

# Governor Announces Recipients of the 2021 Governor's Awards for Excellence in the Art

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SANTA FE – Today, Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham announced the artists and major contributors to the arts who will receive the 2021 Governor's Awards for Excellence in the Arts. This year's recipients are Edward "Gus" Foster, Ricardo Caté, Susan Contreras, Dave Grusin, Kathleen Wall, GallupARTS, and Spencer Theater for the Performing Arts. Since 1974, the Awards have celebrated the foundational role that artists, art, and supporters play in the state. The Awards are presented by the New Mexico Arts Commission and New Mexico Arts, a division of the New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs (NMDCA).

"Artists didn't stop last year, even when most everything we love was cancelled or postponed by the virus," said Governor Lujan Grisham. "So many incredible artists rose to meet the moment, finding great inspiration in challenging times, tapping into a wellspring of creativity and resilience that reflects the best of us, reminding us that the darkest moments are often where we find what we're made of and discover and re-discover what we are capable of as a people. I'm humbled every day to be governor of such an incredible state, filled with so many talented artists, whose commitment to their craft extends and elevates our state's multi-generational legacy of artistic innovation and quality. To have the opportunity to celebrate the unique talents of these incredible artists and supporters of the arts is a joy – they represent the very best of the Land of Enchantment."

"Over the past 18 months, we have turned to arts and culture for entertainment, comfort, and understanding. As we move forward, creative workers, organizations, and those that support them are more important in building physical, emotional, and economic well-being of our communities," stated Debra Garcia y Griego, Cabinet Secretary of the NMDCA. "It is an honor to recognize and celebrate the work of this year's outstanding recipients."

The arts and culture sector in New Mexico normally contributes about \$5.6 billion annually to the state's economy. This industry enjoys a national reputation that is far beyond the state's size or economic standing. Including persons employed in cultural tourism, art and cultural education, and industries linked to the unique culture and heritage of the state, the arts and cultural industry employs nearly 77,000 individuals, equal to nearly one in 10 jobs (9.8%) across the state. That is more than the state's construction and manufacturing industries combined.

2021 marks the 47th annual celebration of the Governor's Arts Awards. A diverse and noteworthy list of painters, weavers, sculptors, dancers, musicians, storytellers, poets, actors, playwrights, and potters have been honored by the Governor's Arts Awards. Past awardees include: Georgia O'Keeffe, Robert Redford, George R.R. Martin, Maria Martinez, Tony Abeyta, Glenna Goodacre, Tony Hillerman, N. Scott Momaday, Tammy Garcia, Lucy Lippard, and Catherine Oppenheimer.

A virtual awards ceremony will be held Friday, October 22, 2021. Please visit [nmarts.org/governors-arts-awards](https://nmarts.org/governors-arts-awards) for more information as details become available.

About the recipients

## **INDIVIDUAL SUPPORTER OF THE ARTS**

### **Edward "Gus" Foster — Taos**

Edward "Gus" Foster started his professional career in 1963 as an assistant curator in the prints and drawings department of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. Within a brief period of five years, he rose to head curator and head of his department. Some of his early curatorial efforts were shows with such seminal artists as Ed Ruscha and Robert Rauschenberg.

After the success of these early shows, Foster moved to Los Angeles in 1972. During his time in L.A., he became acquainted with many other prominent artists in that area, some of whom would relocate to the Taos area in the 1970s. By 1975, Gus too had moved to Taos, embarking on a photographic odyssey and sharing a studio with his friend Larry Bell (a leading artist in the Light and Space movement as well a Governor's Award recipient).

Foster traversed on foot documenting the landscape and vistas of this awe-inspiring country with his unusual panoramic camera, his profound ability to focus on things that others miss

only became more pronounced. Over time, he began to take an interest in Taos' Harwood Museum of Art and eventually donated private property he owned adjacent to the museum. He, his sister, and mother donated money to the museum for the establishment of the George Foster Jr. Gallery (in honor of his father).

