



26th Orange County Arts Awards

Call for Honorees, Guidelines & FAQs



Nominations are now being accepted for the 26th *Orange County Arts Awards* to be held on Tuesday, September 29th in the Samueli Theater at the Segerstrom Center for the Arts.

Awards are presented for work in these categories:

- **Helena Modjeska Cultural Legacy Awards** for extraordinary contributions to arts and culture over a lifetime.
- **Annual Achievement Awards** for outstanding work completed in one or more years.
- **Emerging Artist/Arts Leader Awards** (see description below)

Please note: Awards are not always given in every category each year.

Download a 2026 Nomination form with instructions [here](#). (DUE March 20, 2026)

Our 2025 honorees and a list of previous honorees may be found [here](#).

Category Guidelines

Helena Modjeska Cultural Legacy Awards - These recognize extraordinary contributions to arts and culture as an artist, arts leader, or philanthropist over a lifetime of individuals who are **connected to Orange County through one or more of the following: Individual must have either been born here, educated here, currently resides here, or spent an important part of his/her career here.**

- **Artist** – An artist who has achieved national or international distinction.
- **Artistic Visionary** – An individual or arts organization that has made an indelible mark upon the cultural landscape of Orange County as a founder, longtime leader or through other significant endeavors.
- **Arts Philanthropist** – Individuals, foundations and corporations that have demonstrated longtime, deeply generous support for the arts in Orange County, preferably for more than one artistic endeavor or institution.

Annual Achievement Awards - The Achievement Awards recognize accomplishments in one or more years, with an emphasis on recent accomplishments.

- **Arts Organization** – A nonprofit Orange County-based organization that produces, creates, and or presents theatre, dance, music, exhibitions, festivals or multi-disciplinary arts programming.
- **Individual Artist** – A professional performer, visual artist or writer currently living or working in Orange County.
- **Contribution to the Built Environment** – The opening of a new arts venue of major significance to the Orange County community or one that has exceptional architectural merit. Large-scale public art projects that involve multiple artists on a permanent or rotating basis will also be considered.

Emerging Artist/Arts Leader Awards – To recognize early and mid-career individual artists or arts leaders who have already demonstrated exceptional talent and success, who are living or working in Orange County, and whose work is taking place in Orange County.



In Memoriam - During the Arts Awards ceremonies, we honor the memory of distinguished Orange County artists, arts leaders, volunteers and patrons who died during the past year through a slide presentation similar to the Academy Awards. You are encouraged to propose individuals for inclusion in this special tribute on the Nomination Form.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who can make a nomination?

Individuals, businesses, corporations, nonprofit arts organizations, government agencies and educational institutions are invited to submit candidates for the Orange County Arts Awards. Self-nominations are also accepted.

How many nominations may I submit?

You may submit one nomination for each Award category. There is no limit for the number of categories in which you choose to submit a nomination.

What category should I submit?

Refer to the Category Guidelines to review award categories.

Can I nominate an individual or organization that has been previously honored?

Although previous Annual Achievement Award honorees are eligible to be recognized again for their most recent achievements, preference is given to organizations and individuals that have never been honored. Helena Modjeska Cultural Legacy Awards are given only once to a recipient.

Can I nominate someone who is deceased?

The Arts Awards are awarded only to living persons, however you may propose the recognition of someone who has died in the past year for inclusion in the “In Memoriam” portion of our ceremonies. Please check the appropriate box on the Nomination Form.

Must a nominee be able to attend the Awards event to be honored?

Nominees who are unavailable to attend are not eligible to be honored. Each selected honoree plus one guest will be guests of Arts Orange County at the event.

Who makes the Arts Awards decisions?

Award recipients are chosen by Arts Orange County’s Executive Committee.

How many honorees will be chosen in each category?

Arts Orange County retains the discretion to present single or multiple awards in a category, or not to present an award in a given category.

When will we learn which honorees have been selected?

Most honorees will be announced in June 2026. Those selected to be honored and those nominating them will be notified directly by Arts Orange County, and Arts Orange County will also notify the nominating individual or entity of those that are not selected for this year’s Awards.

How do I e-mail my nomination?

Download the Nomination Form to your computer. The Nomination Form is a Word document and can be filled out on most PC and Mac computers. After completing the form and narrative section, save the document using the name of your nominee as the file name and email the file (a Word document is the preferred format) and a JPEG photo of your nominee to pbrien@artsoc.org with “Arts Award Nomination” as the subject line.

Still have a question?

Please send an e-mail to pbrien@artsoc.org.