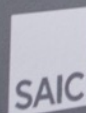


**Y** My curiosity and infinite delight for cryptic constructs—characteristics of visual languages—is not always asking to be satiated. Encountering the work of recent MFA graduates at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, I have found myself a spectator amongst this current generation of young artists for whom technology and its resources are a commonplace.

While navigating the influx and abundance of information and automation, there are artists who are choosing to debate their own case, pursuing independent languages and methods of making, impartial to the latest trends or flaunting of technical stylings. Their explorations are sometimes personal, some methodical, all with fluidity—moving through mediums, materials, and subjects with care, confidence, and a type of DIY mentality.

I find satisfaction in these gestures that take on a range of vocabularies, directions, and ideas. While the Y Generation has also been named (and critiqued as) the Peter Pan Generation, I consider Scottish novelist and playwright J.M. Barrie's idea of Neverland—a place found in children's minds, resembling more or less an island, yet never the same from one child to the next. The somewhat negative traits that seem to characterize the Millennials also denote a great sense of individualism, narcissism, and idealism. But let us remember, not all negative traits are negatives in concept.

**Edra Soto (MFA 2000), Guest Curator**



School of the Art Institute  
of Chicago























*Jenn Smith, Untitled (Snake), (2016).  
Oil and acrylic on canvas.*

## THE SCHOOL OF THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO

The School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) has been a leading institution in educating artists, designers and scholars since 1866. Located in downtown Chicago, SAIC has an educational philosophy built upon an interdisciplinary approach to art and design, giving students unparalleled opportunities to develop their creative and critical abilities while working with renowned faculty who include many of the leading practitioners in their fields. For EXPO CHICAGO 2016, SAIC alumna and artist Edra Soto (MFA 2000) continued her curatorial practice, organizing an exhibition of 25 artists from SAIC's 2016 graduating class. This selection highlighted emerging talent from Canada, China, Iran, Mexico, Spain, the US and more. In

coordinating this show, Soto notes, "No matter how drastic, diverse or monitored our upbringing is, humans' natural instincts and necessities for mating, surviving and communicating may perpetually remain."