



OREGON ARTS  
COMMISSION

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**Arts Commission and The Ford Family Foundation Announce  
New Visual Arts Ecology Project. Opening Event April 14.**

Salem, Oregon – The Oregon Visual Arts Ecology Project is now live at [www.oregonvisualarts.org](http://www.oregonvisualarts.org).

The online magazine and archive attempts to further explore the depth and expand the breadth of Oregon's visual arts ecology. The Project is a joint effort of the Oregon Arts Commission and The Ford Family Foundation, who wish to create an accessible, permanent and interactive virtual collection documenting Oregon's visual arts landscape, and the interconnected realms of artist, institution, patron, curator and arts writer. The collection is a beginning, with historic and contemporary content drawn from the archives of the Arts Commission and visual arts partners across Oregon.

A key interest of the Project partners is to increase the volume of critical writing on art in our region in addition to acting as a dynamic, collective repository of all things visual arts in Oregon. We are pleased to announce that 12 new essays by a selection of talented arts writers have been commissioned for the Project, overseen by guest editors Stephanie Snyder, John and Anne Hauberg Curator and Director, The Douglas F. Cooley Memorial Art Gallery; and Sue Taylor, Associate Dean, College of the Arts and Professor of Art History, Portland State University.

[PSU symposium to celebrate Project's launch](#)

On Friday, April 14, the College of the Arts at Portland State University will present a symposium on art writing and criticism to celebrate the launch of the Visual Arts Ecology Project. Four writers will unveil their essays in illustrated talks, with subsequent discussion of their topics, reflections on art criticism and its role in our collective imaginative life, and questions and contributions from the

audience. The four essays—by Patrick Collier, Melanie Flood, Prudence Roberts and Linda Tesner—will be released at that time on the Project website. The remaining essays, by Grace Kook-Anderson, Sam Hopple, Nick Irvin, Marci McDade, Mack McFarland, John Motley, Jon Raymond and Sarah Sentilles, will published throughout the year.

**"Our Imaginative Life:" A Symposium on Art Writing and Criticism**  
**3 to 5 p.m., Friday, April 14**  
**Portland State University, Lincoln Hall 55,**  
**1620 SW Park Blocks, Portland, Ore.**

The symposium is free and open to the public.

The Visual Arts Ecology Project began with a series of conversations with artists and allied professionals in Ashland, Astoria, Bend, Portland, Eugene, Newport and Pendleton, moderated by Arts Commission Visual Arts Coordinator Meagan Atiyeh. These discussions revealed a good deal of similarity across our arts communities. Along with affordable studio space and more robust patronage, artists expressed a critical need for arts writing and other forms of visibility and critical engagement for their work. “The desire for community, be it a local community or one bridged across the state or the world via the internet,” says Atiyeh, “is the bedrock of a creative profession. Communities help educate, challenge and support our artists—they are the unseen force behind a great work of art.”

More than 30 organizations have contributed more than 1,100 items of content to-date. The intent is for the site to continue to gather, receive and also commission new content, to create an informal (never encyclopedic) place where the work of the field – artists, presenting institutions, funders and collectors – may be celebrated and furthered.

Please follow the new Visual Arts Ecology Instagram @oregonvisualarts and the Oregon Arts Commission <https://www.facebook.com/OregonArtsCommission/>  
Information is also available on the Foundation’s website: [www.tfff.org](http://www.tfff.org)

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The Oregon Arts Commission provides leadership, funding and arts programs through its grants, special initiatives and services. Nine commissioners, appointed by the Governor, determine arts

needs and establish policies for public support of the arts. The Arts Commission became part of the Business Oregon (formerly Oregon Economic and Community Development Department) in 1993 in recognition of the expanding role the arts play in the broader social, economic and educational arenas of Oregon communities. In 2003, the Oregon legislature moved the operations of the Oregon Cultural Trust to the Arts Commission, streamlining operations and making use of the Commission's expertise in grant-making, arts and cultural information and community cultural development.

The Arts Commission is supported with general funds appropriated by the Oregon legislature, federal funds from the National Endowment for the Arts and funds from the Oregon Cultural Trust.

The Ford Family Foundation was established in 1957 by Kenneth W. and Hallie E. Ford. Its Mission is "successful citizens and vital rural communities" in Oregon and Siskiyou County, California. The Foundation is located in Roseburg, Oregon, with a Scholarship office in Eugene. The Foundation established its Visual Arts program in 2010 to support Oregon visual artists and Oregon visual arts institutions, and by extension, the visual arts ecology of Oregon. For more information about the Foundation and its Visual Arts Program please visit [www.tfff.org](http://www.tfff.org).