



Dear Friends of the Arts in Ventura,
 I am delighted, once again, to host the Mayor's Arts Awards which have honored arts leaders, patrons, educators and emerging and community artists dedicated to nurturing our city's lively arts community and cultural life since 2005.

On behalf of the City of Ventura and the City Council, I thank you for joining me tonight as we recognize the impressive accomplishments of five outstanding honorees singled out for this eleventh annual celebration.

I also offer warm thanks to the selection panel that convened for the difficult task of reviewing the many strong candidate nominations and of forwarding recommendations to me as Mayor and the city's Cultural Affairs Commissioners for our approval.

Gratitude also goes to our many partners for tonight's event, especially our host, the Museum of Ventura County, and artist Lis J. Schwitters for designing the "Mark of Excellence" award given each year to every honoree.

These annual awards are a vital and beloved tradition for everyone who esteems the arts and Ventura. The awards cultivate a greater visibility and understanding of the value of the arts to the public at large while showcasing the economic impact of Ventura's creative businesses, arts leadership and patrons.

The Mayor's Arts Awards Honoree Reception is but one small way to say "well done" and "thank you" to all members of our creative community--for their contributions, their dedication and their passion to serve our city through the arts.

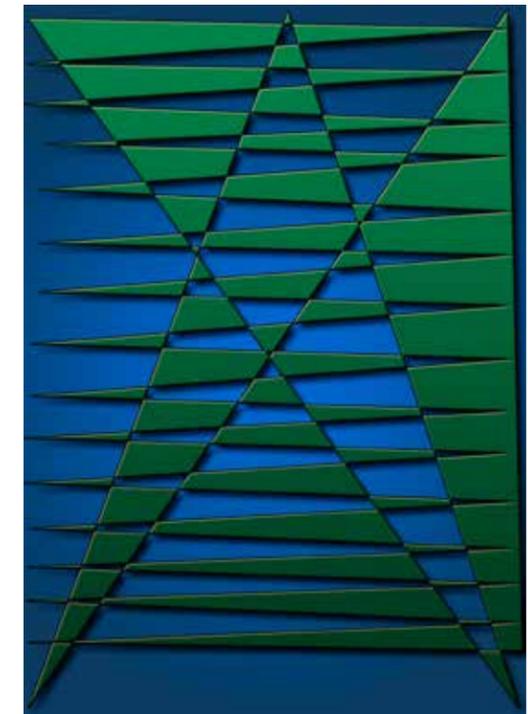
Sincerely,

Cheryl Heitmann

Past Mayor's Arts Awards Recipients

2014	Debbie Golden Arts Leader	Helle Scharling-Todd Artist in the Community	Miriam Arichea Arts Educator
	Miriam Chase Wille Arts Patrons		Pete Ippel Emerging Artist
2013	Todd Collart Arts Leader	Gerald Zwiers Artist in the Community	William Hendricks Arts Educator
	Sue Pollack, Mary Perez, Kevin Clerici Arts Patrons		Uriel Leon Emerging Artist
2012	Lorenzo DeStefano Arts Leader	Debbie Fox, Fox Fine Jewelry Creative Entrepreneur	Pam Cohen Arts Educator
	Barbara Meister Arts Patron	Johanna Spinks Artist in the Community	Katrina Maksimuk Emerging Artist
2011	Tim Schiffer Arts Leader	Steve & Polly Hoganson Creative Entrepreneur	Mary Perez Arts Educator
	Ann Deal Arts Patron	Susan Cook Artist in the Community	Maribel Hernandez Emerging Artist
2010	Helen Yunker Arts Patron	Sylvia White, Sylvia White Gallery Creative Entrepreneur	Jack Halbert Artist in the Community
	Margaret Travers Arts Leader	Bob Moskowitz Arts Educator	Chris Jay Emerging Artist
2009	Albert & Micheline Sakharoff Arts Patron		Michele Chapin Artist in the Community
	Chris Velasco Arts Leader	Patricia Strickland Arts Educator	Veronica Valadez Emerging Artist
2008	Affinity Bank Arts Patron		Phil Taggart Artist in the Community
	Moses Mora Arts Leader	Kathleen Noblin Arts Educator	Jennifer Livia Emerging Artist
2007	Josh Addison Arts Patron		Paul Lindhard Artist in the Community
	Linda Ottsen Arts Leader	Carlisle Cooper Arts Educator	Brian McDonald Emerging Artist
2006	Sandra and Jordan Laby Arts Leaders		Gerd Koch Artist in the Community
	Clarissa Boeriu Arts Educator	Ventura Visitors & Convention Bureau Special Initiative	
2005	Lee Hodges Arts Leader	MB Hanrahan Artist in the Community	
	Focus on the Masters Arts Educator	Michel "Michellino" Petersen Special Initiative	

