



HELEN FRANKENTHALER FOUNDATION IN ASSOCIATION WITH ROCKY MOUNTAIN INSTITUTE LAUNCHES \$5-MILLION GRANT PROGRAM TO ADVANCE ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION WITHIN THE VISUAL ARTS SECTOR

**Marking First Program of its Kind for the Visual Arts, Frankenthaler Climate Initiative
To Open First Grant Cycle Today to Art Museums, with Initial Grantees Selected by Fall 2021**

New York, NY—February 3, 2021—The Helen Frankenthaler Foundation is proud to launch the Frankenthaler Climate Initiative, an unprecedented \$5-million, multi-year commitment to support and accelerate energy efficiency and clean energy use at visual arts museums and organizations. Developed in association with the [Rocky Mountain Institute](#), a leading expert and advocate of clean energy, and [Sustainable Museums](#), the Frankenthaler Climate Initiative is the first nation-wide program of its kind for the visual arts and the largest private national grant-making program to address climate change through cultural institutions. The initial cycle of grants will provide critical support to visual art museums in the United States seeking to assess their impact on the environment and to lower ongoing energy costs.

The Frankenthaler Climate Initiative builds on the Foundation’s commitment to social impact philanthropy begun in 2020, including its multi-year [COVID-19 Relief Effort](#) for artists and arts organizations and establishment of [new grants](#) to support greater diversity, equity, and inclusion in the field. The two-step application process, which opens today, begins with a required Letter of Interest, due by March 15, 2021. A limited number of museums will be selected to submit full proposals in late spring, and final awards will be announced in the fall. Full application details are available at [frankenthalerclimateinitiative.org](#).

“The Frankenthaler Climate Initiative aims to be a catalyst to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by arts institutions. A new world of cleantech is being invented by the acclaimed Rocky Mountain Institute to address the climate threat. The Helen Frankenthaler Foundation wants to bring that technology and know-how to art museums, big and small. Our goal is to enable these institutions to fulfill their role as thought leaders on the climate issue. Every museumgoer and artist is a prospective ally in the climate struggle. Who will paint the *Guernica* of climate?” said Fred Iseman, President of the Helen Frankenthaler Foundation. Added the Foundation’s Chairman Clifford Ross, “People might ask why a foundation devoted to the arts has turned its sights on climate change. It’s simple. The Frankenthaler Climate Initiative will enable museums to trim energy costs, balance budgets, and take a leadership role in the most challenging issue of our time. The arts can help us to achieve a sustainable future, and we want to be part of that effort.”

“As we enter this decisive decade in the fight against climate change, every sector of the U.S. economy is called to aggressively reduce greenhouse gas emissions,” said Jules Kortenhorst, CEO of Rocky Mountain Institute. “Charitable institutions will require significant support for these technical and capital projects, but the good news is that so much of energy efficiency is cost-effective, providing financial benefits while

reducing emissions. Every efficiency and clean generation project funded through the Frankenthaler Climate Initiative will be a form of endowment investment for the museum recipient and for the planet.”

Energy use is among the highest fixed costs at museums, and often the hardest to off-set as funding for museum facilities is largely tied to expansions or capital campaigns. Laura Lott, President & CEO of the American Alliance of Museums, further elaborated, “As facilities age, energy and maintenance costs from mechanical systems become an unsustainable burden on our operating budgets and a risk for our cherished collections. This new grant program will fill a major unmet need for existing facilities and help museums continue to evaluate and amplify their social responsibilities within their missions.”

The Frankenthaler Climate Initiative will fund energy efficiency and clean energy generation projects in the following three categories:

- **Scoping grants** help museums understand the climate and energy mitigation opportunities at their facilities.
- **Technical assistance grants** support the specification and budgeting of an identified efficiency project to allow for procurement and financing.
- **Implementation grants** provide partial seed funding for fully specified projects.

Monetary awards will be issued in proportion to the scope and timeline of the project. The Initiative is administered by Sustainable Museums, which has also coordinated cultural institution involvement in climate change action through the [We Are Still In](#) campaign. More information about the Initiative is available at frankenthalerclimateinitiative.org.

About 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 arts 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 selection 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 Rocky Mountain Institute

Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI)—an independent nonprofit founded in 1982—transforms global energy use to create a clean, prosperous, and secure low-carbon future. It engages businesses, communities, institutions, and entrepreneurs to accelerate the adoption of market-based solutions that cost-effectively shift from fossil fuels to efficiency and renewables. RMI has offices in Basalt and Boulder, Colorado; New York City; the San Francisco Bay Area; Washington, D.C.; and Beijing.

About Sustainable Museums

Sustainable Museums is a Tacoma (WA)-based consultancy helping the staff and leadership of museums and other cultural institutions take responsibility for their impact on climate. Principal Sarah Sutton, LEED-AP, organizes the cultural sector for We Are Still In, encompassing nearly 4,000 U.S. businesses and investors; tribal nations, cities and states; cultural institutions and higher education; and faith, health and sports organizations supporting the goals of the Paris Agreement. She is the co-author, with Elizabeth Wylie, of *The Green Museum: A Primer on Environmental Practice*.

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