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Rhode Island School of Design announces
Cultural Critic and Radio Host KURT ANDERSEN
to give 2005 Commencement Address

Honorary Degrees will also be conferred on architect **Deborah Berke**, designers **Zuzana Licko** and **Rudy VanderLans**, Russian film director **Yuri Norstein**, and ceramist **Eva Zeisel**

PROVIDENCE, RI – On **Saturday, June 4, at 10am**, 165 graduate students—the largest RISD graduate class ever—and 487 undergraduates will gather in the First Baptist Church on North Main Street to prepare for a grand parade down the Providence riverwalk. This annual processional, which leads to RISD’s Commencement Ceremony, held outdoors on South Water Street rain or shine, is more Mardi Gras than pomp and circumstance. Graduates typically festoon their caps and gowns with outrageous decorations or create costumes of their own design. As is fitting for such a creative student body, Commencement is a vibrant celebration of the RISD experience.

Each year at Commencement, RISD presents honorary degrees to individuals who have made groundbreaking contributions to the world of art and design. At this year’s ceremony, honorary doctorates will be presented to six recipients, who were selected by a committee representing students, faculty, staff, and trustees.

Delivering this year’s Commencement Address is honorary degree recipient **Kurt Andersen**, a cultural critic and radio show host who redefines the meaning of multidisciplinary. As host of Studio 360, a radio show focused on art and design and produced by Public Radio International and WNYC, he works to “get inside the creative mind,” offering an incisive look at the intersection of art and everyday life. Earlier in his career, Andersen won awards for his coverage of national affairs and criminal justice at *Time* before working for eight years as the magazine’s architecture and design critic. His cultural columns and essays have appeared in *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, *Rolling Stone*, *Vanity Fair* and *Architectural Record*, among other publications. Andersen also served as editor-in-chief of both *New York* and *Spy* magazines, the latter of which he co-founded. A magna cum laude graduate of Harvard College, he is a trustee of Pratt Institute and a member of the exhibition committee of the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum.

Additional honorary degrees will be presented to the following:

- Architect **Deborah Berke** (RISD Bachelor of Architecture ’77) is known for an understated aesthetic applied to commercial, public, and residential projects. In 1982 she established Deborah Berke & Partners Architects LLP in New York and has since been in high demand, designing the headquarters for the Battery Park City Parks Conservancy in NYC (1996); a series of Calvin Klein stores from Tokyo to Topeka; the Yale School of

Art and New Theater buildings (2000); the James Hotel in Scottsdale, AZ (2004); and most recently, the Marlboro College Performing Arts Center in Marlboro, VT (2005).

- Designers **Zuzana Licko** and **Rudy VanderLans** revolutionized the typeface design and magazine publishing industries through Emigre, their California-based digital type foundry and publishing firm. In launching *Emigre* magazine in 1984 as a forum for experimental graphic design, they developed one of the first independent type foundries to focus on the needs of personal computer users. *Emigre* has inspired other designers to defy entrenched rules and has set new standards for graphic communications.
- Russian film director **Yuri Norstein** has made a profound impact on the art of animation through a collection of films that are lyrical, nonlinear, and surreal. Made largely in the 1970s with the same team—his wife and long-time creative partner, Francesca Yarbusova, and the late cameraman Alexander Zhukovsky—his finely detailed films make use of fantastic imagery, cut-outs, experimental camera tricks, and stop-motion techniques. In 1984 an international panel of animation experts voted Norstein's *Tale of Tales* (1979) the best animated film of all time.
- Ceramist **Eva Zeisel** is known as one of the leading industrial designers of the 20th century, creating work in the 1940s and '50s that was far ahead of its time. At age 98 she continues to design curvaceous forms that are both fluid and spare. During her 70-year career, Zeisel has designed for companies as diverse as Sears, Phillip Rosenthal, Nambé, and Orange Chicken; in recent years the Museum of Modern Art and the Metropolitan Museum of Art have both reissued some of her early designs in new glazes and colors, and in February Crate & Barrel introduced Classic Century, a reissue of selections from one of Zeisel's 1950s china collections.

About RISD

Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) has earned a worldwide reputation as the preeminent art and design college in the country. Today, with more than 17,000 alumni, the college enrolls roughly 1,900 undergraduates and 375 graduate students from the United States and almost 50 countries, offering degree programs in the fine arts, architecture, and design disciplines, and art education. Academic programs include research and design initiatives, the exploration of art criticism and contemporary cultural concerns, as well as international exchange programs. Each year, RISD hosts prominent and accomplished artists, critics, and authors to its campus. Included within the college is The RISD Museum of Art, which houses a world-class collection of art—objects from Ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome and art of all periods from Asia, Europe, and the Americas, as well as the latest in contemporary art. For more information, go to www.risd.edu.

NOTE TO MEDIA: To attend RISD's Commencement, please contact Guinevere Harrison at 401-454-6342 or gharriso@risd.edu.

A full listing of Commencement-related events and exhibitions is available to download at <http://intranet.risd.edu/pdfs/GradShow.pdf>

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