

Report of the President of the School of the Art Institute

THE 2007–08 academic year at the School was defined by growth and change in both the student body and the campus. The student population increased by over 300 students and the School acquired 68,000 square feet of space in the historic Louis Sullivan building on State Street. The School celebrated the opening of two new state-of-the-art facilities in support of its growing student body: the Karen and Jim Frank Photography Studios in the Columbus Drive Building and the Sage Studios for Fashion Design in the Sullivan Center. A gift from Karen Frank and her husband Jim allowed the School to transform its outdated photography studios into flexible spaces that provide the most cutting-edge technology in both digital and traditional photographic techniques. Karen is an alumna of the School and a member of both the Board of Trustees and Board of Governors, and this gift exemplifies her dedication to improving the academic experience at SAIC.

The Fashion Design department moved into the new 25,000-square-foot Sage Studios for Fashion Design in the historic Sullivan Center. The Studios were made possible by a generous gift from a magnificent friend of the School and SAIC Board member Melissa Sage Fadim and the Sage Foundation. Melissa's support of the fashion department at the School has helped propel it to international acclaim. Mayor Richard M. Daley inaugurated the space and announced the launch of the Master of Design in Fashion, Body, and Garment, one of the country's only graduate fashion programs. Mayor Daley is committed to supporting the outstanding fashion program at the School and considers it crucial to his goal of establishing Chicago as one of the world's fashion capitals.

Fueled by this excitement surrounding fashion in Chicago, the School's Fashion Committee showcased the Department of Fashion Design's annual, awe-inspiring fashion show in an event called *The Walk 2008* to benefit fashion student scholarships. The evening was a tremendous success and was the School's first production in the raw space of its new Sullivan Galleries, directly adjacent to the Sage Studios for Fashion Design. The 40,000-square-foot Sullivan Galleries opened in September 2008 and will be the School's premier exhibition space, dedicated to showcasing student, faculty, alumni, and visiting artist work.

Our faculty, students, and alumni enhanced our global reputation by receiving prestigious awards and international recognition for their outstanding work. Two SAIC graduate students, Genevieve Erin O'Brien and Megan Euker, received Fulbright grants in performance and painting, respectively. A photograph by alumna Carrie Schneider was purchased by the Art Institute museum, and is now part of their permanent collection. Graduate student Jerome Acks received the Toby Devan Lewis Fellowship for 2008, an award of \$10,000. Joseph Hardesty, also a graduate student, received the Gelman Travel Fellowship, an award of \$25,000. Alumni William Cordova, Corey McCorkle, Rodney McMillian, Amie Siegel, and Amanda Ross-Ho; faculty member Melanie Schiff, and visiting artist Walead Beshty were selected to participate in the 2008 Whitney Biennial.

In April, the Getty Foundation awarded Nora Taylor, Alsdorf Professor of South and Southeast Asian Art at SAIC, an unprecedented research grant of \$112,000 for her project entitled "Contemporary Experimental Performance Culture in Vietnam." AIADO faculty members Helen Maria Nugent and Douglas Pancoast collaborated with their students and Industreal, an Italian design company, to create *18% GRAY*, an installation of sculptural designs involving the manipulation of light. It was presented during FuoriSalone 2008 in Milan and received impressive press coverage in Europe and the United States.

The School proudly awarded an honorary doctorate to contemporary artist and alumnus Jeff Koons at the 2008 commencement ceremony at the Pritzker Pavilion in Millennium Park. Honorary degrees were also awarded to *New York Magazine* art critic Jerry Saltz and alumnus and painter Herb Kane.

The School hosted several influential public programs this year. In November, filmmaker George Lucas gave a lecture at the Rubloff Auditorium as part of the John Kurtich Lecture series. From January to March, the School presented *Meta-Matta-Clark*, a series of lectures and events in response to the work of Gordon Matta-Clark. In April, the inaugural lecture of the William and Stephanie Sick Distinguished Professorship featured Chicago artist Kerry James Marshall and William and Stephanie Sick Distinguished Professor Bruce Mau in a panel discussion about the artist's agency in effecting social change.

In June, the Gene Siskel Film Center honored Oscar winner Alan Arkin at their Annual Gala at the Four Seasons Hotel. Arkin began his acting career at Second City in the early 1960s, and he won the 2007 Academy Award for Best Supporting Actor for his performance in *Little Miss Sunshine*. Arkin participated in a panel discussion hosted by Chicago's own Richard Christiansen, former chief Arts and Entertainment critic for the *Chicago Tribune*. Director, producer, actor, and fellow Second City alumnus Harold Ramis also attended the event.

The New Artists Society, the School's premier philanthropic group, toured Los Angeles in January. There they had private viewings of the Murakami exhibition, private collections, and alumni studios. Here in Chicago, the NAS hosted behind-the-scenes tours of faculty homes and studios including Patty Carroll, Richard Rezac, Pala Townsend, and the home of collector Ruth Horwich with Chicago Imagist and SAIC faculty member Karl Wirsum.

Lastly, after twenty years at the School, I end my tenure as President. I will stay on as Chancellor for the next academic year to assist the new President. Wellington Reiter, who was most recently Dean of the College of Design at Arizona State University, assumed the role of President on August 25. President Reiter has already brought excellent experience and a new perspective to our administration, and I feel confident that his presence heralds the beginning of a successful new era at SAIC.

Tony Jones

President