

For Immediate Release

Contact: Program Coordinator, Nelda Ruiz
(520) 621-4046, nruiz33@email.arizona.edu

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***Southwest Folklife Alliance Awards Funding to 10 Master Artists
to Share and Transfer Cultural Knowledge***

Tucson, AZ—A capoeirista, a Navajo weaver, a horse hair and agave fiber rope maker, a mariachi folk violinist, a steel pan craftsman, a paper flower maker, an O’odham silversmith, an ancestral foodways chef, glass blower, and a folk musician are the 2020 recipients of the annual Southwest Folklife Alliance (SFA) Master-Apprentice Award. The recipients were nominated by community members and selected by a panel of cultural leaders and peers.

SFA’s Master-Apprentice Award Program supports master traditional artists and apprentices. This year—thanks to additional support from the Arizona Commission on the Arts (ACA), SFA’s folk & traditional agency partner—it awards \$5,000 each to Arizona-based artist/tradition bearer and \$500 to an emerging-artist mentee to support the transmission of traditional knowledge and work together for one year. The first award program of its kind in Arizona, it joins over 20 similar award programs across the nation and affirms the organization's commitment to individual heritage-based artists, economic development and the transmission of cultural knowledge. Since its inception in 2015, the program has provided awards to 48 master artists.

SFA Program Coordinator, Nelda Ruiz says the awards highlight artists and culture bearers in the state who often go unnoticed. “This award brings support and visibility to tradition bearers whose artforms and practices are closely tied to their culture. By continuing these traditional cultural practices and passing them down, they are doing the beautiful and necessary work to keep their culture and heritage alive,” Ruiz said. SFA and ACA conducted outreach throughout the State pre-COVID in the spring of 2020. Technical assistance provided to nominees and applicants virtually enabled a safe, equitable, and competitive process.

“In a time when the economic and social impacts of the global pandemic threaten basic human needs of Arizona residents, increasing our investment and commitment to these culture bearers, is vital. We hope the awards support the artists and their communities preserve traditional knowledge and cultural resiliency through their respective cultural expressions,” says SFA Managing Director, Leia Maahs.

Alexandra Nelson, Deputy Director of the Arizona Commission on the Arts, says, "The Master-Apprentice awardees are a rich and vital resource for their communities and for the state. We congratulate this year's recipients and thank them for their contributions to Arizona's vast cultural landscape. And we thank our partners at SFA for their invaluable work to preserve, promote, and support Arizona's folklife and traditional arts."

The 2020 awardees are:

Bryan Castle, Capoeirista

Bryan Castle has been a practitioner of the Brazilian martial artform of capoeira for 22 years, studying throughout North America and Brazil with teachers such as the late Contramestre Dondi “Enxu” in Tucson. He will work with apprentice, Malik Arceneaux.

Velma Kee Craig, Diné (Navajo) Textile Weaver

Velma Kee Craig was an apprentice in weaving to Barbara Teller Ornelas (2019 SFA Master-Apprentice Artist Awardee) and Lynda Teller Pete, both master Diné weavers in Two Grey Hills tradition. She will work with Wayne Parkhurst, a beginning weaver and graphic artist.

Jesus Garcia, Horsehair and Agave Fiber Rope Making

Jesus Garcia learned horsehair and agave fiber rope “reata” from his father in Sonora, Mexico and has shared the form through his work as an educator of natural and cultural history of the Sonoran Desert, for the past 20 years. He will work with Maegan Lopez of the Tohono O’odham Nation.

David Gill, Mariachi Folk Violinist

David Gill grew up in the barrios of Tucson where his mother always encouraged singing and music. He has performed with Tucson groups and Mariachi Sol de Mexico in Los Angeles and now teaches in Tucson and Phoenix. He will work apprentice, Rigoberto Ramos.

Ansel Joseph, Steel Pan Craftsman

Ansel Joseph early steel bands growing up in Trinidad and Tobago. He later became a protégé of the legendary steel pan innovator Elliot “Ellie” Mannette and now builds, tunes, teaches, arranges, and performs steel pan drums from his home in Phoenix. He will work with apprentice, Charlene Lusk.

Josefina P. Lizarraga, Paper flower maker

Raised in Nayarit, Mexico, amidst rich vegetation and colorful flowers, Josefina Lizarraga has demonstrated her paper flower making at the annual Tucson Meet Yourself Festival for decades and will work with long-time apprentice, Jean Ramirez.

Rick Manuel, O’odham Silversmith

Rick Manuel and has over 48 years of experience as a silversmith, an artform he learned from teachers and his own experimentation, applying skills he learned in other trades, particularly carpentry. He will work with his son, Jacob Manuel.

Maria del Carmen Parra, Ancestral foodways

Maria del Carmen Parra is a Xicana Indigena who “grew up” in the kitchen with her mother, a traditional womb worker and healer. Later trained as a chef, she now works to educate her community in Phoenix how to decolonize their diet and use ancestral foods for healing. She will work with her husband, Brian Cano.

Paul Anders Stout, Glass Blower

Paul Anders Stout started glass blowing at 19, when he went to assist the renowned glassblower, Tom Philabaum in his Tucson studio. After traveling and studying worldwide, he now makes his own Southwest-inspired innovations. He will work with apprentice, Skyler Blood-Raiter.

Ted Warmbrand, Folk Musician

Ted Warmbrand is a folk musician who grew up in an Ashkenazi Jewish family in New York City, where he learned to sing old country songs from his parents. He uses songs to build community, protest injustice, and bring joy to those around him, and will work with apprentice, Jay Landon.

This year's awards were supported in part by The National Endowment for the Arts, The Arizona Commission on the Arts and matched by individual gifts from local donors. In addition to the awards SFA will promote work by Master-Apprentice artist teams throughout the year.

SFA is an affiliate non-profit organization of the University of Arizona in the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, the official state-designated folk arts partner of the Arizona Commission on the Arts, and the parent-producing agent of the annual Tucson Meet Yourself Folklife Festival. The organization offers yearlong programs that celebrate and preserve the art, culture, heritage, foodways, and folklife of the borderlands region.

To learn more about the program and this year's and past year's awardees, visit:

<https://southwestfolklife.org/master-apprentice-artist-program/>

Attached photos:

Ted Warmbrand.jpg, photo by Joseph Boldt

Josefina Lizarraga.jpg, photo by Steven Meckler