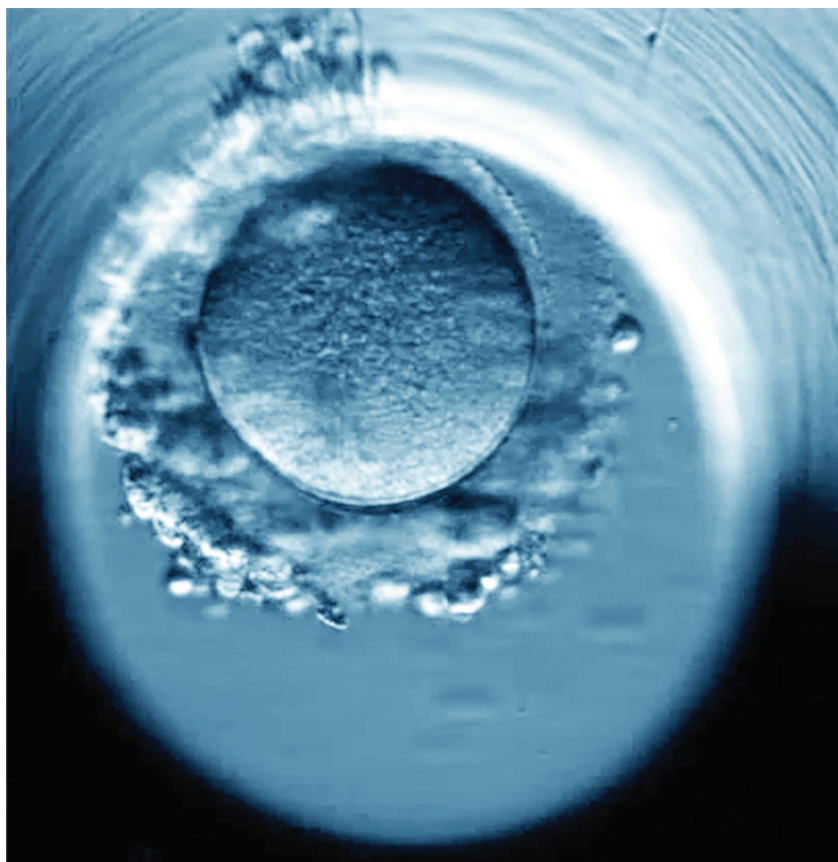


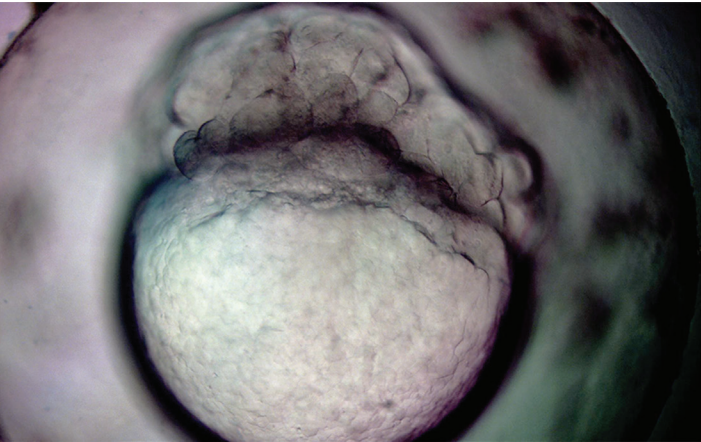
# GERALDINE ONDRIZEK



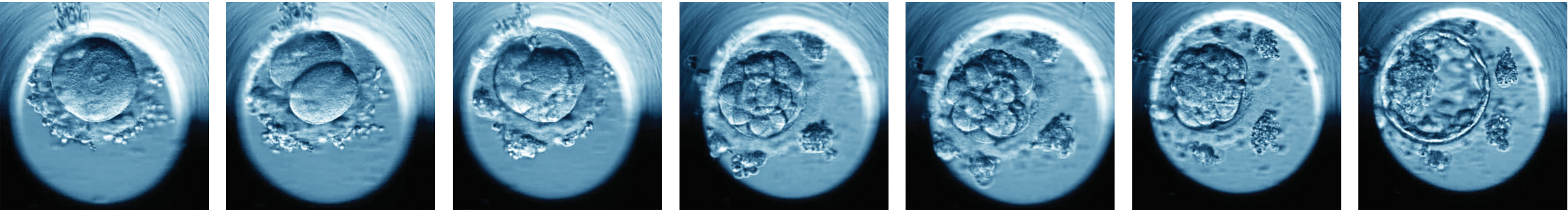
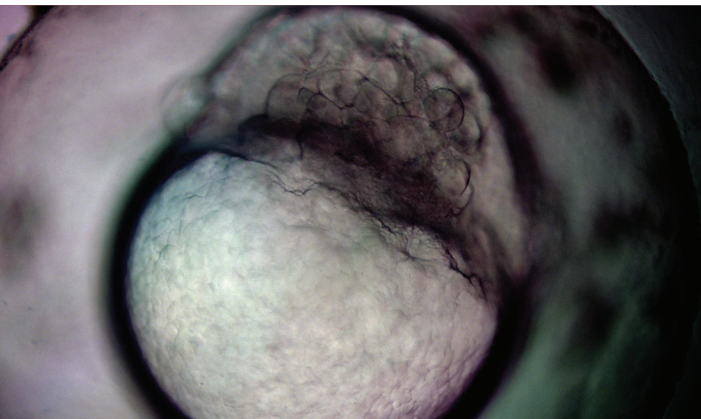
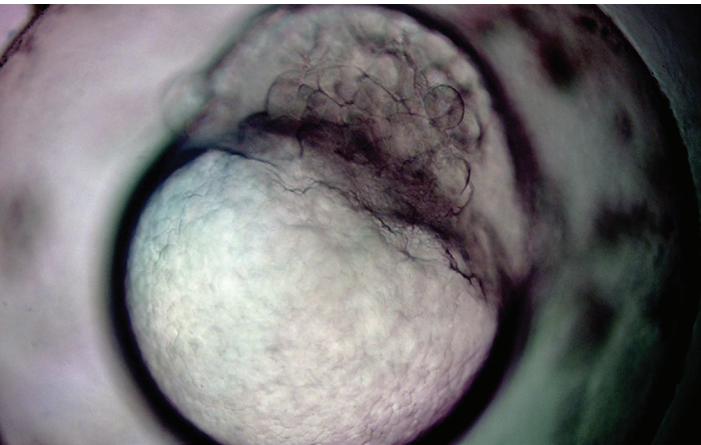




*Fish Egg Book*, 2018  
 Accordion book of photos from film stills  
 of zebra fish eggs printed on silk mounted  
 on archival board frames, plexiglass case  
 124 x 5 in  
 Film made by Geraldine Ondrizek at Reed  
 College Developmental Biology Lab  
 Photo: Dan Kvika



*Fish Egg Blastocyst 1, Fish Egg  
 Blastocyst 2, Fish Egg Blastocyst 3*, 2018  
 Film stills printed on silk  
 3 x 5 in (each)



*In Vitro Fertilization Film Stills: Cleavage, 2 Cell Stage, 4 Cell Stage,  
 8 Cell Stage, 16 Cell Stage, 32 Cell Stage, Blastocyst*, 2019  
 Digital photo, hand painted on silk  
 12 x 12 in (each)  
 Photo: Geraldine Ondrizek

*Previous page*  
*In Vitro Fertilization Film Stills: Fertilization*, 2019  
 Digital print, hand painted on silk  
 12 x 12 in



## THE BIOGENETIC GAZE

*by Jane Chin Davidson*

The new scopic regime is *micro* scopic and Geraldine Ondrizek enlarges this new vision by using visual elements that are *invisible* to the naked eye. Reproducing images and video captured from electron and inverted microscopes, Ondrizek is not simply updating the artistic field in our biogenetic age of mechanical reproduction; she is, rather, reframing the biological gaze toward the social, political, and philosophical understanding of kinship, race, and reproductive power.

