



**MIT LIST VISUAL ARTS CENTER ANNOUNCES
HELEN FRANKENTHALER FOUNDATION AS LEAD FOUNDATION SPONSOR
IN SUPPORT OF ARTIST JOAN JONAS AND THE U.S. PAVILION**

Major Gift of \$200,000 Brings Fundraising Total to \$1.5 Million

CAMBRIDGE, MA, March 10, 2015—The MIT List Visual Arts Center announces that the Helen Frankenthaler Foundation has pledged a lead foundation gift of \$200,000 in support of pioneering video and performance artist Joan Jonas's presentation for the U.S. Pavilion at the 56th International Art Exhibition La Biennale di Venezia. This major commitment makes a significant impact on the List's ongoing fundraising campaign for the project, which has raised \$1.5 million to date.

The List, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, will present Joan Jonas as the representative for the United States at La Biennale di Venezia 56th International Art Exhibition, on view May 9 – November 22, 2015. Jonas, a seminal figure in performance art and video, will create a new multimedia installation that will transform the entirety of the Pavilion's five galleries into a dynamically immersive environment.

Elizabeth Smith, Executive Director of the Helen Frankenthaler Foundation, said, "The Helen Frankenthaler Foundation is honored to provide support for Joan Jonas's project for this year's Venice Biennale. It is a particularly meaningful gift for us, because in 1966 Helen Frankenthaler (1928-2011), along with Ellsworth Kelly, Roy Lichtenstein, and Jules Olitski, represented the U.S. at the 33rd Venice Biennale. It seems fitting that, 49 years later, the Foundation is able to support another pioneering artist at this major moment in her long and distinguished career."

Paul Ha, Director of the MIT List Visual Arts Center and commissioner and co-curator of the U.S. Pavilion at the 56th International Art Exhibition La Biennale di Venezia, stated, "On behalf of the List, Joan Jonas, and everyone involved in this project, I extend our great appreciation to the Helen Frankenthaler Foundation for its incredible generosity and support. We're very excited to present Joan Jonas's latest work in Venice this May, and the Foundation's gift will play an important role in bringing her vision for the U.S. Pavilion to life."

For the five galleries of the U.S. Pavilion, Joan Jonas will conceive a new complex of works, creating a multilayered ambience incorporating video, drawings, objects, and sound. Literature has always been an inspiration and source for Jonas, and the project for Venice will extend her investigation into the work of Halldór Laxness and his writing on the spiritual aspects of nature, but will focus on other literary sources.

Jonas has continued to work with a multimedia approach throughout her career, being one of the first artists to explore the potential of the video camera as a tool for image-making and the TV monitor as a sculptural object. At the same time, she experimented in her performances with incorporating the body into the visual field. Her installations and performances bring these components together through drawing, props, and objects to create works reflecting her research in relation to space, narrative, or storytelling, and materials as they are altered through various technologies such as the mirror, video, and distance. In Venice, she will work with these diverse aspects of her practice to create five distinct rooms, with common themes unifying and resonating in the entire space, relating to the present condition of the world in poetic terms.

Jonas's work developed out of her art-history studies and sculptural practice, and expanded to performance and film in the 1960s through her involvement with the New York avant-garde scene. Her work has had a significant influence on contemporary art to date, as she has continued to be a major figure in the fields of performance and video art throughout the past five decades.

Joan Jonas They Come to Us Without a Word, the official U.S. presentation at the 56th International Art Exhibition – la Biennale di Venezia, is organized by the MIT List Visual Arts Center and is presented by

the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the U.S. Department of State. The exhibition is produced with the collaboration of the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice (Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, New York). Lead foundation support has been provided by the Helen Frankenthaler Foundation; lead individual support has been provided by Cynthia and John Reed. Additional funding has come from The Council for the Arts at MIT, Toby Devan Lewis, Shiseido, VIA Art Fund, Artnet, Agnes Gund, Lambent Foundation, Karen and Gregory Arenson, Barbara and Julian Cherubini, Alison and John Ferring, Barbara Lee Family Foundation, Lore Harp McGovern, Jane and Neil Pappalardo, Office of the Associate Provost of MIT, Office of the President of MIT, Office of the Dean of the School of Architecture and Planning of MIT, Office of the Provost of MIT, Elizabeth A. Sackler, Frank Williams, Anonymous, and numerous other individuals.

