



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **ARTS COMMISSION NAMES MICHA SCOTT ARTIST OF THE YEAR**

*Profile Performance to be held June 5 at the Museum of Art & History*

Micha Scott, dancer and choreographer, has been named 2026 Santa Cruz County Artist of the Year by the Santa Cruz County Arts Commission.

Scott is a professional dancer, teacher and choreographer who has performed on stages around the world as a 13-year senior member with the renowned Garth Fagan Dance. While in the company, she performed leading roles in many of Mr. Fagan's choreographies including "From Before," "Collage For Romie," "Transition/Translation," and the groundbreaking collaboration with trumpeter/composer Wynton Marsalis, "Griot New York," which was filmed and televised on PBS' Dance in America series. Scott has performed and taught extensively in the United States, Italy, France, Brazil, Jamaica, Israel, Australia, Puerto Rico, Canada, and the Republic of Congo.

The Artist of the Year award is presented to local artists for outstanding achievement in the discipline of performing, visual, or literary arts who have also made a substantial contribution to the cultural enrichment of Santa Cruz County. A free Profile Performance will be held at the Museum of Art & History on June 5, from 7:00-9:00 PM. Admission is FREE to the public. Seating is limited and available on a first-come, first-served basis the night of the event; advance tickets are not available. To learn more about the award and previous recipients: <https://www.scparks.com>.

Since moving from New York to Santa Cruz in 2008, Scott has been deeply involved in the local dance community, with particular focus on being an advocate for the Black youth dance community. As Executive Director (since 2021) and Artistic Director (since 2011) at Tannery World Dance and Cultural Center (TWDC), she highlights the

artistic traditions passed on to her by Garth Fagan. This includes not only the technical and performance aspects of dance but also incorporating traditions from the Black American experience through music, discussions around race, advocacy and the arts. Scott has taught at TWDC, Dancenter, UCSC, Cabrillo College, Motion Pacific, SCU, SUNY Brockport, Mountain School, and Mount Madonna School, as well as at public schools and private studios throughout Santa Cruz and Monterey counties. She also serves on the Black Health Matters advisory board and as a volunteer with Your Future Is Our Business as a guest career panelist in local public schools.

In 2022, Scott started the annual Deep Roots Dance Fest, bringing to the Santa Cruz stage artists of the African Diaspora to perform original contemporary dances rooted in their traditional forms. In 2023, she traveled to Congo to perform a solo and train young dancers at the Tokomi Festival in Brazzaville, a professional highlight. In the winter of 2024, Scott performed in New York as a guest soloist with Garth Fagan Dance company.

As a biracial Black woman, Scott is deeply committed to advocating for equity in the arts, including access to funding, professional development, and artistic exposure. In her work she actively elevates Black and immigrant artists. It is her honor to collaborate with many renowned choreographers, including Norwood 'PJ' Pennewell, Sharon Skepple Mayfield, Tandy Beal, Gervais Tomadiatunga, Ramón Ramos Alayo, and many more.

Scott served on the grants panels at Arts Council Santa Cruz County from 2021–2025 and the California Arts Council from 2023–2024 and recently served as a guest panelist for The Great Cabrillo Arts Design Challenge at Cabrillo College. She has secured more than \$120,000 in grants over the past four years to bolster TWDC's youth scholarship program, ensuring that every child in Santa Cruz County who wants to dance is not barred from participation due to lack of income.

Over the last 42 years, the Santa Cruz County Arts Commission has selected outstanding artists nominated by the public and has honored them through the Artist of the Year Award. Nominees must be a resident of Santa Cruz County, must have a national or international reputation, must have contributed to the cultural enrichment of the local community, and must have created or presented work in Santa Cruz County. For more information, including how to nominate an artist for the award, please visit [scparks.com](http://scparks.com).