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SCHOOL OF THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO ANNOUNCES 2014
COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER AND HONORARY DOCTORATE RECIPIENTS
SAIC Commencement to take place at the Auditorium Theatre, Monday, May 12

Chicago, IL—Celebrated artist Theaster Gates will deliver the Commencement address to the 2014 graduating class of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) on Monday, May 12, at the Auditorium Theatre, 50 East Congress Parkway. Along with SAIC alumni Franz Schulze (MFA 1950) and Ellen Sandor (MFA 1975), Gates will receive an honorary doctorate from SAIC to recognize his achievements and commitment to the arts.

“This year’s honorees have reimagined the possibilities of artistic practice, combining various disciplines into their own unique and influential sensibilities,” said Walter Massey, President of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. “All three have made Chicago a priority in their work, and in the diversity, flexibility, and complexity of their artistic explorations reflect the spirit of this city and our school. We are thrilled to have Theaster, one of this country’s most important contemporary artists, as well as Ellen and Franz, two of our most distinguished alumni, at this year’s commencement ceremony.”

For the prestigious art school’s 148th Commencement, more than 900 students are expected to receive undergraduate and graduate degrees and post-baccalaureate certificates. Previous SAIC Commencement speakers include Tony Award–winning actress and playwright, Anna Deavere Smith; Pritzker Prize–winning architect, Renzo Piano; and Chilean installation artist and MacArthur Fellow, Alfredo Jaar.

About the Honorees
Theaster Gates has developed an expanded artistic practice that includes space development, object making, performance, and critical engagement with many publics. Gates’s training as an urban planner and sculptor and subsequent time spent studying clay has given him keen awareness of the poetics of production and systems of organizing. Gates recently opened the Arts Incubator in Chicago to offer a design apprenticeship program, exhibitions, artist residencies, performances, and talks.

Ellen Sandor is a pioneering new media artist whose innovative work integrating photography with other forms of art, including sculpture and computer graphics, resulted in the creation of PHSColograms, a collaborative medium that blends art, science, and technology, and has been used for medical applications and experimental visual research. In 1983, she founded (art)n Laboratory and her works have been featured in the Art Institute of Chicago, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, Smithsonian Institution, and Galerie Darthea Speyer in Paris. Commissioned installations include the City of Chicago Art Program for the Battle of Midway, Santa Barbara Museum of Art, and International Center of Photography in New York.

(more)
Franz Schulze is an acclaimed artist, critic, lecturer, author, and teacher who has been active in the art scene for more than 70 years. After receiving his MFA from SAIC in 1950, Schulze was awarded the Konrad Adenauer Fellowship to study in Munich, where he deepened his knowledge and appreciation for art and architectural history. He served as an art critic for numerous publications, including the Chicago Sun-Times, and spent nearly 40 years as an art professor at Lake Forest College in Lake Forest, Illinois.

**Artist Biographies**

**Theaster Gates**
Artist and innovator in the field of social practice, Theaster Gates is internationally known for his work on the South Side of Chicago, including Dorchester Projects, Black Cinema House, and the upcoming Stony Island Arts Bank and Dorchester Artists Housing Collaborative. Founder of the non-profit Rebuild Foundation, Gates’s work both in museums and in communities responds creatively to the challenges of space.

In 2013, Gates opened the Arts Incubator in Washington Park, a vision he developed as Director of Arts + Public Life at the University of Chicago. The renovated building is now home to artist residencies, a design apprenticeship program, exhibitions, performances, and talks. The Arts Incubator has received awards including the Urban Land Institute Chicago Vision Award for Programming and the Chicago Community Trust Outstanding Community Strategy of the Year Award.

Gates has exhibited and performed at the Studio Museum in Harlem, New York; Whitechapel Gallery, London; Punta della Dogana, Venice; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Santa Barbara Museum of Art; and Documenta 13, Kassel, Germany; among others.

Gates has received awards and grants from Creative Time, the Vera List Center for Art and Politics, United States Artists, Creative Capital, the Joyce Foundation, Graham Foundation, Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts, and Artadia.

**Ellen Sandor**
Artist Ellen Sandor (SAIC MFA 1975) is a member of SAIC’s Board of Governors, a Life Trustee of the Art Institute of Chicago, and Chair of SAIC’s Gene Siskel Film Center Advisory Board where, in 2013, she was honored for Outstanding Leadership. She is a member of the Art Institute’s Photography Committee and SAIC’s Fashion Committee. As the founder of (art)n Laboratory, Sandor is also currently an affiliate of eDream, National Center for Supercomputing Applications, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

Sandor has an active, Chicago-based studio practice and has exhibited work in galleries including Feature, Rhona Hoffman Gallery, Maya Polsky Gallery and Kasia Kay Projects. Museums throughout the world include the Smithsonian Institution National Museum of Natural History; Art Institute of Chicago; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Santa Barbara Museum of Art; International Center of Photography; Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art, University of Oklahoma; Museum of Jewish Heritage; Museum Victoria, Australia; National Academy of
Sciences; U.S. Art in Embassies Program (Germany and Zimbabwe); and Musée Carnavalet, Paris. She recently received the Thomas R. Leavens Award for Distinguished Service to the Arts through Lawyers for the Creative Arts. She has just completed a collaboration between her team and the University of Chicago Institute for Molecular Engineering on a nano particle, PHSCologram. Sandor is presently co-editing the forthcoming Women in New Media Arts: A Survey of Innovative Collaboration for the University of Illinois Press that chronicles the oral history of pioneering new media women artists.

Franz Schulze
Franz Schulze was born in 1927 in Uniontown, Pennsylvania where he and his family lived until they moved to Chicago in 1939 to escape the Great Depression. After earning his Bachelor of Philosophy from the University of Chicago and a Bachelor and Master of Fine Arts from SAIC in 1949 and 1950, he taught briefly until awarded the Konrad Adenauer Fellowship, which enabled him to study in Munich until 1957. Schulze is an artist, working on canvas and with charcoal, and has done many portraits, including some of significant Chicago architects. A show of his drawings took place in 2011 at the Printworks Gallery in Chicago.

Schulze’s career as a writer began with his monthly Chicago report for ARTnews in 1958. He later became art critic for The Chicago Daily News in 1961, transferring to the same post in the Chicago Sun-Times in 1978. His writing has appeared meanwhile in ARTnews and as corresponding editor of Art in America. In the latter journal his articles on art and architecture continue to appear on a regular basis. His books include Mies van der Rohe, a Critical Biography (University of Chicago Press, 1985); Philip Johnson, Life and Work (Alfred A. Knopf, 1994); and Chicago’s Famous Buildings, with co-author Kevin Harrington (University of Chicago Press, 2005).

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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