

October 30, 2016

### ARTADIA ANNOUNCES FIVE FINALISTS FOR 2017 ATLANTA AWARDS

New York, NY - Artadia is pleased to announce the five Finalists for the 2017 Atlanta Awards: **Clark Ashton, Michi Meko, Masud Ashley Olufani, Charlina Rose-Renaye Smith, and Tori Tinsley.**

The Finalists were selected by jurors **Anthony Elms**, Chief Curator, Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia; **Adam McEwen**, artist; and **Teresa Bramlette Reeves**, Director of Curatorial Affairs, Zuckerman Museum of Art, Atlanta.

Of the Atlanta applicants, Reeves noted: "I am really pleased and excited about the list of five Finalists as it represents a strong sampling of the breadth of work being produced by artists in Atlanta. It is a bit of an irreverent list too, satisfyingly open."

McEwen expanded on the diversity of the applicants. "Judging by the work we looked at, Atlanta clearly enjoys an exceptionally healthy and vibrant art scene. The quality of the work and the diversity of methods explored was extremely impressive: many different ways of thinking and seeing and risk-taking. To encounter so many artists - of such a wide range in age and experience - pushing forward with such seriousness and determination was very exciting."

This is Artadia's fifth time presenting curator-driven, unrestricted Awards to Atlanta artists. The 2017 Atlanta Artadia Awards were open to all visual artists living in Greater Atlanta (the 23 eligible 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 any media, and at any stage of their career. Finalists and Artadia Award recipients are selected through Artadia's rigorous, two-tier jury review process. In the first round of review, jurors evaluated the merit of all submissions and collaboratively determined the five Finalists. The Finalists will receive studio visits with the second-round jurors, who will ultimately select two artists as Awardees to receive \$10,000 in unrestricted funds. Awardees are invited to participate in Artadia's ongoing Beneficiary program, connecting them to a network of curators and collectors across the country and advancing their careers.

On the jurying experience, Elms noted, "Artists deserve a range of support far and wide across this country. It is always a pleasure to be exposed to new artists and new scenes beyond locations I regularly visit. It is inspiring. To have invested conversations around art and artists is something I will always make time for."

Artadia is a national non-profit organization that supports 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 Schragger Family Foundation, Artadia's Board of Directors, Atlanta Council members, and many generous individual donors in Atlanta.

## 2017 Atlanta Awards Finalists

### CLARK ASHTON

At his Mechanical Riverfront Kingdom on Druid Hill, Clark Ashton confronts life's inherent cruelty and unfairness by asserting truth and establishing history with an assuming permanence that challenges existing power structures. Farmer engages issues both urgent and timeless with a keen sense of craft and a vision driven by independent thought. He constructs cosmologies and interacts 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, *Mechanical Riverfront Kingdom*, 2015, fabricated steel, found iron, corn plants, 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

### MOSUD ASHLEY OLUFANI

Masud Ashley Olufani's work blends formal elegance, emotional integrity, and spiritual resonance. His thematic concerns include issues such as race, social stratification, history, and memory. The oral traditions of the Deep South and West Africa weave a consistent narrative thread throughout my work expressed by the juxtaposition of disparate materials charged with psychological, historical, and sociological implications as well as the implementation of new media—audio recordings and video—to articulate a conceptual idea. Olufani's commitment to process reflects his conviction that the maker imbues the object with spirit through physical labor, fueled by vision and creativity.



Mosud Ashley Olufani, *Tight Packers A Depleted Harvest*, 2016, graphite on wood panel and sardine can

### CHARLINA ROSE-RENAYE SMITH

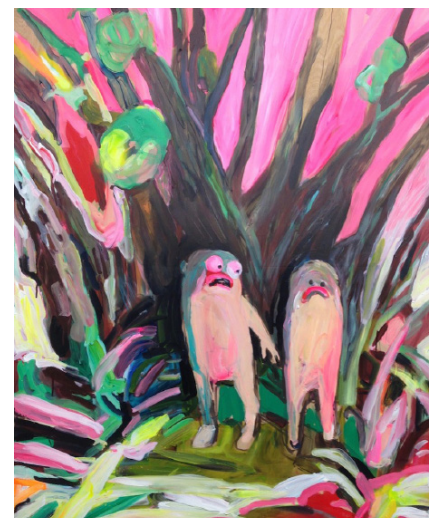
*The Inner City Urban: Vine City* is a continuous photographic declaration of the significance for the lives of Black Americans amidst the loss of historic Black neighborhoods. This body of work highlights the common misperception of African-Americans narrated by the media. It brings awareness to the current state of a low-income neighborhood on the verge of gentrification over revitalization and restoration in Atlanta, GA. The works draw attention to the truth and authenticity of the people and their reality, what they look like, where they live, and how they act.



Charlina Rose-Renaye Smith, *Chesnut Street*, Archival Inkjet Photograph, 2017

### TORI TINSLEY

Tori Tinsley's work explores her changing relationship with her mother as she succumbs to a degenerative brain disease. Through the interaction of two figures, she conveys the challenging emotional experience of such an ambiguous loss; feelings that include despair, longing, disbelief, and even hope. These works not only serve as premature memorials to her mother, but they also stand as monuments to resilience and highlight how painting can serve as a proxy for reconnection.



Tori Tinsley, *Forest Hug*, Acrylic on panel, 2016, 72X48 inches