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PRESIDENT AND ELOISE W. MARTIN DIRECTOR DOUGLAS DRIUCK ANNOUNCES HIS RETIREMENT AFTER 30 YEARS OF SERVICE AT THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO

CHICAGO – Douglas Driick, President and Eloise W. Martin Director announced today his plans to retire from the Art Institute of Chicago. An internationally recognized scholar and curator who joined the Art Institute in 1985, during his distinguished 30 years of service Driick chaired two of the museum’s eleven curatorial departments and led the institution as its president and director since 2011, overseeing many milestones in the museum’s illustrious history.

“It has been my honor to serve as the Art Institute’s president and director,” said Driick. “I have been deeply proud to lead one of the finest museums in the world, and to work for three decades with an exceptional cadre of remarkably talented museum colleagues. It is my hope that together we have ensured a solid footing for the Art Institute to continue to grow stronger and more vibrant, financially stable and internationally renowned, with a future filled with more opportunities than challenges.”

“Douglas is one of the most respected, thoughtful, and innovative museum leaders in the world. He has made extraordinary contributions to the development of the Art Institute—ushering the museum into the digital age, achieving an unparalleled ranking among the world’s top three museums on TripAdvisor for three years running, and managing the largest gift of art since the museum’s founding with the contemporary works from Stefan Edlis and Gael Neeson,” said Bob Levy, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Art Institute of Chicago. “Douglas’s initiatives to place a stronger emphasis than ever before on visitor access and engagement, and on championing global diversity as it is reflected in the museum’s audiences, collections, and programs, will only continue to advance the Art Institute’s global reach and reputation for excellence.”
Under Druick’s leadership, since 2011, the Art Institute has offered more than 100 internationally recognized and innovative exhibitions that have inspired and educated millions of visitors who count on the museum to encourage the individual experience of exceptional works of art. During Druick’s tenure, the museum achieved—and continues to record—the highest attendance numbers in its history. He managed the largest gift of art to the Art Institute since its founding, in the generous and extraordinary collection of Stefan Edlis and Gael Neeson, affirming the museum’s legacy as an international leader in contemporary art and realizing the promise of the Modern Wing.

Druick’s commitment to bring the museum fully into the digital age—overseeing a comprehensive plan to install wireless internet in the galleries and public spaces, launching a pioneering Online Scholarly Catalogue Initiative, and recalibrating the museum’s culture to prioritize visitor access and engagement—has ensured a solid footing for the Art Institute’s continued preeminence as one of the world’s most exceptional museums.

Druick noted, “The next chapter in the life and legacy of the Art Institute hinges on an all-important five to seven year endeavor to realize the museum’s long range plan that I believe requires uninterrupted leadership. I will retire with confidence, knowing that the foundation for the museum’s future is firmly in place and that we will energetically pursue our ambitious vision. For decades, the Art Institute’s life has been my own, but I need now to draw a distinction between my professional and personal life. I am doing so to realize long held plans with my partner and frequent collaborator Peter Zegers to actively pursue new directions and experiences together, here and abroad.”

Douglas Druick, 70, received a B.A. in English and Philosophy from McGill University in Montreal in 1966, and an M.A. in English from the University of Toronto in 1967. In 1972, he received his M.Phil. in the History of Art from Yale University, followed by his Ph.D., also from Yale, in 1979. From 1973 to 1984, Druick was the Curator of European and American Prints at the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa.

He first came to the Art Institute in 1985 as the Chair and Prince Trust Curator of Prints and Drawings. Four years later, in 1989, he also became the Searle Curator of European Painting at the Art Institute. In 2006, while remaining the Chair of the Department of Prints and Drawings, he was named the Chair of the Department of Medieval to Modern European Painting and Sculpture, deftly stewarding the Art Institute’s renowned Impressionist, Post-Impressionist, and Modern collections.
As chair of two of the museum’s largest departments Druick oversaw the acquisition of thousands of notable prints and drawings of all schools and many important European paintings, both building on the collections’ strengths and expanding the geographical representation of nineteenth- and twentieth-century art.


Druick has published and lectured extensively, with 15 exhibition catalogues to his credit; numerous essays and articles; and talks and lectures from Vienna to London and from Amsterdam to San Francisco.

He has been awarded many professional honors and has served on various advisory councils and boards, including as the Chairman of the Arts and Artifacts Indemnity Advisory Panel, National Endowment for the Arts (2002–2004); a Founding Board Member of the Association of Art Museum Curators (2002–2008); and the National Committee for the History of Art (2003–2009). The Government of France named him an “Officier des Arts et Lettres” in 2012, and he was elected as a Fellow to the American Academy of Arts & Sciences in 2013.

Douglas Druick will remain fully engaged in his duties as President and Eloise W. Martin Director until his successor has been appointed and installed. The Board of Trustees of the Art Institute of Chicago deeply respects and has enormous gratitude for Druick’s service and his stewardship of the museum, and will begin the important work to formulate an approach to his succession.

Images:
Douglas Druick. The Art Institute of Chicago, photography by Robert Carl.
Douglas Druick and Peter Zegers with their curatorial and conservation team for *Van Gogh and Gauguin: The Studio of the South* (2001).
Douglas Druick and Suzanne Folds McCullagh. The Art Institute of Chicago.
Douglas Druick. Photography by Kirsten Miccoli.

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