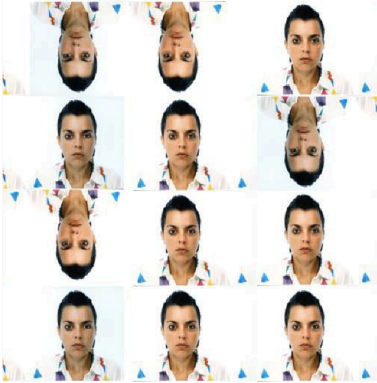


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ARTADIA ANNOUNCES 2023 HOUSTON AWARDEES



Left to right: Violette Bule (photo courtesy of the artist); Saúl Hernández-Vargas (photo credit Madison Lloyd); and Irene Antonia Diane Reece (photo credit Kaba Dia).

(Houston, TX | January 23, 2024)

Artadia, a non-profit grantmaking organization and nationwide community of visual artists, curators, and patrons, is thrilled to announce the recipients of the 2023 Houston Artadia Awards: **Violette Bule**, the Horton Artadia Award Recipient, **Saúl Hernández-Vargas**, and **Irene Antonia Diane Reece**.

Since its inception in 1999, Artadia has steadfastly championed emerging talents, leaving an indelible mark on the cultural landscape. Over the past 25 years, Artadia has been a catalyst for artistic innovation, providing crucial financial support, mentorship, and recognition to countless artists who have gone on to shape the culture of contemporary art. In its 25th year, Artadia is thrilled to continue doing what it does best – providing impact that not only includes financial assistance, while also cultivating a community that values artistic expression and champions the next generation of visionaries.

The 2023 Houston 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 Harris county for a minimum of two years. The 2023 Houston Artadia Awards received **110** applications, with **75%** of the applicants identifying as Black, Native American or Alaskan Native, Latinx, Asian, Arab, biracial or multiracial; **58%** of applicants identify as women, gender nonconforming, or nonbinary; and **56%** self-identify as **emerging** artists. The 2023 Houston Artadia Awards are supported by the John C. Eckel Foundation, Cecily Horton, the Artadia Board of Directors, Artadia Council supporters, and individual donors across the country.

The Awards decision was reached after an extensive two-tiered jurying process. This year's finalists for the Awards included **Keliy Anderson-Staley**, **Ann Johnson**, and **Anna Mayer**, selected by Round 1 jurors **Alana Hernandez**, Senior Curator + CALA Alliance Curator of Latinx Art, ASU Art Museum; **Anna Walker**, Executive Director, Lawndale Art Center; and **Adeze Wilford**, Curator, Museum of Contemporary Art, North Miami.

"I learned so much about the rich artistic talent in Houston as a juror for the 2023 Houston Artadia Awards," said fellow juror **Hernandez**. "After much deliberation with my fellow jurors, we chose a group of finalists that encompass diverse approaches toward their thoughtful, rigorous, and timely projects."

"I'm always excited to expand my knowledge of artists working in communities beyond my own, so it was wonderful to engage with a selection of artists in Houston and gain insight into what is shaping their worldview," shared **Wilford**. "There is a wide range of medium and conceptual framework represented in this selection and I am pleased Artadia is able to support artists not only in critical moments in their career but also at sites of innovation in their practice."

All six finalists held virtual studio visits with jurors **Omar Lopez-Chahoud**, Independent Curator, and **Anna Walker**, Executive Director, Lawndale Art Center.

On the jurying process, **Walker** remarked, "Being part of the jury process for Houston's Artadia award reaffirmed my belief in the breadth and depth of Houston's artistic talent. There are so many artists making work worthy of recognition and support. Artadia is doing important work providing unrestricted grants, truly believing in artists and I'm humbled to be a small part of the process. My hope is that this work and investment in the Houston community acts as a catalyst for others to recognize and invest even further in the wider community of creativity happening in our city and region."

On Reece's Award, **Walker** said, "I'm excited how this award celebrates and supports Reece's commitment to her community through a radical art practice that tells their stories with thoughtfulness and care."

"Working with words, sounds, object-making, and performance, Hernández-Vargas' practice transcends boundaries and I hope this award will continue to propel his artwork forward into new realms of making," remarked **Walker**. On Bule's Award, she continued, "I'm excited to see how this award will shape upcoming projects for Bule and support her multidisciplinary practice that centers personal connection and storytelling to reveal the power dynamics that shape our daily life."

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 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.

