FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Vija Celmins accepts honorary doctorate at IUPUI commencement, addresses Herron School of Art and Design graduates

Vija Celmins, an internationally celebrated Herron School of Art and Design alumna who graduated in 1962, attend IUPUI's 2013 commencement ceremony on Mother’s Day to accept an honorary Doctor of Fine Arts degree from Indiana University. The honor is the highest academic recognition the university can bestow.

In addition to accepting the honor, Celmins also addressed graduating Herron students during the ceremony. The Latvian-born visual artist immigrated to Indiana with her family when she was ten years old. John Herron Art School was independent when Celmins attended. It became part of the IU extension campus in Indianapolis in 1967, and a part of IUPUI when it was established in 1969.

Celmins earned an M.F.A. degree in painting from UCLA in 1965. A MacArthur Fellowship in 1997 was only the latest in a string of accolades for the Riga, Latvia-born visual artist. Known for her photo-realistic paintings and drawings, her works are in permanent collections around the world from the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York City to Centre Pompidou in Paris.

Celmins joins four previous Herron School of Art and Design alumni in being awarded an honorary doctorate from IU: Professor Emeritus Garo Antresian, with whom Celmins studied, 1972; Hale Woodruff, 1978; Ken Tyler, 2005, and Don Gummer, 2009. -30-