Artist Lalla Essaydi Named 2012 Commencement Speaker for the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Essaydi will address SMFA graduates at May 20 ceremony

Boston, MA (March 21, 2012)—International artist and alumna Lalla Essaydi will deliver the commencement address to the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston’s (SMFA), 221 graduates on Sunday, May 20 at 6 pm in the Ruth and Carl J. Shapiro Family Courtyard at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Essaydi’s art, which often combines Islamic calligraphy with representations of the female body, addresses the complex reality of Arab female identity from the unique perspective of personal experience. In much of her work, she returns to her Moroccan girlhood, looking back on it as an adult woman caught somewhere between past and present, and as an artist, exploring the language in which to “speak” from this uncertain space.

Essaydi received her Bachelor of Fine Arts in 1999, Diploma in 2000 and Master of Fine Arts in 2003 from SMFA’s joint program with Tufts University. She is represented by Schneider Gallery in Chicago, by Howard Yezerski Gallery in Boston and by Edwynn Houk Gallery in New York. Her work has been exhibited throughout the United States and internationally and is represented in a number of collections, including the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Williams College Museum of Art; the Art Institute of Chicago; the Fries Museum; the Kodak Museum of Art and the Louvre. Upcoming exhibitions include the Sharjah Calligraphy Biennial (United Arab Emirates), April 1–June 1, 2012; “Lalla Essaydi: Revisions, A Retrospective” at the Smithsonian African Museum of Art (Washington DC), April 4–November, 2012 and “Les Femmes du Magreb” at the Orientalist Museum (Qatar), March–June 2013.

In celebration of our graduates, SMFA will showcase a multifaceted exhibition, “MEDIUM WITHOUT MEASURE,” May 19–June 2, 2012, which highlights the talent and artistic maturity developed during their time at SMFA. It features 2011–12 award recipients, works from artists across programs and BFA candidates taking part in the Senior Thesis Program.

About the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston:

Founded in 1876 and accredited by the National Association of Schools of Art and Design, the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (SMFA), is one of only three art schools in the country affiliated with a major museum—the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Our mission is to provide an education in the fine arts—for undergraduate and graduate artists—that is interdisciplinary and self-directed. This education values cultural, artistic and intellectual diversity; it embraces a wide range of media; it stresses the development of individual vision and its relation to culture in general; it values equally the knowledge gained by thinking and doing; it is deeply engaged with the world as a whole. If the mission is constant, its practice is always transforming. For more information about our programs and partnerships, visit www.smfa.edu.

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