

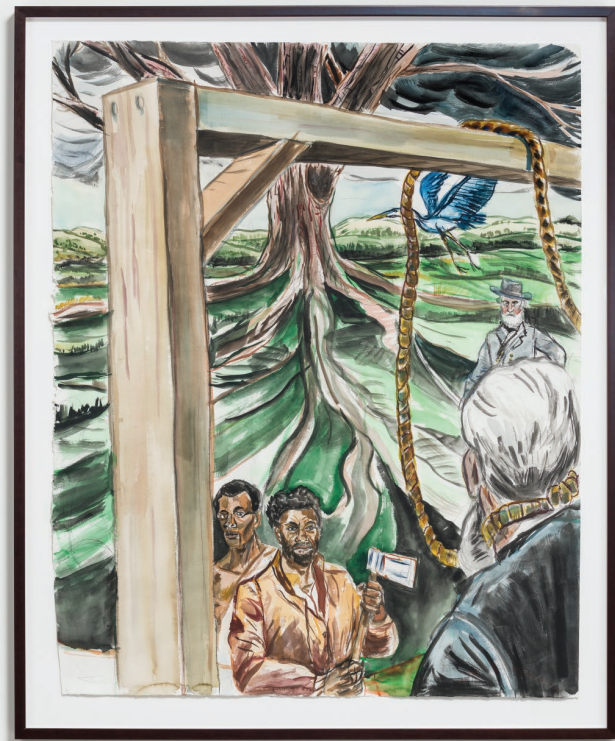
## DANIEL DUFORD







*Revolution Hall: Emergence, 2018*  
Acrylic on wood panel  
96 x 40 in  
Photo: Mario Gallucci



*John Brown's Vision  
on the Scaffold, 2018*  
Watercolor on paper  
44 x 36 in  
Photo: Mario Gallucci



*Revolution Hall: Transmission, 2018*  
Acrylic on wood panel  
96 x 40 in  
Photo: Mario Gallucci



*The General and  
Supermax, 2018*  
Watercolor on paper  
44 x 36 in  
Photo: Mario Gallucci



Daniel Duford is a storyteller above all else. Working in paint, clay and ink, he retells and remixes American mythology, weaving together stories of sacrifice, struggle, and rebellion. The characters that inhabit his works form a new canon of American heroes, outside of (and often in opposition to) the jingoistic pantheon of presidents, industrialists, and generals. Instead, Duford offers us complicated portraits of men and women who have pushed back against the oppression and dehumanization that continues to haunt the American story. These are tales of resistance, not conquest.

In a series of large WPA-style murals at the Revolution Assembly Hall, in Portland, OR, for example, the viewer is presented with a march of thinkers and makers across the expanse of the Americas. In this dream, the likes of W.E.B. Dubois, Felipe Ortega, Pablo Neruda and Harriet Tubman traverse an environment overseen by a matriarchal she-wolf, a figure that represents the earth itself.

Moving from public art to the gallery, his series *The North American Codex* included clay vessels, comics, poems and woodblock prints to generate narratives of border crossings and cross pollination, teasing out the complexity and ambiguity of these cultural exchanges. One important reoccurring theme is the examination of what nourishes us from the land and how we interact with it. For Duford this work runs in conversation with “tree time,” referencing both the millennia it takes for old growth forest to take root and the eagerness with which colonizers harvested them to build ships for the transatlantic slave trade. Using this frame of reference, ancient trees become the environmental witnesses to great human atrocity and suffering, to the souls violently ripped from one land and taken to work the soil of another.

While Duford's subjects are often drawn from the history of civil rights and labor struggles, his work is best understood as reflecting and meditating upon our current conditions. This blending of past and present is exemplified in his current project on abolitionist John Brown, whose final message before being executed for leading the attack on Harper's Ferry in 1859 was that “the crimes of this guilty land will never be purged away, but with Blood.”<sup>1</sup>

Duford's meditation on the life and death of John Brown addresses the timely question of what white allyship means in the contemporary fight to address the legacy of slavery. The work was inspired by a chance visit to Harpers Ferry while on an artist residency in Waterford, Virginia. On the site of this historic event, a tree can be observed sprouting from the old train bridge support that still extends into the river, another

moment of tree time. The tree reminds us of how quickly the imposed order on land will slip back into the wildness.

