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Artadia Announces Awardees for Seventh Houston Artadia Awards

Houston, TX - Artadia is pleased to announce the 2015 Houston Artadia Awardees. **Lily Cox-Richard** and **Autumn Knight** will each receive \$12,000 in unrestricted funds, and **JooYoung Choi**, **El Franco Lee II**, and **Charisse Weston** will each be awarded \$5,000 in unrestricted funds. Each artist will receive the lifetime benefits of the Artadia Award program including access to the Artadia Art & Dialogue program, Awardee exhibitions, connections with curators and participation in Artadia projects at art fairs across the country.

Applications for the Houston Artadia Awards were open to visual artists living in Harris County, TX for over two years and working in all media and at any stage of their career. In the first round of jury review, **David Altmejd**, artist, **Rujeko Hockley**, Assistant Curator of Contemporary Art, Brooklyn Museum, and **Claudia Schmuckli**, Director and Chief Curator at Blaffer Art Museum, University of Houston, selected ten finalists following a panel review of 225 applicants in late October.

Schmuckli was joined in Houston by second round juror **Lanka Tattersall**, Assistant Curator, Museum of Contemporary Arts, Los Angeles, to conduct studio visits with the ten finalists from November 18 - 20. Tattersall said of the Awardees: "I was deeply impressed by the work of the five Awardees and am thrilled that Artadia's substantial, unrestricted funds will support these fantastic artists. While the work of each of the Awardees is remarkably different from the next, these artists all combine formal experimentation and an open sense of curiosity with a keen awareness of the role of art in contemporary culture."

This is Artadia's seventh award cycle in Houston. Schmuckli spoke to the organization's commitment to Houston's arts community: "Every few years Artadia throws its spotlight on Houston and I cannot think of a more gratifying task than to serve as a juror to bring heightened national attention and significant financial support to the artists working in my community. Artadia's commitment to supporting individual artists is unparalleled. It allows artists to grow and thrive locally and yet be part of a national network of finalists and Awardees that expands their professional opportunities."

Annise D. Parker, Mayor, City of Houston, said of the Awards: "For over a decade, the Artadia Awards have promoted engagement among the Houston arts community, strengthened the local creative economy, and offered vital financial resources to one of our city's most valuable cultural assets – its artists. Artadia's mission and work embody the commitment to a rich local culture that we seek to nurture through the Houston Arts and Cultural Plan. We are thankful to Artadia for their work to celebrate and fortify the city's arts community, and for continuing to highlight Houston as a dynamic incubator of culture on a national stage."

Since 1999, Artadia has recognized artistic excellence in cities across the United States with unrestricted, merit-based Awards and connections to a network of opportunities. In addition to Houston, Artadia funds Awards on a rotating cycle in Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, and San Francisco.

The Houston Artadia Awards and Artadia's programs in Houston are made possible thanks to the generosity of The Brown Foundation, Houston Arts Alliance, The Houston Endowment, Artadia's Board of Directors and Council members, and many individuals throughout the country.

Artadia

2015 Houston Artadia Awardees



Autumn Knight

“My interdisciplinary work primarily falls within performance, installation, and social practices that address conventions of race and gender, absurd notions of identity, psychotherapy, place and art access in a Black American context.”



Lily Cox-Richard

“By digging into cultural and material histories of things like lightning rods, neoclassical sculpture, and sweetgrass baskets, I foreground their infrastructure, trace their legacies, and test their potency, to see how these histories reveal idealized notions of an earlier national identity that persist in contemporary American culture.”



Charisse Weston

“Using text, printmaking, installation and photography, I question the means and tools used in the erasure of personal, social, and historical narratives from the public sphere with the intent to bring what is omitted to the surface.”



El Franco Lee II

“My art brings an illustrator’s technique of realism and surrealism to the fine arts arena. The intent is to set my work apart from ‘Pop Art’ and ‘Folk-Art’ by depicting real life events consequentially, addressing the needs of fine art audiences who demand cultural and innovative renderings of the unexpected.”



JooYoung Choi

“It is through world building that I can take a stance against the false securities of cynicism and apathy, while unashamedly recognizing the power of make-believe and its ability to manifest new realities.”