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# ARTS/99

The publication of Arts and Culture El Dorado



MILESTONES

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## Dear Reader,

With 2024 having come to a close, we used this issue of *Arts 99* as an occasion to reflect on recent milestones, both for our organization and for our friends and partners in the community. *Scattered Water Droplets*, an exhibition of work from regional Native artists, curated by artist collective concept:art+movement, opened in Arts and Culture El Dorado's Switchboard Gallery; Sugar Skull Art Walk held its 5th annual Día de los Muertos celebration in Downtown Placerville; Save the Graves brought history back to life with their 5th annual public event in the Placerville Union Cemetery; a rotating exhibition series curated by Arts and Culture El Dorado's Loren Christofferson brought sculptures, photographs, and paintings by local artists into the Board of Supervisors' Chamber; an Arts Education Strategic Plan, spearheaded by Arts and Culture El Dorado's Marya Osucha in partnership with the El Dorado County Office of Education, entered the first phase of development; and Arts and Culture El Dorado celebrated its 40th Anniversary at David Girard Winery.

Just as the year's end is an occasion to remember and reflect, the coming of a new year is an occasion to look to the future. In 2025, we have a lot to look forward to: the debut of our literary journal, *Slope & Basin*; our ongoing fundraising for the Placerville Historic Renovation Campaign; our new poetry program for young people, "Our El Dorado", administered in partnership with El Dorado County Poet Laureate Stephen Meadows; a slate of public art projects in Meyers, Placerville, and elsewhere; and much more.

Even as we look ahead to the future, we would like to take a moment to remember John Hidahl, who passed away suddenly on November 2. John's passion for public service guided his life, most recently for eight years as El Dorado County Supervisor for District 1. He was a steadfast supporter of the arts and of Arts and Culture El Dorado, and he will be deeply missed. We extend our heartfelt condolences to his wife of 52 years, Eileen, and their family.

**Cover: Shanti Parks – "To See With Your Heart"**

*When I think about the name of the show, Scattered Water Droplets, the rivers in my world come to mind. The fish in those waters, and how they have impacted every bit of land not only here, but across the globe. The fish follow clear maps we cannot see, which are represented by the black intersecting lines in the painting. We can't see them, but to the fish they are clear. Whether landlocked Hitch, Kokanee, or the families that spend most of their lives in the sea and return to their home mountain tops, these fish, including eels and lamprey, all come home to set the next generation on its path. These relatives are the building blocks of our world. Growing up, dad brought home salmon longer than we were. We swam with sturgeon and screamed when little eels got caught in our hair. Despite modern impacts like mining and dams, represented by the oxidized copper paint flows, these beautiful creatures follow their hearts home and quietly teach us how to keep going no matter what.*

