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ARTADIA ANNOUNCES 2024 LOS ANGELES AWARDEES



Left to right: Phung Huynh (photo credit Ken Gonzales-Day); Young Joon Kwak (photo credit Joe Pugliese); and Na Mira (photo courtesy of the artist).

(Los Angeles, CA | March 19, 2024)

Artadia, a non-profit grantmaking organization and nationwide community of visual artists, curators, and patrons, is thrilled to announce the recipients of the 2024 Los Angeles Artadia Awards: **Phung Huynh**, the Marciano Art Foundation Artadia Award recipient, **Young Joon Kwak**, and **Na Mira**.

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 2024 Los Angeles 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 Los Angeles county for a minimum of two years. The 2024 Los Angeles Artadia Awards received **472** applications, with **61%** of the applicants identifying as Black, Native American or Alaskan Native, Latinx, Asian, Arab, biracial or multiracial; **60%** of applicants identify as women, gender nonconforming, or nonbinary; and **61%** self-identify as **emerging** artists. The 2024 Los Angeles Artadia Awards are supported by Capital Group, the Marciano Art Foundation, 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 **Teresa Baker**, **Adrian Culverson**, and **Nery Lemus**, selected by Round 1 jurors **Josie Lopez**, Head Curator and Curator of Art, Albuquerque Museum; **Selby Nimrod**, Assistant Curator, MIT List Visual Arts Center; and **Selene Preciado**, Curator & Director of Programs, LACE.

On the jurying process, **Nimrod** shared, "Jurying Artadia's Los Angeles Awards alongside such esteemed colleagues, as well as being an honor, was an excellent opportunity to become acquainted with a sampling of the exceptional practitioners in LA's thriving arts community. This range is evidenced in the accomplished practices of the six finalists: while spanning diverse media and subject matter, they share in common bold material and formal approaches and lucidly articulated visions."

"As an Art Historian and Curator with a deep commitment to unraveling the intricacies of artistic innovation, my role as a juror for the 2024 Los Angeles Artadia Awards was a journey into the landscape of contemporary art in L.A. The dialogue with other curators, who were both from L.A. and other parts of the country, added to the experience of delving into the subtleties of each submission, exploring the boundaries of creativity, and assessing the extent of their innovative expressions," shared **Lopez**. "It was a thoughtful conversation, where the pursuit of groundbreaking artistic vision took center stage, and the unique perspectives of Los Angeles artists who are engaging with both the broader art world and their own communities enriched our perspectives and the review process."

Lopez remarked on the finalist cohort, "Their collective creativity profoundly engages with the diverse landscape of contemporary art. Their innovative artistic approaches, ranging from conceptual exploration to formal experimentation, reflected a deep pool of artistic visions often profoundly influenced by the vibrant cultural context of Los Angeles."

All six finalists held virtual studio visits with jurors **Selene Preciado** and **Eugenie Tsai**, Independent Curator.

"Serving as a juror for Artadia's LA awards introduced me to the generous and generative practices of six finalists. I found it a remarkably uplifting experience, leaving me optimistic and hopeful, feelings in short supply these days," said **Tsai**.

Fellow juror **Preciado** commented, "The Artadia Awards are pivotal in elevating the talent of visual artists in Los Angeles. The three selected artists' practice center connection: Phung Huynh describes herself as a conduit that brings people together; Young Joon Kwak describes themselves as a bridge between communities; and Na Mira as a collaborator across borders and timelines. They all address resilience through memory, from unique perspectives. I am proud of the representation of our diasporic existence in such powerful and moving work."

"Huynh's multifaceted artistic practice is informed by her work as artist, educator, and activist. She embodies all her roles in her community through enacting generosity and abundance, such as in

her detailed and thoughtful drawing process, and the efforts of bringing institutional transformation in the display of cultural objects,” shared **Preciado. Tsai** continued, “Huynh’s drawings, paintings, and public commissions embody cultural memories of displaced Southeast Asians in the U.S., as well those of other immigrant communities. Her collaborative practice includes “rematriation,” the return of a head in a U.S. museum to the body of Buddha in a Cambodian temple.”

“Queer intimacy, community, and collaboration as “radical caring” are at the core of Kwak’s practice. They explore the politics of visibility of marginalized communities with empathy for all sides of the conversation, bringing forth open-ended connections through their use of material, history, and the body as it is in a perpetual state of transition,” said **Preciado**.

“Kwak’s innovative sculptures and performances propose new ways of considering bodies by utilizing strategies of masking and camouflage, and rethinking representation and visibility to reimagine what a body can be, informed by BIPOC, Queer and Trans communities,” added **Tsai**.

On Mira’s work, **Preciado** shared, “Mira’s projects about the work and legacy of Theresa Hak Kyung Cha explore how “fragmentation is the truest form of witness.” Mira’s layered experimental work is visionary and extremely profound. Language, memory, and archive are the source materials for her research-based shamanism as she connects time and space through transmission.”

“Mira’s poetic and powerful film installations incorporate her long-term research on Korean Shamanism and the practice of Theresa Hak Cha, examining “ghosts” in Cha’s and her own deeply layered personal and cultural past, outside of conventional time and space,” noted **Tsai**.

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

[Phung Huynh](#) (she/her)

Phung Huynh is a Los Angeles-based artist and educator with a practice in drawing, painting, public art, and community engagement. Her work has been exhibited nationally and internationally at the Gagolian Gallery, Beverly Hills; the Vincent Price Art Museum, Los Angeles; the Wende Museum, Culver City; the USC Pacific Asia Museum, Pasadena; the Asia Society Texas Center, Houston; and the U.S. Embassy in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Huynh received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena and her Master of Fine Arts degree from New York University. She is a recipient of the City of Los Angeles Individual Artist Fellowship, the California Arts Council Individual Established Artist Fellowship, and the California Community Foundation Visual Artist Fellowship. Phung Huynh is Assistant Professor of Art at California State University Los Angeles, and she is represented by Luis De Jesus Gallery in Los Angeles.

