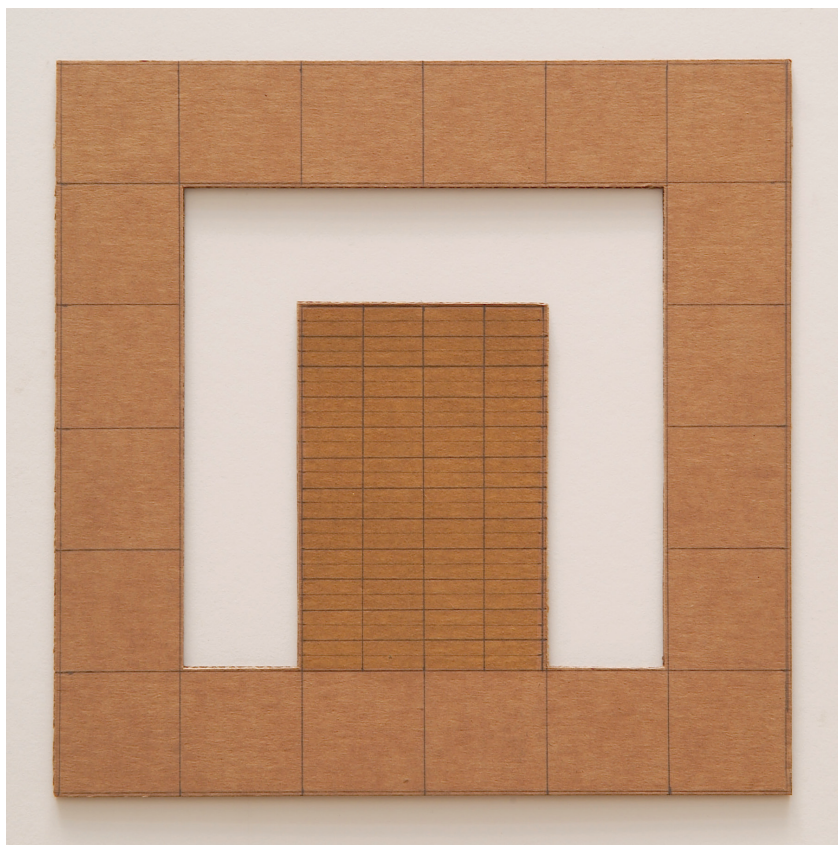
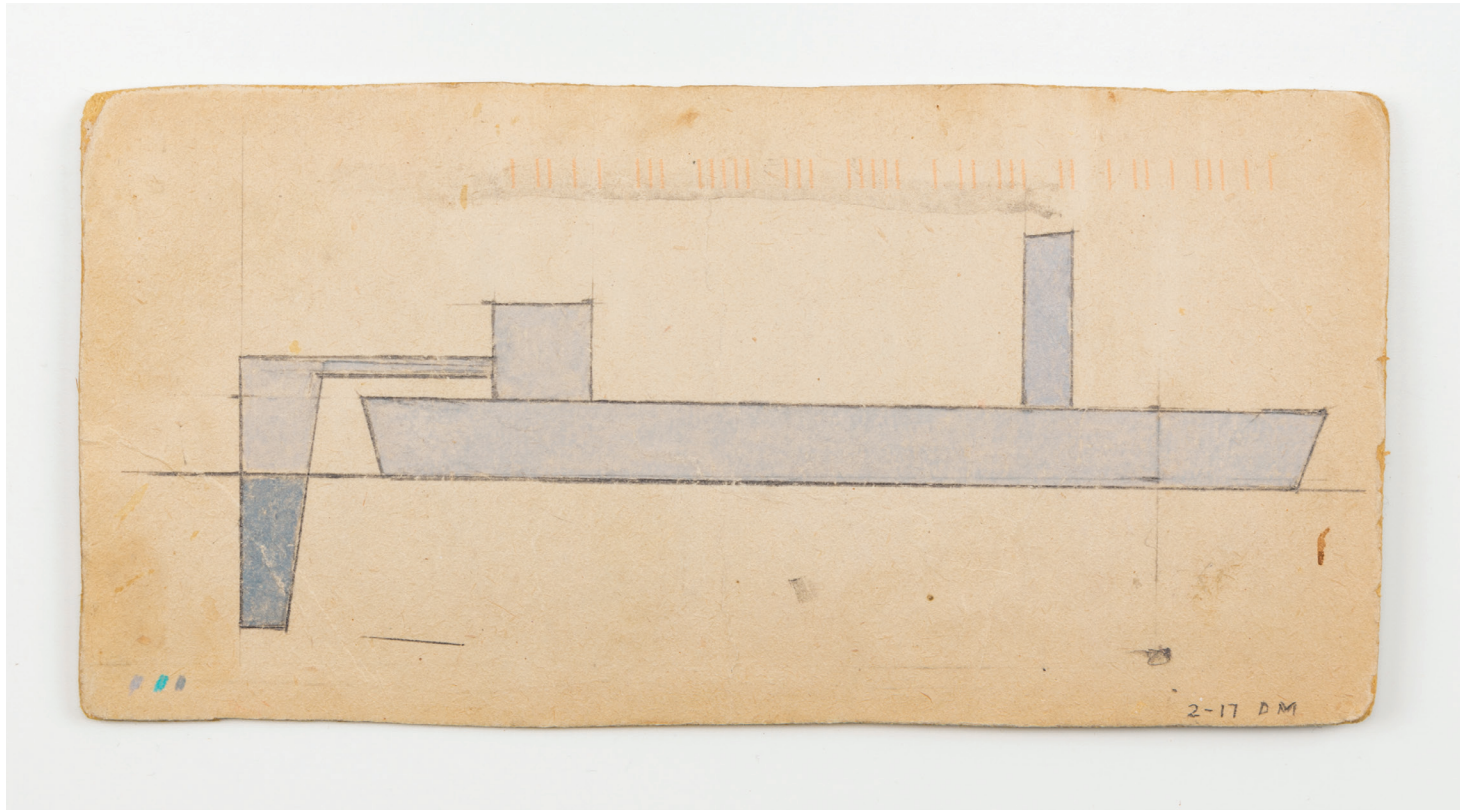