EDITOR Jordan Hyatt-Miller  
DESIGNER Dan Keenan  
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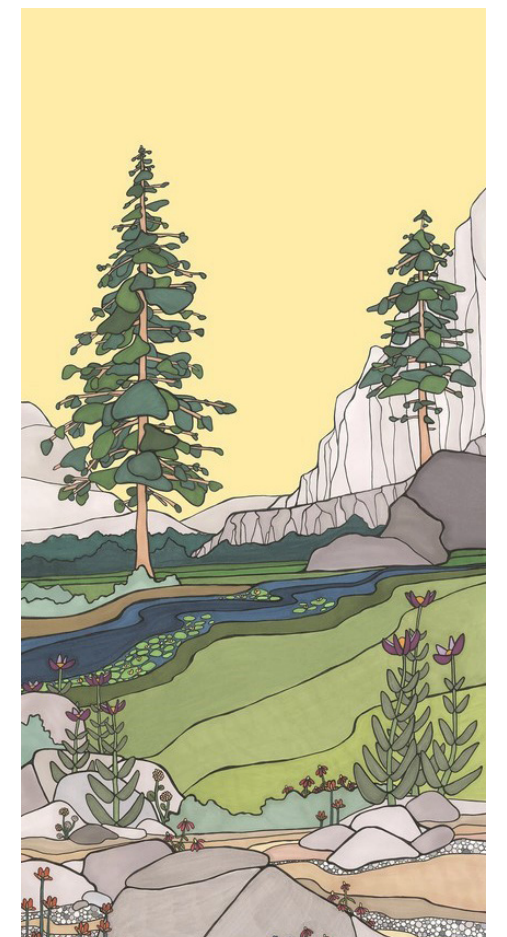
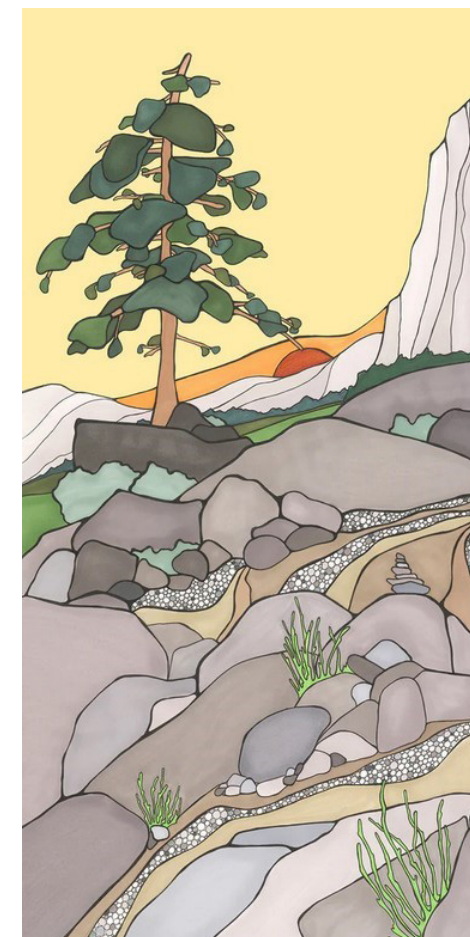
## Switchboard Satellite

In Arts and Culture El Dorado's Switchboard Gallery, a specially curated rotating exhibition series celebrates all that is exceptional about El Dorado County, from our artists, craftspeople and makers, to our agriculture and natural resources, to our cultural heritage. Arts and Culture El Dorado brings this same model into the County Board of Supervisors' Chamber. Curated by artist Loren Christofferson, who also serves as Arts and Culture's Administrative Coordinator, the rotating exhibition series in the Supervisors' Chamber features artists from each of El Dorado

County's Supervisorial Districts. For approximately three months at a time, each of these artists provides the backdrop for the deliberations of the Supervisors who represent their communities.

So far, the program has featured four artists. Photographs by Fabienne Sowa-Dobkowski from Placerville (District 3) first graced the walls of the Supervisors' Chamber, followed by the oil paintings of Robert Anderson from El Dorado Hills (District 1) and the dendriform sculptures of Kelly Smith Cassidy from South Lake Tahoe (District 5). Currently featured are the works of Rebecca Roehr (District 3), whose colorful explorations of the natural world will be on display through March 2025.

The creativity on display within the Chamber is a testament not just to the Supervisors' support for the arts, but to the central role of the arts in creating and maintaining our civic identity.



# Bringing Creativity to Every Student

Arts and Culture El Dorado knows that arts exposure can be life-changing for children and transformative for communities. That is why, through programs like Poetry Out Loud, the Young Artist Awards, Youth Art Month Exhibitions, and Our El Dorado, Arts and Culture El Dorado provides critical access to the arts and creativity for young people in El Dorado County. With the development of a countywide Arts Education Strategic Plan, Arts and Culture El Dorado is deepening its commitment to young people by enabling access to the creative process for every student in El Dorado County.

