

WEBVTT

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Let's see.

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Not to advance the slides, of course. There we go. All right.  
We're just going to introduce ourselves before we start.  
Jennifer, why don't you

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go ahead?

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Okay.

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**2026 SPARK AWARD FOR OREGON ARTISTS: INFO SESSION TRANSCRIPTION**

Recorded on April 22, 2026

Yeah, I'll go ahead and do that. Yeah, it sounds like there's an echo on your voice. Maybe folks can drop a note in the chat if there's an echo on mine as well. Hi, everyone. I'm Jennifer Allen. I'm the director of responsive grant making at the Miller Foundation. Really happy to be talking with you all today.

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I use she, her pronouns. I'm a white woman with medium-length blonde hair. I'm wearing a green shirt, and I've got a whiteboard behind me in an office.

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I'll turn it over to you.

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How about now? Is there an echo?

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I can't hear it. So why don't you go ahead and dive in?

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All right. Oops. Ah, got ahead of us. Okay, so my visual description is my name is Alan Mir. I'm a program officer here at the Miller Foundation. I'm a white presenting female, Middle Eastern origin. I have a straight dark brown hair with bangs. I'm wearing a white shirt.

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And I'm sitting in an office with a blurred background. Our missing Spark award team co-worker Lacey Matney is attending a conference currently, but she is the person that would be responsible for answering.

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Any of the technical questions that you might have, you can get in touch with us. You'll see this email many, many times throughout this presentation, but you can get in touch with us at this email on the screen, [artists@millerfound.org](mailto:artists@millerfound.org).

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And if you just direct any technical or otherwise questions to their, we will all respond. One of us will respond. All right, let's get started.

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Today we are going to give you an overview of the Spark award program. We're going to talk about eligibility, the review criteria that the panelists will be.

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looking at when they score the applications. Then we're going to give you a fairly detailed application overview, and we've threaded some grant writing tips in there. We've done this program now. This is the third year, so we've kind of gotten a good sense of what reviewers look at

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and the applications, and we've managed to build up quite a few tips and resources to help you succeed.

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Then there'll be a little bit information about any further assistance that we offer between now and the deadline, and there'll be time at the end for questions. Feel free to drop any questions that you might have through the Q&A.

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feature on this webinar. If we don't answer them right away, that is because we know that they'll be addressed at a later point in the presentation. But again, we will try to get to as many questions at the end. We have an hour earmarked for this. We do have a lot of content to get through.

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But if your question is an answer, please reach out at [artists@millerfound.org](mailto:artists@millerfound.org), and we are very happy to follow up by email or have a quick phone call.

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All right, everybody. So I'm hoping my audio is better. A couple of you said it was muted. We're really happy to be talking to you about the 2026 cycle of the Spark Award. We created this program to provide direct support to individual artists in our State, and this is the third year of a 3-year pilot. Some of you may know this.

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We are supporting 60 individual artists over the three-year pilot. This is the final year, and it's 20 per year. In 2024, we supported 20 individual performing artists, and last year we focused our funding on literary.

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and media artists. This year, of course, is visual artists. Each year we award \$25,000 grants to 20 individuals to support overall creative development, so not a specific project.

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We do see this funding as an investment both in individual artists and the communities that benefit from all of your work. And it's intended to fill a gap that we saw in the Oregon Arts funding landscape, which was for mid-career artists who are accomplished but continue to face.

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barriers or constraints that impact your artistic growth. In this info session, we're going to go over, as Yael said, who the grants intended for, how applications will be evaluated, what

materials you'll need to include in your application, tips on how to make your application stronger, and then the different ways that you can get support from us through the process.

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So, each year of the pilot, as I said, supports artists working in a particular set of disciplines. You can see those specifically listed here. The thing that I'd like to point out this year for visual arts.

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is that I want you to recognize that there's a difference between video art and sound art, and then the film and music artists that we've supported in prior years. You can see the specific list of disciplines here on the screen. But we will get into greater detail at a later point about those.

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All right. So each year of the Spark award we do fund interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary artists.

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The key here is to apply in the year where you think you would be most competitive based on the primary discipline in your practice.

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An interdisciplinary artist integrates multiple disciplines within your individual projects, rather than creating projects in more than one distinct discipline. An interdisciplinary artist whose dedicated practice includes the visual arts as the primary form of expression

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for seven years or more is encouraged to apply this year.

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So the way we structured the Spark award takes into account the wide variety of needs that working artists might have in pursuing their creative and career development from the creation of an art object to covering living expenses that allows them to follow through with their arts opportunities.

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Because of this, the award is intended to provide a flexible source of funding to support your overall creative development instead of a specific project, as I said.

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The funding is intended to be catalytic. It can be used to support any activities that remove barriers to your creative development and grow your artistic practice into the future.

