



OREGON ARTSWATCH

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

2023 - 2024

We are hard at work planning for the future so we can better serve the region's arts and culture community. As part of our vision and strategy, we are carefully laying the building blocks to expand and strengthen our operations and to develop new programming.

In order to meet our goals, several financial needs must be met. We have laid out a number of projects we are working on, from overall capacity building efforts to individual programs. We have donor needs big and small, and every donation makes a difference.

We do this work for you. Because if we aren't telling your stories, then who is?

Your contribution makes our work stronger, and when we are stronger, our entire cultural community is stronger. Together we can help keep the arts alive. Be part of our exciting future!



INTRODUCTION

As coverage of the fine and performing arts in other media has dropped dramatically, Oregon Arts Watch fills this critical news gap and has become the area's leading arts and culture journal. We publish independent arts journalism and criticism at orartswatch.org, producing a breadth and depth of coverage not found elsewhere.

OUR MISSION

Oregon Arts Watch produces arts journalism that is fundamentally useful to the public interest. Our goal is to discover, report on, and evaluate art that we think is most important to the public, and then to encourage discussion by the public of that art and the issues it raises. Our journalism is professional – independent, transparent, fair, accurate, and responsive – and we aspire to be a trusted public source for journalism about the arts.

WHO WE ARE

We are journalists, academics, and artists who are specialists in our fields and have years of experience. We have published books, written for major publications, served on executive boards of national organizations, and received highly regarded honors.

In total, we have:

- 7 editors
- 65 contributors
- 145 sponsors and community partners

OUR IMPACT

Our work supports the entire cultural ecology in the region and ripples out to bolster hundreds of organizations. We provide critical analysis, publicity, visibility, and validation that cultural organizations use to amplify their work, and we provide documentation and a lasting impact for temporary works of art. As one of only a handful of organizations in the country that do this kind of specialized work, we provide a valuable contribution to public dialogue about the arts.

In 2022-23:

- 744 stories and podcasts published
- 270,780 users
- 473,498 page views
- 5.1 million Google impressions



COMMITMENT TO UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES

We are deeply committed to amplifying voices of underrepresented communities. We have a diverse array of contributors who frequently give voice to their respective communities, and we have programs dedicated to BIPOC, AANHPI, rural, Indigenous, and gender nonconforming and trans communities.

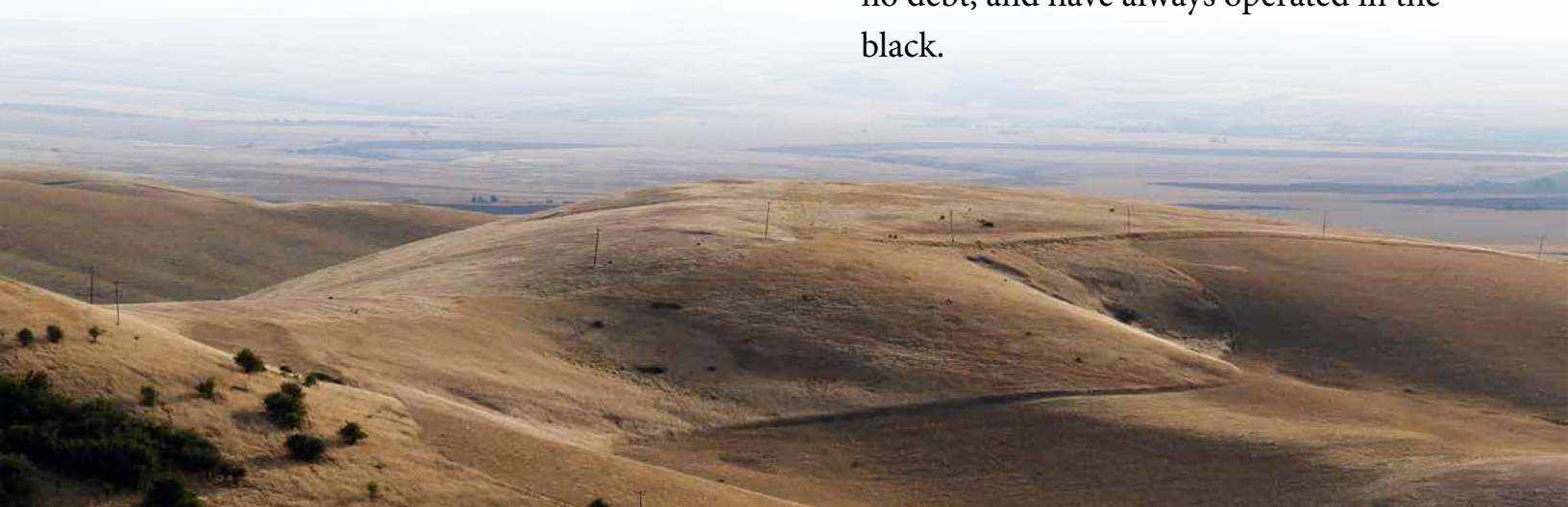
KEY INITIATIVES

- **Underreported communities:** It's our goal to tell the stories of these communities, and to find correspondents who represent them to provide an inside look.
- **Statewide coverage:** It's our goal to tell stories from a variety of places around the state and reflect the distinct cultures of different regions.
- **New contributors:** We consciously work to identify, train, and mentor young or emerging writers.

