

ARTADIA  
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## ARTADIA ANNOUNCES 2025 CHICAGO AWARDEES



**Left to right:** Carlos Flores (photo credit: Miguel Vazquez), Isabelle Frances McGuire (photo credit: Kevin Weil), and B. Ingrid Olson (photo credit: John Henderson).

### EMBARGOED THROUGH TUESDAY, APRIL 15TH AT 10AM CT/11AM ET

(Chicago, IL | April 15, 2025)

**Artadia**, a non-profit grantmaking organization and nationwide community of visual artists, curators, and patrons, is thrilled to announce the 2025 Chicago Artadia Awardees: **Carlos Flores**, the **2025 Joyce Foundation Artadia Awardee**, **Isabelle Frances McGuire**, and **B. Ingrid Olson**, the **2025 LeRoy Neiman and Janet Byrne Neiman Foundation Artadia Awardee**.

The 2025 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 **306** applications, with **60%** of the applicants identifying as Arab, Asian, biracial or multiracial, Black, Latinx, Native American or Alaskan Native; **74%** as women, gender nonconforming, or nonbinary; and **54%** as emerging artists.

The 2025 Chicago Artadia Awards are supported by The Joyce Foundation, the LeRoy Neiman and Janet Byrne Neiman Foundation, the Pritzker Pucker Family 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 **Sydney Lynne**, **Farah Salem**, and **Edra Soto**, selected by Round 1 jurors **Giampaolo Bianconi**, Dittmer Associate Curator, Modern and Contemporary Art at the Art Institute of Chicago; **Alessandra Gómez**, Independent Curator; and **Brittany Webb**, Evelyn and Will Kaplan Curator of Twentieth-Century Art and the John Rhoden Collection, Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts.

“Working with my fellow jurors allowed me to see Chicago’s diverse artists with fresh eyes. The group of finalists we’ve selected is the result of a competitive selection of experimental practices, and a testimony to Chicago’s continued vibrancy,” shared **Bianconi**.

Fellow juror **Gómez**, remarked, “As a curator who spent some of my formative years immersed in Chicago's interdisciplinary art scene, participating in Artadia’s jurying process provided a valuable opportunity to reconnect with the city's exceptional artistic talent. As our arts funding landscape presently faces increasing obstacles, I commend Artadia for their unwavering commitment to their values.”

She continued, “The selection process was highly competitive, thanks to Artadia's impressive pool of applicants. After a thorough evaluation with my fellow jurors, I’m delighted that we selected these six outstanding finalists, each of whom demonstrated conceptual rigor, distinct viewpoints, and a clear dedication to their craft.”

All six finalists held virtual studio visits with Round 2 jurors **Giampaolo Bianconi** joined by **Lydia Ross**, Independent Curator and Educator.

“Learning from so many artists, as well as my fellow jurors, has been the defining aspect of this process,” **Bianconi** commented about the overall process.

His fellow Round 2 juror **Lydia Ross** remarked: “It was an honor and privilege to serve as a juror for this year's Chicago Artadia Awards. The six finalists embody the best of Chicago’s vibrant art community, each with a strong visual language and generosity of spirit. It was especially rewarding to have the intimate, immersive experience of virtual studio visits, where I was able to engage directly with their work and process, deepening my appreciation for the talent and vision shaping Chicago’s contemporary art scene. Determining the awardees was a difficult process as all are deserving of the support and amplification of their practices, and I am excited to follow each as they tackle urgent questions that drive their work.”

Bianconi and Ross ultimately found the three Awardees to be fitting recipients of the Awards, recognizing each individual's demonstration of being at a pivotal moment in their career.

“Olson’s practice fits objects and bodies together in the form of an exhibition. She practices in the tension between an easy fit and a rough edge,” said **Bianconi**. “B. Ingrid Olson’s work stands out for her skillful manipulation of materials and conceptual rigor. Olson has developed a striking, multidimensional visual language across sculptural and photographic forms as she plays with her

own and viewers' relationships to the body in space within the carefully constructed and dynamic environments of her exhibitions," commented **Ross**.

