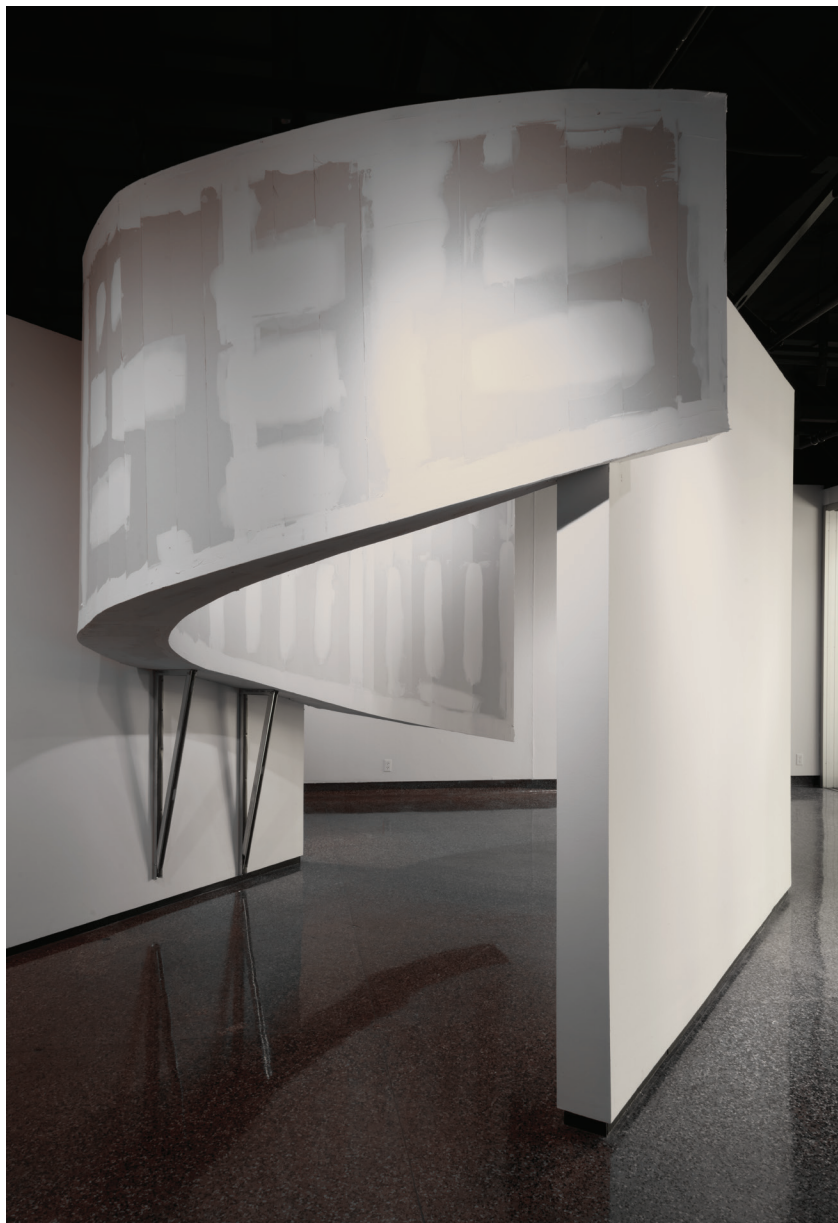


KARL BURKHEIMER



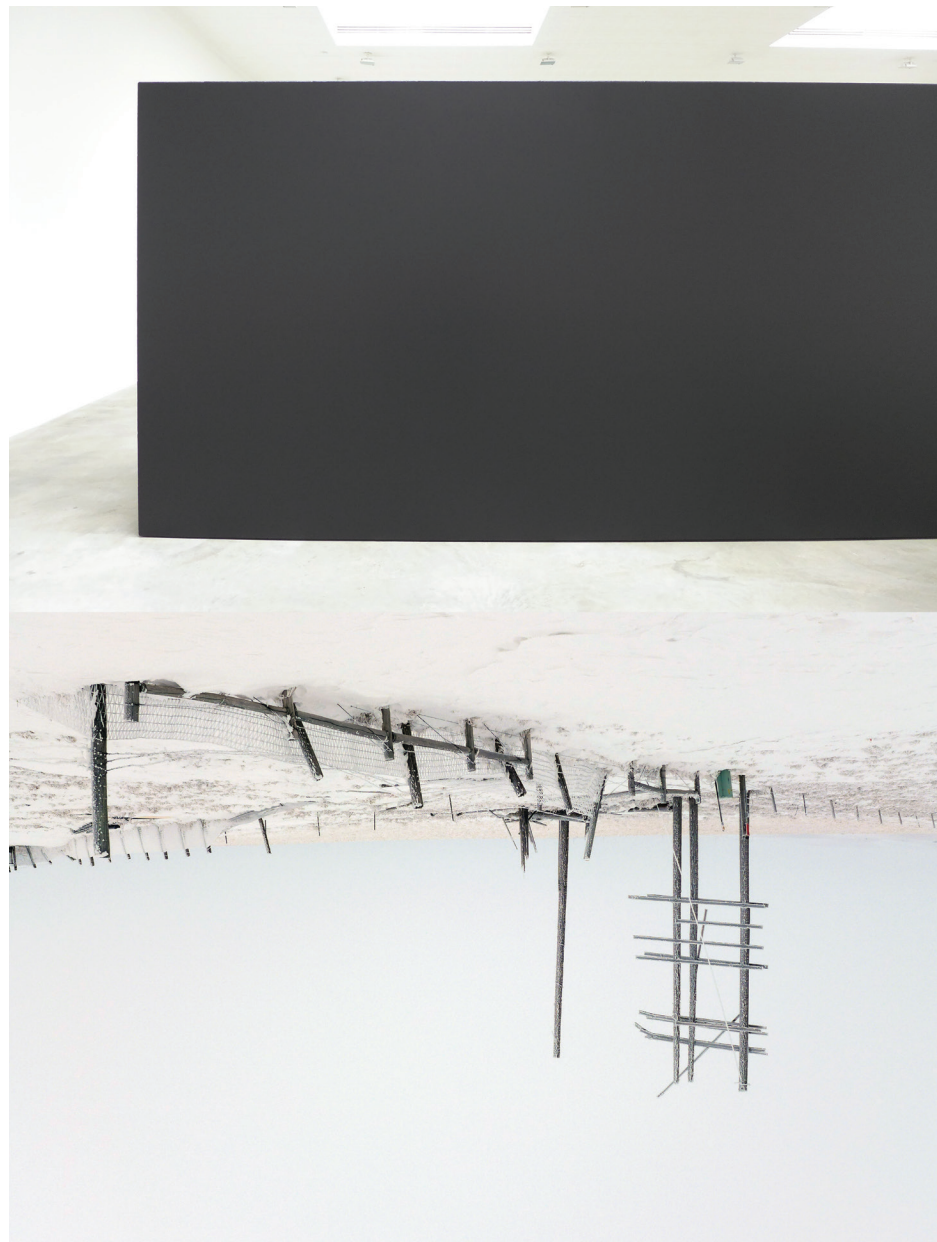
Previous page
tautline, 2018
Installation view
Wood, metal, gypsum wallboard, joint compound
144 x 534 x 662 in (exhibition space)
Photo: Alan Shaffer



oblique constructs, 2019
Wood, paint
Dimensions variable



aline, 2019
Installation view
Wood, paint, digital prints
120 x 225 x 318 in (exhibition space)



waterline series: composition 13, 2019
Digital print
42 x 22 in



tautline, 2018
Installation view
Wood, metal, gypsum wallboard, joint compound
144 x 534 x 662 in (exhibition space)
Photo: Alan Shaffer

ENDS AS MEANS

by Travis Diehl

One can't say where art begins or ends, exactly—only that it's there. Art is in the way things come together to make a seam, like the planes of a cube making edges and corners, like the facets of Karl Burkheimer's *oblique constructs*, an ongoing series of carved wooden blocks. The pieces are playful, simple; they fit the hand. Shaped in ways reminiscent of industrial molds and accented with black and white paint, the work explores the grain of the lumber and the high contrast of positive and negative space. In places, the deep black covers a corner between three or more sides of the form, appearing as an irregular pentagon or hexagon rising to the surface of the picture plane, of the visible, and masking the object itself. The plain wood of each chunk insists on the materiality of Burkheimer's gesture, while the graphic illusion of the paint pushes into self-symbolism. An object that supports an idea—isn't that how art works?

Burkheimer has stated this core coexistence of process and result throughout his peripatetic career, across the limits of mediums and disciplines. He also seeks it out in the built environment. The photographs in the *traces* series, culled from years of snapshots, document the intricacy of surface, mark, material—corrugations, flattening winter light, splinters and dents and flaking paint—that occur on human-made surfaces (naturally, as it were) without an artist's encouragement. As photographs, these found substrates take on an extra degree of abstraction, joining conversations about form and content and the agency of art that have been ongoing at least since the invention of paint. Burkheimer's *waterline series* combine his photos of depopulated industry and infrastructure in doubled compositions, one scene inverted under the other. Here, too, one finds a high-contrast, synthetic formalism: for example, the polygon of a rusted dumpster on a snow-smeared asphalt slab, poised above the upended image of a makeshift toolshed crisscrossed by lines of

sun-grayed rope and wood. The artist pays special attention to the palimpsest of bare use that covers the unconsidered, the utilitarian surface; the accidental textures that define cinderblocks and sheetrock panels whether or not anyone notices.

