CONVERSATIONS AT THE EDGE’S SPRING 2014 SEASON OPENS MARCH 27
ARTISTS’ FILM, VIDEO, AND NEW MEDIA FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Chicago, IL—Conversations at the Edge (CATE), the screening and visiting artist series organized by the School of the Art Institute of Chicago’s (SAIC) Department of Film, Video, New Media, and Animation (FVNMA) in collaboration with the Video Data Bank and the Gene Siskel Film Center, returns to the big screen on Thursday, March 27 with a multimedia talk by new media scholar and curator Christiane Paul. The complete schedule for the Spring 2014 season along with links to interviews, preview videos, critical reviews, and more are available at saic.edu/cate.

This season also includes the complex and nuanced film Spectres by Belgian filmmaker Sven Augustijnen and the visually bombastic found footage works of the anonymous video collective Everything is Terrible! Additionally, Thom Andersen will present his latest feature Reconversão, which considers the built, unrealized, and abandoned projects of Pritzker Prize-winning Portuguese architect Eduardo Souto de Moura. Finally, Basma Alsharif returns to CATE with a collection of recent films that explore bilocation, Palestinian and Arab identity, as well as cinema itself.

FVNMA Department Chair Jon Cates notes, "A spectrum of approaches to experimental Media Art makes Conversations at the Edge a literal meeting place for a series of investigations into the making of meanings and changing cultures."

All programs take place Thursdays at 6:00 p.m. at the Gene Siskel Film Center, 164 North State Street, unless otherwise noted. Full schedule and program descriptions are below and at saic.edu/cate.

Tickets
$11 general admission, $7 students, $6 GSFC members
$5 Art Institute of Chicago staff and SAIC faculty and staff
FREE to SAIC students with a valid school ID

All tickets may be purchased at the Film Center Box Office. Both general admission and Film Center member tickets are also available through
CATE Spring 2014 Program Details:

Christiane Paul: Genealogies of the New Aesthetic
Thursday, March 27, 6:00 p.m.

Curator and scholar Christiane Paul presents a multimedia talk on the “Genealogies of the New Aesthetic.” Identified as such by the British artist and programmer James Bridle, the New Aesthetic began as a Tumblr devoted to new modes of technologically enabled imaging and exploded into a meme dissected by critics from Wired, The Atlantic, and Vanity Fair. Taking Bridle’s Tumblr as her starting point—a collage of corruption artifacts, 8-bit imagery, information visualization, and more—Paul (using research conducted in collaboration with Malcolm Levy) traces the histories of each to create a lineage for practices, artifacts, and their aesthetics. 1968–2014, multiple countries, multiple formats, ca 60 min + discussion

Christiane Paul (b. 1961, Attendorn, Germany) is Associate Professor at the School of Media Studies, The New School, and Adjunct Curator of New Media Arts at the Whitney Museum of American Art. She has written extensively on new media arts and lectured internationally on art and technology. As Adjunct Curator of New Media Arts at the Whitney Museum of American Art, she curated several exhibitions—including Cory Arcangel: Pro Tools (2011), Profiling (2007), Data Dynamics (2001) and artport, the Whitney Museum’s website devoted to Internet art.

Sven Augustijnen: Spectres
Thursday, April 3, 6:00 p.m.

Confronting the authorized version of an atrocity committed during the early days of post-colonial African rule, Sven Augustijnen’s Spectres (2011) focuses a critical eye on the official account of the murder of Patrice Lumumba, the Congo’s first elected Prime Minister. The film begins a half-century later as the filmmaker sets off in the company of an amiable former Belgian civil servant-turned-historian on a journey in which the political soon becomes personal and standard notions of historical evidence begin to veer into Errol Morris terrain. Spectres vividly demonstrates that reconciliation always begins by uncovering the truth. 2011, Belgium, HDCam, 104 min + discussion
Sven Augustijnen (b. 1970, Mechelen, Belgium) studied at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp, the Hoger Sint-Lukas Instituut in Brussels, and at the Jan van Eyck Academy in Maastricht. His work concentrates mainly on the tradition of portraiture and the porous boundaries between fiction and reality, using a hybrid of genres and techniques to disorienting effect. His films have been included in exhibitions and festivals in Athens, Basel, Fribourg, San Sebastián, Siegen, Rotterdam, Tunis, Tel Aviv, Tokyo, and Vilnius, among others. In 2011 he received the Evens Prize for Visual Arts. Augustijnen lives and works in Brussels.

