



# COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS, OPEN SPACE & CULTURAL SERVICES  
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## NEWS RELEASE

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### SPOTLIGHT AWARD RECIPIENTS ANNOUNCED

The Santa Cruz County Parks Department is pleased to announce the Santa Cruz County Arts Commission's 2026 Spotlight Award recipients: Tish Bertino (Visual Artist), and Barbara Martin (Drummer/Percussionist). The artists' work will be exhibited on the 5th floor of the County Governmental Center, 701 Ocean St., Santa Cruz, from August 3–October 9, 2026. A First Friday opening reception will be held August 7 from 5–7 p.m.

The natural world serves as the source of inspiration for Tish Bertino's paintings, where she invites and encourages the viewer to visit real and imaginary places where shape, vibrant color, luminous light, and a sense of movement provide literal form to the pieces. Tish's style is loose and expressive impressionist. A longtime resident of Santa Cruz, Tish runs and hikes through the woods and along the ocean allowing nature's beauty to feed her soul and inspire her works. She returned to school in her mid-thirties to earn both a Bachelor of Fine Arts and a Multiple Subject Teaching Credential from San Jose State University. For several years she taught art in local elementary schools. Painting is a source of immense joy for Tish and considers the process of creating art essential to leading a balanced and meaningful life.

Barbara Martin is a Drummer and Multi-Percussionist, originally from Guantanamo City, Cuba. While studying music in at college Santa Clara, Cuba, she had the opportunity to perform with the Harvard Symphony Orchestra, as well as other traditional and popular Cuban bands. She also gained extensive teaching experience while in college by teaching music at the middle and high school levels. Arriving to the United States in 2016, she has taught music in various schools and performed in different bands throughout California. She is currently studying Music at Cabrillo College as well as working as a TA for the Music Department, where she also co-directs the Cabrillo Latin Jazz Ensemble. She currently directs, plays drums/percussion and is the lead singer in various local bands including El Sol, La Otra Banda, and The Peacoat Project.

Through the Spotlight Award, the County Arts Commission publicly recognizes individuals who have achieved a high level of excellence and creativity in their work, but who have not received widespread acknowledgment of their talent. This annual award recognizes younger artists as well as those who are discovering their artistic voice later in life. For more information, please visit <https://tinyurl.com/2xbu3nmk>.