

# Hallie Ford Fellows in the Visual Arts 2017–2019

28 Jan–20 Mar 2022



Corey Arnold  
Avantika Bawa  
Pat Boas  
Bruce Burris  
Julie Green

James Lavadour  
Niraja Cheryl Lorenz  
Elizabeth Malaska  
Demian DinéYazhi'  
Harrell Fletcher

Jessica Jackson Hutchins  
Flint Jamison  
Jess Perlitz  
Sharita Towne  
Marie Watt

Curated by Jenelle Porter

The Ford Family Foundation celebrates the contributions and potential of outstanding Oregon artists working in fine art and craft with its Hallie Ford Fellowships in the Visual Arts, awarded annually by an independent jury of arts professionals. This exhibition includes artworks by the fifteen artists honored in 2017, 2018 and 2019: Corey Arnold, Avantika Bawa, Pat Boas, Bruce Burris, Julie Green, James Lavadour, Niraja Cheryl Lorenz, Elizabeth Malaska, Demian DinéYazhi', Harrell Fletcher, Jessica Jackson Hutchins, Flint Jamison, Jess Perlitz, Sharita Towne, and Marie Watt.

This exhibition presents no singular thematic organizing principle. Rather, it is composed of many ideas and approaches: community, presence and presentness, bearing witness, devotion, the natural and urban environment, systemic injustice, daily lived experience, the body, civil rights and the rights of citizens, power, survival, storytelling and who is permitted to tell stories, philosophical divides, colonialism, the metaphorical dimensions and allowances of abstraction, beauty, pedagogy, and legacies. Most, if not all, of these words describe the struggles of the past two years. These words suggest, as well, how we, as viewers and as citizens, might move the conversations prompted by these artworks out of the museum and into our daily lives.

Unprecedented is a word we use when we don't yet know how to contextualize extraordinary events. It's a word we use when the present is tumultuous, the future unknowable. During these times, it is often our writers, musicians, and visual artists who show us ways to interpret, to translate, and to make meaning. And because art has the capacity to hold time—hold the past, present, and future, often simultaneously—we often turn to the arts for sustenance. Though we should resist asking artists to define the moment as we live it, we do acknowledge that they will continue to make artworks that ask us to look, to pause, and to consider the meanings and roles of art.

JENELLE PORTER | Exhibition Curator  
*January 2022*



## Works in the exhibition

### Sharita Towne

b. 1984; lives and works in Portland

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#### **In These Streets** 2021

Screenprint, edition of 400

In collaboration with Bruce Poinsette

Sharita Towne creates interdisciplinary community art projects that engage local and global Black geographies, histories and possibilities. For this exhibition she has produced an artwork edition in the form of a yard sign, like those now ubiquitous apparitions that proclaim a resident's personal values: "In Our America ... All People Are Equal ... Love Wins ... Black Lives Matter ..." (The design of the red, white, and blue signs mimics the American flag.) Towne appropriates the motif, adding, as she has explained, "Pan-African colors, ideas and values (and necessary antagonisms) needed since this sign first hit Portland streets after the 2016 election. *In These Streets* both localizes and globalizes conversations of Black liberation and Indigenous sovereignty. The edition size of 400 corresponds to the four centuries of folks who have lived and died troubling an idea of 'our America.'" Towne's editioned sign, posted here, can be purchased from our shop for \$44.

