

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
March 31, 2009

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*LEADING CURATORS NAME INAUGURAL ARTADIA AWARDEES 2009 ATLANTA*

New York, NY—Artadia: The Fund for Art and Dialogue is delighted to announce the inaugural *Artadia Awardees 2009 Atlanta*. For three consecutive days (March 26-28, 2009), three internationally prominent jurors—Jeffrey Grove (Wieland Family Curator of Modern & Contemporary Art, High Museum of Art, Atlanta), Clara Kim (Gallery Director and Curator, REDCAT, Los Angeles) and Hamza Walker (Associate Curator and Director of Education, The Renaissance Society, Chicago)—conducted studio visits with 15 short-listed artists drawn from nearly 300 applicants throughout Greater Atlanta (23-county area) for the inaugural *Artadia Awards* in Atlanta. The awards range from \$15,000 to \$3,000.

The *Artadia Awardees 2009 Atlanta* at the \$15,000 level are: Don Cooper and Jerry Siegel. The five recipients of the \$3,000 awards are Tristan Al-Haddad, Ruth Dusseault, Fahamu Pecou, Larry Walker, and Angela West. In honor of Atlanta arts patron Judith Alexander, Don Cooper has been named the Judith Alexander Artadia Awardee.

Artadia Founder and President Christopher Vroom said of the inaugural program in Atlanta, “The vibrancy of any creative community relies upon a network of committed individuals, institutions, foundations and others, working together to ensure that cultural legacies are not only celebrated but extended. Artists, situated at the foundation of creative production, play a critical role not only in their unique ability to help us see the world in new ways but also in their capacity as educators, mentors and civic leaders. Artadia is thrilled to add Atlanta’s thriving community to our growing national network of support for artists. The city’s cultural institutions, schools, foundations, non-profit spaces, galleries and arts patrons have nurtured a terrific artistic community. We are proud to be a part of it and to extend the visibility of its institutions and artists across the country.”

Local juror Jeffrey Grove stated: “I am always supportive of programs that provide direct grants to individual artists to enable them to do what they must do. The Artadia Awards program in Atlanta provides local artists with national recognition for their achievements, access to internationally recognized curators from other cities, and an ongoing network of new connections and opportunities.”

Hamza Walker added, “For a town whose arts community prides itself on self-reliance, Atlanta is giving Chicago a run for its money. The panel process was a terrific opportunity to meet these very talented Atlanta artists. Having known Artadia well from Chicago since 2001, it is exciting to be part of adding this important city to the national network.”

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Applications for the *Artadia Awards* were open to visual artists in all media and at any stage of their career working and living in Greater Atlanta, GA. The application was available online for three months from September 1 to December 1, 2008. The three first round jurors—Naomi Beckwith (Assistant Curator, Studio Museum Harlem, New York), Lisa Cremin (Director, Metropolitan Atlanta Arts Fund), and Jeffrey Grove (Wieland Family Curator of Modern & Contemporary Art, High Museum of Art, Atlanta)—reviewed 292 applications and selected the finalists in New York February.

Artadia is grateful for the visionary support of the Atlanta program from the Common Good Funds of The Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta, the Judith Alexander Foundation, and many generous individuals.

#### *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 to support the core of creative culture: the individual artist. 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.

This year Artadia is launching its New York Artist Residency program, which brings Artadia Awardees from each of its program cities to New York for a three-month residency at the International Studio and Curatorial Program (ISCP). This groundbreaking addition to Artadia's commitment to individual artists is the first of its kind in New York City for US-based visual artists.

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

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

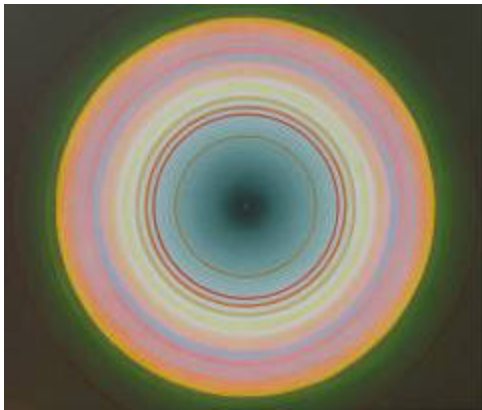
For information on becoming a partner or friend of Artadia, contact: Lila Kanner, Executive Director, [lilakanner@artadia.org](mailto:lilakanner@artadia.org); 212-727-2233 ext. 207.

