Étant donnés
Contemporary Art

FACE Foundation
Supporting French-American Cultural Exchange in Education and the Arts
Presentation

Étant donnés Contemporary Art aims to strengthen ties between France and the U.S. in the field of contemporary art by fostering active collaboration and encouraging long-lasting partnerships between French visual artists, curators and collectives and American curators and cultural institutions. The fund supports the discovery of emerging talents, while also sustaining interest in established artists. Furthermore, it has been instrumental in creating a network of curators from France and the U.S. Since its inception, Étant donnés has developed an international reputation by allocating over $3 million to fund more than 300 projects and 16 curators.

Over the past 20 years, the art world has profoundly evolved. Étant donnés seeks to embrace new practices and enable different approaches to creation in contemporary art, to include projects that draw on the visual arts, design, architecture, and performance. Étant donnés aims to support ambitious projects, with high priority given to coproductions, new commissions, and projects that can be developed across several cities in the U.S.

To this end, and with the aim of introducing French visual artists whose works have rarely, if ever, been shown in the United States, the fund supports projects at three levels. Financial support is granted to American nonprofit institutions to organize exhibitions, installations, or research projects featuring French artists; a curatorial fellowship assists American curators, either independent or affiliated with institutions, who wish to conduct research in France; and a residency program supports French visual artists seeking to develop specific projects with American partners.

Origins

Étant donnés was founded in 1994 by the Cultural Services of the French Embassy, the former Association Française d’Action Artistique (AFAA)—now the Institut français—and the Délégation aux Arts Plastiques (DAP) of the French Ministry of Culture and Communication. Taking its name from the famed work of art by Marcel Duchamp, the French-born artist who established himself in the United States and whose work has inspired contemporary artists for decades, Étant donnés underscores the continuous exchange between France and the United States in the art world. It also supports the belief, formulated by Duchamp, that “All in all, the creative act is not performed by the artist alone.”

Étant donnés Contemporary Art has supported exhibitions in most major American institutions, including the Guggenheim Museum, the Whitney Museum, the DIA Art Foundation, MoMA PS1, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, the MCA in Chicago, the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, and the Wexner Art Center in Ohio. Support has also been given to numerous projects at alternative spaces, including Artists Space, Artist’s Institute, and Art in General. In previous years, it also provided funding for French organizations such as the Musée National d’Art Moderne Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, Villa Arson in Nice, and several FRACs (Fonds Régional d’Art Contemporain).

Among the French artists first introduced to the U.S. thanks to the support of Étant donnés are Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, Pierre Huyghe, Koo Jeong A, Isabelle Cornaro, Christine Rebet, and Céleste Boursier-Mougenot. In France, John Currin, Sterling Ruby, Roe Etheridge, and Diana Thater are just a few of the American artists to have benefited from Étant donnés support for early presentations of their works in solo shows. Some of the numerous curators whose work has been facilitated by the fund are Nicholas Baume, Tim Griffin, Fionn Meade, Lauri Firstenberg, and Silvia Karman Cubina.
Guidelines

Grants to Artistic Projects
This program seeks primarily to introduce French visual artists whose works have rarely, if ever, been shown in the United States. The fund offers financial support in the form of grants to American nonprofit institutions that organize exhibitions, installations, or research projects featuring French artists.

Curatorial Fellowships
Étant donnés Contemporary Art offers grants to American curators wishing to conduct and deepen their research in contemporary art in France. These grants are intended to expand the professional opportunities and networks of American curators, encourage in-depth explorations of French cultural resources, and provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and knowledge among artists, professionals, researchers, and institutions.

Residencies
A new residency program initiated by Institut français within the framework of Étant donnés aims to support the professional development of French artists in the U.S. Grants are allocated to French artists developing a project in partnership with an American institution, and intended to generate collaborations that will extend beyond the residency.

Artistic Committee

The Artistic Committee is comprised of independent American and French professionals who specialize in contemporary art. A Program Officer facilitates the operations and activities of the Artistic Committee and plays a vital role in assisting organizations in developing new projects, connecting with potential partners, and evaluating the eligibility of their projects for support.

