



For Immediate Release

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### **‘These funds give me hope:’ Oregon artists share impact of recent relief funding**

Salem, Oregon – “Before I even opened the email, I exhaled a sigh of relief,” said Eryk Donovan of Portland, one of [646 Oregon artists](#) to receive an [Artist Relief Program](#) grant award from the Oregon Arts Commission, Oregon Community Foundation and the James F. and Marion L. Miller Foundation.

“When you are weighed down, and every step is a struggle, anything that lightens the burden is an immeasurable gift,” added Donovan, one of dozens of awarded artists who shared stories of impact and gratitude with the Arts Commission.

From Hood River, Jason Grimes wrote, “Words can’t express the excitement I feel knowing that I got a new start to give back and make a difference in the community again. This is a real testament to how we all are in this together, I am truly grateful.”

“The notes are so heartfelt and inspiring,” said Brian Rogers, executive director of the Arts Commission. “They remind us how far a little relief can go in bringing hope right now. Our artists play important roles as small businesses, educators and community builders.”

“Art has become an even more essential way to increase our emotional intelligence and further our social evolution,” said Jason Graham (Mosley WOtta) of Bend. “To find that there is real support for this type of thinking and growth is a vision we must continue to foster and care for. This grant will directly positively impact the wellbeing of both the creative practice and family health I am woven into.”

Many of the artists promised to pay the funding forward. “These funds give me hope,” said Joni Kabana. “I promise to utilize them for the benefit of community in some way. I am trying to find an old abandoned building near my home in the Fossil/Spray area to open an art studio and if I can get this to happen in this rural area, I will make sure I use the funds in some way that brings art to residents who live in remote areas. Thank you from the bottom of my heart and the tips of my toes.”

The comments also reveal artists are using the funds to adjust their practice during the pandemic. From Melanie Ooi , “This grant is helping me to pivot from my hands on henna work with clients to producing my documentary about henna. I had intended to use my own earnings to entirely fund the post-production of the film, but in losing the majority of my work in 2020, I was stymied. So through crowd-sourced funding and this grant, we are able to bring my film to completion and release.”

A geographic distribution model ensured artists were funded in every region of the state. They represent a wide array of artistic disciplines and diverse backgrounds and cultures.

[Read more artist comments.](#)

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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](http://www.oregonartscommission.org).