Daniel Duford

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ARTIST STATEMENT

Here’s the central image of my artistic practice– an enormous tree growing out of a half-buried storage jar. The roots have cracked the walls of the submerged pot and suck up nutrients from deep in mythic and historic earth. The disparate branches unite at the nubby, gnarled trunk. The jar itself is burnished by age with fissures filigreed up to the lip from the cracked belly. The clay for the jar was dug a long time ago nearby in a dry riverbed and fired by who knows who in a crude wood-burning kiln. The tree is a maypole, boundary marker, axis mundi. I use blunt materials to tell stories. My stories generate paintings, public sculpture, books, installations and performances.

The dendritic nature of my practice fans out from American mythology and folklore. In comics, narrative is understood through a sequence of panels. The space between the panels (the gutter) is filled in by the mind of the reader. What if the gutter were three-dimensional? How do we receive our stories? Mostly, we receive them in fragments. Like the broken pottery of a lost culture, we infer, we contextualize and we filter those fragments through our own beliefs and biases. The meanings are fluid.

BIO

For 20 years, Daniel Duford has woven visual narratives — stories that flow through large paintings, graphic novels, installations and figurative sculpture. His work is born from the mythic and political history of North America. He is a 2019 Guggenheim Fellow, a 2010 Hallie Ford Fellow and a 2012 Art Matters Grant recipient.

His work has been exhibited nationally including MASS MOCA, Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art at PSU, Orange County Museum of Art and the Boise Art Museum.

His writing has appeared in Artweek, ART news, High Desert Journal and Parabola among others. In 2011 he published *Wellspring: Poems 1996-2006.* His current writing can be found on *The Whole Live Animal* at danielduford.substack.com.

His curatorial projects include the 2012 exhibition *Fighting Men: Leon Golub, Jack Kirby, Peter Voulkos*(2012) at the Hoffman Gallery at Lewis and Clark College and *An Earth Song, A Body Song: Figures with Landscapes. Works from the Permanent Collection*(2020) at Orange County Museum of Art. He is Visiting Professor of Art at Reed College. He is Creative Director of Building Five in Portland, Oregon.