



For Immediate Release

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**Heather Fortner's "Secrets of the Kelp Forest" to be exhibited
in the Governor's Office Dec. 7 – Jan. 31**

Salem, Oregon – Toledo artist Heather Fortner will exhibit "Secrets of the Kelp Forest: Nature printed scenes of life under the canopy" in the Governor's Office of the Capitol Building in Salem from Dec. 7 to Jan. 31.

Fortner's works in "Secrets of the Kelp Forest" present underwater scenes created with layered and juxtaposed elements printed directly from plants and fish. Drawing on the traditional Japanese art of fish rubbings (*gyotaku*) and her lifelong involvement with the world of the sea, Fortner's prints interpret the natural artistry of marine and freshwater realms with life-like detail and rich textures. Fortner began fish printing in 1976, at times working in studios that she set up on ships as a commercial fisherman and an officer in the U.S. Merchant Marine. Living in Toledo, Oregon, since 2012, Fortner continues to find inspiration in the bounty of the Pacific Ocean.

Following graduation from the University in Hawaii with a degree in natural sciences, Fortner spend 25 years working on the water, as a commercial fisherman in Hawaii and with the US Merchant Marine, working her way from seaman to Master (Captain) of seagoing vessels. As she travelled the world by sea, Fortner visited fish markets worldwide to find specimens and studied with *gyotaku* masters in Japan. Since 1987, she has taught *gyotaku* workshops from Alaska to Hawaii to Florida including at Sea Fern Studio (Toledo), The High Desert Museum (Bend), Seattle Aquarium, the University of Hawaii, Oregon State University and Sitka Center for the Arts (Otis). Fortner's work has been published and exhibited in the United States, Canada, Europe and Japan.

The Art in the Governor's Office Program honors selected artists in Oregon with exhibitions in the reception area of the Governor's Office in the State Capitol. Artists are nominated by a statewide committee of arts professionals who consider artists

representing the breadth and diversity of artistic practice across Oregon, and are then selected by the Arts Commission with the participation of the Governor's Office. Only professional, living Oregon artists are considered and an exhibit in the Governor's office is regarded as a "once in a lifetime" honor. Artists whose work has previously been shown in the Governor's office include Henk Pander, Michele Russo, Manuel Izquierdo, James Lavadour, Margot Thompson, Gordon Gilkey and Yuji Hiratsuka.

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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 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 grantmaking, arts and cultural information and community cultural development.

The Arts Commission is supported with general funds appropriated by the Oregon legislature and with federal funds from the National Endowment for the Arts as well as funds from the Oregon Cultural Trust. More information about the Oregon Arts Commission is available online at: www.oregonartscommission.org.