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High School Art Teachers Rejuvenate with SAIC TICA Program

June 7 -- Over one hundred high school art teachers converge on Chicago's Loop each summer, all-expenses paid, to return to their creative beginnings while participating in current dialogs on the visual arts. The School of the Art Institute of Chicago's Teacher Institutes in Contemporary Art (TICA) allows experienced high school art educators to immerse themselves in the School's studios, and to work with leading thinkers, writers, and practitioners in the visual arts.

"While tomorrow's artists are educated in colleges and art schools, they are born in high schools," says TICA founder and director Phil Baranowski, a former high school art teacher himself. Baranowski's conviction that "the future of art in this country depends on the creative vitality of high school art teachers" won support from the National Endowment for the Arts in 2000. Thanks in part to that continuing support, SAIC sponsors TICA at no cost to participating teachers or their schools.

The program integrates three elements: a week in the SAIC studios under the direction of accomplished artist instructors in Painting/Drawing, Art & Technology, or Visual/Cultural Studies; a visiting artist program that brings internationally renowned figures into intimate connection with teachers; and immersion in Chicago's art culture, including visits to the Art Institute galleries with Metropolitan Museum of Art museum educator Rika Burnham. Many teachers stay for an optional studio extension week to apply what they have learned to their own studio practice.

TICA is one of the only programs in the country where art teachers are trained in the use of new media technologies. "The goal is to give them an introduction to digital video, digital sounds, digital imaging, and multimedia on the web," says Tiffany Holmes, who has been leading the Art & Technology session, with colleague Shawn Decker, for six years. "It's a lot to learn in one week, but the teachers have an enormous capacity for learning." Classroom tutorials are complemented by "top-of-the-line, world-class media artists doing some of the best work in the field right now," says Holmes.

"I had a working knowledge of technology and could use it in my classroom and my instruction," says Art & Technology student Scott Tompkins, art teacher from Suttons Bay High School in northwestern Michigan, "but I had no idea what people were doing

with it out in the art world, and now I am getting that information to my students. For example, I introduced them to the online universe—it's like a journal and a novel—of Yael Kanarek, one of the visiting artists who came in through TICA last summer [2006], and they're just blown away by the combination of art and technology. It fits where their heads are. That's pretty powerful—to be able to feed the interest that the kids have—and I wouldn't know about it if it weren't for TICA.”

Susan Leavey participated in the Visual/Cultural Studies program, which examines contemporary culture's impact on art practice and theory. “TICA was deeply energizing for me as a teacher—being so validated by the visiting artists brought in to talk with us, being exposed to so much art, and having the luxury of being able to *talk* about art and talk about visual culture,” says Leavey, who returned home from TICA 2005 to teach photography in Marlboro, Massachusetts. “I felt like I was a better person when I came back. I had more to share with my students, and more enthusiasm for what I was doing.”

Paul Gaudreau, of Elsie Allen High School in Santa Rosa, CA, participated in the 2006 Drawing/Painting session. “The TICA program gave me the opportunity to go back to the reason I got into teaching in the first place, which is my love for art. I'm not a teacher who's also an artist, I'm an artist who chooses to teach. That's the way that I approach my class now, and my students have responded in an amazing way. They take the class more seriously, and their work is significantly more thoughtful. My excitement has brushed onto them.”

Teacher Institutes in Contemporary Art (TICA)

June 17–August 3, 2007
School of the Art Institute of Chicago
37 S. Wabash Ave., Suite 711
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The Teacher Institutes in Contemporary Art is an annual summer program of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. TICA is designed to enable high school art teachers to experience contemporary art practice with leading artists in the visual arts and to provide an intensive studio/theoretical/pedagogical experience that re-inspires and re-invigorates veteran secondary art educators.

For program information, please see:
www.saic.edu/continuing_studies/teacher/index.html#tica

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

A leader in educating artists and designers for 141 years, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago offers undergraduate and graduate programs to nearly 2,800 students from around the world. In addition to the time-honored study of painting, sculpture, printmaking, and design, SAIC's studio programs embrace film and new media, electronic and sound arts, and creative writing. To complement its studio programs, SAIC offers academic degrees in disciplines from art history to arts administration, visual and critical studies to historic preservation. Located in the heart of Chicago, the School promotes contemporary discourse about art and design through venues such as the Gene Siskel Film Center, Video Data Bank, Betty Rymer Gallery, Gallery 2, the Division of Continuing Studies, and in conjunction with the Poetry Center.

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