

FOUNDATION FOR CONTEMPORARY ARTS RECEIVES \$1.25 MILLION GRANT TO ENDOW THE HELEN FRANKENTHALER AWARD FOR PAINTING

New York, NY, September 10, 2024 – The Foundation for Contemporary Arts (FCA) announced today that it has received a \$1.25 million grant from the Helen Frankenthaler Foundation to endow The Helen Frankenthaler Award for Painting. Initially launched in 2020 with a five-year gift from the Frankenthaler Foundation, this new, major grant will endow the Award at FCA in perpetuity. As part of FCA’s longstanding [Grants to Artists](#) program, this annual \$45,000 award honors the legacy of Helen Frankenthaler, and manifests FCA’s founding ethos—by artists, for artists. Awarded annually to an artist demonstrating Helen Frankenthaler’s passion for innovation and experimentation in painting, over the last five years it has been given to celebrated artists such as: [Kerstin Brätsch](#) (2020), [Candida Alvarez](#) (2021), [Joan Woldemath](#) (2022), [Cynthia Hawkins](#) (2023), and [Suzanne Jackson](#) (2024).

A pivotal artist of the twentieth century, Helen Frankenthaler was renowned for her experimental process, which pushed the medium of painting into new territories, and which continue to be generative for today’s practitioners. Frankenthaler was also one of FCA’s earliest supporters: in 1965 she contributed the work on paper *The Face of the Landscape* to FCA’s second benefit exhibition to help raise funds for the Foundation’s grant-making programs. The exhibition was installed across three galleries and conveyed an outpouring of generosity by Frankenthaler and 220 fellow contributing artists, whose support helped FCA raise funds to provide grants to their artist peers.

“As an annual award, the Helen Frankenthaler Award for Painting recognizes important contributions and innovation in painting” said Cecily Brown, Board Co-Chair of Foundation for Contemporary Arts. “We are thrilled that the Helen Frankenthaler Foundation has chosen to ensure the continuity of the award, and we look forward to supporting the bold painters working today—such as recent awardees Candida Alvarez and Suzanne Jackson—and future generations who challenge the medium through their work.”

Elizabeth Smith, Executive Director of the Helen Frankenthaler Foundation said: “Frankenthaler contributed *The Face of the Landscape* to the Foundation for Contemporary Arts’ 1965 benefit exhibition, which helped raise funds to support her fellow artists. Decades later, the Foundation is thrilled to extend this generous intention, and to assure that this namesake award will continue to champion Frankenthaler’s legacy by celebrating and supporting artists who take risks and continue to evolve the medium of painting.”

FCA’s Grants to Artists Awards

FCA’s Helen Frankenthaler Award for Painting is made annually through FCA’s [Grants to Artists](#) program and joins ten other endowed or funded awards established in the memory of and named for artists, many of whom are directly connected to FCA’s history. In 2025, FCA will make a total of twenty-three unrestricted \$45,000 Grants to Artists Awards, inclusive of the named awards—more than \$1 million in unrestricted grants directly to artists. These transformative awards provide artists with the

financial resources to support their creative practice or personal needs, and the encouragement that comes with knowing their work is being recognized by a community of their artist peers.

Markedly expanding FCA's grant-making to individual artists, the other named awards—most of which have been launched in the past decade—include: the John Cage Award, Merce Cunningham Award; Viola Farber Award; Roy Lichtenstein Award; Alvin Lucier Award for Music, Richard Pousette-Dart Award; Robert Rauschenberg Award; Dorothea Tanning Award; Cy Twombly Award for Poetry; and C.D. Wright Award for Poetry.

About the Helen Frankenthaler Foundation

Established and endowed by Helen Frankenthaler during her lifetime, the Helen Frankenthaler Foundation advances the artist's legacy and inspires a new generation of practitioners through a range of philanthropic, educational, and research initiatives. Since becoming active in 2013, the Foundation has continued to strategically expand its program, which includes organizing and supporting significant exhibitions of the artist's work, fostering new research and publications, advancing educational programs in partnership with artist organizations around the world, and launching groundbreaking initiatives that foster systemic change in the field. As a primary resource on the artist, and a steward of her collection and archive, the Foundation holds an extensive section of Frankenthaler's work in a variety of mediums, her collection of works by other artists, and original papers and materials pertaining to her life and work.

About the Foundation for Contemporary Arts (FCA)

The mission of the Foundation for Contemporary Arts is to encourage, sponsor, and promote innovative work in the arts created and presented by individuals, groups, and organizations. Since FCA's inception, more than 7,300 grants to artists and arts organizations—totaling over \$25 million—have provided opportunities for creative exploration and the realization of new work. FCA's unrestricted, by-nomination Grants to Artists recognize 23 artists each year with awards of \$45,000 for their pioneering work across the fields of dance, music/sound, performance art/theater, poetry, and the visual arts. Its Emergency Grants provide urgent funding to more than 200 artists annually to respond to sudden opportunities to present their work, or unexpected expenses for projects close to completion. Artists are primarily responsible for the Foundation's existence, its growth, and its continuation. To date, over 1,000 artists have contributed artwork to help fund FCA's grant programs; and financial contributions from like-minded individuals and foundations significantly enhance FCA's ability to recognize and support innovative artists.

FCA was established by John Cage (1912-1992) and Jasper Johns in 1963. At the time, emerging visual artists were experiencing modest financial success, while many of their peers working in dance, music, and theater struggled to find funding for their work. FCA was initially operated on a volunteer basis by a group of artists who together organized benefit exhibitions, made grants, and produced performances by innovative artists. Many of the artists who participated in those early years would go on to make significant contributions to American arts and culture.

www.foundationforcontemporaryarts.org

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For more information, please contact:

Sascha Freudenheim

PAVE Communications & Consulting

sascha@paveconsult.com

917-544-6057