

ARTISTS FOR ARTISTS

FIFTY YEARS
OF THE
FOUNDATION FOR
CONTEMPORARY ARTS



MORTON FELDMAN, left, and EARLE BROWN in rehearsal.

Two Composers

**Feldman: 'Sound the Hero';
Brown: 'Images in Space'**

by Jill Johnston

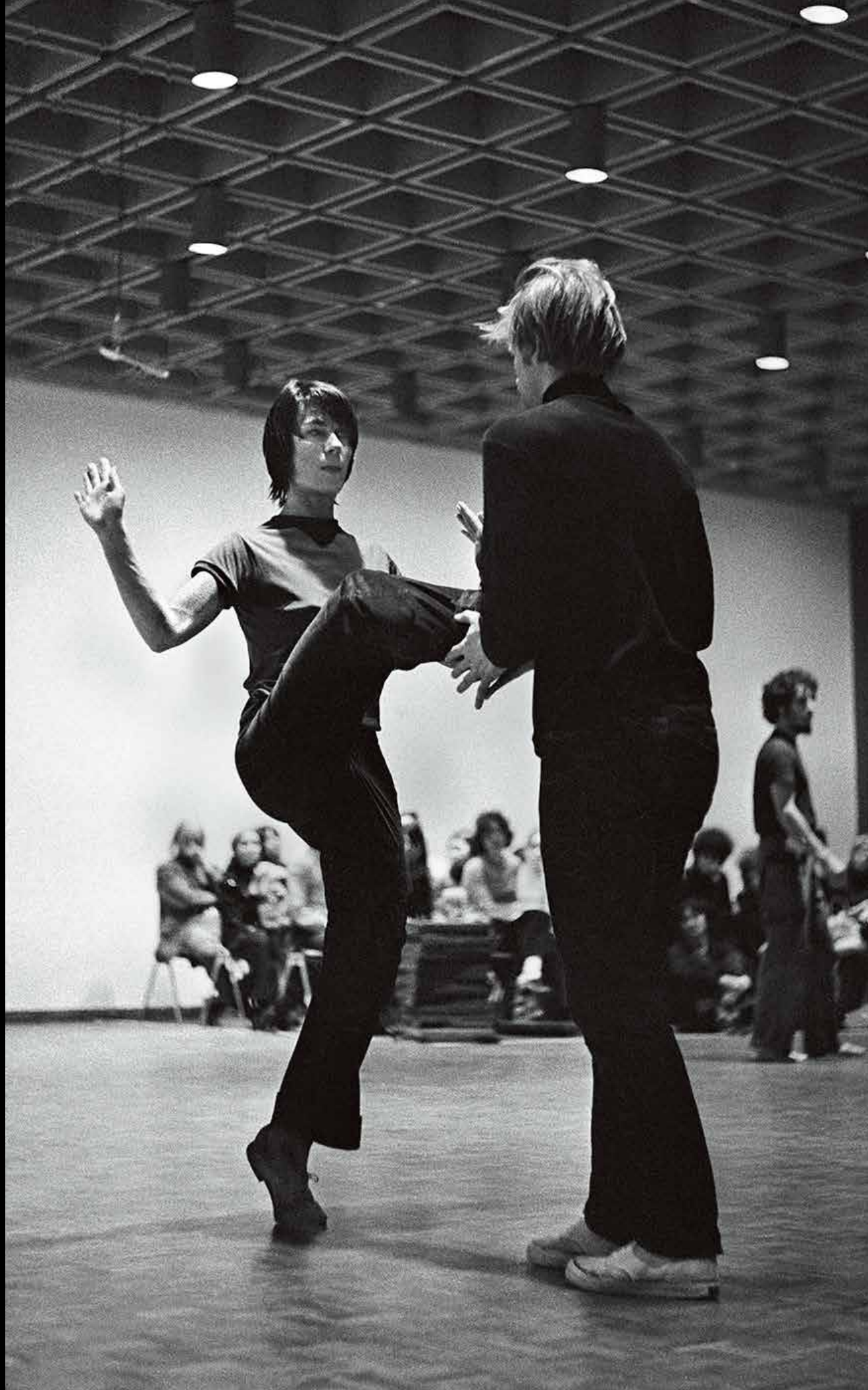
The concert of music by Earle Brown and Morton Feldman to be given in Town Hall this Friday, October 11, will be the first time the two composers will have had