Mayor's Arts Awards



"Mark of Excellence" by Lis J. Schwitters

2015

Honoree Reception

November 5, 2015

7:00 – 9:00 pm

The Museum of Ventura County

100 East Main Street

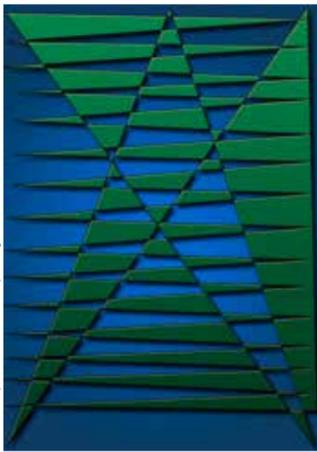
Downtown Ventura Cultural District

Thank you to our sponsors:



A collaboration of the City Manager's Office and Parks, Recreation and Community Partnerships Department





Mayor's Arts Awards

Welcome & Remarks

Cheryl Heitmann, Mayor

Awards Presenters

Marie Lakin

Cultural Affairs Commission Chair

Daniel Saltee

Public Art Commission Chair

Margaret Travers

Ventura County Arts Council Executive Director

Debbie Golden

Ventura Unified School District
Board of Education President

Brian McDonald

Associate Producer/Director of Education and Outreach
for the Rubicon Theatre Company

Entertainment

Jill Martini Soiree Band

Awards Selection Committee

Debbie Golden, Board of Education and
Ventura Educational Partnership Board Member

Kathy Asher, Cultural Affairs Commissioner & Retired
Assistant Superintendent of VUSD Schools

Meredith Hart, Downtown Ventura Organization
Project Manager

2015 Honorees



Arts Patron

New West Symphony League

For 20 years the 270 members of this fundraising support group for the New West Symphony has raised millions of dollars and up to 40% of the orchestra's operating budget. They not only provide the funds but also the dedication and volunteer staff support vital to the orchestra's dynamic educational development and cultural enrichment programs for our community's youths and adults. These include the ongoing Harmony Project, Music Van, Symphonic Adventures, Meet the Artists, Bill Israel Memorial Recitals and Poinsettia Ball Dancing with the Stars fundraisers as well as special one-time events such as the Special Olympics World Games 2015, Bach Walk, Science of Sound lecture and off-Broadway and Erhu (ancient Chinese stringed instrument) performances. Each year the Symphonic Adventures alone reach over 8,000 elementary school children in three area school districts (600 from Ventura). The Music Van, a mobile musical instrument "petting" and playing zoo, visits thousands of children in local schools, YMCAs, Boys and Girls Clubs and local festivals each year. The League of American Orchestras – comprised of 900 orchestra auxiliaries across Canada, Mexico and the U.S. – awards annual prizes for nine volunteer-initiated projects and in 2012 bestowed its top award to the New West Symphony League for its fundraiser series *The Pleasure of Your Company*, citing its community and "home" appeal, financial effectiveness and outreach to new audiences – a model now much copied throughout the U.S. "Having fun while doing everything in our power to raise important funds to bring music to the Ventura community is what the League is all about!" exclaims Patricia Croner. These community volunteers are passionate about developing creative ways of spreading the transformative joy of music to wide new audiences with diverse needs. Nominated by Paul Finkel.



