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SCHOOL OF THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO’S FASHION SHOW
RETURNS TO MILLENNIUM PARK THURSDAY, APRIL 19

SAIC Alumna Cynthia Rowley to Receive SAIC Legend of Fashion Award Alongside Husband and Art Connoisseur Bill Powers at THE WALK 2012 Annual Benefit Gala

Tickets to daytime shows on sale now via saic.edu/fashionshow

CHICAGO — Nick Cave, professor and chair of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) Fashion Design department, proudly announces that SAIC will present its 78th annual fashion show, Fashion 2012, on Thursday, April 19, 2012. Presented for the second consecutive year against the backdrop of beautiful Millennium Park, the show will be presented three times throughout the day before a final evening presentation during THE WALK 2012, SAIC’s annual benefit gala supporting the production of student work and scholarships. This year’s runway show will conclude with the elaborate and diverse creations of more than 40 seniors, the largest graduating class in SAIC Fashion Design history. Taking place a full three weeks earlier than in 2011, Fashion 2012 is one of several significant year-end happenings at SAIC, which also hosts the annual Graduate Exhibition in SAIC’s Sullivan Galleries April 28–May 18.

Fashion and art lovers from around the world will experience a stunning runway show at these events, featuring more than 300 original garments created by undergraduate students in SAIC’s internationally renowned Fashion Design program, which boasts such distinguished alumni as Halston, Cynthia Rowley, Gary Graham, J. Morgan Puett, Lawrence Steele, and Maria Pinto.

“SAIC’s full day of year-end fashion events is great for our students and the vibrancy of our city,” says SAIC President Walter Massey. “As a flagship event on Chicago’s cultural calendar, this show provides our talented fashion design students a platform to share their innovative work and gives a sophisticated, creative audience a glimpse of the future of fashion and the next generation of designers. I am delighted that we were able to welcome more than 2,400 guests to our shows last year and eager to welcome them back to Millennium Park once again, along with new friends.”

Fashion 2012 delivers all the elements of a professional fashion runway show—stunning design, intriguing soundscapes, exquisite garments, and cutting-edge looks—by incorporating and combining techniques from the fields of sculpture, performance, design, technology, architecture, and installation. Seniors in SAIC’s acclaimed Fashion Design department will create complete collections of five garments; Juniors will show three complete designs from their collection; and each Sophomore will present one avant-garde look in muslin. Behind-the-scenes photos from students and other insights into their creative process are online and updated regularly at facebook.com/saic.fashionshow.
More than 70 models from Factor Runway will wear designs down a 90-foot runway inside a 15,000-square-foot tent on Chase Promenade, a three-block-long, tree-lined walkway centrally located in Millennium Park. Hairstyling is provided by Aveda Institute Chicago; make-up services are provided by Chicago Emerging Artists. Capitalizing on the success of Fashion 2011, Creative Director of Brooklyn-based WAAVES Studio Skooby Laposky—a past collaborator with designers including Gemma Kahng, Conny Groenewegen, and Jason Wu—will again lend his creative expertise to the sound and musical accompaniment that serves as the backdrop for the show. Fashion 2012 is produced by SAIC faculty member Conrad Hamather, Graduate Coordinator of the Master of Design in Fashion Body & Garment program.

THE WALK 2012– APRIL 19, 5:30 P.M.
SAIC is also proud to host THE WALK 2012, the annual scholarship benefit gala held in conjunction with the fashion show. The event is made possible in part by presenting sponsor Swarovski, returning for its second consecutive year of support. This year’s chairs are Kate Neisser and John Jones of Chicago. Neisser is the chair of the board of trustees of the Erikson Institute, immediate past president of Snow City Arts, and is a member of the SAIC Fashion Committee. She also co-chaired THE WALK 2011. As a freelance writer, her work was published in Harper's Bazaar and Elle Décor among other publications. Jones is the founder and co-owner of the Gold Coast men’s boutique George Greene. Previously, for 30 years, Jones served as the Vice President of high-end fashion boutique Ultimo, working directly with Joan Weinstein. He was the first recipient of the Uomo Moda Award for Men’s Fashion in the United States.

2012 SAIC LEGEND OF FASHION AWARD TO CYNTHIA ROWLEY AND BILL POWERS
A highlight of THE WALK 2012 will be when SAIC alumna Cynthia Rowley (SAIC 1978–81), creator of the renowned fashion label bearing her name, and her husband Bill Powers, co-owner of HALF Gallery and judge on Bravo’s competition reality series Work Of Art, receive the 2012 SAIC Legend of Fashion Award.

