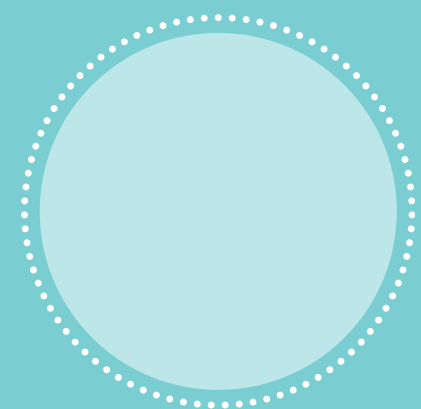


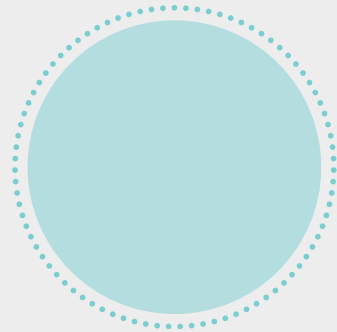


Tuberculosis & art

When disease shapes art



World TB Day 2026



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the European Union**

These visuals are based upon work from COST Action ADVANCE-TB, CA21164, supported by COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology). COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology) is a funding agency for research and innovation networks. Our Actions help connect research initiatives across Europe and enable scientists to grow their ideas by sharing them with their peers. This boosts their research, career and innovation. www.cost.eu

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World TB Day 2026



Tuberculosis: more than a disease

For centuries, tuberculosis has shaped how people live and how they create.

It influences art, literature, and music, leaving a lasting mark on culture.



When illness was romanticized

In the 19th century, tuberculosis was linked to beauty, fragility, and artistic genius.

LA TRAVIATA

Libretto di Francesco Maria Piave

MUSICA DI

GIUSEPPE VERDI

Cavaliere della Legion d'onore

DALL'EDITORE **TITO DI GIO. RICORDI** DEDICATA

in segno di stima ed amicizia all'egregio signor Dottore

CESARE VIGNA



Riduzione per CANTO e PIANOFORTE
di **Luigi Truzzi**

OPERA COMPLETA
P. 1.

Proprietà dell'Editore che si riserva il diritto della stampa di tutte le riduzioni, traduzioni e composizioni sopra quest'Opera. — Reg. all'Arch. dell'Unione.

MILANO

DALL' I. R. STABILIMENTO NAZIONALE PRIVILEGIATO DI
TITO DI GIO. RICORDI

Contrada degli Omenoni N. 1720 e sotto il portico a fianco dell'I. R. Teatro alla Scala.

FIRENZE, Ricordi e Jouhaud. — MENDRISIO, C. Pozzi, che ne ha fatto regular deposito al Consiglio di Stato. — PARIGI, Blanchet.

In works like La Traviata, illness was portrayed with elegance and tragedy.



Behind the myth: real lives

Behind every romanticized story of tuberculosis were **real people**: artists, writers, and performers whose lives were **shaped by the disease**.



John Keats

Poet

His poems had been in publication for less than four years when he died of tuberculosis at the age of 25.



Frédéric Chopin

Composer and virtuoso pianist

He was diagnosed with and treated for tuberculosis throughout his lifetime.

