



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 13, 2026

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OCF FIELDS FELLOWSHIP INVESTS IN OREGON ARTISTS AND COMMUNITIES

Four Oregon Artists Each Receive \$150,000 Over Two Years

PORTLAND, Ore. — Oregon Community Foundation, in partnership with Oregon Humanities, has named four Oregonians to the Fields Artist Fellowship, which awards \$150,000 over two years to Oregon-based artists working to address issues within their communities through creativity and cultural expression.

- Amber Kay Ball (Portland)
- Yanely Rivas Maldonado (Salem)
- Talilo Marfil (Portland)
- Ernesto Javier Martínez (Eugene)

“These four people are amazing changemakers,” said Jerry Tischleder, Senior Program Officer for Arts and Culture at Oregon Community Foundation. “They have deep connections in their communities and are using creativity in vastly different and incredible ways to spark hope, inspiration and connection, and to raise voices that aren’t always heard. These investments come at times that will open doors for them in ways that wouldn’t be possible otherwise. It’s going to be amazing to see what they do.”

The Fellowship will support these creative individuals to advance their artistic practice and honor and sustain their commitment to create social change within their community. In addition to the \$150,000 award, fellows will receive professional development, networking and community-building opportunities throughout the two-year term.

Community members across the state reviewed applications and interviewed finalists to select this cohort of fellows. The Fellowship term will begin in May 2026 and run through May 2028.

In addition to the four fellows, these other finalists will also receive a one-time award of \$10,000.

- Oluyinka Akinjiola (Portland)
- Micah BlackLight Lael (Ashland)
- Chisao Hata (Portland)
- Anthony Hudson (Portland)
- Jose Antonio Huerta (Springfield)
- Fish Martinez (Siletz)
- Concepcion Samano (Falls City)

Artists of all disciplines and artistic media are eligible for the Fields Artist Fellowship, including writers, filmmakers, visual artists, multimedia artists, culture bearers and performance artists. Eligibility requirements include the following:

- At least five years of professional practice in an artistic discipline or combination of disciplines
- At least three years of residence in Oregon and the intent to reside in Oregon for the majority of the fellowship term (May 2026 to May 2028)
- Demonstrable evidence of artistic practice that can engage with community groups and organizations and/or address community concerns

Oregon Community Foundation, in partnership with Oregon Humanities, administers the program and convenes gatherings for the fellows. Funding is provided by the Fred W. Fields Fund of Oregon Community Foundation. This is the fourth cohort of Fields Artist Fellows, joining twelve previous recipients awarded in 2019, 2021 and 2024.

About the Artists

Amber Kay Ball (she/her) is a Citizen of the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians. Born in Portland, Oregon, she is a director, playwright, visual artist and community-based advocate. As a contemporary multi-practice artist, Amber uses theater, multimedia and beadwork as mediums for sharing stories, truths, laughter and joy. These mediums allow Amber to critically explore, honor and weave Native pasts, presents and futures in a just and liberated methodology. She is a co-founder of Native Playwrights PDX and works to support multigenerational Native theater-makers in the process of new play creation and direction.

Ball plans to use her Fields Fellowship to invest in time for new play development and creation, as well as share current works around Oregon with community. Her hope is to continue with more playwriting and theater making workshops to support more early

career Native theater makers in sharing story and continuing advocating for our communities.

Yanely Rivas Maldonado (she/they) is a working-class printmaker, cultural worker and educator with ancestral roots in the mountains of Michoacán, Mexico — lands traditionally steward by the P'urépecha. Her art practice has been sowed in community and has flourished in the versatile soil of social justice movements and solidarity efforts she's been a part of over the last decade. Their art is an offering and prayer for a world where we are all beautifully free and interconnected — living in good relationship with the lands, waters and beings that so graciously nourish our hearts. They create artwork to weave us across the continuum of past-present-future and to leave seeds of ancestral memory, resistance, joy and hope along the path back to center — back to home.

Yanely's primary creative mediums are printmaking, digital illustration and social practice art. Over the last couple of years, she's been deepening her art practice in traditional cultural arts including basket weaving, natural dyes, beadwork and gourd art.

Yanely plans to use the Fellowship as an opportunity to invest time in foundational arts training and creating a sustainable studio space for printmaking, natural dyeing and traditional crafts. The grant will support her vision to organize art offerings in her community and participate in a residency in Oaxaca, Mexico, while strengthening ties with cultural workers and bearers in the U.S. and Mexico.

