STORM THARP
Talk, 2014
Oil on panel
53 x 42 in
Photo: Evan La Londe

Not from Here, 2014
Oil on panel
53 x 42 in
Photo: Evan La Londe

Heaven’s Door I and II, 2016
Gouache on paper
188 x 140 in
Photo: Evan La Londe

Ladd Ave, 2019
Gouache on paper
30 x 22 in
Photo: Yusuke Tsuchida

Apology with Knee Pads (2011), 2020
Gouache on paper
36 x 22½ in
Photo: Yusuke Tsuchida

Sister, 2016
Ink, gouache, fabric dye, printmakers ink, newspaper, linen tape on paper
60 x 50 in
Photo: Evan La Londe
Twenty-two vertically oriented rectangles chug around the gallery walls. Uniform in format and spacing, the sheets of paper ring the room with a dynamic one. This device is used in Hakiku, redolent of the conflicted emotions that permeate Kawabata’s novel and Tharp’s exhibition. Hotly visceral and coolly intellectual, the power of Tharp’s work pivots on his formidable talent tempered by a self-conscious reserve. He possesses an astonishing mastery of the brush yet never comes off as enamored of his gifts. Tharp operates not so much as a painter but as an auteur, sometimes randy and sometimes aloof but always spot on. His ultra-fine-tuned sensibilities take as much from fashion and pop culture as from art history. The queer genius of Alexander McQueen and Andy Warhol come to mind, self-preserving hypersexuality culminated from a young age, built on a foundation of shame and fear. This erotic tension is throughout Tharp’s earlier works: dry point etchings of thick hirsute limbs and back, so muscled in their making and so elegantly contained in the frame. Or the soft sculpture of an arm, an elbow, a knee and a rump, compressed into an ottoman sized block and dispatched in an acrylic cube. Cryptic, encoded, wrestling with itself, aching with desire, flaring with strength. The works here, feel gay. Pretty sure. And what I mean by gay is beauty to ease the pain.

Mr. Tharp’s sweeping work closes with three paintings that, for me gel a self-preserving hypersensitivity cultivated from a young age, built on a foundation of shame and fear. This erotic tension is throughout Tharp’s earlier works: dry point etchings of thick hirsute limbs and back, so muscled in their making and so elegantly contained in the frame. Or the soft sculpture of an arm, an elbow, a knee and a rump, compressed into an ottoman sized block and dispatched in an acrylic cube. Cryptic, encoded, wrestling with itself, aching with desire, flaring with strength. The works here, feel gay. Pretty sure. And what I mean by gay is beauty to ease the pain.

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STORM THARP
b. 1970. Lives and works in Portland, Oregon
2014 Hallie Ford Fellow

“In my figurative work,” says Storm Tharp, “the primary interest has been to unfold various traditions of painting and sculpture into my own, emerging with something altogether new.” Tharp’s work has established a voice that carries across media and form, exploring character through drawn line to gouache and ink painting, both figurative and abstract, sculptures and domestic objects. Tharp has received solo exhibitions internationally including Galerie Bertrand, Geneva, Switzerland; FeldbuschWiesnerRudolph Galerie, Berlin, Germany; Koki Arts, Tokyo, Japan; Nicole Klagsbrun Gallery, New York, New York; and PDX CONTEMPORARY ART, Portland Institute of Contemporary Art (PICA), Disjecta Contemporary Art Center and The Douglas F. Cooley Memorial Art Gallery, Reed College, in Portland, Oregon. He was included in the 2010 Whitney Biennial, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, New York and is the recipient of an Oregon Arts Commission Artist Fellowship. Tharp received a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Cornell University.
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.