

ARTADIA
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ANNOUNCING THE 2023 21c RESEARCH TRIANGLE ARTADIA AWARDEE



Left to right: André Leon Gray, *Fighting in the land of the free, while desiring a better future*, 2023; *Speak, so you may speak again*, 2023; *In the absence of light, flip the script in your mind*, 2021 (photos courtesy of the artist).

(Durham, NC | September 14, 2023)

21c Museum Hotels, a multi-venue contemporary art museum and award-winning hospitality company, and **Artadia**, a non-profit grantmaker and nationwide community of visual artists, curators, and patrons, are thrilled to announce **André Leon Gray** has been selected as the **2023 21c Research Triangle Artadia Awardee**.

Launched in Louisville, KY in 2021, the 21c Artadia Award marked the beginning of a long-term partnership, which will annually provide **\$15,000** in unrestricted funds to one artist living and working in the unique creative communities where 21c Museum Hotels are located. The 21c Artadia Award is designed to provide essential funding and recognition to artists at pivotal points in their careers, strengthen arts communities, and spur new levels of career achievement.

The 21c Research Triangle Award application was open to visual artists currently living and working within **Chatham, Durham, Franklin, Harnett, Johnston, Nash, Orange, Person**, and **Wake** counties for a minimum of two years.

This year's Round 1 and 2 jurors were **Dr. Ashley James**, Associate Curator of Contemporary Art, Guggenheim and **Hallie Ringle**, Daniel and Brett Sundheim Chief Curator, ICA Philadelphia.

"Artadia jurors Ashley James and Hallie Ringle selected three outstanding finalists for the 2023 21c/Artadia award," says **21c Chief Curator Alice Gray Stites**. "Raj Bunnag, André Leon Gray, and

Gadissee Lee are all dynamic, thoughtfully engaged artists whose practices reflect the diversity and vibrancy of the arts community in the Research Triangle. 21c congratulates André Leon Gray on being awarded this year's grant, and we look forward to his growing success and contributions to an expanding art community through compelling work that explores relevant and timely issues.”

Juror **Hallie Ringle** reflected on the jurying process, “It was a pleasure to review the finalists with Ashley James, a curator I admire and whose insightful comments were critical to the process. I’m grateful to Artadia for the chance to be involved in such a rewarding and thoughtful process that offers such crucial support and recognition to artists.”

“Artadia's jurying panel was a great opportunity to spend time learning about the practices of artists within the Research Triangle,” said juror **Dr. Ashley James**. “The three finalists reflect the vibrant contemporary arts landscape of the South.”

Ringle remarked, “André Leon Gray, with his long-standing practice working with found materials in the service of uncovering larger historical and contemporary truths, deserves larger recognition.”

James added “Gray repurposes found objects to investigate power structures and social hierarchies with such rigor and imagination. I'm keen to follow Gray's work and excited to be supporting his rich trajectory on the occasion of this Award.”

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

About 21c Museum Hotel Durham

21c Durham includes a 125-room boutique hotel, contemporary art museum, and Counting House restaurant. Standing tall in the center of downtown Durham, the property offers 10,500 square feet of exhibition space featuring rotating, curated contemporary art exhibitions free of charge, seven days a week. Onsite restaurant, Counting House, offers a dining experience with deep ties to the community, featuring seasonal ingredients and products.

For more information, visit 21cDurham.com

About 21c Museum Hotels

21c is a multi-venue contemporary art museum combined with a boutique hotel and chef-driven restaurant with nine properties across the U.S. The company was founded by Laura Lee Brown and Steve Wilson, contemporary art collectors and preservationists committed to expanding access to thought-provoking contemporary art. Each 21c property features a public exhibition space that presents rotating solo and group exhibitions that reflect the global nature of art today and commissioned site-specific installations curated by Museum Director, Chief Curator Alice Gray Stites. 21c collaborates on arts initiatives with artists and organizations worldwide, including the North Carolina Museum of Art, Contemporary Arts Center, Speed Art Museum, Creative Capital Foundation, Creative Time, For Freedoms, and others. Since opening in Louisville, KY, in

2006, 21c Museum has presented over 100 exhibitions, including *Alter Ego: A Decade of Work* by Anthony Goicolea; *Aftermath: Witnessing War, Countenancing Compassion*; *SEEING NOW*; *Wild Card: The Art of Michael Combs*; *Albano Alfonso: Self-Portrait as Light*; *Pop Stars! Popular Culture and Contemporary Art*; *Labor&Materials*, *Fallen Fruit: The Practices of Everyday Life*; *The SuperNatural*; *Dress Up, Speak Up: Regalia and Resistance*; *The Future is Female*; *Truth or Dare: A Reality Show*; *Refuge*; *Wim Botha: Still Life with Discontent*; and *Still Life! Mourning, Meaning, Mending*.

About Artadia

Artadia is a non-profit grantmaking organization and a nationwide community of visual artists, curators, and patrons. Over two decades, Artadia has worked collaboratively to foster a more just arts economy and improve the conditions necessary for artists of all backgrounds to thrive. We elevate the careers of artists at critical moments in their practice through a proven combination of recognition, grantmaking, community support, and advocacy. Since its founding in 1999, Artadia has awarded over \$6 million in unrestricted funds to nearly 400 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. For more information, visit artadia.org

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About [André Leon Gray](#) (he/him)

André Leon Gray is a multi-disciplinary self-trained artist born and raised in Raleigh, North Carolina where he currently lives and works. He is interested in power structures, social hierarchies, and the synthesis of history and culture, past and present through an art practice that utilizes assemblage, collage, installation, painting, drawing, and video to code multiple layers of pictorial meaning and material relationships. Gray's work is in the permanent collections of the North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh, NC; the California African American Museum, Los Angeles, CA; and the Gregg Museum of Art & Design, NC State University, Raleigh, NC.

Gray is a multi-disciplinary self-trained artist seeking to engage his audience in a dialogue that explores connections between identity, culture, and history while investigating power structures and social hierarchies. Primarily, his work applies symbols, text, and found objects to fuse the past and present into thought-provoking social commentaries, while questioning the duality of remembering and forgetting with a visual language that examines the surrounding structures of our lives.