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It's our intention that it will provide artists with time to explore

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reflect, connect, or create work at a particularly important moment in your artistic development.

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Some artists have used these phones for living expenses, like housing, utilities, food, transportation, childcare, or

healthcare, for example. Others might use the funds to cover the costs of studio space or travel materials and equipment

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or development of their skills as a teaching artist, or even professional services.

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There are only two types of expenses that the Spark award funding can't support. One is tuition toward a college degree program, whether that degree is creative or non-creative.

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And secondly, it can't serve as compensation for work an artist is doing as an employee of an arts nonprofit organization.

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The purpose of this requirement is so that an organization isn't receiving funding from the Miller Foundation that supports this individual artist and the individual artist is getting duplicate

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support through the Spark Award. Because as many of you know, the Miller Foundation also funds arts organizations statewide.

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Just an important note, the IRS does consider award funds through the Spark award to be taxable income. So if you get a grant through the Spark Award program, you will get a 1099 form in the mail.

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and just due to our Irs restrictions on our grant making for this program, funds can only be issued to individuals and not a fiscal sponsor.

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Alright. So just to go over some key dates of the Spark program. The guidelines are available now. They're linked on our website. As of April 15, th which was just a week ago. The application is also available in our grants portal for visual artists to apply. You can find a link to the grants portal to open up your account. If you have not done so already

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from the top right corner of our homepage. Then we'll be offering a few support programs with this grant to help applicants work through the application. You can already find tips and resources on how to fill out different parts of the application, like the CV, the artist statement, work samples.

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It's linked on our Spark page under our We're here to help header. A recording of this info session will be available on our website again about Friday, hopefully this Friday. Then we're going to hold some one-on-one Spark support sessions on different dates and times throughout May and in early June leading up to the deadline.

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I will talk more about those in a few slides. And then on May 27th, we're going to hold an open support session, which I'll talk about as well in a little bit. Most importantly, the application deadline is on Wednesday, June 3rd

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by 5 p.m. Not a midnight deadline. Application should be in by 5:00 PM on June 3rd. We can't accept late applications, so please make note of this date and time. The review period takes place from June to November with award announcements to be made

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in mid-November. About a year after the awards are announced, we ask awardees to submit a report. This can be done by an interview, a casual conversation with a Miller team member

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or by filling out a form. Just describing how the Spark Award funding has supported their creative development.

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We don't require, again, the creation of or presentation of new artistic work as a result of the award funds. This is really to support an overall practice that's in a catalytic moment.

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So next we're going to talk more about who this program aims to support and eligibility. I will say the slides, we are aware, have a lot of information that is to support different ways of absorbing information. And since this is

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likely going to be viewed primarily as a recording. We like to provide a lot of information on the slides.

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Jennifer, why don't you talk about who should apply?

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Thanks. So in terms of who should apply, I'm going to run through our eligibility criteria. All of this information is in our guidelines.

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But to be eligible for Spark, you should be 30 years or older as of the end of this year, December 31st on 2026, and we aren't able to make exceptions for that.

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You should have been a resident of the state of Oregon for the last 5 years, since 2021 or earlier, and that should be continuously. Obviously, people travel for work, go to residencies. We fully understand that. So we're not considering that. This does include enrolled members of tribal communities that share this geography.

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We consider a resident of Oregon as anyone required to file a resident Oregon income tax return.

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To be eligible, you should be at a mid-career stage of your professional practice, which we define as being able to demonstrate through work samples and through your CV, a dedicated artistic practice of 7 or more years in the discipline in which you're applying.

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You should be able to demonstrate a steady growth in the professional opportunities you've had and your public engagement through your career to date. And with likely future contributions to your discipline.

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Competitive applicants do a good job of describing this phase as a catalytic phase of their creative career in the application.

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In terms of having 7 years of a sustained and active public practice, artistic practice in your primary discipline that should not include schooling, and it should reach beyond your studio. That could include curated exhibitions, competitive residencies

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talks, readings, distribution, publications, or public screenings or other opportunities.

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Your ongoing practice should involve creating new original work rather than interpreting, translating, arranging, reviving, remounting, or copying the work of others or your own previously existing material.

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I mentioned already you can't be enrolled in a creative degree program that includes associate, low res, undergrad or graduate non-creative degree students can apply.

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Not a former recipient of a Spark award from the Miller Foundation, not be a family member of an employee or board member of the foundation or its namesakes.

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I want to be clear that this program isn't focused on supporting artists who are in an emerging or an advanced stage of their careers. I know it's that's one of the the primary challenges for you as artists is making sure that you align with the career phase that this program is currently focused on.