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This page, clockwise from top left: Article on "Feldman/Brown," concert organized and sponsored by the FCPA, *The Village Voice*, October 10, 1963. Meredith Monk, 1969 grantee, *Juice*, FCPA-supported performance, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, 1969. Performer: Blondell Cummings. Philip Glass, 1970 grantee, page from musical score of *Music in Twelve Parts*, supported by the FCPA, 1971-74. Paper Bag Players, 1963 grantee, *Scraps*, performance, venue unknown, 1963. Performers: Marni Mahaffay, Betty Osgood, and Judith Martin. Photo: John Wulf. Merce Cunningham and Dance Company, lecture-demonstration at Ballets Modernes de Paris, June 8, 1964. Performers: Viola Farber, Carolyn Brown, Shareen Blair, Sandra Neels, Barbara Dilley, and Deborah Hay. Opposite page: Yvonne Rainer, 1970 grantee, *Continuous Project—Altered Daily*, FCPA-supported performance, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, April 5, 1971. Performers: Yvonne Rainer, 1985 grantee Douglas Dunn, and 1972 grantee Steve Paxton (background). Photo: James Klosty.





It was just before the Christmas holidays and Roy and I were spending Saturday as we usually did, going to galleries to see the latest art exhibitions. What we came upon at the Kornblee Gallery and the Castelli Gallery were walls filled salon style with work by contemporary artists, donated by the artists as usual, to raise money for the Foundation. I recall that everything had a price tag of under \$400. We acquired a mini-art collection that day . . . two Warhol drawings, a Twombly, a Christo, a Scarpitta; too bad we only had a few hundred dollars to spare! Roy had donated a drawing too, which was hung at Tibor de Nagy.

—Dorothy Lichtenstein

7. Judge interview with Johns, 1999, FCA Archives. Johns and Rauschenberg had at various times individually acted as visual director of the Cunningham dance company, designing its costumes, lighting schemes, props, and stage sets. In both these artists' cases, their interests in time-based performance were expressed in the ways their own paintings encouraged viewer participation and incorporated a sense of the duration a work required in its composition and reception. Johns's *Target with Plaster Casts* (1955) and *Device Circle* (1959), for example, included dynamic and movable portions that were hinged or that pivoted. In the former work, casts of actual body parts that had "performed" stillness in the composition of the work's components were a key element of the completed work. Rauschenberg's *White Paintings* (1951), according to a text Cage published about them, were "airports for lights, shadows and particles," and thereby functioned as screens for dynamic activities happening around them (Cage, "On Robert Rauschenberg, Artist, and His Work," *Silence* [Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1961], 102). The fascination with activating or encouraging imagined movement on the part of the painting's beholder was, in a fashion, similar to the identification a dance performance promotes: a kind of empathetic experience of physical exertion by the audience (always tempered, in the case of dance, by the spectators' awe of the athleticism performed by the lithe bodies onstage). In this sense, working in dance seems to have activated Johns's and Rauschenberg's awareness of how a play of time and space could be depicted in painting.

exhibitions the Foundation would hold after 1980). The 1969 change to the U.S. tax code, which barred artists from taking deductions on work donated to public causes, perhaps accounts for the fact that the 1967 exhibition would be the final one held by the Foundation until 1980.

Yet for all the benefit exhibition's success, it bears remembering that it was a unique model for its time. Other sources of funding that might be taken for granted today simply did not exist. The National Endowment for the Arts would not be established until 1965; the New York State Council on the Arts, which began in 1961, only funded arts organizations, not individuals; and the New York Foundation for the Arts, which does fund individual artists, was founded much later, in 1971. From the moment of its inception in 1925 the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation proved the exception in giving grants to individuals, though of course its wealth derived from the family's mining interests, not aid provided by artists. The same was true for the Ford Foundation (whose arts grants were established in 1959) and the Rockefeller Foundation (which made grants beginning in the 1930s), and neither focused exclusively on the arts.

