

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**THE SCHOOL OF THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO ANNOUNCES ITS SPRING LINE-UP OF VISITING ARTISTS**

CHICAGO—This spring, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC), a global leader in art and design education, will host a distinguished lineup of visiting artists who exemplify the boundary-blurring nature of contemporary art. Beginning in February, SAIC's Visiting Artists Program lecture series will feature a diverse group of artists including: sound artist, designer, and electronic musician Yuri Suzuki, who explores the realms of sound through exquisitely designed pieces; SAIC alum Işıl Eğrikavuk, whose work plays at the edges of fact and fiction, journalism and storytelling; Alok Vaid-Menon, a gender nonconforming performance artist, writer, and educator; and writer Maggie Nelson, who explores gender and the domestic institutions of marriage and childbirth. The spring season kicks off on February 7.

This spring, SAIC will present the following visiting artists:

- **Huma Bhabha** is a New York-based artist who creates work that addresses universal themes of colonialism, war, displacement, and memories of place. Using found materials and the detritus of everyday life, Bhabha creates haunting figures that hover between figuration and abstraction, the monumental and the abject. Bhabha is known for her engagement with the human form and for her use of found objects. Her materials include Styrofoam, scavenged wood, found metal parts, chicken wire, cork, and air-dried clay, which she forms into complex assemblages, sometimes transforming them into bronze.
- **Yuri Suzuki** is a London-based sound artist, designer, and electronic musician who explores the realms of sound through exquisitely designed pieces. His work looks into the relationship between sound and people and explores how music and sound affect their minds. His sound, art, and installations have been exhibited all over the world.
- **Işıl Eğrikavuk's** (MA 2005, MFA 2008) work finds its core in social and political events blended with fictional components. She primarily works with stories that have a fantastical or absurd element that challenges the viewer's ability to believe them.
- **Alok Vaid-Menon** is a gender nonconforming performance artist, writer, and educator. Their eclectic style, political comedy, and poetic challenge to the gender binary have been internationally renowned. Their work has been staged at the Queer New York International Arts Festival, La MaMa's Squirts: New Voices in Queer Performance, the Under the Radar Festival, and the Drodesea Festival.
- **Simone Leigh's** practice incorporates sculpture, video, and installation informed by her ongoing exploration of Black female subjectivity and ethnography. Her objects often employ materials and forms traditionally associated with African art; her performance-influenced installations create spaces where historical precedent and self-determination come together. Through her investigations of visual overlaps between cultures, time periods, and geographies, she confronts and examines ideas of the female body, race, beauty, and community.
- **Nari Ward** is known for his sculptural installations composed of discarded material found and collected in his neighborhood. He has repurposed objects such as baby strollers, shopping carts, bottles, doors, television sets, cash registers, and shoelaces, among other materials. Ward recontextualizes these found objects in thought-provoking juxtapositions that create complex, metaphorical meanings to confront social and political issues surrounding race, poverty, and consumer culture. He intentionally leaves the meaning of his work open, allowing viewers to provide their own interpretation.
- **Maggie Nelson** has made a name for herself as a border-smashing writer of books that straddle poetry and prose, academic writing and cultural reporting, and memoir and criticism. Writing in the spirit of critics like Susan Sontag and

Roland Barthes, Nelson's experience serves as a way to explore how iconic thinkers and theorists have tried to untie the vexing knots that limit the way we talk about gender and the domestic institutions of marriage and childbirth.

"We are delighted to have such a diverse group of artistic voices coming to the School of the Art Institute of Chicago as part of our Visiting Artists Program," said Andrea Pierro, Director of the Visiting Artists Program. "These artists use their practices to explore significant topics and share their unique perspectives with audiences around the world."

The Visiting Artists Program, founded in 1868, is the oldest public program at SAIC. In addition to bringing some of the leading artistic voices to SAIC, the program plays a critical role in informing the curriculum by arranging studio critiques and roundtable discussions with students, providing them with direct access to world-renowned speakers working across disciplines.

### **Visiting Artists Program Lecture Schedule**

All presentations are free and open to the public, begin promptly at 6:00 p.m. and take place in Rubloff Auditorium at The Art Institute of Chicago, 230 S. Columbus Drive. All seating is first come, first served and reservations are not required. This program is partially supported by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council Agency. For more information, visit [saic.edu/vap](http://saic.edu/vap).

#### **Huma Bhabha**

Wednesday, February 7, 6:00 p.m.

#### **Yuri Suzuki**

Tuesday, February 13, 6:00 p.m.

*Presented in partnership with the William Bronson and Grayce Slovet Mitchell Lecture Series in SAIC's Department of Architecture, Interior Architecture, and Designed Objects and the Art Institute of Chicago's Department of Learning and Public Engagement and the Architecture & Design Society*

#### **Işıl Eğrikavuk: Distinguished Alumni Lecture Series**

Tuesday, March 6, 6:00 p.m.

*Presented in partnership with SAIC's Office of Alumni Relations*

#### **Alok Vaid-Menon**

Monday, March 12, 6:00 p.m.

*Presented in partnership with SAIC's Office of Multicultural Affairs, Department of Performance, and Writing Program*

#### **Simone Leigh**

Tuesday, March 20, 6:00 p.m.

*Presented in partnership with SAIC's Office of Engagement, Homan Square*

#### **Nari Ward**

Wednesday, April 18, 6:00 p.m.

#### **Maggie Nelson**

Monday, April 30, 6:00 p.m.

*Presented in partnership with the Poetry Foundation and SAIC's Writing Program*

### **About the 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 consistently ranking among the top 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, Jeff Koons, and LeRoy Neiman.

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