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The foundation defines advanced as a well-established artist who's experienced significant regional or national recognition and achievements over an extended period, such as major national awards, a retrospective, multiple solo museum exhibitions, etc.

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So that level of advanced would not be a fit for the Spark award.

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Just want to emphasize again that this program accepts applications from individuals rather than artistic teams. We do recognize that a lot of creative practices are collaborative. So if you work within a team, you just need to be able to represent your ongoing individual and original work in your Spark application

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both in the narrative and in the work samples that you upload.

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I just want to make note. We see the questions coming in in the Q&A. We will address all those points coming up.

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So in 2026, the the award is intended for mid-career visual artists and culture bearers. As we define in the previous slide with dedicated creative practices of 7 or more years, and one of the one or more of the following categories that appear on the on the screen here.

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Creative practices that fall within these categories but aren't intended primarily for intended primarily for online viewing, a theatrical setting or other non-exhibition or installation settings are not eligible this cycle. So that is a distinction that we're making

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this year - that the creative practice should be a practice that is intended to be an exhibit shared in a context of exhibition or installation setting.

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Competitive applicants can demonstrate through their work samples and a CV, the prerequisite of the seven or more years duration of exhibiting their work in dedicated art venues. They could be able to show growth in the scope and caliber of opportunities to engage audiences in their practice over time.

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Examples of this progression can include working up to several solo exhibitions in the last decade, a dedicated art venues, an inclusion in substantial group exhibitions, some regional or national reach,

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commissions and acquisitions, securing competitive awards or residencies, visiting teaching opportunities, and other examples. If your practice doesn't fall within the eligible or the ineligible categories that are listed on this slide and in the guidelines.

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James F. and Marion L. Miller Foundation

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Please feel free to reach out to us with your question at the email that appears on the screen, [artists@millerfound.org](mailto:artists@millerfound.org).

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you're muted.

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Just wanted to review quickly the evaluation criteria. Just know that this information is, of course, in the guidelines, but is also in the application itself.

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Following an initial screening for eligibility, applications are reviewed by a panel of regional and national experts. Panelists consider the following criteria when they're evaluating your application and materials.

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They look at vision and voice. Skill and commitment.

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your audience and reach, and your timing and potential with this application.

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We will discuss the application at length in a few slides, so you'll see how these criteria match up with the application materials.

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I just want to, since this question comes up a lot in the in the support that I provide, and is also coming up right now, and some of the questions coming in. We acknowledge that mid career is

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defined differently in different ways by different people and different geographies at different stages of their extensive professional career. What is important in the application is to define

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through the narrative and your work samples and CV, this catalytic period that you are in your creative career, that what you've done up until now has informed the moment that you're in at this point, and how pushing forward will contribute greatly to your creative growth and to the growth of

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the visual arts discipline for 2026. So that is an important distinction to be made.

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Okay. So we are now going to go into the specifics of the application. So after reading through our guidelines on the website, you have determined this opportunity might be right for you. That's great. So the next step is to start an account and on our artist grants portal that's linked on our website.

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As you work your way through the various steps of the application, different helpful tips will pop up depending on the answers that you provide. Please read these tips carefully. The portal will auto-save your work as you go, so you don't need to fear that when you walk away

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you'll lose the information. And then the 1st step as you start completing an application will be an eligibility quiz

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to make sure that your time isn't wasted on filling out an application when the opportunity isn't right for you. So the eligibility quiz has 8

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short questions. One of them is verifying that you are 30 or older by December 31st, 2026, that you are an artist currently creating original visual art that aligns with this year's eligible categories.

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That you have been a full-time resident of Oregon for the last 5 or more years since 2021, or sooner.

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If you're currently enrolled in a creative degree program, if you answer yes to that, you will be told the quiz will tell you you're ineligible to apply.

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Have you previously received the Spark award from the Miller Foundation? Again, if you have,

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the 40 who have, they are not eligible to apply.

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And then the next question is crucial that you read it carefully. So this is about the career stage. Applicants should be individual mid-career artists that are able to answer yes to each of the following 3 questions:

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Have you been a practicing artist with a dedicated visual arts practice for 7 or more years that extends beyond the studio? If not, you're not eligible. Does your practice involve creating new original visual arts work, rather than interpreting, translating, etc?

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If not, you're not eligible. Do you have a track record of growth and opportunities to present your work to public audience for 7 years or longer? If not, you are not eligible.

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And then the final 2 questions are, are you an employee of an arts-based nonprofit organization? This excludes short-term contract work. That is obviously very common in our field or employees of higher education institutions.

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If you answer yes, that doesn't mean that you're necessarily ineligible, you're just going to be asked a follow-up question - is the majority of your individual artistic practice independent of the work of the organization by which you're employed.