"Isabelle McGuire brings a unique and clear voice to her exploration of the construction of American identity and public memory," **Ross** noted about the Awardee. "Through humor, a DIY ethos, and innovative mashup of digital technology and traditional craft, McGuire creates wholly original, often haunting work that makes me hungry to see where she goes next with her research and Frankenstein-like creations." In similar vein, **Bianconi** offers: "McGuire's work emerges from the complex networks of history, narrative, and action within our contemporary technological landscape. She tinkers with the forms we inherit, testing their limits in the process."

"Carlos Flores' civically engaged practice stands out in the city's art scene. He balances a rigorous studio practice with a strong community orientation, seamlessly moving between public and private contexts," shared **Bianconi**. And **Ross** likewise shared: "Carlos deploys his many talents—sculptor, flower farmer, performer, and facilitator—to create 'de-numbing' experiences that are both beautiful and deeply necessary in this fraught climate. Through his portable *ofrendas* and other immersive installations in public space, Carlos invites reflection, healing, and connection, often drawing from the rich traditions of Latinx/e culture to foster spaces of collective memory and ritual. His deep commitment to community is evident not only in his artistic practice but also in his role as a mentor and collaborator."

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.

### **Press Contact**

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## About the Awardees

### [Carlos Flores](#) (he/him)

Carlos Flores (b. 1992, Valley of Atemajac/Guadalajara) is an interdisciplinary artist, flower farmer, and earthkeeper now living in Shikaakwa. His work moves between collective construction, performance, and organizing, creating hybrid forms that commandeer tools of colonization and capitalism away from extraction and toward placemaking.

Since 2014, he has cultivated a “mycelial” practice, working through co-creation and a broad civic rhizosphere to seed social interventions on the Southwest Side, addressing justice, displacement, and migration. His community-based projects center the creation of immersive activations that bring viewers face-to-face with issues of land, race, and belonging, while simultaneously building connection and care. As a civically focused artist, he founded *Contra Corriente*, an annual artist-run festival that brings together artists, environmentalists, and community organizers to resist ecological racism through exhibitions and interactive programs. His current project, *Porta(til)*, expands on this work—creating portable monuments that connect Latinx/e communities on the frontlines of climate migration.

### [Isabelle Frances McGuire](#) (she/her)

Isabelle Frances McGuire (b. 1994, Austin, TX) lives and works in Chicago, IL. Select solo and two-person presentations include, *Year Zero*, The Renaissance Society, Chicago (2024); *The First Machine*, What Pipeline, Detroit (2023, with Nolan Simon); *Loop*, King’s Leap, New York (2023); *Bailey Connolly and Isabelle Frances McGuire*, Scherben, Berlin (2022); *Dresses Without Women*, Mickey, Chicago (2021); *P\*\*\*\* B\*\*\*\* ARENA*, Et al., San Francisco (2020, curated by Good Weather); *From The Desk of Lucy Bull*, Los Angeles (2020); and *I’m a Cliche*, Prairie, Chicago (2017). Recent group exhibitions include *A Prose By Any Other Name*, Hans Goodrich, Chicago, IL (2025); *My Story Gallery*, High Art & Sister, Seoul, KR (2024); *Artists Space*, New York, NY (2024); *Descending the Staircase*, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, IL (2023); *Multi-User Dungeon (MUD)*, Petzel, New York, NY (2024, curated by Simon Denny); and *Tell Me What You Want*, Bel Ami, Los Angeles, CA (2023).

McGuire uses open-source technologies, readymades, and popular media references to investigate contemporary shifts in American culture while taking steps to expand on questions traditionally explored through sculpture. With a focus on myths and cultural figures that persist and reappear over time, McGuire implements strategies from gaming culture (such as “kitbashing” and “modding”), prop making, open-source robotics, and art history to breathe new uncanny life into the familiar. McGuire navigates the mutability of the symbolic by engaging with culturally monumental signifiers in ways that feel humorous, unpredictable, and, at times, haunting—ultimately presenting a project intent on forging new possibilities and spiraling pathways.

