

Summary of 2023 AMOCAT Arts Awards Nominations
COMMUNITY OUTREACH BY AN INDIVIDUAL - Community outreach, engagement, and involvement in the arts in Tacoma by an individual
Individual Nomination Name
Curtis Ashby
Theresa Byrd
Ellen Ito
Drew Lindgren
Chandler O'Leary
Reid Ozaki & Kristina Batiste
Terri Placentia
James Allen Tucker Rodriguez
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Organization
Southeast Asian Comedy Collective
ARTS PATRON - A community partner who significantly supports or contributes to the arts in Tacoma
Patron
Bryson & Kristin Foster
Tacoma Public Library

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Curtis Ashby	Northwest Til Death	Curt is a member of the Metro Parks Tacoma Arts & Heritage Council and the Tacoma Mural Roster. He has many murals up around town that he's painted. He also teaches and volunteers his time in the community.	As a Metro Parks Tacoma Arts & Heritage Council member he has advocated for a more varied diverse representation of artists.	I am a coworker and friend!
Curtis Ashby		Not only are Curt's murals a breath of fresh air and beauty scattered across the south sound—he has a heart for community, the arts and making art accessible to all.	He's been involved with so many projects from beautifying locally owned businesses to live painting for all to see and hosting workshops to encourage folks to create. He volunteers his time ok selection panels and elsewhere. You'd be hard pressed not to see his stamp on a community within the Tacoma footprint.	Friend & Co worker , in addition to admiring his work.

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Theresa Byrd		<p>I met Theresa while stage managing at Lakewood Playhouse in 2016. She became a friend when I saw her ushering at every show and clearly interested in being part of production teams. I requested her as an ASM for Rocky Horror and we won the first award for stage crew for that production. Theresa volunteers at every theatre in Tacoma and in the area. She is the familiar smiling face greeting our patrons and warmly welcoming them to to the space. She has continued to work on back stage crews (often thankless positions) and her enthusiasm for each production is unparalleled. She attends every show in the region and everyone in theatre knows how much she adores the art form.</p> <p>She turns to theatre when she is struggling and the art form has helped her get through hard times. She brings joy to the work even in her darkest moments. She is beloved by casts and crews alike for her tenacity and commitment to putting on a good show and treating everyone kindly. She is the ultimate collaborator. It is long past time we turn the spotlight on Theresa and show her that we see her support for Tacoma theatre.</p>	<p>Theresa volunteers as an usher at every theatre in the South Sound and in Tacoma. She has worked as an Assistant Stage Manager on multiple shows and stage managed a couple shows. She enthusiastically supports not only the productions she's working on, but attends as many shows as she can sharing her love for the show and cast on social media. Working backstage, you don't often get paid much in community and indie theatre, but shes committed to being on crews even when she was between jobs.</p> <p>Ask most South Sound actors and stage managers and directors, they will acknowledge Theresa as one of Tacoma Theatre's most avid fans and hardest working volunteer/crew member.</p>	<p>I've been a director and a stage manager who worked with Theresa on my crew.</p>

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Ellen Ito	Tacoma Art Museum	<p>Working across disciplines as curator, media theorist, filmmaker, publisher, ethnographer, podcaster, visual artist and community activist, Ellen's multipartite practice focuses on uplifting diverse voices and expanding transdisciplinary strategies. Her work systematically expresses her contemporary and visionary approaches functioning within sustainable and pragmatic frameworks. Likewise, her collaborative-minded projects are always grounded in collective action and, taken holistically, offer radically new, inclusive approaches for an arts ecology to grow across Tacoma's cultural sector.</p> <p>Her projects both mirror and predict the cultural landscape of Tacoma; with her recent exhibition (and ancillary programming initiatives) for GATHER at TAM, an expansive museum exhibition opening in October 2023, and on-going development of her experimental documentary of the wartime hitchhiking journey of activist and sociologist Gordon Hirabayashi, now is a vital time to share and honor Ellen's work more publicly.</p> <p>Ellen's contributions to Tacoma are expansive and omnipresent yet often strategically concealed behind-the-scenes. Recognition from this award would certainly allow her work to become more visible but, even more presciently, would offer greater opportunities for other women and artists of color to see spaces for their own practices to develop, locating new constellations of</p>	<p>As Curator of Special Projects and Collections Manager at Tacoma Art Museum, Ellen's mission-driven practice focuses on locating opportunities to bring the TAM collection into dialogue with new audiences and diverse voices. Her exhibition SOFT POWER (opening October 2023) blends contemporary work from Northwest artists with objects from the museum's permanent collection to explore ideas around the ongoing legacy and intersection of art/craft in the Pacific Northwest, highlighting cultural heritage and personal narrative as an integral part of process and practice, while emphasizing regional use of textiles to voice and incite activism. In tandem with this project, she serves on the Board of Directors for the Grand Cinema, creating bridges (as well as dynamic, cinematic programming) across both institutions; her recent film series RAYOS (presented in conjunction with the exhibition LUCES Y SOMBRAS at TAM) brought experimental cinema into direct dialogue with the photographic works in the show, examining deep currents across media.</p> <p>Parallel to this work, her curatorial programming for Mini Mart City Park (in Seattle's Georgetown neighborhood) foregrounds community-based outreach with emerging and mid-career artists to share their practices with new audiences. Her projects strategically create active networks, holding space for new communities to evolve organically.</p>	<p>Her curatorial practices function as a guidepost in my navigation and understanding for the possibilities of a healthy arts ecology in our region. We have collaborated on several projects (past and present) and her multipartite approaches inspire me to find new ways to contribute to our shared cultural practices.</p>
Drew Lindgren	Tacoma Photo Center	<p>Drew provides the essential service of keeping dark room photography alive and preserving the art form by offering donation based classes for artists of all experience levels. In addition to sharing his vast knowledge of photography, he helps others to further their art experiences by allowing figure drawing classes to take place in his space for free.</p>	<p>By offering donation based photography classes, Drew is helping to found a new iteration of Tacoma artists, not limited by available funds. By offering his space up for a local queer figure drawing group, he has helped to create a wonderful community oriented space for creatives.</p>	<p>I have attended the figure drawing sessions held at Tacoma Photo Center.</p>

