

# SCI-Arc

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*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

## SCI-Arc Presents World-Renowned Architect Frank Gehry with Honorary Degree



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**Los Angeles, CA (October 1, 2019)** – On September 8<sup>th</sup> during SCI-Arc’s 2019 graduation commencement ceremony, esteemed architect and longtime SCI-Arc friend, faculty, and trustee Frank Gehry received an honorary M.Arch degree from the school. SCI-Arc Director and CEO Hernan Diaz Alonso, who presented the degree to Gehry, remarked, “There are very few figures in the history of architecture who can claim that there’s a ‘before’ and ‘after’ their work. Frank Gehry is one of them. His impact in our world—the world of architecture—and the world at large, is unparalleled.”

Upon receiving the honorary diploma, Gehry shared words of gratitude for his time at SCI-Arc and offered sincere encouragement to the graduating class: “I started teaching at SCI-Arc way back, before all of you were born probably. There were some rough times—they didn’t know who I was or what I was. I didn’t

know who I was or what I was either. But we got through it. And what a journey SCI-Arc has had, the people that have supported it and been with it all these years, and look where it is now. I'm so proud of you. Keep on going."

"Frank's generosity and commitment to architecture and education on every level is relentless," continued Diaz Alonso. "He's innovated on every front that an architect can innovate. There are not enough words or concepts to define what Frank Gehry means for architecture, for Los Angeles, for our students, for our faculty, and for the world at large. I cannot think of anybody better to deserve an honorary degree from SCI-Arc."

Gehry, born in Canada and raised in California, still actively practices with Gehry Partners, a firm he established in 1962. Often referred to as "the most important architect of our age," Gehry is widely known for designing and producing some of the world's most lauded, boundary-pushing, and recognizable buildings including Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles, the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Panama Puente De Vida Museo in Panama City, and the Facebook campus in Menlo Park, California. He was awarded architecture's highest honor, the Pritzker Prize, in 1989, and has been the recipient of the National Medal of Arts, the American Institute of Architects Gold Medal, the Royal Institute of British Architects Gold Medal, and the US Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Gehry's contributions to SCI-Arc have been numerous and vital for its students and the institution as a whole. He has served on the Board of Trustees since 1990. In 2012, he along with his wife Berta donated \$100,000 to the school to establish the Gehry Prize, which is awarded annually during SCI-Arc's graduation to the most outstanding graduate thesis projects, as determined by faculty and visiting critics. In keeping with his mission to promote the inherent social responsibility of architecture, in spring 2017 Gehry taught an upper level vertical studio entitled *The Future of Prison*, which called on students to address problems of incarceration and generate architectural solutions to prison reform, using research and design to reimagine a carceral system of the future.

Diaz Alonso adds of Gehry: "I really believe he represents what an architect should be; there's no architect in the past 50 years that's as important as Frank Gehry. 300 years from now, he will be reflected upon as one of the two or three biggest figures in architecture in the latter half of the twenty-first century. He is in a league of his own. The career of Frank Gehry and the growth of SCI Arc are parallel— being from Los Angeles, what he became, as a planetary figure—SCI-Arc, as well as the rest of the world, benefit from that."

#### **About SCI-Arc**

Southern California Institute of Architecture (SCI-Arc) is dedicated to educating architects who will imagine and shape the future. It is an independent, accredited degree-granting institution offering undergraduate and graduate programs in architecture. Located in a quarter-mile-long former freight depot in the Arts District in Downtown Los Angeles, the school is distinguished by its vibrant studio culture and emphasis on process. SCI-Arc's approximately 500 students and 80 faculty members, most of whom are practicing architects, work together to re-examine assumptions, create, explore and test the limits of architecture. SCI-Arc faculty and leadership have garnered more than 500 national and international design awards and recognitions, including Progressive Architecture awards, American Institute of Architects (AIA) awards, and the prestigious Jencks and Pritzker architecture prizes. U.S. DesignIntelligence ranked SCI-Arc #1 in Design Technologies in the *2019 America's Best Architecture Schools* survey. SCI-Arc is located at 960 E. 3rd Street, Los Angeles, CA 90013. [www.sciarc.edu](http://www.sciarc.edu)