

Frankenthaler

FRANKENTHALER CLIMATE INITIATIVE EXPANDS TO \$10 MILLION

MORE THAN \$5 MILLION AWARDED TO 79 ART MUSEUMS ACROSS U.S. AS PART OF INAUGURAL GRANTMAKING CYCLE

Launched by Helen Frankenthaler Foundation in Partnership with RMI and Environment & Culture Partners, Initiative Advances Goal of Carbon Neutrality across the Visual Arts

New York, NY—July 28, 2021—The **Helen Frankenthaler Foundation** announced today that it has increased the [Frankenthaler Climate Initiative](#) to a total commitment of \$10 million and conferred \$5.1 million to nearly 80 visual art institutions across the United States. The first program of its kind supporting energy efficiency and clean energy projects for the visual arts in the U.S., the Frankenthaler Climate Initiative was developed in partnership with [RMI](#), a leading global expert and advocate for clean energy, and [Environment & Culture Partners](#) consultancy, and was launched this past February as a \$5-million, multi-year program. In response to the range, depth, and need of applications from the first call for proposals, the Foundation is conferring the full initial commitment in its inaugural cycle and dedicating an additional \$5 million to be awarded over the next two years.

The 79 grant recipients from the 2021 grantmaking cycle represent a broad cross-section of collecting institutions across more than 25 states, ranging from smaller specialized museums, including the **Abbe Museum** (ME) and **Museum of International Folk Art** (NM), to regional powerhouses like **Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami** (FL) and **Denver Art Museum** (CO), to major encyclopedic institutions such as the **Metropolitan Museum of Art** (NY) and **National Gallery of Art** (DC). With annual operating budgets ranging in size from \$1 million to nearly \$500 million, applicants' diversity demonstrated an expansive interest and need for this support across the field. A full listing of grantees is available at frankenthalerclimateinitiative.org.

“The Frankenthaler Climate Initiative was conceived to move art museums toward net zero, and to set an example for all institutions and citizens to follow suit. We wanted to help U.S. art institutions join the climate fray. There is a void to be filled: a crying need to provide technical know-how and financial support to art institutions to scope their needs, define problems, and implement solutions. We made a wide swath of grants in the hope that private benefactors and public policy would continue to support these and other art institutions in their climate goals,” said Fred Iseman, President of the Helen Frankenthaler Foundation. “RMI, one of the world’s key thought, policy, and technology leaders in global carbon reduction, has agreed to work alongside us to provide our FCI grantees with its massive environmental engineering expertise for one reason: the importance of art as an instrument of enlightenment and public leadership. We are grateful to them and to Environment & Culture Partners, and delighted by the breadth and depth of the 79 institutions who successfully applied for grants to date. The enormous response caused us to double down on our commitment.”

Added Iseman, “Life imitates art—think of Delacroix and his *Liberty Leading the People*. That painting helped overthrow the last French Bourbon king. We are proud to do our part in a climate call to arms.”

"Humanity is facing an existential crisis due to climate change. And since the arts can and should play a leadership role in focusing society on crucial issues, we have initiated our largest grant program to date to help museums participate in this all-important campaign against global warming. The Helen Frankenthaler Foundation wants to help galvanize the arts community to reach for a net-zero carbon footprint starting right now," said the Foundation's Chairman Clifford Ross.

Added Foundation's Director, Elizabeth Smith, “By documenting and sharing best practices and expanding our funding, the impact of the Frankenthaler Climate Initiative will not only be measured by the grants we confer but the impact over time on the sector as it supports the creation of greener and more sustainable institutions.”

Reducing both operational costs and climate impacts for the planet, the inaugural grants support key interdependent goals at each of the institutions, including:

- Providing critical funds to institutions to replace end of life systems, bring existing buildings up to current standards, and respond to evolving state and local policies, at **Met Cloisters** (NY), the **Museum of Arts and Design** (NY), and the **Seattle Art Museum** (WA);
- Creating new avenues for museums to achieve long-term financial and operational sustainability, such as **ICA Boston** (MA) and **Museum of Fine Arts, Boston** (MA), both of which anticipate that energy savings will pay back the investment made in new systems in less than two years;
- Helping museums actualize their own climate goals, including climate neutral commitments made by such institutions as the **Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum** (NY), **Museum of Modern Art** (NY), and **The Davis** (MA); and
- Advancing an institution's ability to prepare for and respond to climate-driven disasters, including **California Indian Museum and Cultural Center's** creation of a resilient power system and cleaner air system, which will improve museum operations while also establishing a safe haven for the public during forest fires; and **Museo de Arte de Ponce's** (Puerto Rico) assessments for wall insulation and repair to create a climate-ready, earthquake-ready museum.

“As we enter this decisive decade in the fight against climate change, every sector of the U.S. economy is called to aggressively reduce greenhouse gas emissions,” said Jules Kortenhorst, CEO of RMI. “Charitable institutions will require significant support for these technical and capital projects, but the good news is that so much of energy efficiency is cost-effective, providing financial benefits while reducing emissions. Every efficiency and clean generation project funded through the Frankenthaler Climate Initiative will be a form of endowment investment for the museum recipient and for the planet.”

Applications were evaluated on the bases of both feasibility and impact, and monetary awards have been issued in proportion to the scope and timeline of the project. Awarded projects were evenly divided between scoping and technical assistance grants, which help museums understand the climate and energy mitigation opportunities at their facilities and support the specification and budgeting to allow for procurement and financing, and implementation grants, which provide partial and seed funding for fully specified projects. Recipients are required to track and report their energy and greenhouse gas reduction in Energy Star® Portfolio Manager, providing important data for the cultural sector and the climate movement. The Helen Frankenthaler Foundation will continue working with grantees through the coming years to share best practices and insights from their projects. The application process for the next grantmaking cycle is expected to commence in early 2022.

About the Frankenthaler Climate Initiative

The [Frankenthaler Climate Initiative](#) is the first nation-wide program to support energy efficiency and clean energy use for the visual arts and the largest private national grant-making program to address climate change action through cultural institutions. Its grants provide critical support to visual art museums in the United States seeking to assess their impact on the environment and to lower ongoing energy costs, which are among the highest fixed costs faced by museums. The Frankenthaler Climate Initiative builds on the Helen Frankenthaler Foundation's commitment to social impact philanthropy, catalyzing change across critical issues in the arts.

The Frankenthaler Climate Initiative was launched and is managed in association with [RMI](#), an independent nonprofit that engages businesses, communities, institutions, and entrepreneurs in accelerating the adoption of market-based solutions that cost-effectively create a clean, prosperous, and secure low-carbon future, and [Environment & Culture Partners](#), a nonprofit that creates relationships and leads collaborations that engage the cultural sector in broader climate action.

About Helen Frankenthaler Foundation

Established and endowed by Helen Frankenthaler during her lifetime, the Helen Frankenthaler Foundation advances the artist's legacy and inspires a new generation of practitioners through a range of philanthropic, educational, and research initiatives. Since becoming active in 2013, the Foundation has continued to strategically expand its program, which includes organizing and supporting significant exhibitions of the artist's work, fostering new research and publications, advancing educational programs in partnership with arts organizations around the world, and launching groundbreaking initiatives that foster systemic change in the field. As a primary resource on the artist, and a steward of her collection and archive, the Foundation holds an extensive selection of Frankenthaler's work in a variety of mediums, her collection of works by other artists, and original papers and materials pertaining to her life and work.

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