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Chandler O'Leary		Outstanding contributor to the preservation of heritage illustration art design methods and applied her talent to inspire intersectional public media campaigns.	Goggle: Chandler O'Leary Life In Review. Chandler and her business partner contributed funding to local organizations.	Chandler has published several books.
Reid Ozaki & Kristina Batiste	Tacoma Pottery Salon	Reid and Kristina created and run the Tacoma Pottery Salon, an ongoing lecture series for potters.	The Salon is a pop-up watering hole for Tacoma's clay community. It's a space to gather, build relationships, and learn from a featured speaker/presenter about their education, body of work, and technique. In this city of glass, the Salon is shining a light on Tacoma's rich (and oft-overlooked) history of potters.	I have attended most of the Salons and am so grateful for what they provide to Tacoma's Arts Community.
Terri Placentia		Terri has devoted about 40 years to teaching young artists. She is extremely insightful and highly motivational to her students. She pushes them and raises the bar gradually with the highest expectations for all. She is an accomplished artist herself, but has always put that on the back burner to spend her time helping others. Her stamina, patience, charisma and enthusiasm are unparalleled. Because Terri has just retired from teaching after 20 years at Tacoma School of the Arts, I think it is the perfect time for her to be recognized. There is a very long and impressive list of past students who are now working in the arts and accomplishing amazing things, from film, fine art and graphic design industries.	While teaching at Tacoma School of the Arts, Terri has inspired thousands of students to excel in the Visual Arts. She taught drawing and painting from about 2003 until June of 2023. Numerous students have won state and national awards with her guidance. Many of her students have gone on to prestigious art schools and now work at the top of their field. I have personally heard from many of her past students that she is the BEST art teacher they have ever had, and that included their teachers from NY School of Visual Arts and Art Center in CA. Terri has given her students real world experience in community art projects. They have completed murals for businesses, performed and planned art showcases in Tacoma during the summer. They have obtained internships in local businesses, learning about what it is like to work in the graphic design and Architectural industries.	Terri was my mentor teacher when I was hired to teach art at the Science and Math Institute in 2009. She has supported and inspired me over the years. We are friends now.

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James Allen Tucker Rodriguez		<p>James has been involved with the arts in Tacoma for sometime now. His involvement in the 2015, 2016 and 2017 with Art on the Ave were the most successful yet. He refused pay the first year he directed it. He believed it was about creating a successful environment for the artists to thrive. He started The Tacoma Artist Collective a free artist membership using his network in order to give artists a chance to show their work in various venues and events in the Tacoma area. In 2020 he created The Tacoma Art Market as an avenue for artists to make money vending during the COVID epidemic when many of us were struggling to survive. This year he created Planet Of The Arts along with Heritage Coffee and Plant House. Planet of the Arts is an artistic exhibition based event with the intention of inspiring and nurturing the core elements of an artistically fertile environment. All artistic styles and mediums were encouraged to attend. It was a celebration of the arts with local artists performing live in their integrity. His passion for the arts is inspiring to all of us who just want to create for a living.</p>	<p>James has created Several artistic avenues to help other artists gain recognition and help make a living through their work. I mentioned several events listed above. He is currently working on a mentorship program with local artists to help with artists looking to make a living through their craft. The business side that so many of us artists have a hard time with. He genuinely cares about the artists in the community that may not have the best of networking skills but show real talent in their craft. His concern during COVID pushed him to find a way to help those artists in need. His creation of Planet of The Arts in May of this year paying all out of pocket and giving local artists a chance to perform and display their work downtown. He worked with several downtown businesses to ensure it was a success. He did it because of his love for the arts.</p>	<p>I worked with him on projects, have learned from his mentorship and feel he deserves recognition</p>

