Morning Ritual, 2019
Oil, Flashe, glitter, rhinestones on canvas
72 x 60 in

Dry Day, 2019
Oil, Flashe on canvas
76 x 60 in

Maidens, 2019
Oil, Flashe on canvas
78 x 60 in

It is Our Pleasure to Serve You, 2019
Oil, Flashe, rhinestones on canvas
60 x 78 in
The word vulnerable—from the Latin noun vulneris (wound) and verb vulnerare (to wound)—originally meant “both capable of being physically wounded” and “having the power to wound.” That second meaning the ability to wound others—has fallen out of popular usage, but its ghost is still work in Malaska’s paintings. Who is in a position of power? Who is exploited? Who is precarious? “I want to make the viewer feel a sense of vulnerability. Skin and flesh expose us to the gaze of others, expose us to loving touch, expose us to violence. Our bodies skin put us at risk of becoming…instrument of violence as well,” Butler continues. “Although we struggle for rights over our own bodies, the very bodies for which we struggle are not quite ever only our own.”

When I look at Malaska’s paintings, I have a sense that I am viewing an aftermath, yet I also carry a sense of anticipation, the feeling that something-destructive—repressive? reparative?—is about to happen, that Malaska calls an “enlivening, a thickening of the air.” One of the ways Malaska enforces the surface of her paintings is through touch. “I think about touch when I am composing an image,” she said. “Objects overlap, things touch in weird places, or bisect one another. It’s a way of creating an erotic sense with an image, making it refer again to the human body and our shared intimacy, dependence, and desire.” In Malaska’s (2010), a woman’s elbow connects with a bag of potting soil for an amaryllis, sage smoke curls around a knee, hands hold a mug, feet wear furry bear slippers, a body fills a couch, her arm elongated, her finger hooked and reaching. Even the single iris bloom appears to have arms, one touching the couch, the other touching the round pink lamp and its pleated shade.

In Listening to Images, Tina Campt writes about the role of the haptic in living rooms or bedrooms, in the dark. Campt is writing about convict photos, images used as a form of prayer. I did find this: http://teachersinstitute.yale.edu/curriculum/environment/spring/2014/40442/units/1986/3/86.03.08.x.html. I also wrote about this idea in Stranger Care, pg. 26.

Malaska’s work invites me for the word Agility as defined by theorists like Campt, Harney, and Moten. These writers claim fugivity not only as an aftersense with an image, making it refer again to the human body and our shared intimacy, dependence, and desire.” In Malaska’s (2010), a woman’s elbow connects with a bag of potting soil for an amaryllis, sage smoke curls around a knee, hands hold a mug, feet wear furry bear slippers, a body fills a couch, her arm elongated, her finger hooked and reaching. Even the single iris bloom appears to have arms, one touching the couch, the other touching the round pink lamp and its pleated shade.

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ELIZABETH MALASKA  
ｂ. 1978. Lives and works in Portland, Oregon  
2018 Hallie Ford Fellow

Elizabeth Malaska is known for paintings that explore the place of a present-day femme subject in relation to art history, raising issues about femininity, power, domination, and vulnerability, with social and political implications for our current times. She earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts from California College of the Arts and a Master of Fine Arts in Visual Studies from Pacific Northwest College of Art. She is the recipient of a Painters and Sculptors Grant from the Joan Mitchell Foundation and a grant from the Elizabeth Greenshield’s Foundation. Malaska’s work is included in the permanent collection at the Portland Art Museum, Portland, Oregon, and the Schneider Museum of Art, Ashland, Oregon, and has been featured in Ms. Magazine, Art in America, and ArtForum, among others.
Hallie Brown was born in 1905, outside of Tulsa, in Indian Territory that would become the state of Oklahoma. She supported herself as she earned a bachelor’s degree at East Central University and taught in Oklahoma before her parents moved their family to rural Oregon. In 1935 Hallie married Kenneth W. Ford and together they established Roseburg Lumber Company in the midst of the Great Depression.

Hallie Ford was drawn to art all her life, specifically the accessibility of artmaking. She took classes with the painter Carl Hall at Willamette University in Salem, and painting became a central part of her life. Her philanthropy established and supported key Oregon visual art museums and universities.

After Hallie’s death in 2007, The Ford Family Foundation’s Board of Directors honored our co-founder by establishing a Visual Arts Program. The first element of this program was the Hallie Ford Fellowships in the Visual Arts, awarded since 2010. Through these unrestricted fellowships, we seek to make significant awards to visual artists who have worked to establish their voice and craft.

Another of our goals is to help support the ecology that builds connections and capacity in the visual arts community of our state. As the Fellows become the focus of exhibitions throughout the world, they bring more attention and support to their Oregon peers. We are certain that Hallie Ford would be pleased to see how both individual artists and the visual arts community in Oregon have flourished since the establishment of this program in her honor.

We could not be more excited each year to bring new Hallie Ford Fellows into this family, and to share their work with you.

Anne C. Kubisch
President, The Ford Family Foundation

The Hallie Ford Fellowships are the flagship element of The Ford Family Foundation Visual Arts Program. The Foundation commits to an ongoing relationship with our Fellows through exhibition support, convenings, and professional development opportunities. In addition, the Visual Arts Program offers grants to visual artists for unanticipated career opportunities; supports artists-in-residence programs in Oregon and nationally; brings curators and arts writers from outside the region to Oregon for studio visits and community dialogue; commissions arts writing and publication; supports exhibitions, catalogues and other forms of documentation for Oregon artists; and awards grants to enhance exhibition spaces.

The Foundation is pleased to partner with the Oregon Arts Commission, University of Oregon, Pacific Northwest College of Art (PNCA), Portland State University, Reed College, Portland Institute for Contemporary Art (PICA), Creative Capital, Native Arts and Cultures Foundation, United States Artists, and the artists and visual arts organizations of our state.

The Ford Family Foundation was established in 1957 by Kenneth W. and Hallie E. Ford. Its mission is “successful citizens and vital rural communities” in Oregon and Siskiyou County, California. The Foundation is located in Roseburg, Oregon, with a Scholarship office in Eugene. For more information about the Foundation and its Visual Arts Program, visit www.tfff.org.