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## FOUNDATION FOR CONTEMPORARY ARTS ANNOUNCES 2020 ELLSWORTH KELLY AWARD RECIPIENT

**New York, NY, October 8, 2020** – Foundation for Contemporary Arts (FCA) is pleased to announce the 2020 recipient of The Ellsworth Kelly Award, a \$40,000 annual grant created during Ellsworth Kelly's lifetime and endowed by the Ellsworth Kelly Foundation to support museum exhibitions for contemporary artists. The recipient is the Institute for Contemporary Art (ICA) at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) for the first solo museum exhibition of filmmaker, photographer, and writer **dana washington-queen**. This will include a two-year collaboration to develop a new multi-media work, *UNTITLED (Continuum of Spirit)*, which the artist will realize in partnership with ICA Assistant Curator of Film and Special Programs Enjoli Moon, and members of the ICA and VCU communities. The creative process will be shared publicly throughout the collaboration period, and the exhibition will be presented at the ICA from September 2022 through January 2023.

The Ellsworth Kelly Award is a by-invitation, \$40,000 annual grant to support a solo exhibition by an emerging, mid-career, or under-recognized contemporary visual artist at a regional U.S. art museum or university or college art gallery. The program and selection process are administered by FCA. This year, due to the unprecedented challenges facing museums, the Ellsworth Kelly Foundation has made a one-time decision to support two additional exhibitions from the proposal pool with grants of \$10,000 each. These grants will be awarded to the Cranbrook Art Museum and to the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art. “Supporting dana washington-queen’s first solo museum exhibition at the ICA at VCU with the Ellsworth Kelly Award epitomizes Ellsworth’s conviction that a museum exhibition can be transformative for an artist’s career,” said Jack Shear, President of the Ellsworth Kelly Foundation. “In a year when both museums and artists are struggling to survive, the Ellsworth Kelly Foundation will support two other future exhibitions of underrecognized contemporary artists, the Cranbrook Art Institute’s Sonya Clark survey and the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art’s Will Wilson exhibition.” All three exhibitions are slated to open in late 2022.

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“*UNTITLED (Continuum of Spirit)*, will present new ways of thinking about the politics of the performing Black body, sporting events and broadcast technologies to examine relationships between labor-spectacle and entertainment-audience,” noted washington-queen, who uses the pronouns they/them. In this work they will remove the spectacle of the Black body in sports through a process of technology-driven abstraction and reconstruction; the work will collapse genre boundaries across video, sound, photography, and text. “Since its opening in 2018, the ICA has been dedicated to supporting artists in the creation of bold new work, so we are so honored to be recognized with The Ellsworth Kelly Award, which will significantly bolster our long-term collaboration with dana washington-queen as they embark on the development of an ambitious new project,” said Enjoli Moon, ICA Assistant Curator of Film and Special Projects. “I first encountered washington-queen’s work in 2018 and was immediately touched by its intimacy, humanity, and distinct aesthetic vision, and I am excited to help introduce it to a wider community. This award will allow ICA to do not only that, but also to serve as a support system for washington-queen as they take the next step with their practice, creating their most technically and conceptually complex project to date.”

The ICA’s proposed exhibition of dana washington-queen’s work was selected by FCA’s Board of Directors, including Cecily Brown, Anne Collier, Anthony B. Creamer III, Jasper Johns, Jennie C. Jones, Julian Lethbridge, Dean Moss, Emily Wei Rales, James Welling, and John Yau. In selecting the award, FCA’s Directors seek projects that are in the earliest stages of planning at the time of review and require the financial catalyst provided by The Ellsworth Kelly Award to propel them from planning to realization. Proposals in this cycle were invited from a small number of institutions east of the Missouri River. In 2021, applications from institutions west of the Missouri will be invited.

