

SKOWHEGAN SCHOOL OF PAINTING & SCULPTURE RECEIVES \$250,000 GIFT FROM HELEN FRANKENTHALER FOUNDATION FOR NEW NAMED STUDIO

New York, NY – October 6, 2017 – Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture, one of the nation’s leading residencies for emerging visual artists, announced today that it has received a \$250,000 gift from the Helen Frankenthaler Foundation. The funds will provide for a new studio building to be constructed on its rural campus in central Maine.

The new building will be named in Frankenthaler’s honor, acknowledging her deep commitment to studio practice, and will accommodate discrete workspaces for three visual artists. When complete, the Frankenthaler Studio will be the 15th studio building on Skowhegan’s 350-acre campus, joining those named for other artists who taught at Skowhegan, including founder Willard “Bill” Cummings and Jacob Lawrence.



Helen Frankenthaler at Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture. June 1986. Photo by Barbara N. Lapcek

“This remarkable gift is deeply meaningful for Skowhegan, which was founded by and for artists. It carries forward that legacy and underscores the critical role that alumni and faculty play in its long-term success,” said Skowhegan Co-Director Sarah Workneh. The sentiment was echoed by Co-Director Katie Sonnenborn, who stated, “Skowhegan is a place that cherishes legacy, and the presence of previous generations is palpable through its archives, historic campus, and honorific spaces like the Frankenthaler Studio that are so inspiring for artists to work within.”

Frankenthaler came to Skowhegan during the summer of 1986 as a visiting faculty artist. In addition to conducting studio visits with participants, she gave a lecture on campus in the Old Dominion Fresco Barn. This talk, excerpts of which can be heard on Skowhegan’s website, is preserved in [Skowhegan’s Lecture Archive](#), a trove of lectures by faculty and other artists who spoke at Skowhegan dating back to 1952.

Clifford Ross, Chairman of the Helen Frankenthaler Foundation, stated, “The Foundation is extremely pleased to support Skowhegan in offering new studio workspaces that will carry Helen’s name. She valued exchanges with students and young artists throughout her life, finding her time at Skowhegan not only meaningful, but also productive for her own work.”

Elizabeth Smith, Executive Director of the Foundation, added, “We are delighted to contribute to Skowhegan’s broader efforts in a way that also signals Helen Frankenthaler’s commitment to the serious work of studio practice.”

The Frankenthaler studio will be one of several new or renovated spaces being conceived by Skowhegan as part of a holistic campus Master Plan. Approximately 750 square feet in size, it will be sited atop a ridge with expansive views to the north, east, and west, and buttressed by dense woods to the south. It will house three Skowhegan participants, who will be among the 65 emerging visual artists selected annually, from a pool of about 2,000, to participate in the summer program. Construction will begin within 24 months, with the first artists in residence in the new spaces by summer 2020.

The gift will be marked on October 23, 2017, when Douglas Dreishpoon, Director of the Helen Frankenthaler Catalogue Raisonné, will moderate a conversation at the Foundation among artists Tom Burckhardt, Byron Kim, and Lisa Sigal, who were participants at Skowhegan in the summer of 1986 when Frankenthaler visited. Seating is limited, and reservations are required. For information or to reserve a seat, email Cori Spencer at cspencer@skowheganart.org.

ABOUT SKOWHEGAN

Skowhegan is an intensive nine-week summer residency program for emerging visual artists located on a historic 350-acre farm in rural Maine. Each year Skowhegan brings together a gifted and diverse group of individuals who have demonstrated a commitment to artmaking and inquiry. Founded by artists in 1946, and still governed by artists, the program provides an atmosphere in which participants are encouraged to work free of market or academic expectations. For additional public information, visit: www.skowheganart.org

ABOUT HELEN FRANKENTHALER AND THE HELEN FRANKENTHALER FOUNDATION

Helen Frankenthaler (1928-2011), whose career spanned six decades, has long been recognized as one of the great American artists of the twentieth century. She was eminent among the second generation of postwar American abstract painters and is widely credited for playing a pivotal role in the transition from Abstract Expressionism to Color Field painting. In addition to unique paintings on canvas and paper, she worked in a wide range of media, including ceramics, sculpture, tapestry, and especially printmaking. Her work, which continues to have a profound impact on contemporary art, is represented in museum collections worldwide and has been the subject of numerous national and international exhibitions and substantial publications.

The New York City-based Helen Frankenthaler Foundation, established and endowed by the artist during her lifetime, is dedicated to promoting greater public interest in and understanding of the visual arts. For more information, visit: www.frankenthalerfoundation.org.

For more information about Skowhegan, please contact Cori Spencer at cspencer@skowheganart.org or Kat Mills at kat@bluemedium.com

For more information about Helen Frankenthaler or the Helen Frankenthaler Foundation, please contact info@frankenthalerfoundation.org, or Jeanne Collins at press@frankenthalerfoundation.org