SAIC PROFESSOR NAMED A CURATOR OF 2014 WHITNEY BIENNIAL

Chicago, IL—Michelle Grabner, Professor and Chair of Painting and Drawing at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC), has been named a curator of the 2014 Whitney Biennial. The most influential survey of the state of contemporary art in the United States, the next Biennial goes on view at the beginning of March 2014 and will be the last Biennial to take place in the museum’s historic Marcel Breuer-designed building on Madison Avenue in New York City. Grabner will work with Stuart Comer (Tate Modern, London) and Anthony Elms (Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia) to develop the exhibition.

Grabner, who joined the SAIC faculty in 1996 and became Chair of its prestigious Painting and Drawing department in the fall of 2009, is an artist, curator, and critic. The Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland is organizing and hosting a traveling survey exhibition of her work that will open in the fall of 2013. Grabner’s work will be on view in Buzz, curated by Vik Muniz, at Galeria Nara Roesler in São Paulo December 1–February 23, and she opens exhibitions at Shane Campbell Gallery’s three Chicago locations in January and a one-person exhibition at Autumn Space in February. Grabner is also a senior critic at Yale University in the Department of Painting and Printmaking.

“The Whitney has made an outstanding selection in Michelle Grabner, who in her unparalleled career manages to engage every aspect of artistic production," says Walter E. Massey, President of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. “I am excited to see her tremendous acumen, which has a vital impact on our students and the rest of our community each day, at work in this exhibition,” Lisa Wainwright, Dean of Faculty and Vice President of Academic Affairs, adds, “Michelle Grabner is remarkable. Her exceptional practice as an artist is only complemented by her keen eye for contemporary art, and her writing which always enlarges the art she beckons us to consider. She is a true Midwesterner with a broad gaze for that which is important and compelling. I have no doubt that this Whitney Biennial will be one of the most daring, meaningful, and influential exhibitions with Michelle Grabner at the helm.”

Donna De Salvo, Chief Curator and Deputy Director for Programs at the Whitney, notes, “As we anticipate our move downtown, we chose to make the last Biennial in the Breuer building an experiment with a new curatorial structure. By flinging open the Museum’s doors metaphorically, we hope to create a platform in which voices from outside the Whitney can enliven the conversation around contemporary art in the United States. Hailing from Chicago, Philadelphia, and London, each curator will bring a personal approach to the process, creating an exciting mix of emerging and established artists that is the Biennial’s hallmark.”

Michelle Grabner says, “Like most artists, I have been loving and hating the Whitney Biennial exhibitions for decades. Shows that don’t matter don’t elicit such strong responses. The Biennial matters. As the mother of all group exhibitions, it is critically contentious simply because of its history and charge. Needless to say, as an artist I am enthusiastic about helping shape the 2014 Biennial exhibition and eager to deliberate on the breadth of our contemporary art landscape by spending the coming year talking to artists, visiting studios, and identifying art that will elicit strong, hopefully positive responses.”
The 2014 biennial will be the 77th in the Museum’s ongoing series of Annual and Biennial exhibitions, inaugurated in 1932 by Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney. The Museum has selected Comer, Elms, and Grabner to represent a range of geographic vantages and curatorial methodologies. While past Biennials have been organized collectively by multiple curators, for this edition each curator will oversee one floor of the exhibition. Whitney curators Elisabeth Sussman and Jay Sanders, who were responsible for the widely praised 2012 Biennial, will act as advisors on the project. The list of artists in the exhibition will be released at the end of 2013.

About Michelle Grabner
Michelle Grabner was born in Oshkosh, WI. She currently lives and works in Oak Park, IL and Waupaca County, WI, and is Professor and Chair of the Painting and Drawing Department at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC). Grabner is also a senior critic at Yale University in the Department of Painting and Printmaking.

The Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland is organizing and hosting a traveling survey exhibition of Grabner’s work that will open in the fall of 2013. In January 2013 she opens exhibitions at Shane Campbell Gallery’s three Chicago locations.

Her work is included in the following public collections: Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; MUDAM - Musée d’Art Moderne Luxemburg; Milwaukee Art Museum, Wisconsin; Daimler Contemporary, Berlin; Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington DC.

Grabner, and her husband Brad Killam, founded The Suburban (est. 1999) and the Poor Farm (est. 2009). The Suburban is an artist-run project space in Oak Park, Illinois. Over the past 13 years The Suburban has hosted projects by numerous major and emerging artists, including Ceal Floyer, Nicholas Gambaroff, Lucie Fontaine, Luc Tuymans, Katharina Grosse, Ann Pibal, and Katrin Sigurdardottir.

The Poor Farm is a not-for-profit exhibition space in rural Waupaca County, Wisconsin. In 2012–13 the Poor Farm is exhibiting Tracking The Thrill, a focused selection of Gretchen Bender’s (1951–2004) video works, including the re-staging of the video performance Total Recall. A catalog published by Poor Farm Press with essays and interviews by Stuart Argabright, Amber Denker, Michelle Grabner, Tim Griffin, Carla Hanzal, Robert Longo, Peter Nagy, Lane Relyea, David Robbins, Rirkrit Tiravanija, and Philip Vanderhyden accompanies the exhibition.

She is also a corresponding editor for X-TRA, a quarterly art journal published in Los Angeles since 1997. Her writing has been published in Artforum, Modern Painters, Frieze, X-TRA, Art Press, and Art-Agenda among others.

About the Whitney and the Whitney Biennial
The Whitney Museum of American Art is the world’s leading museum of 20th-century and contemporary art of the United States. With a history of exhibiting the most promising and influential artists and provoking intense debate, the Whitney Biennial, the Museum’s signature exhibition, has become the most important survey of the state of contemporary art in the United States. In addition to its landmark exhibitions, the Museum is known internationally for events and educational programs of exceptional significance and as a center for research, scholarship, and conservation.

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 and graduate degrees and post-baccalaureate programs to nearly 3,200 students from around the globe. SAIC also enables adults, high school students, middle school students, and children to flourish in a variety of courses, workshops, certificate programs, and camps through its Continuing Studies program. 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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