

ARTADIA
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ARTADIA ANNOUNCES 2024 CHICAGO AWARDEES



Left to right: Nour Ballout (photo courtesy of the artist); Jefferson Pinder (photo courtesy of the artist); and Yuge Zhou (photo credit Jia Bao Zhou).

(Chicago, IL | April 10, 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 Chicago Artadia Awards: **Nour Ballout**, the LeRoy Neiman and Janet Byrne Neiman Foundation Artadia Award recipient, **Jefferson Pinder**, the Walder Foundation Artadia Award recipient and **Yuge Zhou**, the Joyce Foundation Artadia Award recipient.

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 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. We received **304** applications, with **53%** of the applicants identifying as Black, Native American or Alaskan Native, Latinx, Asian, Arab, biracial or multiracial; **74%** of applicants identify as women, gender nonconforming, or nonbinary; and **54%** self-identify as **emerging** artists. This year's Chicago Artadia Awards are supported by the Joyce Foundation, the LeRoy Neiman Foundation, the Pritzker Pucker Family Foundation, the Walder 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 **Sungjae Lee**, **Courtney Mackedanz**, and **Soo Shin**, selected by Round 1 jurors **Bana Kattan**, Pamela Alper Associate Curator, MCA Chicago; **Zoe Lukov**, Independent Curator; and **Lola Ayisha Ogbara**, Artist, Curator, Writer.

On being a part of the jurying panel, **Lola Ayisha Ogbara** remarked, “Chicago is full of talented bright artists. It means a lot to be embedded in a community where I can be both comrade and a steward of great reward. The finalists for Artadia’s 2024 Chicago Award are just a small representation of what Chicago’s arts world has to offer. I am glad that we can recognize them for the work that they do!”

Fellow juror **Zoe Lukov** shared, “Artadia has an incredible impact on the lives of artists, providing much needed support at critical junctures. It was a real honor and a learning experience to join a jury with such diverse viewpoints on contemporary art making. It sparked really dynamic conversations around the artistic process and allowed me to see these artists' works from a multitude of vantage points. As someone who is not from Chicago the selection process also introduced me to new and very moving work coming out of the city that I was previously unfamiliar with.”

Of the finalists, **Lukov** said, “I was really impressed with the multidisciplinary nature of the applications. In particular the finalists feel to me, to be foregrounding embodied practices and the finding new forms for expressions and interpretations of the body— working between sculpture, performance, photography/video documentation and occupying a hybrid space between disciplines— I look forward to continuing to follow their work.”

All six finalists held virtual studio visits with jurors **Bana Kattan** and **Gee Wesley**, Curatorial Assistant Department of Media and Performance, MoMA.

On Pinder’s practice, juror **Wesley** remarked, “Pinder's work explores the vernacular performance of Black life—probing how Black movement-building practices of protest, remembrance, and assembly can not only disrupt choreographies of state power but also rehearse new possibilities for the future.”

“In Ballout's work, the artist strikes an affective relationship to the past, that neither privileges the logics of official archives nor the written histories of the state, but instead, weaves together subjugated accounts drawn intimate personal spaces and collective sites of belonging,” continued **Wesley**.

“Zhou's stirring moving image works, performances, and videos, often layers personal and political histories addressing questions of place, the silences in the archive, and the forces of connection,” shared **Wesley**.

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

[Nour Ballout](#) (they/them)

Nour Ballout (b. 1993 Beirut, Lebanon) is an interdisciplinary artist and curator challenging who and what is erased in an archive / history, constructed by the colonizer. In subject and form their work expresses the tension between the desire to be represented and the fear of being surveilled. Their work has been nationally showcased in both group and solo exhibitions, with recent solo shows including "Muslims of North America" at the Wayne State Collections gallery and "The (De)Construction" at The Rotunda Gallery in Ann Arbor, MI.

As a survivor of a war that destroyed their childhood images, Nour is compelled to create their own archive. Further, as an immigrant from Lebanon to Detroit to Dearborn, they come from an intersection of people that have been looked at and surveilled but not seen. Their experience of assimilation exposed the social construction of norms, and how our choices either uphold or disrupt them.

[Jefferson Pinder](#) (he/him)

Jefferson Pinder (b. 1970, Washington, DC) has produced highly praised performance-based and multidisciplinary work for over a decade. His work has been featured in numerous solo and group shows including exhibitions at The Studio Museum in Harlem, the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art in Hartford, Connecticut, The High Museum in Atlanta, the National Gallery of Art, Washington DC, and Tate Modern in London, UK. In 2017, Pinder received a Guggenheim Fellowship and the Moving Image Acquisition Award; he also won a 2016 USA Joyce Fellowship Award in the field of performance. Most recently, he was named a 2021 Smithsonian Artist Research Fellow. He is currently a Professor of Sculpture at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

An instigator of risky interventions. From a quiet and tactful assault on a police stronghold to sending performers adrift in the mighty Lake Michigan, Pinder mediates a conversation by any means necessary. Primarily working within the lines of performance, he utilizes video, sound, and object-making to meditate on the ritual and the human in an urbanized and highly polarized society. Through action, Pinder is constantly exploring a quagmire of representations -and misrepresentations-, myths, and visual tropes to access truthful renditions of identity.