### Demian DinéYazhi'

Indigenous Diné, b. 1983; lives and works in Portland

2

#### **We don't want a president ...** 2018

Site-specific installation in vinyl

In collaboration with R.I.S.E. : RADICAL

INDIGENEOUS SURVIVANCE & EMPOWERMENT

Courtesy of the artist

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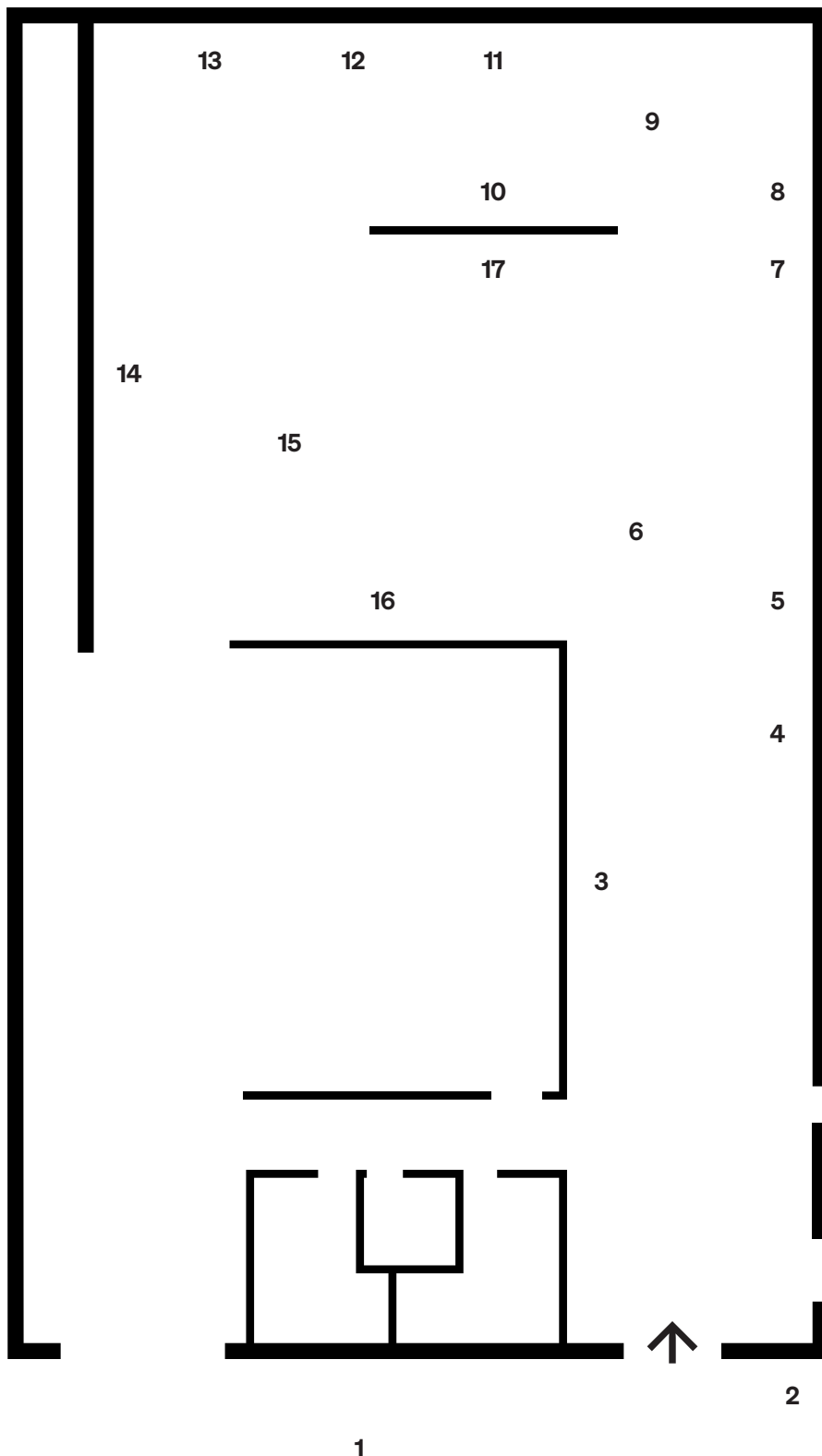
#### **DESTROY THE MYTH** 2020

Neon

Courtesy of the artist

Demian DinéYazhi' is an Indigenous Diné transdisciplinary artist, poet, and curator born to the clans Naasht'ézhí Tábaqahá (Zuni Clan Water's Edge) and

continued





## Demian DinéYazhi'

continued from previous

Tódích'í'nii (Bitter Water). Through research, mining community archives, and social collaboration, they highlight the intersections of Radical Indigenous Queer Feminist identity and political ideology while challenging the traditions, histories, systems and markets that characterize contemporary art. They do so using various modes of address, including performance, writing, and objects.

