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## Foundation for Contemporary Arts

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### FOUNDATION FOR CONTEMPORARY ARTS ANNOUNCES INAUGURAL MERCE CUNNINGHAM AWARD RECIPIENT FOR 2015

**New York, NY, January 5, 2015** – Foundation for Contemporary Arts (FCA) is pleased to announce the recipient of the inaugural 2015 **Merce Cunningham Award**. Selected from confidential invited nominations by FCA’s Directors and noted members of the arts community, this year’s recipient is **Yvonne Rainer** (New York, NY).

The Merce Cunningham Award is being established in 2015 with a major endowment gift from the Merce Cunningham Trust to extend and preserve Cunningham’s legacy. One of FCA’s earliest grants was made to support the Merce Cunningham Dance Company’s 1964 World Tour, and the Foundation remained supportive of the Company throughout its existence. The Merce Cunningham Award will be a biennial grant given in recognition of outstanding achievement in the arts that reflects the creativity and spirit of Merce Cunningham. This unrestricted, by-nomination award will be made to an individual artist through FCA’s signature Grants to Artists program. FCA will fund the inaugural 2015 award; the Trust’s endowment gift will support the award beginning in 2017. The Merce Cunningham Award joins two permanently endowed awards at FCA: the biennial John Cage Award and the annual Robert Rauschenberg Award.

Ms. Rainer trained with Merce Cunningham as a dancer in the early 1960s, and was a co-founding member of the Judson Dance Theater. Following a fifteen-year career as a choreographer and dancer, she transitioned to filmmaking where she created seven experimental feature films between 1972-1996. In 2000, she returned to dance and has since completed several choreographies. Her memoir, “Feelings are Facts: a Life” was published in 2006 by MIT Press. Rainer received early grants from FCA in 1966 and 1970.

Founded and guided by artists, FCA’s mission is to encourage, sponsor, and promote innovative work in the arts created and presented by individuals, groups, and organizations. Artists working in dance, music/sound, performance art/theater, poetry, and the visual arts are awarded

nonrestrictive grants to use at their own discretion, and a fund is maintained to help artists with work-related emergencies. Since FCA's inception in 1963, over 900 artists have donated work to raise funds for these grants. The current Directors of the Foundation are: Brooke Alexander, Cecily Brown, Robert Gober, Anne Dias Griffin, Agnes Gund, Jasper Johns, Julian Lethbridge, Glenn Ligon, Kara Walker, and T.J. Wilcox.

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