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We ask this question because the goal of the Spark Award is to support artists who have an individual artistic practice that's independent of the work of their employer. And if they are trying to get support for work that they do within a nonprofit organization, there are other avenues of support that the Miller Foundation offers.

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And then the final question in the eligibility quiz is, if you're a family member of an employee or board member of the foundation.

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Once you've completed the quiz and it's determined that you are eligible to apply for the Spark award, a continue button will appear, and it'll take you to the next page where you can begin filling out the application.

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Before we move into reviewing the application, we wanted to mention a few general grant writing recommendations. I will read these. You can also find these on our website in the 'we're here to help'

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section. We have several resources for tips and resources. But please read the guidelines carefully to understand if this opportunity is appropriate for you. In our effort to be as transparent as possible around this program's goals and process.

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Our guiding materials include all the relevant information. Our guidelines are long, but they're thorough, and they're meant to provide the information up front and answer any questions that you we anticipate you might have.

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If the written format is a barrier to applying for this award, we recommend using dictation software that's available on most devices and platforms. We have some options linked in our guidelines.

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Please do not wait until the last minute to start your application. I am also a procrastinator, and I know how that

works, but if this is the first time that you're looking at the application, it will take you some time to get used to the information that we're asking for, so please

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review at least the application in advance to make sure that this is something that you can complete by the deadline on June 3rd. Rushed answers do come across as unclear and less considered, so take that into consideration.

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Please write clear and concise answers that address all the relevant aspects of the question. Please consider avoiding art speak, exaggerations, flowery statements, generalized language, and focus instead on expressing yourself in a direct and simple manner.

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Don't assume the reviewers of your application are familiar with you or your work. Please provide context and basic information where it's possible and appropriate.

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Check that your website and hosted links are active and in working order before submitting the application. If your website is outdated, just consider not including it in your application. It's not required to have a website.

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Panelists often, when they see a website that is very outdated, it can count against an applicant. Please be mindful of your social media presence. Don't include social media handles that are private or that provide a lot of personal or irrelevant information. Ensure that you're putting forth your most professional self and all the materials and information that you provide.

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And finally, please ask someone to read through your application draft if time allows to make sure that you've gotten your ideas across clearly and efficiently. Avoid typos, spelling mistakes, or grammatical errors. We know these things sound

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obvious, but we still see them over and over again, and it does impact how the application is perceived.

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Finally, in this brave new world of AI technology, we wanted to be pretty open and transparent about how these tools can be employed in the Spark application process. If you choose to get help from an AI tool in the prep of some of the application materials.

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Please make sure your voice is still coming through. Panelists will likely be able to tell if it was written by you or by a machine. We have a quick, I'm not going to read it, but this appears in our guidelines and on our website

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the consideration that we've put into our AI guidance. And most importantly, this year in the visual arts year, we're not going to accept AI generated or AI augmented visual or image work samples. The exception to that is artists whose continued practice explores and interrogates the use of AI tool in a meaningful and deliberate way.

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And in these cases, we do ask applicants to explain the ways in which they employ AI in their work and the application narrative and the work sample description field.

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I apologize, you're going to hear my voice for the next few minutes, because I'm going through the application. Hopefully that is that works for you. So once applicants have filled out the basic details about themselves, now we're going to move on to the application questions. There are 4 questions in the application

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and then we ask for additional/ supplemental materials. So it's not a very long application. We have a very, very generous character count. That does not mean that you need to utilize all of it at all. If you can get your ideas across and your narrative across and and less of a character count

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please do so. We just didn't want to be limiting, so that you're trying to stretch your answer into a... or condense your answer into a shorter

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character count. After you've filled out the basic details about yourself, you're going to be asked first up to select three primary forms that your work takes. These selections should match what you end up submitting in your work samples, so please consider that.

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For instance, if you're a visual artist whose practice consistently is of making prints, paintings, and wooden sculptures, you can select all three of these categories, but please make sure that your work samples and the answers to the questions in the application

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discuss these different forms that your practice takes. If you're primarily a printmaker and a painter, for instance, but occasionally dabble in creating wooden sculptures, please consider focusing your application on the two primary expressions of printmaking and painting.

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Please note again, we will say this several times, that this visual arts year is aimed at artists creating work in an

installation or exhibition context. And again, if your work is intended primarily for online viewing or theatrical settings rather than exhibition or installation, this is not the year for you.

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There are other... we cover all disciplines in almost all disciplines with this program, but you will not be competitive in the visual arts year.

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After you select these primary forums, you're going to then be asked to provide a very short discipline description. This is a sentence - 100 characters or less. This just gives us more information about the specific focus of your practice.

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And in some cases, it'll help us assign your application to the appropriate panel.

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You should begin the description with I am a and include your genres, your main creative activity as succinctly as possible. And again, this might assist with panel placement.

