

Celebrating the Past, Present, and Future of MCASB

The 2026 Annual Art Awards Honor Artistic Excellence and Leadership



By **Leslie Dinaberg**, photos by **Ingrid Bostrom**
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Frederick Janka, MCASB Board President | Credit: Ingrid Bostrom

Honoring artistic excellence, raising critical funds, and looking fabulous while doing it, supporters of MCASB gathered at the Museum and Paseo Nuevo Arts Terrace on Sunday, July 12 for the annual Art Awards.

Celebrating 50 years of contemporary art this year — MCASB was founded in 1976 by artists for artists — the museum remains a free community benefit and quality of life asset for Santa Barbara and the California Central Coast. This year's MCASB honorees for their artistic excellence and history past, present and future with the museum included Kathryn Andrews, Sanford Biggers, Tonia Calderon, and Marc Swanson. In addition, a new award for curatorial excellence and arts leadership honored the achievements of Hamza Walker, director of The Brick, the Los Angeles nonprofit visual art space.



Dalia Garcia and Marcelo Mendez | Credit: Ingrid Bostrom

Additional celebrations at the event were the acquisition of the institution's historically significant archive by the University of California at Santa Barbara (UCSB) Library Special Research Collections, now [accessible to the public](#).

Also honored were the 2026 Roots and Branches Fellowship recipients, who will receive a \$1,000 unrestricted award, thanks to the program donors. Roots and Branches fellows include: Beth Amine, Natalia Bautista, Audrey Gamble, Luis David Figueroa, and Mia Lopez.



The 2026 Roots & Branches Fellows, from left, Mia Lopez, Luis David Figueroa, Barb Pinner (artist and supporter), Beth Amine and Engels Garcia | Photo: Ingrid Bostrom

Roots and Branches is one of MCASB's core BIPOC fellowship programs, a reparative investment in the cultural leaders our community already has. This year's cohort recognizes five BIPOC artists and cultural organizers in Santa Barbara County for their labor, commitment, passion, and social justice work. Fellows reflect diverse disciplines, ages, and communities: Black, Indigenous, immigrant, LGBTQ+, and working-class artists and organizers whose practices are rooted in lived experience, community accountability, and arts and culture work, say the organizers.

For more information about the museum and its programs see mcasantabarbara.org.