DinéYazhi' appropriates, in form and style, a 1992 text by artist Zoe Leonard, "I want a president," written in support of poet Eileen Myles's bid for the U.S. presidency. Leonard's text emerged from her feminist and LGBTQ perspective, and has been frequently re-presented by the mainstream art world as a call to action. DinéYazhi' turns that text on its head (and cites the ways artists from Jenny Holzer to Hock E Aye Vi Edgar Heap of Birds have deployed text) with a kind of "re-write" that rejects transformation of existing structures and asks instead for a necessary revolution that "centers Indigenous, Brown, & Black livelihood."

## Niraja Cheryl Lorenz

b. 1953; lives and works in Eugene

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### Strange Attractor # 16 2015

Hand-dyed and commercial solid-colored cotton fabric, machine-pieced and machine-quilted by the artist  
Collection of the artist

5

### Strange Attractor # 14 2016

Hand-dyed and commercial solid-colored cotton fabric, machine-pieced and long-arm quilted by Susan Miner  
Collection of the artist

Niraja Cheryl Lorenz's *Strange Attractor* series draws its inspiration and title from mathematics and chaos theory, specifically the theory that elements evolve toward an "attractor," whereas a strange attractor is fractal and evolves toward a repeating pattern at all dimensions. "One of the concepts of chaos is that the initial conditions can be changed just a tiny bit, even by one degree, and the result can be ultimately totally different," she says. "I see that in my work." Working in the tradition of art quilts, Lorenz's works are composed of individual, solid-colored fabrics arranged in small, strip-pieced modules. They are in and of themselves multi-hued

universes. These modules are combined to generate geometric, mosaic-like fields.

## Jessica Jackson Hutchins

b. 1971; lives and works in Portland

6 left to right

### Holy Galore 2021

Glazed ceramic

### Love As It Is 2021

Glazed ceramic

### Cool Thing 2021

Glazed ceramic

### Distant Country 2021

Glazed ceramic

### Giver of Luck 2021

Glazed ceramic

Courtesy of the artist, Adams & Ollman, Portland, and Marianne Boesky Gallery, New York and Aspen

Jessica Jackson Hutchins makes work that often translates, and transforms, the daily stuff of life into art. A couch is pressed into service as a pedestal; the kitchen is transformed into a printing press; her family's clothing is reconfigured as elements in a collage. The rituals of quotidian use linger in these objects, infusing her work with charged sentiment. Hutchins has long worked in multiple mediums. The ceramic sculptures on view here resemble abstracted bodies. The artist uses a small scale to recognize the exceedingly domestic lives many have experienced during the past two years of pandemic lockdowns. As well, touch and tenderness—so glaringly absent of late—is critical to her thinking and making. The application of glaze ranges from matte, muted colors to shiny, bright greens and oranges that reference Tang dynasty ceramic tomb figurines. Hutchins' arrangement brings the works' similarities and differences into focus in minor moments of intimacy.

## Elizabeth Malaska

b. 1978; lives and works in Portland

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### Maidens 2019

Oil and Flashe on canvas

Courtesy Joan Delillah and Jacqueline Joy Pepin

8

### Controller 2019

Oil, Flashe, charcoal, and pencil on canvas

Collection of the Hallie Ford Museum of Art, Willamette University, Maribeth Collins Art Acquisition Fund, 2021.005

continued



## Elizabeth Malaska

continued from previous

Elizabeth Malaska makes paintings that explore the situation of the female body in a range of art historical contexts and histories, raising issues about representation, femininity, power, domination, and vulnerability. The female figure—or figures—in her large paintings is often central and disproportionately large in relation to the interior. Bodies luxuriate, albeit awkwardly, in relation to an assortment of eccentric, but referential objects. In *Controller*, she includes a mirror designed by Italian designer Ettore Sottsass and a video game controller; in *Maidens*, a sunburst-like painting by artist Judy Chicago. Malaska's surfaces are varied and highly tactile, as well as evocatively patterned, with the body itself the least coherent visual element. She explains, “I think about touch when I am composing an image. Objects overlap, things touch in weird places, or bisect one another. It's a way of creating an erotic sense with an image, making it refer again to the human body and our shared intimacy, dependence, and desire.”

