

# TORONTO BIENNIAL OF ART

For Immediate Release

## TORONTO BIENNIAL OF ART ANNOUNCES TWO PRIZES ON THE EVE OF ITS INAUGURAL EDITION OPENING SEPTEMBER 21, 2019

**Toronto's newest, citywide art event on view through December 1, 2019 recognizes an outstanding contributor and an emerging artist**



Abel Rodríguez, *Terraza Alta III*, 2018. On view at Small Arms Inspection Building, Mississauga.



Hera Büyüktaşçıyan, *Reveries of an Underground Forest*, 2019. On view at 259 Lake Shore Blvd East, Toronto.

**Toronto, Canada, September 20, 2019**—The [Toronto Biennial of Art \(the Biennial\)](http://torontobiennial.org) announced today that Abel Rodríguez (on view at Small Arms Inspection Building in Mississauga) is the recipient of its inaugural Art Prize, which recognizes an artist's outstanding contribution to the Biennial, and Hera Büyüktaşçıyan (on view at 259 Lake Shore Blvd East in Toronto) is the recipient of its first Emerging Artist Prize, which acknowledges a promising, early-career Biennial artist. Both awards carry a value of \$20,000 CAD. Artists Althea Thauberger + Kite received an Honourable Mention (\$5,000 CAD). Awardees participating in the Biennial's first-ever edition, *The Shoreline Dilemma*, were selected by an international jury of distinguished art-world luminaries.

"Abel Rodríguez's captivating drawings come out of his memories of an earlier life spent in the Colombian Amazon. They are witness to his long and deep knowledge of this vital and necessary ecosystem and his work to protect it," noted juror Kitty Scott, Carol and Morton Rapp Curator, Modern and Contemporary Art, Art Gallery of Ontario.

Büyüktaşçıyan was at the Biennial to accept her prize: "I am extremely humbled to have been a part of this journey, which led all of the artists to dive into the depths of Toronto's lost rivers

and forests. They are a reminder of who and what existed before, and allow us to question the present through a different understanding of history. Big gratitude and thanks to the jurors and the valuable team who made everything possible for this very first edition of the Toronto Biennial of Art."

"We are thrilled to recognize the exceptional work of all the prize recipients, and hope this support helps them further develop their already impactful practices," said Biennial Executive Director Patrizia Libralato. "We are also grateful to the esteemed international jury for their efforts, and to our visionary patrons for spearheading support for this initiative in our inaugural year."

The 2019 Toronto Biennial of Art jury included: Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, Director, Castello di Rivoli Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Turin, Italy; Mark Godfrey, Senior Curator of International Art, Tate Modern, London, United Kingdom; Brian Jungen, artist, Vernon, British Columbia, Canada; Meg Onli, Assistant Curator, ICA Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, United States; and Kitty Scott, Carol and Morton Rapp Curator, Modern and Contemporary Art, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

The Art Prizes were initiated by Biennial patrons Jay Smith and Laura Rapp, and generously supported by David and Carol Appel; Leslie Gales, Keith Ray, Stephanie Ray, and Eric Ray; the Hal Jackman Foundation; and Eleanor and Francis Shen.

### **About the Toronto Biennial of Art Prize recipient**

Abel Rodríguez (Nonuya, born in Cahuinarí region, Colombia; lives in Bogotá, Colombia) is a sage from the Nonuya ethnic group from the Cahuinarí River in the Colombian Amazon. Rodríguez has extensive ancestral knowledge of regional plants and ecosystems, transmitted to him through generations. In the 1990s, Colombian armed conflict displaced Rodríguez from his native territory, and as a way to preserve his legacy, he creates drawings that represent cultural myths and personal memories. Now in his 70s, he is considered one of the most important living artists in Colombia.

### **About the Toronto Biennial of Art Emerging Artist Prize recipient**

Hera Büyüктаşçıyan (born and lives in Istanbul, Turkey) graduated from the Fine Arts Institute at Marmara University, Istanbul in 2006. The artist locates the figure of "the other" between the twinned spectres of absence and invisibility in order to weave connections between identity, memory, space, and time. Exhibitions include: *GIGANTISME—ART & INDUSTRIE*, Dunkirk, 2019; *Neither on the Ground, nor in the Sky*, ifa Galerie Berlin, 2019; *Underneath the Arches*,

Naples, 2018; Dhaka Art Summit, Bangladesh, 2018; Armenian Pavilion, 56th Venice Biennale, 2015; 14th Istanbul Biennial, 2015; and Jerusalem Show VII, 2014.

### **About the Toronto Biennial of Art Honourable Mention recipients**

Althea Thauberger (born in Saskatoon, SK, Canada; lives in Vancouver, BC, Canada) is primarily concerned with the use of performative and collaborative processes in the production of new forms of social documents. Thauberger's local and international projects involve long-term negotiations, co-operations, and collaborations with individuals, communities, and institutions in processes of their own representation. Currently, Thauberger is Assistant Professor in the Department of Art History, Visual Art & Theory at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver. Kite a.k.a. Suzanne Kite (Oglála Lakħóta, born in Sylmar, CA, USA; lives in Montreal, QC, Canada) is a performance artist, visual artist, and composer. She is a graduate of Bard MFA Milton Avery Graduate School of the Arts, Annandale-on-Hudson and a PhD candidate at Concordia University, Montreal. Kite is also a Research Assistant for the Initiative for Indigenous Futures and a 2019 Trudeau Scholar. Her research is concerned with contemporary Lakota epistemologies through research-creation, computational media, and performance practice.

### **About the Toronto Biennial of Art**

The Toronto Biennial of Art is a new international contemporary visual arts event as culturally connected and diverse as the city itself. From September 21 to December 1, Toronto and surrounding areas will be transformed by exhibitions, talks, and performances that reflect our local context while engaging with the most pressing issues of our time. In an effort to make contemporary art available to everyone, the Biennial's free, citywide programs aim to inspire individuals, bridge communities, and contribute to global conversations from a variety of perspectives.

For more information, [torontobiennial.org](http://torontobiennial.org), @torontobiennial, and #TObiennial19 on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/torontobiennial), [Twitter](https://twitter.com/torontobiennial), and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/torontobiennial).

### **Toronto Biennial of Art Founders and Funders**

The Toronto Biennial of Art is grateful to all contributing donors for their generous support. Major funders include: Founding Signature Patron – The Pierre Lassonde Family Foundation; Founding Premiere Patron – TD Bank Group; Founding Innovators – Canadian Malartic, Castlepoint Numa, CIBC, The Michael and Sonja Koerner Charitable Foundation, Polar Foundation, RBC Foundation, Scotiabank, St. Joseph Communications, Teknion; Founding Visionaries – Miranda Hubbs, Michelle Koerner & Kevin Doyle, Lisa & Mathew Melchior,

Menkes Developments, Theresa & Seth Mersky, Newpoint Developments, and Partners in Art. View the full list of donors at [torontobiennial.org](http://torontobiennial.org).

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### Image captions

Abel Rodríguez, *Terraza Alta III*, 2019. Acrylic on paper, 70 x 100 cm. Courtesy the artist and Instituto de Visión, Bogotá. On view at Small Arms Inspection Building, Mississauga.

Hera Büyüktaşçıyan, *Reveries of an Underground Forest*, 2019. Carpets, dimensions variable. Commissioned by the Toronto Biennial of Art. Photo: Toni Hafkenscheid. On view at 259 Lake Shore Blvd East, Toronto.