Artist in the Community

Michael O'Kelly

A professional artist for over forty five years – as painter, classical guitarist, composer, writer, playwright and filmmaker (subject: Ray Bradbury), curator, collector, exhibitor, illustrator, novelist, ceramist and muralist – Michael O'Kelly has brought rich and remarkable gifts to every community he has lived in throughout his creative Odyssey of life. The Welsh-born resident of Ventura since 1993 grew up in Wales and Ireland before his artistic family moved to the swinging arts scene of London where he earned a performing arts degree from the Royal College of Music, became a member of the Omega Guitar Quartet and gained transformative exposure to painting from versatile art forger Thomas Keating. With a British Council Research Scholarship in Pre-Columbian music and dance at the University of Mexico, Mexico City, Michael stayed there for a decade, studying with Spanish Surrealist Carlos Siliuto and Rufino Tamayo and traveling and collecting throughout South America. O'Kelly is co-owner, principal designer and partner with Sean and Des McLean of California Pottery & Tile Works, a fine art architectural ceramics studio in Los Angeles whose public works can be found at The Getty, The Guggenheim, Harvard, Yale, many Disneylands and the British Museum as well as locally in Montecito, Santa Barbara, Camarillo, Ojai and The Star Lounge, Jersey Mike's, Westside Cellars and Watermark. His extensively-researched, intricate, 13-by-6 foot "History of Ventura" ceramic tile mural in the California Spanish Revival Style that graces the Offco Building at 60 California Street is full of local historic landmarks, industries, natural scenes and peoples starting with the Chumash. It is very fitting that Michael O'Kelly be selected as Artist in the Community as the City of Ventura embarks on celebrating its sesquicentennial. The artist has a major work-in-progress, a ceramic mural that will, no doubt, communicate, as all his work does, the deep roots of his adopted community. Nominated by Patti Channer.

2015 Honorees



Arts Leader

Anna Rios Bermudez

During her eight-year tenure as Curator at the Museum of Ventura County, Anna has become "a natural leader in the community," according to the museum's Research Library Director Charles Johnson, "a curator who is a connector, promoter, nurturer and artist" with "a huge amount of heart and an innate ability to communicate. She is the kind of cultural ambassador that humanities organizations seek but seldom find." Fluent in local, regional and national art, Anna is committed to bringing multiple voices and diverse art into the community conversation, seeking out emerging local artists, cultural inclusivity and community engagement. With a passion for promoting Latino art and culture beyond museum walls she curates the Tool Room at the Bell Arts Factory where she is on the board. She has championed exhibits by Omar d'Leon and graffiti artist Cristian Gheorghiu and co-produced, with author Michelle Serros, *Cuento Cups: Because Our Stories Matter* in response to Chipotle's *Cultivating Thought* author series that excluded Latino voices. With a BA in Spanish, Italian and Art History from Scripps College, Anna is also a Fiber Arts master whose textile art pieces grace many private collections. Nominated by Wendy VanHorn.



Arts Educator

Andrea Shigeko Landin

Director of the New West Symphony Harmony Project of Ventura County, Andrea is lauded, locally and internationally, as an innovator of music education and community building, using music and art for social change. One of 50 international Sistema Fellows at the New England Conservatory researching effective music teaching practices, she has designed and implemented the Harmony Project curriculum as a youth development program providing up to 130 low income youth, starting in third grade, with tuition-free, high quality ensemble-based music instruction and performance opportunities in the community from classical to *Son Jarocho*, popular music from Veracruz, Mexico. She also created music and eco-projects for nonprofits Artcorps and Ecologic in the Guatemalan highlands. She was a 2014 presenter at the Los Angeles Philharmonic Take a Stand Conference and featured on the TED Prize blog. Andrea is fluent in Spanish and holds a B.M. in Cello Performance and a B.A. in Anthropology from Oberlin College and Conservatory of Music. "Andrea has our youth's best interests at heart," says Sheridan Way Elementary School Principal Maria Elizarraras. She spreads a culture of joy and youth empowerment through music. Nominated by Natalia Staneva.



Emerging Artist

Miranda Leigh Mize

Since childhood Miranda "Mimi" Mize has been wowing audiences with her singing, dancing and acting talents in a dozen musicals including "West Side Story," "The Drowsy Chaperone" and "The Pirates of Penzance" and dramas such as "The Grapes of Wrath" and "Molly Sweeney" at the Rubicon Theatre, Ventura College, Actors Repertory Theatre of Simi and The Transport Theatre. She also performs with many vocal groups including Kids for Kids, Rubicon Harmonix and the Ventura Unified School District Festival of Talent directed by Brian McDonald. Mimi is an admired choreographer and dancer in many genres including ballet, tap, jazz and ballroom, creating the moves of Company, the VUSD All-District High School Show Choir. Mimi is "becoming one of the best dancers in California," says her dance instructor Seth Coons. "Mimi is always singing, reading lines and seeking to improve herself. She carries an intense desire to learn. She is the rare gem known as 'Driven Talent.'" Nominated by Michael L. Merewether.