

2025 North County Arts Awards Finalists

Best Emerging Artist

Amanda Grunloh, Julia Marz, Pako Pablos, Julianna Veling, Aubriella Navarro

Best Artist of the Year (Top overall distinction across visual arts)

Brian Caldwell, Brenda Townsend, Suzanne Nicolaisen, Tristan Pittard, Mary Jhun

Outstanding Arts Educator (Visual or Performing Arts)

Michelle Hammack, Alex Bezdeka, Jennifer Conway, Julia Fister, Studio ACE, Kara Howard

Best Established Artist (5+ years active with significant community impact)

Suzanne Nicolaisen, Stevie O'dell, Brian Murphy, DJ Summitt, Cathy Carey

Best Digital or Multimedia Artist

Kim DeCew, DJ Summitt, Cate Dudley, Mark Wassef, Pako Pablos

Best Public Art or Mural

Tristan Pittard Sky Whale, Hummingbird Jubilee - Artist: Brenda Townsend, Zane Kingcade - Books, Katie Gaines - Footbridge Mural at the CCAE, STAR - Glasshouse Arts/ Colin Jemmott and MJ Brovold

Best Local Band or Performer

Highland Way, Whiskey Heat, Daring Greatly, Paul Tseng, Dave Scott

Breakout Performance/Performer of the Year

DeAndre Simmons, Aubriella Navarro, Anthony Cullins, aka Fallbrook Kid, Julia Marz, Whiskey Heat

Best Youth Arts Organization

Center Stage Productions, Georgia's School of Dance, San Diego Civic Youth Orchestra, Patio Playhouse Community & Youth Theatre, Star Repertory Theater

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Best Theater Group

Escondido Christian School's Lions Players, Star Repertory Theater, Center Stage Productions, Patio Playhouse Community & Youth Theatre-Jennifer Guttiere, Escondido Charter School

Best Local Chef or Culinary Artist

Bob Carpenter from Sunny Side Kitchen, Chef Brandon Hunsaker, Davin Waite, Chef at Vintana's, Ms Scott, Luis at Bellamys

Best Homegrown Eatery or Food Vendor

Sunny Side Kitchen, A Delight of France, H Brothers, Burger Bench, C&L Catering

Best Cultural Cuisine Spot

Mi Guadalajara, Joe's Italian, L & L BBQ, Cochino del Charro, Frida's Tacos

Best Cultural Event

Fiesta del Sol, Cruisin Grand, Indigenous Festival, Vista Viking Festival, Filipino Cultural Celebration in Oceanside

Best New Event or Festival

Escondido " Art in the Garden", Carlsbad Street Village Fair, Arts, Culture and Creativity Month, Escondido Renaissance Fair, Grand Avenue Holiday Roller Rink

Changemaker Award (Art for Social Good Individual or Organization)

Donna Cosentino, Julia Fister Boon/Studio Ace, Steve Dilley, Carol Rogers, Escondido Arts Partnership

NextGen Changemaker Award (Under 18yo)

Sienna Deponte, Dash Parker, LuMaya, Zander Chan, Royce Escobar

Best Friend of the Arts (Business Partner or Supporter)

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Sue and Bob Gilson, Tracy Steele, Escondido Arts Partnership, TERI Campus of Life/The Borneman Theater, Mei of "Daydream Here" Store