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SCHOOL OF THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO ANNOUNCES 2013 COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER AND HONORARY DOCTORATE RECIPIENTS
SAIC Commencement to take place in Millennium Park Saturday, May 18

Chicago, IL—Acclaimed American actor, playwright, and professor Anna Deavere Smith will deliver the commencement address to the 2013 graduating class of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) on Saturday, May 18, at the Frank Gehry-designed Jay Pritzker Pavilion in Chicago’s Millennium Park. Along with architect Jeanne Gang and artist Joe Zucker (SAIC BFA 1964, MFA 1966), Smith will receive an honorary doctorate from SAIC to recognize her achievements and commitment to the arts.

“These three visionary individuals are fine examples of creative success and determination in the world of art and design,” notes SAIC President Walter Massey. “I am certain Anna Deavere Smith’s words will resonate with this year’s class of enterprising graduates. Like her fellow honorees, her life’s work has defied the boundaries of convention that we at SAIC always seek to challenge and question.” Lisa Wainwright, SAIC Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean of Faculty, says, “Anna Deavere Smith, Jeanne Gang, and Joe Zucker have cultivated careers that are seemingly without limits. In the process, they have made great civic and cultural contributions that reflect on our interdisciplinary work and scholarship at SAIC.”

Anna Deavere Smith uses her singular brand of theatre to explore issues of community, character, and diversity in America. The MacArthur Foundation awarded Smith the “Genius” Fellowship for creating “a new form of theatre—a blend of theatrical art, social commentary, journalism, and intimate reverie.” Newsweek declared her “the most exciting individual in American theatre.” Currently the Artist-in-Residence at the Center for American Progress, Smith is researching and writing a new play called The Americans.

Since founding Studio Gang in 1997, Jeanne Gang has gone on to win numerous honors, among them a MacArthur Fellowship and an Academy Award in Architecture from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. A distinguished graduate of the Harvard Graduate School of Design, Gang has taught at Harvard, Yale, Princeton, and Illinois Institute of Technology, where her studios have focused on cities, ecologies, materials, and technologies. The Art Institute of Chicago is presenting her firm’s first solo museum exhibition, Building: Inside Studio Gang Architects, through February 24.

A Chicago-born SAIC alumnus whose work has been featured in the Whitney Biennial three times and the Venice Biennale twice, Joe Zucker has since the 1960s been creating paintings, mixed media works, and prints and drawings that combine innovative materials and processes with brainy, provocative, and timely content. One of the most unique aspects of Zucker’s work is its indivisible affiliation between medium and message.
**Previous SAIC Commencement Speakers**

2012 Eric Fischl  
2011 Patti Smith  
2010 Käthe Kollwitz of the Guerrilla Girls  
2009 Renzo Piano  
2008 Jerry Saltz  
2007 Alfredo Jaar  
2006 Bruce Mau  
2005 Ann Hamilton  
2004 Marina Abramović  
2003 Lucy Lippard  
2002 Michael Brenson  
2001 Paul Miller (DJ Spooky)  
2000 Philip Glass  
1999 James Turrell  
1998 Bill T. Jones  
1997 Bill Viola  
1996 Tony Kushner  
1995 David Sedaris  
1994 Marcia Tucker  
1993 Miriam Schapiro  
1992 Robert Storr  
1991 Tim Rollins & the Kids of Survival  
1990 Vito Acconci  
1989 Ronne Hartfield  
1988 student presentation  
1987 student presentation  
1986 John David Mooney

**More About the Honorees**

**About Anna Deavere Smith**

Playwright, actor, and professor Anna Deavere Smith uses her singular brand of theatre to explore issues of community, character, and diversity in America. *Newsweek* declared her “the most exciting individual in American theatre.”

Smith is perhaps best known as the author and performer of one-woman, multi-character plays that deal with social issues in America. The prestigious MacArthur Foundation awarded Smith the “Genius” Fellowship for creating “a new form of theatre — a blend of theatrical art, social commentary, journalism, and intimate reverie.” In 2013 Smith won the *Dorothy and Lillian Gish Prize*, one of the largest and most prestigious awards in the arts, which recognizes trailblazers who have redefined their art and pushed the boundaries of excellence in their field.

In 1997 Smith founded the Institute on the Arts & Civic Dialogue at Harvard University, which is now known as *Anna Deavere Smith Works*. ADS Works unites artists and performers and “cultivates artistic excellence that embraces the social issues of the day.” Her latest book is *Letters to a Young Artist: Straight-up Advice on Making a Life in the Arts*.

A tenured professor at NYU’s Tisch School of the Arts teaching performance
studies, Smith is also affiliated with the NYU School of Law. She won a 2006 Fletcher Foundation Fellowship in recognition of her contribution to advancing civil rights. Her professional accolades also include a Matrix Award from the New York Women In Communications, a Fellow Award in Theatre Arts for the United States Artists, and the United Solo Theatre Festival’s inaugural uAward for outstanding solo performance.

Smith appears as Mrs. Akalitus on the Showtime series Nurse Jackie. Her television credits also include The West Wing and All My Children. She has appeared in films, including Rachel Getting Married, Philadelphia, and The American President. Currently the Artist-in-Residence at the Center for American Progress, Smith is researching and writing a new play called The Americans.

About Jeanne Gang
FAIA, LEED AP
Architect and MacArthur Fellow Jeanne Gang is Founder and Principal of Studio Gang Architects, a Chicago-based collective of architects, designers, and thinkers whose projects confront pressing contemporary issues. Through her practice, Jeanne seeks to respond to and reframe questions that lie locally (site, culture, people) and resound globally (density, climate, sustainability). She roots her designs in both architectural form and idea-driven content toward achieving a compelling whole, and she often arrives at design solutions through investigations and collaborations across disciplines. Her projects include the 82-story Aqua Tower, the 2009 Emporis Skyscraper of the Year; the SOS Lavezorio Community Center, an award-winning building designed using donated materials; and the Nature Boardwalk at Lincoln Park Zoo, an educational pavilion and landscape that also function as stormwater infrastructure. In 2009 she was named a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects.

Her work with Studio Gang has been published and exhibited widely, most notably at the International Venice Biennale, MoMA, and the National Building Museum. Reveal, her first volume on Studio Gang’s work and working process, was released in 2011.

About Joe Zucker
A Chicago-born SAIC alumnus whose work has been featured in the Whitney Biennial three times and the Venice Biennale twice, Joe Zucker has since the 1960s been creating paintings, mixed media works, and prints and drawings that combine innovative materials and processes with brainy, provocative, and timely content.

One of the most unique aspects of Zucker’s work is its indivisible affiliation between medium and message. The artist generates the subject matter of his art from the material substances with which he works, an approach made most memorable perhaps in Zucker’s “cotton ball paintings” of the early 1970s with their narrative images of plantation life in the American south.

Zucker attended SAIC, receiving his BFA in 1964 and his MFA in 1966. He has been featured in solo exhibitions at venues including Scheibler Mitte, Berlin (2008); Paul Kasmin Gallery, New York (2006, 2004); Parrish Art Museum, Southampton, NY (1992); The Arts Club of Chicago (1988); Queens Museum, New York (1985);

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 more than 3,200 students from around the globe. SAIC also provides adults, high school students, and children with the opportunity 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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