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As an artist, architect, and educator, Tristan Al-Haddad focuses on the material systems and the methods of making work within the context of a digitally driven culture. His structures use geometric designs and form to loop through the mind's interaction with the material world, and the ever-adapting process of "becoming" (as opposed to "being"). Al-Haddad is an assistant professor at Georgia Institute of Technology. His work has been shown at the High Museum of Art and been published in the *New York Times*, *Dwell*, and *Metropolis* magazine.

*Virtual Doubling*, 2008, steel, polymers, wood, light, 384 x 48 x 120 inches



Influenced by the Indian concept of the bindu, Don Cooper's paintings attest to the moment in time he paints them and in which they are viewed. The Sanskrit concept represents the point at which the universe expands and recedes, among other definitions. Free of representations, his process is both meditative and realistic, building layers of transparent paint, each rotation representing a connection to the Whole. Cooper is a recipient of the Working Artist Grant from the Museum of Contemporary Art of Georgia, a Fulbright Artists Fellowship in Great Britain, and exhibits with Sandler Hudson Gallery, Atlanta. In honor of arts patron Judith Alexander, Cooper is the Judith Alexander Artadia Awardee.

*A Connection to the Whole*, 2008, oil on canvas, 56 x 66 inches



Ruth Dusseault's interests lie in urban utopian ideals. Her photographs follow projects that strive to present a self-contained world. In one project she chronicled the seven-year transformation of the Atlantic Steel Industries mill site into the urban development Atlantic Station. She has exhibited at the High Museum of Art Atlanta and The Contemporary, as well as in New Orleans, Austin, and Beijing. She has received an invitation to attend the Wendover Artist Residency with the Center for Land Use Interpretation, Los Angeles.

*Mill Substructure, During Demolition (Atlantic Steel Project)*, 2000  
C-print, 48 x 68 inches



In his paintings, performances, and videos, Fahamu Pecou questions our participation in the creation and proliferation of one-dimensional portraits of African-Americans in the media. Utilizing, for example, his alter ego "art celebrity" in the series "Fahamu Pecou is the SHIT," he considers and challenges art-world politics and issues of the black male body. Audacious, confrontational, and witty, his work appropriates the lexicons of celebrity, magazine, and fine art culture. Pecou attended the Spelman College Independent Study program and received his BFA from Atlanta College of Art. He has exhibited and performed extensively throughout the US and internationally.

*They Shootin: Made You Look*, 2008, acrylic on canvas, 66 x 51 inches



Photographer Jerry Siegel is well known for both his commercial and fine arts work. In the series “Black Belt Color,” he concentrates on his native Selma, Alabama where he witnessed Martin Luther King, Jr.’s march across the Edmund Pettus Bridge as a child. He captures the essence of the region and the dwindling Southern town. His love for the South, its art, and people, is also evident in an ongoing series of portraits of southern artists. A graduate of the Art Institute of Atlanta, Siegel’s work has been exhibited and collected extensively.

*Graffiti bus, Highway 80, 2006, photograph, 11 x 17 inches*



Larry Walker’s ongoing Wall Series is characterized by surfaces with peeling posters, eroding paint, and graffiti markings. These stem from his visual interest in the textured, weathered surfaces of urban walls and the psychological, socio-cultural dialogue they inspire. Walker is professor emeritus of Georgia State University, where he taught for almost 20 years and figured as an important mentor for a generation of Atlanta artists. Walker has exhibited extensively since the ’70s and his work is included in major collections nationwide.

*Listen to da Beat, 2008, mixed materials on birch ply, 72 x 98 inches*



In her lush color photographs, Angela West works with traditional genres such as portraiture and landscape to explore the nature of place and community, especially of rural small-town Georgia. As our contemporary world is redefining the notion of community—now a group of people unhinged from geographical location—West seeks to elevate the quotidian, the cadence of time, and the tangible proof of having been there. A Yale-graduate, West shows around the US, and currently is in residence at The Atlanta Contemporary Art Center.

*Untitled Portrait #12 (from Sweet 16 series), 2002, c-print, 24 x 30 inches*

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