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So some examples are textile artists examining abstraction and color. I'm a video artist making non-narrative work about feminist critique,

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for instance. Now we're going to move on to the application questions. Again, there are 4 of them.

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The first one is biographical narrative. Please note, this is different than the bio that people or other applications might ask for, or other you might be asked for in different contexts. The biographical narrative is a first person account:

137

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Will you tell us a bit about yourself, such as where you grew up, what led you to become an artist, or any other information that might not be included in other parts of your application, or might not fit well in other parts of the application.

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This is not a place for a summary of your professional CV. We ask for your CV later in the application, and please don't write this text in third person.

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So the okay, I think that is covered all that.

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The next question that we ask is for your artist statement.

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We ask you to tell us about your original artistic practice and how it's developed over time. You can include information about your influences, your process, your values, emphasis, main interests, and other things you

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feel are relevant to your practice. We would like to know what your underlying concepts or ideas that connect your work over time. We're looking at a... again, this isn't an application for a project, this is an application about your practice as an artist for about seven years or a decade. So what connects your practice over time?

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And what are you currently looking at? What are your current investigations or curiosities?

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In general, the biographical narrative is about you and the path you took to becoming an artist, and the artist statement is about the work that you make.

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If you are starting from scratch for the artist statement for the Spark Award, we have a few tips to help you kind of put it

together. So again, the artist statement focuses on the how's and the why's of your creative practice.

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You can use these guiding questions. These also appear on our tips and resources page on our website, so don't feel like you need to write these down. They are readily available.

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You can ask a friend to interview you, you can ask yourself these questions, or use another method that might work for you. But some of the things that could help in shaping an artist statement is asking what discipline do you work in, what themes and concepts are you interested in exploring?

148

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What's your process for creating new work? Who or what has influenced you? That could be a genre, a tradition, a method. How's your art practice evolved over time? What's important to you when you're making your work?

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What are you responding to with your work? And what are your current... what are you currently curious about, and where might you be headed with your work?

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The next 2 questions that the 2 final questions in the application before we move on to the supplemental material are about audience. The third question is audience and reach. So the Spark award aims to support artists who directly engage audiences beyond their studio practice.

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We ask that you tell us about the specific audiences and public that you wish to reach and impact with your work. In what ways do you engage with these audiences? What interactions or experiences have you had with those? And those who have been engaged with your work?

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And what this question gets at is your intent behind your work as it relates to a public. So while having a practice that starts and ends in the studio is, of course, a totally legitimate art practice. The Spark award is specifically intended to support

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artists who directly engage on audience. This can look like presenting your work consistently in exhibitions, attending competitive residencies, or other things. This isn't a place to list their main accomplishments. That's where the CV comes in and the application.

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In this answer, reviewers are most interested in hearing about who your target audience is for your work, how you try to reach them, and if you have had any experiences that you can speak to about any impact or conversations your work might have generated.

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This can be one-on-one dialogue with someone who saw your work, or a more community-wide experience.

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And then the final question asks about the impact this award could have on your creative development. So the Spark Award is

intended to support artists at a pivotal juncture of their practice. So please tell us in what way this is a catalytic

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phase and your creative career. How would this funding provide momentum for your creative development in this particular period? And also, what comes next? So again, this funding is intended to support you as an artist, so the funding can be used to support any activities-

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it could be living costs, it could be equipment, it could be research. And while this funding doesn't need to be focused in support of a specific project, the application should describe how the funding can serve as a catalyst to advance your creative development. So you can still speak about what you want to be working on next and how that could, how

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having the funding clears barriers to be able to make that happen.

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In the next section, this is now we're moving into the supplemental materials phase of the application. The next section we ask 2 things. One is a list of 5 career spotlights. And then the second is to upload your artist Cv. So the career spotlights are a list of 5 achievements that you,

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the applicant, regard as highlights of your career to date. What you choose to include in this section might look different for each artist based on geography, discipline, focus, life events and career trajectory. But it's an opportunity for you to provide a personal view of your career accomplishments.

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This can include particular exhibitions, the completion of a major project, the inclusion of your work in a collection, a commission, a publication, a teaching position, really any other professional opportunity.

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We realize that these same accomplishments are likely to appear on your resume and CV. Our intention is not to duplicate your efforts, but really to provide the reviewers with a sense of what you regard as your greatest career accomplishments

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rather than them bringing their experience and context while viewing your CV.

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These don't need to be listed in a particular order, and we just ask for a very, very brief description of the opportunity and when and where it took place.

