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For Immediate Release

Yuba County Artist Awarded Prestigious Upstate Individual Artists Fellowship

Yuba City, Calif., August 18, 2026 – Yuba Sutter Arts & Culture is proud to announce that Marcelo Hernandez Castillo from Yuba County has been awarded a **2026 Upstate Individual Artists Fellowship**. Administered by Nevada County Arts & Culture in partnership with the California Arts Council and a coalition of regional county arts agencies including Yuba Sutter Arts & Culture, the fellowship delivers unrestricted funding directly to individual artists and culture bearers at key moments in their careers.

Marcelo is a poet, memoirist, translator and co-founder of Undocupoets which works nationally to open doors for immigrant writers into literary spaces, and through teaching and mentorship, he brings poetry to local agricultural spaces in Yuba and Sutter Counties where he was raised. Marcelo also serves as the Poet Laureate for both Yuba and Sutter Counties.

"It's rare the times I feel like celebrating but this news truly has me jumping up and down, spilling over with a feeling to allow myself the luxury of being proud and to not shrink or withdraw whenever good things happen," said Marcelo. "I'm sitting here with tremendous gratitude for being awarded a \$10,000 upstate individual artist fellowship from the California Arts Council. Thank you so much to Nevada County Arts & Culture for administering this grant and for seeing promise in my work. And thank you so much to David Read, Abbie Cesena and everyone at Yuba Sutter Arts & Culture for bringing the arts to our small pocket of northern California," he added.

Across California's 19-county Upstate Region, a total of \$240,000 was awarded to 15 fellows across three distinct career tiers: Emerging (\$5,000), Established (\$10,000), and Legacy (\$50,000). The selection followed months of regional outreach and a competitive multi-round peer review process evaluating 243 applications from across Northern California.

"We are proud to celebrate poet Marcelo Hernandez Castillo, whose powerful writing and generous mentorship have elevated voices throughout the Yuba-Sutter region. His work brings national attention to our community while inspiring local students, writers, and artists to share their own stories. Investing in creators like Marcelo strengthens our cultural identity and demonstrates the extraordinary talent rooted right here at home," said David Read, YSAC Executive Director.

"Investing directly in artists and culture bearers is foundational to the health and vitality of our entire region," says Eliza Tudor, Executive Director at Nevada County Arts & Culture. "Unrestricted funding empowers artists at pivotal career moments—providing the freedom and stability needed to deepen their creative practices, sustain ancestral traditions, and continue uplifting the cultural and civic fabric of California's rural and mountain communities."

To learn more about the 2026 Upstate Individual Artist Fellows and view the full regional cohort, visit www.upstateiaf.org/2026fellows.

About YSAC: Yuba Sutter Arts & Culture is a non-profit organization whose mission is to provide arts programming, education, advocacy, assistance, and service to artists, organizations, and residents of Yuba and Sutter Counties. The local affiliate for Yuba and Sutter of the California Arts Council for 45 years,

its programs include Arts in Education, Veterans Initiatives in the Arts, Arts in Corrections, Stage 754, Center Stage Productions, the Yuba Sutter Big Band and many more.

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2026 FELLOW

HELLO I'M **MARCELO** HERNANDEZ CASTILLO

ESTABLISHED ARTIST

Marcelo Hernandez Castillo is a poet, memoirist, translator, and co-founder of Undocupoets which works nationally to open doors for immigrant writers into literary spaces and, through teaching and mentorship, he brings poetry to local agricultural communities in the Yuba-Sutter area where he was raised.



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