



**JO HAY OPEN STUDIO GALLERY is pleased to present**

***URBAN SAINTS***

**Large-scale portrait paintings by CHRIS LÓPEZ**

**July 7th through July 13th, 2018**

**Meet the Artist Reception: Sunday July 8th, 7-10PM**

*URBAN SAINTS* is a series of large-scale portraits juxtaposing doctrinal Renaissance painting techniques with modern masculinity. The artist, Chris Lopez, is well known for his portrayal of the attitudes and distinctive personalities of his subjects in the details of his otherwise burly and raw nude paintings. His work is masculine to the core, but in a way that represents man in totality: rugged, brawny, sensory, and sensual.

Lopez says that this series is a play on the word "saint", combining the painting styles of the Apostles and other religious masterpieces with modern subjects, adorning large tattoos that showcase their personalities. His paintings do not just represent each man, but reveal their personal memoirs; the hardships they have faced, their private suffering, and the stories they carry with them. There is an instinctual response to each painting; a relation made between the work and the viewer's own experiences that creates an intimate, empathic connection. Viewers are enticed by the paintings to explore the personalities of each subject, from their most masculine features to their clandestine sensitivities.

To Lopez, the men in his paintings represent saints in a secular way. He offers that “people don't need to be religious to be a saint to someone”, and reflects on stories of perseverance, passion, moving to a new country for a better life, and dealing with loss. He argues that the hardships his subjects have faced have made them better men, saint-like in his perspective, which is why he has chosen to portray them in this virtuous manner. An intentional choice to use acrylic paint on oriented strand boards blends texture into the portrait, giving the subject another expression in a realistic language. Lopez considers the panels an essential part of the painting process as they become the gestures that create and actualize his subjects.

The series is not just about the emotional and multifaceted nature of the men Lopez portrays. *URBAN SAINTS* is an homage to the sanctity within all of us.

### **General Information**

Founded in 2014, JO HAY OPEN STUDIO GALLERY is a contemporary art gallery located in Provincetown, MA. Carolyn Kramer, Founder and Gallery Director, has a clear vision and bold approach to the art scene in Provincetown. The gallery's mission is to exhibit current, provocative art that motivates conversation and progressive thought. Exhibitions are propelled by the art and it's message rather than commerce, creating an open and inclusive space to delve into contemporary issues.