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Next, we asked for an artist's CV. The way the the CV is used for the Spark award is it's a tool that helps the reviewers understand the evolution of your artistic career to date. You're limited to 5 pages and a PDF upload. This will be carefully reviewed to assess eligibility, career stage, your ongoing commitment to your discipline, your engagement with

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audience and any future opportunities that come up. We had some general general recommendations for putting together the CV for the Spark award. This doesn't look very different than than what

you might be used to from other grant opportunities, but we want to make sure that you include all the things that we have seen the reviewers

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often look for please include an overview of past and upcoming exhibitions, commissions, acquisitions, etc. lists and exhibition history that separates out solo from group exhibitions.

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Clearly state the year and location in which the activity occurred. Don't include general employment history or other information unless it is pertinent to your... relevant to your artistic practice. This is not the same as a resume you submit for a job opportunity.

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Please tailor it to this specific opportunity. Information should be accurate, current, and free of technical and factual errors. Please don't list trainings, awards, and accomplishments that happened before you turned 18.

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Please have the formatting be simple and not overly designed. We don't need headshots, we don't need graphics, just a simple black on white PDF works just fine.

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There's more information on what information to include on our website.

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Finally, the work samples. As you can imagine, the work samples you submit are the most important part of your application. And for the Spark award application, we ask that you submit either 10 image files or 6 media files, video or audio.

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Each of the media files should be up to 3 minutes each. You can include the longer file and just designate the 3 min that you want the reviewers to focus on. There's a space for that in the application. If you want to submit a combination of images and media, you can submit up to 8 work samples.

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These work samples should be works that were created in the last 10 years that show a range of your visual arts practice. Half of the samples should have been completed in the last 3 years, and this can include works in progress.

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Each sample must represent one distinct artwork or project, so one sample equals one single work. Images of two-dimensional work should represent a single view of the work per upload. If you create 3D or installation projects, you can include composites or multiple views of the same piece.

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But please don't upload JPEGs, PDFs, etc. that have different works in one image.

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The applicant must be the original creator of the work that's represented in these samples.

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We have the image formats listed here on the slide, JPEG, PNG, or PDF only, 5 megabytes max per upload. Please don't provide links to image samples, but if you're uploading audio or video files, please do provide links to YouTube, Vimeo.

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Include any passwords that are required. And again, there are prompts for this all over the application form.

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We also include a field for a description for each work sample. You can please include the title of the work, the date that it was completed, the materials, the overall dimensions, and then you're also welcome to use this space to provide the panelists with context for the sample.

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Just a few sentences, but please don't paste any links for more information in this space.

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The application guidelines detail a lot of the exact, of course, work sample guidance.

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Okay, so we're almost there. Here's some tips on work samples do's and don'ts, because, of course, every application has other different recommendations. So this is what we recommend. Again, don't create a composite of different works in a single upload.

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You can create composite views of the same work if you're an installation or a 3D artist. Work samples must represent the work itself. Don't include exhibition installation images unless this is an installation project that you're sampling.

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Provide links for video, audio files only if this is the format of the work itself, or the only documentation of your work.

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Don't include image watermarks or information about the artwork in the sample file. You have the opportunity to provide those details and the 'work sample information' field.

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The materials that are created for commercial or promotional purposes are not accepted as a sample.

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And again, while we recognize that a lot of works are created collaboratively, we really recommend that you have as your work samples, samples that reflect your original individual practice.

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This is you, Jennifer. You could all stop listening to me.

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Alright, I'll take a break from answering questions.

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Some of this is repetitive. Yaelle did say that the work samples are really the most important part of your application. We do have specifications for what to include and what not to include in those work samples, and it really is important to follow the instructions.

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Very specifically, you should represent your best and most compelling examples of your work in the samples you upload. They should be those that demonstrate your individual artistic voice over the last 10 years, so having it really represent your most

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recent work. You should make sure that when you provide samples, you have the rights to those samples. Please make sure it's high quality documentation. If it's audio, make sure that the audio is clear, that the picture is stable and in focus. We do have

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as Yaelle noted, we have resources to provide some advice on that, but reviewers will most commonly be viewing your samples

on personal computers. They're not likely to be large. So make sure and take a look at that tips and resources page on our website.

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For sound and video artists, when choosing your cue points, consider what is the most engaging point of the piece. Bring the reviewers into the most compelling moments within the first few seconds of viewing is our advice. This isn't always the start or the end of a piece, so give that some thought.

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When excerpting a longer work, provide some contextual information in the work sample information text field. That's what that's for. We recommend testing your video or audio links prior to submitting, just to make sure they're not broken. Every year we do find

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broken links in people's applications. And then, if it's password protected, make sure to provide the passwords so that reviewers can access your samples if they're hosted by a third party, like video or YouTube.

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There's a field in the application that prompts you to make sure to enter those necessary passwords.