### [B. Ingrid Olson](#) (she/her)

B. Ingrid Olson's (b. 1987, Denver, CO) work has been the focus of solo exhibitions at institutions and venues such as Keijiban, Kanazawa; XYZ Collective, Tokyo; fluent, Santander; i8 Grandi, Reykjavik; The Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts at Harvard University; Secession, Vienna;

Buffalo AKG Art Museum; and a two-person exhibition at The Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago. Olson's work was recently included in the 2024 Whitney Biennial, and has been featured in group exhibitions at Jeu de Paume, Paris; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Henie-Onstad Kunstsenter, Hovikodden; Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Lumber Room, Portland; Aspen Art Museum; and The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Engaging the reciprocities between photography, sculpture and architecture, Olson's practice stages a manifold approach to plurality, gender, and power. Mirrored and fragmented depictions of the artist's actions performed within the studio are situated amongst found materials as well as forms produced with various casting and carving techniques. Poetically testing the capacities of the artist's body, viewers' bodies and an exhibition's architectural conditions, Olson's artworks and installations call attention to both the psychological and physical structuring of the spaces around us.

### **About the finalists**

[Sydney Lynne](#) (she/her)

Sydney Lynne (b. New Orleans, LA) is a multi-media visual and civic artist, specializing in creative space-making, immersive experiences, and interactive/activated locations. Stemming from an extensive career in theatrical scenic design, her exploration of live arts environments insists upon a seismic confrontation of scale and manipulating the aesthetics of spectacle. Her work interrogates the content of the near allegorical and fantastic conditions that play out on a global level.

Referencing the aesthetic structures and symbols of memorials and monuments, Lynne's spectacle work archives the scale and scope of present (future and past) catastrophes often subjected to simplified revisionist histories. Lynne uses a southern gothic framing to contextualize the thematic foundations of mortality in direct conversation with architectural and cultural ephemera. Focusing on the use of spore-like patterns, murmurations, and doubling, Lynne conjures the materiality of the uncanny, primal, and fungal in reference to the complex and polar nature of natural life.

[Farah Salem](#) (she/her)

Farah Salem (b.1991, Kuwait) is an interdisciplinary artist and somatic art therapist; these two practices exist independently, yet are intertwined as her professional training informs her artistic inquiry of how trauma manifests in the body. Her visual arts practice rooted in photography expands through video, performance and installation finding subtle affinities between geologic time, somatic movement, gendered trauma, and Arabian Peninsula ceremonial healing rituals. Through relational merging and mapping of human and geologic bodies, she envisions their liberation by examining themes of agency, making the invisible visible, and the potential erosion of socio-cultural conditioning.

Farah works with the body as a site of transgenerational experiences, a container of memory, in correspondence to geologic time. She explores how land formations shaped by weathering and erosion parallel our human bodies' vast inner worlds, shaped by a range of emotions. She examines how bodies and landscapes are constantly in flux, against the backdrop of time, a

vital force shaping endurance in the face of change and redefining agency in our adaptability.

[Edra Soto](#) (she/her)

Edra Soto (b. 1971, Santurce, Puerto Rico) is a visual artist working at the intersection of architectural interventions, literary components, collaboration, and adjacency. Soto has brought her passion for innovative forms of engagement to her role as an artist. Reconciling her past and present cultural influences, from her mainstream Puerto Rican education to her life on the US mainland, her practice raises questions about constructed social orders, diasporic identity, loss of cultural knowledge, and possibilities of resilience.

Migrating from her native Puerto Rico after 27 years impacted her relationship with the rest of the world. Embodying the role of migrant, Soto has uncovered its potential to ignite reflection and inspire resilience towards social contexts that constantly threaten some of our most vulnerable communities. Through Soto's art, it is her goal to advocate, uplift, and celebrate the voices of working-class communities.