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Artadia Announces 2024 Boston Awardees

Boston-area artists Funlola Coker, Evelyn Rydz, and Gabriel Sosa are the recipients of the \$15,000 awards.

News by [BAR Editorial](#)



Left to right: Funlola Coker (photo credit Carolina Porras Monroy); Evelyn Rydz (photo courtesy of the artist); and Gabriel Sosa (photo credit Victoria Roytenberg).

BOSTON, MA, October 29, 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 Boston Artadia Awards: **Funlola Coker**, the Wagner Foundation Boston Artadia Award recipient; **Evelyn Rydz**, the Liberty Mutual Artadia Award recipient; and **Gabriel Sosa**.

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

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at any stage in their career, who have been living and working within Bristol, Essex, Middlesex, Norfolk, Plymouth, and Suffolk Counties for a minimum of two years. We received **302** applications, with **44%** of the applicants identifying as Arab, Asian, biracial or multiracial, Black, Latinx Native American or Alaskan Native; **69%** as women, gender nonconforming, or nonbinary; and **42%** as emerging artists.

This year's Boston Artadia Awards are supported by Dodge Family Foundation, Liberty Mutual, the Meraki Artist Award, Wagner Foundation, the Artadia Board of Directors, Artadia Council supporters, and individual donors across the country.

On sponsoring and selecting the recipient of the Liberty Mutual Artadia Award, **Christina Gerber**, Liberty Mutual, said "It is a pleasure to support these Awards and have the honor of selecting a Liberty Mutual Artadia Award winner for the third consecutive year. At Liberty, we are passionate about supporting artists of all ages, from all backgrounds, across various art forms. We believe in a strong future for the arts, and again we are assured by the high standard of entries that the future is bright."

Gerber continued, "Evelyn's multidisciplinary work is truly thought-provoking, highlighting the importance of communities and collaboration in addressing the challenges we face. Evelyn incorporates issues such as immigration, threats to natural and cultural ecosystems, and public health into work."

"We are honored to partner with Artadia in giving unrestricted awards to Greater Boston artists, and to name Funlola Coker as the 2024 Wagner Artadia Awardee," shared **Charlotte Wagner**, Founder and CEO of Wagner Foundation. "We believe in the vibrant artist community that is thriving here, and are so excited to support all the awardees in furthering their practice and continuing their careers here."

The Awards decision was reached after an extensive two-tiered jurying process. This year's finalists for the Awards included **Sharon Harper**, **Marcel Marcel**, and **Yu-Wen Wu**, selected by Round 1 jurors **Eric Booker**, Associate Curator, Storm King Art Center; **Erin Christovale**, Assistant Curator, Hammer Museum; and **Kristin Parker**, Lead Curator and Manager of the Arts, Boston Public Library.

"It's an honor to be a part of Artadia's 2024 Boston Awards, an important organization whose regional support of artists ensures that their work receives wider critical recognition," remarked

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“Serving as a juror for the Boston Artadia awards was an incredible opportunity to spend time with some of the area’s most exciting artists, and to learn more about the variety of ideas, materials, strategies, and processes they use to enliven our creative community. It was also a pleasure to be in conversation with fellow juror Kristin Parker, with a range of thoughtful questions and observations in our deliberations,” shared **Arauz**.

Arauz continued, “The three Awardees represent exciting and important voices in the Boston art scene. Engaging urgent topics as varied as water ecosystems, criminal justice, and Yoruba cosmology, these artists deploy materials, language, and cultural traditions to make connections between individual identity and community experience. Each artist draws on their own personal and professional histories to create works of art that speak to our society’s current need for care, joy, and hope.”

Fellow juror **Parker** remarked, “I had the honor of participating in the jury panel for Artadia’s selection of Boston Awardees for 2024. Throughout the process, Artadia’s commitment to supporting artists was inspiring. I was thrilled to engage with the diverse work of both new and familiar artists during the portfolio reviews. Collaborating with Rachael Arauz was a highlight, as her thoughtful insights enriched our discussions.”

Parker was involved in both rounds of jurying. On the first jury session, she shared, “During evaluations with curators from outside the region, I felt immense pride in our Boston artists and our vibrant creative community. It’s clear that this city is brimming with talented individuals addressing contemporary issues through their unique perspectives.” She continued, “We carefully considered many artists for this award, and it was a significant responsibility. The three artists selected exemplify the spirit we were looking for—bold experimentation, meaningful engagement with relevant topics, commitment to their craft, and a genuine connection to their communities. Each of them approaches the world with curiosity and wonder, and we can’t wait to see what they create next!”