Since a number of the FCPA's founding members and early donors had histories of collaboration in performance-based actions beyond the Black Mountain events of the previous decade, it is not surprising that some of the earliest grants the Foundation made went to dancers, composers, and choreographers who came out of the Cage/Cunningham circle, just as the original donations were drawn, in Johns's words from a "network of friends who asked other friends."⁷ When the 1963 Cunningham run on Broadway fell through, a victim of the longest newspaper strike in New York history, the Foundation gave its first round of grants to composer Earle Brown (then married to Cunningham dancer Carolyn Brown) and composer Morton Feldman, followed quickly by Judson Memorial Church, where many dances of the so-called Judson Dance Theater group were held (staged by those trained by or associated with Cunningham such as Trisha Brown, Lucinda



Installation view, "Drawings," FCPA's second benefit exhibition, Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, December 1965. Photo: Rudy Burckhardt. Leo Castelli Gallery records, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.



Photographs and ephemera from FCPA-supported Merce Cunningham and Dance Company 1964 World Tour. Clockwise from top left: Company members boarding tour bus, location and date unknown. Pictured: Barbara Dilley holding son Benjamin Lloyd, Robert Rauschenberg, David Vaughan, and Merce Cunningham. Photo: attributed to Steve Paxton. Courtesy Robert Rauschenberg Foundation Archives. On the tour bus, date and location unknown. Pictured: Deborah Hay, John Cage, Merce Cunningham, and David Vaughan, Photo: attributed to Steve Paxton. Courtesy Robert Rauschenberg Foundation Archives. David Vaughan, David Tudor, Carolyn Brown, and unidentified guide, Japan, November 1964. *Septet* rehearsal, Sadler's Wells theater, London, July 1964. Pictured: Shareen Blair, Carolyn Brown, Merce Cunningham, Viola Farber. Photo: Douglas H. Jeffrey. Japanese program, Sogetsu Art Center, Tokyo, November 1964.





Clockwise from top left: Promotional posters, France, Japan, and India. *Septet* rehearsal, Sadler's Wells theater, London, July 1964. Pictured: Merce Cunningham (rear), Viola Farber, Steve Paxton (front) Photo: Douglas H. Jeffrey. Pre-tour rehearsal at the Cunningham Studio, New York, 1964. Seated: Barbara Dilley, John Cage, Sandra Neels, Shareen Blair, and Robert Rauschenberg; in mirror, standing: Merce Cunningham, Carolyn Brown, Steve Paxton, William Davis, and Viola Farber. Photo: Robert Rauschenberg. Courtesy Robert Rauschenberg Foundation Archives. Lewis Lloyd, Merce Cunningham, John Cage, and Viola Farber, India, October 1964. John Cage in front of Taj Mahal, India, October 1964.



Selected Grants to Artists, 1993–2012

Compiled by Eric Banks, Mark Beasley, and Debra Singer



Zeena Parkins, *Regeneration* (collaboration with Daria Martin), performance, Tate Modern, London, 2006. Photo: Sheila Burnett. Courtesy Maureen Paley, London.

Zeena Parkins, 1997

Prior to receiving her Grant to Artists in 1997, composer and harpist Zeena Parkins was “living on Ludlow in the Lower East Side of Manhattan, within a strong artist community, playing lots of concerts, and of course struggling to pay bills and invent clever ways to earn money.” The impact of the award, she recalls, was much greater however than the freedom it gave her from practical concerns. “It is the acknowledgment and unmitigated support from my peers that really was profoundly moving for me. This gave me a special kind of extra energy and force. I think I was particularly impressed that the panel included artists from many different disciplines, not only composers and musicians.”

