

FOUNDATION FOR CONTEMPORARY ARTS ANNOUNCES ELLSWORTH KELLY AWARD RECIPIENT THE RENAISSANCE SOCIETY, CHICAGO

New York, NY, July 28, 2026 – Foundation for Contemporary Arts (FCA) is pleased to announce the **Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago (the “Ren”)** is the 2026 recipient of the [Ellsworth Kelly Award](#), a \$45,000 annual grant from FCA to support a solo exhibition for a contemporary artist. The award will support the 2027 exhibition of the work of Berlin-based multidisciplinary artist **Pan Daijing** (b. 1991, Guiyang, China) which will incorporate moving image, sound, and other interventions that take their cues directly from the institution’s architectural space. This new project is organized by Karsten Lund, Senior Curator.

Pan’s wide-ranging practice is driven by her interests in emotion, perception, ephemerality, and the visceral qualities of lived human experience. Her exhibitions prioritize site-responsiveness and shifts between different mediums, led by an improvisational sensibility that she first developed onstage as a genre-defying musician. For its fall 2027 presentation, the Ren’s gallery space will become a catalyst for Pan’s new work, as she shapes both tangible materials and intangible atmospheres to reimagine the environment. With its soaring gallery spaces and unusually dynamic acoustics, the Ren offers a unique setting—both challenging and energizing—for an exhibition that will fuse moving image, sound, and sculpture, and potentially performance as well. Following the exhibition, Pan and the Renaissance Society will produce a publication that both documents her project and expands on it.

FCA’s Ellsworth Kelly Award was created to support an in-depth solo exhibition for a contemporary artist, driven by Kelly’s own recognition of how transformative this could be for an artist’s career—and the essential role that U.S. regional museums and university and college art galleries play in creating such opportunities. This annual grant of \$45,000 is intended to support an institution in providing a significant exhibition opportunity to a visual artist whose artistic achievements merit wider recognition, regardless of career stage. FCA administers the selection process and award, which was launched during Ellsworth Kelly’s lifetime and endowed by the Ellsworth Kelly Foundation.

“Pan Daijing’s revealing and responsive approach to composing exhibitions encourages us to experience and be receptive to the ephemeral, and to engage with time and space. We are honored to assist the Renaissance Society in bringing Pan’s expansive practice to audiences in Chicago through the Ellsworth Kelly Award,” said Kay Takeda, Executive Director of Foundation for Contemporary Arts. “We are compelled by the Ren’s commitment to supporting Pan’s ideas and experimentation, and the opportunity to help them enable their fullest expression.”

“At the Ren, we love working with artists who embrace experimental methods and have a desire to make the most of our unusual exhibition space,” said Karsten Lund. “At the same time, we’re always trying to find ways to give artists a longer runway for projects like this and the real tailwind of greater support. The Ellsworth Kelly Award will have a major impact on Pan’s exhibition here, letting her think more expansively and play out a wider range of ideas.”

The Renaissance Society's proposal was selected for support by FCA's Board of Directors, including Cecily Brown, Anne Collier, Anthony B. Creamer III, Jennie C. Jones, Wyatt Kahn, Julian Lethbridge, Richard Maxwell, Dean Moss, Okwui Okpokwasili, Emily Wei Rales, Matana Roberts, James Welling, and John Yau. In making the award, FCA seeks projects that are in earlier stages of planning at the time of review and require the financial catalyst provided by The Ellsworth Kelly Award to help propel them from planning to realization.

Since its inception in 2016, the Ellsworth Kelly Award has helped to realize substantial solo exhibitions of artists Yhuri Cruz, Bojana Ginn, Dakota Mace, Karyn Olivier, Lydia Ourahmane, Shahpour Pouyan, Barbara T. Smith, Cauleen Smith, and dana washington-queen. The award has been presented to institutions across the United States, including university and college galleries in Augusta, GA; Los Angeles; Philadelphia; Richmond, VA; and San Francisco, and at cultural institutions and museums in Detroit; Nashville, Tennessee; San Diego; and Santa Fe, New Mexico. Awarded institutions have taken a considered approach to illuminating and contextualizing an artist's practice and have engaged artists to realize new work, explore new creative methods, and collaborate with new communities.

About Pan Daijing

Pan Daijing, born in Guiyang, China, (1991) is a multidisciplinary artist working across moving image, sound, sculpture, and performance. In her exhibitions, she creates environments that bring together these different elements. A category-defying musician and composer, her contemporary art environments feature an improvisational sensibility. Over time, she has developed a practice that is expansive, agile, and experimental in spirit, driven by her interests in emotion, perception, and the individual and collective experience.

Pan has presented ambitious solo and group exhibitions and performances at a variety of venues in Europe and Asia, including Haus der Kunst, Germany (2024), Grazer Kunstverein, Austria (2023), Hamburger Bahnhof, Germany for the Preis der Nationalgalerie (2024), Tai Kwun Contemporary, Hong Kong (2021), the 13th Shanghai Biennale, China (2021), Martin-Gropius-Bau, Germany (2020), and Tate Modern, U.K. (2019). Her forthcoming exhibition at the Renaissance Society will be only her second solo exhibition in the United States, following *Sudden Places* at the Walker Art Center. Pan has additionally released several critically acclaimed albums, including *Tissues* (2022), *Jade* (2021), and *Lack* (2017)

About The Renaissance Society

The Renaissance Society is an independent, non-collecting museum in Chicago that presents contemporary art exhibitions, performances, and wide-ranging public programs. The Ren pursues collaborations with artists at pivotal moments in their careers, helping to develop ambitious projects that foster experimental approaches and seek out connections with both local and global audiences. Choosing to stay nimble and artist-centered, the Ren prioritizes depth of engagement over scale, and intimacy instead of growth for its own sake.

Founded in 1915 by a group of University of Chicago faculty, the Ren is one of the oldest contemporary art institutions in the United States. Although located on the university campus, the Ren operates independently as a nonprofit organization. In the early 20th century, the Ren played a pivotal role in introducing avant-garde practices to U.S. audiences. In its current era, the institution has continued commissioning projects by new generations of artists, while expanding its legacy.

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 8,000 grants to artists and arts organizations—totaling over \$31.5 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 250 artists annually to respond to sudden opportunities to present their work, or unexpected expenses for projects close to completion. Launched in 2024, FCA's Creative Research Grants provide at least 35 artists annually with \$10,000 awards to support critical exploratory phases of their process. 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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