D.E. MAY

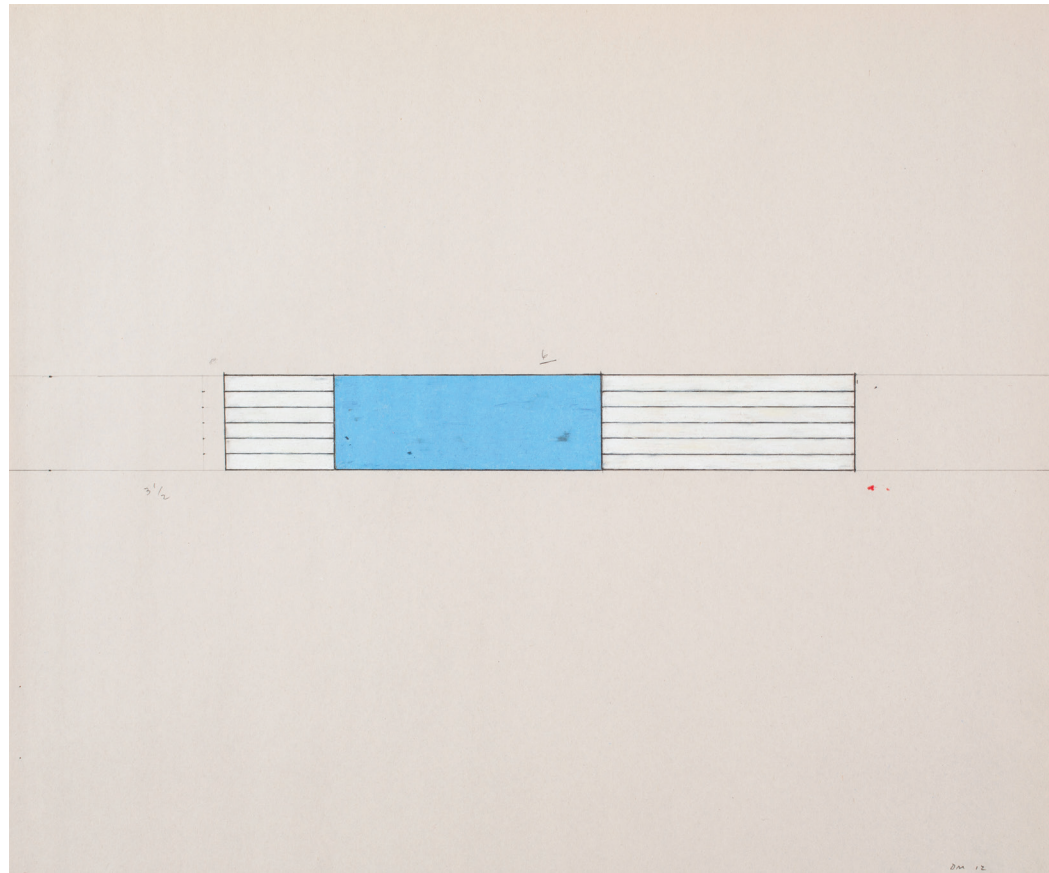




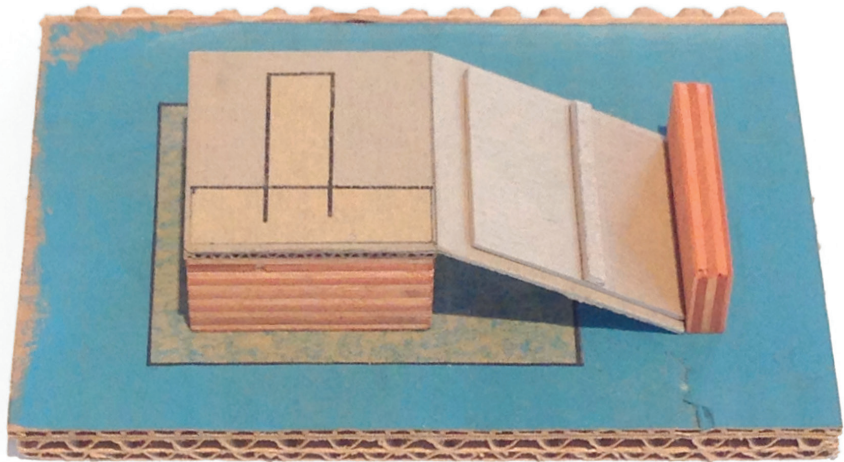
Untitled (Boat Drawing), 2017
Graphite, colored pencil, ink on found stereograph card
3 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 6 $\frac{3}{4}$



Untitled (Stations-Makeshift Shelf), 2015
Wood, cardboard, construction board,
tissue, ink, graphite
3 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 2 $\frac{1}{16}$ x 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ in



Deighton, 2012
Colored pencil, graphite on paper
14 x 17 in



Untitled, 2015
Cardboard, construction board, paper, wood, acrylic
1 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 4 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ in

If one were to walk down Ferry Street SE in downtown, Salem, Oregon chances are you wouldn't give a second glance to a nondescript, two-story commercial building on its north side. For almost three decades the second floor was both the home and studio of D.E. May, one of the most singular artists that have come out of the Pacific Northwest. The suite of former, interconnected offices display little in the way of domesticity, resembling more the drafting department of some pre-modern industry. Dan May referred to this space as his “workroom,” a word that originated in the nineteenth century that usually describes a modest place of hand manufacture and diligent craft, and May’s use of it aligned perfectly with the nature of what transpired there.

Although May’s work reflected deep influences of both Modern and Contemporary art his endeavors conjure up the past, but in ways that defy time. Yes, the materials he gravitated to were usually timeworn and ephemeral, but his manipulation of them resulted not in a simple nostalgic yearning, but rather in an expansive meditation on how the past, present, and future can coexist in an object. May’s material of first choice was paper, and the artist valued it for its commonality as well as its myriad forms: over the course of his career he utilized ledger books, graph paper, corrugated cardboard and postage stamps, among countless other paper products. Paper, being fragile, is a sensitive recorder of its history, and May reveled in the marks and handwriting left from previous owners, as well as stains, yellowing, wrinkling, and discoloration. The only time I met Dan I was walking with him down the street and he excitedly rushed out into traffic to retrieve the remains of a small chipboard box that had been repeated run over. After carefully examination he returned it to its punishment by passing cars, telling me “It’s not quite ready. I’ll come and look at it tomorrow.”