Past and Present Committee Members:
Selection of grantees since 1994  
(institutions, artists, curators)

Since 1994, Étant donnés has given grants to major institutions, including:

Art in General, New York  
Artists’ Space, New York  
Artist’s Institute, New York  
The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago  
Artpeace San Antonio, San Antonio  
Blaffer Gallery, Houston  
California Institute of the Arts (REDCAT), Los Angeles  
Contemporary Arts Center (CAC), New Orleans  
Crosby Street Project, New York  
Delta Axis, Memphis  
Dia Art Foundation, New York  
Fowler Museum at UCLA, Los Angeles  
Grey Art Gallery at NYU, New York  
Henry Art Gallery, Seattle  
High Museum of Art, Atlanta  
International Center of Photography, New York  
The Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston  
The Kitchen, New York  
MAK Center for Art and Architecture at the Schindler House, Los Angeles  
MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge  
MoMA PS1, New York  
Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago  
Museum of Contemporary Art, Detroit  
The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles  
Museum of Modern Art, New York  
New Orleans Museum of Art, New Orleans  
The Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia  
Portland Institute for Contemporary Art, Portland  
San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco  
SITE Santa Fe, Santa Fe  
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York  
Storefront for Art & Architecture, New York  
Swiss Institute - Contemporary Art, New York  
Walker Art Center, Minneapolis  
Wexner Art Center, Ohio  
Whitney Museum, New York

Étant donnés has supported individual artists such as:

Adel Abdessemed  
Chantal Akerman  
Kader Attia  
Yto Barrada  
Valérie Belin  
Olivier Blanckart  
Katinka Bock  
Céleste Boursier-Mougenot  
Mathieu Briand  
Sophie Calle  
Isabelle Cornaro  
matali crasset  
Marcelline Delbecq  
Didier Faustino  
Claire Fontaine  
Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster  
Mark Geffriaud  
Laurent Grasso  
Camille Henrot  
Thomas Hirschhorn  
Pierre Huyghe  
Bertrand Lavier  
Guillaume Leblon  
Annette Messager  
Jean-Luc Moulène  
Orlan  
Jean-Michel Othoniel  
François Perrin  
Laure Prouvost  
Christine Rebet  
François Roche  
Anri Sala  
Bojan Sarcevic  
Caecilia Tripp  
Tatiana Trouvé  
Xavier Veilhan  
Jean-Luc Verna

Curators supported by the Fund (since 2008) include:

Art in General  
Nicholas Baume  
Virginie Bobin  
Jennifer Burris  
Silvia Karman Cubina  
Dean Daderko  
Daniel Fuller  
Ginger Gregg Duggan and  
Judith Hoos Fox  
Lauri Firstenberg  
Tim Griffin  
Anthony Huberman  
Ruba Katrib  
Fionn Meade  
Dominic Molon  
Florence Ostende  
Yasmin Raymond  
Tyler Stallings  
James Voorhies
Project Highlights

Étant donnés has supported groundbreaking projects in diverse fields of contemporary creation, including first solo exhibitions, group shows, special commissions, and Biennales. These projects have served as a launchpad for the artists involved by enabling them to build relationships with U.S. curators and institutions.

Laurent Grasso, *Portrait of a Young Man*
Bass Museum of Art, Miami
October 29th, 2011 — February 12th, 2012
Installation View

For this exhibition, French artist Laurent Grasso was invited to select works from the permanent collection of Renaissance and Baroque art at the Bass Museum of Art. He juxtaposed historical works with his own series of paintings, sculptures, videos, and neons, creating a dialogue between past and present.
Camille Henrot: Cities of Ys
New Orleans Museum of Art, New Orleans
October 11th — April 13th, 2014
The exhibition was organized by Miranda Lash, Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art at NOMA

For her first solo exhibition in the United States at the New Orleans Museum of Art, Camille Henrot investigated the legendary city of Ys in France and the vanishing coastal area of southern Louisiana that is occupied by the ancestral Houma Indians. She has created parallels between the mythical and the contemporary.

