



By –
Jackie
Shafer,
WOSU

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Giving artists the attention they didn't get during their lifetimes

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POBA, an online arts center that celebrates the work of artists who died without receiving the full recognition they deserved, takes its name from a Tibetan phrase describing the transformation of consciousness at death to begin a new life.

“This is a place where the public can go to discover their works and where estates and families of these artists— professional and amateur— can store their works and put them on display,” said POBA managing director Jane Cohen.

“There’s some sense of love about all of these artists who have gone from the world, whose work now exists in this one place... It’s as if they are here with us.”

POBA is a national organization that works with state arts councils to identify under-recognized artists who have died. The online site then provides secure digital vaults to preserve their work, whether it is painting, drawing, photography, video or performance art. POBA also offers the services of archivists and publishers to help organize, appraise, market and sell the creative works online for the families and estates of the artists.

“There’s something pretty fantastic about knowing your legacy will live on, long after you’ve gone,” said Donna Collins, executive director of the **Ohio Arts Council**. Collins points to the example of Aminah Robinson, who was an artist in Columbus, Ohio. Robinson used found objects to create beautiful murals sculptures and mixed media works. She died last year, but her work lives on in several public spaces in Columbus. The work has also found new life on the POBA website, helping her gain national exposure.

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Salli LoveLarkin’s work has also found new fans through POBA. She was a painter, performance artist, playwright and costume designer from Cincinnati who died of ALS in 1999. The POBA website showcases many of her paintings and videos.

“There’s some sense of love about all of these artists who have gone from the world, whose work now exists in this one place. And we can visit it in the dark of night, in early morning, on our lunch hour, on a walk— and they still belong to us. It’s as if they are here with us,” said Collins.

This report originally appeared on PBS station WOSU's "**Broad & High**" show. Local Beat is an ongoing series on Art Beat that features arts and culture stories from PBS member stations around the nation.

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Producer/Editor: Jackie Shafer

Videographer: Shawn Likley

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Aminah Robinson & Salli LoveLarkin Images Courtesy: Columbus Museum of Art, Weston Art Gallery, POBA.org

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