FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FOUNDATION FOR CONTEMPORARY ARTS APPOINTS
KAY TAKEDA AS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

New York, NY, February 1, 2022 — Foundation for Contemporary Arts (FCA), the nonprofit organization founded in 1963 by artists John Cage (1912-1992) and Jasper Johns, is pleased to announce the appointment of Kay Takeda as the new Executive Director, effective March 28.

Takeda will lead the Foundation in its work to recognize, support, and respond to the changing needs of experimental artists, providing vision, leadership, and management for operations and activities. She also will work closely with the Board of Directors and engage staff to establish priorities, refine areas of programmatic interest, and develop policies and procedures that uphold the Foundation’s commitment to make its programs available and accessible to artists of all backgrounds and ability.

— continued —
She succeeds Stacy Tenenbaum Stark, who served as Executive Director from 2005 to 2021.

Cecily Brown, Co-Chair of the Board of Directors of the Foundation for Contemporary Arts, said: “Over the course of her career in arts philanthropy, Kay Takeda has been deeply thoughtful and consistently imaginative in her dedication to supporting artists. Her work is grounded in meaningful engagement with artists—as individuals and as a community—and a steadfast commitment to supporting artists' evolving needs, qualities that lie at the core of the mission of the Foundation for Contemporary Arts. We are thrilled to welcome Kay Takeda to her leadership role and look forward eagerly to working with her.”

Okwui Okpokwasili, a 2014 FCA Grants to Artists recipient in the field of dance, said: "Kay has not only been a stalwart champion of artists, but she has helped so many of us see ourselves as drivers of cultural capital, undergirding the NYC economy. We are not disposable, we are vital and she has made sure that we have access to the tools to root ourselves squarely in that truth.”

Kay Takeda said: “The challenges of the past two years have reminded us that individuals and organizations working in solidarity can make a difference. The Foundation for Contemporary Arts understands this deeply, as a unique resource created by artists nearly 60 years ago to recognize and assist fellow artists. I am inspired by how the organization keeps sight of artists doing generative work to interpret and influence culture and how each artist makes a larger contribution, beyond any single project. It’s an honor to work with the staff and Board to further this vibrant mission and the creative community that it celebrates and fosters.”

On January 28, FCA announced its 2022 Grants to Artists and John Cage Awards, which have been increased to $45,000 as part of the Foundation’s planned growth to its core programs. Information on the awardees can be accessed at https://www.foundationforcontemporaryarts.org/recipients/.

This announcement follows almost two years of the Foundation's significantly increased grant-making in response to artists' needs during the pandemic. Between March 2020 and December 2021, FCA provided more than 3,200 artists with over $5.6 million in support through the FCA Emergency Grants COVID-19 Fund and the FCA COVID-19 Bridge Fund. Additionally, FCA was part of the coalition of grant-makers which came together to form Artist Relief, an emergency initiative which distributed close to $23.4 million in grants to 4,682 artists between April 2020 and June 2021.
About Kay Takeda
Kay Takeda has worked for more than 25 years to support the advancement of artists and the arts sector. Prior to joining the FCA, she was Deputy Director, Artist Programs for Joan Mitchell Foundation, where she oversaw a roster of artist-focused initiatives including national fellowships, resources for artist legacy planning, and residencies at the Joan Mitchell Center in New Orleans. In that role, she led the design and launch of the Joan Mitchell Fellowship, a reinvention of the organization’s longstanding $25,000 Painters & Sculptors grant into a $60,000 award paid over five years with dedicated creative and career development support; commissioned the second edition of the organization’s seminal career documentation guide for visual artists, to be released in 2022; and led the Foundation’s programmatic response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which channeled $1.25 million into direct relief funding for alumni artists and to regrant partners Artist Relief and New Orleans Creative Response and focused its artist residencies locally through 2021, hosting 50 New Orleans artists for 3-to-5-month studio residencies.

In her previous role as Vice President, Grants & Services at Lower Manhattan Cultural Council (LMCC), she developed and oversaw local initiatives including a 5-year community arts partnership to activate the waterfront along Manhattan’s Lower East Side, a $5 million fund to support the recovery of Lower Manhattan’s arts sector after 9/11, and the growth and expansion of its long-standing Manhattan Arts Grants providing public funding for arts projects and programming. In tandem with these programs, she brought an innovative approach to the organization’s professional development programs for artists and organizations, which grew during her tenure to serve more than 500 artists annually.

Takeda also led funding programs for international projects and artistic exchanges at Arts International and managed exhibitions and visual artist programming at the Newhouse Center for Contemporary Art at Snug Harbor. She serves on the board of Movement Research, has sat on selection committees for the NY Dance and Performance Awards (the Bessies) and numerous funding bodies, and lectures widely on professional issues affecting artists.

About the Foundation for Contemporary Arts (FCA)
Foundation for Contemporary Arts was established in 1963 by John Cage (1912-1992) and Jasper Johns. By the early 1960s, some emerging visual artists were beginning to experience modest financial success while many of their peers working in dance, music, and theater struggled against severely limited funding options to present their work. Cage, Johns, and a few friends 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, Robert Morris, Barnett Newman, Claes Oldenburg, Robert Rauschenberg, James Rosenquist, Frank Stella, Elaine Sturtevant, and Andy Warhol were among the sixty-seven artists who contributed to this landmark show at the Allan Stone Gallery, a prominent contemporary gallery of the period. With proceeds from the exhibition, FCA began making grants to individual artists.

– continued –
FCA depends on the generosity of artists to fund its programs and remains the only institution of its kind, created by artists to benefit artists. Its mission is to encourage, sponsor, and promote innovative work in the arts created and presented by individuals, groups, and organizations. FCA supports pioneering work in dance, music/sound, performance art/theater, poetry, and the visual arts through two core grant-making programs: Grants to Artists and Emergency Grants. Established in 1993, Grants to Artists are unrestricted, by-nomination grants that provide recipients with the financial means to engage in any artistic endeavors they wish to pursue. Each year, artists and arts professionals invited by FCA propose one artist, collective, or performing group whom they believe would benefit from an award. These confidential submissions are then reviewed by an advisory panel of artists, arts professionals, and FCA’s Board of Directors and the recipients are determined. FCA also assists artists who are in need of urgent work-related funding through Emergency Grants; requests are reviewed monthly by a volunteer panel of established artists that typically awards grants of between $500 and $3,000. Since 1963, nearly 6,800 grants awarded to artists and arts organizations—more than $24 million—have provided opportunities for creative exploration and development. To date, more than 1,000 artists have contributed paintings, sculptures, drawings, prints, photographs, performances, and videos to help fund these programs. www.foundationforcontemporaryarts.org

###

CONTACT: Kathleen Flynn
kf@contemporary-arts.org