

As an artist, *place* is fundamental to Renee Couture's studio work and research. She uses her own rural community as a starting point for her work in examining the tension between social well-being and ecological integrity.

Couture graduated from Buena Vista University (Storm Lake, IA) with a BA in Studio Art and Spanish. She spent the next four years rambling throughout the United States and South America working a wide range of jobs from camp counselor to wild land fire fighter to gourmet goat cheese maker, international backpacker to bank employee. She moved to Oregon in 2004 after completing Peace Corps service in Bolivia, South America. Couture has taught a range of art courses in children's camps in the United States and abroad. She earned her MFA in Visual Art from Vermont College of Fine Arts in Montpelier, VT. Couture currently teaches art at a small community college and volunteers at the local arts center.

Couture's work has been exhibited nationally in group exhibitions and as a solo artist. She has exhibited as a solo artist at Chemeketa Community College (Salem, OR); Eastern Oregon University (LaGrande, OR); Minot State University (Minot, NE); Southern Oregon University's Center for Visual Arts (Ashland, OR); The Brink Gallery (Missoula, MT); Pearson Lakes Art Center (Okoboji, IA); and The Wood Gallery (Montpelier, VT). Group exhibitions include: Disjecta (Portland, OR); Whatcom Museum (Bellingham, WA); Gallery 114 (Portland, OR); Work Gallery (Detroit, MI); WomanMade Gallery (Chicago, IL); and Target Gallery of the Torpedo Factory Art Center (Alexandria, VA); to name a few. She is the recipient of two Career Opportunity Grants from the Oregon Arts Commission, and two Project Grants from the Douglas Country Cultural Coalition. Couture was a featured artist on OPB's Oregon Art Beat, and has completed artist residencies at Jentel (Banner, WY), Playa (Summer Lake, OR), Kimmel Harding Nelson Center for the Arts (Nebraska City, NE), and Vermont Studio Center (Johnson, VT).

Currently, Couture lives on seven acres in rural southern Oregon with her husband, two dogs and two cats. She works out of a retrofitted 20 foot travel traveler turned studio space located in her garden. When she's not in her studio working or taking her dogs for hikes in the mountains surrounding her home, she's in her garden growing food much of the food she and her husband eat during the year.

Photo credit: Rewa Bush and Djerassi Artist Residency Program