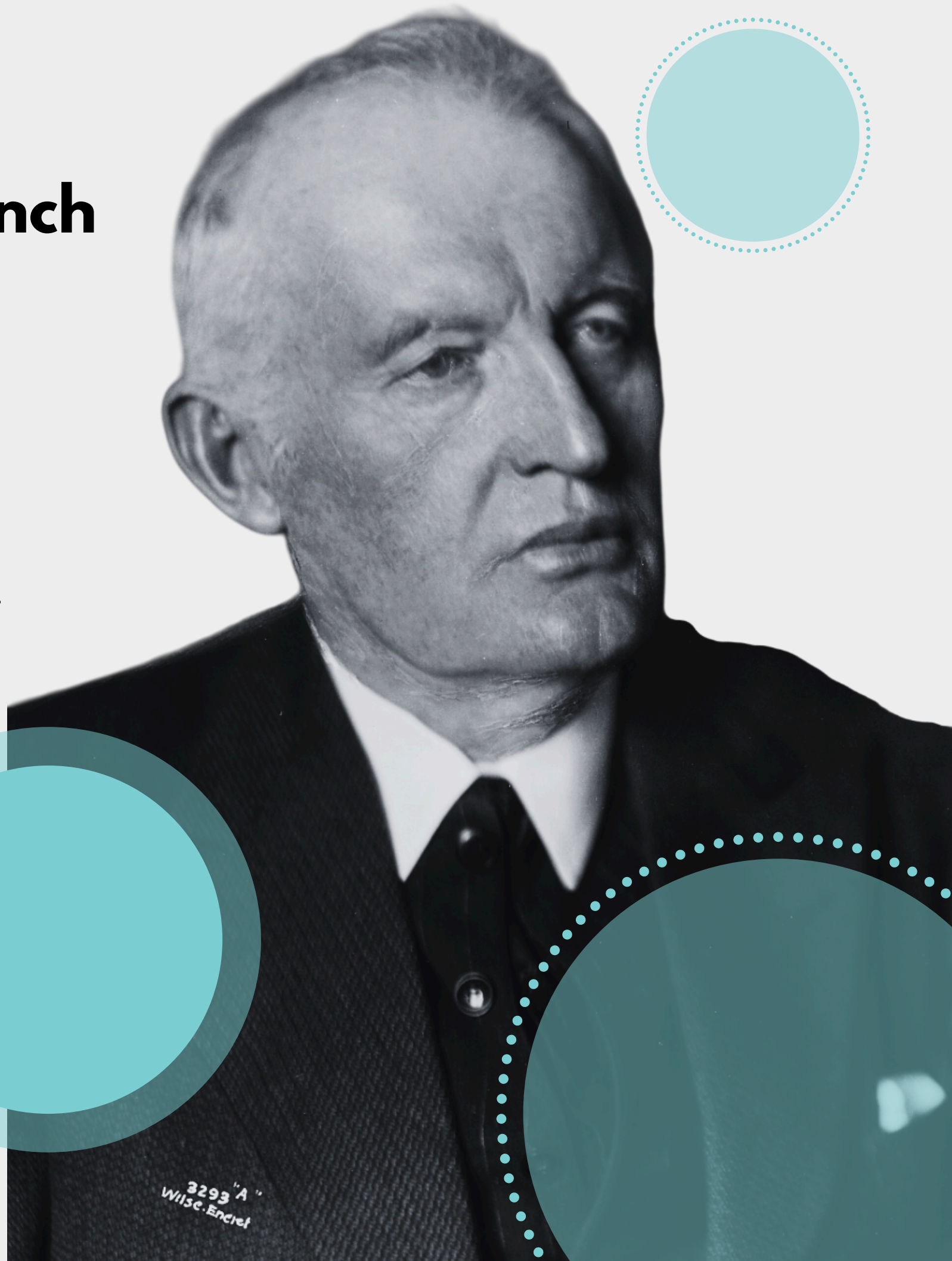




Edvard Munch

Painter

He lost his mother and sister to tuberculosis which impacted his work.

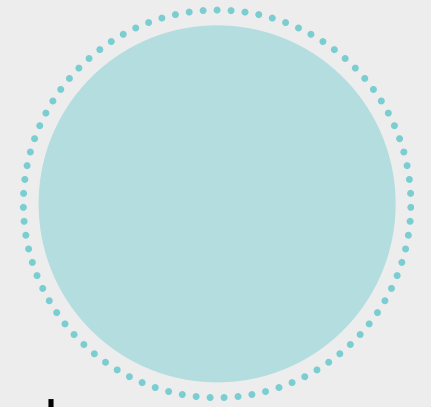


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3293 "A"
Wisc. Enclaf



Anton Chekhov



Playwright and doctor

He would not admit his tuberculosis to his family or his friends.



