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Press Release

United States Artists Awards Lulani Arquette and Roberto Bedoya the 2021 Berresford Prize

Each will receive the \$25,000 award, given annually to a cultural practitioner who has contributed significantly to the advancement, wellbeing, and care of artists in society.

CHICAGO, IL —June 9, 2021—United States Artists (USA) is thrilled to announce **Lulani Arquette** and **Roberto Bedoya** as recipients of the **2021 Berresford Prize**, an annual award that honors cultural practitioners who have contributed significantly to the advancement, wellbeing, and care of artists in society. Lulani Arquette and Roberto Bedoya are complementary figures in the field that have both created new possibilities for artists, and will each receive the \$25,000 award this year. Their visionary approaches engender cooperation, promote thoughtful civic engagement, and advocate for artists on a local and national level.

“As practitioners who have made their care for the artistic community keenly felt throughout their careers, Lulani and Roberto represent complementary approaches to supporting and elevating artists in our society. Lulani has long been an advocate for investing in diverse indigenous communities and cultures on a national scale, and Roberto’s thinking on the politics of space and belonging has been seminal to the cultural policy sector. They are ideal recipients of the Berresford Prize, as they represent a deep commitment to artists, placing them at the heart of their life’s work,” said United States Artists **Program Director Lynnette Miranda**.

The Native Hawaiian arts leader Lulani Arquette has helmed the Native Arts and Culture Foundation (NACF), a philanthropic organization dedicated exclusively to the perpetuation of American Indian, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian arts and cultures nationwide, since 2009. Arquette’s grassroots and community-driven approach has funded Native artists and cultural bearers and advanced the support for those artists on a national level. In early 2020, her organization, along with the NEA and NEH, co-presented Native Arts and Culture: Resilience, Reclamation, and Relevance, the first gathering of its kind. Later that year it was announced that NACF would gain ownership of the Yale Union building in Portland, Oregon, in a historic repatriation of property.

Roberto Bedoya is currently the Cultural Affairs Manager of the City of Oakland, where he recently unveiled the city’s first cultural plan in 30 years. From 1996 to 2001, he was the Executive Director of the National Association of Artists’ Organizations (NAAO), supporting artist-run alternative art space and artist-centered other initiatives. He was then the Executive Director of the Tucson Pima Arts Council (TPAC), where he launched P.L.A.C.E (People, Land, Arts, Culture and Engagement), a nationally recognized project that brought together art, civic engagement, and social justice to contend with complex issues in Southern Arizona.

“I am overflowing with gratitude to receive the completely unexpected Berresford Prize award. Actually, I’m still quite stunned by all of this! It is especially meaningful because it is a tribute to the value of artists, arts, and cultures in our world, and is named for a woman who is held in high regard and honor herself. All of the abiding relationships and help from family, community, and colleagues has allowed my work to thrive. It feels immensely rewarding to be recognized

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for working with arts creatives and cultural changemakers. In my own Native language, Mahalo nui loa (Great Thanks),” said **2021 Berresford Prize Recipient Lulani Arquette**.

“It is an honor to be given this prize that acknowledges the entanglements of poetics, policy-making and justice that my career is engaged in and bewitched by. I am extremely grateful for this gift,” said **2021 Berresford Prize Recipient Roberto Bedoya**.

The decision to name two recipients this year came from an ethos of abundance and sharing during a time where resources are strained for artists and cultural practitioners—both qualities that are embodied by Arquette and Bedoya. Naming two awardees is one of the many ways United States Artists has responded to the needs of the field during this challenging time, including, as a founding partner of **Artist Relief**, distributing over \$20 million nationwide in direct funding to nearly 4,000 artists in need throughout 2020, and establishing an initiatives department that advises foundations, philanthropists, and other field partners seeking to create or expand programs that support individual creative practitioners across the country.

“Lulani Arquette and Roberto Bedoya perfectly embody the values of the Berresford Prize: they have spent their careers concerned with the well-being of artists and centering the roles of artists in our communities. This has been especially important over the past year when many artists have been among the hardest hit during the pandemic,” said **Ed Henry, USA board chair**. “Their consistent advocacy for artists working within their communities sets a standard to which we all aspire.”

“The word ‘radical’ originates in the word ‘root,’ and this year we have the luck of awarding the Berresford Prize to two arts makers, Lulani Arquette and Roberto Bedoya, each of whose radical imagination and advocacy are rooted in fierce, rigorous generosity of place and community. Based in Portland and Oakland respectively, they each bring the West Coast and Pacific Ocean to bear on the crucial conversations resounding our arts institutions today. Arquette’s and Bedoya’s leadership and vision escalate the work of artists in revolutionary ways, turning and returning us, with keener eyes, toward art and one another as we ask essential questions such as: ‘Who?’ and ‘How?’—‘What if?’ and ‘Why not now?’,” said **2014 United States Artists Fellow Natalie Diaz**.