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About the Awardees

[Violette Bule](#) (she/they)

Bule is a conceptual artist and photographer. Bule draws on her experiences as a queer woman and Venezuelan immigrant of Lebanese descent in the United States.

Bule's work builds on social and economic vulnerability as a tool for creativity and political empowerment, engaging with topics such as identity, memory, violence, the politics of space, and digital technologies. She examines power dynamics shaping everyday life, underscoring the entanglement of capitalism and structural racism in interrelated patterns of migration, nationalism, populism, and social justice.

[Saúl Hernández-Vargas](#) (he/him)

Saúl Hernández-Vargas. Visual artist. Recently, he has exhibited at the Houston Climate Justice Museum. He has been an artist in residence at the Center for Imagination in the Borderlands (Arizona State University) and he is a Core Fellow at the Museum of Fine Arts of Houston.

Hernández-Vargas' work is a forensic poetry that invokes the specters haunting the margins, cracks, and fissures of the Nation-State's official narratives. Thus, his work explores the intricate relationship between the Nation-State, and the so-called national territory and history.

[Irene Antonia Diane Reece](#) (she/her)

Irene Antonia Diane Reece, Born and raised in Houston, TX, identifies as a contemporary artist and visual activist. She earned her BFA in Photography and Digital Media (Houston, TX) and MFA in Photography and Image-making (Paris, France).

The topics surrounding her work are racial identity, African diaspora, social injustice, family histories, re-memory, mental and community health. With a background in photography and image-making Reece's journey through lens-based work has transformed her art practice to become critical of the tools that we use to create art in an effort to decentralize whiteness, engage/deconstruct the violence of the camera, protecting Black archives and centralize/celebrate the complexities of the Black identities.

About the finalists

[Keliy Anderson-Staley](#) (she/her)

Keliy Anderson-Staley, a 2022 Guggenheim Fellow, has exhibited her work widely, including at Akron Art Museum, Bronx Museum of the Arts, Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery, Southeast Museum of Photography, Shelburne Museum, and Morris Museum of Art. Collections holding her work include the Library of Congress, Cedar Rapids Museum of Art, Houston Airport System, Museum of Fine Arts Houston and Portland Museum of Art. On a Wet Bough, a monograph of her tintype portraits, was published by Waltz Books.

Keliy Anderson-Staley's handmade artist's books and paper quilts present unconventional autobiographical narratives that resist linearity, shift into biographical modes and collapse generations. Manipulating an inherited archive with scanners, cyanotype printing, film, tintype and silkscreen to alter and combine source materials, her work explores the role private archives play in shaping identities, the relationship between interior lives and public history, the fabrications at the heart of origin narratives, and photography's unreliable representations.

[Ann Johnson](#) (she/her)

Born in London, England and raised in Cheyenne, WY, Ann is a graduate of Prairie View A&M University in Texas, (where she taught for over 20 years) with a BS in Home Economics. She earned an MA in Humanities from the University of Houston-Clear Lake, and an MFA from The Academy of Art University, in San Francisco with a concentration in printmaking. She has been acknowledged as an "Artist to Watch" by the International Review of African American Art and was listed as one of the 10 most transformative artists of 2022 by Black Art in America.

Johnson's work investigates truths. Hard truths. Johnson's work focuses on the Black experience as she examines ancestry, injustice and double consciousness. From Mammy to Breonna her work explores Black womanhood and women in the shadows. Her practice of experimental printmaking and installation allows her to delve into these subjects in an unorthodox and insightful manner.

[Anna Mayer](#) (she/her)

Anna Mayer's recent solo exhibitions include the Houston Center for Contemporary Craft, Houston Jung Center, and A-B Projects (CA). Group exhibitions include Artpace (TX), Blaffer Art Museum (TX), Ballroom Marfa (TX), California Museum of Photography, Hammer Museum (CA), Glasgow International (UK), and Catherine Bastide Gallery (BE). Her work has been written about in X-TRA Contemporary Art Quarterly, Momus, Los Angeles Magazine, and CFile. Mayer is a 2023-24 Smithsonian Artist Research Fellow.

Mayer revels in the fact that historically ceramic has been used to create highly functional items as well as intensely symbolic objects. Through projects that enact various kinds of burial and recovery, she points to extractive and exploitative human behaviors towards the land. In the last five years Mayer has made eco-critical artworks out of grief, about mourning, and to chart how influence and mutuality operate between generations of family and eras of art history.