## Jess Perlitz

b. 1978; lives and works in Portland

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**Barely There** 2017

Fiberglass, FGR-95

Courtesy of the artist

Jess Perlitz makes work that bridges sculpture, performance and drawing. Much of her focus is on the intersections of landscapes and bodies, specifically her own body in often deadpan and site-specific performances. Her humor is affecting, even Chaplinesque, in the ways it contemplates solitude, invisibility, and fruitless but well-intentioned gestures. *Barely There* is a mask so big it is practically a wall, a massive sculpture that contradicts its own genre by edging toward two dimensions. It exists in space; it holds space, but just barely. The shape is the simplest kind of mask, based on ancient Hellenistic style, with two holes for eyes and little other detail. Its scale allows for viewers to disappear, and to engage the holes—if one is of a certain height—as windows.

## Julie Green

1961–2021; lived and worked in Corvallis

10 left to right

**Beef House Near Danville** 2020

Acrylic, glow-in-the-dark paint and palladium leaf on Tyvek

Randy Steidl, 1st steak in 17 years, Beef House near Danville Correctional Center. (Green collaborated with artist Clay Lohmann to sew the red meat center.)

**Hyde Park Steakhouse** 2021

Acrylic, cotton, nylon star and number from Illinois state flag, 100-year-old silk ribbon from artist's grandmother, thread and glow-in-the-dark paint on Tyvek

The interview form states Hyde Park Steak House. Taking liberties, I depicted Hyde Park's landmark Robie House by Frank Lloyd Wright and added a few cattle on the roof. Nate Fields's hopeful words from the interview form are reproduced in the painting: We can end capital punishment.

**Pepsi-Cola Monticello for Horace Roberts** 2019

Acrylic and glow-in-the-dark logo on Tyvek

On release, Horace Roberts enjoyed a big Pepsi first thing, then Chick-Fil-A at the airport on the way home. Roberts served more than 20 years in prison for a murder he did not commit. The two true perpetrators were arrested in October of 2018, the same month that Roberts was exonerated and freed. This story was provided by the wrongfully convicted individual and the California Innocence Project. Proceeds from the sale of work is shared with the organization that helped secure the individual's release.

All works courtesy of the Estate of Julie Green

*First Meal* is an ongoing painting series, started in 2018, that embodies the themes at the forefront of Julie Green's oeuvre: collective memory, loss, and social justice. Works in the series depict the first meals eaten by wrongfully convicted persons after leaving prison, created from stories generously provided by the wrongfully convicted and the Center on Wrongful Convictions, Bluhm Legal Clinic at Northwestern University (unless noted otherwise). Proceeds from the sale of work is shared with the organization that helped secure the individual's release. The paintings are roughly flag-sized, a scale that alludes to the magnitude of a wrongful conviction. “I think of flags generally being something we are proud of, something to hold up, something to wave,” Green said, “but *First Meal* flags point to flaws in our legal system. They are pennants of loss.”



## Bruce Burris

b. 1955; lives and works in Corvallis

**11** top row, left to right

**We Will Be Glad to Answer Questions That Might Come Up During Treatment** 2020

Mixed media on paper

**We Strive to Make Our Services ...** 2020

Mixed media on paper

**Welcome to Eastern State Hospital** 2020

Mixed media on paper

bottom row, left to right

**Perverse Climate Morality.** 2020

Mixed media on paper

**Friendliest Manner** 2020

Mixed media on paper

**And Whose Treatment Needs** 2020

Mixed media on paper

All works courtesy of MARCH GALLERY, New York, NY

Bruce Burris uses hobby shop materials, vernacular lettering, comic-style rendering, and high-key color to represent and address the complexity of history, place and community. His works pay tribute to those who've experienced challenges, including veterans and those who struggle with addiction and mental illness. The six drawings here pile up words using exuberant color and softly undulating shapes in a happy-go-lucky vibe that at first glance camouflages the solemnity of their source: a patients' manual from Eastern State Hospital, the nation's second-oldest psychiatric institution, located in Lexington, Kentucky. In 2006, Burris, then living in the area, discovered a mass grave on hospital property dating to the 1970s. He generated several community projects, including an organization to advocate for the identification of remains, a permanent site on hospital grounds, and a memorial marker.