The grant helped Parkins realize a specific work, *Pan-Acousticon*, released on John Zorn’s Tzadik label in 1999 and the result of three years of labor. Scored for violin, cellos, electric guitar, percussion, daxophone, electric harp, piano, accordion, and sampler, *Pan-Acousticon* is a piece Parkins describes as concerning “language, hearing, radiance, loss, and the desire for connectivity.” Thanks to her FCA grant, Parkins was able to travel to Germany to research on-site the thieves’ cant called Rotwelsch—a lexical component of her earlier work *Mouth=Maul=Betrayer* that she further developed in *Pan-Acousticon*.

Parkins’s current work includes the project *Spellbeamed, Fixexploded, Fixabolished*, which she performed in September 2012 at Roulette in New

York with the Ne(x)works Ensemble and JACK Quartet. A frequent collaborator with visual artists and other musicians, including Björk and Yoko Ono, Parkins has worked as well with numerous fellow FCA Grants to Artists recipients, including composers Ikue Mori, Jim O’Rourke, Elliott Sharp, Douglas Henderson, and Pauline Oliveros, and choreographers DD Dorvillier, Neil Greenberg, Jennifer Monson, and John Jasperse. Her work has received three “Bessies” (the New York Dance and Performance Awards) as well as a 2004 award from the British Academy of Film and Television Arts.

—Mark Beasley

Julie Mehretu, 2000

Best known for her intricate abstract drawings and paintings, Julie Mehretu recalls receiving her Grant to Artists at a pivotal moment: "The grant came at a time when I had rented a bigger space, so I could make new paintings that were larger than anything I had done before. I was broke from the renovations and needed to come up with money that day so the contractor could finish—otherwise, I would be without a studio and a home. I opened the envelope with the check inside that same afternoon. It was unbelievable. It came at a critical time because I was preparing for my first solo museum exhibition, at the Walker Art Center, which turned out to be a very significant exhibition for my work."

The work that Mehretu generated for her traveling 2003 Walker show became what she considered a breakthrough cycle of paintings. The expansive compositions marked a new stage where the artist figured out, as she explains, how "to bring the city into the paintings" and refined what would become her signature visual vocabulary—diaphanous layers of finely drawn, whorling lines intermixed with schematic architectural fragments, geometric shards of color, and gestural brushwork. Moreover, she explained, it was the first time she was able to create a group of paintings in conversation with one another—in no small part made possible by her larger studio space, where she could actually see them next to one another, as they were being developed.

Since her early FCA recognition, Mehretu has gone on to international prominence. Her work is in myriad museum collections, and in addition to participating in numerous group exhibitions, she has had solo exhibitions at the Detroit Institute of Arts; the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art in Denmark; the Deutsche Guggenheim Museum, Berlin; the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; and the Saint Louis Art Museum, among other institutions. She received a MacArthur Foundation "genius award" in 2005. —Debra Singer



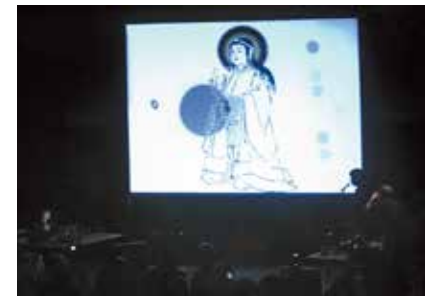
Julie Mehretu, *Looking Back to a Bright New Future*, 2003, ink and acrylic on canvas, 95" x 119". Courtesy the artist and Marian Goodman Gallery, New York.

Ikue Mori, 2006

"The grant helped me tremendously, both financially and mentally," drummer and composer Ikue Mori says of her 2006 Grant to Artists. "It pushed me forward to produce the projects I was working on and allowed me to take time off from touring so that I could concentrate and focus." When Mori received the grant, she had embarked on a pair of new projects: an animation, titled *Kibyoshi*, that featured historic Japanese illustrations, and a new music piece using sixteen speakers for Issue Project Room. The FCA grant allowed her to "travel to Japan to film new footage, locate props, and produce a DVD of the work." The effect was salutary: *Kibyoshi* has been described as her most accomplished work to date, drawing on the rich literature of Japanese *kibyōshi*, satirical comics that critically engage with contemporary society and focus on literature, political affairs, and current events. Her *Kibyoshi* animations continue to travel in the US, Europe, and Japan.

