

ARTADIA
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ARTADIA ANNOUNCES HOUSTON AWARDEES

Valentina Jager and Bria Lauren Each Receive \$10,000 Awards



Valentina Jager (l) and Bria Lauren (r)

Embargoed through January 12, 2021 2:00pm ET

(Houston, TX | January 12, 2021) – **Artadia**, the nonprofit grantmaker and nationwide community of visual artists, curators, and patrons, is pleased to announce **Valentina Jager** and **Bria Lauren** as the newest recipients of the Artadia Award in Houston.

Valentina Jager and Bria Lauren will each receive \$10,000 in unrestricted funds, as well as access to the ongoing benefits of the Artadia Award program.

Press-approved images of each artist’s work are available [here](#).

“Artadia provides social and financial support for visual artists to sustain a thriving practice and continue creating their vital work,” said Artadia Executive Director **Carolyn Ramo**. “Artists play an essential role in shaping our communities, serving as social leaders and cultural innovators, and Artadia is honored to celebrate these individuals through our Award program.”

The decision followed an extensive jury process, culminating in a virtual studio visit with Jurors **Ashely DeHoyos**, Curator at Diverseworks, and **Rebecca Matalon**, Curator at Contemporary Art Museum Houston. The Houston Artadia Award application was open to visual artists working in any visual media, at any stage in their career, who have been living and working within Harris County for a minimum of two years.

Speaking to the process, **Rebecca** states, "The five finalists excellently represented Houston's diverse and intergenerational community of artists. Their varying works and practices reflect the many urgent questions and concerns driving contemporary conversations around art and politics, from ecology and land use, to Black motherhood, and the intersection of consumer culture and gentrification."

Additionally, **Ashley** mentions, "I am continuously inspired by Houston artists and the depth of artistic practices across the city. Each of our five finalists offered unique perspectives of how art can be used to generate conversation, share important or forgotten history, reclaim narratives, and create. I am in awe of each finalist's lines of inquiry in contemporary topics and their creativity. It was an honor to visit with each artist and I look forward to seeing where they go from here."

In addition to Lauren and Jager, this year's finalists for the award included Cindee Travis Klement, Anna Mavromatis and Phillip Pyle II, selected by Jurors Ashley DeHoyos, Curator, DiverseWorks; Judy Ditner, Curator of Photography and Digital Media, Yale University Art Gallery; and Ugochukwu-Smooth C. Nzewi, Steven and Lisa Tananbaum Curator, Department of Painting and Sculpture, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

The Houston Artadia Awards are generously supported by John R. Eckel Jr. Foundation, The Brown Foundation, the Houston Endowment, Artadia Board of Directors, and individual donors from across the country.

Portrait of Valentine Jager by Agustín Arce, Portrait of Bria Lauren by Troy Montes

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About [Valentina Jager](#) (she/her)

Valentina Jager (B. 1985, Puerto Vallarta, Mexico) moved from Mexico to Houston in 2018 to pursue a PhD in Creative Writing in Spanish when the influence of writing and literature started to take a focal point in her work. She had formerly participated in residency programs such as Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture, Fieldworks Marfa, and the Syros Institute. Her work has been featured in several exhibitions at galleries and museums internationally such as the Orange County Museum of Art, Paul Kasmin Gallery New York, and the Kunstverein Göttingen. Jager's practice unfolds in the area between writing, book and sculpture making, and performance. Her work explores expanded notions of translation, ephemerality, the life cycles of materials and the material conditions that allow art and literature to exist.

About [Bria Lauren](#) (she/her)

Bria Lauren (B. Houston, TX) is a Texas native, born and raised in Third Ward, Houston. The south is a sacred and integral part of her work as a visual storyteller, healer, and queer Black woman utilizing ancestral healing as a tool to navigate intersectionality as an act of resistance. Analog photography is a catalyst for Lauren to translate her own unspoken vulnerability, visually and to hold space for marginalized voices to be seen, honored, cared for, and respected. The heartbeat and intention of Lauren's work intersects race, gender, vulnerability, motherhood, and Black feminism. She travels through time using 35mm, medium format, and motion picture film to bridge social and political gaps within her community – to communicate the true essence of one's identity and truth without censorship. She is currently developing an ongoing body of work, 'Gold Was Made Fa' Her' that will be exhibited in Houston Fall of 2021.

About [Artadia](#)

Since its founding in 1999, Artadia has awarded over \$5 million in unrestricted funds to almost 350 artists. Celebrating visual artists and the foundational role they play in shaping society, the Artadia Award benefits two artists annually in each of six major US cities with high concentrations of creative workers—Atlanta, Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and New York. Beyond the grant, the Award includes lifelong access to a community of fellow artists and patrons. The Artadia Award is designed to provide essential funding and recognition to artists at pivotal points in their careers, strengthen their communities, and spur new levels of career achievement.