

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 21, 2010



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NATIONAL CURATORS SELECT SEVEN ARTADIA AWARDEES 2010 HOUSTON

New York, NY—**Artadia: The Fund for Art and Dialogue** is pleased to announce the Artadia Awardees 2010 Houston. For three consecutive days (April 15-17, 2010), three nationally known jurors—**Mónica Ramírez-Montagut**, Curator, Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgefield, CT; **Sandra Jackson-Dumont**, Deputy Director for Education and Public Programs/Adjunct Curator, Seattle Art Museum; and **Toby Kamps**, Senior Curator, Contemporary Arts Museum Houston—conducted 45-minute studio visits with 15 short-listed artists who were drawn from a record-breaking 230 applicants in Harris County, TX.

The two Artadia Awardees 2010 Houston at the \$15,000 level are: **J. Hill** and **Jeff Shore & Jon Fisher**. The five recipients of the \$3,000 awards are: **David Aylsworth**, **Bill Davenport**, **Augusto Di Stefano**, **Nathaniel Donnett**, and **Nestor Topchy**. (See attachment for images and descriptions of their work.)

“Houston’s large artist community resonates with deep talent and a commitment to enhancing our city’s quality of life,” says **Annise D. Parker**, Mayor of Houston. “Our creative community contributes to Houston’s worldwide reputation as an innovative cultural center. We are proud that an important national arts organization such as Artadia recognizes the incredible artistic talent we have in Houston. We appreciate Artadia’s ongoing awards to and support of our city’s artists and cultural innovators.”

Artadia Founder and Board President **Christopher E. Vroom** commented: “One of the most gratifying aspects of our work at Artadia is the opportunity we have to meet the many committed individuals and terrific institutions that do so much to support Houston’s vibrant artistic community. We are proud to be a part of the creative ecosystem that makes Houston one of the most exciting places in the country.”

Applications for the *Artadia Awards* were open to visual artists in all media and at any stage of their career working and living in Harris County, TX. The application was available online for three months from December 1, 2009 – March 1, 2010. A total number of 230 applications were received in response to the open call to Houston artists. The three first-round jurors—**Toby Kamps**; **Deborah Cullen**, Director of Curatorial Programs, El Museo del Barrio; New York; and **Adam Pendleton**, artist, New York—named the 15 Finalists in New York in March. This is the fifth cycle of *Artadia Awards* in Houston.

Local juror **Toby Kamps** said of the process: “I was proud to introduce my fellow jurors to an incredible selection of artists in Houston. And helping Artadia with its work of providing unrestricted financial support to the seven awardees was especially gratifying. The *Artadia Awards* are a crucial force in keeping the visual arts in our city vital, and I’m sure this year’s recipients will do great, creative things with their awards.”

—more—

Artadia has long-standing, close relationships with local foundations, art organizations, and private patrons of the arts who recognize the importance of unrestricted funding to visual artists at the local level. Visionary support for Artadia in Houston is provided by The Houston Endowment and many generous individuals committed to the arts in Houston. Special thanks to Lawndale Art Center and DiverseWorks.

HOUSTON ENDOWMENT INC.

A PHILANTHROPY ENDOWED BY MR. AND MRS. JESSE H. JONES

About Artadia: *The Fund for Art and Dialogue*

Artadia's mission is to encourage innovative practice and meaningful dialogue across the United States by providing visual artists in specific communities with unrestricted awards and a national network of support. Artadia was founded as The ArtCouncil in 1997 by investment banker and art collector Christopher E. Vroom. The first awards were given in San Francisco, where Vroom was living at the time. Chicago was added as a program city in 2001. In 2003, Artadia added Houston to its roster, Boston in 2007, and Atlanta in 2009. Once Artadia commits to a community, it returns every other year and also co-sponsors public programs with a local institution. Started as an individual's vision, Artadia's base of support now includes private foundations, a national Board of Directors, a National Council, and members who are active in supporting the core of creative culture: the individual artist.

Artadia Awards are determined through a rigorous jury process that employs nationally prominent curators, artists, and critics. Artadia partners with local foundations and individuals in the host cities to raise funds that go directly to artists in that community. Artadia matches those contributions by providing the funds that administer the program. Once an artist receives an *Artadia Award*, he or she becomes part of a national network of support forever.

In 2009, Artadia launched a New York Artist Residency program, which brings Artadia Awardees from each of its program cities to New York for a three-month residency at the International Studio and Curatorial Program (ISCP) in Brooklyn. This groundbreaking addition to Artadia's commitment to individual artists is the first of its kind in New York City for US-based visual artists and is supported by the National Endowment for Arts (NEA). Artadia also presents events in New York and Miami, which intend to not only demonstrate the tremendous creativity in partner communities, but also facilitate exchange and dialogue nationwide.

For press inquiries and information on Artadia, contact news@artadia.org.

For information on becoming a member or joining The National Council at Artadia, contact: Lila Kanner, Executive Director, lilakanner@artadia.org; 212-727-2233 ext. 207.

