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At Least 12 Indian Americans Among 2016 YoungArts Winners



The National YoungArts Foundation campus. (Tomas Lowey/youngarts.org photo)

Of the 819 students from 42 states recognized for their excellence in literary, visual, design and performing arts, 165 were named finalists and will participate in the 35th anniversary National YoungArts Week in Miami from Jan. 3 through Jan. 10. Each YoungArts winner is designated as a finalist, honorable mention or merit winner.

Four of the finalists – Sharada Shashidhar, Pavithra Nagarajan, Nushat Nur and Ksheeraja Sriram – are Indian Americans.

At the weeklong intensive final, participants across 10 disciplines will take master classes and workshops with internationally renowned leaders in their field, YoungArts said. Their work throughout the week will determine their award levels, ranging from \$1,000 to \$10,000.

In addition, finalists are eligible to become United States Presidential Scholars in the Arts. Each year, YoungArts nominates 60 winners to the White House-appointed Commission on Presidential Scholars, it said.

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Another eight Indian Americans were recognized with honorable mentions – Sharanya Balaji, Anju Cloud, Swathi Jaisankar, Ravi Campbell and Rekha Sharma – and merits: Divya Nayar, Sita Vakkalanka and Dhruv Prasad.

The more than 800 winners were chosen by a panel of highly-accomplished artists from more than 12,000 applications and will receive cash awards of up to \$10,000, validation by renowned mentors, opportunities to participate in YoungArts programs, a strong professional network and guidance in taking steps toward achieving their goals, according to a YoungArts statement.

All the winners are eligible to participate in YoungArts regional programs next year: in Los Angeles from Feb. 16 through Feb. 21; in Miami from March 8 through March 13; and in New York from April 12 through April 17.

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