## Harrell Fletcher

b. 1967; lives and works in Portland

**12** left to right

**12.12.20 (Squirrel)**

Digital print

**9.7.21 (Tower)**

Digital print

**12.8.21 (Stickers)**

Digital print

All works courtesy of the artist

**7.29.21 (Apples)**

Digital print

**9.17.21 (Jay)**

Digital print

Harrell Fletcher is widely recognized for his socially engaged, interdisciplinary, collaborative art works that explore the social dynamics of communities, social spaces, and institutions. He has made projects in museums, schools, and correctional facilities. But despite the collaborative nature of social practice art, Fletcher's approach often exposes entrenched hierarchies of value and objecthood, of social and economic structures. It does so by privileging the ephemeral over the easily categorizable art object. Still, the artist has, since he was young, recorded his work and his surroundings with a camera. His formal study led to an engagement with artists such as Jim Goldberg and Larry Sultan, photographers who observed and documented the world as it is. Fletcher explains that the works on view emerge from his collaboration with subjects—a bird, a stranger—that are part of his daily life. They are made with an iPhone, impressionistic and casual, and often blurred by zooming in a distant subject. "I'm interested in adequacy, what it takes to make something just cross the line into significance or 'art,' and I think these images reflect that concept. They are very simple formalizations of the act of pointing to moments and things I find interesting."

## James Lavadour

Walla Walla, b. 1951;  
lives and works on the Umatilla Reservation

**13**

**Land of Origin** 2015

Oil on panel, 6 panels

Courtesy PDX Contemporary Art, Portland

James Lavadour instills in his paintings a form of geological or slow time by working on as many as 100 panels simultaneously, a practice that allows him to build surfaces by accumulation and removal. Panels are then presented as grid arrangements.

continued



## James Lavadour

continued from previous

Working in traditions that range from ancient Chinese and Japanese brushwork to 19th century landscape painters, Lavadour honors the relationships that play out on the painting's surface: the reach of a brush, for instance, and how it encapsulates the literal and metaphorical distances we measure by land. Lavadour explains: "What a painting does is bring you to the edge of perception, out in that place where there are processes happening that we're not usually aware of. Painting is a telescope pointing into worlds we cannot otherwise see."

## Corey Arnold

b. 1976; lives and works in White Salmon, WA

**14** left to right, top to bottom

**Streamset** 2013

**Hansbreen Face** 2013

**Arctic Laser** 2013

**Land Light** 2013

**Polish Polar Station** 2013

Archival pigment prints

Courtesy of the artist and Charles A. Hartman Fine Art, Portland

In 2013, photographer and fisherman Corey Arnold traveled to the Polish Polar Station on Svalbard, a remote Norwegian archipelago in the Arctic.

Arnold wrote of his journey, which was funded by climate research organizations, "At 77° N latitude, the station is a rare human outpost in the far North, on an island with few year-round inhabitants aside from native polar bears, arctic foxes, and an abundance of tiny reindeer. In early September the sky never grows dark, and I spent long days trekking across chossy valleys and crumbling mountains, exploring the many glaciers that rest and rumble within a 24-hour walk. Some days I'd join a glaciologist across vast glacial landscapes to check field instruments and on other days, I would walk alone, hauling a heavy backpack of camera equipment with an old WWII rifle strapped to my back for protection from white bears. I've never felt more vulnerable to chance than in that place—wandering solo across yet another nameless ice field in the Arctic. Here, my insignificance to the universe became fully realized. My primary focus was to photograph glaciers and to make a record of how the region looks today, with a plan to someday return and document change to the land over time. Hornsund is a

collection of images made during this journey by an unlikely human outsider into an unfamiliar and overwhelming land."

## Marie Watt

Seneca, b. 1967; lives and works in Portland

**15**

**Companion Species (Underbelly)** 2018

Aromatic cedar

Courtesy PDX Contemporary Art, Portland, and the artist

Marie Watt makes sculpture and textile works that draw from history, biography, Iroquois protofeminism, and Indigenous teachings. Watt is a citizen of the Seneca Nation with German-Scots ancestry. With her evocative and symbol-laden works she explores the intersection of history, community, and storytelling. Part of a larger series that conflates canine species with the Roman mythical figure of *La Lupa Capitolina*—the Etruscan she-wolf who nursed Romulus and Remus, the mythological founders of ancient Rome—Watt's massive, carved cedar wolf invites a multivalent encounter. Of her work, Watt says, "I think a lot about the symbiotic relationships humans have with the natural world and each other. This echoes Seneca and Iroquois teachings: We are all related, and Animals are our first teachers."

