



May 25, 2021
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:
Bree Witt
312.499.4211
bwitt@saic.edu

THE SCHOOL OF THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO RECEIVES \$1 MILLION GIFT TO ADVANCE HISTORIC AND CULTURAL PRESERVATION

CHICAGO—The School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC), a global leader in art and design education, has received a gift of \$1 million from Sam and Ann Mencoff to establish the endowed Mencoff Family Internships in Historic and Cultural Preservation Fund. The investment, which builds off of the previously established Mencoff Family Fellowship in Historic Preservation Fund, aims to preserve, conserve, and protect culture and history by expanding opportunities in the field.

The field of preservation is undergoing a transformational shift. Previously concerned primarily with the built environment—for example, skyscrapers, homes, zoning, streets, and sidewalks—the practice now plays a key role in preserving culture: sacred spaces, artifacts, decorative arts, and changes to landscapes. As preservation becomes more expansive and inclusive, it must evolve to become more interdisciplinary, as historians work alongside sculptors and architects collaborate with sound artists. With projects ranging from urban planning and park development to documenting cultural histories and interpretive centers, it is critical that artists can collaborate with individuals most impacted by historic and cultural preservation, particularly those who have been underrepresented, and accurately tell the stories of various cultures and peoples.

The Mencoff Family Internships in Historic and Cultural Preservation Fund will primarily support paid, hands-on internships for students, whether they're interning at a preservation organization or working alongside faculty on historic and cultural preservation projects. The internships are available to students studying in any discipline.

“Similar to the transformation taking place in many fields, practitioners of cultural and historic preservation are using their talents and scholarship to make the field more inclusive by fostering a dialogue about material presence, a site’s legacy, cultural history, and individuals’ lived experience,” said SAIC President Elissa Tenny. “We are so grateful to Sam and Ann Mencoff for recognizing this need and contributing to the field in a very tangible way.”

Since 2008, Sam Mencoff has served as a member of the Art Institute of Chicago’s Board of Trustees, and he is co-chief executive officer of private equity investment firm Madison

Dearborn Partners. Ann serves on the board of The Preservation Society of Newport County (Rhode Island). The Mencoffs have preserved numerous historic properties in Illinois, Indiana, Rhode Island, and Virginia, including the Aloha Landing Boathouse in Newport, Rhode Island, where they were recognized in 2013 with the Doris Duke Historic Preservation Award for their restoration.

“As Chicagoans, we are deeply inspired by the history of the place we call home, and preserving objects, voices, and cultures is essential to understanding our past and illuminating our future,” said Sam and Ann Mencoff. “Artists and designers are particularly suited to blending aesthetics, science, and compassion, and we look forward to the innovative research, teaching, and learning that will be brought forth by SAIC’s talented students and faculty.”

School of the Art Institute of Chicago

For more than 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 ranked number two 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, Jeff Koons, and LeRoy Neiman.

###