

## Guillermo “Yermo” Aranda Santa Cruz County 2021 Artist of the Year

Multi-media artist Yermo Aranda has been named 2021 Artist of the Year by the Santa Cruz County Arts Commission. Yermo will be honored for his work and contribution to the arts in Santa Cruz county on October 23, 3:00 PM. At a live-streamed *Profile Performance*, Yermo will be speaking about his work, and the Whitehawk dancers will also perform. **Please note: this event will be VIRTUAL ONLY, not an in-person event.**

### [Zoom link for the event:](#)

**The meeting ID and Code will be posted @ [scsparks.com](http://scsparks.com) a day prior to the event.**



Born and raised in National City/San Diego, California, Yermo comes from a family of artists, craftsman, and musicians. He is a co-founder of “Toltecas en Aztlan” (1968), a collection of multi-media Chicano Artists. He is also co-founder and First Director of “El Centro Cultural de La Raza” (1971-75), a cultural art center focusing on Latino and Indigenous Art forms. As the Centro’s first Administrative Director, Yermo initiated the first Chicano Park Murals in San Diego in April of 1973. Chicano Park is now recognized as a National Historical Landmark.

Within a year after arriving in Watsonville in 1983, Yermo began to practice and teach Aztec dance and co-founded the Whitehawk Dancers, a cultural arts organization providing Visual and Performing Arts Workshops for youth. In 1985, the first “Xilonen” ceremony on the West Coast was held. This gathering of Aztec dancers continues to this day, the second weekend of July. In 1995, ten Whitehawk dancers went to Shingu, Japan as part of the Sister Cities program, where they danced at the World Exposition in Wakayama. Yermo’s contributions to the White Hawk Dancers has always been on a volunteer basis, and its focus has always been the youth of our communities. Yermo helps youth develop their artistic skills, utilizing murals as the means to involve youth in the arts. He has over 80 murals in the Santa Cruz and Monterey County areas, all youth projects. Currently he teaches art and the process of mural painting, locally and throughout the State of California, working with elementary students in Northern California and inmates in a California state penitentiary.

Over the years, Yermo has been commissioned and sponsored by a host of agencies and organizations, including the California Arts Council, Cultural Council of Santa Cruz County, Santa Cruz County Arts Commission, Santa Cruz County Office of Education, Community Foundation Santa Cruz County, Mexican American Community Services Agency of San Jose, and the City of San Diego. Among the awards Yermo has received are a Gail Rich Award in 1997, Watsonville YMCA’s Community Racial Justice Heroes Award in 1999, A Community Heroes Recognition from Santa Cruz County and the Santa Cruz Sentinel, and in 2000, a Jackie Kennedy Award from TV 8, Salinas.

The Artist of the Year program is sponsored by the Santa Cruz County Arts Commission and the County of Santa Cruz Department of Parks, Open Space and Cultural Services.