The planning initiative, undertaken in partnership with the El Dorado County Office of Education, will address a critical need in El Dorado County, which will join the 34 out of 58 total counties in California with a Strategic Arts Education Plan in progress or in place. In the proposed timeline, the process will begin with conversations with Superintendents and statewide networks of arts education advocates and experts, as well as the creation of a Planning Advisory Committee in El Dorado County. Through a needs assessment and the identification of key partners in the community, the Strategic Plan that emerges will reflect the unique character of El Dorado County's diverse communities, schools, and students.

Marya Osucha, Special Projects Manager at Arts and Culture El Dorado, is facilitating the development of the Strategic Plan. She hopes that the plan will “create an awareness of the scaffolding of arts education, the way in which arts education at younger grades builds access as students reach high school and beyond.” In rural El Dorado County, where access to the arts can be less robust than in larger urban areas, the ripple effect of early life arts education can be especially powerful.

The State of California has released an arts framework that elaborates on the benefits of exposure to the arts in early life. This framework also outlines avenues for implementing or expanding arts education in schools. The purpose of the Arts Education Strategic Plan is to turn that framework into an actionable plan for local schools. “That is where we

can leverage our network to support administrators. We want to help implement the framework within a school's existing environment in a way that makes it easy for educators and administrators,” Marya explains.

As beneficial as the Strategic Plan will be for El Dorado County students, it will also provide critical support to local educators and artists. “Arts and Culture El Dorado has an understanding of the existing arts ecosystem and the creative economy... We can engage local resources to support educators,” Marya says. “There are so many wonderful artists and creatives and teaching artists right here in our county.”



To learn more, visit:  
[artsandcultureeldorado.org/  
arts-education-strategic-plan-  
for-el-dorado-county/](https://artsandcultureeldorado.org/arts-education-strategic-plan-for-el-dorado-county/)



**Our El Dorado:** Our El Dorado, a project of El Dorado County Poet Laureate Stephen Meadows and Arts and Culture El Dorado, will invite El Dorado County students to explore their relationship to their hometown through poetry; the poems they write will be published by Arts and Culture El Dorado alongside Stephen's own poetry.



**Youth Art Month Exhibitions:** Youth Arts Month Exhibitions are annual showcases of artworks from El Dorado County High School students. The Spring 2025 Youth Arts Exhibition will feature Union Mine High School.



**Poetry Out Loud:** Poetry Out Loud is a national poetry recitation competition for high school students, administered locally by Arts and Culture El Dorado.



**Young Artist Awards:** An annual program, the Young Artist Awards recognize the special potential of El Dorado County High School Juniors and Seniors in four categories: Music, Theatre, Visual Art, and Nature-Inspired Art.



## Ofrendas on Main

On Saturday, November 2, over two thousand people gathered in Downtown Placerville to celebrate Dia de los Muertos (the Day of the Dead). Children sporting traditional face paint played alongside a community procession of celebrants while the scents of delicious regional foods mingled with strains of live mariachi music. At the center of a swirl of dance, poetry, performance, and arts and crafts activities was the Community Ofrenda: an enormous, colorful collection of tributes—photographs, food, flowers, drawings, notes—to loved-ones who have passed away, which were placed at the Bell Tower by members of the public.

The event was the 5th Annual Community Celebration hosted by

Sugar Skull Art Walk, a community art project that positions Latinx and Indigenous art in places of high visibility on Main Street. Their mission is to use art as a bridge between communities, engaging local Spanish-speaking, Latinx, and Indigenous artists and student communities in creating ofrendas for los Días de los Muertos. The Community Celebration is the culmination of a month-long community art project involving the creation and exhibition of ofrendas in Arts and Culture El Dorado's Switchboard Gallery, Scout Hall, and shop windows all along Main Street. A key element of the program is introducing school children to the tradition, with over 200 local 3rd graders visiting both locations. Educators were on hand to explain

the cultural background of Dia de los Muertos and demonstrate how to make paper marigolds, a key element of the tradition.

