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**For Immediate Release**

**July 18, 2019**

**ARTADIA IDENTIFIES TWO ARTISTS FOR THE 2019 CHICAGO AWARDS**

**NEW YORK, NY** - Artadia is pleased to announce the Awardees for the 2019 Chicago Artadia Awards: **Bethany Collins** and **Brendan Fernandes**. As the 2019 Chicago Artadia Awardees, Collins and Fernandes will receive \$10,000 in unrestricted funds as well as access to the ongoing benefits of the Artadia Awards program. Additionally, Artadia's booth at EXPO CHICAGO will feature artwork by the two Awardees.

In the first round of jurying, **Ylinka Barotto**, Assistant Curator, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and Foundation, New York; **Ian Berry**, Dayton Director of The Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery at Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, NY; and **Grace Deveney**, Assistant Curator, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago selected **five Finalists: Bethany Collins, Assaf Evron, Brendan Fernandes, Caroline Kent, and Alice Tippit. Dr. Romi Crawford**, Associate Professor of Visual and Critical Studies, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, joined Deveney for the second round of evaluations. The jurors conducted studio visits with the five Finalists to determine the Awardees.

**"Fernandes and Collins' work, at this stage in their careers, compellingly communicates their talents, as well as their zeal for pushing the bounds of, and problematizing the reception of, the visual arts object, and in the case of Fernandes its very existence."** Crawford noted.

She continued: "Collins' work stood out for her steady and ongoing pursuit of spare and minimal outcomes that emerge from an unexpectedly complex and fascinating set of researches into American culture. In addition, she revealed an evolving interest in performance and repetitive physical or bodily actions that implicate our connectivity to American history, especially its social hauntings and riddles. How such interests in form and content variously compete and smooth out, was persuasive."

"While dance, or more specifically ballet, is an important ingredient in Fernandes' practice, bigger ideas also course through the project of his work. There is important risk taking involved in staging sculptural objects that beg for, and often need, the body and bodies to organize their full visual bearing and impact. We were taken by his ability to let go of the need for a consummate art work and instead attempt materializing what are ostensibly exploratory investigations of pertinent and timely subjects."

**Deveney added:** "Bethany Collins' labor intensive process of erasure that underpins her transformation of these sources creates a generative tension between the spare visual language she uses and the stakes of the questions her work raises about place, lineage and legacy as they relate to lived experience. Fernandes' recent work invites viewers to participate in creating fleeting moments of public conviviality, elevating the simple gestures to a strategies for navigating the current political moment and celebrations of the power of intimacy and being together."

Artadia is thrilled to partner with Global Insurer, Liberty Mutual Insurance Company, and the artist LeRoy Neiman and Janet Byrne Neiman Foundation, Inc. for the two 2019 Chicago Artadia Awards. Both organizations have generously committed to supporting exceptional artists in Chicago, each with a named Award in the amount of \$10,000. The 2019 Chicago Artadia Awards are additionally supported by individual donors across the country, Chicago Council members, and Artadia's Board of Directors.

**The LeRoy Neiman and Janet Byrne Neiman Artadia Award is presented to Bethany Collins.** "LeRoy Neiman was passionate about nurturing talent at every stage of an artist's career. [The foundation] was drawn to Artadia's Chicago awards because of their reputation for rigor in the selection process, and feel that our first year of support is going to a very worthy cause in Bethany Collins. There is no doubt LeRoy would have found much affinity between Bethany's practice and his own, thanks to her impressive

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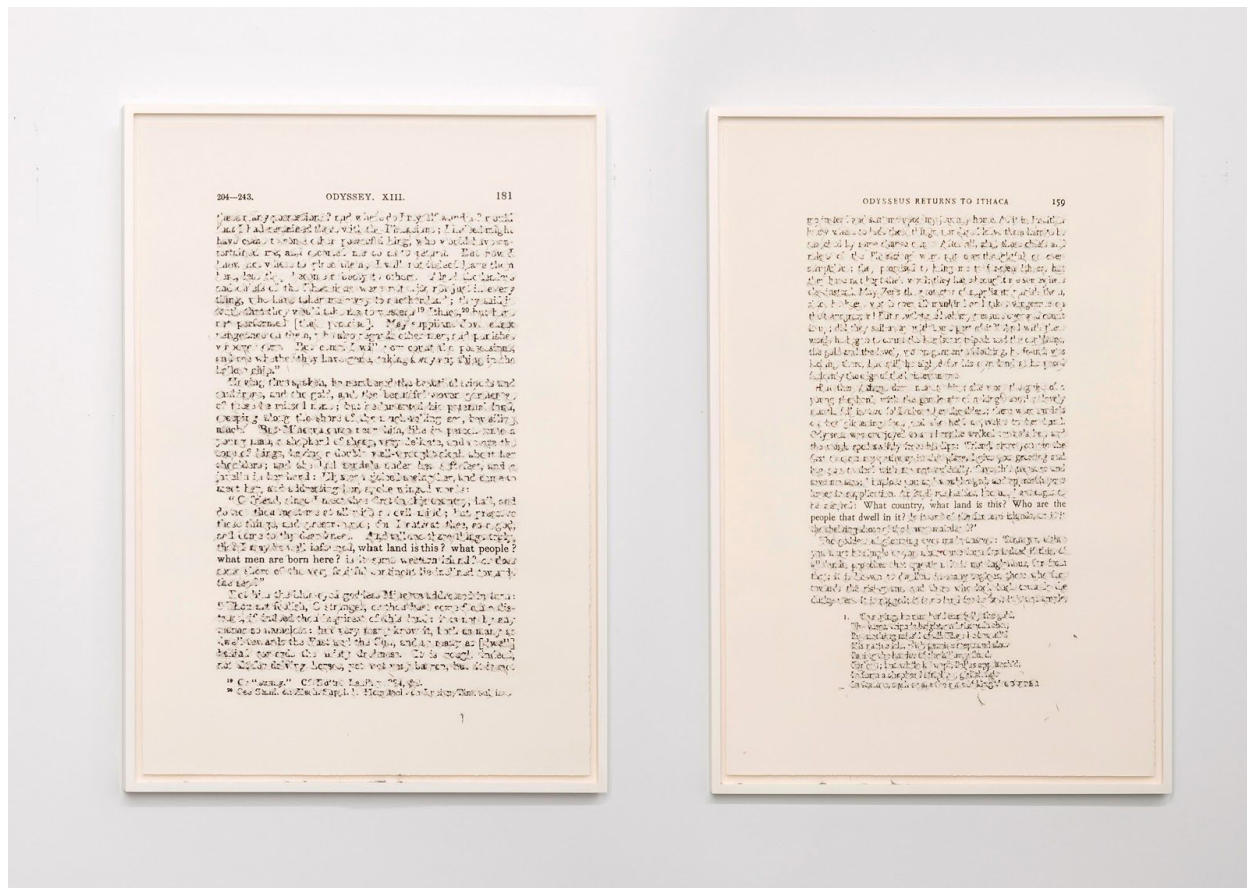
printmaking techniques and her vibrant engagement with current events. We congratulate her and look forward to the next additions to her already impressive oeuvre.”