Later, Foster was elected to the governing board of the Harwood where he helped spearhead fundraising for building the new museum wing on the property he had donated. This expansion made it possible for the museum to gain accreditation from the American Alliance of Museums. This afforded new opportunities for the Harwood to work with major art museums and collections. His association with the Harwood Museum led Foster to become involved with the University of New Mexico Foundation as a trustee. He also became a member of the museum's Collections Committee and helped guide that collection into the contemporary age. As a result of his unusually discerning eye, Foster's private collection included the work of artists working in New Mexico. He gradually expanded his collection to include Ken Price, Larry Bell, Ron Cooper, Kevin Cannon, Jim Wagner, Lee Mullican, Ron Davis, Robert Ellis, Bea Mandelman, and other artists working in a new era of New Mexican visual arts.

After 35 years of amassing this collection, Foster donated the Gus Foster Collection to the Harwood in 2013. A compendium of 391 works of art by more than 80 artists became part of the permanent museum collection. This extremely benevolent gesture was celebrated with an opening show in 2014, featuring 121 pieces from the Gus Foster Collection. He continues to collect the working artists of New Mexico with the intention of eventually donating even more work to the museum. This sustained patronage has enabled many working artists to continue with their craft and to mature aesthetically in new directions.

## **INDIVIDUAL ARTISTS**

### **Ricardo Caté — Santo Domingo Pueblo**

Ricardo Caté is from the Santo Domingo Pueblo, where he currently lives with his three children. He has followed many different paths throughout his life: in addition to being the only Native Cartoonist to be featured in a mainstream daily newspaper, he was a Marine diesel mechanic, earned a teaching degree from Fort Lewis College, and has taught in the Santo Domingo School and in the Head Start program in Sandoval County. Caté is a stand-up comedian, activist, and filmmaker. He has been a speaker at Yale University and Cal Poly State University, and a commencement speaker at Santa Fe Community College. He has

always incorporated humor to shed light on difficult subject matter and spark discussion on topics otherwise easy to avoid. Caté's work has been on display at the Wheelwright Museum, Heard Museum, Museum of Indian Arts & Culture, Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, and local galleries across the country.

Regarding his career as in cartoonist, for which he is best known, Caté said:

"I started drawing cartoons in the seventh grade with my best friend David when we wound up in separate classrooms. We would draw cartoons of our 'adventures' – both real and made-up – in our respective classrooms and then exchange cartoons in the hallway between classes. I continued to draw in high school, college, and while I was in the Marines.

"'Without Reservations' was first published in the Santa Fe New Mexican in 2006. I've tweaked the cartoons a bit by drawing fewer 'inside jokes' that only Native people would understand and making them more universal; developing my two main characters, the Chief and the General, so that each basically represents the culture they come from; and getting rid of my characters' eyes because I found it easier to have them express themselves that way.

"I try to 'educate' my readers about certain tribes and certain dates in Native American history that should have been told already. I do feel my work is even more important now than ever, both for open-minded egalitarian readers as well as conservatives who seem to be most offended by my work. I would like to think I am starting to bridge the gap between the two so that real discussions start to take place.

"I don't feel I should be responsible and represent all Natives because each tribe is different with its own history. I think mainstream America often depicts us as one even though there were well over 1,000 tribes before the Europeans came. I base my cartoons on my knowledge of other tribes as well as my own."

### **Susan Contreras — Santa Fe**

Born in 1956 in Mexico City, Susan Contreras comes from a great artistic lineage – her grandfather Jesús Fructuoso Contreras is considered the most representative Mexican sculptor of the 19th Century. Susan's family moved to Santa Fe in 1968, where she attended St. Michael's High School, graduating in 1970. After receiving her college degree in Santa Barbara, California, Susan studied in the U.S. and abroad, returning to Santa Fe in 1981. In short, she has been an artist all of her life.