In other, large-scale works, Burkheimer designs such surfaces himself and invites others to embellish them. The artist first tested these ideas with a pair of curling, stage-like plywood structures built around large central holes, one indoors and one outdoors, that played host to the interventions of guests and the public. The *tautline* exhibition at the Los Angeles Valley College presented a series of freestanding wall-like forms, curved and protruding and punctured, which the students and other gallery visitors could paint. Born of utilitarian stuff, Burkheimer's sheetrock objects incorporate the appearance of metal studs and smeared plaster into their visual language. They function as a formal extension of the quintessential White Wall, while also performing as a painterly ground, receptive to expressions of color and form. In turn, these pieces become less “walls” than surfaces—for thoughts as well as for paint.

The artist's background in construction and architecture gives his takes on minimalist sculpture and public collaboration a certain refinement, even when the wood is bare. In whatever medium—including the social—his projects are ends as much as means. Burkheimer's imagery joins together the past moment of making and the future one of viewing. Indeed, from drywall slabs on legs that resemble graffiti-covered billboards to almost rubble-like arrangements of carved wooden blocks to studies of the beauty of human blight, the artist's work stages the edge of ruin and construction, the zones on either side of an object's plain, observable present. Art, for Burkheimer, is a process of processing results. Art is work, work is art, and both are life.

Travis Diehl is a writer based in Los Angeles, California.



In Site, 2011
Wood, plywood, paint
500 x 43 x 800 in
Photo: Mark Stein

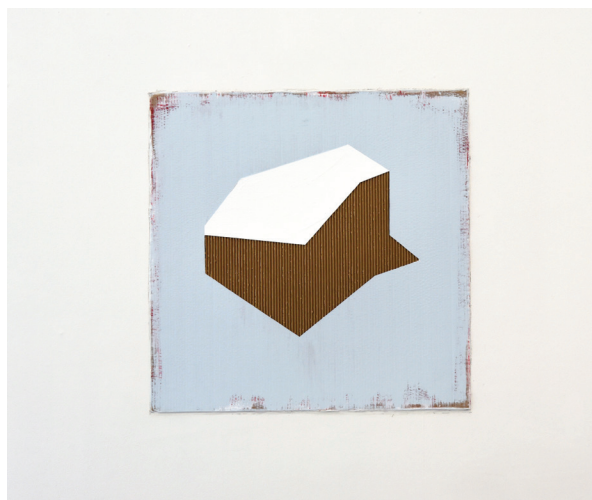


Bit, 2013
Wood, paint
47 x 96 x 96 in
Photo: Mark Stein

KARL BURKHEIMER

*b. 1965. Lives and works in Portland, Oregon
2016 Hallie Ford Fellow*

Karl Burkheimer's practice is rooted in a utilitarian simplicity that forefronts his objects in relation to, and often interaction with, the body. His work has been exhibited nationally, including the American Academy of Arts and Letters, New York, New York; the Museum of Contemporary Craft, Portland, Oregon; the Society for Contemporary Craft, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and the Portland Art Museum, Portland, Oregon. He was awarded a 2012 individual Artist Fellowship from the Oregon Arts Commission, a 2013 U.S.-Japan Creative Artist Fellowship, and was a finalist for the 2013 Contemporary Northwest Art Awards at the Portland Art Museum. Burkheimer earned a Master of Fine Arts from the Department of Crafts and Material Studies at Virginia Commonwealth University and a Bachelor of Environmental Design in Architecture from North Carolina State University.



Modeled, 2016
Cardboard, paint
36 x 36 in



Not It, 2015
Installation view
Wood, cardboard, concrete blocks, paint, digital prints
216 x 348 x 508 in (exhibition space)
Photo: Mark Stein

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.



VISUAL ARTS PROGRAM

© 2020

Published by The Ford Family Foundation,
Roseburg, OR

All rights reserved. This book may not
be reproduced, in whole or in part, in any
form without written permission from
the publisher.

Essay © 2020 by Travis Diehl

Designed by Martha Lewis

Photographed as credited

Edited by Abby McGehee

Printed and finished in Portland, OR,
by Brown Printing

tautline: Courtesy LAVC Art Gallery,
Los Angeles, CA

In Site: Courtesy Disjecta Contemporary
Art Center, Portland, OR

aline: Courtesy Asphodel Gallery,
Brooklyn, NY

Not It: Courtesy Linfield Gallery,
McMinnville, OR

All remaining works: Courtesy the artist