A founding member of the No Wave band DNA, a group that helped change the approach to and sound of

contemporary rock music, the Tokyo-born Mori has since developed her signature drum style and entered into frequent improvisational and collaborative work with fellow musical pioneers Bill Frisell, Fred Frith, Anthony Coleman, fellow FCA grantee Zeena Parkins, and John Zorn, with whom she continues to collaborate. Mori has received commissions from numerous venues and organizations, including The Kitchen, Roulette/Mary Flagler Cary Charitable Trust, RELACHE, and the Montalvo Arts Center. In 2008 she was commissioned by the Tate Modern to create recordings to accompany Maya Deren's silent films. —MB



Ikue Mori, *Kibyoshi*, performance, Unlimited Festival, Wels, Austria, 2010.

1990

Sixty-three grants are made, totaling \$283,900.

1991

Fifty-four grants are made, totaling \$297,250.

1992

Foundation cofounder John Cage dies on August 12 at age 79.

David Tudor is the first recipient of the John Cage Award, established in memory of the composer in November. The \$50,000 award is made every other year in recognition of outstanding achievement in the arts for work that reflects the spirit of Cage; selections are made from invited nominations.

Twenty other grants are made, totaling \$115,000.

1993

In March, the Foundation hires its first executive director, Mary Judge, who directs the Foundation's grants programs until 2004;

henceforth the Foundation maintains its own small staff.

For the first time, the Foundation formalizes distinct grant programs, creating Grants to Individuals, Grants for Immediate Needs, and Grants to Organizations.

In December, the first Grants to Individuals for \$25,000 apiece are awarded to six recipients: John Luther Adams, Paul Beatty, Steffan "Wiggles" Clemente, John Jesurun, Lois V Vierk, and Trevor Winkfield. Winkfield is the first visual artist to receive an FCPA grant since James Turrell in 1984.

In its first formal year, nine Grants for Immediate Needs totaling \$18,500 are made, to artists and organizations including Bang on a Can, Bill Le Page, Pauline Oliveros, and S.E.M. Ensemble. The grants are all less than \$2,000.

Fifteen Grants to Organizations are made, totaling \$53,000; grants range in size from \$2,000 to \$5,000.

The seventh benefit exhibition, "30th Anniversary Exhibition of Drawings: To Benefit the Foundation for Contemporary Performance Arts," is held at Leo Castelli, 420 West Broadway, December 11, 1993–January 8, 1994. Some 187 artists donate 189 works, including Charles Arnoldi, Robert Barry, Nayland Blake, Ross

Bleckner, Richmond Burton, George Condo, Merce Cunningham, Carroll Dunham, Eric Fischl, Dan Flavin, Richard Hamilton, Jane Hammond, Jenny Holzer, Bryan Hunt, Kim Jones, Anselm Kiefer, Barry Le Va, Tom Levine, Glenn Ligon, Richard Long, Suzanne McClelland, James Nares, Tom Otterness, Ellen Phelan, Jack Pierson, Lari Pittman, Dorothea Rockburne, Joel Shapiro, Antoni Tapies, Dorothea Tanning, Rirkrit Tiravanija, and others. More than \$400,000 is raised.

1994

Artist Julian Lethbridge joins the board of directors in January 1994; he remains a director through the present.

The Foundation's offices move to 151 East 63rd Street.

Seven \$25,000 Grants to Individuals are awarded in November to David Behrman, Ondřej Hrab, Phill Niblock, Pauline Oliveros, Steve Paxton, Sam Reveles, and Trimpin.

Takehisa Kosugi is the second recipient of the \$50,000 John Cage Award.

Eighteen presenting and support organizations are awarded grants totaling \$55,000.

The Foundation holds its first formal grants reception to announce its annual awards at the Drawing Center on December

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(1) Installation view, "30th Anniversary Exhibition of Drawings," FCPA's seventh benefit exhibition, Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, 1993. Photo: Dorothy Zeidman. (2) Installation view, "Prints," featuring print editions made to benefit FCPA by Robert Mangold, Richard Serra, Kiki Smith, Julian Lethbridge, and Donald Baechler, in FCPA's eighth benefit exhibition, Brooke Alexander, New York, 1995. (3) Jasper Johns, Margaret Leng Tan, and John Cage, at opening of "The Drawings of Jasper Johns," Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, February 22, 1991. Photo: George Hirose.