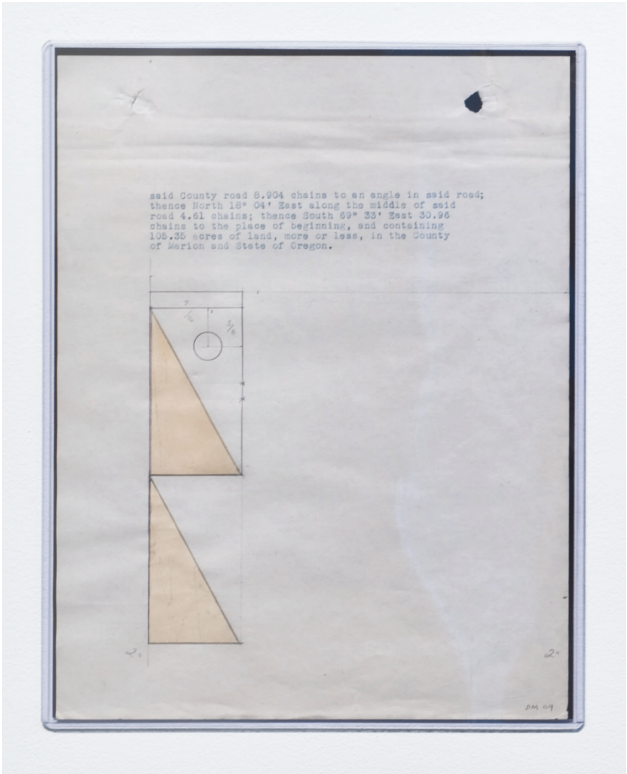
Many of May’s works suggest that they are documents or tools left over from the planning and construction of something larger. These works resemble diagrams, floor plans, measuring devices, elevations, models or templates that served a specific purpose at some point, but that purpose is now lost and can only be imagined. Despite their small scale and ephemeral character, they offer an expansive experience. In looking at them one tries to understand their function and with what larger scheme they might be connected. The “larger scheme” is May’s entire

body of work, a lifetime of rigorous, poetic pursuit that built a system of correspondences that takes a stab at making a certain sense of what is ultimately unknowable.

The word *template*, often used by May when titling his work, comes from the Latin *templum*, a space separated from the everyday world that has a special purpose. The artist's small sculptures, which often resemble buildings, never look like domestic architecture, but rather structures that might serve a civic function or be the site of industry. The artist spent countless hours in Salem's public library, and his sculpture—made literally out the same material that fills library shelves—reference the act of archiving by both their content and construction. May loved the architecture of Le Corbusier, the Swiss-French Modernist architect, and if the artist's paper and wood sculptures look somewhat familiar, compare them with Villa Savoye, Le Corbusier's most well-known building. Villa Savoye is a horizontal box, mounted on columns, with a smaller mass perched on top. None of May’s sculpture, however, is directly imitative of high Modernism—if one is going to make direct architectural references the works owe as much to Oregon's vernacular architecture of warehouses, lumber yards and grain elevators, the type of businesses that might house spaces that resemble the artist's Salem workroom.

It is tempting to label May an outsider, but he was college educated and certainly not a loner. To understand where the artist's work came from, it might be helpful to follow May's footsteps and walk the backstreets of Salem (or any small American city) late on a weeknight after everything is closed down. Without people, the built environment comes into sharper focus, streetlighting imbues the commonplace with mystery, and the quietude encourages introspection. May loved to walk his city by dark, and the early hours are often when time seems to be running both backwards and forwards and when one's entire life can be glimpsed in the empty parking lot or the plate glass of the deserted storefront. Returning to his workroom the artist spread his materials before him and began the exacting process of building a world that was based on its own construction.

