

ARTADIA
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ARTADIA ANNOUNCES 2021 CHICAGO AWARDEES



Left to Right: Andrea Carlson, Melissa Leandro, Nate Young

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(CHICAGO, IL | April 8, 2021) – **Artadia**, a nonprofit grant making organization and nationwide community of visual artists, curators, and patrons, is pleased to announce the recipients of the 2021 Chicago Artadia Awards: **Andrea Carlson**, **Melissa Leandro**, and **Nate Young**.

Artadia is honored to partner with three foundations who have committed to supporting exceptional artists in Chicago with these \$10,000 awards. Andrea Carlson is the recipient of **The LeRoy Neiman and Janet Byrne Neiman Foundation Artadia Award**; Melissa Leandro is the recipient of **The Pritzker Pucker Family Foundation Artadia Award**; and Nate Young is the recipient of **The Joyce Foundation Artadia Award**.

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

This cycle's jurors were **Mia Lopez**, Independent Curator, Chicago and **Jade Powers**, Assistant Curator, Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art.

Of the process, **Jade** notes, “Even during an international pandemic, the team at Artadia worked hard to make sure the jurors were able to meet with all the finalists and have engaging and insightful conversation. I appreciate Artadia’s hard work and what they do for artists and enjoyed working with each member and the other juror deeply.”

Of the Awardees, **Mia** states, “**Andrea Carlson's** practice imbues mythic landscapes with cultural references to her Ojibwe roots, creating fantastic new narratives. Carlson is at the forefront of artist activism and her illustrative landscapes allow the viewer to imagine a world of alternative possibilities and radical new paradigms. **Melissa Leandro** uses textiles to evoke feelings of nostalgia, comfort, and lushness, drawing upon her memories of family homes, flea markets, and tropical landscapes. She masterfully combines multiple processes- jacquard weaving, embroidery, cyanotypes, and more- to create singular textiles reflective of her complex perspective and lived experiences. **Nate Young** views history as a framework for the production of truth and makes conceptual works that explore themes of legibility and meaning. His recent projects incorporate family lore with histories of the Great Migration and evade straightforward narrative in favor of subjective interpretation and ephemeral impressions. Young endeavors to collapse the past and future into the present moment, inviting the viewer to join his enigmatic pursuit.”

The 2021 Chicago 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 Chicago Cook County for a minimum of two years. This year’s finalists for the award included Carlos Javier Ortiz, Cecil McDonald, Jr., and Celeste Rapone selected by Cathleen Chaffee, Chief Curator, Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo; Denene De Quintal, Assistant Curator, Native American Art, Detroit Institute of Arts; and Mia Lopez, Independent Curator, Chicago.

The 2021 Chicago Artadia Awards are generously supported by The Joyce Foundation, the LeRoy Neiman and Janet Byrne Neiman Foundation, The Pritzker Pucker Family Foundation, the Artadia Board of Directors, Artadia Council Members, and individual donors across the country.

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About [Artadia](#)

Since its founding in 1999, Artadia has awarded over \$5 million in unrestricted funds to over 350 artists. Celebrating visual artists and the foundational role they play in shaping society, the Artadia Award benefits three 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.

About [Andrea Carlson](#)

Andrea Carlson (Ojibwe, b. 1979) creates large-scale works on paper from her home on unceded Potawatomi land in Chicago, Illinois. Her art practice includes painting, drawing, and arts writing on subjects ranging from museum studies, Indigenous Futurisms to assimilation metaphors in film. For previous exhibitions her artwork has required a willingness on behalf of institutions to engage their patrons in thinking critically about the display and representations of cultural difference. By citing pieces from the museum's collection, Carlson re-presents objects into her own fictional landscapes. Carlson states, "The museum is a landscape in it's own right, accreting and assimilating objects foreign to itself." Her art is in the collections of the Minneapolis Institute of Art, The British Museum, the Walker Art Center, and the National Gallery of Canada.

About [Melissa Leandro](#)

Melissa Leandro (b. 1989, Miami, FL) explores her cultural identity and family memories to create vibrantly layered, topographical textile works filled with her drawn and collected imagery. Her textile works are vibrant, animated and heavily layered through traditional and non-traditional processes of stitching, quilting, weaving and batik dyeing. By mirroring often personal moments of daily life, she manifests thoughts of family history, remembered childhood fantasies and nostalgic cultural ephemera. These works are specific to Leandro's hybrid culture as a first-generation US Latinx artist moving between Costa Rica, Miami, Chicago and abroad.

Leandro holds a BFA and MFA from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) and is currently teaching at the Art Institute as a Lecturer and Advisor. She was awarded the Craft Fellowship Grant, from the Illinois Arts Council (2020), the Wingate Artist Fellowship from Vermont Studio Center Residency (2019), the Toby Devan Lewis Fellowship (2017), and the Luminarts Fellowship (2017) from the Luminarts Cultural Foundation, Union League of Chicago. She has exhibited at The University Club of Chicago, Rockford University (Rockford, IL), the Wright Museum of Art (Beloit, WI), DePaul Art Museum (Chicago, IL), Andrew Rafacz Gallery (Chicago, IL), Frieze Art Fair NYC (2020) among a variety of other venues.

About [Nate Young](#)

Nate Young received his B.A. from Northwestern College, Saint Paul, MN in 2004. He earned his M.F.A. from the California Institute of the Arts and completed a residency at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in 2009. Young's recent solo exhibitions include *A Tale of Today*, The Driehaus Museum, Chicago, IL (2020), *The Transcendence of Time*, Monique Meloche Gallery, Chicago, IL (2020); *(re)collection*, The DePree Art Center at Hope College, Holland, MI (2020); *...WELL!*, Julius Caesar, Chicago (2019); and *Cleromancy*, monique meloche (2018). His work has been included in numerous group shows including; *The Long Dream*, MCA, Chicago, IL (2021), *FRONT International: Cleveland Triennial of Contemporary Art* (2018); *Four Saints in Three Acts*, DePaul Art Museum, Chicago, (2017); *Chicago Invites Chicago*, Galerie Lelong, New York (2016); *Retreat*, curated by Theaster Gates, Richard Gray Gallery, Chicago (2014). He is represented by Monique Meloche Gallery in Chicago.

Using strategies of Conceptualism, Nate Young investigates the nature of identity on an ontological level. His work highlights how meaning, embedded in the aesthetic of objects, resides within fragile networks and contextual systems. Young's recent ongoing project observes his family lineage, detailing the fissures found in his grandmother's stories about his great grandfather and his horse. Excavating these familial accounts connects his practice to the gaps found in larger, related histories, presenting these connections through drawing, sculpture, video, and immersive installations that utilize sound, absence of light, and sculpture to project a narrative void.