**The Liberty Specialty Markets Artadia Award is presented to Brendan Fernandes. Robert Pittinger, Senior Vice President – Fine Art & Specie at Liberty Mutual Insurance said:** “We are delighted that Brendan Fernandes is the recipient of Liberty Specialty Markets Artadia Award in their 20th Anniversary year. We hope that the award will help this internationally recognized exciting dance and visual artist to flourish, achieve career growth and build further recognition of his creative, inspiring works. As a leading fine art insurer, we’re dedicated to protecting single works of art and collections, but it’s also important to us that we support the art community. The Artadia program, which helps artists to flourish in their local communities and beyond, fits with our philanthropic culture and our commitment to supporting the arts in our communities around the world.”

This is Artadia’s tenth Award cycle in Chicago providing unrestricted Awards to artists in the city. Applications for the Awards were open to any visual artist living in Chicago for over two years, working in all media, and at any stage of their career. 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 artists and curators to review work, and culminates in direct grants. Since 1999, Artadia has awarded over \$5 million to more than 330 artists in Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, New York, and San Francisco.

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Bethany Collins



Bethany Collins, *The Odyssey: 1852/1980, 2018*. Graphite on Somerset paper, 44 x 60 inch diptych

Bethany Collins (American, b. 1984) is a multidisciplinary artist whose conceptually driven work is fueled by a critical exploration of how race and language interact. Collins is interested in the unnerving possibility of multiple meanings, dual perceptions, and limitlessness in the seemingly binary. Collins' practice (drawing, printmaking, sculpture & performance) allows her to define and redefine her own racial landscape. As Holland Cotter noted writing in *The New York Times*, "language itself, viewed as intrinsically racialized, is Bethany Collins' primary material."

Bethany has had solo exhibitions at the Center for Book Arts, New York; Locust Projects, Miami; Birmingham Museum of Art; and Atlanta Contemporary Art Center; among others. Her work has been shown in group exhibitions at the DePaul Art Museum, Chicago; the Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus; the Studio Museum in Harlem; the Drawing Center, New York; and the Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum, East Lansing; as well as other venues. She has been the recipient of an NEA award, a Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant, and the Hudgens Prize. Collins has been recognized as an artist-in-residence at the Studio Museum in Harlem, the MacDowell Colony, the Bemis Center, and the Hyde Park Art Center, among others.

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[Brendan Fernandes](#)



Brendan Fernandes. *The Master and Form*, 2019. Performance / Installation: scaffolding, carpets, ropes, and teak wood and leather sculptures all in collaboration with Norman Kelley, Architects; choreography for 5 dancers; costuming and audio. Photography: Matthew Carasella Photography. Commissioned by the Graham Foundation, Chicago. Shown here at the 2019 Whitney Biennial.

Brendan Fernandes (b. 1979, Nairobi, Kenya) is an internationally recognized Canadian artist working at the intersection of dance and visual arts. Currently based out of Chicago, Brendan's projects address issues of race, queer culture, migration, protest and other forms of collective movement. Always looking to create new spaces and new forms of agency, Brendan's projects take on hybrid forms: part Ballet, part queer dance hall, part political protest... always rooted in collaboration and fostering solidarity. Brendan is a graduate of the Whitney Independent Study Program (2007) and a recipient of a Robert Rauschenberg Fellowship (2014). In 2010, he was shortlisted for the Sobey Art Award and is currently the recipient of a 2017 Canada Council New Chapter grant. His projects have shown at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (New York); the Museum of Modern Art (New York); The Getty Museum (Los Angeles); the National Gallery of Canada (Ottawa); MAC (Montreal); among a great many others. He is currently artist-in-residence and faculty at Northwestern University and represented by Monique Meloche Gallery in Chicago. Upcoming projects in 2019 include performances and solo presentations at the Solomon R. Guggenheim (New York); The Whitney Biennial (New York); the Smithsonian Museum of American Art (Washington); the Museum of Contemporary Art (Chicago); and the Noguchi Museum (New York).

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