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2026 Individual Artist Fellowships Announced; Brenda Mallory Receives Joan Shipley Award

SALEM, Oregon – Brenda Mallory leads a group of 10 Oregon visual artists awarded 2026 Individual Artist Fellowships and receives the Oregon Arts Commission’s honorary Joan Shipley Award. The other Fellows are Nancy Floyd, Sam Hamilton, Nancy Helmsworth, Horatio Hung-Yan Law, Michelle Muldrow, Jennifer Rabin, Rick Silva, Taravat Talepas and John Whitten. Each Fellow will receive a \$5,000 award.

The Joan Shipley Award, named for Oregon arts leader Joan Shipley, honors her legacy as a collector, philanthropist, and champion of the arts. Shipley, who passed away in 2011, supported numerous arts and humanities organizations and, with her husband John, received an Oregon Governor’s Arts Award in 2005. She was widely regarded as a mentor and friend within the arts community.

The Arts Commission’s Fellowship program is open to more than 20,000 Oregon-based artists. Applicants are reviewed by a panel of Oregon arts professionals who evaluate outstanding talent, demonstrated ability, and commitment to creating new work. The Commission then acts on the panel’s recommendations. For 2026, the program received 208 applications. Visual and performing artists are honored in alternating years.

The 2026 review panel was chaired by David Harrelson, Arts Commissioner, and included arts professionals Abby McGehee, Professor and Art Historian; artists Kim Fink and Michael Boonstra (a 2024 Arts Commission Artist Fellow); Michael Lazarus, Assistant Professor, PNCA Willamette University; Nanette Thrush, Teaching Assistant Professor of Art History at Western University; and William Cravis, Artist and Sole Proprietor of Sisters Slipworks.

“This program is more competitive than ever owing to the exceptional talent of Oregon’s artists and the increasing number of applications,” said Harrelson. “I am inspired to see such thoughtful work grounded in conveying understanding of place and practice. It’s a reminder of how reflective of place our arts community truly is.”

Fellowship recipient biographies follow. Artists’ photos are attached.

Brenda Mallory lives in Portland, Oregon. She grew up in Oklahoma and is a citizen of the Cherokee Nation. She received a B.A. in Linguistics & English from UCLA and a B.F.A. from Pacific Northwest College of Art. Mallory has received grants from the Oregon Arts Commission, the Ford Family Foundation and the Regional Arts & Culture Council. Awards include the Joan Mitchell Fellowship, the Hallie Ford Fellowship, the Bonnie Bronson Fellowship, the Eiteljorg Contemporary Native Art

Fellowship, the Native Arts and Culture Foundation Visual Arts Fellowship and the Ucross Native Fellowship. Residencies include Crow's Shadow Institute of the Arts, Bullseye Glass and International Studio & Curatorial Projects. Her work is in the collections of the National Gallery of Art, the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, the Portland Art Museum, the Heard Museum and the Hallie Ford Museum of Art.

Nancy Floyd uses photography, video and mixed-media to address the ways in which lens-based media can connect deeply with experience and memory. Much of her work addresses the passage of time, representations of women and the aging female body. More recently she's begun a series on trees in Oregon. Floyd is the 2024 recipient of the Victoria & Albert Parasol Foundation Prize for Women in Photography and a 2022 Guggenheim Fellow. Her 39-year self-portrait series, "Weathering Time," was published in 2021 by the International Center of Photography and GOST books. The work was featured in the New Yorker Photobooth (2021) and the New York Times "T Magazine" (2025). Her artwork is in the collections of the Hallie Ford Museum of Art in Salem, the Center for Creative Photography in Tucson, the High Museum of Art in Atlanta, the Museum of Contemporary Photography in Chicago, and various private collections.

Sam Hamilton (also known as Sam Tam Ham) is a working-class, interdisciplinary artist from Aotearoa, New Zealand, of Pākehā (English settler colonial) descent, who has been living and working in Portland, Oregon, since immigrating to the United States in 2014. After 20 years of full-time practice across multiple fields and global regions, Hamilton's practice today functions more like an ecology than a discipline. A garden with rich subterranean continuities, fertile hybridization and verdant seasonal displays. A year-long song. That which happens between an entrance and an exit. What emerges can, and has taken various forms, including: opera, painting, sound installation, photography, artist cinema, ceramics, writing, civic works and social practice projects. Recent projects include a major solo exhibition and live opera project "Te Moana Meridian" that has been presented in various forms at Oregon Contemporary as part of Converge 45 Triennial (2023), the Portland Art Museum with PICA and Boom Arts (2024), Artspace Aotearoa (2020), the Simon Fraser University Gibson Art Museum (2025), and Transmediale, Berlin (2021); as well as other recent exhibitions and projects presented at Fumi Store (2026), Theatre for the New City NYC (2025), Critical Signals, Aotearoa (2025) and Public Nature (2025).

Nancy Helmsworth is a Portland, Oregon-based artist who for years, has been drawn to the rugged beauty of the Pacific Northwest. She works primarily with painting on panels and mixed media within installations. Most recently, she has directed her work to Forest Park in Portland, as a lush, representative forest which is readily accessible as a visual lab and subject source. Finding her focus shifting to kulla kulla* Creek (*means bird in *chinuk-wawa*, the first language of Oregon), which flows through the Bird Alliance and along Lower Macleay Trail within the park, has led her on a journey of discovery and connection with this feature. She continues to chronicle its infinite variations by the season and by running on foot. Simultaneously, she has dug deep into its "settler" history to respond to the jarring intersection of the colonial mapping/gridding of the area with the wild nature and its persistent energy. This man-made overlay is a metaphor for much of the imbalance between Western culture and the Land, one we can experience and know in our own neighborhoods when we pause to notice.

