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## **Oregon Community Foundation Invests \$1 Million in Bold Arts and Culture Projects**

*Creative Heights Projects Celebrate Creativity and Elevate Cultural Voices*

PORTLAND, Ore. — An audio archive that celebrates people who stutter. An independent film with a TV/VCR as its central character. A video series about the Albina neighborhood's historic Black music scene. These are just a few of the 14 thought-provoking arts and culture projects included in the latest round of Creative Heights grants from Oregon Community Foundation.

OCF announced today it will invest more than \$1 million in projects that celebrate bold creativity, elevate cultural voices and explore community issues across Oregon. Grants ranging from \$24,000 to \$100,000 are designed to stretch the creative capacity of artists and culture bearers.

For example, Portland-based composer and interdisciplinary artist Luke Wyland, who is also a person who stutters, said his project “centers my commitment to the stuttering community by expanding the Library of Dysfluent Voices, an audio archive of people with speech differences, through in-person interviews collected in partnership with SPACE, a stuttering nonprofit. Contributors share reflections on life and their relationship to their speech, which are then transformed into immersive ‘voice portraits.’ These portraits will form the foundation for a multimedia installation and performance series that celebrates the richness and complexity of dysfluency.”

Artist and curator Steph Littlebird will use her grant to expand a Contemporary Indigenous Art Biennial exhibit with the Salem Art Association that showcases the artistic talents of Indigenous artists and fosters cross-cultural engagement.

“We are so thrilled to showcase the deep well of Indigenous talent in the Pacific Northwest,” said Littlebird. “We cannot wait for everyone to learn more about the Native creatives and innovators carrying culture forward through contemporary art.”

OCF's Creative Heights initiative has invested roughly \$1 million per year since 2014 — supporting 151 projects across visual art, performance, folk and traditional arts, film and media, literary arts, museum exhibitions, humanities, music, theater, dance, opera, history, cultural heritage, and multidisciplinary works.

"We want to support bold creative visions — not just to advance the careers of these artists, but also to enrich Oregon's creative landscape. These projects give communities access to groundbreaking arts and cultural experiences," said Jerry Tischleder, Senior Program Officer, Arts and Culture, Oregon Community Foundation. "Opportunities like these are rare. We have found that when given the resources they need to reach for the stars, Oregon's creatives deliver."

### **Other grantees include:**

#### **enTaiko | \$66,000**

To support a multisensory taiko performance that creates an inclusive experience for deaf, blind, neurodivergent and physically disabled artists and audiences.

"Echoes of Inclusion reimagines Japanese taiko drumming as a shared language of rhythm and movement, where disabled, non-disabled, Deaf and Hard of Hearing, blind, and neurodivergent artists and audiences create together," said Kazuyo Ito, Artistic Director of enTaiko.

#### **Jason Hill with Albina Music Trust | \$100,000**

To produce an episodic docuseries exploring the history and amplifying the legacy of Black music and culture in Portland's Albina neighborhood.

"The history of Portland's Black music scene is pretty amazing and yet most know little about it. This series with the Albina Music Trust is an effort to honor these amazing artists and their legacies," said filmmaker Jason Hill. "Plus, we have the opportunity to do this when many of them are still here, and we can capture their stories in their own words."

#### **Masami Kawai with Portland Art Museum | \$100,000**

For *Valley of the Tall Grass*, an independent feature film that follows the life of a TV/VCR and explores identity and cinema's language through an Indigenous worldview.

"With my film *Valley of the Tall Grass*, I'm telling a story of Indigenous people who lost ties to their land and found themselves in Oregon, a place I call home," said filmmaker Masami Kawai. "We don't always have our traditional ways intact and sometimes we've lost our language. But we carry connections to family and value ways to sustain life and forgotten objects, like the TV/VCR at the center of the film. The grant will help bring this story to life."

#### **Nez Perce Wallowa Homeland with Oregon East Symphony | \$100,000**

For *Rhythms of a Homeland*, an original performance to be staged outdoor on Nez

Perce ancestral land, blending the symphonic works of Native composer Jerod Tate with Indigenous drumming, dance, and visual storytelling.

"When I sit in the Arbor on the Homeland grounds, I feel a powerful connection to the land and its history," said Nancy Crenshaw, longtime board member for Nez Perce Wallowa Homelands. "When the drums beat, and the spirits come to life, I am overwhelmed. To see this project underway is like a dream, and I'm excited knowing that through the gift of music we will bring people and cultures together and offer hope for the future."

Find a full list of the new Creative Heights grantees [here](#).

### **About Oregon Community Foundation**

Since 1973, Oregon Community Foundation has worked to improve the lives of all Oregonians through the power of philanthropy. In partnership with donors and volunteers, OCF strengthens communities in every county in Oregon through grantmaking, scholarships and research. Individuals, families, businesses and organizations can work with OCF to create charitable funds to support causes important to them. To learn more, visit [oregoncf.org](http://oregoncf.org).

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