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if you choose to share via a Google folder or Dropbox, make sure that it's accessible to anyone with the link for the duration of the application process, which we'll go through November 2025, and this is in the application. There are plenty of these reminders are actually in the application embedded there, but

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we wanted you to know in advance. We encourage you always to ask a friend or colleague that's familiar with your work to take a look at your application

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and give feedback on the work samples you're submitting. Make use of that work sample information field to provide, as I said, essential information and context. Don't assume that reviewers will recognize the venue. Our reviewers are both local to Oregon and from other states.

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Don't paste links to more information in that space. If you're multidisciplinary artist, we recommend you only provide work samples that demonstrate your visual arts practice, given that's the focus this year.

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There are more tips on the blog on our website. And then lastly, the work samples you provide should confirm and strengthen the story that you're relaying about you as an artist in the application.

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They should relate directly to what you've discussed in your bio, in your artist statement, in the narrative questions, and in your resume/ CV. It should really hold together as an entire package.

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Okay, so if you have gotten through the entire application, you click submit before June 3rd at 5PM. You can download a copy of your application for your records, if you want.

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Please make sure that you reviewed everything before you submitted, since we can't reopen the application once it's submitted, and we can't accept late applications.

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And then finally, we're really happy to be able to offer applicants different avenues of support, other than this info session, to make sure that the application is accessible. As I mentioned many times, the tips and resources and an extensive FAQ on the program, and preparing the application materials is available on our website.

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We have these one-on-one Spark support sessions, which are Zoom or phone calls with me,

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mostly. They're 15-minute one-on-one meetings, and this is for people who have started an application already, or have

completed a draft and have specific questions about parts of the application.

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We cannot review drafts or work samples in these meetings, not in advance and not during it, so this has to be a space for specific questions. A lot of these slots are already taken.

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If you are one of the people who has scheduled a one-on-one meeting, and your questions have been answered in this info session, or you're watching the recording and your questions have been answered, please cancel your appointment and make room for people who have specific questions.

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It is just me, myself, and I doing these meetings, and my time is limited, so please consider if your question can be answered over email or in another way.

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In addition, on May 27, th we offer an open support session. This is a 90-min Zoom meeting that you can come and go as you please. You can either just tune in your camera off or on your audio off or on, and you can work on your application just in community.

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You can come in and just drop in and ask a question or stay for the entire time. We've done this in the last two years, and it's been a very productive space to get assistance. This is for the week before the application is due.

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We offer translation or interpretation for the application. If that is a barrier for you, please email us in advance at [artists@miller@found.org](mailto:artists@miller@found.org) so that we can assist with that if

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that is a need. And then finally, you can find a recording of this information session on our website within a couple of days.

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Alright. We are happy to answer questions about the application technical eligibility assistance. We can do that. Obviously, via the email address that we've been sharing [artists@millerfound.org](mailto:artists@millerfound.org). We're going to stay for the next

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few minutes and answer the questions that have piled up in our Q&A and in the chat. But you're welcome also to to ask us questions at any time. We definitely ask, don't wait until the day of the deadline to get in touch, because we will just get a lot of calls, and we can't guarantee that we'll have time to get back to you in that circumstance.

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There's plenty of information on our website. You can actually see the list and some bios and links to the work of all the awardees that have been recipients in the last couple of years in literary and Media Arts last year and in performing arts in 2024.

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Thank you so much for joining us, and as I said, we'll be here for the next few minutes answering questions. But we're so glad you were here.

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I forgot to mention the time for the open support session. It is at 4pm on May 27th, 4 to 5:30pm.

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I will answer some of the questions that have come in in the Q&A that I can get to in the next 7 min. Someone asked to clarify the 1st 5 images must be from and the work samples must be from 2024 to 2026, and the next 5 images from 7 years prior.

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Yes, half of the work samples should be from the last 3 years, and to indicate on something that you are currently working on, and the other work samples can be samples

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from the last 10 years. There's a lot of questions around commercial the the restriction around commercial and promotional work samples. That is a distinction that we have made. Please do not include in your work samples

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commercial work samples created for commercial intent. Also make sure before you apply that the work that you make is in the eligible categories of of the for the Spark award this year.

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Is there any prioritization for work that is particularly social cultural commentary as opposed to more personally focused work? No, this Spark award does not have a specific focus

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for the type of work that we support, it's more in terms of which media, which visual arts category you submit. But the nature of the work

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is not a restriction.

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In terms of the work samples, there's confusion around the views of the piece.

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If you choose to submit 10, you have to submit a minimum of 6 work samples, a maximum of 10. If you're submitting images. If you're a sculptor, and you want to include multiple views of the sculpture-

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do not include... don't have work samples 1, 2, and 3 be of one sculpture. That is not advisable, because you want to show as much of a range of your work as possible through the work samples. So you can, as a 3D

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creator, you can submit a composite image that has multiple views within that image. But no, don't submit 3 different distinct work samples of the same piece.