To learn more about Joan Jonas and the U.S. Pavilion, please visit <http://joanjonasvenice2015.com>

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ABOUT HELEN FRANKENTHALER AND THE HELEN FRANKENTHALER FOUNDATION

Helen Frankenthaler (1928-2011), whose career spanned six decades, has long been recognized as one of the great American artists of the twentieth century. An heir of first-generation Abstract Expressionism, she brought together in her work—with prodigious inventiveness and singular beauty—a conception of the canvas as both a formalized field and an arena for gestural drawing. She was eminent among the second generation of postwar American abstract painters and is widely credited for playing a pivotal role in the transition from Abstract Expressionism to Color Field painting. One of the foremost colorists of our time, she produced a body of work whose impact on contemporary art has been profound. Her work is represented in museum collections worldwide and has been the subject of numerous national and international exhibitions and substantial publications. The New York City-based Helen Frankenthaler Foundation, established and endowed by the artist during her lifetime and newly active following the closing of her estate, is dedicated to promoting greater public interest in and understanding of the visual arts.

For more information, visit: <http://www.frankenthalerfoundation.org>

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Joan Jonas (b. 1936, New York, NY, USA) Jonas is a pioneer of video and performance art, and an acclaimed multimedia artist whose work typically encompasses video, performance, installation, sound, text, and drawing. Trained in art history and sculpture, Jonas was a central figure in the performance art movement of the late 1960s, and her experiments and productions in the late 1960s and early 1970s continue to be crucial to the development of many contemporary art genres, from performance and video to conceptual art and theater. Since 1968, her practice has explored ways of seeing, the rhythms of ritual, and the authority of objects and gestures.

The recipient of numerous honors and awards, Jonas's most recent solo exhibitions include those at HangarBicocca, Milan (2014); Centre for Contemporary Art, Kitakyushu Project Gallery, Japan (2014); Kulturhuset Stadsteatern Stockholm (2013); Proyecto Paralelo, Mexico (2013); Contemporary Art Museum, Houston (2013); Bergen Kunsthall, Norway (2011); and Museum of Modern Art, New York (2010). She has been represented in dOCUMENTA in Kassel, Germany, six times since 1972, and has had major retrospectives at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Galerie der Stadt Stuttgart, Germany; and the Queens Museum of Art, New York. Joan Jonas is a New York native, and she continues to live and work in New York City. She received a B.A. in Art History from Mount Holyoke College in 1958; studied sculpture at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; and received an M.F.A. in Sculpture from Columbia University in 1965. Jonas has taught at MIT since 1998, and is currently Professor Emerita in the MIT Program in Art, Culture, and Technology.

ABOUT THE COMMISSIONER/CURATORS

Paul C. Ha is the Director of the MIT List Visual Arts Center, and has more than 25 years of professional experience in art and museum administration, fundraising, curating, and teaching. Since joining the List in 2012, Ha has founded the exhibition program *List Projects*, which commissions emerging artists to create

site-specific installations at the museum. As the inaugural Director of the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis from 2002 to 2011, he developed new programming that expanded the Museum's audiences both locally and internationally, raised more than \$40 million for the institution, and established a \$5-million endowment—the Museum's first, and positioned CAM as a leader in the contemporary art field. He has curated and worked with over 100 artists in solo and group exhibitions, and many artists received their first major museum exhibitions under his leadership at the List Center and the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis, as well as when he was Director at White Columns gallery in New York, and Deputy Director of Programs and External Affairs at Yale University Art Gallery.

