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## ARTADIA ANNOUNCES 2023 CHICAGO FINALISTS



**Top, left to right:** SaraNoa Mark, Nyeema Morgan, Julia Phillips.  
**Bottom, left to right:** Orkideh Torabi, Jacqueline Surdell, Bobbi Meier.

(Chicago, IL | March 29, 2023)

**Artadia**, a non-profit grantmaking organization and nationwide community of visual artists, curators, and patrons, is pleased to announce that **SaraNoa Mark, Bobbi Meier, Nyeema Morgan, Julia Phillips, Jacqueline Surdell, and Orkideh Torabi** have been selected as the **2023 Chicago Artadia Awards Finalists**.

The Finalists will each hold virtual studio visits with second-round jurors, who will ultimately select three artists to receive \$15,000 in unrestricted funds. The 2023 Chicago Artadia Awards are supported by the Leroy Neiman Foundation, the Pritzker Pucker Family Foundation, the Walder Foundation, the Artadia Board of Directors, Artadia Council Members, and individual donors across the country.

The 2023 Chicago Artadia Awards application was open to visual artists working in any visual media, at any stage in their career, who have been living and working within **Cook County** for a minimum of two years.

This year's Round 1 jurors were **Janet Dees**, Steven and Lisa Munster Tananbaum Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art, Block Museum, Northwestern University; **Craig Hadley**, Executive Director and Chief Curator, Dennon Museum Center, Northwestern Michigan College; and **Ellen Tani**, Independent Curator and Postdoctoral Fellow, Smithsonian American Art Museum. The Round 2 jurors will be **Janet Dees** joined by **René Morales**, James W. Alsdorf Chief Curator, MCA Chicago.

Juror **Craig Hadley** remarked on Artadia's jurying process, "It was a pleasure to review such a strong pool of submissions alongside co-jurors who treated the process with the utmost thoughtfulness."

"The review process revealed how artists' creativity has endured amidst the most difficult conditions of the pandemic era, and how they continue to open up new ways of thinking about the way we experience this world," shared fellow juror **Ellen Tani**.

Juror **Janet Dees** said, "Jurying the first round of the Chicago Artadia award submissions provided an invaluable opportunity to be exposed to a broad swath of artists living and working in Chicago, and to engage in meaningful conversations about aesthetics practices with colleagues in the field." On the finalists, she commented, "The six finalists represent diverse material and conceptual perspectives and I look forward to learning even more about their work."

"The finalists share imaginative means of navigating contradiction and constraint; in their range of practices we saw a resilient commitment to both materiality and conceptual language," noted **Ellen Tani**. "Each of our finalists conveyed a sincere sense of authenticity and a complexity of ideas—a curious spark that left me filled with even more questions than answers," relayed **Craig Hadley**.

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

### **About Artadia**

Since its founding in 1999, Artadia has awarded over \$6 million in unrestricted funds to over 380 artists nationally. Celebrating visual artists and their foundational role in shaping society, the Artadia Award benefits three artists annually in seven major US cities with high concentrations of creative workers—Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, New York City, and the San Francisco Bay Area.

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**About [SaraNoa Mark](#)** (she/they)

SaraNoa Mark (b.1991 NY) examines traces left by time, in landscapes and collective memory. SaraNoa's work has been supported by a Fulbright research fellowship in Turkey, U.S. Embassy Mission Grants Program in Turkey, Luminarts Cultural Foundation, Foundation for Contemporary Art Emergency Grant, John Anson Kittredge Fund, Illinois Arts Council, Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events Individual Artists Program (DCASE), West Collection LIFTS, and a SPARK grant. Recent exhibitions of their work have taken place at the Chicago Cultural Center, Chicago, IL; Daniel Faira Gallery, Toronto, CA; Bridge Projects, Los Angeles, CA; Davis & Langdale Company, New York, NY; Goldfinch Gallery, Chicago, IL; 5333, Istanbul, TR among others. SaraNoa is a co-director at the 4th Ward Project Space in Chicago.

Mark's practice is founded in the construction of memory, as told through carved languages – from cuneiform tablets to sidewalk graffiti – that document an eternal impulse to score picture into place. Mark employs enduring materials to explore permanence and erasure to archive the presence of absence. Their sculptures are rooted in observation and fieldwork. In their reliefs, time is counted slowly, through repeated carved gestures. These marks accumulate in works that form a physical accounting, providing an alternative means of measuring existence outside the world of commodified time. Making art is their method of becoming a witness.

**About [Bobbi Meier](#)** (she/her)

Bobbi Meier is a Chicago-based visual artist. Life's frustrations, joys, and fears are embedded into her abstract sculptures, drawings, and installations through provocative use of materials including; pantyhose, spandex, porcelain, and found home furnishings. Her work has been exhibited at; The Hyde Park Center, Roots & Culture Contemporary Art Center, Evanston Art Center, Lubeznik Center for the Arts, The Franklin, and recently a solo exhibition at Riverside Arts Center in Riverside, IL for which she was awarded an Illinois Arts Council individual artist project grant. Meier has been in residence at: John Michael Kohler Arts/Industry Program, Ragdale Foundation, and Ox-bow School of Art and Artist's Residency. Her work is in the permanent collections of the Kohler Foundation and The John Michael Kohler Arts Center. Meier serves as a member and director of ADDS Donna Artist collective in Chicago. She earned her MAAE (2000), and MFA in Fiber and Material Studies (2011), from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Reflecting the complexity of lived experiences, Meier's sculptures, tapestries, drawings, and installations are emotional repositories for the feelings we hide and thoughts that remain unspoken. Psychologically challenging, and awkwardly humorous, a dichotomy of seduction and revulsion exists, where fragments of thoughts and materials are re-constructed becoming assemblages of grotesque beauty. A dialogue is created between hard and soft, playfulness and discomfort, abstraction and figuration; a voyeuristic invitation to visit uncomfortable situations with desire and embarrassment.