The Berresford Prize is named for Susan V. Berresford, former President of the Ford Foundation, who co-founded USA and is still an active Trustee. Introduced in 2019, the unrestricted \$25,000 prize reinforces USA’s commitment to artists by acknowledging the remarkable administrators, curators, scholars, and producers who are building platforms and creating conditions for artists to thrive. The award was conceived of by several USA Fellows in response to the lack of acknowledgement for those who have dedicated their careers to the betterment of artists. The inaugural recipient in 2019 was Kristy Edmunds who is the Executive and Artistic Director of UCLA’s Center for the Art of Performance. 2020’s recipient was Linda Goode Bryant who is a social activist, gallerist, filmmaker, and Founder and President of Active Citizen Project and Project EATS.

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About Lulani Arquette

Lulani Arquette is in her twelfth year as the President and CEO of the Native Arts and Cultures Foundation (NACF), a national nonprofit located in Portland, Oregon. NACF is dedicated to advancing equity and Native knowledge with a focus on arts and cultural expression that helps support American Indian, Native Hawaiian, and Alaska Native artists, organizations, and communities. Arquette brings over twenty five years of professional experience steering organizations to their highest ability and potential. Through NACF's work centered on transformative creativity and Native resilience, artists have advanced their careers, increased their national and international visibility, and strengthened relationships with their communities and stakeholders. In 2020, NACF accepted the historic transfer of ownership of a building in Portland, Oregon that will become its new headquarters and the unique Center for Native Arts and Cultures that will provide artist maker space and exhibiting and presenting opportunities. Arquette, a theatre performing artist herself with a BA in Theatre Arts and MA in Political Science, has performed in stage productions and executive produced film projects. Her past work includes leading the largest multi-service organization for Native Hawaiians in Hawai'i and developing its first for-profit subsidiary. She created the Hawaii Leadership Center, a distinctive multi-sector leadership program for executives and managers that based its curriculum on Native Hawaiian, Asian, and contemporary western approaches. Arquette has served on many boards including Grantmakers In the Arts and is currently a board member of the Association of Performing Arts Professionals.

About Roberto Bedoya

Roberto Bedoya is the Cultural Affairs Manager for the City of Oakland, where he recently shepherded its Cultural Plan, *Belonging in Oakland: a Cultural Development Plan*. Throughout his career, Bedoya has consistently supported artist-centered cultural practices and advocated for expanded definitions of inclusion and belonging in the cultural sector. His essays, "U.S. Cultural Policy; Its Politics of Participation, Its Creative Potential;" "Creative Placemaking and the Politics of Belonging and Dis-Belonging;" and "Spatial Justice: Rasquachification, Race and the City," have reframed the discussion on cultural policy to shed light on exclusionary practices in cultural policy decision making.

Prior to his work in Oakland, he was the Executive Director of the Tucson Pima Arts Council (Tucson, AZ), where he established the innovative P.L.A.C.E (People, Land, Arts, Culture and Engagement) initiative, which supported art-based civic engagement/creative placemaking projects. He was the Executive Director of The National Association of Artists' Organizations, (NAAO) in Washington, DC, a national arts service organization for individual artists and artist-centered organizations. NAAO was a co-plaintiff in the Finley vs. NEA lawsuit. At NAAO, he established The Co-Generate Leadership Development Initiative. As a cultural policy researcher, he has worked on projects for the Ford Foundation and the Urban Institute regarding the support systems for artists. As a speaker, he has made numerous presentations at organizations such as Opera America, the National Association of Latino Arts and Culture, The National Council for the Arts, The Creative Time Summit, University of Houston, and Center for Arts Leadership and American for the Arts about artists and civil society. He is the author of *The Ballad of Cholo Dandy*, a poetry chapbook (Chax Press) and has contributed poems to publications about visual artists James Luna, Daniel J Martinez, Dario Robelto, and the artists group Postcommodity. Bedoya has been a Visiting Scholar at the Getty Research Institute, a Rockefeller Fellow at New York University, and a Creative Placemaking Fellow at Arizona State University.

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About United States Artists

United States Artists is a national arts funding organization based in Chicago, IL. We raise money and redistribute it in the form of unrestricted awards to the country's most compelling artists and cultural practitioners. Since our founding in 2006, we have awarded more than 700 individuals with over \$33 million of direct support.

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