FISCAL HEALTH

Thanks to careful fiscal management, long-term grants, and support from donors, our finances have remained strong and we are growing fast.

- Last 2022-23 fiscal year, which ended June 30, we **increased overall revenue 60%** over the previous year.
- Percent of our budget that goes to pay people: 95.69%
- We receive about \$182,280 a year in donated services (\$160,280 from core staff, \$20,000 in in-kind content, \$2,000 in legal fees).
- During the 2022-23 fiscal year, our sponsorship revenue from 74 sponsors more than doubled from the previous year. We donated \$37,000 and offered \$30,000 in trade to cultural organizations.
- During the height of the pandemic, we provided \$360,000 worth of free sponsorships for 20 months to help our arts community in its time of need, which benefited 80 cultural organizations.
- We have low overhead, no capital costs, no debt, and have always operated in the black.



FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Capacity Building

Since we started publishing in 2011, Arts Watch has grown considerably, dramatically increasing content and the number of users we reach. Yet our core executives have been donating most of their services, sacrificing to build the rest of the organization.

In 2022, we launched a major capacity-building campaign to meet our growing needs.

Our goals:

- Strengthen operational stability
- More effectively support the vital need for arts journalism
- Better support our statewide arts community
- Compensate equitably
- Improve accessibility
- Grow our audience
- Set the stage for future succession
- Provide sustainability

Our capacity building efforts target 4 key areas that all work together to be successful:

1. Increase pay for core staff, who have been donating most of their professional services, in order to strengthen and stabilize operations. This incremental increase meets only a fraction of a full salary. Staff members will continue to donate much of their time with the goal to eventually provide full, equitable salaries.

Amount to raise: \$36,000

To pay for: Professional services

Current professional services donated:
\$138,000

2. A financial systems consultant will help develop a strategic funding plan, shape our financial future, and increase revenue in order to sustain the new level of capacity.

Amount to raise: \$10,000

To pay for: Consulting fees

3. A marketing consultant will help develop targeted promotional materials for each piece of programming in order to increase revenue by reaching new donors, sponsors, and foundations.

Amount to raise: \$10,000

To pay for: Consulting fees, graphic design, and promotional materials

4. A long-range digital plan will improve accessibility and strengthen our operations. Our website is our entire public face so its health is crucial to our success. Two separate projects that are part of this plan, Tech Improvements and Accessibility Upgrades, are outlined below.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Tech Improvements

A web developer and a tech consultant will implement our long-range digital plan to increase performance, expand our programming, develop new community resources, work more efficiently, and improve the user experience.

Our plans include:

- **Develop community resources** as part of our goal to become a bigger central resource for all arts organizations in the region. Arts organizations identified having more ways to communicate and connect as a top need. Since we are already in the news business and are the go-to site for information, it makes sense for us to take on this role. Part of this effort involves providing a way for organizations to introduce themselves to the public with links to their websites, and building calendars for arts events, grant deadlines, artist residencies, calls for public art proposals, arts submissions, and professional development opportunities.
- **Increase video and audio capability**, both on our website and with new equipment. This is an important step to professionalizing our operations since we now use our personal equipment. This will broaden the ways we tell stories, allow for more multimedia programming, and better position us to work with up-and-coming journalists.
- **Improve data collection** so we can more easily gather information for specific types of content, which will strengthen our evaluation methods.
- **Automate certain features**, which will increase efficiency.
- **Increase server and software capacity** to host multimedia programming.

Amount to raise: \$25,000

To pay for: Consulting fees, professional services, web development, software subscriptions, and new equipment

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Accessibility Upgrades

According to the Institute for Disability Research, Policy, and Practice, 97% of websites are not accessible to people with certain disabilities. We will upgrade our website to increase access to patrons with vision or hearing impairments, and we will document and publish our experience with recommended tech improvements, guidelines, and best practices.

As Oregon's leading arts and culture journal, we want to be a guiding beacon to influence change so that other organizations may follow our example.