The uniqueness of her mature style is expressed through the use of masks from her impressive collection of more than 150 from Central America. Susan expresses her fascination for masks and their use, in her own words in her artistic statement, saying: "Masks reflect a desire to escape and explore, and, when painting, I can be a space traveler, a deep-sea diver, or, say, a cat, a fish, a faster-than-fast greyhound, chasing a cat in space or a fish in the ocean. Sometimes when I'm painting, I feel as if the masks are painting themselves, singing their own operas, building their own sets."

Susan's generosity of spirit has been felt by many individuals and organizations. She has often given some of her best work in support of fundraising auctions and has been equally generous with her time and energy in artist-in-residence programs at colleges and universities.

### **Dave Grusin — Santa Fe**

Dave Grusin has been described as one of the 20th Century's most important music composers. Millions of people all over the world know and love his music, but even his most ardent fans don't completely realize what a phenomenal career he has had.

Grusin has been described as "flawless" by his peers, amazing when you consider that he had five simultaneous careers – composer, pianist, arranger, performer, and record company executive. Although a New Mexico resident for the past 34 years, he led a completely bi-coastal life for decades, flying between Los Angeles and New York to work with an astounding list of music and film artists. Industry icons called on Grusin when they needed something extraordinary, including Barbra Streisand, Steven Spielberg, Quincy Jones, Norman Lear, Sydney Pollack, Warren Beatty, James Taylor, Paul Simon, Renee Fleming, Andy Williams, Sarah Vaughn, Al Jarreau, Carmen McRae, Phil Ramone, Marilyn & Alan Bergman, Sergio Mendes, Billy Joel, Judy Collins, Peggy Lee, Chaka Khan, and Nancy Wilson to name a few.

Frequently honored by his peers, Grusin has had eight Academy Award nominations, 80 Grammy Award nominations (GRP Records), 38 Personal Grammy Award nominations, four Golden Globe nominations, three honorary doctorate degrees, and one Emmy Award nomination.

Grusin was a music and film industry pioneer during the "Golden Age" of music production in the film and the music industries. Taking a huge leap of faith by co-founding GRP Records with his partner Larry Rosen, he created the first record label to go "all digital" at a time when

other labels were afraid to change. Beating all the odds, GRP became the highest selling jazz label for five consecutive years.

Grusin's most enduring legacy may live on in his beloved melodies and arrangements for film. The themes for films such as "On Golden Pond," "The Firm," "The Fabulous Baker Boys," "Havana," "Tootsie," "Heaven Can Wait," and "113 Days of the Condor" are written about in textbooks and revered by new and veteran composers around the world.

### **Kathleen Wall — Jemez Pueblo**

For nearly 40 years — first as a child learning Jemez Pueblo clay traditions from her mother and aunts, then as a ceramic and visual artist creating her own path — Kathleen Wall has moved into the front ranks of New Mexico Native artists. She will be the Featured Artist for the 2021 Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA) Gala and was named the Museum of Indian Arts and Culture (MIAC) 2020-21 Native Treasures Living Treasure, with a solo exhibition of her work at MIAC. Those honors follow numerous awards and exhibitions, at distinguished venues like Santa Fe Indian Market, Heard Museum Indian Market (Phoenix), Eiteljorg Museum (Indiana), Yale University Art Gallery, Indian Pueblo Cultural Center (Albuquerque), and the Smithsonian Institution. Near and far, Kathleen's work has sparked admiration, joy, and pride for the attention she brings to her family, Pueblo, and culture.

Family, Pueblo, and Native culture are fundamental sources of Wall's works in clay, bronze, and acrylics. She has taken the clay Storyteller figures that Pueblos like Jemez and Cochiti traditionally created and put her own distinctive stamp on them by using Koshari clown figures like those who enliven Pueblo dances throughout New Mexico. These signature figures convey a profound sense of joy in their faces; they light up her booth at Indian Market, homes of patrons nationwide who purchase her work, and museums that hold them in permanent collections. More importantly, they represent the spiritual strength of her people at Jemez and the larger Native community.

