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NEWS

CSUN features exhibition 'Warmth of the Sun' from art nonprofit Tierra del Sol Foundation

The foundation provides ways to careers in the arts for people with disabilities such as autism, epilepsy, cerebral palsy



Marlena Arthur shows off some of her ceramic work at the Tierra del Sol Foundation on Wednesday, Oct. 8, 2025. Work from Arthur and other artists at the Tierra del Sol Foundation is currently on exhibit at CSUN. (Photo by David Crane, Los Angeles Daily News/SCNG)



By **CONTRIBUTING WRITER** |

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By Jenna Jarrah

[CSUN Art Galleries](#) exhibition “The Warmth of the Sun” features artwork by artists from Tierra del Sol Foundation, a nonprofit art organization founded in Sunland in 1971 by parents seeking an alternative to institutional care for children with developmental disabilities such as autism, epilepsy, cerebral palsy and other lifelong conditions.

Today Tierra del Sol Foundation has established itself as an [organization that empowers people with developmental disabilities](#) to excel in meaningful jobs, pursue further education, or establish a career in the arts.

“I had known about Tierra del Sol and its artist program for a number of years,” said Holly Jerger, director of CSUN Art Galleries. “As the idea for the exhibition series focusing on Valley-based arts organizations took shape, I wanted to include Tierra and give CSUN Art Galleries’ audience a chance to learn about the program and see the incredible work being done there.”

The exhibit will run through October 15 and features 20 artists focusing on “Los Angeles, people and places.”

The Tierra del Sol Foundation, which has art studios in Sunland and Upland, as well as a gallery in West Hollywood, is equipped with kilns, drawing and painting, fabric and textiles stations and more. The

foundation supports artists in their careers by providing the necessary resources to create art, as well as providing a network of mid-career artists and mentors to support their personal and professional growth.

Marlena Arthur, recommended to the foundation through her high school, and an artist with whom she has since 2016, is showing her work “7 acorns,” in the CSUN exhibit. Made of ceramic using hand-building techniques, the larger-than-life-size acorns, in hues of brown, span dimensions of 12 to 37.5 inches.

Arthur is a multidisciplinary artist working across painting, drawing, sculpture and fiber arts. She created a public-commissioned mural downtown at the Los Angeles Public Library to be shown through December 7, has a solo exhibition at Tierra del Sol Gallery in West Hollywood, has been included in a group show at Loyola Marymount University, and has been featured in numerous national art fairs.



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Some of the ceramic work by Marlena Arthur at the Tierra del Sol Foundation on Wednesday, Oct. 8, 2025. Work from artists at Tierra del Sol Foundation is currently on exhibit at CSUN. (Photo by David Crane, Los Angeles Daily News/SCNG)

When asked about the impact Tierra del Sol has had on her career as an artist, she said “I’m happy to be here because I keep on working. I love making the art.”

Her mother Constance agreed. “I see the improvement with her; she’s more outgoing now, she works hard because she wants to do good work, and Tierra has supported her towards her art,” she said.

Kyle Johnson, another artist featured at the exhibition, works across painting, drawing, ceramics, textiles, and poetry. Inspired by nature and the world around him, his two works “Wheelchair Piece,” and “Talking to Myself,” are featured in the exhibition at CSUN.

“Wheelchair Piece,” is an acrylic work on paper with an emphasis on a lone wheelchair placed over a landscape, and through the lens of mobility, suggests the artist’s relationship with nature.

“Talking To Myself,” is a self-portrait depicting two flat ceramic heads in profile, pointing toward each other as if in direct dialogue with one another. The heads show different looks of the artist and have variances in hair, hat, and beard, which suggests the conversation is taking place over time, between a past and present, or possibly a future version of himself.

“Most of my art was hiding inside, without an outlet to pour into,” he says. “Tierra del Sol provided that outlet.”

Johnson began as an artist with Tierra del Sol in 2019, and has since been featured in numerous exhibitions, published two poetry books, and most recently had a solo booth in the Armory Show in New York this past September.

Works by Arthur and Johnson are featured in Tierra del Sol’s Gallery in West Hollywood and are available for purchase at <https://tierradelsogallery.org>.

Jerger noted that, “The Valley, and Los Angeles as a whole, is sprawling and incredibly diverse. It’s easy to miss organizations and resources, even in your own neighborhood. Presenting ‘The Warmth of the Sun’ in the art galleries recognizes both Tierra del Sol’s and CSUN’s unique contributions to the creative fabric of the Valley and larger Los Angeles.”

CSUN Art Galleries have free admission and are open Monday through Thursday during their gallery hours, and Friday and Saturday by appointment only.