

Letter from the President

For the SFAI community, May is a mixed-emotion time of endings, beginnings, and reflection.

The graduate capstone projects and events mark our students' proud exit from SFAI and entry into the broader art world, but also prompt us to look back, noting the many transformations (of both art and self) forged in the crucible of the Institute. Soon, colleagues and friends will separate and embark on the next phases of their lives and careers. Since this has been my first year as President, there are many people whom I've only just met and now must send off.

During my time at SFAI—and in the diverse and ambitious work showcased in this catalogue—I have seen how this place contains multitudes: there is a gritty, punk rock spirit coupled with sophisticated critical thinking; fierce independence paired with generous collaboration and mentorship; and the coexistence of a truly remarkable history and a commitment to forward progress. But there is a unifying factor.

Last spring, when I addressed an assembly in application for this job of President, I talked about the school's many assets, among them its illustrious history, top-notch faculty, and beautiful environment. But the single greatest asset of SFAI is the place it holds in the hearts of virtually all who have come into its orbit. Alumni, students, professors, staff, the public—even tourists and occasional visitors—have come to share an

extraordinary bond. I, myself, felt it over the decades I visited to attend programs or exhibitions, or to work with artists here in my role as a museum curator. It is the source of tremendous power and the key to this institution's 140 years of vitality.

In a word, this place is beloved.

So at the risk of sounding like a cult leader, I say to our new graduates: Once you've joined the SFAI community, you can never actually leave it. The modes of thinking and making that you have honed here, the relationships that you've developed, and the very essence of this place will stay with you as you close your bright orange door at the Graduate Center or walk out the arched entryway at 800 Chestnut Street. Being an SFAI artist or scholar is a way of seeing the world; it is a way of life.

The work contained within these pages is a wonderful beginning to that lifetime adventure. I can't wait to see what else you all will contribute.



CHARLES DESMARAIS
President