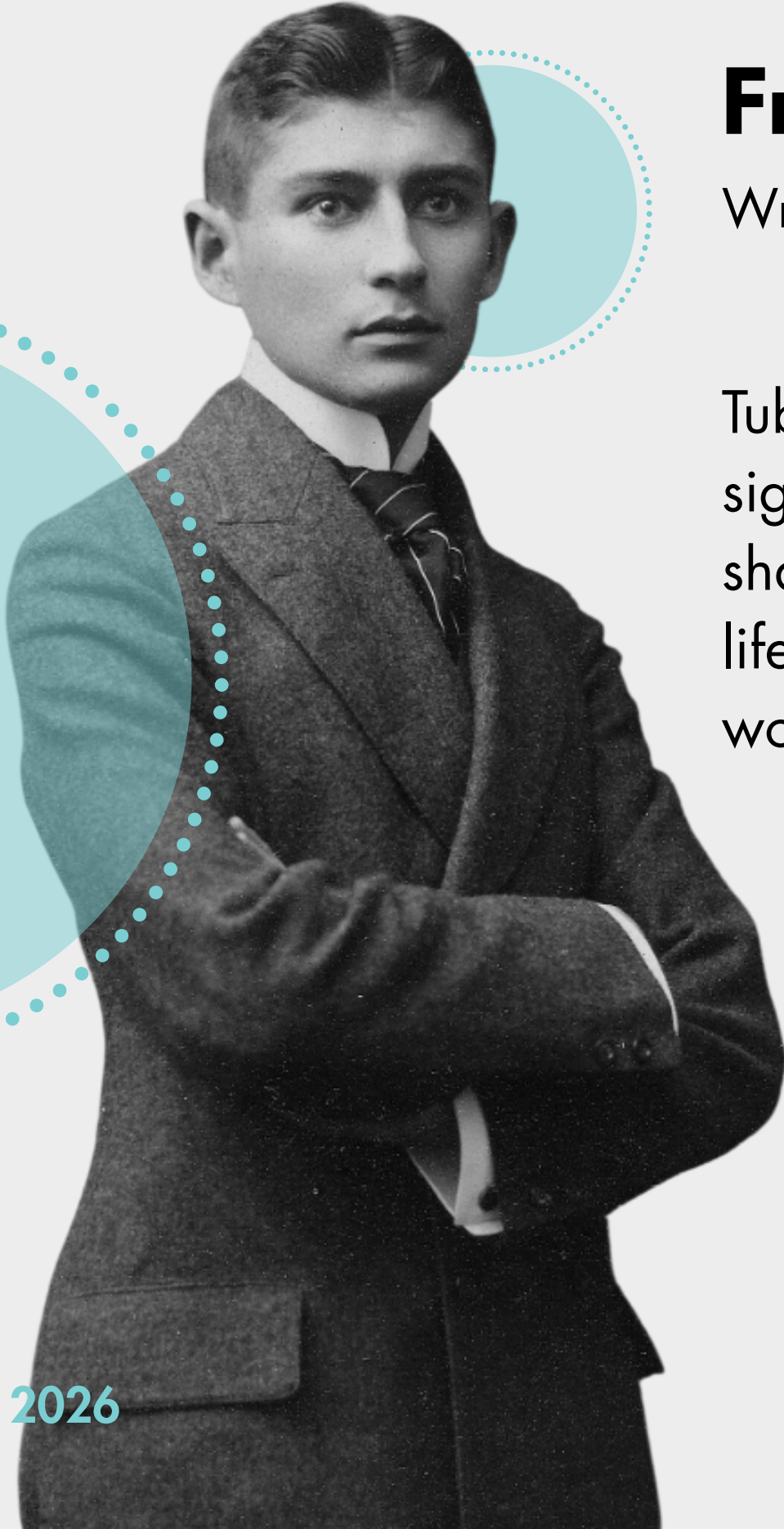


Amedeo Modigliani

Painter and sculptor

Suffered from tuberculosis for most of his adult life.

He hid his condition to avoid social stigma.



Franz Kafka

Writer and novelist

Tuberculosis significantly shaped his later life and literary works.



Vivien Leigh

Actress

Battled chronic, recurrent tuberculosis for over two decades.





Brontë Sisters

Charlotte, Emily & Anne

Poets and novelists

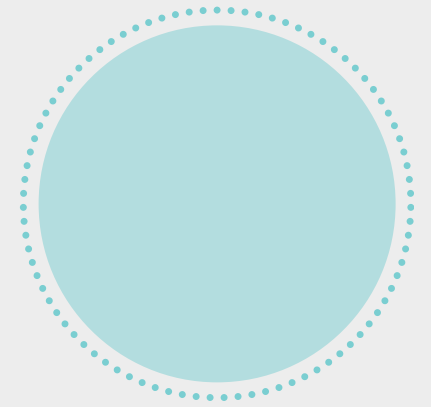
Each sister's story is a reminder of tuberculosis' human toll, and how it shaped literature forever.



Frances Hodgson Burnett

Novelist and playwright

Her elder son, Lionel,
died of tuberculosis,
which caused a
relapse of the
depression she had
struggled with for
much of her life.





Cat Stevens

Singer-songwriter and musician

Contracted tuberculosis in 1969.

"To go from the show business environment and find you are in hospital, getting injections day in and day out, and people around you are dying, it certainly changes your perspective. I got down to thinking about myself. It seemed almost as if I had my eyes shut."





Paulina Siniatkina

Artist, activist, tuberculosis survivor, and advocate

Paulina works with a form of autobiographical reflective research. Her socially-oriented practice is driven by her own survival of tuberculosis in 2015 and is dedicated to fighting stigma and rethinking what is considered conventional.





Tuberculosis is not just history

Today, tuberculosis is
preventable and curable. Yet it
still affects millions worldwide
shaping their lives.