

Third Time's the Charm

Artadia's third annual tennis tournament returns to support artists.

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NINA FERNANDEZ/BFA.COM

Last Monday, L.A.'s art community gathered at the historic Los Angeles Tennis Club for Artadia's annual tennis tournament, a special initiative launched in 2023 to support Artadia's regional artist awards, currently activated in seven cities across the U.S. Founded in 1999, Artadia has awarded more than \$6 million in unrestricted funds to 430 artists in its program cities in a mission to "strengthen their communities through a proven combination of recognition, grantmaking, community support, and advocacy." Esteemed curators and arts leaders serve as the selection committee for merit-based unrestricted awards (\$15K) aimed to support artists at pivotal times in their careers.

Cochaired by Rafael Flores, Charles Gaines, and Jennie Lamensdorf, this year's benefit connected about 120 patrons, including art dealers, curators, artists, and collectors. Half the crowd grabbed racquets, joining in a rotating doubles LVBL format on the court. I particularly enjoyed watching art collector and film producer Michael Sherman nail some wins in the doubles match, and curator/writer Larry Earl also showed off his skills with another group across the courts. I lost track of score as the smell of the grill led me upstairs at the club, where I had a better view of both the courts and the taco buffet. L.A. delivered its signature perfect sunny day, making everyone on and off the courts look and feel great.

Over lunch, Claire Malloy, Artadia's director of advancement, shared that the event, originally set in February to kick off Frieze L.A. week, was rescheduled to prioritize wildfire relief for L.A.-based awardees. Patton Hindle, executive director, shared remarks thanking everyone for their ongoing support and commitment, which is critical especially during a divisive moment in politics and culture. While the spring gala season has many artists and patrons jet-setting and dressing up for black-tie evening events, the Artadia tennis tournament is a refreshing way to gather outside in the sun for the sake of art, fun, and community. This year's fundraiser generated enough funding to directly support Artadia's Awards program (three awardees) and ongoing work in Los Angeles.

Takeaways: Tennis makes everyone look great. Wear sunscreen. And say yes to charity games and tournaments. It's a win-win for all.