"Receiving this Fellowship is truly a blessing. It gives me the time and space to go deep into my art practice in a way that I haven't been able to do before and in a way that feels sustainable and life-giving. I'm looking forward to all aspects of the journey and seeing what artistic seeds take root and bloom for me and my community long-term because of this opportunity." ~ Yanely Rivas Maldonado

Talilo Marfil (he/him) is a West Bisayan immigrant, Filipino American hip hop artist and community leader focused on advancing youth voice, cultural preservation and equitable access to creative resources. For over a decade, he has developed and led arts-based programs with marginalized youth, including co-founding Ascending Flow in East Portland and helping develop Keys, Beats, Bars at MacLaren Youth Correctional Facility in partnership with the Oregon Health Authority. He is the founder of Peer Tribe Foundation, which supports artists and leaders creating measurable impact in their communities. Talilo's work centers storytelling as a tool for healing, self-advocacy and change. In the city of bridges, he serves as a bridge between culture, community and creative opportunity.

Through this Fellowship, Talilo will expand his music career while using his platform to attract and reinvest resources through Peer Tribe Foundation. The grant will support cultural exchange in the Philippines, sustain hip-hop workshops for youth in correctional facilities, and launch a portable recording studio project in Oregon.

"Receiving this Fellowship means I can pour back into the communities that shaped me. I'm looking forward to honoring ancestral knowledge, expanding access to creative

resources, and creating spaces where young people see their voices as powerful and necessary.”~ Talilo Marfil

Ernesto Javier Martínez (he/him) is a queer Chicano/Puerto Rican writer, educator and filmmaker. He was born in Oakland, California, raised between Mexico and the United States, and currently lives in Eugene. He studied literature at Stanford and Cornell, becoming a university professor at the age of 28. Ernesto pivoted toward artistic work when he collaborated with illustrator Maya Gonzalez, authoring *When We Love Someone, We Sing to Them*, the first bilingual children’s book published in North America about a boy who loves a boy. This book earned two International Latino Book Awards and was selected for the American Library Association’s “Rainbow Book List.” He began working as a screenwriter and filmmaker when he collaborated with Director Adelina Anthony, writing and producing his first short film, *La Serenata*, winner of 11 best film awards and distributed by HBO Max. He later contributed to beloved children’s television programs such as *Daniel Tiger’s Neighborhood*, *Sesame Street*, and *Lyla in the Loop*, and co-wrote *Daniel Visits a New Neighborhood: The Movie* (PBS Kids), introducing a new Latinx family to the Emmy-winning franchise.

Ernesto’s work has earned him the Lambda Literary Award, Imagen Award, Spark Award for Oregon Artists, HBO Latinx Short Film Competition Award, and fellowships from the Ford Foundation, Mellon Foundation, and NALIP.

This support comes at a pivotal moment as Ernesto is finalizing his first live action feature film *La Serenata* and beginning bold new projects that challenge stereotypes and inspire hope. Ernesto plans to produce an animated TV pilot, *The Boy Who Became a River*, a fantasy adventure that honors migrant struggles and uplifts queer Latinx youth. The grant will help him create sustainable ways to develop content in Oregon, while building a local creative community.

“Receiving the Fields Artist Fellowship is an incredible honor because it affirms the importance of telling stories that center queer Latinx youth. Too often, these voices are marginalized or erased, and this Fellowship gives me the resources and time to create work that celebrates their resilience, complexity and beauty. I’m excited to use this support to build imaginative worlds that inspire hope and belonging for the next generation.”~ Ernesto Javier Martínez

About Oregon Community Foundation

Since 1973, Oregon Community Foundation has worked to improve the lives of all Oregonians through the power of philanthropy. Each year, OCF distributes more than \$200 million in grants and scholarships in every county in Oregon in partnership with donors and volunteers. 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.

About Oregon Humanities

Oregon Humanities connects people and communities through conversation, storytelling, and participatory programs to inspire understanding and collaborative change. More information about our programs and publications — which include Consider This, Conversation Project, Humanity in Perspective, *The Detour* podcast, Facilitation Training, and *Oregon Humanities* magazine — can be found at oregonhumanities.org. Oregon Humanities is an independent, nonprofit affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities and a partner of the Oregon Cultural Trust.

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