“There could not be a more perfect choice for our Legend of Fashion Award than Cynthia Rowley and Bill Powers,” says SAIC Fashion Design Department Chair Nick Cave. “In a constant conversation between fashion and art, Cynthia and Bill work from a communal, visceral center that allows them to inspire, support, collaborate, and share their vision with the world. In doing so their work resonates with the duality of couture and artistic expression that is at the core of SAIC’s Fashion Design program. Their involvement in Fashion 2012 will benefit our students tremendously.”

Cynthia Rowley constructed her first dress when she was seven years old. Her intuitive technical skill paired with a love of “making things” led her into an undergraduate degree from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, where she began to pursue a career in fashion. Her first full collection was purchased while she was still in school, and gave her the leverage she needed to move to New York and establish her brand. Rowley’s namesake collection has since grown to include womenswear, menswear, eyewear, handbags, shoes, legwear, shapewear, home sewing products, wetsuits as well as a collaboration with Johnson & Johnson Band-Aid Brand. Rowley has been recognized both within the fashion industry, with a Perry Ellis Award for Womenswear Design Talent by the CFDA and a CFDA nomination for the Perry Ellis Award for New Menswear Design Talent, and as a popular style authority on 24 Hour Catwalk, Project Runway, Oprah, Late Show with David Letterman, The Today Show, and
America’s Next Top Model among others. Her work has been featured in nearly every major magazine and newspaper domestically and internationally, and the Cynthia Rowley Collection is sold in better department, specialty, and online stores, as well as in more than 60 Cynthia Rowley boutiques around the world. An art enthusiast herself, Cynthia has collaborated with artists like SAIC’s Nick Cave, Will Cotton, Olaf Breuning, and Ryan McNamara on various ventures and collections, and has designed a capsule for the Gagosian Gallery, a collaborative exhibit for MoMA’s PS1, and co-founded the groundbreaking art retail site Exhibition A.

Bill Powers owns Half Gallery in New York City along with partners Andy Spade and James Frey. More recently, Powers co-founded ExhibitionA.com, an online art site that commissions limited edition prints. Powers path in contemporary art first manifested itself in 1997 when he became the Editor-in-Chief of Blackbook magazine, where he remained off-and-on until 2005. He has also written about art and culture for other prominent titles including the New York Times, W, and Muse, and is currently a contributor at Purple magazine and a judge on Bravo’s Work of Art. Powers is currently on the board of the non-profit RxArt, an organization that places contemporary art in hospitals and healing environments.

“I am so honored to be receiving the Legend of Fashion Award,” says Cynthia Rowley. “As an alumna of SAIC this award has a very special meaning to Bill and me. We both believe that a marriage between fashion and art is something to strive for in the 21st century, and we hope that future fashion and design students continue to draw inspiration from both the runway and the gallery.”

“Chicago has an incredibly vibrant and thriving scene where art, fashion, and culture at large fuse together,” says Bill Powers. “The MCA continues to introduce artists from Jeff Koons to Rashid Johnson into the larger ‘art world’ and wouldn’t you know it: they both got their start as students at SAIC.”

FUNDRAISING HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2011
In addition to the Presenting Sponsor’s Swarovski Scholarship, THE WALK 2011 included the presentation of a diverse and noteworthy array of fashion student scholarships, fellowships, and internships. Additional scholarships included the $25,000 Eunice W. Johnson Fellowship, the $25,000 Ikram and Joshua Goldman Scholarship, and a $30,000 Fashion Scholarship from an anonymous donor. SAIC students were also awarded coveted fashion internships with major designers, including paid internships at J.Crew and Proenza Schouler in New York, through the work of Chicago fashion icon and 2011 Legend of Fashion Award winner Ikram Goldman, a member of SAIC’s Fashion Committee. In total, THE WALK 2011 raised more than $167,000 for student scholarships.

EVENT DETAILS AND SPONSORS
Fashion 2012 will be presented three times on Thursday, April 19:
9:00 a.m. is a general admission dress rehearsal. Tickets are $40.
12:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. shows are general admission seating. Tickets are $75.
Tickets to the 9:00 a.m., 12:00 p.m., and 3:00 p.m. shows are on sale now. Tickets are available online only via saic.edu/fashionshow.