About the Awardees

Funlola Coker (fun/she/they) Funlola’s work follows research threads in the realm of recollection, imagination, and the surreal. Funlola builds narrative sculptures that call on nostalgic memories and moments of the mundane held dear. Using materials and techniques based in craft, these sculptures suggest dream-like and half-remembered spaces, yet sacred.

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from lasting industrial impacts to daily reliance, and deep reverence. She works across drawing, site-responsive installations, and community projects to reimagine our relationships with the natural world and with each other, exploring connections between bodies of water, personal histories, consumer cycles, and threats to natural and cultural ecosystems.

Multidisciplinary artist Evelyn Rydz has received grants from the Joan Mitchell Foundation, U.S. Latinx Art Forum, Brother Thomas Fund, and Massachusetts Cultural Council. Exhibitions include features at Harvard Radcliffe Institute, Cambridge, MA; ICA, Boston, MA; Anchorage Museum, AK; MFA, Boston, MA; USC Fisher Museum, Los Angeles, CA; Lowe Art Museum, Miami, FL; Palacio de Justicia, Matanzas, Cuba. In 2025 she will present a new project at the Charlestown Navy Yard for the Boston Public Art Triennial.

Gabriel Sosa (he/him) Gabriel Sosa (b.1985, Miami, Florida) is a Cuban-American artist, educator, community builder, and curator whose work explores how words—and the scope of their interpretation—define and condition our understanding of the world around us. Sosa spent over a decade working as a court interpreter in the Massachusetts Trial Court. He draws from legal proceedings, personal archives, and contemporary visual culture to nurture a multidisciplinary art practice.

In the public space, he considers how language can both strengthen and problematize our relationship to our surroundings. By subverting platforms often traditionally used for advertising, and camouflaging alternative ideas within them, he brings buried conversations to light, and sparks new ones in unexpected places. Throughout his practice, he recognizes that words can often fail us, but asks, how can we shape them to do otherwise?

Most recently, his work has been featured at the Fitchburg Art Museum and the Wagner Foundation in Cambridge. He is also one of the artists invited to participate in the first Boston Public Art Triennial in 2025.

About the finalists

Sharon Harper (she/her) Sharon Harper is a lens-based artist working the intersection of technology, perception, and the living environment. She lives in Somerville, Massachusetts.

Recently she is looking at ways that social and cultural traditions arise and are shaped by the land itself. The geologic and spiritual qualities of a landscape shape beliefs, and those, in turn, help determine how societies relate to the land. Many cultures offer lessons learned from living in

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fiction of borders and binaries. In a remix of microbial SCOBYS, sculpture, performance, surveillance/judicial footage, sound-scapes, experimental cake-scapes, drawing, writing, AR face filters and GIFs, Marcel imagines a queer architecture of time, creating speculative worlds as refuge for radical joy, rest, play and liberatory networks of care.

Marcel is currently a studio artist resident at the Boston Center for the Arts. They are a member of the artist collectives Digital Soup and Mobius. In 2018, Marcel received their MFA from the VCFA, creating a gesamtkunstwerk thesis called Hot Dogs 24/7. In 2023, OyG Gallery in NYC named Marcel as an artist to watch for. In Summer 2024, they had their very first art piece in a show in NYC on Governors Island through Flux Factory. Upcoming shows of note include a 2 person show in July 2025 with Georgina Lewis at Piano Craft Gallery, called “of both and worlds, in double time.”

Yu-Wen Wu (she/her) Yu-Wen Wu (born Taipei, Taiwan) is an interdisciplinary artist whose practice investigates the intersections of art, science, the natural world, and social and cultural issues. Her works include large-scale drawings, site-specific video installations, community-engaged practices, and public art. Yu-Wen’s works reflect her journey as an immigrant, exploring the complexities of global migration, displacement and the nuances of identity. Her love of materials serve as metaphors expressing the emotions, memories, and multifaceted experiences of the diaspora. Recent bodies of work engage materials associated with her Asian heritage such as tea, porcelain, and gold. She often uses organic materials reflecting on our relationship with the environment.

Wu is a current artist-in-residence at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston. She was a 2023 recipient of the James and Audrey Foster Prize at the Institute of Contemporary Art Boston, and recipient of the Mass Cultural Council Artist Fellowship. Her work was recently on view at Taipei Dangdai, James Cohan Gallery, New York and Praise Shadows Art Gallery, Brookline, MA.

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

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