



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

San Francisco Art Institute plans multi-faceted, online commencement ceremony and year-end MFA/BFA exhibitions

San Francisco, CA, May 11, 2020 — San Francisco Art Institute (SFAI) will honor its graduating students with a wide-reaching, online, year-end celebration that features virtual MFA/BFA exhibitions, a live-streamed Symposium, and online Commencement Ceremony, including the presentation of honorary doctorates to two accomplished alumni, **Nao Bustamante** (MFA, 2001) and **Catherine Opie** (BFA, 1985).

The publicly-accessible events include the May 15, 2020 launch of the BFA and MFA exhibitions on the sfai.edu website. Online visitors to the BFA exhibition can navigate a 3D model of the Chestnut Street campus and its galleries to view the installation of several hundred multi-disciplinary works by more than 100 students. The interactive platform allows viewers to tour the galleries, focus in on specific works, learn more about the artists, and experience video and sound works via QR code.

MFA student work in contemporary installation, painting, sound, video, sculpture, photography, printmaking, performance, and more will be viewable and accessible via a dedicated page on the school's website that will direct the public to individual websites. Both exhibitions will be accessible online from May 15-June 20, 2020.

On May 13, 2020, the public can tune in from 10am-5:30pm to SFAI's live Symposium via its @sfaiofficial YouTube channel. Graduating scholars will present portions of their theses in a moderated symposium and answer questions from the audience. Links will be available from the sfai.edu website as well.

The year-end events culminate with SFAI's Commencement Ceremony starting at 2pm on May 16, 2020, also broadcast live on the @sfaiofficial YouTube channel. The ceremony begins with a virtual student procession, followed by a welcoming address from students **Kaycee Phillips** and **Rebecca Sexton** and remarks from Board Chair, **Pam Rorke Levy**. Beloved SFAI Librarian and Archivist **Jeff Gunderson** will emcee the event live from the Chestnut Street campus and will present SFAI's highest honor, the Honorary Doctor of Fine Arts, to two exceptional artists and alumni, Nao Bustamante and Catherine Opie, who will both address the graduating class via pre-recorded video segments. Viewers will also hear from faculty speaker **John Priola**, undergraduate representatives, **David Welch** and **Cardamom Bloom**, as well as graduate speakers, **Chris Williams** and **Lexyguis Calip**. The recital of the graduates' names will be accompanied by a slideshow of clips that highlight each artist and their work. The

ceremony ends with video shout outs from well-known alumni including **Stephanie Syjuco** (BFA, 1995), **Eamon Ore-Giron** (BFA, 1996), and more.

The commencement ceremony will be immediately followed by a live art opening on the school's YouTube channel that will feature student performance and exhibition tours.

About the Honorees

The Honorary Doctor of Fine Arts is the highest honor bestowed at SFAI, given annually to a person or persons who have made inspiring contributions to our society and demonstrated how an aesthetically astute, investigative mind can impact the world for the better.

Other recent recipients of an honorary degree from SFAI include alumnus Kehinde Wiley, Enrique Chagoya, Linda Nochlin, Theaster Gates, Jack Whitten, Kathryn Bigelow, and Roberta Smith.

Nao Bustamante is an internationally recognized artist, residing in Los Angeles, California. Bustamante's precarious work encompasses performance art, video installation, filmmaking, sculpture, and writing. She has exhibited at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London, the New York Museum of Modern Art, The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Sundance International Film Festival/New Frontier, Outfest International Film Festival, El Museo del Barrio Museum of Contemporary Art, First International Performance Biennial, Deformes in Santiago, Chile and the Kiasma Museum of Helsinki. She was also an unlikely contestant on the Bravo network's show, "Work of Art: The Next Great Artist." In 2001, she received the Anonymous Was a Woman fellowship and in 2007, was named a New York Foundation for the Arts Fellow, as well as a Lambert Fellow. In 2008, she received the Chase Legacy Award in Film and was the Artist in Residence of the American Studies Association in 2012. In 2013, Bustamante was awarded the (Short-term) CMAS-Benson Latin American Collection Research Fellowship and also a Makers Muse Award from the Kindle Foundation. In 2014/15 Bustamante was Artist in Residence at UC Riverside and in 2015 she was a UC MEXUS Scholar in Residence in preparation for a solo exhibit at Vincent Price Art Museum in Los Angeles. Bustamante's video work is in the Kadist Collection.

Bustamante is an alumna of SFAI, New Genres program, and the Skowhegen School of Painting and Sculpture. Currently she holds the position of Professor of Art at the USC Roski School of Art and Design. There, she also serves as the Director of the MFA in Art.

Catherine Opie is an artist working with photography, film, collage, and ceramics. Her work has been exhibited extensively throughout the United States and abroad and is held in over 50 major collections throughout the world. Opie was a recipient of The Guggenheim Fellowship in 2019, The Smithsonian's Archives of American Art Medal in 2016, The Julius Shulman Excellence in Photography Award in 2013, and a United States Artists Fellowship in 2006. In

September of 2008, the Guggenheim Museum in New York opened a mid-career exhibition titled *Catherine Opie: American Photographer*. Recent projects include a permanent photographic installation for the new Los Angeles Federal Courthouse in 2016, and her book, *700 Nimes Road, a portrait of Elizabeth Taylor*, was published by Prestel in 2015. A large survey of Opie's work opened at the Henie Onstad Kunstsenter in Norway in 2017. She debuted her first film, *The Modernist*, at Regen Projects, Los Angeles in 2018, and her exhibition titled *Rhetorical Landscapes* is currently on view at Regen Projects through June 20, 2020. Opie received a BFA from SFAI, and an MFA from the California Institute of the Arts in 1988. She is the Lynda and Stewart Resnick endowed Chair in Art and Professor of Photography at UCLA.

SFAI Year-End Events

The Commencement Ceremony is open to the public and part of a week-long series of events and exhibitions to which all are invited:

BA + MA Symposium

- Online: YouTube channel: @sfaiofficial
- Wednesday, May 13, 10am-5:30pm

Graduating scholars present portions of their theses in a moderated symposium.

MFA Exhibition

- Online: sfai.edu
- On View: May 15 - June 20

BFA Exhibition

- Online: sfai.edu
- On View: May 15 - June 20

A campus-wide virtual exhibition featuring multi-disciplinary works by graduating Bachelor of Fine Arts students.

Commencement

- Online: YouTube channel: @sfaiofficial
- Saturday, May 16, 2:00pm

About San Francisco Art Institute

Founded in 1871, SFAI is one of the country's oldest and most prestigious institutions of higher education committed to the practice and study of contemporary art. SFAI fosters creativity and original thinking in an open, experimental, and interdisciplinary context, and has played a central role in many contemporary art movements including Abstract Expressionism, Bay Area Figuration, Color Field, California Funk, and the Mission School. Celebrated artists who have studied or taught at SFAI include Ansel Adams, Mark Rothko, David Park, Richard Diebenkorn, Jay DeFeo, Joan Brown, Barry McGee, Alicia McCarthy, and Kehinde Wiley. Other notable

alumni include the photographer Annie Liebovitz and Academy Award-winning director Kathryn Bigelow.

MEDIA CONTACT

Nina Szevich

Public Relations

415.752.2483

nina@szevichpr.com

###