THE WALK 2012 begins with a cocktail welcome at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 19. Preceding the evening’s runway show, the presentation of the SAIC Legend of Fashion Award to Cynthia
Rowley and Bill Powers is followed by the announcement of individual student awards and scholarships. The event concludes with an elegant post-show dinner at 8:00 p.m. on the rooftop terrace of Millennium Park’s Harris Theater. Tickets are $500 to $1,000, and tables are $5,000 to $25,000. Call 312.499.4194 for tickets, tables, sponsorships, and more information.

CS Magazine is the Exclusive Print Media Sponsor of THE WALK 2012, which is made possible in part by Presenting Sponsor Swarovski.

ABOUT THE SAIC FASHION DESIGN DEPARTMENT
The School of the Art Institute of Chicago’s Fashion program provides a creative and intellectual context in which the nature and potential of fashion is closely examined and reimagined. Uniquely situated within a vibrant contemporary school of art and design, SAIC’s Fashion department offers undergraduate, graduate, and post-baccalaureate fashion programs that build on the connections and relationships between art and fashion that have been evolving in the past century and that reach an unprecedented level in contemporary practices today.

SAIC’s Fashion program is housed within the Sage Studios for Fashion Design located in the historic Carson Pirie Scott building. The 25,000-square-foot studio space includes the Fashion Resource Center, a hands-on collection of late-20th- and 21st-century designer garments and accessories representing extreme innovation, which allows SAIC students the opportunity to explore the most progressive achievements in the world of dress and fashion.

The success of SAIC’s Fashion Design program and SAIC’s interdisciplinary approach to education is reflected in a list of alumni that includes such notable designers as Halston, Cynthia Rowley, Lawrence Steele, J. Morgan Puett, Eunwha Kim, Maria Pinto, Gary Graham, and Matthew Ames. SAIC graduates hold senior design positions in firms as varied as Yeohlee, Jones New York, Levis, Charles Chang Lima, and Tommy Hilfiger, and design for Anna Sui, Calvin Klein, Tiffani Kim, Betsey Johnson, Triple5Soul, and Moschino. Upon graduating, many have chosen to intern for international houses such as Viktor & Rolf, Alexander McQueen, Wendy & Jim, Castelbajac, Zac Posen, Threesfouro and William Ivey Long or to launch their own fashion lines. The current chair of SAIC’s Fashion Design department is critically acclaimed designer Nick Cave. For more information, please visit saic.edu/fashion.

ABOUT SAIC SPRING EXHIBITION EVENTS (APRIL 14–JULY 21)
The fashion events on April 19 are the launch of an unparalleled year-end lineup of artistic and cultural events at SAIC. A host of year-end exhibitions will be featured on and off campus, including ARTBASH 2012: Contemporary Practices Exhibition, April 14–27; the MFA Graduate Exhibition, April 28–May 18; and the AIADO and Fashion Graduate Exhibition/Post-Baccalaureate Studio Exhibition, June 9–July 21. Concurrent with THE WALK 2012 is the Master of Arts in Visual and Critical Studies Symposium, in conjunction with an exhibition at Autumn Space Gallery. Other symposia featuring the latest research from SAIC’s graduating scholars include the Bachelor of Arts in Visual and Critical Studies and Bachelor of Fine Arts in Liberal Arts Symposium on April 28; the Modern Art History, Theory, and Criticism Graduate Symposium May 3–4; and the Art Education Graduate Symposium and Apprentice Teaching Event and Reception on May 9 and 10. The Undergraduate and Graduate Film, Video, New Media, Animation, and Sound Festival showcases the next generation of film, video, and new media artists May 9–11 at the Gene Siskel Film Center. More information is available at saic.edu/highlights.
ABOUT THE SCHOOL OF THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO (SAIC)
A leader in educating artists, designers, and scholars since 1866, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) offers nationally accredited undergraduate, graduate, and post-baccalaureate programs to nearly 3,200 students from around the globe. Located in the heart of Chicago, SAIC has an educational philosophy built upon an interdisciplinary approach to art and design, giving students unparalleled opportunities to develop their creative and critical abilities, while working with renowned faculty who include many of the leading practitioners in their fields. SAIC’s resources include the Art Institute of Chicago and its new Modern Wing; numerous special collections and programming venues provide students with exceptional exhibitions, screenings, lectures, and performances. For more information, please visit saic.edu.

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