

Merce Cunningham and Robert Rauschenberg Award Winners Announced

Sarah Cascone, Friday, January 9, 2015



Eve Beglarian, winner of the 2015 Robert Rauschenberg Award.

The Foundation for Contemporary Arts (FCA) has announced the winners of its 2015 Robert Rauschenberg Award and the inaugural Merce Cunningham Award, as well as the recipients of its Grants to Artists. The winners in the field of visual arts are David Diao, David Hartt, and Xaviera Simmons.

Founded by John Cage and Jasper Johns, the foundation has distributed \$4.5 million since establishing the grant program in 1993. The 2015 grants have gone up to \$35,000 each from \$30,000 in 2014. That was itself a \$5,000 increase from the prior year, as the Grants for Artists were celebrating their 20th edition, and the organization as a whole was marking its 50th anniversary.

The Robert Rauschenberg Award, now in its third year, goes to composer Eve Beglarian, who is cited for her willingness to break genre boundaries (her work includes electronic, vocal, chamber, and

orchestral music). Beglarian carefully documents her work and process, such as her 2009 kayak and bicycle journey down the Mississippi River, which saw her team up with local musicians she met during her travels.

The inaugural recipient of the Merce Cunningham Award, which comes with an unrestricted grant, is choreographer, dancer, and filmmaker Yvonne Rainer, who trained with Cunningham in the 1960s and helped found New York's Judson Dance Theater. "It gives me pleasure to remember, long ago, seeing Yvonne dancing with a ball in Merce's old 14th Street studio," Johns wrote of Rainer's selection in an e-mail to the New York Times. The biannual award, which recognizes artistic achievement in the spirit of Cunningham, who died in 2009, has been established thanks to a \$375,000 grant recently bestowed upon the FCA by the Merce Cunningham Trust (see "Merce Cunningham Trust Bestows Major Gifts to Art Organizations").

The FCA awarded 14 grants to artists across five disciplines, including the Body Cartography Project, Melanie Maar and Will Rawls for dance; Ellen Fullman, Zach Layton, and Missy Mazzoli for music/sound; Mallory Catlett, Jim Findlay, and Cynthia Hopkins for performance art/theater; Julie Patton and Tony Towle for poetry; and David Diao, David Hartt, and Xaviera Simmons for visual arts.