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Southeast Asian Comedy Collective	<p>The Southeast Asian Comedy Collective deserves to be recognized for its work in challenging the model minority myth and carving a space for Southeast Asian comedians in the stand-up comedy scene.</p> <p>The model minority myth is a harmful stereotype that Asian Americans are all successful and don't face any discrimination. This myth can lead to Southeast Asians being overlooked for opportunities and making it difficult for them to speak out about their experiences with racism.</p> <p>The collective's shows feature comedians from all walks of life and cover a wide range of topics. By providing a space for Southeast Asian comedians to be seen and heard, the collective is helping to break down stereotypes and create a more inclusive comedy scene.</p> <p>In addition to their shows, the Southeast Asian Comedy Collective also offers workshops and mentorship programs for aspiring comedians.</p>	<p>In April 2023, the SEA Comedy Collective produced a sold-out show at the ALMA Venue in Tacoma. The show featured a lineup of SE Asian comedians from all over the United States, and it celebrated SE Asian culture and heritage. The show was well-received by the Tacoma community, and it helped to introduce a whole new genre of comedy to the city.</p> <p>The SE Comedy Collective is a valuable asset to the Tacoma community. The collective provides a platform for Southeast Asian comedians to share their stories and experiences, and it helps to promote diversity and inclusion in the arts. The collective is also committed to social commentary and uses its platform to raise awareness of important issues facing the Southeast Asian community.</p>	<p>I met Meanroth while he was producing a new year comedy celebration that turned into SEA Comedy Collective in 2022.</p>

ARTS PATRON - A community partner who significantly supports or contributes to the arts in Tacoma

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Bryson & Kristin Foster	Bryson & Kristin have built a Marketing and Design firm centered around doing good & documenting it, one of the ways they do this is by leveraging the popular Tacoma_wa instagram page to showcase local artists & creatives in our community thorough both pro bono videos as well as collabs. They also utilize an extensive network to put creatives in a position to do work for local businesses. Their 2023 Annual Community project: ten of us, heavily features local artists as well as a wide variety of other creatives.	By using their platforms to lift up creatives in Tacoma, as well as providing pro bono features on thier platforms and encouranging their clients to use local artists in their projects.	I am an employee at Foster's Creative

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Tacoma Public Library	<p>Though a partnership formed with Tacoma Creates in 2019, Tacoma Public Library has become an important co-presenter of arts, culture, heritage, and science programs throughout the city. Hosting these programs in their eight neighborhood branches created a beneficial arrangement for all involved: the libraries boosted their program offerings; the organizations funded by Tacoma Creates had a free, reliable, and accessible place to present programs; and the public gained free access to an incredible array of activities and events at their local libraries.</p> <p>Tacoma Public Library staff have worked to fulfill this partnership through the work of planning, facilitating, and co-promoting events in their branches. In 2022, 27 Tacoma Creates-supported organizations presented 75 programs, serving more than 2,000 people. Programs are diverse in format and subject matter: from local history presentations, hands-on art workshops, cultural dance performances, ocean ecology, opera performances, and more. Tacoma Public Library will host more than 30 organizations in 2023 as the partnership and programming continues to grow. In addition to being free and local, these presentations are “low risk” opportunities for both youth and adults to expand their artistic horizons, and then see where new interests and connections might lead.</p>	<p>A challenge that both Tacoma Creates and Tacoma Public Library wanted to address was the concentration of arts and culture programming in downtown Tacoma – this downtown programming is essential for our city, but it is not always accessible for all community members.</p> <p>Tacoma Public Library embraced the opportunity to present more arts opportunities where their branches are already trusted community hubs - places where community members from all backgrounds can gather to find resources, materials, and services to meet their needs and interests. Organizations that previously presented mostly or exclusively in just one location in Tacoma were now giving presentations and providing hands-on workshops in multiple community locations, thanks to the Tacoma Public Library partnership.</p> <p>Through this partnership, new interests are explored, passions ignited, and inspiration and learning occur in a public place where all are welcome. Tacoma Public Library staff are helpful and knowledgeable, adept at creating and managing partnerships, and are invested in their community and neighborhoods. Particular appreciation to Assistant Library Director Amita Lonial, Public Information Officer Mariesa Bus, Neighborhood Services Manager Michelle Massero, and to all of the neighborhood Librarians and TPL staff who have supported, co-produced, and co-promoted arts and culture opportunities at TPL.</p>	Community Partner