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Hopefully that clarifies that.

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Let's see. Jennifer, do you see any questions?

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Trying to browse without it being too awkward on Zoom.

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Yeah. So here's this question, I think, is likely to come up perhaps more often this year than in prior years. Are all materials created for a client considered commercial materials? For example, a painting created in collaboration with a nonprofit.

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And I was going to respond, but Yaelle, please feel free to chime in that, yes, that would be considered a commercial effort rather than the product just of the artist's individual voice and vision, because it would have been created in collaboration with the nonprofit's

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purpose for the work. But Yaelle, maybe you have a broader response to that.

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I would say if the artist is considered the sole author of the work,

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it is allowable. If the authorship is shared, then you might want to choose a different work sample in that case.

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00:56:17.650 --> 00:56:26.650 Public art is eligible as long as you can meet the other eligibility requirements

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of the application. Please look at those closely.

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Elaborate on the term installation in the context of imagery, a 3-dimensional room size or smaller.

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not a 2D artwork.

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If your exhibition history is growing consistently, it may fall more into the DIY sphere rather than traditional established foundations, galleries. Would that be considered

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emerging to mid-career cusp. If you have shown in the DIY sphere, but in the last few years you have also shown in dedicated art venues, you are eligible.

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Again, it's a composite of different factors. It's not just one yes or no. Please look at all the eligibility requirements. It might seem quite restrictive, but it is a way to make sure that potential applicants

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are using their time wisely.

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If I could encourage folks to use the Q&A. That's a great way to be able to track versus the Q&A and chat.

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Yeah.

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I'm not sure if the sculptor, if you had your question answered about three views of the piece. I think you responded to that sufficiently. Here's someone asking if they have a zine. Should they submit a spread as a work sample?

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Sure. Yes. Not if it's a multi-page zine, just remember this is a visual art year and cycle. We did consider zines in the literary art year last year. If you just make zines, then

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you should check in with us over email to make sure that you would be competitive for this year. There's a question that's come up a few times in other channels around video art. If you show

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primarily in galleries, museums, exhibitions, but you also have screenings in other contexts. You are welcome to apply this year. If you primarily show your work in the film circuit

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and theatrical settings than the film year is the year for you, but the person who asked this question, I think that is more you from your description here, you fall more within the visual arts here.

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Alright. I see. So this question is, can you share examples of what counts as advanced career as opposed to mid career?

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Also, is it okay to have winning entries at a few competitions, state level, or online?

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the advanced career benchmarks that we noted are significant and ongoing recognition at the regional and or national level

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over a period of time. So from what you say about state level competitions are online, that would not suggest that you are in the advanced career stage based on our benchmarks.

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There's a question, what about public art? I'm going to assume that means does that count as public facing art? I think you addressed that.

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Yeah, I did address that - as long as you meet the other benchmarks.

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Yeah. I'm not sure I fully understand this question. Can you please elaborate on the term installation in the context of imagery and art you're supporting this year?

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Oh, sorry about that. I must have been reading questions as you were doing that.

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I responded to that.

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Let's see.

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Performance. We know that some other grant opportunities include performance as part of visual arts. In our case performance

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is part of the performing arts cycle and was awarded in 2024.

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I'm just scanning really quickly to see if there are any other questions before we depart.

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Goodness,

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we forgot a slide. Here's where you can find the artist portal link, individual artists to start your application.

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01:01:21.650 --> 01:01:30.650

And don't forget applications are due Wednesday, June 3rd by 5pm.

274

01:01:30.650 --> 01:01:42.650

Please do contact us at any time before the deadline with questions. Again, our materials are thorough,

275

01:01:42.650 --> 01:01:51.650

there's a lot to read through, but that is in an attempt to provide as much guidance as possible

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01:01:51.650 --> 01:01:56.650

through the guidelines, our website, and our artist portal.

277

01:01:56.650 --> 01:02:12.650

If you've asked a question through the Q&A or chat and we did not respond to it, that is very possible. There's a lot of things happening on my screen here. Please email us. Right now you can email us the question and we'll respond tomorrow.

278

01:02:12.650 --> 01:02:26.650

We apologize for not being able to make it to all the questions that I think we will end this now and and please do reach out with any questions you might have.

279

01:02:26.650 --> 01:02:27.650

Thanks, everyone.

James F. and Marion L. Miller Foundation

**2026 SPARK AWARD FOR OREGON ARTISTS: INFO SESSION TRANSCRIPTION**

Recorded on April 22, 2026

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01:02:27.650 --> 01:02:37.650

Thanks, everyone.