Recently, while honored with the Eric and Barbara Dobkin Native Artist Fellowship at the School for Advanced Research (SAR) in Santa Fe, Wall created new works that emphasized who she is and where she comes from. With imaginative design and technical mastery, she combined clay figures — a female dancer, her grandfather, her son — with acrylic paintings of Jemez landscapes, places that provide the figures' traditional names. Human forms arise from and blend into the natural world, emphasizing the importance of indigenous places, and

languages. Her artistic program includes future works that focus on other Native peoples and places.

Kathleen's sense of community is profound. She has led pottery workshops at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, the Poeh Center in Pojoaque, and the Heard Museum, conveying many of the lessons she learned from the women in her family. She has contributed her artwork to auctions for the Cancer Foundation for New Mexico, Futures for Children, IAIA, the Southwestern Association for Indian Arts, and others. Those efforts combined with the quality of her work have led to widespread coverage by print, television, radio, and online media. All of this attention benefits not just Kathleen; her Pueblo, Native arts, and New Mexico itself are held forward like one of her Kosharis offering a beautiful child, a fallen star, or basket of watermelons.

## **MAJOR CONTRIBUTOR TO THE ARTS**

### **gallupARTS — Gallup**

gallupARTS is a nonprofit arts council that creates opportunities for McKinley County artists and residents through more than 12 community-based programs, including gallery programs, arts education, community arts engagement projects, public art, grant awards, workshops, and special events. Under the leadership of Executive Director Rose Eason, GallupARTS has made a huge impact in supporting and uplifting the arts community in Gallup.

gallupARTS has been a driving force and innovator in developing and deepening creative economy work in McKinley County. In 2018, they secured a coveted \$150,000 "Our Town" grant from the National Endowment for the Arts with locally secured matching funds of another \$150,000 to do community revitalization and creative place-making work in Gallup.

gallupARTS developed innovative approaches to support the arts and culture sector in their community who were hit hard by pandemic-related shutdowns. They helped artists and organizations market their arts online and through social media, including the "Art on Air" Podcast, virtual artist talks, and continued hosted events in multiple gallery spaces.

In addition, they have worked with their local community to develop signature events in the Gallup area like Northfest, Doin' Dylan, Holiday Art Market, as well as programs that showcase Native artists to complement the Gallup Inter-Tribal Indian Ceremonial.

Eason also serves as Project Director for Digital Projects for the Public “Discovery” grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) to plan the Gallup New Deal Art website.

### **Spencer Theater for the Performing Arts – Alto**

Designed by Antoine Predock, the gorgeous 514-seat nonprofit Spencer Theater for the Performing Arts in Alto opened in 1997. With a mission to enrich the cultural lives of South-Central New Mexico’s residents and visitors, the Spencer Theater operates year-round, with summer and winter seasons consisting of touring concerts, shows, plays, dance companies, and family and children’s shows. In addition, the Spencer Theater has a second outdoor stage which can seat 1,200 for outdoor performances. Executive Director Charles Centilli joined the Spencer in 1996 as Director of Business Affairs and assumed his current role in 2000. The Spencer Theater has multiple blown glass installations by Dale Chihuly (2018 GAA honoree), including “Indian Paint Brushes” and “The Persians.” In 2000, “Glowing Sunset Tower,” “Ruby Sea Garden,” and “Womb” were installed.

With a focus on supporting the surrounding local communities, area schools use the theater free of charge for productions during Student Performing Arts Month in the spring and fall. Students from throughout the region attend performances at the theater and artists visit local schools.

In 2004, the United States Institute for Theatre Technology named the Spencer as one of seven outstanding theaters in the world. The Spencer Theater is known internationally for outstanding acoustics, intimate seating, and its performances.

### **About New Mexico Arts**

*New Mexico Arts, a division of the Department of Cultural Affairs, is the state arts agency. New Mexico Arts administers the state’s One Percent for Public Art program, awards grants to nonprofit organizations for arts and cultural programs in their communities across the state, and provides technical assistance and educational opportunities for organizations, artists, and arts educators throughout New Mexico.*

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