

St. Catharines Arts Awards celebrate culture, creativity and community

Oct. 26, 2020 — The community's creative best, and those that support them, received their due on Sunday night.

While the annual St. Catharines Arts Awards moved to a virtual format this year, there was no shortage of real-world talent and support in those recognized with awards during the online affair.

Aimed at celebrating excellence in all areas of artistic creation, the awards seek not only to recognize artistic talent, but to promote the city's vibrant and growing arts scene. Awards recognize creators and those that support them through their leadership, financial assistance and volunteer efforts.

"Arts and culture gives us so much, it challenges us to think, grow and join together as a community," said acting supervisor of Cultural Services Kathleen Powell, adding, "it's no secret culture in our community has exploded in recent years, it's evident in the winners and in the list of truly phenomenal nominees, including those providing support for the arts to thrive and those creating and performing in our community."

Arts Awards recipients each received a hand-crafted award and \$500 to support future projects. The Emerging Artist recipient received \$500 and a civic certificate. Arts Awards winners were selected by a jury comprised of past recipients Ola Kiermacz (2019 Emerging Artist), Derek Knight (2018 Arts in Education), the 2019 Awards co-director, Emily Oriold of the Foster Festival, and awards committee representative Wynne Nicholson presiding.

Please continue reading for a full breakdown of this year's St. Catharines Arts Awards winners.

Arts in Education Award, sponsored by the St. Catharines Downtown Association: Kari-Lynn Winters

Winters is an award-winning children's author, playwright, poet, performer, and academic scholar. An experienced teacher of writing, she has worked with students across North America and currently teaches drama in education to future educators at Brock University.

Emerging Artist Award, sponsored by Henry of Pelham Family Estate Winery: Erica Sherwood

Sherwood is a multi-disciplinary artist who has held roles as a director, actor, editor, producer, marketer, promoter, camera operator, cohost, organizer, singer, improviser, filmmaker and sound designer. She has received critical recognition for her work both as an actor and filmmaker. Erica frequently collaborates with local organizations and has created a youth film initiative / non-profit Jarico Films to promote youth involvement in film in Niagara.

Established Artist Award, sponsored by Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts: Danny Custodio

Custodio is a photo-based artist who has been living and working in St. Catharines since 2009. Beginning with his studies of photography, Custodio has developed a rigorous practice that explores his familial histories and cultural traditions. His work has been presented in exhibitions throughout North America and is held in many collections. Custodio's most recent works, Flower Carpets / Tapetes Floridos, were featured in solo exhibitions at Rodman Hall Art Centre and Smokestack Gallery.

Making a Difference Award, sponsored by the Pen Centre: Juliet Dunn

Dunn is the co-founder and executive director of the TD Niagara Jazz Festival which celebrates the art of jazz across the Niagara region, presenting internationally acclaimed musicians, and showcasing local performers at a variety of events throughout the year. Juliet is a performer herself, known widely for her talents as a jazz singer and actress.

Jury's Pick Award: Candice Turner-Smith

Turner-Smith is an arts administrator who is known for serving as the executive director of the Niagara Symphony Orchestra from 2012 until her retirement in 2019. Since leaving the Niagara Symphony Orchestra, Candice is once again focussed on her extensive consulting career, working with many organizations including The Foster Festival, Bravo Niagara, Carousel Players, Chorus Niagara and Music Niagara, just to name a few.

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