.

This annual cash award is administered by MAS and named for longtime New Yorker theater and architecture critic, champion preservationist, and civic booster Brendan Gill. The recipient is chosen by the Brendan Gill Jury from nominations submitted to MAS by the general public.

Brendan Gill Prize Jury

- **John Haworth**, (Brendan Gill Prize Jury Chair), Senior Executive Emeritus, National Museum of the American Indian/NY, Smithsonian Institution
- **Randall Bourscheidt**, Director, Archive of New York City Cultural Policy
- **Roz Chast**, Cartoonist, *The New Yorker*
- **Patricia Cruz**, Artistic Director and CEO, Harlem Stage
- **Gail Gregg**, Artist and Journalist
- **Cassim Shepard**, Urbanist, Filmmaker, and Author
- **Laurie Beckelman**, Not-for-profit Consultant

[Learn more about the Brendan Gill Prize >](#)

About the Municipal Art Society of New York

The Municipal Art Society of New York (MAS) lifts up the voices of the people in the debates that shape New York’s built environment and leads the way toward a more livable city from sidewalk to skyline. MAS envisions a future in which all New Yorkers share in the richness of city life—where growth is balanced, character endures, and a resilient future is secured. For more information, visit mas.org