Even before DNA tests were easily available, Ondrizek explored genetic testing as a form of aesthetic/conceptual engagement. In 2003, following the calamitous events of 9/11, she worked with a genetics student from her campus at Reed College to develop DNA tests to portray members of her husband's Arab-American family. The resulting installation, *Fingerprint DNA: A Portrait of an Arab-American Family*, consisted of magnifying DNA thousands of times and reproducing the images onto silk-like fabric panels. During a moment when Arab Americans were treated with open hostility in the United States, Ondrizek pushed us to see “race” differently by creating an entirely new kind of family portraiture.

Ondrizek continued her anti-xenophobia advocacy through *Origins of Biometric Data*, her installation of books, photographs, video, and textiles completed during her 2015–16 Max Planck residency in Berlin. Our handprints taken at birth are universally accepted markers of identity, extended today in the use of fingerprint scanners. But as traced by Ondrizek, the system was developed from 1930 to 1960 by Dr. Georg Geipel in Germany in order to draw detrimental conclusions, connecting racial difference to mental capacity. His “evidence” resulted in grave consequences during World War II.

Today, we can know our future selves intimately through at-home DNA tests that reveal our genetic risks for disease. Ondrizek's 2009 installation *Chromosome 17* is a large-scale blue and green, embroidered and painted panel that reproduces the genetic sequence carrying the markers for ovarian and breast cancer. The artist was commissioned to create this commemorative work to honor Dr. Arno Motulsky the “father of medical genetics” and his program at the University of Washington. Motulsky embodied the paradox of medical genetics, devoting his life work to curing diseases genetically after surviving the Nazi eugenics pogrom. Members of Ondrizek's family were also Holocaust survivors and her own *Biometric Data* testing reveals an Iberian ancestry, potentially the

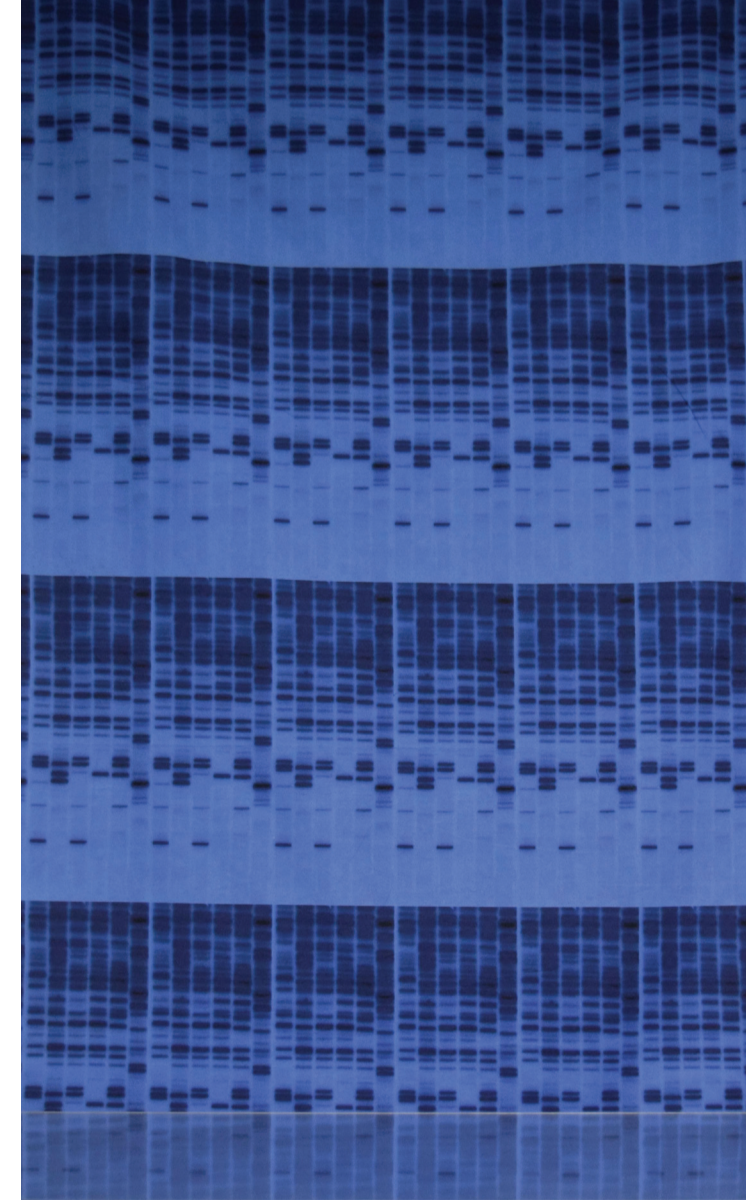
lineage of Safardic Jews. Using textile craft to invoke memory (including the loss of her own mother and grandfather to cancer), Ondrizek reconnects science with the emotionality of grief and the hope of survival.

