



New Jersey Heritage Fellows

Fiscal Year 2026

New Jersey Heritage Fellowships are the state's highest honor in folk and traditional arts, and are one-time, \$20,000 awards to exemplary New Jersey folk and traditional artists. FY26 is the second time the Council has given these awards, following the inaugural cohort in FY24. In alternate years, the Council offers the Folk and Traditional Arts Project Award, which is an opportunity for developing folk and traditional artists to pursue learning and mentorship opportunities that further their artistic development.

Heritage Fellows are selected based on the following criteria: lifetime achievement; artistic excellence; and contributions to New Jersey's living cultural heritage. Of the 58 nominations reviewed by an independent peer panel, the top 10 scoring nominations are awarded.

Later this year, *State of the Arts* - an Emmy Award-winning television series with episodes coproduced by the State Arts Council and Stockton University, in conjunction with PCK Media - will produce short documentary videos on each of the Fellows, to be aired statewide on NJ PBS and available any time at stateoftheartsnj.com.

Alessandra Belloni

Southern Italian Dance and Music
Edgewater, Bergen County

Deborah Mitchell

Tap Dance
Monroe Township, Middlesex County

Kimberly Camp

Dollmaking
Collingswood, Camden County

Ramya Ramnarayan

Bharatanatyam
Dayton, Middlesex County

Omar Edwards

Tap Dance/Griot
Englewood, Bergen County

Juan "Pepe" Santana

Andean Music
Stanhope, Sussex County

Tyrese Bright Flower Gould Jacinto

"No face" gourd dolls, beaded leather pouches, pine needle arts
Bridgeton, Cumberland County

Rachna Sarang

Kathak
Tenafly, Bergen County

Neelima Raju Kakarlapudi

Kuchipudi
Edison, Middlesex County

Yang Yi

Zheng (guzheng)
West Windsor, Mercer County