Huynh's work explores cultural perception and representation. She challenges beauty standards by constructing images of the Asian female body vis-à-vis plastic surgery to unpack how contemporary cosmetic surgery can whitewash cultural and racial identity. Her work of drawings and prints on pink donut boxes explores the complexities of assimilation and cultural negotiation among Cambodian and Vietnamese refugees who have resettled in the United States.

[Young Joon Kwak](#) (they/them)

Young Joon Kwak (b. 1984, Queens, NY; lives and works in Los Angeles) is the founder of Mutant Salon and lead performer in the electronic-dance-noise band Xina Xurner. They presented solo and collaborative exhibitions internationally at galleries and institutions including Arko Art Center, Seoul; Korean Cultural Center, LA; Commonwealth & Council, LA; Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions; and Walter Phillips Gallery, Banff, Alberta. Selected group exhibitions have been held at Hauser & Wirth, New York, Tufts University Art Galleries, Boston; and the Hammer Museum's biennial exhibition *Made in L.A. 2023: Acts of Living*.

Kwak's sculptures and performances use different forms of masking and camouflage to question conventional notions of representation and visibility while imagining new ways for racialized, trans, and nonnormative bodies to exist and thrive in spaces that surveil and police them. Shimmering cast-negative sculptures of bodies optically camouflage against their surroundings, offering viewers an alternative way of embodying the experience of social and spatial camouflage. Through their work, Kwak aims to foster a broader dialogue on visibility, surveillance, and violence against marginalized communities and generate new embodied ways of relating to bodies beyond gendered and raced taxonomies.

[Na Mira](#) (she/her)

Na Mira lives in Los Angeles. Recent projects have been presented at Whitney Biennial, Whitney Museum of American Art, Company Gallery, and The Kitchen, New York; Midway Contemporary Art, Minneapolis; Museum of Contemporary Art, Tucson; Paul Soto and Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Croy Nielsen, Vienna; and Art Sonje Center, Seoul. Mira

graduated from University of California Los Angeles and School of the Art Institute of Chicago. In 2022, Wendy's Subway published the first collection of her writing.

Mira works at the edges of perception. Her films, videos and sculpture engage animism to denaturalize the historically produced apparatus of image making. Through installations drawing from Asian ancestral technologies, Structural film, and phenomenology, multiple vanishing points open a dimension beyond representation.

About the finalists

[Teresa Baker](#) (she/her)

Teresa Baker (Mandan/Hidatsa, b.1985) currently lives and works in Los Angeles, CA. Through a mixed media practice combining artificial and natural materials together, Baker creates abstracted landscapes that explore vast space, and how we move, see and explore within them. The materials, texture, shapes, and color relationships are guided by Baker's Mandan/Hidatsa culture to explore how identity can relate to innate objects.

Baker has had recent solo exhibitions at de boer, Los Angeles, Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, Scottsdale, AZ; Halsey McKay, East Hampton, NY; Pied-à-terre, San Francisco; and Interface Gallery, Oakland. Recent group exhibitions include Ballroom Marfa, Marfa, TX, The Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco, CA; Marin MoCA, Novato, CA, and Anthony Meier, Mill Valley, CA. In 2023 Baker's work was included in 'Made in L.A. 2023: Acts of Living' at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA. Baker is a 2022 Joan Mitchell Fellow, a 2022 Artist-in-Residence at FOGO Island Arts in Newfoundland, and the recipient of the 2020 Native American Fellowship for Visual Artists at the Ucross Foundation, she was and Artist-in-Residence at MacDowell, and a Tournesol Award Artist-in-Residence at the Headlands Center for the Arts.

[Adrian Culverson](#) (she/her)

Adrian Culverson is a Los Angeles based artist that makes wall relief paintings and sculptures. Recently her work has been exhibited at Moran Moran gallery, Artists Curated Projects and PSLA gallery. In July 2023 Culverson had a solo exhibition of her sculptural paintings at Human Resources gallery. Culverson also teaches beginning drawing at Citrus College.

Culverson's work is focused on the real and imagined structures that govern interior thought processes. The pieces that she makes are part sculpture and part painting bridged together by articulated and abstracted forms. Culverson is interested in the infinite space that exists between two defined spaces, the sliver between acceptance and denial and use and non-use, her work is devoted to the sticky surface of frosting and first impressions.

[Nery Lemus](#) (he/him)

Nery Gabriel Lemus is a multidisciplinary artist born and raised in Los Angeles, CA. Lemus received his BFA at the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, California (2007), his MFA at the California Institute of the Arts in Valencia, California (2009), and attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in Maine (2008). His work has been featured at the Los Angeles

County Museum of Art; the California African-American Museum; the Vince Price Art Museum; the New Americans Museum; El Paso Museum; Bethel University, Saint Paul, MN; Roberts Wesleyan College Rochester, NY; Project Row Houses, Houston, TX; District of Columbia Arts Center, Washington, DC; Indianapolis Art Center, Indianapolis, IN; 9.99 Gallery, Guatemala City, GU; Museo Regional Guadalajara, Jalisco, MX; and the Centro Cultural Tijuana, Tijuana, MX, among other venues.

Lemus' work explores race and family issues that are ultimately about society's role to advance human dignity. His work underscores the connections that merge differences and explores how social patterns cross ethnic and cultural boundaries. Lemus is interested in creating art that not only functions within the context of a gallery or museum but involves society and functions in a public space- he believes this to be essential to an artist working with social issues.