Our plans include:

- **Accessibility audit:** A team of consultants who are blind or low-vision will audit our site in different conditions using many different screen reader devices and browsers and provide a report on how we can improve access.
- **Automated audits:** Plug-ins will provide ongoing accessibility site analyses and recommend adjustments.
- **Improved audio clarity and transcripts** for podcasts to make them accessible to people who are deaf or hard-of-hearing. This involves software subscriptions, transcription services, and labor costs.
- **Best practices for web development** such as enhancing text-to-voice software, high contrast modes to reduce glare and improve readability, and color-blind considerations.
- **Best practices for journalists** such as consistently providing alternative text descriptions for images.

Amount to raise: \$40,000

To pay for: Consulting fees, web development, transcription services, and software

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Gathering Wisdom

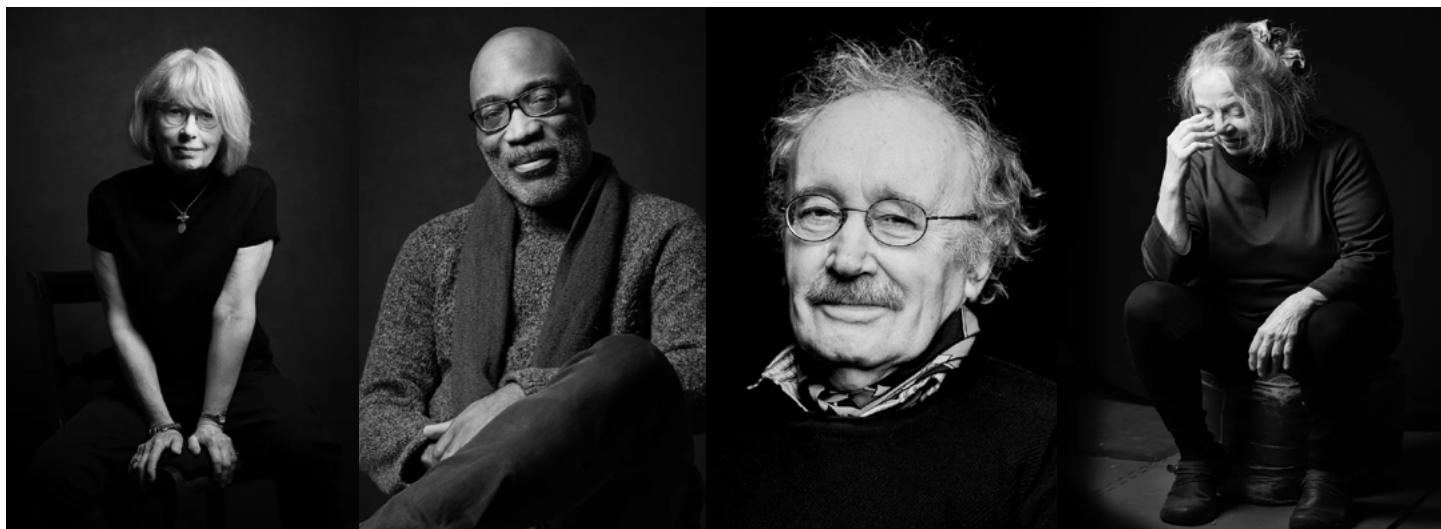
This project, due to begin in 2024, will profile artists late in their careers; recognize and honor their lifetime achievements; document and preserve their influence, contributions, and what they've learned; and collectively gather a cultural history of the state of Oregon. We want to capture the vital process of passing knowledge down as the state continues to refine and reshape its cultural identity.

K.B. Dixon has already photographed dozens of artists who have made significant contributions to the art, character, and culture of Oregon. His captivating and intimate black-and-white images methodically document our contemporary cultural landscape in an ongoing series published at Oregon Arts Watch.

Now we want to build on this remarkable collection by adding artists' personal stories and providing context in order to create a broader and more complete cultural history of the state.

Amount to raise: \$25,000

To pay for: Professional writing, editing, audio, and photography services



FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

New Multimedia Theater Program

Theaters across the country face a crisis with a loss of 25%-30% of audiences since the start of the pandemic, according to Theatre Communications Group, a national advocacy organization. A new multimedia program will connect theaters with new patrons, expand audiences, increase access, and foster conversations about the arts.



Susannah Mars

Every month, two hosts will take three community members to a theater performance, one an industry person and two “civilians” who don’t typically attend, and then have a conversation for a podcast with a written account that provides context.

Our goals are to bridge the gap between theaters and audiences; demystify perceptions of elitism in theater; and help theaters gain fresh perspectives so they can more effectively assess their impact, meet community needs, and attract ticket-buyers. Engaging with people who are new to theater offers the opportunity for a rich cultural exchange between theater artists and audiences that can expand our mindset.