Everything is Terrible! Doggie Woggiez and More
Thursday, April 10, 6:00 p.m.

“If everything is terrible, then nothing is” is the motto of this filmmaking collective, whose pseudonym-loving members make rapid-fire mash-ups from VHS tapes found in thrift stores—forgotten children’s shows, religious sermons, no-budget monster movies—to explore the weirdest corners of the American psyche. Leaving little time for reflection, only total submission, its cinema is a kind of psychedelic food poisoning, equally abrasive and hilarious and, in the end, oddly affectionate toward its varied subjects. EIT! presents several shorts and its feature-length masterwork Doggie Woggiez! Poochie Woolchiez! (2012)—a remake of Alejandro Jodorowsky’s Holy Mountain with a cast of cinematic canines. 2012–14, USA, multiple formats, ca 80 min + discussion

Founded in 2006 Everything is Terrible! (EIT!) is an anonymous video collective dedicated to unearthing the best and worst ever committed to VHS. EIT! mines thrift stores and bargain bins for old VHS tapes and gives them new life in video compilations, live shows, and the group’s website. EIT!’s work has been hailed by Wired, Time, The Onion, Chicago Tribune, NPR’s All Things Considered, Boing Boing, Buzzfeed, Videogum, Paste, and Jezebel.

Thom Andersen: Reconversão
Thursday, April 17, 6:00 p.m.

A master of the essay film, Thom Andersen (Los Angeles Plays Itself) turns his attention to the work of the Pritzker Prize–winning Portuguese architect Eduardo Souto de Moura. Considering built, unrealized, and abandoned projects and using a stop-motion technique that emphasizes the temporal dimension of architecture, Reconversão (2012) regards buildings not as static objects but living things, subject to decay, death, and even rebirth. (Museum of the Moving Image) 2012, Portugal/USA, Digital Video, 65 min + discussion

Thom Andersen (b. 1943, Chicago) is a filmmaker, curator, and scholar based in Los Angeles where he currently teaches at the California Institute of the Arts. Anderson has made numerous short films including Melting (1965), Olivia’s Place (1966) and --- ------ (1967, in collaboration with Malcolm Brodwick). In 2003 he completed Los Angeles Plays Itself, a videotape about the representation of Los Angeles in movies. It won the National Film Board of Canada Award for Best
Documentary Feature at the 2003 Vancouver International Film Festival, and it was voted best documentary of 2004 in the Village Voice Film Critics’ Poll.

Basma Alsharif: Doppelgänging
Thursday, April 24, 6:00 p.m.

Basma Alsharif’s sharp, seductive films are often informed by Palestine’s history, its contemporary political situation, and the conflicted experiences of those who call it home (whether or not they live there). She returns to CATE with a collection of recent films that explore bilocation—the act of being in multiple places at once—a state of being she uses to describe Palestinian identity, as well as cinema itself. The program offers the possibility of bilocating through the visceral experience of drone-glitched TV and teenage cello lessons in Home Movies Gaza (2013); a rhyming exercise in the Panathenaic Stadium in Girls Only (2014); a stroboscopic oral history in Farther Than the Eye Can See (2012); and a hypnosis-inducing pan-geographic shuttle in Deep Sleep (2014), a film/performance. Presented in collaboration with the Video Data Bank. 2012–14, Canada/Gaza Strip/Greece/Malta/United Arab Emirates, multiple formats, ca 70 min + discussion

Basma Alsharif (b. 1983, Kuwait) is a visual artist working between cinema and installation whose work concerns the human condition as it is related to the subjective experience of political history. Since receiving her MFA from the University of Illinois in Chicago in 2007, her works have shown in solo exhibitions, biennials, and film festival internationally, including Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival, the Jerusalem Show, the Toronto International Film Festival, the Berlinale, Videobrasil, and Manifesta 8.

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.

###