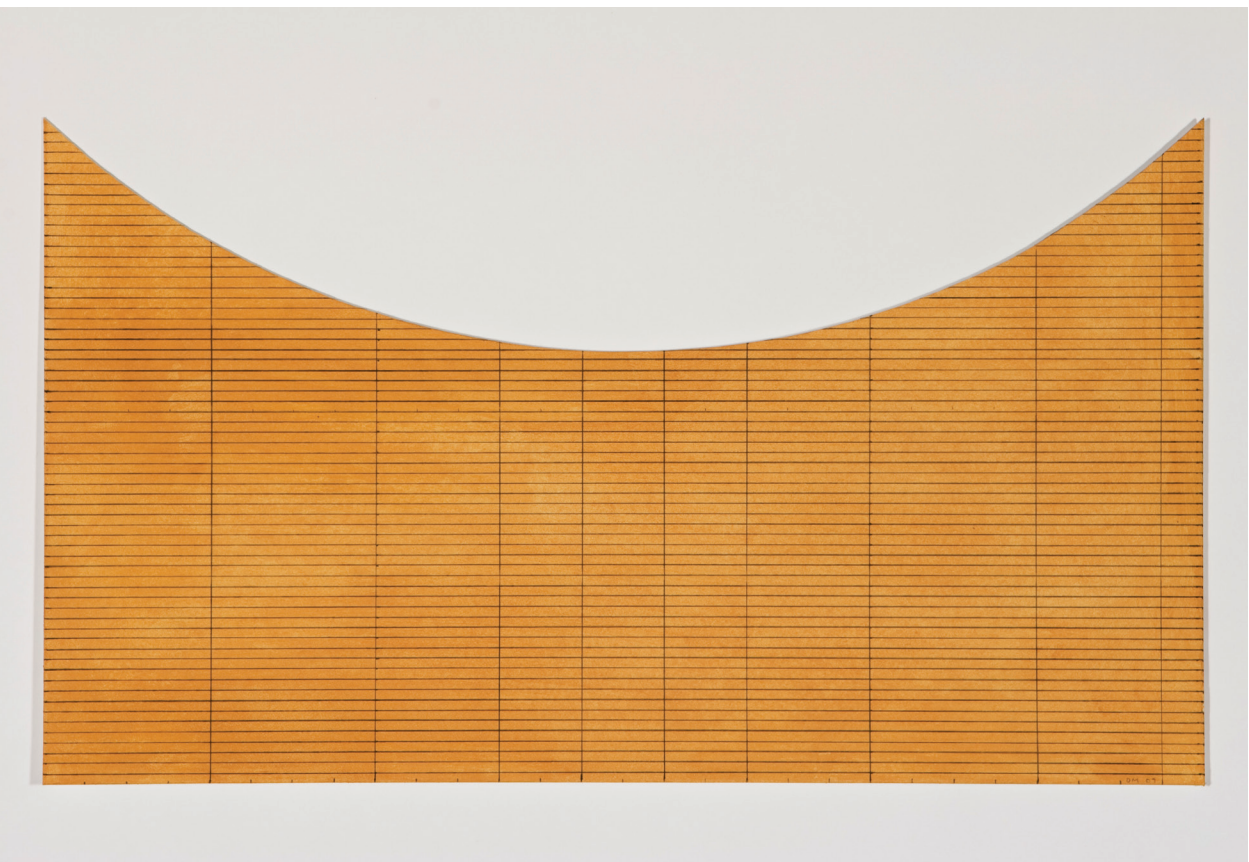
Richard Klein is a curator, artist, writer and the exhibitions director of The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum.



Untitled, 2009
Graphite on paper
11 x 8½ in



Gauge, 2009
Mixed media on found paper
11 x 8½ in



Template, 2007
Mixed media
8 x 14 in



Tinder, 2013
Found papers, cardboard, plaster of
Paris, acrylic, watercolor, ink
3¹/₁₆ x 5¹/₈ x 3³/₄ in



Duraine, 2013
Found materials, cardboard, plaster of
Paris, acrylic, varnish
7¹/₈ x 4⁷/₈ x 1¹⁵/₁₆ in

D.E. MAY

1952–2019. Lived and worked in Salem, Oregon

2013 Hallie Ford Fellow

Though modest in stature and decidedly analog, D.E. May's constructions speak to an urgency to archive and remember in our digital age. The artist's work was featured in the PORTLAND2014 Biennial at Disjecta Contemporary Art Center, Portland, Oregon, and in a solo exhibition at LAXART, Los Angeles, California the same year. Other notable exhibitions include the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art in Eugene, Oregon; the Sun Valley Center for the Arts in Sun Valley, Idaho; the Portland Art Museum, and the Art Gym at Marylhurst University in Portland, Oregon; the University of Alaska Museum of the North in Fairbanks, Alaska; and Ute Barth in Zurich, Switzerland. May was a 2008 Contemporary Northwest Art Awards finalist, and received an Art Matters Grant in 1992. His work is included in the collections of the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York; the Boise Art Museum, Boise, Idaho; the Portland Art Museum, Portland, Oregon; the Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, Washington; the Hallie Ford Museum of Art, Salem, Oregon; the Tacoma Art Museum, Tacoma, Washington; the University of Alaska Museum of the North, Fairbanks, Alaska; the Blanton Museum of Art, Austin, Texas; the Oregon Arts Commission, Salem, Oregon; the Regional Arts and Culture Council, Portland, Oregon; and ArtColl Trust, Seattle, Washington.

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

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Untitled (2003), Untitled (2009), *Untitled*
(*Boat Drawing*), Untitled (2015), *Deighton*:
Courtesy the D.E. May Estate, Portland, OR

Template: Courtesy Private Collection,
Vancouver, WA

Tinder: Courtesy the collection of Hallie Ford
Museum of Art, Salem, OR

Duraine: Courtesy the collection of Kellie
and Francis Lombardi, Salem, OR

Gauge: Courtesy the collection of Dan
Wieden, Portland, OR

Untitled (Stations-Makeshift Shelf): Courtesy
the collection of Nancy Lorenz, New York, NY