



Smith-Buonanno Family Director of Contemporary Practices

The Department of Contemporary Practices at the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) invites applications for the Smith-Buonanno Family Director of Contemporary Practices position. The Buonanno Director is a tenured faculty position, serving in a leadership role and overseeing the first-year program at SAIC. The position begins in August of 2025. Salary is competitive with peer institutions and commensurate with quality of practice, scholarship, academic research, extent of teaching experience, and current professional standing.

Program Profile

SAIC's first-year program, the Department of Contemporary Practices (CP), provides an intensive introduction to interdisciplinary contemporary art and design practices, including required curriculum for first-year and transfer students. Faculty work with students in transitioning to SAIC and preparing for their future studies at the School. Pedagogically, the Department of Contemporary Practices is committed to integrating critical thinking skills, cultural competency, anti-racism, and social engagement towards a decolonized, studio-based curriculum across myriad media and processes. Courses move between studio practices, investigating and developing ideas, skill building, collaborative learning, various forms of critique, and activities to foster community.

Evolving out of a traditional foundations program, the Department of Contemporary Practices is continually evaluating and assessing what a first-year required curriculum in the arts might be, rigorously exploring the changing nature of what it means to be “contemporary” for new generations of artists and designers.

The Department of Contemporary Practices is deeply committed to consistent and ongoing anti-racist work and creating a culture of learning and engagement. This work has taken the form of educational programming events focusing on anti-racism, social justice, and inclusivity in the arts and classroom settings including artist talks, workshops, reading groups, and student panel discussions about urban segregation, identity, oppression, disability justice, and land acknowledgment, all designed to engage faculty and students in critical dialogue and reflection on these issues.

The Department of Contemporary Practices provides courses for over 850 students. Approximately seventy-five faculty teach in the department, eleven of whom are tenured or tenure-track faculty.

Further information about the department can be found at: <https://www.saic.edu/contemporary-practices>

Responsibilities

The Smith-Buonanno Family Director of Contemporary Practices is a leadership position at SAIC and is responsible for working with the faculty in developing the curricular and programmatic initiatives of the department.

The director is expected to demonstrate a commitment to the mission of the Department of Contemporary Practices: to maintain the “contemporary” in Contemporary Practices, while also underscoring the importance of fundamental skills, interdisciplinary practices, and critical thinking that are part of SAIC’s curriculum. The primary responsibility of the director is to work with the CP faculty to develop and maintain innovative courses and to select faculty to teach those courses. Other duties include facilities planning and oversight, budget and resource allocation, as well as evaluating curriculum and faculty performance. Within the department, the director is

supported by departmental administration and two coordinator positions: faculty coordinator and curriculum coordinator; roles held by full-time faculty colleagues. Throughout the school the director works in partnership with the undergraduate division, student affairs, and the chairs of twenty-two studio and academic programs. In addition, the director is an outward facing member of the SAIC community who connects with the School at large, potential students, and the city of Chicago.

A selection of responsibilities of the director include:

- Providing leadership in implementing a long-term vision for the Contemporary Practices curriculum, upholding the departmental commitment of innovating and integrating an anti-racist and decolonized curriculum into a studio-based curriculum.
- Serving as an advocate for the needs of Contemporary Practices students, faculty, and the overall department.
- Liaising with institutional, departmental, and program leaders throughout SAIC to ensure alignment of the Contemporary Practices curriculum with evolving departmental and institutional needs.
- Directing and mentoring full-time faculty in their departmental service responsibilities, including the departmental faculty coordinator who supports and oversees part-time faculty development, and the departmental curriculum coordinator who supervises and facilitates departmental curricular development and assessment.
- The director works departmentally with the CP assessment committee to envision and implement meaningful and creative assessment models to support effective teaching of the CP learning goals and course learning outcomes, while also engaging with broader school-wide accreditation cycles.
- In consultation with the CP faculty coordinator and administrative director, scheduling faculty for all Contemporary Practices classes.
- Managing the administrative staff and collaborating with the senior administrative director to develop departmental procedures.
- Working with the senior administrative director to establish and monitor the operating and capital asset budgets for the department.
- Working with the Office of Advancement to secure student scholarships and funding for additional Contemporary Practices initiatives.
- The director is a standing member of the following institutional committees: Undergraduate Recruitment Committee; Department Heads; Undergraduate Cabinet; First Year Forum. The director facilitates communication between these committees and the Contemporary Practices faculty.
- Active participation in School governance.
- The director is expected to teach concurrent with administrative responsibilities.

