ILANA HARRIS-BABOU AND MATEO NAVA RECEIVE NATIONAL YOUNGARTS FOUNDATION’S JORGE M. PÉREZ AWARD

ARTISTS TO SPLIT $25,000 PRIZE

Announcement Made at Annual YoungArts Backyard Ball, the Culmination of National YoungArts Week Supporting Accomplished Young Artists from Across the Country

Miami, FL (January 12, 2020) – Ilana Harris-Babou (2009 YoungArts Winner in Visual Arts) and Mateo Nava (2013 YoungArts Winner in Visual Arts & U.S. Presidential Scholar in the Arts) are the recipients of National YoungArts Foundation’s Jorge M. Pérez Award. The winners were selected by Jorge M. Pérez, patriarch of the Pérez family and founder of leading development firm The Related Group, and Patricia García-Vélez Hanna, Art Director for The Related Group. Chosen for their artistic excellence and promise of future achievement, Harris-Babou and Nava will split an unrestricted prize of $25,000.

Established in 2019, the Jorge M. Pérez Award, funded by The Jorge M. Pérez Family Foundation at The Miami Foundation, is an unrestricted granting program for emerging and mid-career artists who are past YoungArts award winners.
Sarah Arison, YoungArts Board Chair, said, "National YoungArts Foundation is deeply grateful to The Jorge M. Pérez Family Foundation for their unwavering commitment to up-and-coming artists like Ilana and Mateo. The Jorge M. Pérez Award is just one of the many ways YoungArts provides past YoungArts award winners with professional and creative development opportunities at critical moments in their careers. We look forward to seeing what this year's grantees do next."

"The Jorge M. Pérez Family Foundation is proud to support organizations like YoungArts that are dedicated to nurturing and cultivating the next generation of artists throughout the U.S.," said Jorge M. Pérez. "This year's award grantees, Ilana and Mateo, have shown incredible talent and future promise, and we are happy to support their creative journeys as they continue to grow in their respective fields."

Ilana Harris-Babou was born in Brooklyn, New York, and is a rapidly rising Massachusetts-based interdisciplinary artist. Her work is grounded in video and spans sculpture and installation. Through her work, Harris-Babou confronts the contradictions of the American dream, and specifically, the ever-unreliable notion that hard work will lead to upward mobility and economic freedom. She received a Bachelor of Arts from Yale University in 2013 and a Master of Fine Arts from Columbia University in 2016. Harris-Babou has exhibited throughout the United States and Europe, with solo exhibitions at the Museum of Arts and Design, Larrie and 80WSE in New York. Her work has also been shown at the de Young Museum, The Jewish Museum, Kunsthau Hamburg, SculptureCenter and Whitney Museum of American Art.

Harris-Babou said, "I continue to be impressed by YoungArts’ commitment to artists at every stage of their career. As a young artist, I’ve learned that recognition doesn’t necessarily come with financial security. The Jorge M. Pérez Award gives me a solid foundation from which to reach for the stars. I feel that I have so much left to learn and so many big ideas to realize. This award will help me to take my practice places I haven’t yet imagined."

Mateo Nava is a Miami-based artist working in painting, drawing, collage and sculpture. Nava earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts at The Cooper Union in 2017, where his work began to focus on pattern and iconography in relationship to Latin American visual tradition. His work has been included in group exhibitions in New York and Miami, and he has completed residencies at the Yale Norfolk Summer School of Art, Parc Space at Bay Parc Apartments, Fountainhead Studios and Vermont Studio Center. Nava’s work was also the subject of a solo exhibition at Real Art Ways in Hartford, Connecticut. He is a recent recipient of an Artist Access Program grant from Miami-Dade County and FUNDarte, and his work has been featured in New American Paintings, issue #142. Nava is currently an artist-in-residence at Miami’s ProjectArt and an art faculty member at Design and Architecture Senior High (DASH).

Nava said, "I feel extremely fortunate to be honored with YoungArts’ Jorge M. Pérez Award. With the help of this award, I will be able to invest more of my time and resources to completing enriching and constructive experiences that can help me grow as an artist. More specifically, I will begin working on a large-scale interdisciplinary installation that will take on the form of an exhibition; this project can help me further develop a new vision for my work."

The announcement of the 2020 Jorge M. Pérez Award winners took place at YoungArts’ annual Backyard Ball performance and gala, presented by fine jeweler Harry Winston, Inc. and hosted by honorary chairs Sandra and Tony Tamer and co-chairs Sarah Arison and Thomas Wilhelm, Jay Franke and David Herro, and Oxana and Steven Marks. The evening honored jazz trumpeter
and composer **Terence Blanchard** (1980 YoungArts Winner in Classical Music) and conceptual artist **Teresita Fernández** with the Arison Alumni Award and Arison Award, respectively, for their vital contributions and commitment to the arts. The event culminated **National YoungArts Week**, the organization’s signature weeklong program, and celebrated the achievements of the 2020 YoungArts Winners, the nation’s most accomplished young artists in the literary, visual and performing arts.

The Jorge M. Pérez Award is one of two major awards given by National YoungArts Foundation as part of a wide range of ongoing creative and professional support for YoungArts award winners. In December, **Adam Amram** (2012 YoungArts Winner in Visual Arts) was named the 2020 **Daniel Arsham Fellow**, receiving a $25,000 unrestricted prize and mentorship with Arsham (1999 YoungArts Winner in Visual Arts).

**About National YoungArts Foundation**

National YoungArts Foundation (YoungArts) was established in 1981 by Lin and Ted Arison. YoungArts identifies the most accomplished young artists in the visual, literary and performing arts, and provides them with creative and professional development opportunities throughout their careers.

Entrance into this prestigious organization starts with a highly competitive application process for talented artists ages 15–18, or grades 10-12, in the United States, that is judged by esteemed discipline specific panels of artists through a rigorous blind adjudication process. In their first year, YoungArts award winners, who represent the top 10% of applicants, receive valuable financial awards of up to $10,000; presentation opportunities at renowned institutions; and the chance to learn from notable artists and mentors such as Debbie Allen, Mikhail Baryshnikov, Frank Gehry, Wynton Marsalis, Salman Rushdie and Mickalene Thomas in intimate settings.

YoungArts award winners are further eligible for exclusive opportunities including: nomination as a U.S. Presidential Scholar in the Arts, one of the nation’s highest honors for high school students; a wide range of fellowships, residencies and awards; presentation opportunities at major venues nationwide; additional financial support; and access to YoungArts Post, a free private digital network for YoungArts artists to connect, collaborate and learn about additional opportunities. YoungArts award winners include accomplished leaders in their fields such as Daniel Arsham, Terence Blanchard, Camille A. Brown, Viola Davis, Allegra Goodman, Josh Groban, Judith Hill, Tarell Alvin McCraney, Andrew Rannells, Desmond Richardson and Hunter Schafer.

For more information, visit **youngarts.org**, **Facebook**, **Instagram** or **Twitter**.