

# Artist of the Year 2021

“An Award to Recognize a Lifetime of Achievement”



[Click here to watch Yermo's Artist of the Year "Profile Performance," recorded October 23, 2021](#)

## Guillermo “Yermo” Aranda

Born and raised in the San Diego area, 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 where he initiated the first Chicano Park Murals in San Diego. 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. Yermo 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.

Yermo has been commissioned and sponsored by a host of agencies and organizations, including the California Arts Council, Mexican American Community Services Agency of San Jose, and the City of San Diego. Among the awards he 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.

**2010 Robert Kelley** Robert Kelley was Artistic Director for the Santa Cruz Ballet Theatre from 1998-2019. Two of his works were given the Regional Dance America Choreography Award. He has served on the Tannery Arts Center Board and in 2009, received Gail Rich Award.

**2008 Manuel Santana** Manuel Santana studied art at Otis Art Institute. After decades in the restaurant business, he began actively painting and sculpting again, becoming an accomplished artist. His numerous awards include a Gail Rich Award.

**2007 Richard Deutsch** Richard's sculptures are in the permanent collection of the M.H. de Young Memorial Museum and the Smithsonian Institution. He was a founding and active member of Santa Cruz Art Center and was instrumental in bringing Open Studios to Santa Cruz County.

**2006 Laurie R. King** Laurie R. King, a New York Times best-selling mystery writer, has won the Edgar and Creasey awards, the Nero, and the MacCavity. Her nominations include the Agatha, the Orange, the Barry, and two more Edgars.

**2005 “Sista” Monica Parker** Sista Monica wrote, produced, performed and toured in support of her original music. She received the coveted Bammie Award for “Best Blues Artist” in California in 1998, and the Artist of the Year Award at the Monterey Bay Blues Festival in 2002.

**2003 Karen Thuesen Massaro** Karen Massaro's ceramic work explores how ceramic painting and abstract forms can come together. Her work is included in The National Gallery of Art, the Columbus Gallery of Fine Art, and the Milwaukee Art Museum.

**2002 Jessica Williams** Jessica Williams creates strikingly original jazz music. Leading her own bands and as a solo artist, she has amassed a large and critically acclaimed body of work. Her awards include a Guggenheim Fellowship and two NEA Fellowships.

**2001 Carol Summers** An internationally-known printmaker, Mr. Summers' work is held in numerous national and international collections, as well as myriad private collections. He is the recipient of several prestigious awards and grants, including a Guggenheim Fellowship.

**1999 Morton Marcus** Morton Marcus published over seven volumes of poetry and a novel. He co-hosted the Sunday Night Poetry Show on KUSP, as well as the film review program, “Cinema Scene.” He was also a steering committee member for the Pacific Rim Film Festival.

**1998 Lynda Watson** Lynda Watson's innovative jewelry and metal work has been included in numerous exhibitions, and collections throughout the world, including the American Craft Museum and the Smithsonian. She has received two National Endowment for the Arts grants.

**1997 - Paul Whitworth - Actor**

**1996 - Frans Lanting - Photographer**

**1995 - Adrienne Rich - Poet**

**1994 - Linda Burman-Hall - Musician**

**1993 - Jack Zajac - Visual Artist**

**1992 - Douglas McClellan - Visual Artist**

**1991 - William Everson - Poet**

**1990 - Cultural Council of Santa Cruz County**

**1989 - Charles N. Hilger - Visual Artist**

**1988 - George Barati - Composer and Conductor**

**1987 - Cabrillo Music Festival**

**1986 - James D. Houston - Author**

**1985 - Lou Harrison - Composer**

**1984 - Tandy Beal - Dancer, Director and Choreographer**



Artist of the Year is sponsored by the County of Santa Cruz Dept. of Parks, Open Space & Cultural Services

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Santa Cruz County Arts Commission

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Over the last 35 years, the Santa Cruz County Arts Commission has selected outstanding artists nominated by the public, and has honored them through the Artist of the Year Award. The *Artist of the Year* award is presented for outstanding achievement in the discipline of performing, visual, and literary arts. Nominees must be a resident of Santa Cruz County and must have: a national or international reputation, contributed to the cultural enrichment of the local community, and created or presented work in Santa Cruz County. For more information, please visit [www.scparks.com](http://www.scparks.com).

