

STATEWIDE APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM SUPPORTS CALIFORNIA'S CULTURAL TRADITIONS THROUGH 17 ARTIST TEAMS

Since 1999, the Alliance for California Traditional Arts' (ACTA's) [Apprenticeship Program](#) has supported California's cultural traditions with **348 contracts to outstanding folk and traditional artists and practitioners**. Now entering its 19th cycle, ACTA's Apprenticeship Program encourages the continuity of the state's living cultural heritage by contracting exemplary master artists to offer intensive training and mentorship to qualified apprentices.

ACTA's Executive Director, Amy Kitchener says, "The Apprenticeship Program is at the heart of our mission, with a focus on the generational transfer of knowledge. The program not only sustains and grows traditions; it also reveals all the different ways of knowing within the many cultural communities of our state."



Master artist Snigdha Venkataramani (L) with her apprentice Anagaa Nathan (R; photo courtesy of Suri Photography).

Contracts of \$3,000 are made with California-based master artists to cover master artist's fees, supplies and travel. Participants work closely with ACTA staff to develop and document the apprenticeships, culminating in opportunities to publicly share results of their work.

The 2019 Apprenticeship Program cohort of 34 artists (17 pairs) reflects California's breadth of cultural diversity and intergenerational learning, ranging from master artists in their 60s to a 15-year old apprentice, spanning from San Diego to Humboldt Counties. Thriving traditions supported through these apprenticeships reflect indigenous California cultural practices that include Yurok, Karuk, and Hupa basketry. Others celebrate traditions which have taken root in California, and originally hail from Peru, Africa, Bolivia, India, Iran, Armenia, China, Japan, Philippines, Korea, Mexico, and Vietnam.

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ACTA is the California Arts Council's statewide partner in serving the folk and traditional arts field.

The 17 statewide artist pairs contracted in the 2019 Apprenticeship Program include:

Mehrdad Arabifard (Los Angeles) will be teaching Negin Fadaee (Los Angeles) techniques of the percussive Persian Tombak.

Master vocalist Hari Asuri (Orange) will be working with his daughter and apprentice Brinda Asuri in *sankeertanam*, a south Indian musical tradition.

Zarouhi “Zee” Bedrossian (Fresno) will be sharing traditions of Armenian home cooking with her apprentice, **Julianne Burk** (Fresno). Follow along with their blog, [*The Stranger in Your Kitchen*](#), where they will be documenting Zee’s recipes.

Swapan Chaudhuri (Marin, 2016) comes back to the program to work with **Rohan Krishnamurthy** (Alameda) on North Indian tabla forms (Krishnamurthy was also a 2017 master artist in Mridangam Carnatic music).

Master artist **Bernard Barros Ellorin** (San Diego) will train his apprentice **Kimberly Kalanduyan** (San Diego) in Kulintang music of the Southern Philippines.

Apprentice **Melody Hyun-Jeong Shim** (Los Angeles) will be mentored by master artist **DaEun Jung** (Los Angeles) in Korean folk dance.

Master artist **Youngmin Lee** (Alameda) will share the crafting of *bojagi*, or Korean wrapping cloths, with apprentice **Stephanie Rue** (Sacramento).

Apprentice **Francisco Gomez Padilla** (Fresno) will learn the art of Cambalache, a kind of open-work embroidery, from his wife, master artist **Guadencia Lopez**.

Shirley Kazuyo Muramoto-Wong (Alameda; 2014, 2016) will be working with her apprentice **Bo Shannon Chappel** (Alameda) in Japanese Koto music.

Master dancer **Pierr Padilla** (Alameda) will train his wife and apprentice **Carmen Román** in the Afro-Peruvian dance form *Marinera Limeña*.

Master weaver **Dorothy Sylvia** (Yurok/Karuk; Humboldt) will teach apprentice **Sonia Franzi** (Yurok/Karuk; Humboldt) how to make infant cradle baskets in the Yurok, Karuk, and Hupa tradition.

Cantonese Opera performer **Eva Tam** (San Francisco) will train apprentice **Teresa Luk** (San Francisco) in the Chinese art form.

Apprentice **Vibha Raju** (Santa Clara) will train under master artist **Soumya Tilak** (Santa Clara) in the South Indian classical dance form Bharatanatyam.

Master artist **Luis Torres** (Los Angeles) will work with his son and apprentice **Arthur Torres** in the tradition of Andean music from Bolivia.

Master artist **Jayashree Varadarajan** (Santa Clara, 2010, 2015) returns to take on apprentice **Kaushik Shivakumar** (Santa Clara) in South Indian Carnatic classical music.

Master dancer **Snigdha Venkataramani** (Alameda) will train her apprentice **Anagaa Nathan** (Santa Clara) in the Bharatanatyam dance.

Van-Anh “Vanessa” Vo (Alameda, 2010, 2013, 2016) returns to the program to work with **Thu Vu** (Alameda) to deepen her practice in the Vietnamese Dan Tranh.

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The Alliance for California Traditional Arts (ACTA) was founded specifically to address a void in statewide support of folk and traditional artists. Folk and traditional artists are tradition bearers: people who transmit what they believe, know, do, and create with others who share a common heritage. From Ohlone basketry and African-American quilt-making to cowboy poetry and Vietnamese opera, California is home to hundreds of diverse traditions. ACTA promotes and supports ways for these cultural traditions to thrive now and into the future by providing advocacy, resources, and connections. ACTA connects artists, communities, and funders to each other, information, and resources through convenings, research, and technical assistance. Recognized for its leadership, intellectual capital, and excellence in program administration, ACTA is the state-designated entity for all folk and traditional arts.

For more information on ACTA or folk and traditional arts, please go to <http://www.actaonline.org>.

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Read more about our 2019 Apprenticeship recipients here:
<https://actastories.atavist.com/apprenticeships-2019>