## Avantika Bawa

b. 1973; lives and works in Portland and Vancouver, WA

**16**

**Coliseum Black** 2018

Acrylic and oil pastel on wood panel

Avantika Bawa's expansive *Coliseum* series looks at Portland's iconic Veterans Memorial Coliseum, an International Style building completed in 1960. In drawings, prints, and paintings, Bawa translates the geometric precision of modernism into carefully rendered and elegant perspectival studies of line, shape, form, and color. Her attention to this one subject, the Coliseum, emphasizes her explorations of memory through abstract form, pointing viewers to the ways we memorialize. How do we hold the histories of a place in our memory? "I think of site as a question mark," she has said, "and my work as an answer."



## Pat Boas

b. 1952; lives and works in Portland

17

**Bliksem** 2021

Pigment print on Breathing Color Art Peel paper paintings, left to right

**Sentinel (Window)** 2021

Acrylic and Flashe on linen over panel

**Good Listener** 2021

Acrylic and Flashe on linen over panel

All works courtesy of the artist and Elizabeth Leach Gallery

Pat Boas makes drawings, paintings, and prints that emerge from language, specifically the visual manifestation of word and image from popular print sources. Using the history and lexicon of twentieth-century abstraction, Boas makes work that points to the symbolic forms that surround us, and even define us. Known primarily for her small-scale abstract paintings, Boas has recently expanded, figuratively and literally, to site-specific wallpaper. The pattern is made from a painting: a unique gesture becomes a motif, and then an endlessly reproducing pattern. Boas's installation influences the way we perceive the wall, and the paintings hung upon the wallpaper, by manipulating figure/ground relationships. *Bliksem* is Dutch for lightning, a word that for the artist represents the chaos of recent years, but also, with humor, points to the language Ikea invents for its products.

## Flint Jamison

b. 1979; lives and works in Seattle, WA

**Masterworks on Loan: 2020** 2020

Publication

A copy of the *Masterworks on Loan* publication is on view in Ox's Platform space.

Courtesy of the artist

Working with sculpture, performance, video, and more (including co-founding the art center Yale Union in Portland), Jamison's wide ranging conceptual approach to art making often focuses on context- and site-specific inquiry. "Like a programming language, the framework of my practice changes based on application; inherently, however, the work is concerned with connections and interfaces." A central component of Jamison's artistic inquiry is publishing. Printing and distributing books, magazines, and the like—as well as publishing via mass emails—allows the exchange, dispersal, and regulation of information and images. For the artist's participation in this exhibition, Jamison researched the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art's Masterworks on Loan Program (since renamed), where this work was first made, and published a limited edition book that was distributed for free to University of Oregon art and art history students.

From the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art website (2020):

The Masterworks on Loan program presents exciting works by important, internationally recognized artists and artworks from around the world, borrowed from private holdings. With frequent rotations of the works on view, the JSMA's visitors and large K-12 and university audiences have the opportunity to enjoy and study examples by major artists and art periods not represented in the museum's permanent collection. Lenders are responsible for costs related to presenting their works. Some lenders may receive tax benefits for participating in our Masterworks on Loan program and should consult a tax advisor to learn more.

This exhibition is generously supported by The Ford Family Foundation and the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art at the University of Oregon.

Oregon Contemporary is also supported by The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, the Robert & Mercedes Eichholz Foundation, VIA Art Fund and Wagner Foundation, the Maybelle Clark Macdonald Fund, the James F. & Marion L. Miller Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Oregon Arts Commission, and the Regional Arts & Culture Council. Other businesses and individuals provide additional support.



Oregon Contemporary would like to recognize that our programming is being held on the traditional lands of the Chinook, Cowlitz, and many other Nations. We take this opportunity to offer respectful recognition to the Native communities in our region.

## Oregon Contemporary

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