8. Arts writer and memoirist Rosamund Bernier announces the grants. Margaret Leng Tan performs John Cage's *Suite for Toy Piano* (1948), and Susan Sontag and Edward Albee give readings. There is not another such reception until 1997.

By the end of 1994, ten Grants for Immediate Needs totaling \$15,500 are made.

1995

In May, the directors approach artists about making a print edition for the benefit of the Foundation, to be included in a forthcoming sale of prints. Donald Baechler, Julian Lethbridge, Robert Mangold, Richard Serra, and Kiki Smith each agree to participate.

Artist Elizabeth Murray joins the board of directors in September. After resigning in March 2001 and rejoining in 2003, she will serve on the board until her death in 2007.

Nine \$25,000 Grants to Individuals are awarded in November to Alex Bag, Doug Elkins, Irène Hultman, Joan Jonas, Mary Jane Leach, Bernadette Mayer, Bob McGrath, John Moran, and Edwin Torres.

Twenty-three presenting and support organizations are awarded grants totaling \$64,000.

The eighth benefit exhibition, "Prints: To

Benefit the Foundation for Contemporary Performance Arts," is held at Brooke Alexander, 59 Wooster Street, December 5–29. Some 133 artists donate 141 works, including Jennifer Bartlett, Vija Celmins, Chuck Close, Merce Cunningham, Mark di Suvero, Lucian Freud, Peter Halley, Mary Heilmann, Bill Jensen, Wolf Kahn, Byron Kim, R.B. Kitaj, Robert Moskowitz, Elizabeth Murray, Chris Ofili, Richard Smith, Lawrence Weiner, Marjorie Welish, and Robert Wilson. Forty works are sold and about \$67,000 is raised.

By the end of 1995, ten Grants for Immediate Needs totaling \$19,000 are made.

1996

Ten \$20,000 Grants to Individuals are awarded in November to Burt Barr, Paul DeMarinis, Petr Kotik, Roscoe Mitchell, Ron Padgett, David Shapiro, Patricia Spears Jones, Gary Stevens, Elizabeth Streb, and Howard S. Thies.

Christian Wolff receives the \$50,000 John Cage Award.

Twenty-eight presenting and support organizations are awarded grants, totaling \$65,500.

By the end of 1996, ten Grants for

Immediate Needs totaling \$11,968 are made.

1997

Experimental composer and 1994 grantee Phill Niblock joins the board of directors in February; he will remain on the board until 2006.

Ten \$25,000 Grants to Individuals are awarded in November to Muhal Richard Abrams, Charles Amirkhonian, Zoe Beloff, Douglas Dunn, Neil Greenberg, Julian Maynard Smith, Alice Notley, Mary Oslund, Zeena Parkins, and Edward Sanders.

Twenty-nine presenting and support organizations are awarded grants, totaling \$60,000.

The second formal grants reception is held at the West Village studio of artist Jennifer Bartlett on December 3. Bartlett will host these annual events for seven years. Arts journalist and critic Linda Yablonsky announces the awards with a presentation about each recipient; she will serve the Foundation in this capacity for eight years. Bang on a Can All-Stars members Mark Stewart and Robert Black perform Stewart's *Trummings* and Tom Johnson's *Failing*, and Gary Stevens

(4) Trevor Winkfield, *I Will Not Tolerate Such Insubordination From My Pets!*, 1994, acrylic on linen, 48 3/4" x 60 1/4". Courtesy Tibor de Nagy Gallery, New York. (5) Mary Oslund, *Behavior*, Portland Institute for Contemporary Art performance series, Portland, 1997. Photo: Julie Keefe. (6) Joan Jonas, still from *Woman in the Well*, 2000, video installation, Rosamund Felsen Gallery, Los Angeles.

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