Solos: matali crasset
Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, New York
May 1st, 2005 — January 9th, 2006

French designer matali crasset designed an immersive and innovative installation using a variety of media to explore living spaces by transforming them into areas of experimentation and mobility. Her work also included an interactive light-and-sound installation in the new 700-square-foot gallery.

Jean-Luc Moulène: Opus + One
Dia Art Foundation, New York
December 2011 — December 2012
Curated by Yasmil Raymond

Opus + One was the first comprehensive exhibition in North America devoted to the work of Paris-based artist Jean-Luc Moulène. The installation at Dia:Beacon, Riggio Galleries was comprised of objects and images created over the past two decades. It was accompanied by a new project at the Dan Flavin Art Institute in Bridgehampton, New York, as well as a major publication.
Davide Balula, *The Endless Pace (Variations for 60 dancers)*
Performance for Performa, New York
November 15th, 2009
Curated by RoseLee Goldberg

Presented in the Atrium lobby of a Madison Avenue skyscraper, this performance is a collaboration between Davide Balula and the choreographer Biba Bell, inspired in part by Busby Berkeley’s synchronized swimming spectacle. The project was a commission from Performa.

The Third ICP Triennial of Photography
International Center of Photography, New York
September 18th, 2009 — January 17th, 2010

Every three years, New York’s International Center of Photography (ICP) presents a global survey of the most exciting and challenging new work in photography and video. The Third ICP Triennial examined fashion and its relation to contemporary art and other cultural phenomena. Among the artists taking part in the Triennial were Yto Barrada and Valérie Belin.
Jean-Michel Othoniel, *Crystal Palace*
Museum of Contemporary Art, North Miami
May — August 2004

*Crystal Palace* reveals a wonderful world, at once fragile and monumental. The Murano glass beads and the iron ring structure invites us into a contemporary tale combining art and *artisanat d’excellence*.

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Didier Fiuza Faustino
LAXART, Los Angeles
November 3rd — Dec 22nd, 2008
Curated by Lauri Firstenberg

French-Portuguese architect, designer and artist Didier Fiuza Faustino’s site-specific installation at LAXART focused upon the materiality of chain link fence and its use in American cities and suburbs from a critical perspective. The transformation of space and usage of a common material address the social, political, and psychological issues of the sculptural installation and the politicizing nature as a spatial marker.
The exhibition *Theanyspacewhatever* began with Mr. Parreno’s emblem of romantic comedy above the museum’s entrance: a white-on-white movie marquee of neon and fluorescent lights hanging from white, lighted chains. It blinked wildly, like an excited crowd, but had no message and was open to interpretation. It suggested that you were entering a palace of pleasure and purity, art and life, aesthetics and entertainment.
Laure Prouvost: From the Sky
Danspace Project, New York
ART2: Art & Value
April 24th & 25th, 2014
Curated by Fionn Meade

Laure Prouvost's installation *Wantee*, which garnered her the 2013 Turner Prize, envisioned a fictional relationship between Prouvost's grandfather and artist Kurt Schwitters. *From the Sky* was a premiere in New York at Danspace Project, mixing video, music, and live narrative.

Pierre Huyghe, *A Journey That Wasn’t*, 2005
Super 16mm film transferred to HD video

On the evening of October 14th, 2005, one small spot in the heart of Manhattan was temporarily transformed into a striking glacial landscape, becoming the site of a film shoot by internationally renowned artist Pierre Huyghe. The exhibition/film was curated by Tom Eccles, former director of the Public Art Fund. In collaboration with 2006 Biennial Exhibition curators Chrissie Iles and Philippe Vergne, the project was presented at the Whitney Museum of Art (March 2nd — May 28th, 2006).
Curatorial Research Highlights

The program supports curators and art historians working on exhibitions or research related to the French art scene. Most sponsored curators organized an exhibition and published a catalogue, and their curatorial research led to projects including first solo exhibitions, group shows, and artists being invited for residency programs in the U.S.

