



Virtual Awards Ceremony May 6, 2021

City Announces Recipients of 29th Annual Mayor's Award for Excellence in the Arts

APRIL 13, 2021 -- Mayor Alan Webber and the Arts & Culture Department are pleased to announce the five artists and arts' supporters who will receive the 2021 Mayor's Awards for Excellence in the Arts.

The Mayor's Awards for Excellence in the Arts program was established in 1989 to acknowledge individuals and organizations that have made significant contributions to arts and culture in Santa Fe. Nominations for consideration are collected each year from the community.

Mayor Alan Webber says: "Santa Fe is known as a world-class city of arts and culture, and that reputation is a result of so many people and organizations who contribute so much. This year's winners of the Mayor's Arts Award deserve this recognition, as do the many nominees who make such a difference in Santa Fe. They all have my congratulations and gratitude. I'm looking forward to presenting the awards on May 6."

The Recipients of the 2021 Mayor's Awards for Excellence in the Arts:

ARTS: Lightning Boy Foundation was founded in the memory and honor of Valentino Tzigiwhaeno "Lightning" Rivera, a hoop dancer from Pojoaque Pueblo who passed away at the age of 8 in 2016. The nonprofit foundation is dedicated to empowering youth and helping them preserve cultural roots. The foundation supports a tribally inclusive Lightning Boy Hoop Dance Group and other youth performance and visual arts objectives.

ARTS INNOVATOR: Santa Fe Independent Film Festival serves as a creative center for film year-round, and presents a robust collection of well curated films each October. SFiFF provides professional opportunities for artists and a high level of audience engagement and participation. SFiFF began in 2009 as a fringe festival that took place in a community center. By 2011, it was the largest event of its kind in New Mexico, screening over 100 films during a five-day fest. SFiFF has become a top annual event

that helps to secure Santa Fe's place on the map as a great little film city, and has effectively helped extend Santa Fe's tourism season into late October.

CULTURE CONNECTS: Israel Francisco Haros Lopez is a community-minded artist, poet, mentor, muralist, and gardener. Currently he is the cofounding member and Artist Director of Alas De Agua Art Collective, where he works to create opportunities for Black Indigenous People of Color and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and/or Questioning, Intersex, and Asexual and/or Ally Artists.

PHILANTHROPY: Andrew Wallerstein and Mary Sloane have over the years provided generous support for creative programming and collaboration in the arts community. Among the institutions they have supported are SITE Santa Fe, the New Mexico School for the Arts, Center for Contemporary Arts (CCA), and the New Mexico Museum of Art. Andrew served as Board Chair of SITE Santa Fe for eight years and continues to be an active Board member; he led the \$12.5 million capital campaign for SITE's new building and grew the endowment to \$10 million. He is currently serving on the board of directors of Radius Books, a Santa Fe nonprofit arts organization that publishes and distributes books to schools and libraries. Mary Sloan serves as a board member for the New Mexico School for the Arts.

MELISSA ENGESTROM YOUTH ARTIST AWARD: Theo (Satya) Kutsko (they/them/theirs) is a junior studying theater at New Mexico School for the Arts. Theo is a Vocalist, Pianist, Actor, Theater Technician, and Visual Artist. In 2020 Theo was a finalist at Broadwaycon's Star to Be competition in NYC, and was the youngest performer at the All Things Broadway showcase at Feinsteins/54 Below. They serve as a member of student Wellness for Voice and Empowerment team and is Vice President of NMSA's Gay Straight Alliance. Theo has performed locally at Eldorado Fall Festival, Rock the Arts, at Chili Line, and during the pandemic did a Ghost Light Session on stage at the Lensic.

Mayor Webber will present the awards at a ceremony to be held virtually on Thursday, May 6 at 5:30 p.m. The event will be hosted by local performer Carlos Medina, and will feature performances by Theo (Satya) Kutsko and Mariachi Xóchitl. More information will be announced closer to the date on the [Arts & Culture webpage](#).

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