



## ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS ANNOUNCES ELECTION OF NEW KEEPER AND TWO HONORARY ROYAL ACADEMICIANS

The Royal Academy of Arts has elected **Rebecca Salter RA** as the new Keeper and two Honorary Royal Academicians; **Kiki Smith** and **Bill Viola**, following a recent General Assembly. The Keeper is responsible for guiding the Royal Academy Schools, the longest established postgraduate art school in the UK and the only free three-year programme in Europe. She will replace Eileen Cooper RA in the role from September 2017.

**Christopher Le Brun, President of the Royal Academy of Arts, said:** “Since Rebecca Salter became a Royal Academician in 2014 she has proved herself to be a highly engaged and respected member. As Keeper, she will bring invaluable teaching experience and unique printmaking skills to share with and to guide the next generation of artists in the RA Schools. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Eileen Cooper for the tremendous contribution she has made to the Royal Academy during her six-year term as Keeper. She will remain committed to both the RA Schools and to her role as co-ordinator of the 2017 Summer Exhibition until her term as Keeper comes to an end in August. In the lead up to the RA’s 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2018, we are also delighted to welcome two more internationally renowned artists as Honorary Royal Academicians; Kiki Smith and Bill Viola.”

### Biographies

**Rebecca Salter RA** (born in Middleton-On-Sea, 1955)

Category of Membership: Printmaker

Rebecca Salter studied at Bristol Polytechnic and then at Kyoto City University of the Arts in Japan, where she lived for six years. While living in Kyoto, Salter studied traditional Japanese woodblock printing with Professor Kurosaki Akira and has since written two books on the subject. Her interest in printmaking is combined with her practice in painting. Until 2016 she was Associate Lecturer on the MA Printmaking Course at Camberwell College of Art, University of the Arts, London. Salter exhibits regularly in London and internationally, and in 2011 had a major retrospective *into the light of things* at Yale Center for British Art, Connecticut. A monograph was published to coincide with the show. An accompanying exhibition at Yale University Art Gallery explored links between Western artists and Japan. She has also been artist in residence twice (2003 and 2011) at the Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, Connecticut. Salter has undertaken several architectural commissions including 15 Sackville Street, London W1, St George's Hospital, Tooting and NGS Macmillan Cancer Unit, Chesterfield Royal Hospital. She has work in many private and public collections including Tate, British Museum, Yale Center for British Art and Yale University Art Gallery.

**Kiki Smith Hon RA** (born in Nuremberg, 1954)

Kiki Smith is recognised for her multidisciplinary practice through which she explores the human condition. The body, mortality, regeneration, gender politics, as well as the interconnection of

spirituality and the natural world are observed through a postmodern lens. Her expansive practice resonates personally and universally, manifesting in sculpture, glassmaking, printmaking, watercolor, photography, and textile, among other production methods. Drawn to the cogency of repetition in narratives and symbolic representations, much of Smith's work is inspired by the visual culture of the past, spanning scientific anatomical renderings from the eighteenth century to the abject imagery of relics, memento mori, folklore, mythology, Byzantine iconography, and medieval altarpieces.

**Bill Viola Hon RA** (born in the United States, 1951)

Bill Viola is internationally recognised as one of the leading artists of our time, an acknowledged pioneer in the medium of video art. For over 40 years he has been making work that explores a series of humanistic and spiritual issues. His works include room-size video installations, sound environments, electronic music performances, flat panel video pieces, as well as works for television broadcast, concerts, opera, and sacred spaces. This year alone, he is the subject of several major museum retrospectives including Palazzo Strozzi, Florence; Diechtorhallen, Hamburg; and Guggenheim Museum Bilbao.

**About the RA Schools**

The RA Schools, led by the Keeper, have been an integral part of the Royal Academy of Arts since its foundation in 1768 and is the longest established art school in the UK. The RA Schools offers the only free three-year postgraduate programme in Europe and is tailor-made to the individual student, affording each artist the creative flexibility to develop work across a broad array of media.

Current Professors include David Remfry RA, Piers Gough RA, Chantal Joffe RA, Cathie Pilkington RA, Humphrey Ocean RA, Gerald Libby, Tim Green and Roberto Cipolla. Past students of the RA Schools include JMW Turner RA, William Blake and John Constable RA. More recent alumni include John Hoyland RA, Anthony Caro RA, Paul Huxley RA, Matthew Darbyshire, Rachael Champion, Toby Christian, Lynette Yiadom-Boakye, Lucy Williams, Hannah Sawtell, Catherine Story, Prem Sahib and Eddie Peake.

**About the Keeper**

The Keeper is one of four Officers of the Royal Academy of Arts elected from and by the Royal Academician membership. The Keeper is responsible for guiding the Royal Academy Schools, the longest established postgraduate art school in the UK and the only free three-year programme in Europe.

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## **About the Royal Academy of Arts**

The Royal Academy of Arts was founded by King George III in 1768. It has a unique position in being an independent, privately funded institution led by eminent artists and architects whose purpose is to be a clear, strong voice for art and artists. Its public programme promotes the creation, enjoyment and appreciation of the visual arts through exhibitions, education and debate.

The Royal Academy of Arts is governed by 80 Royal Academicians who are all practising artists or architects. On reaching the age of 75 they become Senior Academicians thus initiating vacancies for new Members. Elections are held at regular meetings of the General Assembly, when new Members are voted in by existing RAs.

In recent years, the Royal Academy has elected a record-number of Members, creating a new generation of Royal Academicians, including Thomas Heatherwick, Neil Jeffries, Chantal Joffe, Tim Shaw, Conrad Shawcross, Yinka Shonibare, Bob and Roberta Smith, Wolfgang Tillmans and Rebecca Warren.

Honorary Academicians are distinguished artists who are not resident in the UK. They do not take part in the governance of the RA and do not have voting rights. A maximum of two per year may be appointed by the RAs. Other Honorary Royal Academicians include Marina Abramovic, Tadao Ando, Georg Baselitz, Per Kirkeby, Anselm Kiefer, Jeff Koons, Renzo Piano, Cindy Sherman, Frank Stella, and Ai Weiwei.

The RA is undergoing a transformative redevelopment which will be completed in time for its 250th anniversary in 2018. Led by the internationally-acclaimed architect Sir David Chipperfield RA and supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), the plans will link Burlington House on Piccadilly and Burlington Gardens for the first time, uniting the two-acre site. The redevelopment will also reveal the elements that make the RA unique, sharing with the public the historic treasures in its Collection, the work of its Academicians and the RA Schools, alongside its world-class exhibitions programme. For more information on the RA visit [www.royalacademy.org.uk/ra250#video](http://www.royalacademy.org.uk/ra250#video)

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