Sugar Skull Art Walk, which is a project of the Arts and Culture El Dorado's Art Incubator program, is supported by Arts and Culture El Dorado, The Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians, La Asociación Guadalupeña, La proMesa familiar, the City of Placerville, Main Street Merchants, the Placerville Co-op, Art on Center and numerous other Community Supporters.



To learn more or donate, visit [artsandcultureeldorado.org/sugar-skull-art-walk/](https://artsandcultureeldorado.org/sugar-skull-art-walk/)



## Death Becomes Them

Just under two weeks before Halloween, on Saturday, October 19, long-dead historical personages were seen roaming Placerville Union Cemetery, telling the stories of their lives and deaths beside their own graves. It was not a mass haunting, but rather the 5th annual Save the Graves event, which featured dramatizations by local actors of four historic crimes in El Dorado County. This year's theme was "Law and Order" and each of the crimes was recounted from two perspectives. Attendees at the event were invited to "meet the famous, the forgotten, and the infamous". The actors, playing to an audience of over 500 people, were joined by living descendants of the historical figures being portrayed.

Save the Graves, a non-profit founded in 2019, is dedicated to the restoration and protection of El Dorado County cemeteries and the history contained therein. The event in Placerville Union Cemetery is one of many organized annual by Save the Graves. Some of these events are performances or community gatherings that raise funds to support local cemeteries, while others recruit volunteers to clean and straighten headstones.

In 2023, Save the Graves installed over 25 interpretive signs in Placerville Union Cemetery, which help visitors understand and appreciate the history and enduring cultural importance of the cemetery. Topics on the signs ranged from biographies of notable deceased to Victorian headstone symbology and 19th century headstone carvers. The signs are just one recent example of the many improvements Save the Graves has made to El Dorado County cemeteries in the five years since their founding.



To help Save the Graves save the graves, visit: [savethegraveseldorado.org](https://savethegraveseldorado.org)



# Scattered Water Droplets

*Scattered Water Droplets: Yatapke'oyihim Mom*, a recent exhibition in Arts and Culture El Dorado's Switchboard Gallery, featured a selection of work from regional Native artists curated by Meyo Marrufo, whose work was also featured in the exhibition. The artists "were chosen to embody a 'scattered' representation of native viewpoints across our region", writes Meyo in her curatorial statement, and included Billy Hawk Enos, Raymond LeBeau, Jacky Calanchini, Viola LeBeau, Gemma Benton, Shanti Parks, Deerstine Suehead, and Jacinda Tayaba-Cordero.

The exhibition is one element of the larger Momím Wadaahá Campaign, a public awareness initiative by The Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians, the artists' collective concept:art+movement (c:am), and Arts and Culture El Dorado. The campaign engages rural populations in El Dorado and Alpine Counties and Tribal communities on Nisenan homelands to promote cultural competency regarding Tribal landscapes, ecological knowledge, and water rights. The campaign hires Tribal artists to create artworks that highlight the relationship between Tribal people and waterways. In addition to exhibitions of their artwork like *Scattered Water Droplets: Yatapke'oyihim Mom*, the campaign integrates selected artworks into public relations and educational materials.

The Momím Wadaahá Campaign is supported by the California Creative Corps, an initiative of the California Arts Council that provides funding directly to arts organizations for work that creates awareness around one of several themes: public health; water and energy conservation and climate mitigation, emergency preparedness relief, and recovery; civic engagement; and social justice. The campaign has received additional support from the Sacramento Office of Arts and Culture.

Meyo Marrufo of concept:art+movement was the driving creative force behind *Scattered Water Droplets: Yatapke'oyihim Mom* and other upcoming exhibitions in the Momím Wadaahá Campaign. concept:art+movement, a project of Arts and Culture El Dorado's Arts Incubator program, supports California Indian, Native American and Indigenous arts and curation through community-centered contemporary art exhibits, professional development workshops, and educational programming. For Meyo, *Scattered Water Droplets: Yatapke'oyihim Mom* was an opportunity to empower Native artists from a range of backgrounds: "Urban and rural, traditional



and contemporary, local and relocated, young and experienced." Together, the pieces give viewers "a small glimpse of the intimate relationship between Native artists and their tribal waters," Meyo explains.

