SAIC School of the Art Institute of Chicago

A Proposal for an Endowed Research Center

THE CHAGALL CENTER

for Modern and Contemporary Jewish Art

Jewish artists have defined modern and contemporary art as profoundly as any community in the world. Yet the Jewish dimension of that contribution remains overlooked by the institutions that create the canon.

The Art Institute of Chicago holds work by hundreds of modern and contemporary Jewish artists. No graduate program in the country is funded to study them. Since October 7, 2023, the climate for Jewish cultural life in the arts has only grown harder, and Jewish identity is at risk of becoming a professional liability.

The proposed Chagall Center responds by **seeding the future**: it supports young talent and launches the careers of professionals committed to Jewish art — the people who will collect it, teach it, and remember it.

Its centerpiece is a fully funded MA fellowship at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago for a graduate student whose thesis examines a modern or contemporary Jewish artist, body of work, or theme — or who brings a Jewish interpretive lens to art of any kind. The fellowship is defined by the subject of the research, not the identity of the researcher: it is open to students of any background, heritage, or belief. Each fellow also holds a residential research fellowship at the Art Institute's Research Center.

The endowment is permanent, so the support is permanent. This Center will seed the future every year, without end. Fifty years from now, the curators who shape art collections, the administrators who fund programs, and the scholars who write art history will trace their formation to this Jewish Center.

A center like this does not fund a program. It founds a field.

We are not soliciting gifts with this letter. SAIC's Provost has advanced this project to its initial outreach phase, and we are now looking for people and organizations who want to know more about supporting young talent and seeding this future.

Please write or call David Raskin. He will send the full proposal and arrange a conversation. Feel free to forward this letter to anyone you think would want to help launch the careers of the next generation of professionals committed to Jewish art.

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