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*LEADING CURATORS NAME ARTADIA AWARDEES 2008 CHICAGO*

New York, NY—Artadia: The Fund for Art and Dialogue is very pleased to announce the *Artadia Awardees 2008 Chicago*. For three consecutive days (October 23<sup>rd</sup>-25<sup>th</sup>), three internationally prominent jurors—Allison Peters Quinn (Director of Exhibitions at the Hyde Park Art Center, Chicago), Kristin Poole (Artistic Director of the Sun Valley Arts Center, Sun Valley, ID), and Tumelo Mosaka (former Associate Curator of Exhibitions at the Brooklyn Museum, NY)—conducted studio visits with 15 short-listed artists drawn from over 650 applicants throughout Cook County, Illinois for the fifth *Artadia Awards* in Chicago. The awards range from \$15,000 to \$3,000.

The *Artadia Awardees 2008 Chicago* awardees are: Melika Bass, Juan Angel Chávez, Jim Duignan, Theaster Gates, Kelly Kaczynski, Dutes Miller and Stan Shellabarger, and Kim Piotrowski.

“Chicago’s amazing artistic community plays such a vital role in the creative and civic life of this city. They are artists helping us see the world in new ways, educators mentoring the next generation of visionaries, advocates of imagination, and we are indebted to them. Artadia is so proud to support their efforts,” said Christopher Vroom, Artadia’s founder.

He added, “Since Curt Conklin brought Artadia to this community and with the help of our founding Chicago Board members—Marlene Breslow-Blitstein, Larry and Marilyn Fields, Sally Kovler, and Kerry James Marshall—over 2,500 artists have participated in the Chicago process. We thank the artists and our national board for helping sustain the vibrancy of creative life here in Chicago and around the country.”

Local juror Allison Peters Quinn emphasized “how important the *Artadia Awards* program is for artists working in Chicago. It provides them with national recognition for their achievements, gives them access to the Artadia network of opportunities, and also offers some financial return on their artwork.” She added that “the doubling of the lower award amounts this year comes at a crucial economic time when everyone is struggling financially.”

Applications for the *Artadia Awards* were open to visual artists in all media and at any stage of their career working and living in Cook County, IL. The application was available online for 13 weeks from June 1, 2008 to August 29, 2008. The three first round jurors—Allison Peters Quinn, Matthew Drutt (Executive Director of ArtPace, San Antonio), and Fred Wilson (New York-based artist)—reviewed a record number of 654 applications and selected the finalists in New York in September.

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Artadia has long-standing close relationships with the local foundations and private patrons of the arts who recognize the importance of unrestricted funding to visual artists at the local level. The *Artadia Awards* 2008 Chicago are generously supported by the Richard H. Driehaus Foundation, numerous generous individuals, and the Artadia Board. In addition to Chicago, Artadia administers successful programs and awards in Boston, Houston, San Francisco, and Atlanta.

*About Artadia: The Fund for Art and Dialogue*

Artadia's mission is to encourage innovative practice and meaningful dialogue across the United States by providing visual artists in specific communities with unrestricted awards and a national network of support. Artadia was founded as The ArtCouncil in 1997 by investment banker and art collector Christopher E. Vroom as a response to the demise of the National Endowment for the Arts' artist fellowships. The first awards were given in San Francisco, where Vroom was living at the time. Chicago was added as a program city in 2001. In 2003, Artadia added Houston to its roster, Boston in 2007, and Atlanta this year. Once Artadia commits to a community, it returns every other year to run its awards programs and, on the off years, it co-sponsors a public program with a local institution. Started as an individual's philanthropy, Artadia is now expanding its base of support by recruiting art patrons from across the United States to join its giving circles and board of directors. Artadia has been based in New York City since late 2002.

*Artadia Awards* are determined through a rigorous jury process that employs nationally prominent curators, artists, and critics. Artadia partners with local foundations and individuals in the host cities to raise funds that go directly to artists in that community. Artadia matches those contributions by providing the funds that administer the program. Once an artist receives an Artadia Award, he or she becomes part of a national network of support forever. Since its founding, Artadia has awarded over \$2 million to more than 200 artists in its participating cities Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Houston, and San Francisco.

Artadia also presents events and programming in New York and Miami. Upcoming programs are intended to not only demonstrate the tremendous creativity in partner communities, but also to facilitate exchange and dialogue nationwide.

For press inquiries and information on Artadia, contact [news@artadia.org](mailto:news@artadia.org).

For information on becoming a partner or friend of Artadia, contact: Lila Kanner, Executive Director, [lilakanner@artadia.org](mailto:lilakanner@artadia.org); 212-727-2233 ext. 207.

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## Artadia Awardees 2008 Chicago



Recently granted an Illinois Arts Council Media Arts Fellowship, Melika Bass's atmospheric, experimental films unfold episodic tales through impressionistic moments, inviting viewers to accept a dreamy logic. By challenging audiences' expectations of traditional storytelling, Bass encourages them to make connections between fragments, observe details, raise questions, and accept ambiguities. Her films are inspired by a Midwestern-gothic sensibility and revolve around the sacrament of the everyday, rendered strange when treated with theatrical lighting and visceral sound design.



Juan Angel Chávez uses found objects from urban spaces to construct multilayered structures that blend the accessibility of the mundane with the interaction of public spaces. He views everyday possessions as a physical description of the history of existing, the texture of reality, and the purpose of the present and past. The massive nature of his work invites interaction with viewers and highlights the social relationship to public art. He has shown in the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago and Bucket Rider Gallery.



As a studio artist, "accidental" curator, and collaborative artist, Jim Duignan's practice has evolved to encompass an open vision for designing and manufacturing ideas, including dialogical exchanges, education as a medium, sustained community programs, participation in residencies and commissions, and alternative production and exhibitions in order to critically explore the intersection between art, education, and the urban. He is the founder of the Chicago-based collaborative project Stockyard Institute.



A self-described sculptor, trickster, and preacher, Theaster Gates enjoys the role that narrative can play in contemporary practice. With a history of singing and shouting in the Black Church and working as an urban planner, he makes objects and stages Soul Food dinner parties in unconventional locations that riff on cultural rituals, social and economic relationships, and assigned values in the arts community. Gates has exhibited and worked in Japan, Paris, the Netherlands, and throughout the U.S.



Kelly Kaczynski investigates psyche-social relationships within landscape and the built environment. Her large-scale installations and object-based work, while existing in a temporal-spatial platform, is deeply materials based. She desires to position viewers in ways that involve their presence and awareness of their bodies. The narratives she maps are from significant experiences with place and the people within it. Her public installations and exhibitions have been seen nationally and she teaches at Northwestern University.



Collaborative artists Dutes Miller and Stan Shellabarger's performances and artist books document the bittersweet rhythms of human relationships. Their work shifts between moments of togetherness and separation, between spaces of private and public, protection and pain, and visibility and invisibility. The work functions in a space that is both autobiographical and metaphorical. It speaks to the common experience of human interaction as well as the specific experiences of queer relationships. They had solo exhibits at this year's VOLTA Art Fair, Switzerland and the NEXT Art Fair, Chicago.



Sparring with the claims of painting versus drawing, Kim Piotrowski's work begins as a sepia-toned abstract form based on a nostalgic notion of vintage photographic portraits. Using a mix of synthetic materials such as modern packing paper, Sharpie pens, and acrylic inks, Piotrowski expresses contrasting form, contemporary content, and movement that appear as a three-dimensional presence. These explosive, organic, and abstract forms address issues of war, commercialism, and personal experiences. She recently had a solo show at the McClean County Arts Center in Bloomington, IL.

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