

**ARTADIA
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ARTADIA ANNOUNCES HOUSTON AWARDEES

NEW YORK, NY - Artadia is pleased to announce **Adriana Corral** and **Vincent Valdez** as the recipients of the eleventh Houston Artadia Awards. The Houston Artadia Awardees will receive \$10,000 in unrestricted funds, as well as access to the ongoing benefits of the Artadia Awards program.

The Houston Artadia Awards were open to all visual artists living in Harris County 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.

In the first round of evaluations, **Stephanie Baptist**, Curator, Facebook Artists in Residence (AIR) Program and Independent Curator, New York; **Rachel Cook**, Artistic Director, On The Boards, Seattle; and **Irene Mei Zi Shum**, Associate Curator of Contemporary Art, The Menil Collection, Houston, selected five Finalists. The Finalists included Adriana Corral, Allison Hunter, Lovie Olivia, Vincent Valdez, and Sarah Welch. In the second round of evaluations, **Tyler Blackwell**, Cynthia Woods Mitchell Curatorial Fellow, Blaffer Art Museum at the University of Houston, joined Irene Mei Zi Shum to conduct studio visits with each of the five Finalists to determine the Awardees.

In a joint statement, Shum and Blackwell noted: "We are very pleased to select artists Vincent Valdez and Adriana Corral as the 2019 recipients of the Artadia Awards in Houston. These artists' compelling, rigorous practices probe the difficult issues of our time with sophistication and ambition."

Commenting on each of the Awardees, Shum and Blackwell stated: "Valdez stood out for his skillfully-crafted, labor-intensive figurative painting that explores the under-represented plights and stories of marginalized communities across Texas and a so-called "post-racial" America. Profoundly informed by his own experiences and personal biography, Valdez's works are alternately confrontational, sublime, and eerie in their realism and clarity, urging viewers to look more closely and think more deeply about contemporary life and the history of the United States."

"Adriana Corral's interdisciplinary, research-based practice boldly explores memory, loss, human rights abuses, and unwritten histories. Often working across international borders, she mines state and national archives for primary documents and engages historians, anthropologists, journalists, gender scholars, human rights attorneys, and victims' families for information that materialize in her performances, sculptures, and installations. These refined, contemplative works, in turn, encourages us to question and unpack the power (or lack thereof) our own voices as well as the voices of forgotten, displaced, or exploited communities and individuals."

Shum and Blackwell additionally praised each finalist: "More broadly, the five finalists—including Sarah Welch, Allison Hunter, and Lovie Olivia—thrillingly reflect and affirm both the complexity and quality of Houston's wide-ranging, growing creative community. They were selected from a pool of over hundred-thirty applicants, and it was a pleasure and honor to visit their studios to discuss their work and learn more about their varied practices."

Artadia is a national non-profit organization that supports artists with unrestricted 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 335 artists in Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, New York, and San Francisco.

The 2019 Houston Artadia Awards are generously supported by the Brown Foundation, the Houston Endowment, Artadia's Board of Directors, Artadia Council Members, and individual donors across the country.

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About the Awardees

Adrianna Corral

Adriana Corral's installations, performances, and sculptures embody universal themes of loss, human rights violations, memory, and erased historical narratives. Her practice is rigorous and researched based, often driving her to work within the archives. Experts ranging from historians, librarians, anthropologists, writers, journalists, gender scholars, human rights attorneys, and the victims' families provide Corral with vital data that aids in the conception of her works. Corral received her MFA from the University of Texas at Austin and completed her BFA at the University of Texas at El Paso. She was invited to attend the 106th session of the Working Group on Enforced and Involuntary disappearances at the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland (2015) and was selected for the Joan Mitchell Foundation Emerging Artist Grant (2016). Corral attended the McDowell Residency (2014), Künstlerhaus Bethanien Residency in Berlin, Germany (2016), the International Artist-in-Residence at Artpace (2016), is a fellow at Black Cube, a Nomadic Art Museum (2017), an artist research fellow at the Archives of American Art and History at the Smithsonian Institution (2018), and an Artist-in-Residence at the Joan Mitchell Center (2018).

Vincent Valdez

Vincent Valdez is recognized for his monumental portray of the contemporary figure. His drawn and painted subjects remark on a universal struggle within various socio-political arenas and eras. Valdez was born in 1977 in San Antonio, Texas. He received a full scholarship to study at the Rhode Island School of Design, and earned his BFA in 2000. Valdez is represented by David Shelton Gallery and Matthew Brown Los Angeles. He is a recipient of the Joan Mitchell Foundation Grant for Painters and Sculptors (2016), as well as residencies at the Skowhegan School of Painting (2005), the Vermont Studio Center (2011) and the Künstlerhaus Bethanien Berlin Residency (2014). Exhibitions and Collections include: The Ford Foundation, The Los Angeles County Museum of Art, MassMoCA, The Museum of Fine Arts Houston, The Smithsonian Museum of American Art, and The National Portrait Gallery, among others.