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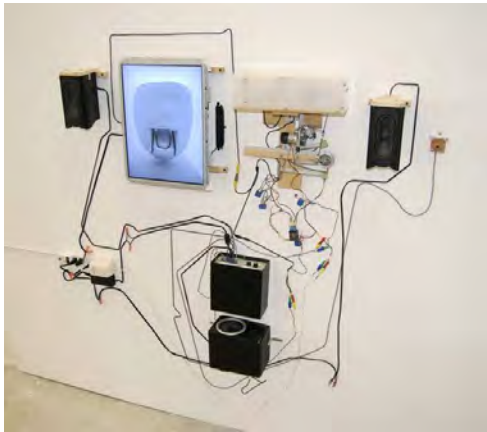
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Artadia Awardees 2010 Houston

\$15,000 Awards



J. Hill's projects are driven by subject matter and context; his methods of interventions, social practice, and new media investigate community conversations, cultural backgrounds, and connect disparate people and places. A self-described storyteller who enables stories of ordinary people, Hill has created pirate AM radio stations, worked with Sioux Indians to make a relational sculpture, and teamed with an opera company and composer to produce an outdoor audio environment. Hill is an Idea Fund Grant recipient, exhibited in Project Row Houses, and curated a drawing show at Lawndale Art Center, Houston. *Welcome Wagon* (initial performance route), 2010, aluminum, wood, bicycle, performance, variable dimensions.



The collaborative work of **Jeff Shore & Jon Fisher** involves electro-mechanical sculptural installations that perform in real time to create surreal and cinematic audio and video displays. The functional electrical systems and mechanical devices are left intentionally exposed, creating elaborate wire drawings on the wall. Hand-crafted dioramas are animated within the installation, which feed to a video screen, accompanied by a continuously created soundtrack. These organic systems result in a poetic complexity and a use of metaphor that is epic. Shore and Fisher recently had a solo show at Derek Eller Gallery, New York and McClain Gallery, Houston. *talking head III*, 2004, mixed media, variable dimensions.

\$3,000 Awards



The pared-down oil paintings of **David Aylsworth** employ a playful language of evocative forms, unusual colors, and textures in abstractions. Titled after lyrics of Broadway musicals, the paintings reference musical theater's excitement and frivolity, yet focus on the interaction of various formal elements. He says of his paintings, "Plucked from their intended context, they reference the music and plot of their source while defining a new, personal activity and space within the painting." Aylsworth has had a solo show at Ellen Noel Art Museum, Odessa, and his work is in numerous collections in Texas. *Orchestrated Wrong*, 2009, oil on canvas, 60 x 60 inches



Bill Davenport is an artist who embraces his inner hobbyist. His objects and installations vary from crocheted light bulb covers to needlepoint drawings to wonky wood sculptures, often using irony and wit simultaneously to delight and hint at darker underlying content. Recently, he has pulled his collection of thrift store art, housed in a store named Bill's Junk, into his practice. Davenport describes it as "a low-pressure haven for the appreciation of the incomplete, the flawed, the amateur, the innocence objects... and leaves judgment of worthiness to the viewer." His work was commissioned for the 2009 Texas Biennial. *Bill's Junk* (interior panorama at CAMH), 2009, installation, variable dimensions.

Artadia Awardees 2010 Houston



Augusto Di Stefano uses deliberate marks on canvas and paper to create images that evoke emotional and physical boundaries. His paintings employ a variety of processes—spraying, brushstrokes, sanding, rolling, drizzling—while his mostly graphite drawings depict representational structures. His interest lies in the conversation between constructed space and the interior space of an individual. Examining his works, like creating them, is a solitary and obsessive act that leads to layers of inner space and self-absorption. In 2007, Di Stefano was included in “Nexus Texas” at CAM, Houston and has an upcoming solo show at David Shelton Gallery, San Antonio.
Untitled, 2006, oil on canvas, 72 x 66 inches.



Multi-media artist **Nathaniel Donnett** creates a variety of methods to communicate and question intrinsic cultural conceits and notions of value, and often solicits participation from the viewer. Currently, his work addresses the coded meanings of brown paper and black plastic bags, mirroring the tensions between light- and dark-skinned people of African descent. Drawings, collages, installations, and mock standardized tests explore blackness, ostracism, beauty, and worth. Donnett was a Louis Comfort Tiffany nominee last year, participated in a group show at Lawndale Art Center, Houston, and has an upcoming solo show at Colton & Farb Gallery, Houston. *When it burns, seek the source, 2010, plastic bags on paper bags, 44 x 55 inches.*



Nestor Topchy is a painter, sculptor, installation, and performance artist whose past endeavors in Houston include co-founding the artist-run exhibition, performance, and residency space Zocalo/Templo. His painting projects, influenced by sacred art, explore icon-making, abstract and pattern work, and portraiture. He is in the process of realizing a plan for a self-sustaining art village, “Organ,” composed of shipping containers that accommodate affordable studio and living spaces, a bazaar, performance areas, meditation chapels, and other communal amenities. Topchy was included in CAM Houston’s “No Zoning” and has lectured extensively on the sacred arts. *Hive, 2009, architectural rendering, 48 x 72 inches.*

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