

VOGUE

PARTIES

At the Foundation for Contemporary Arts's Latest Benefit Exhibition, 106 Artists Unite for a Common Cause

BY MARLEY MARIUS

December 10, 2021



Photo: Brad Farwell

The Foundation for Contemporary Arts was established nearly 60 years ago, by the artists Jasper Johns and John Cage. From the outset, its aim was to make grants, offering critical support to emerging creatives working in dance, music/sound, theater, poetry, and the visual arts. Since 1963—when FCA operated out of Johns’s studio—more than 1,000 artists have contributed to periodic benefit exhibitions, including the one up now through December 18 at Greene Naftali Gallery in Manhattan. (Its proceeds go directly to FCA’s grant programs for individual artists.)

FCA invited the Harlem-based visual artist, writer, and performer Sonia Louise Davis to curate this month’s show, for which a whopping 106 artists donated work. The opportunity had a deeply personal resonance for Davis. “I received FCA’s timely support twice via Emergency Grants when rapidly approaching exhibitions seemed almost impossible to pull off,” she has said. “In the years since, I have told countless other artists about this lifeline, especially those who show and perform at non-profits and artist-run venues.” Needless to say, the FCA’s aid was especially necessary over the past two years, when canceled opportunities meant, for many artists, vanished income.

For “Sonia Louise Davis Selects: Exhibition and Sale to Benefit the Foundation for Contemporary Arts”—which had a cheerful and well-attended opening last night—Davis considered the ways in which artists “are always embedded within larger ecosystems, even when we have relatively solitary studio practices.” To that end, she thought of groups of friends and artist couples who worked both collaboratively and alone; several artists she admired but didn’t know personally; and others whom she thought could benefit from being in FCA’s orbit.

The resulting exhibition is thrillingly varied: a miniature work of ink on plastic by Johns lives next to a recent sculpture by Suzanne Jackson, and Robert Rauschenberg's twisted-metal *Nasturtium Summer Glut* shares space with Precious Okoyomon's *Angel of Light* which is crafted from wool, yarn, dirt, and blood. Alex Katz, Ken Okiishi, Deborah Willis, Nick Mauss, Jacqueline Humphries, Nan Goldin, and Rochelle Feinstein are just a few of the other artists with work for sale, and next weekend, a performance by Ashley Grier will respond to the curation through movement and voice.

With its spirit of artists-for-artists camaraderie, the show makes for a warming scene—even on the chilliest December evening.



Photo: Brad Farwell