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SCHOOL OF THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO (SAIC) RISES IN NATIONAL RANKINGS

Gains one position to #2, only one-tenth of one ranking point from #1

Four individual areas of concentration ranked in nation’s top three

Chicago, IL—New rankings compiled by U.S. News and World Report released March 13 confirm that the fine arts graduate program at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) continues to build upon its unparalleled history as one of the most influential programs in North America and internationally. SAIC rose to the nation’s second-ranked program in the Fine Arts category of the 2013 Best Graduate Schools list, just one-tenth of one ranking point below the top position.

Specialty rankings also released by U.S. News last week show that SAIC’s excellence in graduate studies spans an impressively wide array of artistic disciplines. In the nine individual areas of concentration ranked by U.S. News in the Fine Arts category, seven of SAIC’s graduate concentrations were ranked in the top 10. Four individual areas of SAIC graduate study—Visual Communication Design, Painting and Drawing, Photography, and Sculpture—were ranked in the nation’s top three.

“This ranking demonstrates the extremely high regard that individuals in visual arts communities across America hold for SAIC students, faculty, staff, and our more than 17,000 alumni,” says SAIC President Walter Massey. “I’m proud to be a part of SAIC with them, and offer my congratulations to everyone in our diverse, growing SAIC community.”

“The unparalleled talent, dedication, and vision of our faculty, who teach both graduate and undergraduate courses within our unique interdisciplinary curricula is on display here,” notes Lisa Wainwright, Dean of Faculty and Vice President of Academic Administration.

Provost and Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs Elissa Tenny says, “This rise in the U.S. News and World Report rankings is a reflection of how SAIC continues to lead and create new pathways for art and design education. SAIC’s MFA program is dedicated to the exploration of ideas through the process of making, and encourages experimentation, play, and an avant-garde practice unlike any other curriculum in America. I applaud this recognition of our achievements and embrace the challenge to keep moving forward.”

U.S. News bases its “Best Graduate Schools: Best Fine Arts Schools” rankings on a peer assessment survey of art school deans and other top art school academics, two per school, at 220 Master of Fine Arts programs in art and design. Rankings were last published in 2008, when SAIC earned a #3 overall ranking.
Recent SAIC Faculty Accomplishments

Painting and Drawing Chair Michelle Grabner is featured on the cover of the Brooklyn Rail (circ. 20,000) March edition, interviewed by Barry Schwabsky. Grabner talks about her career, paintings, the Chicago art scene, and her curatorial projects with her husband Brad Killam, expressing in the interview that it is ironic that she is “now Chair of the Painting and Drawing Department at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, a program that rejected my graduate school application.” Grabner’s most recent solo exhibitions were held at Green Gallery in Milwaukee and Shane Campbell Gallery in Chicago.

TIME magazine published a feature covering SAIC Fashion Design Chair Nick Cave in its March 19 edition (circ. 3,376,226). Reporter Richard Lacayo interviewed Cave in his South Loop apartment. Looking back on Cave’s career, Lacayo writes, “He made his first Soundsuit in response to the 1991 beating of Rodney King...At the time, he had just moved to Chicago and taken a job teaching at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, where he now heads the graduate fashion program.” Cave also recalled his childhood in this feature, saying that he “was always a gatherer...collecting and assembling things, making shrines. I would make stuff for my mom all the time.”

SAIC faculty member Mark Jeffery (Performance) has received a $15,000 award from the Chicago Dancemakers Forum. CDF announced the awardees of this year’s Lab Artists Program on March 9. Jeffery, together with three other recipients, was selected from a highly competitive pool of candidates. According to CDF, Jeffery’s proposed project is called Memento Mori: Anatomical Theaters of Mixed Reality. It will “blend the crudeness of early surgery with the prevailing 21st century vision of a body enhanced by data, traceable by forensics, and augmented by computation and bio-technology.”

On March 8 the New York Times blog the Learning Network featured “Momma Said,” a poem by SAIC faculty member Calvin Forbes (Writing). The Times selected his work for the weekly “Poetry Pairing” that matches a poem from the Poetry Foundation’s American Life in Poetry project alongside recent coverage from the Times that “somehow echoes, extends or challenges the poem’s themes.” The Poetry Foundation notes about Forbes’s work in the article, “Calvin Forbes teaches writing, literature, and jazz history at the School of the Art Institute in Chicago. He has described his poetry as ‘simplicity shacked up with complexity.’”

The School of Constructed Environments at Parsons The New School For Design has awarded SAIC Assistant Professor and alumnus Tristan d’Estrée Sterk (MFA 2004) the 2012 Kalil Endowment project grant for a practitioner/scholar. Sterk, who is the founder of the Office for Robotic Architectural Media & Bureau for Responsive Architecture (ORAMBRA), will exhibit new structures work at Parsons within the coming year. He is one of just three 2012 recipients of the $5,000 grant. He was also recently named AIA Chicago’s Dubin Family Young Architect of the Year.

About the School of the Art Institute of Chicago
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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