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**THE NATIVE ARTS AND CULTURES FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES
EIGHT NATIVE ARTISTS TO RECEIVE \$30,000 2018 MENTOR ARTIST FELLOWSHIP AWARD**

VANCOUVER, Wash., April 17, 2018 – The national not-for-profit Native Arts and Cultures Foundation (NACF) has awarded eight accomplished artists representing six states as the 2018 NACF Mentor Artist Fellows in Contemporary Visual Arts and Traditional Arts. This fellowship recognizes established American Indian and Alaska Native artists of ten years or more who wish to mentor an American Indian or Alaska Native emerging artist apprentice for one year, strengthening the artistic skill and evolution of creativity among Native artists.

The Mentor Artist Fellowship is a regional award of \$30,000 available to Native artists residing in and an enrolled member of a tribe located in the Pacific Northwest, Southwest, and Upper Midwest regions of the United States.

Following regional Open Calls, over one hundred Native artists applied for the 2018 Mentor Artist Fellowship award, with the finalists selected by national peer review panelists who specialize in Native Contemporary and/or Native Traditional Arts. Each Mentor Artist Fellow selects their own emerging Native artist to work with for one year. Apprentices must also be a resident of and enrolled in a tribe within one of the three regions.

In addition to the monetary award, the NACF supports program participants in developing their lesson plans and mentorship goals; each mentor and apprentice will attend a two-day training and program kick-off organized by the NACF in Minneapolis, Minnesota in May 2018. Fellowships culminate in a joint mentor/apprentice art project to demonstrate the power of mentoring to promote Native arts and cultural revitalization and perpetuation.

“As we near the end of the first year of the Mentor Artist Fellowship, we are seeing tremendous success—from in-depth intergenerational cultural knowledge exchange shared between each mentor and apprentice pair to community engagement of their joint art projects,” says Francene Blythe, Diné/Sisseton-Wahpeton/Eastern Band Cherokee and NACF’s Director of Programs. “This year’s group of new Mentor Artist Fellows will, with no doubt, be as impactful in their mentoring and accomplishments working with their apprentices.”

The 2018 Mentor Artist Fellowship award recipients reside in Alaska, Minnesota, New Mexico, Oregon, South Dakota, and Washington, and are as follows:

In the Contemporary Visual Arts

- Jason Garcia, Santa Clara Pueblo Tewa, printmaking, New Mexico
- Kathleen Carlo Kendall, Koyukon Athabascan, carving, Alaska
- Will Wilson, citizen of the Navajo Nation, photography, New Mexico

In the Traditional Arts

- Aurolyn Renee Stwyer, Celilo-Warm Springs/Wasco, beadwork, Oregon
- Bryan Akipa, Sisseton Wahpeton Sioux Tribe, flute carving, South Dakota
- Lily Hope, Tlingit, weaving, Alaska
- Lisa Telford, Haida, weaving, Washington
- Patrick William Kruse, Red Cliff Band of Superior Chippewa Indians, descendent of the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, birch bark basket making, Minnesota

The NACF Mentor Artist Fellowship is supported by individual donors and regional funders committed to continuing and flourishing Native arts and cultures. NACF is grateful to Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies; and to the James F. and Marion L. Miller Foundation for supporting an Oregon Mentor Artist Fellow.

The Native Arts and Cultures Foundation's mission is to promote the revitalization, appreciation and perpetuation of American Indian, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian arts and cultures through grant making, convening and advocacy. To date, NACF has supported a total of 295 awards for Native artists, organizations, and advocacy efforts in 32 states and the District of Columbia. To learn more about the Mentor Artist Fellows and NACF's work—*nurturing the passion and power of creative expression*, visit: www.nativeartsandcultures.org.

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