Yasmil Raymond
Curator

Abstract Resistance
Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN | February — May, 2010
Starting with Michel Foucault’s assertion that “where there is power, there is resistance,” curator Yasmil Raymond argued that art made since World War II has been shaped by traumatic historical events in complex ways. The exhibition brought together four generations of artists whose works have rarely, if ever, been seen together in one installation. In their struggle with the abstract qualities of death, violence, and conflict, the artists represented in Abstract Resistance provoked discomfort as well as the possibility for empathy. To accompany the exhibition, the Walker Art Center published a collection of essays by exhibition curator Yasmil Raymond, art historian Simon Baier, and philosopher Marcus Steinweg, as well as artist statements by Thomas Hirschhorn, Gedi Sibony, and Cathy Wilkes.

Dean Daderko
Curator

Parallel Practices: Joan Jonas & Gina Pane
Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, Texas | March — June, 2013
This exhibition brought together a selection of works by two artists born a short time apart who are renowned for their foundational contributions to the field of performance art. Jonas and Pane were proto-feminist artists, working in New York and Paris respectively, who worked in multidisciplinary methods at a time when many of their peers focused their attentions on a single medium. Through selections of their sculpture, photography, videos, drawings installations, and live arts, Parallel Practices celebrated the shared and complementary aspects of Jonas’ and Pane’s art, and highlighted the differences that characterized their unique bodies of work.

To accompany the exhibition, the catalogue Parallel Practices: Joan Jonas & Gina Pane explored the intersections of Jonas’ and Pane’s practices. It included texts by art historians Dr. Barbara Clausen, Élisabeth Lebovici, and Anne Tronche, as well as a text by the exhibition’s curator, Dean Daderko. Significantly, this publication is among the first considerations of Pane’s work to be published in English and includes translations of crucial texts by the artist.
Sponsors & Partners

Cultural Services of the French Embassy in the U.S.
The Cultural Services is a division of the French Embassy in the United States, first imagined in the 1930s by Paul Claudel as a conduit for sharing and promoting the best of French culture. In 1945, General de Gaulle appointed Claude Lévi-Strauss as the first Cultural Counselor, with the mission of providing Americans (individuals and organizations) with access and resources to engage with French culture and promote it in their own communities. | frenchculture.org

Institut français
Under the supervision of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Institut français implements France’s cultural action abroad. Its role is to act as the conduit for a “diplomacy of influence,” which includes promoting visual art, architecture, and design and lending support to artists living and working in France, Africa, and the Caribbean. By fostering dialogue between French and foreign cultures, the Institut français responds to the needs of France via a policy of listening, partnership, and openness to the world.

Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication
The French Ministry of Culture and Communication aims to make the major works of humanity—and especially those of France—accessible to the largest number of people possible. As such, it maintains a policy of conservation, protection, and development of all components of French cultural heritage. It promotes the creation of works of art and of the mind, and the development of art practices and education. It further contributes to cultural initiatives outside of France and to initiatives relating to the establishment of French cultural programs throughout the world.

Florence Gould Foundation
The Florence Gould Foundation, an American foundation devoted to French-American exchange and amity, has consistently provided major support to Étant donnés since its founding. Born of French parents in San Francisco in 1895, Florence Gould lived both in the United States and France during her life, which was shaped by an interest in and dedication to arts and letters. Having no heirs, at her death in 1993, Florence Gould left the bulk of her fortune to the foundation bearing her name.

Helen Frankenthaler Foundation
The Helen Frankenthaler Foundation, established and endowed by the artist during her lifetime (1928-2011), is dedicated to promoting greater public interest in and understanding of the visual arts. It supports the artist’s legacy through a variety of initiatives, including exhibitions, loans of artworks, research and publications, conservation, grants, and educational programs for the public and the scholarly community. As the principal beneficiary of Helen Frankenthaler’s estate, the Foundation maintains an archive of original papers and materials pertaining to her life and work and a collection of her artwork in a variety of media. | frankenthalerfoundation.org
FACE Foundation
The FACE (French-American Cultural Exchange) Foundation is an American nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting French-American relations through innovative cultural and educational projects. In partnership with the Cultural Services of the French Embassy in the United States, FACE Foundation promotes artistic, literary, and educational exchange and collaboration between creative professionals from both countries.

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