

## Arts Council announces 2012 Artist Laureate Awards

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Where once there were fellowship recipients, there now are "artist laureates"--six of them for 2012, in fact, announced recently by Arts Council Silicon Valley.

In the council's first Artist Laureate Awards, which were unveiled last fall, the program awarded \$5,000 each to established artists in four different categories and \$5,000 apiece to an emerging artist and to a longtime local artist.

For more than 20 years, Arts Council Silicon Valley has awarded monetary support to area artists, in large part through its Artist Fellowship program. But the term "fellowship" can often be considered a bit loaded, with an expectation that the funds awarded will go toward the creation of a particular project.

The laureate awards are a reworking of the Arts Council's longstanding Artist Fellowship grant program, with the new "laureate" moniker, along with revamped rules for eligibility, highlighting a unique aspect of the program: it offers a rare opportunity for artists to receive unrestricted funding. The \$5,000 awarded to each recipient is not earmarked for a specific piece or project, as grants often are. Instead the funds can be spent to further each recipient's work however he/she chooses.

Whereas the artist fellowships provided grants in specific artistic disciplines each year, such as dance or poetry, the laureate categories have been broadened. Additionally, while the fellowships required artists to apply, the laureate awards accepted nominations of artists from others.

The 2012 Artist Laureate winners are: painter Kelly Detwiler in the "On the Wall," category, which

encompasses art that can be hung on a wall as well as film or TV work which can be shown on a screen; sculptor Chris Eckert in the "Off the Wall," category, which includes free-standing art that can be viewed from all angles; San Jose Chamber Orchestra founder and director Barbara Day Turner for "On Stage," which recognizes work performed for audiences, and writer Elizabeth McKenzie for the "Off Stage," which encompasses music composition, choreography and all written literary art forms. Playwright, director and producer Jeffrey Lo picked up the Emerging Artist prize while Robert Kelley, founder of TheatreWorks, was recognized with the Legacy Laureate award.