*Chromosome Painting* (2012), completed with Senior Genetics Counsellor Robin Bennett at UW, *monumentalizes* the emotionality of disease by reproducing the marker chromosomes on dye-printed silk panels. Ondrizek's collaboration was deeply influenced by personal experience, having lost a daughter to a genetic anomaly. Hung floor to ceiling, the scientific graphic is magnified 6000 times onto 23 vertical pieces over 9 feet in height, spanning 32 feet across the entire wall of the Clear Lake Art Gallery at the University of Houston. The colourful textile evokes optical illusions of the microscopic image projected so enormously that they “perform” a bodily emotive in the gallery. Audience members were overwhelmed as they cathartically talk about their own experiences with family illness. Ondrizek bridges the gap in our sensibility and understanding of the body we inhabit and the body of “science.”

Not unlike most scientific knowledge, however, we put our trust in medicine's corporeal realism without grasping the interpretative practice involved in the DNA profile. Addressing the dark side of genetic history, Ondrizek's 2014 *Shades of White* implicates the medical field for their part in systemic racism. The installation showcases minimalist steel rectangles, stretched with silk material and dyed according to the hues of the “Gates Skin Color Chart.” Developed in the 1940s, this eugenic melanin system linking race to criminality and disease was utilized in forced sterilizations by the German Society for Racial Hygiene since the 1900s. But *Shades of White* exposed the continuing discriminatory practices. Ondrizek pointed to the 2002 apology from Oregon's Governor John Kitzhaber for the medical assessment of “race by color” in determining the “adoptability” of children in state care. Racial profiling as a form of institutional knowledge, especially in relation to Black Lives Matter, can be traced to medical eugenics and its “scientific truth.”

Ondrizek's opus *Cellular* (2009) is a feminist showcase of reproductive power, a sound and image projection of the embryonic stages of a spider egg. Installed next to *Chromosome Painting* at UH, the video installation is a live recording of the reproductive process, which is indiscernible from the process for humans. Ondrizek magnifies the video into a life-sized experience, further enhanced by the accompanying sound projection of *human* cells dividing. Integrating artisan craft with scientific technology, *Cellular* includes a large-scale circular “cell” created from handmade paper that encloses the viewer in the space of the projection. The result is an extraordinarily intimate experience—the viewer participates in an intersubjective performance of human and animal cellular reproduction.