**About [Nyeema Morgan](#)** (she/her)

Nyeema Morgan is an interdisciplinary artist. Solo and two-person exhibitions of her work have been presented at the Philadelphia Art Alliance, Philadelphia, PA; Marlborough Contemporary Viewing Room, NYC, NY; The Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art, Boulder, CO; PATRON Gallery, Chicago, IL and Grant Wahlquist Gallery, Portland, ME. Group exhibitions include The Drawing Center, NYC, NY; Galerie Jean Roche Dard, Paris, France; The Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Brunswick, ME and the CSS Bard Galleries, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY. Morgan attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture and earned degrees from the Cooper Union School of Art and California College of the Arts. She is the recipient of a Joan Mitchell Painters and Sculptors Grant and an Art Matters Foundation Grant as well as residencies at the Lower

Manhattan Cultural Council and Shandaken Projects at Storm King Art Center. Her work is in public collections at the Walker Art Center, the Bowdoin College Museum and the Worcester Museum of Art.

Morgan's conceptually layered works are characterized by an interplay between text, image and object. Through references to familiar cultural material (popular jokes, canonical artworks, recipes and etc) her works point to the soft aesthetic power of systems of knowledge, information production and the mechanics of representation.

**About [Julia Phillips](#)** (she/her)

Julia Phillips (b. 1985) was born in Hamburg and lives and works in Chicago and Berlin. She has had one-person exhibitions at MoMA PS1 in New York and the Kunstverein Braunschweig in Germany, and her work has been shown at numerous museums nationally and internationally, as well as the Berlin Biennial, the New Museum Triennial, and the recent 59th International Art Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia, "The Milk of Dreams". Her first public artwork commission, an interactive multimedia installation titled Observer, Observed will remain on view on the NY High Line / 26th Street until August 2023.

Inspired by tools and other functional objects, her sculptures are metaphors for social and psychological experiences. The pieces often feature ceramic elements cast from the body and include recurring elements, such as handles or wing nuts, that encourage the viewer to envision direct physical engagement with the work. Sometimes the body can help us to identify with experiences that are not our own.

**About [Jacqueline Surdell](#)** (she/her)

In 2022, Surdell was awarded a Pollock-Krasner Foundation grant in sculpture to attend Vermont Studio Center and participated in major exhibitions at Devening Projects and Hyde Park Art Center in Chicago, and Library Street Collective in Detroit. Her collaboration with The Seldoms in their 40th anniversary exhibition, Toolbox@Twenty, at Hyde Park Art Center was listed by Lori Waxman as one of the best Chicago exhibitions of 2022 in Chicago Tribune. Surdell's most recent project was a solo booth with gallery COMMON at East/East in Tokyo, Japan, in February 2023. In fall 2023 Surdell will be presenting a solo installation at the Abroms-Engel Institute for the Visual Arts in Birmingham, Alabama; in early 2024 solo projects at Scott Miller Projects and gallery COMMON will open. Surdell received her MFA in Fiber and Material Studies from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2017; in 2015 she received her BFA from Occidental College in Los Angeles.

Scrappy and interpretive, Jacqueline Surdell hand-manipulates dock cord — weaving and knotting lines into naturalistic, wall-mounted creatures antagonistically positioned between painting and sculpture. The industrial material and physically demanding process playfully orbits techniques, colors, and forms often associated with domesticity. The work traces her family history and private life while fostering discussion around labor, gender, and sexuality.

**About [Orkideh Torabi](#)** (she/her)

Orkideh Torabi is an Iranian born artist based in Chicago. She earned her MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2016 and her MA and BFA from The University of Art in Tehran. Torabi's solo shows include Half Gallery in New York, Nino Mier Gallery in Germany, Richard Heller in Los Angeles, and Western Exhibitions in Chicago. She's participated in museum shows and group shows such as the Atrium Project at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago (MCA), Chicago Cultural Center, Chicago, Nino Mier Gallery, Los Angeles, Fredericks & Freiser, New

York, and Spurs Gallery in China among others. Her work has been written in the Los Angeles Times, Juxtapoz, Hyperallergic, and Chicago Reader Magazine. In addition, her work is in the collections of The Smart Museum in Chicago, the Hall Art Foundation in Vermont, the CC Foundation in Shanghai, The Progressive Art Collection, and The Microsoft Art Collection in Redmond, WA.

Torabi imagines herself as a director who, through painting, resituates the power dynamics, drawing attention to the personal, political, and social issues facing women. Narration is a key ingredient in her paintings. She sees her paintings as a theatre scene where the sarcastic characters she has created are the cast playing their roles. Rendered with simple button-like eyes, injured or missing noses, unnatural skin hues, and tacked-on mustaches, her unabashedly humorous paintings imbue the protagonists with an emasculated and clown-like state of being. She juxtaposes her cartoonish images of contemporary men against vivid patterns influenced by Persian miniatures. In doing so, she makes explicit that the past and present become interwoven.