

## Four Humboldt textile artists receive 2023 Victor Thomas Jacoby Awards

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Humboldt Area Foundation+Wild Rivers Community Foundation (HAF+WRCF) is proud to announce that four Humboldt County artists – Devva Kasnitz, Jessica Trudeau, Michelle Sonnenfeldt, and Sasha Lyth – are recipients of the 2023 Victor Thomas Jacoby Award.

The Humboldt County weavers, spinners and dyers were selected for their artistic vision and creativity. Each recipient receives \$10,000 to support their work. The four artists were recognized during the Victor Thomas Jacoby Award Reception Dec. 13, as were recipients from 2021 and 2022, when the annual award reception was put on hold due to COVID concerns. The 2021-22 recipients were Annette Makino, Zak Shea, Claire MacKenzie, Daniel Willson, Steph Thomas, Shawn Gould, Mo Harper-Desir, Marceau Verdiere.

Every fall, local artists are encouraged to apply for the Victor Thomas Jacoby Award and submit examples of their work and share their vision for innovation and how they are pushing their art to the next level. This year's focus was on textile artists specializing in weaving, spinning, and dyeing.

“Victor’s passion for the arts has ignited a legacy of empowerment, weaving dreams into reality through the tapestry of creativity,” says Sydney Morrone, Grants and Scholarships Manager.

“His spirit lives on as HAF+WRCF supports Humboldt County artists and craftspeople as they continue to expand the boundless horizons of their artistic pursuits.”

**The 2023 recipients are:**

**Devva Kasnitz**

**“A Disability Ethnography of Spinning”**

This Eureka-based artist, a medical anthropologist and disability studies scholar, likes to spin into yarn various fiber such as sheep, goat, alpaca, dog and cat. Her current project is to bring “more recognition of art into this humble utilitarian practice of spinning fiber by sharing it and building community.” She is particularly keen on combining her yarn with unique textures and baubles such as tiny sand dollar fossils from the South Fork of the Van Duzen River.

**Jessica Trudeau**

**“Weavings Ability to Educate, Impact, and Contribute”**

A weaver who earned a BFA from The Maine College of Art in 2003, Trudeau is drawn to weaving’s ability to alchemize natural materials into a conglomerate of tactile and visual experience. “The raw depth, complexity of pattern, and dimension of color in the natural world has been a long-standing inspiration to me and has fueled my trajectory in the field of weaving. I believe the very nature of weaving is the implementation of alchemizing nature into a physical form.” Follow Jessica’s journey on Instagram @jesstrudeau.yoga.art.

**Michelle Sonnenfeldt**

**“My Weaving Journey or Finding My Voice Through Weaving”**

Sonnenfeldt was introduced to basket weaving through the Point Reyes Field Seminars and, soon after, founding a group called the Bay Area Basket Makers guild. Sonnenfeldt uses a variety of techniques to create upcycled pieces by weaving a variety of natural materials including “found” or reclaimed items such as wire or metal. “Nature is an inspiration to me. My preferred method is to allow the basket to speak to me and tell me which direction to take. I delight in seeing a basket come to life!” Learn more at bayareabasketmakers.wordpress.com.

**Sasha Lyth**

**“Blueprints to the Wilderness”**

When she’s not teaching a variety of arts to 6-12th grade students at Redwood Coast Montessori School or leading international art and Pilates retreats, Lyth creates oil paintings, mixed media works and ceramics.

“My current work combines textiles with experimental techniques in cyanotype printmaking, created on-location in wilderness zones. I like to explore the emotional, intellectual, and spiritual impact of wild places on what it means to be human and draw a correlation between traditional icon painting of the church and how flora and fauna are presented in my experimental works.” Follow Sasha’s journey on Instagram @sasha\_allanja.

### **About Victor Thomas Jacoby**

Victor Jacoby, an internationally recognized Eureka visual artist whose chosen medium was French tapestry, established the Victor Thomas Jacoby Fund with HAF+WRCF before his death in 1997 at age 52. Victor’s vision inspired his friend Dr. Rosalind Novick to make an additional gift to the fund and expand his dream of supporting local artists. This trust fund is dedicated to supporting Humboldt County visual artists and craftspeople and encourages exploring new ideas, materials, techniques, and mediums. In addition, the fund distributes annual cash awards to artists or craftspeople selected by a review panel of leading arts representatives.

*For more information about this grant, contact Grants and Scholarships Associate Elena Keltz at [elenak@hafoundation.org](mailto:elenak@hafoundation.org) or call 707-267-9920.*