From that experience, Duford began a large triptych showing scenes from the life and times of Brown. The first panel, *John Brown and Thoreau at the Stump of the world Tree*, is a meditation on time and legacy, followed by *John Brown's Vision on the Scaffold* depicting the end of Brown's life. The third panel, *The General and Supermax*, doesn't show Brown himself, but instead features Harriet Tubman leading an unnamed prisoner away from an ominous prison facility, drawing the thread from slavery to today's prison industrial complex.

Later works in this series expanded on Brown's inner circles of friends and family, those he held most dear, but also many of whom he ultimately sacrificed to his cause. The works are less interested in deifying Brown than in exploring him as a complicated and sometimes problematic figure who embraced violence, believed in justice and was driven by an uncompromising world view.

The work raises questions about the politics of putting one's body on the line for racial justice, and while it is tempting to say that this work holds particular relevance in the wake of 2020's protests against police brutality towards Black bodies, the truth is that the role of white allyship within racial justice is a perennial question within American history. The question was addressed directly by Malcolm X who said “we need allies who are going to help us achieve a victory, not allies who are going to tell us to be nonviolent. If a white man wants to be your ally, what does he think of John Brown? You know what John Brown did? He went to war.”<sup>2</sup> And in the end, that is what Duford gives us, a John Brown that is not a history lesson or a saint, but one that is an archetype of an active, even violent resistance to an untenable system. Throughout is a sense of the artist struggling to define their own place within that system, a desire to do the work that needs to be done, and the weight of a debt in blood that has yet to be paid in full.

*Josephine Zarkovich is a New York-based curator and writer and the editorial director of 60 Inch Center.*



*Abolitionists in a Flood*, 2019  
Oil on canvas  
48 x 69 in  
Photo: Mario Gallucci

<sup>1</sup> DeNeen L. Brown, “Unflinching: The Day John Brown was hanged for his raid on Harpers Ferry,” *Washington Times*, Dec. 2 2017.  
<sup>2</sup> Louis A DeCaro, “The Enemy of My Enemy”: Malcolm X and the Legacy of John Brown,” *Malcolm X: From Political Eschatology to Religious Revolutionary* (2016), 179.





*Jaguar Man and Border  
Guard Platter, 2016*  
Ceramic  
22 x 21 x 4 in  
Photo: Dan Kvitka



*She Wolf 2 Platter, 2016*  
Ceramic  
21 x 21 x 5 in  
Photo: Dan Kvitka

## DANIEL DUFORD

*b. 1968. Lives and works in Portland, Oregon  
2010 Hallie Ford Fellow*

Daniel Duford is an artist, writer and teacher. His work tells stories drawn from North American history and mythology, stories that flow through large paintings, graphic novels, and figurative sculpture. He is a 2019 John Simon Guggenheim Fellow and a recipient of a 2012 Art Matters Grant. His work has been shown at MASS MoCA, North Adams, Massachusetts; The Atlanta Center for Contemporary Art, Atlanta, Georgia; Bellevue Arts Museum, Bellevue, Washington; The Boise Art Museum, Boise, Idaho; and the Museum of Contemporary Craft, Portland Institute of Contemporary Art (PICA), and the Art Gym at Marylhurst University in Portland, Oregon. Duford's work has been reviewed by the *New York Times*, *Village Voice*, *New York Press*, the *Oregonian*, *Sculpture Magazine*, *Art Papers*, and *Artweek*, among others. His murals and public art can be found throughout Portland, Oregon. Duford is cofounder of Ground Beneath Us, a place-based institute and artist fellowship in Waterford, Virginia.

**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](http://www.tfff.org).



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VISUAL ARTS PROGRAM

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