Ute Meta Bauer is a veteran curator of exhibitions and presentations on contemporary art, film, video, and sound, with a focus on transdisciplinary formats. She is the Founding Director of the Centre for Contemporary Art Singapore (CCA) at the Nanyang Technological University (NTU), where she is also a professor in the School of Art, Media, and Design. She recently curated *Theatrical Fields*, commissioned by Bildmuseet Umeå, Sweden (2013-14), which includes various works by Joan Jonas and is currently being shown at the CCA in Singapore. Bauer is a former MIT professor, having served as the Founding Director of the Program in Art, Culture, and Technology at MIT's School of Architecture and Planning, and as Director of the MIT Visual Arts Program from 2005-2009. She was Co-Director of the World Biennial Forum No. 1 with Hou Hanru, Gwangju, Korea (2012); Artistic Director of the 3rd Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art (2004); and Co-Curator of Documenta 11 (2001–2002) on the team of Okwui Enwezor. She has edited numerous publications, most recently, *World Biennale Forum No 1 – Shifting Gravity* and *AR – Artistic Research* (both published in 2013).

ABOUT LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA

The Venice Biennale dates to 1895, when the first International Art Exhibition was organized. It is one of the most important international biennials and cultural institutions in the world, introducing hundreds of thousands of visitors to exciting new art every two years. The 56th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia (May 9 – November 22, 2015) is directed by Okwui Enwezor, a curator, art critic, and writer, and the Director of the Haus der Kunst, Munich.

ABOUT THE MIT LIST VISUAL ARTS CENTER

The List Visual Arts Center is a creative laboratory that provides artists with a space to freely experiment and push existing boundaries. As the contemporary art museum at MIT, the List presents a dynamic program of six to nine special exhibitions in its galleries annually, a program of evolving site-specific work by emerging artists known as the *List Projects*, as well as a broad range of educational programs, events, and scholarly publications. Beyond the full slate of special exhibitions and projects it presents each year, the List also maintains and adds to MIT's permanent collection; commissions new works through the MIT Percent-for-Art program, a collection of more than 50 site-specific artworks throughout the campus; and oversees the Student Loan Art Program, which lends more than 500 works of art annually to MIT undergraduate and graduate students.

Originally named the Hayden Gallery, MIT established this center for the visual arts in 1950 to provide a dedicated structure upon which to build the university's existing relationship to the arts. It was renamed the List Visual Arts Center in 1985 in recognition of a gift from Vera and Albert List, and relocated to its current, expanded location in the Wiesner Building, which was designed by MIT Alumnus I. M. Pei (B.S. Architecture, 1940) and Partners Architects.

For more information, visit: <http://listart.mit.edu>

ABOUT THE ARTS AT MIT

Nearly 80 percent of incoming freshmen have prior training in the arts, and nearly 50 percent of all MIT undergraduates enroll in arts courses each year. The arts at MIT connect creative minds across disciplines and encourage a lifetime of exploration and self-discovery. As an example, MIT's visiting artists' program enables contemporary artists to engage with MIT's unparalleled environment of pioneering research, unbounded risk-taking, and imaginative problem-solving, and has previously hosted artists such as Olafur Eliasson, Trevor Paglen, Tomás Saraceno, Vik Muniz, Mel Chin, and Rick Lowe.

The arts strengthen MIT's commitment to the aesthetic, human, and social dimensions of research and innovation. Artistic knowledge and creation exemplify MIT's motto—*mens et manus*, mind and hand. The arts are essential to MIT's mission to build a better society and meet the challenges of the 21st century.

For more information, visit: <http://arts.mit.edu>

ABOUT THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE'S BUREAU OF EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) promotes international mutual understanding through a wide range of academic, cultural, professional, and sports exchange programs. ECA exchanges engage youth, students, educators, artists, athletes, and emerging leaders in many fields in the United States and in more than 160 countries. Alumni of ECA exchanges comprise over one million people around the world, including more than 40 Nobel Laureates and more than 300 current or former heads of state and government around the world.

For more information, visit: <http://www.exchanges.state.gov/us>

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Additional information and images available at JoanJonasVenice2015.com