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## **School of the Art Institute of Chicago Opens 32,000 Square Foot Galleries on State Street**

August 6 -- On September 5, 2008 the School of the Art Institute of Chicago will inaugurate the largest contemporary art gallery space in the Chicago Loop, announced SAIC President Tony Jones. "This move creates a new cultural resource sited within one of the world's great landmarks of modern architecture," says Jones.

Located in the Sullivan Center (33 S. State St.), the historic home of Louis Sullivan's masterpiece Carson Pirie Scott & Co. Building, SAIC's new Sullivan Galleries comprise 32,000 square feet dedicated to exhibitions, performances, lectures, and screenings by SAIC students and faculty, as well as works by guest artists and curators. The Sullivan Galleries will debut with two major exhibitions, "Ahh. . . Decadence!" curated by Interim Dean of Faculty Lisa Wainwright, and "Department (Store): A Collaboration with J. Morgan Puett."

SAIC professor Mary Jane Jacob, an internationally known curator recently named the School's Executive Director of Exhibitions, is leading this expansion of the exhibition program. Formerly chief curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, Jacob is known for innovative collaborations with artists; her wide consortium-building efforts across institutions; and her site- and community-based exhibitions that reach out to new audiences for contemporary art.

"Today, exhibitions are central to teaching, and the art school as an exhibition venue has become an essential means of supporting the next generation. This goes back to the origin of SAIC in 1866, as well as that of the museum itself, The Art Institute of Chicago, nearly two decades later in 1883 with the founding mission to educate artists and the public," says Jacob. Among the school's annual exhibition offerings, its spring and fall BFA and spring MFA thesis shows and fashion show are widely anticipated events. True to the School's emphasis on trans-disciplinarity, these exhibitions are not just showcases for graduating students' work, but also opportunities for them to participate in the curatorial process with faculty and advisors.

Exhibitions not only chart new art, they give rise to it. Art schools in particular "engender a synergy between artmaking and new ideas, so we can be a place where artists can come to carry out experimental projects. SAIC excels as a laboratory for making and displaying art, and

this happens in the classroom and in commissions” notes Jacob. This connection can be seen in recent exhibitions such as DJ Spooky’s “Link City: Chicago” (2007), and Omer Fast’s upcoming film *Looking Pretty for God (After GW)* which premieres this October in the School’s Rymer Gallery. “The Sullivan Galleries will advance artistic research while enabling students to play a part—and letting the public in on the process, too!” Jacob says. This process will begin with well-known artists and SAIC alumni Sanford Biggers and J. Morgan Puett’s engagement with the inaugural shows at the Sullivan Galleries.

“Exhibitions are our public face and with the Sullivan Galleries on State Street, the School is poised to become a greater player on the contemporary scene in Chicago and beyond, furthering its alliances with artists and the city’s many cultural constituencies,” Jones notes. One such collaboration beyond the walls of the School is set for 2009 as the Art Institute opens its Renzo Piano designed Modern Wing. SAIC is leading the development of a series of exhibitions and public programs in Chicago to reconsider the Modern era, undertaken in close partnership with the Mies van der Rohe Society. With the Sullivan Galleries now part of its palette of public spaces, SAIC is deeply connected with the origins of Modernism in Chicago. In fall 2009, taking full benefit of the character and context of the Sullivan Galleries, SAIC will host international-artists’ projects that probe the work of Modernism’s master architects and designers, and recontextualize them into the fabric of Chicago.

Opening the Sullivan Galleries on August 23 and running through September 27 will be “Ahh. . . Decadence!,” curated by Lisa Wainwright, with design by internationally recognized artist and SAIC alumnus Sanford Biggers. Over forty Chicago artists explore decadence as associated with excessively ornamental expressions that suggest decay, the nonrational, pleasure, sex, and death. Recalling a style that reached its height in Europe during the 1890s, the work in this exhibition reflects a careful and critical perspective on conditions that encourage its return in contemporary art. Biggers, who often incorporates performance into his sculptures and installations and is known for his improvisatory edge, here takes on his first role as exhibition designer. “Ahh. . . Decadence!” is supported in part by The Kristyna M. Driehaus Foundation.

“Department (Store)” is a continually evolving collaborative work, directed by artist and alumna J. Morgan Puett, that will change throughout its run from August 23 to December 13. Puett is known for her work at the intersection of architecture, fashion production, and social practices. In “Department (Store)” she makes the most of the massive scale of Louis Sullivan’s wall-like windows which, from inside the gallery, put the city literally on display. Puett sets in motion a sea of more than 100 glass department-store display cases as she calls others from all departments of the School and from around the city to join in this game of display and displacement.

The Department of Exhibitions at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago is supported by the William and Anne Hokin Exhibition Fund. Select SAIC exhibitions are also funded in part by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency.

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### **Sullivan Galleries**

33 S. State Street, Seventh Floor  
Chicago, IL 60603  
312.629.6635  
www.saic.edu/exhibitions  
Gallery Hours: Tuesday–Saturday 11am–6pm

#### Ahh... Decadence!

August 23–September 27  
Public Reception: Friday, September 5, 4:30–7pm

#### Department (Store): A Collaboration with J. Morgan Puett

August 23–December 13  
Public Reception: Friday, September 5, 4:30–7pm

### **Other SAIC Galleries**

#### Rymer Gallery

280 S. Columbus Drive, First Floor  
Gallery Hours: Tuesday–Saturday, 11am–6pm  
312.629.6635  
www.saic.edu/exhibitions

#### The Student Union Galleries

LG Space  
37 S. Wabash Avenue, Room 220 B  
Gallery Hours: Tuesday–Friday, 12:30–5:30pm and Saturday by appointment  
312.899.5131  
www.sugs.info

#### Gallery X

280 S. Columbus Drive, Room 113  
Gallery Hours: Tuesday–Friday, 12:30–5:30pm and Saturday 10am–3pm  
312.857.7140  
www.sugs.info

### **About the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC)**

Educating artists, designers, and scholars since 1866, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago's reputation as one of the most distinguished training grounds in these disciplines is reflected in the 2008 edition of "America's Best Graduate Schools" published by *U.S. News & World Report*, which ranked its Master of Fine Arts program as the 3rd best graduate art program in the nation. In a survey conducted by the National Arts Journalism Program at Columbia University, SAIC was named the "most influential art school" by art critics at general interest news publications from across the United States. As one of the two bodies that make up the Art Institute of Chicago, SAIC's unparalleled transdisciplinary approach to art and design education is seen in the twenty-seven areas of study it offers through a range of graduate, undergraduate, and post-baccalaureate programs, and its world-class status is attested to in the over forty countries represented in its 2,900 degree-seeking students. Notable alumni of the School include Paul Chan, Richard Hunt, Halston, Joan Mitchell, Elizabeth Murray, LeRoy Neiman, Georgia O'Keeffe, Claes Oldenburg, David Sedaris, Robert Storr, and Rirkrit Tiravanija.

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