



Office of Institutional Advancement

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THE SCHOOL OF THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO ANNOUNCES ITS 2017 COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER AND HONORARY DOCTORATE RECIPIENTS

CHICAGO—The School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC), a global leader in art and design education, will welcome renowned Chicago artist Kerry James Marshall to deliver the School's commencement address on Monday, May 15, at the Auditorium Theatre, 50 East Congress Parkway. Marshall will receive an honorary doctorate from the School, along with esteemed honorees, celebrated fashion designer and alum Maria Pinto, and accomplished art critic Roberta Smith.

Since 1938 SAIC has awarded honorary degrees to an elite group of individuals who have made significant contributions to art, design, scholarship and culture. Past recipients include Albert Oehlen, Jeff Koons, Tania Bruguera, Yoko Ono, David Sedaris, Kanye West, Theaster Gates, Patti Smith, Marina Abramovic and Jeanne Gang.

"This year's honorees are reimagining the possibilities of art, design and scholarship through their diverse practices, and we are proud to welcome Kerry James Marshall, Maria Pinto and Roberta Smith into this class," said Elissa Tenny, president of SAIC. "Through their work, these individuals provide leadership and creative perspective for shaping today's world."

More than 900 students are expected to receive undergraduate and graduate degrees and post-baccalaureate certificates from the prestigious art and design institution.

About the Honorees

To see the full biographies of the honorees, please visit saic.edu/graduation.

Kerry James Marshall (commencement speaker) is a world-renowned artist based in Chicago. With a career spanning almost three decades, Marshall is well known for his paintings depicting actual and imagined events from African American history. He uses painting, sculptural installations, collage, video and photography to comment on the history of Black identity both in the United States and in Western art. Marshall also produces drawings in the style of comic books, sculptural installations, photography and video. As with his paintings, these works accumulate various stylistic influences to address the historiography of Black art, while at the same time drawing attention to the fact that they are not inherently partisan because their subjects are Black.

Marshall studied at the Otis Art Institute in Los Angeles, earning his BFA in 1978 and an honorary doctorate in 1999. He is the recipient of several awards, grants and fellowships including the MacArthur "genius grant" in 1997. Marshall's work is featured in numerous public collections including the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Art Institute of Chicago and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. A major survey of his work, "Kerry James Marshall: MASTRY" is currently on view at The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles until July 2. The survey was previously on view at The Met Breuer and the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago.

Maria Pinto is a fashion designer and artist, renowned for her minimalist, sculptural designs that pull from the architectures found in both the human and natural worlds. Pinto (BFA 1990) is passionate about creating fashion that empowers women and enhances their lives. She is the creative voice behind M2057 by Maria Pinto, a ready-to-wear

collection inspired by urban architecture and design. She has dressed style icons like Michelle Obama, Oprah Winfrey and Brooke Shields, and her designs have been featured on the hit show “Empire” and in publications such as Vogue, Vanity Fair, Harper’s Bazaar, The New York Times and the Wall Street Journal.

Pinto celebrated her 25th anniversary in fashion design in 2016 with a retrospective at Chicago’s City Gallery in the Historic Water Tower. In 2012 she co-curated an exhibition for the Field Museum, “Fashion and the Field Museum Collection,” and her designs are now part of the Field’s permanent collection. She is a member of the Council of Fashion Designers of America and is the recipient of SAIC’s “Legend of Fashion” Award, given through the School’s Fashion Design department. She serves as a member of Chicago’s Advisory Council on Cultural Affairs and Special Events, and is on the board of the Art Institute of Chicago’s Architecture and Design Society.

Roberta Smith is a co-chief art critic of The New York Times. Smith regularly reviews museum exhibitions, art fairs and gallery shows in New York, North America and abroad. Since joining The Times in 1991, she has written on Western and non-Western art from the prehistoric to the contemporary eras. She sees her main responsibility as “getting people out of the house,” making them curious enough to go see the art she covers. Smith has written critic’s notebooks on the need for museums to be free to the public, Brandeis University’s decision to close its museum and sell its art collection (later rescinded) and the unveiling of the Google Art Project, which allowed online HD views of paintings in the collections of scores of leading museums worldwide.

Born in New York City and raised in Kansas, Smith is a graduate of Grinnell College in Iowa. Before coming to The Times she wrote for the Village Voice. In 2003 she received the College Art Association’s Frank Jewett Mather Award for Art Criticism. Smith lives in New York with her husband Jerry Saltz (SAIC 1970–75, HON 2008), senior art critic for New York Magazine.

About the School of the Art Institute of Chicago

For 150 years, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) has been a leader in educating the world’s most influential artists, designers and scholars. Located in downtown Chicago with a fine arts graduate program consistently ranking among the top three graduate fine arts programs in the nation by U.S. News and World Report, SAIC provides an interdisciplinary approach to art and design as well as world-class resources, including the Art Institute of Chicago museum, on-campus galleries and state-of-the-art facilities. SAIC’s undergraduate, graduate and post-baccalaureate students have the freedom to take risks and create the bold ideas that transform Chicago and the world—as seen through notable alumni and faculty such as Michelle Grabner, David Sedaris, Elizabeth Murray, Richard Hunt, Georgia O’Keeffe, Cynthia Rowley, Nick Cave, and LeRoy Neiman. For more information, please visit saic.edu.

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