



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 1, 2014

CONTACT: Shirlee Tully
Phone: (916) 765-9000
Email: shirlee@sacregcf.org

Sacramento Region Community Foundation **Announces 2014 Arts Awardees**

Leff-Davis Fund for Visual Artists Awards Over \$10,000 to Local Visual Artists

Sacramento, Calif., (10/1/2014) – Local visual artists Robert Ortbal and Kurt Edward Fishback were named the 2014 awardees of the *Leff-Davis Fund for Visual Artists* at the Sacramento Region Community Foundation. Now in its second year, the fund’s purpose is to support artists from the region in the advancement of their careers through a monetary award for creating original art.

“The Foundation is pleased to be able to offer this fund to the visual arts community for the second year. We were thoroughly impressed by both the quality and quantity of submissions,” said Chief Giving Officer Priscilla Enriquez. “This year’s awardees were just two of 68 applications received this year, compared to 43 in 2013, reflecting the growing prestige of the Leff-Davis award and the depth of our local visual arts community.”

Retired pathologist and avid art collector Dr. Emily Leff established the fund at the Foundation in 2013 to support local visual artists on an individual level who have demonstrated professional commitment to their work.

“I was pleased to see that applications almost doubled in the second year. A variety of media were represented, and it is very clear that there are many creative and talented artists in this region,” said Dr. Leff. “For many years, I wanted to create something lasting that would recognize artists for their essential contribution to our culture, and also help them financially to create art. I chose the Foundation to help me realize this longtime ambition because of their superior experience and outreach in the Sacramento Region.”

Awardee [Robert Ortbal](#) received his Master of Fine Arts from the UC Davis in 1989 and currently teaches sculpture and seminar courses at Sac State. His own work uses everyday materials such as styrofoam and cardboard to explore the distinct and interrelated worlds of natural phenomena and human nature. Through his exploration, Ortbal searches for the hidden growth within real and imagined spaces, evoking the connection to a larger system, rather than focusing on exhausted spatial relationships or discrete objects. Ortbal received \$4,175 which he plans to use to create seven to 10 sculptures and installation works for a local gallery.

[Kurt Edward Fishback](#) began his artistic career studying ceramic sculpture at Sacramento City College, the San Francisco Art Institute and the University of California, Davis in the ‘60s. He first began experimenting with photography in 1962 as a way to document his experiences with other sculptors, but it was not until 1973 that photographing artists became his primary mode of expression. Because of the emergence of prominent women artists since his early work, Fishback will use his \$6,000 award to expand his work and shift the focus to women in an effort to create more balance in his archive.

Past recipients of the Leff-Davis award have noted a positive effect on their careers and ability to create art as a result of the award.

“As a young, emerging artist there's a definite feeling of always having to hustle, of having to pool together different sources of income while keeping focused on making work,” said 2013 award recipient Bryan Valenzuela. “The Leff Davis Grant was pretty integral for me in helping to make some big strides towards being able to just make that work. It opened up time and opportunities, relationships and paths that have been such a boon to where I want to go with what I'm creating.”

For more information, contact Shirlee Tully at shirlee@sacregcf.org or (916) 765-9000.

About the Foundation: Sacramento Region Community Foundation has been the trusted steward of charitable assets, a community catalyst for meaningful change and the advocate for shaping vital impact through philanthropy since 1983. As the center of philanthropy in the Sacramento Region, the Foundation's mission is to transform our community through focused leadership and advocacy that inspire partnerships and expand giving. Learn more at www.sacregcf.org.

###