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City of Salem announces Chris Pappan as the Naumkeag Portrait Artist

Salem, MA— The City of Salem’s Arts & Culture Program is pleased to announce the awarding of the Naumkeag Portrait Project commission to artist Chris Pappan. Pappan was selected from a pool of over 60 applicants and 4 finalists as the awardee of this commission by a Jury Panel consisting of arts professionals, City staff & community members, as well as members of both the Salem Public Art Commission and the Massachusetts Tribal Council.

Chris Pappan is an artist of Kanza, Osage and Lakota descent based in Chicago IL. He cites his influences as *Heavy Metal* and *Juxtapoz* magazines, and the Lowbrow art movement with its cultural roots in 1970s underground comics, punk, and hot rod cultures. His artistic style is based on the Plains Native art tradition known as Ledger Art and often literally reflects the dominant culture’s distorted perceptions of Native peoples. Upon winning this commission from the City of Salem, MA, Chris had this to say: “This is an extraordinary opportunity to work with the Naumkeag community. I am incredibly honored and humbled by the fact that they have placed their trust in me, and I will give all I can to honor their living legacy and tenacity.”

A graduate of the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe and a nationally recognized painter and ledger artist, Pappan’s work is in the collections of the National Museum of the American Indian, Washington D.C.; The DePaul Art Museum in Chicago IL; The Newberry Library in Chicago IL, The North American Native Museum of Geneva Switzerland; and The Spencer Museum of Art, Lawrence, Kansas, among others. You can learn more about Pappan’s work by visiting: www.chrispappan.com.

The Naumkeag Portrait Project was proposed by Mayor Kimberley Driscoll to the Public Art Commission in May 2019, and approved by City Council, with the purpose of recognizing and highlighting the contributions and sacrifices of the Indigenous Peoples of this land. On Pappan’s awarding of this commission, Mayor Driscoll stated “I am very pleased that the selection committee has chosen such an accomplished artist for this important and historic commission. Chris will help bring a diversity of representation and history to City Hall through this portrait project. His works have appeared in collections, museums, and galleries across the nation, celebrating, commemorating, and representing a cultural heritage too often unseen and unknown in America today. A portrait recognizing the presence and role of

the Naumkeag in shaping our community is long overdue at Salem City Hall. Chris' vision, to approach this commission with 'a spirit of boldness, community, and resilience,' is consistent with our city's commitment to do better in honoring the contributions and history of the Indigenous peoples who have called this place home for countless generations."

Thomas Green, Vice President of the Massachusetts Tribal Council, added to the Mayor's enthusiasm for this award by saying: "We are excited to work with such a talented artist. We are greatly appreciative to the residents of Salem for all the support we have received with this project".

The research phase for this portrait will commence imminently, whereby Pappan will work closely with the Tribal Council to identify the appropriate subject matter for the work. Painting will commence this fall, with the portrait being finalized and presented to the City and Tribal Council in early 2022.

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