



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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“50 for 50” celebrates 50 years of Oregon’s Percent for Art program

Travel Oregon to collaborate on invitation to explore the collection

In celebration of the 50th anniversary of Oregon’s Percent for Art in Public Places Program, the Oregon Arts Commission presents “50 for 50.” an invitation for Oregonians to rediscover the state through the lens of public art. Oregon was among the nation’s first states to establish a percent for art program; the state’s public art collection now includes close to 3,000 artworks.

Supported in part by Travel Oregon, “50 for 50” encourages exploration of 50 selected works located in state buildings and public spaces from the Oregon Coast to Eastern Oregon. The artworks exemplify the program’s mission to make art an integral part of daily life while reflecting the state’s landscape, communities and people. Each work was selected for its artistic excellence, accessibility, geographic representation and connection to place.

“Travel Oregon is pleased to promote and support ‘50 for 50’ in partnership with the Oregon Arts Commission,” Travel Oregon CEO Todd Davidson said. “Art in public places enriches experiences for visitors and strengthens the economies of local communities while improving quality of life for residents. Arts and culture travelers visit throughout the year, stay longer and spend more on travel, solidifying the arts as a critical economic driver across the state of Oregon.”

Works by more than 900 artists are currently in the state collection, housed in over 280 state buildings occupied by more than 25 state agencies—including the Department of Administrative Services, the Department of Transportation, Oregon’s public universities, the Department of Forestry and others—reflecting the broad reach and collaborative spirit of the program.

To see the 50 selected works, visit the “50 for 50” website. Here are a few examples:

- Clayton Binkley and John Grade’s “Orphan.” a 2022 steel sculpture in front of the Oregon State Treasury’s Resiliency Building in Salem;
- “Tecotosh,” Ed Carpenter’s 2005 glass/metal sculpture spanning the plaza in front of Portland State University’s Engineering Building;
- Janet Echelman’s “Allegory.” a 2014 light art sculpture installed at the University of Oregon’s Matthew Knight Arena;

- Ann Hamilton's "LIFE with LIFE." a concrete paver, sand and gravel sculpture in the courtyard of Oregon State University's Cordley Hall;
- "Weir." Lee C. Imonen's 2006 large-scale cedar and steel sculpture that takes the form of a Native American fishing weir at Eastern Oregon University's Daugherty Hall;
- An untitled large-scale steel sculpture by Lee Kelly installed in 1983 outside Oregon State University's Crop Science Building;
- Henk Pander's "Montfaucon" and "The Oceanscape." 1985 murals installed at Oregon State University's Memorial Union; and
- Susan E. Werschkul Springer's 1993 "Historic Alsea Bay Bridge Interpretive Center Tile Mural."

"This campaign is a tribute to Oregon's open-air museum—a living collection shared by the people, places and stories of our state. For 50 years, public art has transformed ordinary spaces into sites of memory, reflection and wonder. It reminds us that art is not separate from daily life but threaded through it—grounding us in who we are and where we are."

– Ryan Burghard, Public Art and Artist Programs Coordinator

"What makes public art so special is that it's always accessible, whether you're finding solace, gathering with friends, or learning about the collection in your own backyard, public art is for you. It enriches our communities and lives in the shared spaces we inhabit.

"This project has not only deepened my appreciation for public art but has also brought me tremendous joy in witnessing the pride and admiration Oregonians have for this collection. We look forward to that connection continuing to grow and thrive over the next 50 years."

-Sarah Baylinson, Art Collection & Artist Services Specialist

Oregon's Art Acquisition legislation, commonly called "Percent for Art," guides the acquisition of artwork for the state's collection of art in public places, which includes close to 3,000 works. It mandates that 1% of direct construction costs for new or remodeled state buildings be allocated to the purchase or commissioning of artwork. The policy aims to integrate art into the built environment and enhance public spaces. Oregon was among the first states to pass percent for art legislation.

Artists and artworks are selected for each qualifying state building project through a facilitated process that brings together artists, architects and members of the public. Artworks may be of any media, indoors or outdoors, temporary or permanent, purchased or commissioned.

"50 for 50" is a featured exhibition on Creative West's Public Art Archive, where visitors can explore the collection through interactive maps, learn more about each artwork, and access historical materials that reflect the program's impact over the past five decades.

About the Oregon Arts Commission

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 the 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: artscommission.oregon.gov.

About Travel Oregon

The Oregon Tourism Commission, dba Travel Oregon, is a semi-independent state agency whose mission is to inspire travel that uplifts Oregon communities. Collaborating with stakeholders to align as stewards of Oregon, they work to optimize economic opportunity, advance equity and respect the ecosystems, cultures and places that make Oregon... Oregon. Travel Oregon aims to improve Oregonians' quality of life by strengthening the economic impacts of the state's \$14.3 billion tourism industry, which employs more than 121,000 Oregonians.