*Momím Wadaahá*, the next exhibition in the larger Momím Wadaahá Campaign, will run from March 15-September 15, 2025, in the Maidu Museum & Historic Site in Roseville.

**Gemma Benton**  
"Tears Made Holy"

there's a way that the wind carries the sounds of grandmothers weeping sorrow seeking light deep waters held still metabolizing memory tears made holy through song and prayer



To support concept:art+movement, visit [artsandcultureeldorado.org/concept-art-movement/](https://artsandcultureeldorado.org/concept-art-movement/)



**Billy Hawk Enos** – "You Don't Listen"

William TekTek Enos Sr, BHE, Father, Billyhawk, Nisenan/Washiw, singer, dancer, artist, human. Inspired and instructed by those teachers and leaders that had the ability to see the dream and took their time to go beyond themselves to show us with their works. I have been painting, creating, my whole life and use my life's experiences/teachings/dreams to also do as instructed by the goodness we need to survive.



**Raymond LeBeau** – "Ice Caves // Coyote Sign"

There are ice caves in the lava beds and the southwest desert. The original "Ice Box"! Way underground too: scientists have observed that ice cave melting rates have increased. "Oops". Below the melting ice caves there is a coyote drawing based on an experience we had driving down Delaware avenue, where coyote ran in front of the car for a whole block and then peed in the middle of the road while stopping all traffic. What does it mean? Below coyote I wrote "beliefs of a pitt mann" in a previous under drawing. There are other under and over drawings, including the indian coin based on a 1922 photograph of Barney Ronur (Ajumawi).



## Four Decades of Arts, Culture, and Creativity

On Thursday, November 7, 2024, Arts and Culture El Dorado commemorated four decades of service to the community with a special celebration of this milestone at David Girard Winery. The event brought community members, supporters of the arts, and artists in Arts and Culture El Dorado's Arts Incubator program together over wine, food, and live music performed by members of Black Rock Philharmonic, a project of the Arts Incubator. Attendees looked back at Arts and Culture's years of service to El Dorado County since its founding as the El Dorado Arts Council in 1984 and raised their glasses to the vital

creative community it continues to foster today. The celebration was also an opportunity to support the future of the organization and of arts and culture in the county by raising funds to support the renovation of two historic buildings on Placerville's Main Street, the Confidence Hall and Emigrant Jane Stewart buildings, which will form the epicenter of an emerging cultural district in Downtown Placerville.



To support the Historic Renovation Campaign and other programs and services, visit [artsandcultureeldorado.org/donation](https://artsandcultureeldorado.org/donation)

*"We were thrilled to host so many friends of the arts at our Fortieth Anniversary Celebration! Event Co-Chairs Brenda Quintana and Tom Rockenbaugh join me in thanking everyone who supported the Benefit, especially our Renovation Sponsor, T-Mobile, and David Girard Vineyards. We had the opportunity to put our Placerville Historic Renovation Campaign front and center, along with all the important programs and services we offer throughout El Dorado County, and look forward to carrying the message forward into 2025."*

- Terry LeMoncheck, Executive Director



# Thank you for your support

The following generous donors and funders supported Arts and Culture El Dorado and our Arts Incubator projects in 2024. Thank you!

### \$100,000+

California Arts Council

### \$50,000+

County of El Dorado

### \$25,000+

City of Placerville (in-kind)  
Sacramento Office of Arts and Culture  
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Arts and Culture El Dorado's mission to promote, connect, and empower arts and culture throughout the county is achieved by targeted programs and services, a vibrant gallery exhibition series, and a focus on initiatives which support and sustain the cultural life of the region.