[Yuge Zhou](#) (she/her)

At the age of five, Yuge Zhou (周雨歌) became a household name in China as the singer for popular children's TV series. Yuge came to the US almost two decades ago to earn a degree in computer science and subsequently moved into video art and installations. Yuge has exhibited nationally and internationally in prominent art and public venues. Her work has been featured in the New York Magazine, Hyperallergic and The Atlantic, and recently acquired by the Museum of Contemporary Photography in Chicago and the Carl & Marilyn Thoma Foundation.

Growing up in the second stage of China's economic reform, Yuge witnessed a massive influx of migration and expansion in her hometown Beijing. As she moved to America in 2007, she became deeply intrigued with the transient encounters and connections across constructed or natural spaces - the sites of our shared dreams. Yuge uses the camera to document and reassemble scenes that reveal personal and geopolitical relationships embedded within metaphorical territories. Her recent projects explore the actual, historical and emotional distance between her homeland and adopted country—and broader challenges of transcending separation.

About the finalists

[Sungjae Lee](#) (he/they)

SUNGJAE LEE is a Seoul-born, Chicago-based visual artist, educator, and writer whose practice centers around the visibility and varied representations of queer Asians. He has presented his works globally in South Korea, Sweden, Canada, New Zealand, and the US. He received his B.F.A. in Sculpture from Seoul National University and M.F.A. in Performance Art from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Lee's work brings attention to queer Asian men who have been regarded as effeminate, desexualized, and thus invisible in the West. Lee's lack of the dominant expression of masculinity led him to desire hairy, muscular Caucasian men, but he is also critical of the gender stereotype and its relevance to internalized whiteness. To explore the limits of desire in relation to race/ethnicity in the present political climate, and ultimately create space and advocacy for queer Asian communities, Lee utilizes his physical body adorned by colored clay and human hair, along with narratives illustrating his history, memory, and interior experience.

[Courtney Mackedanz](#) (they/she)

Courtney Mackedanz (b. 1989) is a transdisciplinary artist living and working in Chicago. Recent exhibitions of their work have taken place at Rudimento Gallery (Quito), Darling Foundry (Montreal), Skylab Gallery (Columbus), Arts Club, Roman Susan Gallery, ACRE Projects, Links Hall, and High Concept Labs (Chicago) amongst others. Their practice has been supported by the Monira Foundation, Foundation for Contemporary Arts, and Chicago's Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events. They have attended residencies in pursuit of their research including DanceWEB at Impulstanz (Vienna), Praxis Oslo R24 (Oslo), Nave Projecto (Quito), and Landing 3.0 at the Gibney Dance Center (New York), amongst others. Mackedanz has performed the work of artists such as Alexandra Pirici (Chicago Architecture Biennial), Cara Benedetto & Liang Luscomb (Night Gallery), Otobong Nkanga and Tino Seghal (Museum of

Contemporary Art Chicago). Mackedanz earned their BFA in Performance and Visual Critical Studies from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Mackedanz's movement-based performance embodies care and resistance within received choreographic conditions such as surveillant gaze and extractive wage labor, subverting such conditions by rehearsing strategies of evasion as well as restoration through slowness. Mackedanz layers these subversions with movements that surface embedded choreographic influences such as the textural tone of nervous system as they shifts in state or investigations of how individual somatic experiences with haptic inputs such as touch, heat, and friction might inform wider social and political imaginaries. Through critical research, speculative writing, collaborative rehearsal, and the creation of multi-state objects and generative systems which serve as choreographic tools, Mackedanz explores how negotiations of the body, relation, and power might structure, steer, catalyze, and constrain potentials in movement.

[Soo Shin](#) (she/her)

Soo Shin (b.1981, Seoul) lives and works in Chicago, IL. She is the recipient of the fellowship at Djerassi Artist Residency, Woodside, CA; the individual artist grant at the Illinois Arts Council; and the Vilcek foundation fellowship at MacDowell artist residency. Shin's work has been presented at PATRON Gallery, Chicago, IL; Goldfinch Gallery, Chicago, IL; Chicago Manual Style, Chicago, IL; LVL3, Chicago, IL; and Chicago Artist Coalition, Chicago, IL among others. She has completed residences at the John Michael Kohler Arts Center; Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, North Adams; Vermont Studio Center; Art Farm, Marquette, NE; and Ox-box, Saugatuck, MI. She earned a Master in Fine Arts from School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and a Master in Fine Arts and Bachelor of Fine Arts from the Ewha Womans University, Seoul, South Korea.

Centered around the personhood of a body, Shin's work is composed to be a place for metaphoric bodily gestures and the encapsulation of their traces. She uses ceramic, brass, concrete, wood, sea water, and other materials from personal events to render the realities of belonging, distance, loss, longing, and communion with others.