2019  
Ellen Bass



Ellen's work as a poet, educator, and activist has enriched the cultural life in Santa Cruz County for nearly five decades. She has published over six books of poetry. Among her literary honors are three Pushcart Prizes, the Pablo Neruda Prize, the Chataqua Poetry Prize, and fellowships from the California Arts Council and the National Endowment for the Arts. Ellen is also a celebrated nonfiction writer and a pioneer in the field of healing from child sexual abuse. Ellen helped found and build two thriving Santa Cruz-based non-profit organizations, Kidpower, Inc. and the Survivors Healing Center.

2018  
Cheryl Anderson



Cheryl Anderson built the choral and vocal programs at Cabrillo, including founding the Cabrillo Youth Chorus. Cheryl is active in both the national and international choral music industry. She is the Past President of the American Choral Directors Association Western Region, as well as an internationally-acclaimed guest conductor. Under her direction, Cabrillo's choirs have performed in many of the world's most famous concert halls, cathedrals, and opera houses.

2017  
Shelley Phillips



Shelley Phillips has played with many professional folk musicians in America, Ireland, and the UK. Her solo albums with Gourd Music include *The Fairie Round*, *Pavane*, and *The Wood Between The Worlds*. Director of the Community Music School of Santa Cruz, she runs Celtic music camps for children and teens, maintains a private studio, and presents concerts and workshops with visiting musicians of the highest caliber.

Previous Artists of the Year 2019-1984

2016  
Shmuel Thaler



Shmuel photographs have been published in every leading newspaper in the United States, including the New York Times and Washington Post, as well as in numerous magazines including *Time* and *Forbes*. He has been honored three times with awards in the prestigious National Press Photographers Association Best of Photojournalism contest, most recently in 2015.

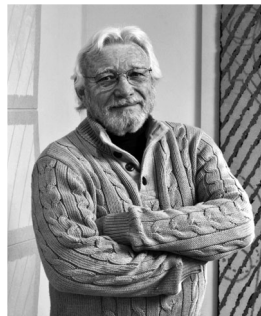
2015  
Geoffrey Dunn



Dunn is the author of several books, including two volumes of *Santa Cruz Is in the Heart*, *Chinatown Dreams* and *The Lies of Sarah Palin*; his films include *Dollar a Day*, *10 Cents a Dance*; *Miss...or Myth?*; *Calypso Dreams*; and most recently, *The Glamour Boyz Again*. For over 40 years Dunn has been an actively-engaged member of the artistic community, including as co-founder and former Executive

Director of Community Television of Santa Cruz Co., as well as a founder and Board member of the Pacific Rim Film Festival.

2014  
John Babcock



John Babcock's work has been shown in over 30 major museums in Europe, the United States and Japan, and is held in many public and private collections, including the Museum of Art and Design, NY. Shows include *Craft Today, USA*, organized by the American Craft Museum, and *The Artful Object, Recent American Craft* at the Fort Wayne Art Museum.

2013  
Susana Arias



Susana Arias has shown her work nationally and internationally, with work in museums in Latin America as well as the United States. Awards include a 1987 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. Her love of the arts and for children shows in her commitment to both; she is either at her studio working, volunteering at local elementary schools, or organizing events where local artists share their expertise with the public.

2012  
Gary Young



Gary Young's print work is represented in collections including the Museum of Modern Art and the Victoria and Albert Museum. Since 1975, he has designed, illustrated, and printed limited edition artist's books and broadsides. Honors include grants from the California Arts Council and fellowship grants from the National Endowment for the Arts. Gary received the Pushcart Prize and the prestigious Shelley Memorial Award of the Poetry Society of America.

2011  
Phil Collins



Phil Collins co-founded New Music Works (NMW) in 1979 and has served as the organization's Artistic Director and Conductor since 1982. His orchestral and chamber works have been played throughout the U.S., Canada, and abroad. Awards include: First Prize (Air), 1996 International Clarinet Society Composition Competition; First Prize (Sappho Songs), 1994 L'ARCIM Festival in Montreal; The Gail Rich Award; and Dramalogue Award for Best Musical

Direction.