On display in recent works is the culmination of Ondrizek's aesthetic and political engagement. While the 2019 exhibition of the *Fish Egg Film and Book* extends the



*The First DNA Fingerprint* (detail), 2016  
Cotton sheeting with digital print  
56 x 108 in

Image is based on the first published DNA Fingerprint made by Alec Jefferies in 1985 at *The Welcome Trust*, London, England; DNA patterns from a mother and her 4 children, compared to an unrelated person lane 1

concept of human-as-animal cell división, the work-in-progress, *Becoming You*, a children's book, conveys the meaning of in-vitro fertilization. Collaborating with reproductive endocrinologist and bio-ethicist Dr. Shizuko Takahashi, Ondrizek illustrates the growth of an IVF embryo by enhancing film stills taken from the Embryoscope Time-Lapse System. As “test-tube babies” have become the norm of human conception, *Becoming You* informs the child about “where s/he comes from.” The tremendous power of IVF reproduction is reflected in the genetic selections that parents now make. Ultimately, Ondrizek forces us to acknowledge that bio-genetics is about human choices, whether choosing to create new life genetically or to destroy it by racially discriminating against others eugenically.

*Jane Chin Davidson is an art historian and exhibition curator.*





*Identical Twins Handprints (left), 2016*  
Vellum, archival digital print  
36 x 42 in



*Identical Twins Handprints (right), 2016*  
Vellum, archival digital print  
36 x 42 in



*The Origin of Bio Metric Data, 2016*  
Installation view  
Steel Shelving, books and plexiglass  
cases in various sizes

## GERALDINE ONDRIZEK

*b. 1963. Lives and works in Portland, Oregon*

*2014 Hallie Ford Fellow*

For the last twenty-five years Geraldine Ondrizek has been exploring personal and political issues through architectural installations and artists books based on medical and genetic information. Each piece results from a lengthy collaboration with scientists and medical researchers with the goal of producing work that incorporates and comments on medicine, genetics, and ethics. She has had over 40 solo exhibitions internationally and is the recipient of several grants and residencies including an Oregon Arts Commission Individual Artist Fellowship, University of Washington Genetic Medicine Commission, NASA at the Johnson Space Center, the Houston Foundation, the Mellon Foundation, and a NEA exhibition support grant. Exhibitions include, the Hallie Ford Museum of Art at Willamette University, Salem, Oregon; Universidad Católica de la Santísima Concepción Chile, Bienal Concepción, Arte & Ciencia, Chile; Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Berlin, Germany; Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, Eugene, Oregon; ZKM Museum of Contemporary Art, Karlsruhe, Germany. Her work has been collected by the Portland Art Museum, John Hopkins University, MIT, Sanofi-Genzyme, the University of Washington Department of Medical Genetics, WVU Cancer Institute, Berkeley Medical Center, and Florida International University. She received a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Carnegie-Mellon University and a Master of Fine Arts from the University of 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](http://www.tfff.org).



## VISUAL ARTS PROGRAM

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*Identical Twin Handprints (left), Identical Twin  
Handprints (right):* Courtesy Momentum Berlin,  
Germany

*The Origin of Bio Metric Data:* Courtesy  
the Hallie Ford Museum of Art, Willamette  
University, Salem, OR

*The First DNA Fingerprint:* Courtesy  
Momentum Berlin, Germany

*In Vitro Fertilization Film Stills:* Featured in the  
book *Becoming You* showing the process  
of human egg fertilization, gestation and  
genetic testing written by Shizuko Takahashi  
M.D. Ph.D., The University of Tokyo, Graduate  
School of Medicine, Department of Biomedical  
Ethics, Obstetrics and Gynecology with  
images by Geraldine Ondrizek, forthcoming  
Shougakukan Publishers, Japan

*Fish Egg Book, Fish Egg Blastocyst 1, Fish  
Egg Blastocyst 2, Fish Egg Blastocyst 3:*  
Courtesy the Biennial Concepción, Arte &  
Ciencia, Universidad Catolica de la Santísima  
Concepción, Chile