

November 15, 2017

### ARTADIA ANNOUNCES AWARDEES FOR FIFTH ATLANTA AWARDS

New York, NY - Artadia is pleased to announce the Awardees for the 2017 Atlanta Artadia Awards: **Clark Ashton** and **Michi Meko**. The 2017 Atlanta Artadia Awardees will receive \$10,000 in unrestricted funds as well as access to the ongoing benefits of the Artadia Awards program. This is Artadia's fifth year providing unrestricted Awards to artists in Atlanta. Applications for the Awards were open to any visual artist living in the Greater Atlanta area, including the counties of Barrow, Bartow, Butts, Carroll, Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Forsyth, Fulton, Gwinnett, Hall, Henry, Morgan, Newton, Paulding, Pickens, Rockdale, Spalding, and Walton, for over two years, working in all media, and at any stage of their career.

In the first round of evaluations, **Anthony Elms**, Chief Curator, Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia; **Adam McEwen**, artist; and **Teresa Bramlette Reeves**, Director of Curatorial Affairs, Zuckerman Museum of Art, Kennesaw State University selected five Finalists from nearly 150 applicants. The Finalists included Clark Ashton, Michi Meko, Masud Ashley Olufani, Charlina Rose-Renaye Smith, and Tori Tinsley. **Shawnya Harris**, Larry D. and Brenda A. Thompson Curator of African American and African Diasporic Art, Georgia Museum of Art, joined Bramlette Reeves for the second round of evaluations. The jurors conducted studio visits with each of the five Finalists to determine the Awardees.

"Both choices for this year's Artadia awards in Atlanta support individuals who concern themselves with object-making, commentary, and the idiosyncrasies and cracks between the art world and the real world," Reeves noted. "The studios of Michi Meko and Clark Ashton offered two complex visions of a world in flux, yet their works were visually compelling," said Harris. "I was impressed with their inventive use of materials and their articulation of the symbolically rich meanings that were attached to their works"

"Clark lives his work—what he believes and how he operates in the world is reflected in the environment he has created. Each object contributes to a larger, impassioned narrative. Part zealot, part humorist, Clark is working to extend and preserve his work and property. Michi is an equally unique man, whose pursuits and interests are wide and deep. I am pleased that this year's Artadia Awards will make a contribution to two distinct, rich practices." Reeves continued.

Artadia is a national non-profit organization that supports visual artists with unrestricted, merit-based Awards followed by a lifetime of program opportunities. Artadia is unique in that it allows any artist to apply, engages nationally recognized curators to review work, and culminates in direct grants. Since 1999, Artadia has awarded over \$3 million to more than 300 artists in Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, New York, and San Francisco.

The 2017 Atlanta Artadia Awards are generously supported by MailChimp, the Tim & Lauren Schrager Family Foundation, Artadia's Board of Directors, and Atlanta Council members.

## 2017 ATLANTA ARTADIA AWARDS FINALISTS

### CLARK ASHTON

"At my Mechanical Riverfront Kingdom on Druid Hill, I confront life's inherent cruelty and unfairness by asserting truth and establishing history with an assuming permanence that challenges existing power structures. I engage issues both urgent and timeless with a keen sense of craft and a vision driven by independent thought. I am citizen with a responsibility to document our time as honestly as I am able. I construct cosmologies and interact with the public in an environment removed from the setting of sponsored spaces where power and politics censor expression and control agendas in insidious ways."



Clark Ashton, *GOD Will Smack YOU DOWN*, 2015, Fabricated steel, found iron, gas fire, artist interaction

### MICHI MEKO

In 2015, Michi Meko almost drowned. Inviting this life changing event's influence into his studio practice, recent works focus on the Black experience of navigating public spaces while remaining buoyant within them. African Americans in public space are consistently threatened, visibly and openly with the evidence sharing offered by social media. Barrages of images simulates an experience of drowning.

The work incorporates the visual language of naval flags and nautical way findings and romanticized objects of the American South to communicate the psychological and the physical. Beyond the physical image of the body, objects become metaphors for self hood and resilience.



Michi Meko, *The Antique Blacks*, 2016, Latex Paint, Acrylic paint, White grease pencil, Aerosol, India Ink, Gold Leaf, Brass Chandelier, Ribbon, Black landscaping cloth, Light fixture, on wood panel