Qualifications

MFA, or terminal degree in an adjacent field, or equivalent professional experience is required. Candidates should have a minimum of five years of full-time experience teaching foundation studio or equivalent first-year students; an ongoing history of recognized accomplishment in their field; and a demonstrated ability to work effectively with both faculty and staff as a manager and a mentor. Candidates should demonstrate their experience with departmental administration. Additionally, candidates should be prepared to demonstrate how they will contribute in meaningful ways to the department and SAIC's shared commitment to anti-racism, cultural diversity, pluralism, and individual differences. Qualified candidates should be at the Associate or Full Professor (or equivalent if outside the US system) rank at their current institution.

The ideal candidate will contribute to the diversity of the School by bringing a perspective, way of thinking, and/or a unique set of experiences that expand the intellectual conversations and practices within the fields of art and design.

Application Procedures

Applicants are encouraged to apply by **Wednesday, January 15, 2025** for full consideration. Please submit application materials via <https://saicfaculty.slideroom.com/#/Login>. You will be asked to create an account after which time you may complete the application, which consists of fill-in fields and required documents to upload. You are encouraged to begin the application well before the priority deadline.

Complete the fields for educational background; current position; and contact information for three professional references.

Please convert all word documents into PDFs before uploading. Required files to upload include:

- cover letter stating your interests and qualifications
- curriculum vitae
- documentation of a selection of professional work
- statement of teaching philosophy including details on how your teaching has supported the success of students from racial, ethnic, gender, and/or socio-economic backgrounds that are underrepresented in your academic field
- statement of research and practice
- statement of administrative philosophy

All applicants for this position must complete and sign a [Prior Workplace Conduct Declaration](#) as part of their initial application materials in order to be considered as a candidate and sign a release authorizing SAIC to conduct a misconduct reference check should the candidate ultimately be selected as a finalist for the position.

Questions

Questions regarding the School and its open positions, application procedures, or the search process may be emailed to saicteach@saic.edu. Please consult www.saic.edu for information on the School and its programs, or <https://www.saic.edu/about/work-at-saic> for open positions and application procedures.

About SAIC

A leader in educating artists, designers, and scholars since 1866, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) offers undergraduate, graduate, and post-baccalaureate programs to students from across the globe. Located in the heart of Chicago, the School is one of the largest and oldest private schools of art and design in the country with programs reflecting current practices in art. SAIC's educational philosophy is built upon a transdisciplinary approach to art and design that provides unparalleled opportunities for students to develop their creative and critical abilities with renowned faculty who are leading practitioners in their fields. SAIC's resources include the Art Institute of Chicago and its Modern Wing, and numerous special collections and programming venues that provide students with exceptional exhibitions, screenings, lectures, and performances. The campus is located on Chicago's magnificent lakefront amid the city's cultural and architectural treasures.

Degree tracks include the Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) in Studio; BFA with Emphasis in Art Education or Writing; BA degrees in Art History and Visual and Critical Studies; Master of Architecture; Master of Design (MDes) in Designed

Objects; MFA in Fashion, Body, and Garment; MFA in Studio or Writing; MA degrees in Arts Administration; Art Education; Art History, Theory, and Criticism; Art Therapy; Teaching; Visual and Critical Studies; and a Master of Science in Historic Preservation.

Equal Opportunity Employer

The Art Institute of Chicago, including both the school and the museum, is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for its students, visitors, faculty, and staff, and to ensuring that educational and employment decisions are based on an individual's abilities and qualifications. The Art Institute of Chicago does not tolerate unlawful discrimination based on race, color, sex, religion, national origin, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, military or former military status, or any other status protected by federal, state or local law, in its programs and activities, public accommodations or employment practices. The following individuals have been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies:

Title IX Coordinator and Section 504 Coordinator

Lakeview Building, 116 S. Michigan Ave., 12th floor, Chicago, IL 60603, 312.499.4165, title9@saic.edu

For further information on notice of nondiscrimination, see the [Office for Civil Rights Discrimination](#) for the address and phone number of the office that serves your area, or call 800.421.3481.

Requests for Accommodations

SAIC provides reasonable accommodations during the interview process for candidates with disabilities in adherence with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Should you need an accommodation to participate in an interview, please contact Molly Roth Scranton, Associate Director of Faculty Affairs, at mscranton@saic.edu.