

ARTADIA
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ANNOUNCING 21c LOUISVILLE ARTADIA AWARDEE KIAH CELESTE



Kiah Celeste, *Of Few Words*, 2020. concrete pipe, rubber, pigment, 6.28m x 1.96m x 1.52m/20.6ft x 6.4ft x 5ft

Embargoed through August 10, 2021, 1:00pm ET

(NEW YORK, NY | August 10, 2021) – **21c Museum Hotels**, a multi-venue contemporary art museum and award-winning hospitality company, and **Artadia**, a nonprofit grantmaker and nationwide community of visual artists, curators, and patrons, are pleased to announce that **Kiah Celeste** has been selected as the inaugural 21c Louisville Artadia Awardee.

Kiah will receive \$10,000 in unrestricted funds, as well as access to the ongoing benefits of the Artadia Award program. The decision followed an extensive jury process, culminating in a virtual

studio visit with Jurors **Vincenzo de Bellis**, Curator and Associate Director of Programs at Walker Art Center, and **Soyoung Lee**, Chief Curator at Harvard Art Museums.

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

The 21c Louisville Artadia Award application was open to all visual artists currently living and working within the Louisville Metro area which includes Jefferson, Oldham, Shelby, Spencer, Bullitt, Nelson, Meade, Trimble and Henry Counties in Kentucky; and Clark, Harrison, Floyd, and Washington Counties in Indiana. The 21c Louisville Artadia Award is supported by 21c Museum Hotels.

This year's Finalists for the Award included **Shohei Katayama** and **Stan Squirewell**. Of the Finalists, **Vincenzo de Bellis** says, "both finalists presented very strong bodies of work. It was very interesting to be exposed to very different approaches, one more traditional, crafted and intimate, the other more technological and socially driven.

"Kiah's works are conceptually and formally very advanced, and you see the potential of her practice escalating to new levels in the future, especially with the aid of this grant. I am not only excited by her practice at the current moment, but engaged to see how she continues to progress. Kiah shows promise that she will continue to grow and push boundaries beyond what is already existing in contemporary art," notes **Vincenzo de Bellis**. "The process was very enjoyable. It was easy to go through the materials which were perfectly organized. I got exposed to many artists I did not know before and selecting only a handful was very difficult. The studio visit confirmed the initial impressions but it helped clarify some aspects which are crucial to the works. Overall the process has been simply excellent!"

"I was impressed by Kiah's compelling vision of working with found objects or materials from local areas and creating abstract sculptural art that are conceptually sophisticated and visually resonant. I feel she is at the stage where this award could really make an impact on her practice and allow her to continue to expand and challenge herself. An artist who is centered within the locality of Louisville, Kiah has the potential to become a part of, and perhaps shape, a wider artistic landscape geographically and culturally," say **Soyoung Lee**. "The Finalists, Shohei and Stan are creating works that not only are conceptually advanced, but are each in their own way making art that connect internationally. Also it was inspiring to see their passion for mentoring and providing space for other/younger artists."

"Congratulations to the inaugural 21c Artadia Awardee, Kiah Celeste, a Louisville-based artist whose compelling practice engages deeply and expansively with a range of materials and media. The high number of applicants, and the insightful conversations between the jurors, Soyoung Lee and Vincent DeBellis, and the three very talented finalists, reflected the vibrancy and promise of Louisville's art community," says 21c Museum Hotels Museum Director and Chief Curator **Alice Gray Stites**. "We are thrilled to work with Artadia to support artists like Kiah Celeste, and look forward to our continuing collaboration."

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 these anchored program cities, Artadia offers periodic awards with partners such as EXPO Chicago, Prospect New Orleans, New Art Dealers Alliance (NADA) and 21c Museum Hotels. In addition to the unrestricted 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.

Press Contact

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21c Louisville Artadia Awardee [Kiah Celeste](#)

Kiah Celeste (B.1994, Brooklyn, NY) is a multi-dimensional artist whose work for the last four years has transcended fitting into one category or medium. Living a peripatetic life since leaving her native Brooklyn, Celeste moved from her university background in photography into three-dimensional production. Kiah has spent her time completing artist residencies in Barcelona, Vienna, Frankfort (KY), worked and exhibited internationally in Abu Dhabi, Berlin, Hong Kong, Basel and now Louisville. She is currently preparing for an exhibition at KMAC Museum in Louisville and a solo exhibition at Swivel Gallery in Brooklyn. Kiah Celeste currently lives and works in Louisville, Kentucky.

Kiah Celeste primarily uses recycled industrial and synthetic objects and builds them into abstract forms alluding to the organic; their stability reliant on the interdependence and embrace of the objects in question. Celeste's conceptual work and research focuses on social stigmas and conditioning that have permeated her life and identity such as the neglect of Black women in America, obsession of self in the media, corruption in the medical world and medical device industry, and gentrification in Brooklyn.

21c Louisville Artadia Awards Finalist [Shohei Katayama](#)

Shohei Katayama is a Japanese-American artist working in Louisville, KY. Utilizing his art as a catalyst for environmental conversations, his work examines the underlying patterns and forces of nature by showcasing unseen relationships in ecology. Through his work, Katayama demonstrates the entanglements that are present between such systems and illustrates the disruptions that can occur when individual components are manipulated.

Katayama received a B.A. in Studio Art from Bellarmine University (2010) and his MFA from Carnegie Mellon University (2019). His work has been exhibited nationally, and internationally at the Palazzo Mora in Venice, Italy; Plaxall Gallery in Long Island City, New York; Littman Gallery in Portland, OR, and more. Katayama has participated in the Facebook Artist-in-Residence Program; the Arctic Circle Residency in Svalbard, Norway; the Labverde Amazon Residency in Manaus, Brazil; the International Sculpture Center Residency at Grounds for Sculpture in Hamilton Township, NJ; Tough Art Residency Program in Pittsburgh, PA, and at the Asia Institute Crane House in Louisville, KY

21c Louisville Artadia Awards Finalist [Stan Squirewell](#)

Stan Squirewell was born and raised in Washington, DC and currently lives and works in Louisville, Kentucky. Mr. Squirewell, is a mixed-media, photographer, installation and performance artist. His work is multilayered and his subject matter tackles themes such as: race, genealogy and memory.

He is a (2007 MFA) graduate of the Hoffberger School of Painting where he studied with the late Grace Hartigan. He has performed with Nick Cave (SoundSuits) at the National Portrait Gallery and Jefferson Pinder with G-Fine Arts. He is privately and publicly collected, his works are in the Reginald Lewis Museum, the Robert Steele Collection and the Smithsonian for the African American Museum.