



Dear Friends,

December is usually the time when we send our best wishes to our friends and supporters, but this year we are announcing that FLAX will cease its activities after its last Project at the Pompidou Center in June 2020. After a decade and a half of pioneering work to "promote Mutual Understanding Between the Diverse Communities of Southern California and France Through the Arts," and after much reflection, we have come to this ultimate conclusion. It has been a privilege to serve as FLAX's Executive Director for the last twelve years and to work with a small but mighty group of committed staff members, a Board of Directors that believes in FLAX's important vision and mission, and, of course, the many of you who have become part of the FLAX family.

Our individual desires to pursue other endeavors, coupled with the loss of our artist-in-residence house, led Lionel Sauvage, FLAX's Founding President and patron, as well as I, its Executive Director, to this final decision.

Thanks to the trust and carte blanche the Board has afforded me to develop programs fitting FLAX's mission of promoting mutual understanding through the Arts, the Foundation has, since its inception in 2006, gradually evolved from initially providing grants to other nonprofits with like-minded goals to initiating and producing over 100 FLAX Projects ranging from exhibitions, performances, and screenings to talks and publications.

With the *LOST (in LA)* exhibition, curated by Marc-Olivier Wahler, in partnership with Palais de Tokyo and the Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery, FLAX became key in both creating awareness for the French contemporary art scene in Los Angeles and establishing itself as a visionary and leading multi-disciplinary arts organization, with a following both in SoCal and in France.

While we were extremely proud of the recognition we received from our peers, our vision to further develop long-term collaborations between France and Los Angeles-based artists required a different strategy. To wit, in January 2014 the *Fahrenheit* by FLAX space, and its related residency program, opened under the curatorial direction of Martha Kirszenbaum. Exhibitions and performances, featuring predominantly original works, provided extensive visibility to young artists, curators and writers never presented before in the US. *Fahrenheit* became a successful and well attended cultural destination. But our commitment to public engagement remained an ultimate goal and motivator.

In 2016 our current Director and Curator Anna Milone took FLAX beyond the *Fahrenheit* walls by developing FLAX Projects with a mobile, cooperative, and interdisciplinary approach. To introduce our artists-in-residence program to a wide and diversified audience, we produced innovative projects in partnership with Los Angeles, and more recently, Paris-based cultural institutions. Concurrently, the FLAX residency house welcomed over 50 France-based artists, curators, and writers providing them curatorial guidance and advice on how to navigate the LA art scene.

This is where we stand today, and this is when we exit, while we are at the peak of performance. The FLAX years have been the most productive and fulfilling of my professional life, and I hope that you, our audience, have discovered, enjoyed, and benefited from our programming and advocacy on behalf of LA and France-based contemporary artists. Again, I want to express my gratitude for your continued support for the work of FLAX and to the dedicated collaborators, private and public donors, senior advisor Olga Garay-English, and Board founding members Gerald du Manoir and Mark Tinglof, who made our journey a reality.

With Best Regards,

Elisabeth Forney
Executive Director