Horatio Hung-Yan Law is a public and installation artist, curator and photographer based in Portland, Oregon. His work explores memory and belonging through the lens of his queer Asian-American and immigrant identity. He engages diverse communities in collaborative projects that investigate the space between individualistic and collective cultures and foster opportunities for civic dialog. Born in British colonial Hong Kong, Law immigrated to the United States with his parents and settled in New York City when he was a teenager. After moving to Portland, he discovered many hidden histories of Chinese communities all over Oregon, and he was inspired by the resilience and creativity of these oppressed and marginalized communities. Since then, he has produced numerous exhibitions and

installations that explored Oregon Chinese history and his immigrant experience. He has also created multiple public art projects in the Pacific Northwest. As Lead Artist and Master Art Planner for the AIDS Memorial Pathway in Seattle, he created Ribbon of Light, his suite of public art sculptures at Cal Anderson Park. Law has been an artistic advisor for Portland Chinatown Museum (PCM) since 2018 and received a Creative Heights Grant in 2022 from Oregon Community Foundation to develop a residency program at PCM.

Michelle Muldrow is an American painter based in Portland, Oregon. Born on a military base in Oklahoma, Muldrow spent her formative years living on Air Force bases throughout America. This nomadic experience laid the foundation for a fascination with the American landscape. Muldrow's work focuses on the experience of landscape using the medium of painting to explore history, aesthetic philosophy, the environment and the concepts of home. As a landscape painter, Muldrow paints the relationships between the present and the past, capturing the landscape as it is suspended in time even as it is of its time.

Jennifer Rabin is a mixed-media sculptor who works with objects that have been discarded and forgotten, having outlived their intended purpose. She finds them in junkyards, along train tracks, piled high in dumping sites, scattered across remote trails. Deteriorating, imperfect, cast aside—they embody the artist's experience with chronic illness, disability and familial estrangement. Using natural fibers, Rabin transforms these unwanted objects into shelter, imagining them as places of safety and refuge. This reclamation is an act of hope and defiance—a testament to rebuilding and resiliency. Rabin has been an artist in residence at Jentel, Caldera, Pine Meadow Ranch Center for Arts & Agriculture and the Oregon Historical Society. She has received grant support from the Regional Arts and Culture Council, the Oregon Community Foundation and the Oregon Arts Commission. She lives in Portland, Oregon.

Rick Silva is an artist who explores landscape via technology and time. His work has been exhibited at the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Centre Pompidou, the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art and the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth. He has been featured in Artforum, Wired, and Rhizome's Net Art Anthology. Silva was born in Brazil, received his M.F.A. from the University of Colorado Boulder, and lives in Eugene, Oregon, where he is a professor at the University of Oregon.

Taravat Talepasand is an artist, activist and educator whose labor-intensive interdisciplinary painting practice questions normative cultural behaviors within contemporary power imbalances. As an Iranian-American woman, Talepasand explores the parallels of cultural taboos that reflect on gender apartheid and political authority to reflect the cross-pollination, or lack thereof, in her approach to subversive joy. Talepasand has exhibited nationally and internationally and is in the permanent collection of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), the de Young Museum, the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (YBCA), Tufts University Bowdoin College Museum of Art, the Orange County Museum of Art and the Portland Art Museum. Exhibitions included "In the Fields of Empty Days: The Intersection of Past and Present in Iranian Art" at LACMA, "طراوت | TARAVAT" at YBCA and Macalester College in Minnesota, the 2018 Bay Area Now 8 exhibition at YBCA, the 2026 Oregon Biennial and the 2010 California Biennial. She is the recipient of the 2024 Creative Heights Grant and the 2010 Richard Diebenkorn Teaching Fellowship at Santa Fe Art Institute (SFAI). Talepasand was the Department Chair of Painting at SFAI and currently lives in Oregon and is the Assistant Professor of Art Practice at Portland State University Schnitzer School of Art + Art History + Design. She received her B.F.A. from Rhode Island School of Design in 2001 and M.F.A. at SFAI in 2006.

John Whitten is a multimedia artist exploring the resonance between digital technologies, physical materials and lived experience. He is based in Portland, Oregon. Through drawing, video and photography, he constructs images that emphasize how perception is shaped by process, material and time. His work often begins with fragments of the everyday: a grain of salt collected from a desert, the surface of a healing scar or the shifting texture of a single element isolated from a landscape.

These subjects, whether deeply personal or broadly environmental, serve as portals into questions of presence, care and observation. Whitten's work has been exhibited in museums, universities and galleries across the United States. Recent awards include Project Grants and a Professional Development Grant from the Regional Arts and Culture Council, a Career Opportunity Grant from the Oregon Arts Commission, a Faculty Research Grant from Oregon State University, and residencies with Caldera and Signal Fire. In 2021, he co-founded Well Well Projects, where he currently serves as a co-director. In 2018, he co-founded Carnation Contemporary and co-created the nomadic artist residency and exhibition project, the Thunderstruck Collective.

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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 artscommission.oregon.gov.