MIKE BRAY
Thomas looking at pictures, 2013
Screenprint on acrylic, light gel, splicing tape
19 x 35½ x 2 in
Photo: Evan La Londe

Intersection Theory, 2016
Two-way mirror, silver
20 x 20 x 20 in
Photo: Evan La Londe

Blocking out the sun, 2016
Powder coated steel
67 x 72¼ in
Photo: Evan La Londe

Viewfinder, 2013
Two way mirror, nickel
13 x 1 x 10 in
Photo: Evan La Londe

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Mike Bray is an artist’s artist. His work, fueled by a collaborative spirit and a curiosity for inventive strategies, is the kind of work that immediately pushes the imaginations of those who see it. Bray is deeply invested in the interplay between the many objects (material and immaterial) that become subject in his practice are not worked with, but worked through and around. Bray’s efforts manifest in many ways—things that transgress traditional conceptions of three-dimensional space, images that are at once twenty-present and deceptively incomplete, and exhibitions that harness the collective spirit of experimentation between creative practices that share a singular commitment to community alchemy.

Bray’s individual work is best exemplified by the 2016 sculpture, The necessity to interfere with Movement. The acrylic and neon sculpture is a veritable “landscape” of light, shadows, and impossible-warming points of horizon. Its fluorescent bulbs pulse in geometric line-forms, animating Barnett Newman-esque “zips” that lead in all directions. The frontal view is entirely unlike the view from any other angle, creating doubt, over and over, about what was witnessed even moments before. The acrylic, acting as both structural support and substrate, is just opaque enough, and simultaneously transparent enough, to confuse the dimensional plane within which the light is hosted. The Necessity to Interfere with Movement is so much a progressive take on painting as it is a sculpture freed from any conventional concept of ground. It is the feeling of studying the planets through a telescope, yet being surprised what you find when physically careening through the cosmos. The experience of the body in motion, maneuvering through all possibilities of perspective, gives this work not only its title, but its most precious contribution to questions of space.

Mike Bray has collaborated with partner Anya Kivarkis on projects like Time and the Other. Perfectly titled to discuss the complexities and utterly akin through notions of exquisite and delicate labor. Viewership with a sense of value independent from material worth, but ideologically calculated, and when made vulnerable in such a way, becomes something altogether more interesting—a set of principles that function poorly when not in the company of sweeping articulated prose. Trope of pioneer-ism, colonization, and segregation are formative ideals within the state of Oregon’s westernized beginnings. But so too, in recent imagination, are punk, DIY and craft-focused sensibilities. The past and the present abut in a spirit that isn’t entirely dissimilar, but that was leveraged toward thankfully dissimilar ends. A Good Way to Invent the Future asks that we harvest their best parts for ideas that incorporate what’s to be learned.

Bray has also collaborated with partner Anya Kivarkis on projects like Time and the Other. Perfectly titled to discuss the complexities and various magics of disembodiment and navigating the temporal, the body of work comprised recreations of jewelry from mid-twentieth century film. Jewel of necklaces from Last Year at Marienbad (1961) and To Catch a Thief (1955) become iconography for a universal sentiment around things untouchable—conjuring the stigmas of desire, class, and access. The adornments, recreated through combinations of photography, video, and purposefully incomplete three-dimensional replication, are imbued with a sense of value independent from material worth, but ideologically calculated, and when made vulnerable in such a way, becomes something altogether more interesting—a set of principles that function poorly when not in the company of sweeping articulated prose.

Bray’s individual work is best exemplified by the 2016 sculpture, The necessity to interfere with movement, 2016. Acrylic, neon, light stands. 60 x 78 x 6 in

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Photo: Evan La Londe

Mike Bray has made a practice from mining the interstice. His diversity of works, collaborative and solitary, demonstrate an eagerness to leave no thread of investigation unwoven. The finished products arise not from a place of logical certainty, but from aestheticizing the moments of calculation. They are born from a love of the not-quite here-nor-there, just as his method of making exists somewhere between Futurism and the classics.

FROM IN BETWEEN
By Ashley Stull Meyers

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Ashley Stull Meyers is a writer, editor, and culture worker.
Mike Bray
2013 Hallie Ford Fellow

Mike Bray creates investigations into a self-inflicted cinematic space, his work recontextualizing time, frame-by-frame, while collapsing and expanding the spectacle through the idiom of cinema. Select group exhibitions include Grammar Center, Medford, Oregon; 12128 Boatspace, Portland, Oregon; Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, Eugene, Oregon; Lumber Room, Portland, Oregon; and Human Resources, Los Angeles, California. Bray has held solo exhibitions at Portland State University, Portland, Oregon; Sienna Gallery, Lenox, Massachusetts; and Fourteen30 Contemporary, Portland, Oregon. He is Co-Founder of Ditch Projects, an artist-run space in downtown Springfield, Oregon.
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.