Amount to raise: \$25,000

To pay for: Professional services, honoraria, and transcription costs for accessibility

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Expanded Stage & Studio Podcast

Dmae Lo Roberts, a multiple Peabody-winning broadcast journalist and one of Oregon's leading cultural voices, has produced the popular audio show Stage & Studio since 1997, interviewing more than 1,000 guests and developing a dedicated following. She brought the show, which features BIPOC artists, to Arts Watch in 2021.



Dmae Lo Roberts

Now Dmae will share hosting duties with veteran broadcaster Jenna Yokoyama, doubling the number of podcasts a year from 12 to 24, and increasing exposure for BIPOC artists who are interviewed.

See the full series here: www.orartswatch.org/category/stage-studio/

Amount to raise: \$25,000

To pay for: Professional services and transcription costs for accessibility



Jenna Yokoyama

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Arts Education

Schools are stripping away arts education even though evidence points to it as a vital key to learning. This also has an impact on attendance at cultural events. We consider arts education a cornerstone of our coverage, as we explore how creativity helps young people learn and think, problem-solve, and innovate.

In addition to features on individual programs, we aim to produce an extensive series on the state of arts education in Oregon. The series will take deep dives into the subject's history, existing research, outcomes, funding mechanisms, diversity and equity, challenges, and solutions, interspersed with snapshots of classrooms around the state to explore local perspectives and priorities.

See the full series here: <https://www.ortartswatch.org/category/learning/>

Amount to raise: \$15,000

To pay for: Writing and editing services and travel costs



FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Mentorship Program

We partner with the applied journalism program at Oregon State University, giving us fresh perspectives and giving students the opportunity to work with experienced editors, have stories published, build professional portfolios, and get paid. We want to eventually expand this program to work with more students at more colleges.

Amount to raise: \$15,000

To pay for: Writing and photography fees for students and editing/mentorship services

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Cultural Hubs

Cultural centers fill a vital role in communities, often serving multiple functions as performance halls, art galleries, historical repositories, gathering places, and educational resources. They help to build essential connections and strengthen the social fabric. In rural areas, they can be the only cultural touchstone for miles around.

As cultural coverage in traditional media has shrunk dramatically, creating news deserts in some areas, arts communities say that greater exposure is a top need. A series of profiles of essential cultural hubs prioritizes centers in rural and underserved areas, and examines how they uniquely serve and reflect their communities.

These stories will give greater visibility, build audiences, generate economic revenue, produce a broad cultural snapshot of the state, provide a window into Oregon's many distinct communities, and help to bridge the urban/rural divide. After our stories are published, the cultural centers can use them for marketing materials and development to amplify their messages, attract audiences, and raise revenue.

“So great that OR Arts Watch reaches out and brings to light for an urban public the gems that exist around the state,” reads a comment on our profile of the Art Adventure Gallery in Madras. “Art Adventure presents quality shows to Jefferson County and the quality of Central Oregon to its visitors.”



See the full series here: www.orartswatch.org/category/cultural-hubs/

Amount left to raise: \$10,000

To pay for: Professional writing, editing, and photography services, and travel costs

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Gender Deconstruction

Violence against queer people has surged in the last decade. We believe that much of this intolerance stems from ignorance. The Human Rights Campaign, a national advocacy group, identifies building understanding of queer issues and shaping the public debate through education as a key practice in effecting change.

A series of 10 stories will explore the experiences of people who are gender nonconforming or transgender in order to increase empathy, counter stigmas, dismantle stereotypes, raise awareness, and work to build a more inclusive and accepting society.

An exhibit based on this series will also be featured in 2024 at Friendly House, thanks to a grant from the Regional Arts & Culture Council.

See the full series here: www.orartswatch.org/category/gender-deconstruction/

Amount left to raise: \$5,000

Total cost of project: \$25,000

To pay for: Professional writing and editing services, travel costs, and supplies



FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

More Funding Opportunities

Each of these important items helps to keep our stories free and accessible to all.

\$10,000 pays for one year of weekly columns.

\$7,500 pays for all our dues and subscriptions for one year.

\$5,000 pays for podcast transcription fees for one year.

\$2,500 pays for a monthly beat column for one year.

\$2,000 pays for our web server for one year.

\$1,000 pays an editor to manage one arts beat for one month.

\$750 pays for bookkeeping software for one year.

\$500 pays for one podcast.

\$250 pays for one preview feature.

\$150 pays for one review.

\$100 pays for anti-spam software for one year.

\$75 pays to edit one review.

\$50 pays for one weekly newsletter.

\$25 pays for graphic design software for one month.