

SAMUEL HOI
Chair, USA Board of Directors

Thank you for joining us for the seventh annual USA Fellows Celebration. Tonight we salute 54 brilliant artists who will be named USA Fellows and each recognized with a \$50,000 grant. We are grateful to our friends at the Getty Trust for hosting this special evening and to the Rasmuson Foundation for their underwriting support.

United States Artists sprang to life in 2005 when the presidents of the Ford, Rockefeller, Rasmuson, and Prudential Foundations chose to make a \$22 million investment in America's creative potential. Responding to research that indicated the most critical needs for artists in America — which included necessary validation and access to funds to support their work — they launched United States Artists and agreed to become its founding Board of Directors. Today our Board comprises 17 national leaders and is dedicated to USA's mission of investing in America's finest artists and illuminating the value of artists to society.

The USA Board is joined by many good friends committed to our success, most notably our National Leadership Committee, which generously supports the USA Fellowships and USA Projects, our microphilanthropy initiative. These patrons include the Goodworks Foundation, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, and the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts. In particular this year, we are honored to have received a second \$1 million commitment from Bloomberg Philanthropies. Finally, we are pleased to welcome our newest donors, which include Murray Grigor and Carol Colburn Grigor, the New Mexico Arts Commission, and Women With Plans.

USA's long-term vision of permanently endowing each of our 50 USA Fellowships reflects our commitment to counteracting a historic, 100-year boom-and-bust cycle of public support for artists in this country. I am pleased that a total of \$10 million has already been pledged to this effort. We express our deepest gratitude to the Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Rasmuson Foundation, the Todd and Betiana Simon Foundation, and the Windgate Charitable Trust for this ongoing and outstanding dedication to American artists.

By funding artists today and by building an endowment that guarantees their support in perpetuity, USA affirms the critical role artists play in our lives. As we pause to celebrate the particular achievements of this year's USA Fellows, we also acknowledge art's exponential potential to expand and inspire all of us — as a culture and as a country.

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