FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: August 11, 2020

Arts Council announces first two recipients of
2020 DeHaan Artist of Distinction Awards

Artists’ projects will focus on landscapes of Underground Railroad sites in Indiana and
the study of innovation in the art of conceptual works on paper

INDIANAPOLIS – Mason Archie and Samuel Levi Jones have been named the first two recipients of the 2020 DeHaan Artist of Distinction Awards, which support aspirational and innovative projects by contemporary visual artists in central Indiana.

Each artist receives $10,000 to execute their proposed project, followed by an exhibition of their work in a group show at Gallery 924 at the Arts Council.

Mason Archie, a landscape and figurative painter, was selected for his project “The Risk and Beauty of Humanity: Landscapes of the Underground Railroad.” Archie will use landscapes and waterscapes to document historical sites of the Underground Railroad in Indiana as they currently exist. He will also create a book providing historical data on the selected sites. Through this project, Archie hopes to enlighten audiences about the sacrifices made for justice and to obtain recognition for Underground Railroad sites in Indiana that aren’t recognized by the National Register of Historic Places.

Visual artist/activist Samuel Levi Jones will attend a residency at Dieu Donné in Brooklyn, New York, to study the art of papermaking with the intention of creating conceptual works on paper that stand alone, without canvas support. Jones will use 20th-century historical texts from Bartholomew County, Indiana, as a reference point for
the production of large, two-dimensional paper works that address the changing nature of how history is understood and the imperfection that exists in the way history is recorded and interpreted. Jones will also pursue a refreshed attempt at a significant three-dimensional sculptural work made from pulped paper.

2020 marks the fourth year of the DeHaan Artist of Distinction Award program, made possible through the generosity of the Christel DeHaan Family Foundation (CDFF). Christel DeHaan, who died June 6, 2020, was a remarkable businesswoman, philanthropist, and devoted advocate for Indy arts, culture, and education. The DeHaan Artist of Distinction Awards are an example of her legacy and commitment toward social impact through her work with many Indianapolis arts, cultural, and youth-serving organizations.

Archie and Jones are the first two recipients of five awards that will be granted to visual artists in 2020. During each round, applicants submit a detailed proposal outlining their project, its impact on their career, and how financial assistance would allow them to take the next steps to add this project to their portfolio. Awardees are then selected for their artistic quality, innovative approach, and impact on the visual arts field.

Application deadlines for the three remaining 2020 DeHaan Artist of Distinction Awards are September 4 and November 13.

“As we traverse an incredibly uncertain time, we often look to artists to examine the most difficult of these issues. The first two artists in 2020 selected for the DeHaan Award are perfectly suited to challenge assumptions and help us all to see more clearly the crippling issues that face our country,” said Shannon M. Linker, vice president of the Arts Council of Indianapolis and director of Gallery 924. “Both projects offer a timely investigation into long-accepted histories that are ready to be explored.”

About the Christel DeHaan Family Foundation:

Since 1997, CDFF Board Members have overseen grants in excess of $60 million to arts, arts education, education, child welfare, and human need organizations. Throughout its history, the Foundation has refined its giving strategies and operations to optimize its support provided to arts and cultural organizations with a special emphasis on the performing arts. Support for the DeHaan Artist of Distinction Award program is a new opportunity to engage the visual arts community.
About the Arts Council of Indianapolis:

The Arts Council of Indianapolis is a nonprofit service organization dedicated to fostering meaningful and equitable engagement in the arts by nurturing a culture where artists and arts organizations thrive. The Arts Council allocates public funding to arts and cultural organizations through a competitive grant program; offers fellowship opportunities including the Creative Renewal Arts Fellowship, the Robert D. Beckmann, Jr. Emerging Artist Fellowship, and the DeHaan Artist of Distinction Award; provides programs, services, and technical assistance for artists and arts organizations; manages the city’s public art program including the Public Art for Neighborhoods initiative; supports arts education and arts integration in partnership with Indianapolis Public Schools; and owns/operates the Indianapolis Artsgarden, Gallery 924, and IndyArtsGuide.org.

Connect with the Arts Council of Indianapolis on Facebook/indyarts, Twitter and Instagram @artscouncilindy, and online at indyarts.org.

Images: Mason Archie (Provided by the artist); Samuel Levi Jones (Provided by Galerie Lelong & Co., New York)