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SCHOOL OF THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO ANNOUNCES NEW LOW-RESIDENCY MASTER OF FINE ARTS DEGREE; ACCOMPLISHED STUDENTS, INSTRUCTORS FROM AROUND THE NATION, WORLD COMING TO CHICAGO

Chicago, IL—In the summer of 2014 the School of the Art Institute of Chicago will welcome its first class of artists, historians, curators, and writers pursuing a Master of Fine Arts in Studio degree in SAIC’s new Low-Residency MFA program. Now in its final stages of development, the program is the newest element of SAIC’s prestigious graduate fine arts program, currently ranked #2 in the nation by U.S. News and World Report. Artist and professor Gregg Bordowitz, a faculty member in SAIC’s Film, Video, New Media, and Animation (FVNMA) department as well as the Whitney Museum Independent Study Program, is directing the program’s curriculum.

With only 35 practitioners accepted into the program each year, students will receive individualized attention relevant to their specific areas of concentration from a diverse and deep roster of core faculty members, SAIC alumni advisors, and visiting artists from a wide range of backgrounds. Visiting Artists for Summer Session 2014 already include Joseph Grigely, Kira Lynn Harris, Glenn Ligon, Josiah McElheny, Lynne Tillman, and Wu Tsang. Along with Bordowitz, Summer 2014 core faculty members include Matthew Buckingham, Laurie Palmer, and Molly Zuckerman-Hartung.

Students will develop major exhibited and written thesis projects and participate in three, six-week consecutive summer residencies at SAIC; fall and spring independent study sessions, including regular consultation with SAIC alumni advisors in students’ geographic locations; remote instruction made possible through online delivery systems; international study trips to sites of art historical importance; and a final exhibition in which significant thesis projects and their written accompaniments will be presented to the public.

Chicago’s own expanding cultural resources, from its museums and galleries to its internationally renowned works of public art, will be a vital resource for the program’s curriculum. The three-year program responds to the evolving needs of contemporary practitioners, and is designed for 21st-century artists and writers—those creators on the move, applying multiple strategies not specific to any one medium, method, or environment. The Low-Residency MFA welcomes a growing number of working professionals, art educators, international students, and practicing artists embedded in their local communities who want to participate in an ongoing dialogue about contemporary ideas and issues in art.

“With our new Low-Residency MFA program, arts practitioners from around the world will have the opportunity to participate in a series of interactions, seminars, and dialogues that recognize the many models of being an artist today,” says SAIC President Walter E. Massey. “The fresh, exploratory approach to Low-
Residency programs put forth by this curriculum will leave graduates with enriched perspectives on contemporary art production and exhibition."

“Students will leave this program with all the necessary skills and knowledge to develop their own methodology for production and distribution in an ever-changing art world," notes Lisa Wainwright, SAIC Dean of Faculty and Vice President of Academic Affairs. “And with Gregg Bordowitz at the helm, I am confident we will make our mark in visual arts education yet again.”

Rebecca Duclos, Dean of Graduate Studies, says, “The Low-Res MFA represents the next step forward for SAIC. This truly interdisciplinary program will certainly stand out among its peers: the students' will have unparalleled summer access to SAIC’s facilities, the program is deeply embedded in the thriving cultural landscape of Chicago, and we have extraordinary faculty, visiting artists, and alumni involved who offer a depth of experience in both academic and professional spheres.”

The Low-Res MFA program will be led by a core of SAIC faculty along with a rotating roster of visiting artists, writers, critics, curators, and historians. Each week of the summer residency a new visitor will spend an entire weekend presenting, participating in a colloquium, and visiting with students in their studios. Each student will also work with a studio advisor / mentor in his or her geographic location selected from a pool of qualified SAIC alumni. Faculty and advisors will introduce students to a wide spectrum of contending positions concerning the production, exhibition, and function of art.

The unique curriculum is developed as an exploration shared by students and faculty together investigating historically established aesthetic philosophy with an aim toward revitalizing and redefining established terms that urgently demand renewed concern. "The three-year program is organized into three topic-driven themes that investigate the philosophy of art," explains Gregg Bordowitz. "The first year is focused on the notion of Attention and capturing attention, one of the single most important concerns of the contemporary artist. The second year is devoted to the subject of Sensation—how our thoughts, moods, and actions originate in our faculties of sense. The third year explores the history of Perception, theories and ideas concerning the relations between subjects and objects. The program uses all three notions of attention, sensation and perception to place emphasis on Poetics. The methods of writing poetry can be applied to any discipline. We write the world we inhabit. The way we author our world is a matter of Poetics."
Painting and Drawing, Photography, and Sculpture—were ranked in the nation’s top three. SAIC’s overall ranking is one-tenth of one ranking point below the top position.

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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