

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 10, 2018

**THE SCHOOL OF THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO AND THE RUMCHATA FOUNDATION
PARTNER TO SUPPORT EMERGING FASHION DESIGNERS**

CHICAGO—The School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC), a global leader in art and design education, teamed up with the RumChata Foundation to provide a \$20,000 merit fellowship to a student graduating from the school's Master of Design in Fashion, Body and Garment program. The RumChata Foundation Fellowship in Fashion Design, now in its third year, supports the vision of emerging fashion designers as they begin their careers by providing critical financial assistance that gives them the freedom to take creative risks.

The fellowship was started in 2016 by the Chicago-area foundation to support artists who have an entrepreneurial spirit. The selection process for the fellowship is competitive, with students submitting statements, images and a project proposal detailing the use of their fellowship funds to a panel of faculty from SAIC's Fashion Design department and a RumChata Foundation representative each year. The finalists then present their work in front of the panel.

"Support from the RumChata Foundation helps students launch their creative careers while removing financial constraints as they transition to working as a professional artist," said Cheryl Russell, SAIC's Executive Director of Corporate, Foundation, Government, and Civic Relations. "We are grateful for the RumChata Foundation and organizations like it that value and validate the unique perspective of artists and designers."

RumChata Foundation Fellowship in Fashion Design fellows include:

- **Nathan Hoyle** (MDes 2018) recently graduated from SAIC. Through his work with fibers and installation, he explores the truth's relationship to past and present. Hoyle is continuing his work, and has recently opened his own studio in Chicago's Humboldt Park neighborhood. His thesis work is currently on display at Gallery Aesthete, 1751 West Division Street.
- **Nick Mahshie** (MDes 2017) founded Tranqui Prints Studio in Miami, a screen printing studio focused on printed textiles, which he was able to begin thanks in part to the RumChata Foundation Fellowship. His artwork has been recognized by *the New York Times*, *Time Out Magazine* and the *Miami New Times*. Mahshie is currently the Youth Program Coordinator at the Institute of Contemporary Art Miami.
- **Benjamin Larose** (MDes 2016) is currently a lecturer at SAIC and was also selected to present in the Chicago Artist Coalition's booth at EXPO CHICAGO 2018. While he was a student at SAIC, he received the New Artist Society Scholarship, which is one of the largest and most prestigious merit scholarships available to graduate students. Larose creates objects that "explore themes such as gender, sexuality, status or taste and question our assumptions on what it means to be 'normal.'"

"The RumChata Foundation is very proud to be able to help these incredibly creative graduates with the financial support to jump start their design careers," said Tom Maas, Founder, RumChata Foundation. "In the spirit of the RumChata Foundation, we celebrate those with the passion and drive it takes to create and bring to life ideas that start from one's imagination and vision."

“It’s important that emerging fashion designers have the opportunity to take risks on their looks and in their careers,” said Nick Cave, SAIC’s Stephanie and Bill Sick Professor of Fashion, Body and Garment. “The RumChata Foundation Fellowship in Fashion Design affords recent graduates of the Master of Design in Fashion, Body and Garment program the freedom to take those risks.”

About the School of the Art Institute of Chicago

For more than 150 years, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) has been a leader in educating the world’s most influential artists, designers and scholars. Located in downtown Chicago with a fine arts graduate program consistently ranking among the top programs in the nation by U.S. News and World Report, SAIC provides an interdisciplinary approach to art and design as well as world-class resources, including the Art Institute of Chicago museum, on-campus galleries and state-of-the-art facilities. SAIC’s undergraduate, graduate and post-baccalaureate students have the freedom to take risks and create the bold ideas that transform Chicago and the world—as seen through notable alumni and faculty such as Michelle Grabner, David Sedaris, Elizabeth Murray, Richard Hunt, Georgia O’Keeffe, Cynthia Rowley, Nick Cave, Jeff Koons and LeRoy Neiman.

About the RumChata Foundation

The RumChata Foundation was formed to share in the world-wide success achieved by the RumChata brand. Its mission is to provide financial support to worthy causes that align with a brand enjoyed by millions around the world who work hard, are passionate and want to do good. The RumChata Foundation is proud to have donated more than \$750,000 over the past five years to Lone Survivor Foundation through its annual RumChata Freedom Bottle Program. The RumChata Foundation also supports local and national charities including The American Cancer Society, The American Heart Association, Variety Clubs and Gridiron Greats in addition to scholarship programs for graduate students studying fashion and culinary arts.

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