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FOUNDATION FOR CONTEMPORARY ARTS
ANNOUNCES THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ANNUAL
DOROTHEA TANNING AWARD
INAUGURAL AWARD TO BE MADE TO POET LIZ WALDNER

New York, NY, January 25, 2017 – Foundation for Contemporary Arts (FCA) is pleased to announce a \$1 million endowment gift from The Destina Foundation to create and sustain a \$40,000 annual grant named for the artist and poet Dorothea Tanning. Administered through FCA’s distinguished Grants to Artists program, The Dorothea Tanning Award will recognize outstanding artistic achievement and potential. It furthers FCA’s pioneering “artists for artists” model, established in 1963 by FCA’s founding artists John Cage and Jasper Johns. The inaugural Tanning Award will be made to poet Liz Waldner.

Over a career spanning eight decades, Dorothea Tanning experimented in her approach, explored challenging content, and evolved as an artist free from a single movement or method. She realized her creative visions in painting, sculpture, drawing, printmaking, theatrical design, autobiography, fiction, and poetry, steadfastly following a simple principle that she passed on as advice to younger artists: “Keep your eye on your inner world.”

“Dorothea believed strongly in FCA’s mission and programs,” said Pamela S. Johnson, President of The Destina Foundation, which is charged with distributing the assets of Tanning’s Estate. “She considered John Cage and Merce Cunningham among her dearest friends from their early days as struggling young artists in 1940s New York, so supporting future generations of artists through FCA has a special significance.”

“Dorothea was a generous and regular contributor to FCA’s benefit exhibitions during her lifetime,” said Stacy Tenenbaum Stark, Executive Director of the Foundation for Contemporary Arts. “Her legacy of supporting other artists through FCA exemplifies the spirit of goodwill among artists. FCA is thrilled to inaugurate an award in her memory. Dorothea’s limitless imagination is reflected in the work of the first Dorothea Tanning Award recipient, poet Liz Waldner.”

The Dorothea Tanning Award will be made annually through FCA's Grants to Artists program beginning in 2017. Established in 1993, Grants to Artists provides significant, unrestricted assistance to individual artists in all disciplines through a confidential nomination and selection process. Once a year, a group of artists and arts professionals are invited to serve as nominators. A separate selection panel reviews nominations and chooses grantees on the basis of the merit of their work and the effect such recognition and support might have at that point in their careers.

Tanning's fierce independence is embodied in this eponymous award, which will recognize artists like Dorothea herself, whose work stood apart from her milieu and transcended her time. Fittingly, Waldner's nominator writes: "Liz Waldner's poetry at its frequent best...embodies the kind of unpredictability, the kind of resistance to consecutive, conventional, expository prose meaning, that I associate with the language poets and with other branches of the American avant-garde. It breaks conversational English, and sometimes technical, specialized English (the English of botany, or of classical scholarship) open and pulls the wires away."

About Dorothea Tanning (1910 - 2012)

Born in 1910 in Galesburg, Illinois, Dorothea Tanning taught herself to paint as a young artist living first in Chicago and later New York, where she found an affinity with the avant-garde Surrealist artists in exile during WWII, including her future husband, Max Ernst. With him, she settled first in Sedona Arizona in 1946, and soon after in France, where she lived for nearly three decades. In 1980, Tanning returned to New York, where she continued her work as a visual artist and began other as a writer and a poet. She died in January 2012 at the age of 101. Tanning's paintings and sculpture are represented in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Whitney Museum of American Art, and the Philadelphia Museum of Art, as well as numerous international institutions including the Tate, the Centre Georges Pompidou, and Kunsthalle Malmo. Tanning published two memoirs (1986 and 2001), a novel (2004), and two collections of poetry (2004 and 2011).

www.dorotheatanning.org

About The Destina Foundation

Based in New York, The Destina Foundation was established in 2015 to distribute the art and assets of Dorothea Tanning's Estate for philanthropic purposes. Through both direct program activities and grants, the Foundation aims to encourage public knowledge and appreciation of the visual, performing and literary arts, and to support creative expression, reproductive freedom, environmental stewardship, and humanitarian efforts, which were so important to its benefactor. The Foundation also works in partnership with The Dorothea Tanning Foundation to manage the artist's archive and educate the public about her enduring cultural contributions.

About Liz Waldner

Liz Waldner was born in Cleveland, Ohio. She received a BA in philosophy and mathematics from St. John's College, and an MFA from the Iowa Writers' Workshop. Her first book of poems, *Homing Devices* (1988) came after an 18-year silence. Her second book, *A Point Is That Which Has No Part* (2000), received the 2000 James Laughlin Award and the 1999 Iowa Poetry Prize. Since then, she has published several

collections of poems, most recently *Her Faithfulness* (2016), *Big House, Little House* (2016), and *Play* (2009). Waldner's honors include grants from the Massachusetts Cultural Council, the Boomerang Foundation, and the Barbara Deming Memorial Money for Women Fund, and fellowships from the Vermont Studio Center, the Djerassi Foundation, and the MacDowell Colony.

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, emerging visual artists were beginning to experience modest financial success, while Merce Cunningham—and others working in dance, music, and theater—struggled to find funding to present their work. Cage, Johns, Robert Rauschenberg, and other painters and sculptors decided to organize a benefit exhibition 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, James Rosenquist, Frank Stella, Elaine Sturtevant, and Andy Warhol were among the 67 artists who contributed to this landmark show at the Allan Stone Gallery. With proceeds from the exhibition, the Foundation began making grants to individual artists.

Now known as the Foundation for Contemporary Arts (FCA), FCA's mission is to encourage, sponsor, and promote innovative work in the arts created and presented by individuals, groups, and organizations. Its legacy continues today with unrestricted, by-nomination grants supporting pioneering work across the fields of dance, music/sound, performance art/theater, poetry, and the visual arts. In addition to vital financial assistance, grantees receive the inestimable encouragement that comes with recognition by their peers. A fund is also maintained to assist artists with emergencies and unexpected opportunities related to their work. More than 2,800 grants awarded to artists and arts organizations—totaling over \$12 million—have provided opportunities for creative exploration and development. To date, nearly 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

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