The first recipient of The Ellsworth Kelly Award (2016) was the Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) at the University of Pennsylvania, for [Cauleen Smith: Give It or Leave It](#), a solo exhibition of film, video, and sculpture. Presented at the ICA in fall 2018, the exhibition then traveled to three additional venues, including the ICA VCU. In 2018 the Kelly Award recipient was the Mary S. Byrd Gallery of Art in Augusta, GA, for a solo exhibition of new multi-media works by sculptor [Bojana Ginn](#), presented in fall 2019. The 2019 Kelly Award was presented to the CCA Wattis Institute in San Francisco for an exhibition of new work by Algiers-based multi-disciplinary artist [Lydia Ourahmane](#), which opened in February 2020.

### **About dana washington-queen**

dana washington-queen (b. 1985) is a writer and lens-based artist exploring narrative within autobiographic and cultural fields to examine representation, place and sociopolitical structures. Their work negotiates between subjecthood, subjectivity, blackness, and liberation to reflect upon the incoherencies of lived experiences and artistic practice.

washington-queen is building a language for their work through Black Noetic theory (BNt) to consider how blackness, interiority, and performance are embedded in modes of production for which to imagine blackness otherwise in audiovisual space, attending to the relationships between the body and image. washington-queen is interested in pushing against the boundaries of production strategies and genre, collapsing distinctions between documentary and constructed documents.

washington-queen received a BFA from California State University, Long Beach and MFA from University of California, San Diego. Their videos and photographs have been exhibited at Art+Practice, Los Angeles; San Diego Art Institute; and 98 Orchard, New York; while their short films have received selections from DTLA Film Festival, Toronto Short Film Festival, Outfest Fusion LGBT People of Color Film Festival, Black Radical Imagination Film Tour, Afrikana Film Festival, and BlackStar Film Festival.

## **About the Institute for Contemporary Art at Virginia Commonwealth University**

The Institute for Contemporary Art at Virginia Commonwealth University is a non-collecting institution that showcases a fresh slate of changing exhibitions and programs. The ICA is a place to explore new ideas, providing an open forum for dialogue and collaboration across the region and the world. Mirroring the increasing emphasis on cross-disciplinary studies across VCU, the ICA has created a new environment for artists and scholars from around the world to test ideas. As a university-wide resource, the ICA links campus, community, and contemporary artists by supporting local creative communities, engaging an international network of contemporary artists and organizations, and encouraging collaborations with VCU departments, faculty, students, and the Richmond community. The ICA is a responsive institution that offers a broad range of artistic perspectives from across the world, with the goal of questioning assumptions and encouraging critical discourse. For more information on the ICA, please visit [icavcu.org](http://icavcu.org).

## **About the Foundation for Contemporary Arts (FCA)**

Foundation for Contemporary Performance Arts was established in 1963 by John Cage (1912-1992) and Jasper Johns. At that time, some emerging visual artists were beginning to experience modest financial success, while many of their peers working in dance, music, and theater struggled to find funding to present their work. Cage and Johns decided to organize a benefit exhibition at the Allan Stone Gallery to support their colleagues in the performance arts. Lee Bontecou, Elaine de Kooning, Willem de Kooning, Marcel Duchamp, Alex Katz, Ellsworth Kelly, Roy Lichtenstein, Marisol, Barnett Newman, Claes Oldenburg, Robert Rauschenberg, James Rosenquist, Frank Stella, Elaine Sturtevant, and Andy Warhol were among the 67 artists who contributed to this landmark show. With proceeds from the exhibition, the Foundation began making grants to individual artists.

Now known as the Foundation for Contemporary Arts (FCA), its mission is to encourage, sponsor, and promote innovative work in the arts created and presented by individuals, groups, and organizations. FCA's unrestricted, by-nomination grants support pioneering work across the fields of dance, music/sound, performance art/theater, poetry, and the visual arts. More than 4,000 grants awarded to artists and arts organizations—totaling almost \$18 million—have provided opportunities for creative exploration and development. To date, over 1,000 artists have made these grants possible by contributing paintings, sculptures, drawings, prints, and photographs to the fifteen benefit exhibitions held over the years.

[www.foundationforcontemporaryarts.org](http://www.foundationforcontemporaryarts.org)

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