

**The School of the Art Institute of Chicago and The University of Chicago  
Are Appointed Co-Commissioners of the United States Pavilion at the  
2018 Venice Architecture Biennale**

**Chicago, IL, August 25, 2017** -- The School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) and the University of Chicago jointly announced today their selection by the U.S. Department of State to serve as co-commissioners of the United States Pavilion at the 2018 Venice Architecture Biennale. As co-commissioners, the two institutions will organize *Dimensions of Citizenship*, the exhibition they proposed as the official United States contribution to the 16<sup>th</sup> International Architecture Exhibition, on view from May 26 through November 25, 2018.

The curators of the exhibition are: Niall Atkinson, Associate Professor of Architectural History at the University of Chicago; Ann Lui, Assistant Professor at SAIC and co-founder of the architecture office Future Firm; and Mimi Zeiger, an independent critic, editor, curator, and educator based in Los Angeles.

Particularly important in today's context, *Dimensions of Citizenship* will grapple with the meaning of citizenship as a cluster of rights and responsibilities at the intersection of legal, political, economic, and societal affiliations. Contemporary issues in the world today—from immigration to the impact of technology on individuals and nations—make it clear that now, and in the years to come, the stakes of citizenship are exceedingly high.

In a statement, the curators said, “It is urgent that architecture act as an important tool in understanding, shaping, and envisioning what it means to be a citizen today. Our goal is to present the United States as a site of critical research and practice in architecture, at the intersection of old and new forms of community engagement, political action, and public policy. Globalization, digital technology, and geopolitical transformations are continuing to challenge conventional notions of citizenship across scales. This exhibition will present works by architects, designers, artists, and thinkers who are responding to today’s shifting modes of citizenship, and putting forth visions of future ways of belonging.”

SAIC and the University of Chicago will announce the exhibitors selected for the U.S. Pavilion soon.

“At the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, we are always engaging with how artists, designers, and scholars enact their citizenship,” says SAIC President Elissa Tenny. “This means recognizing the responsibility artists and designers have to explore pressing issues, like the politics of belonging, and generate new ideas, which help us better share our common humanity. The Department of Architecture, Interior Architecture, and Designed Objects (AIADO) at SAIC has a history of embracing this challenge head-on, pursuing urgent questions across

disciplines with distinguished peers like the University of Chicago and in international forums like the Venice Architecture Biennial.”

“The arts at the University of Chicago embrace a commitment to experimental scholarship with global impact and engagement with distinctive architecture. The Venice Biennale provides an opportunity to collaborate with the School of the Art Institute of Chicago on an exhibition that presents the American architectural imagination at its best, and dramatizes how that imagination connects to the urgent global question of citizenship,” said Robert J. Zimmer, president of the University of Chicago.

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the U.S. Department of State supports and manages official U.S. participation at the Venice Architecture Biennale. The selection of the joint SAIC/University of Chicago proposal for *Dimensions of Citizenship* for the U.S. Pavilion in 2018 was made through an open competition and recommendations from the Federal Advisory Committee on International Exhibitions, convened by the National Endowment for the Arts.

### **About the Curators**

**Niall Atkinson** is Associate Professor of Architectural History in the Department of Art History at the University of Chicago. He is the author of *The Noisy Renaissance: Sound, Architecture, and Florentine Urban Life*, an excavation of the historical meaning of sound and construction of urban space in Renaissance Florence. His research focuses the experience of space and the reception of architecture in early modern Europe, which has led to several collaborative projects involving the digital reconstruction of the social life and spatial context of Florence in the 15th century. His articles have appeared in *I Tatti Studies in the Italian Renaissance*, *Grey Room*, and *Senses & Society*. His investigation of “Wandering in Rome in the Enlightenment,” co-written with Susanna Caviglia, is forthcoming in *Word & Image*.

**Ann Lui** is an Assistant Professor at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and a registered architect. She is a co-founder of Future Firm, an architectural practice working at the intersections of landscape territory and curatorial experiments, whose work has been exhibited at Storefront for Art & Architecture, the Chicago Architecture Foundation, and The New Museum’s Ideas City. She recently co-edited *Public Space? Lost and Found* (SA+P/MIT Press, 2017), a volume on spatial and aesthetic practices in the civic realm.

**Mimi Zeiger** is a Los Angeles-based critic, editor, curator, and educator. She has curated, contributed to, and collaborated on projects that have been exhibited at the Art Institute of Chicago, the 2012 Venice Architecture Biennale, The New Museum, the Storefront for Art and Architecture, pinkcomma gallery, and the AA School. She co-curated *Now, There: Scenes from the Post-Geographic City*, which received the Bronze Dragon award at the 2015 Bi-City Biennale of Urbanism/Architecture, Shenzhen. She teaches in the Media Design Practices MFA program at Art Center College of Design in Pasadena.

### **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, architecture and design, 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. For more information, please visit [saic.edu](http://saic.edu).

### **About The University of Chicago**

The University of Chicago is a leading academic and research institution that has driven new ways of thinking since its founding in 1890. As an intellectual destination, the University draws scholars and students from around the world to its home in Hyde Park and campuses around the globe. The University provides a distinctive educational experience, empowering individuals to challenge conventional thinking and pursue research that produces new understanding and breakthroughs with global impact. At the University, UChicago Arts, which includes nearly 100 arts organizations, initiatives, and academic programs, brings together the efforts of students, faculty, artists, and community partners to infuse creativity throughout the intellectual life on campus while solidifying the University's role as a cultural destination and resource on Chicago's South Side.

### **About the U.S. Pavilion**

The U.S. Pavilion at the Venice Biennale was built in 1930 and designed by architects William Adams Delano and Chester Holmes Aldrich. The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation acquired the U.S. Pavilion in 1986, and now manages it through the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice, with the support of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs for the U.S. Department of State.

### **About the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and the U.S. Embassy in Rome**

The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) builds relations between people of the United States and the people of other countries through academic, cultural, sports, and professional exchange programs, as well as public-private partnerships and mentoring programs. These exchange programs improve foreign relations and strengthen the national security of the United States, support U.S. international leadership, and provide a broad range of domestic benefits by helping break down barriers that often divide us. ECA programs build connections that engage and empower people and motivate them to become leaders and thinkers; to develop new skills; and to find connections that will create positive change in their communities. Alumni of ECA exchange programs comprise more than one million people around the world, including more than 80 Nobel Laureates and more than

500 current or former heads of state and government around the world. For more information:  
[eca.state.gov](http://eca.state.gov)

ECA also closely collaborates with the U.S. Embassy in Rome, which has long supported the Venice Biennale and has maintained a strong interest in this important opportunity to showcase innovative American architects and artists. For more information: [it.usembassy.gov](http://it.usembassy.gov).

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