

Student Programs

Student Programs in the Office of the Arts at MIT includes the Freshman Arts Seminar Advising Program (FASAP), Arts Scholars (a program endowed by the Council for the Arts at MIT [CAMIT]), the Graduate Arts Forum, and the Student Art Association (SAA), which offers noncredit arts instruction to students, staff, and MIT affiliates. The coordinator of Student Programs oversees these programs as well as exhibitions in the Wiesner Student Gallery, the Student Mural Competition, and (in support of the director of the Council for the Arts) arts awards, prizes, and grants.

Accomplishments

We reorganized Student Programs during AY2011, and this process brought noticeable benefits. Consolidating various programs under the direction of one coordinator brought them into the same orbit, allowed for cross promotion across different student audiences, and allowed us to plan future development more effectively for this important component of arts activities at the Institute.

An academic focus was reintroduced into the freshman arts seminar, which in recent years had become focused primarily upon arts excursions. The educational and leadership goals of the Arts Scholars Program were strengthened, and expectations now include a service component; for example, arts scholars led tours of the installations during FAST Light (one of the events featured in the Festival of Arts, Science and Technology), and two have been selected to serve as associate advisors for fall 2011. In addition, the Graduate Arts Forum expanded the range of events offered and, through collaboration with the Graduate Student Council (GSC), significantly increased its audience and reach into the graduate student body. Finally, enrollment in Student Art Association classes increased.

Current Goals

- Continue the effort to make the Arts Scholars Program more selective and effective in nurturing a future generation of leaders in the arts. The participation of creative arts faculty and other expert staff from MIT's arts institutions and CAMIT is crucial to ensuring the educational quality of arts excursions and will be enhanced further.
- Solidify collaboration with the Graduate Student Council and the List Visual Arts Center (LVAC) to further increase participation and the visibility of the arts among the graduate student population. Closer coordination with LVAC on orientation activities for graduate students and a new committee established by GSC for Arts Initiatives will make these goals realizable.

Future Plans

- Identify the most effective means of communication to different student groups. Communications to undergraduate and graduate students may require different

approaches and media platforms (for example, disseminating information and co-sponsoring with the GSC seems to be highly effective for graduate students, whereas working with the scores of student groups in the arts may be more effective for undergraduates).

- Explore the possibility of engaging the large postdoctoral population at MIT in arts activities. Although postdoctoral scholars are no longer students, they play an important role in guiding and mentoring graduate students at MIT and are, at the moment, an overlooked audience for the arts. Some graduate student events may be enhanced by including postdocs.

Personnel

Effective July 1, 2010, Sam Magee, SAA coordinator, was promoted to coordinator of Student Programs. His position was increased from a 60% to a 100% full-time equivalent position. While being given additional responsibilities (as described above), he continues to manage the SAA, which includes the Ceramics Studio (head Darrell Finnegan), Photography Studio (head Thery Mislick), 2D|3D Project Studio (head Matthew Mazzotta SM '09, Visual Arts Program), and 15 to 18 technical instructors in the arts. Leah Brunetto '12 will continue as student curator of the Wiesner Gallery and Monica Gallegos will continue as student president of the SAA.

Freshman Arts Seminar Advising Program

In consultation with associate dean Donna Friedman, the executive director of Arts Initiatives redesigned the freshman seminar in the arts to bring it more in line with the goals of the undergraduate advising program.

The director of Arts Initiatives taught the seminar with a focus on FAST (the Festival of Arts, Science and Technology), held in spring 2011 in celebration of MIT's 150th anniversary, which allowed students to become familiar with the distinctive nature of arts at MIT and to understand the breadth and depth of campus arts offerings. The following individuals were guest lecturers and hosted studio visits: FAST director Tod Machover, Muriel Cooper professor of music and media; Meejin Yoon, associate professor of architecture and FAST curator of installations; Alise Upitis, curator of public art; Seth Riskin, manager of the Emerging Technologies and Spatial Imaging Initiative at the MIT Museum and FAST contributor; João Ribas, LVAC curator and FAST contributor; Evan Ziporyn, Kenan Sahin distinguished professor of music and FAST contributor; Jae Rhim Lee, research affiliate in the Program in Art, Culture and Technology (ACT); Martin Demaine, visiting scientist in the Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory (CSAIL) and FAST contributor; and Erik Demaine, professor of electrical engineering and computer science and FAST contributor.

Writing assignments and collaborative student projects were introduced in order to give the seminar greater academic rigor. Among the successful outcomes of these assignments, two students invited to take part in Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP) projects for FAST, another participated in a UROP project at the Media Lab working on holography, and two others created an informative blog based on the LVAC exhibition *Melvin Moti: The Prisoner's Dilemma*.

Finally, the administrative structure of FASAP was streamlined, and the number of advisors and associate advisors reduced, in order to create an atmosphere more conducive to guiding freshmen through their first, demanding semester at MIT.

Arts Scholars

The [Arts Scholars Program](#), founded in 1998, is a select group of undergraduate and graduate students who share an exceptional interest in the arts. The Arts Scholars' calendar includes 10 to 12 excursions a year to area arts events, with an expert invited to accompany the group on each excursion. On these visits, the group engages in discussion, leaning on the expertise of the guest, with the goal of better understanding the event and how it might impact students' lives and studies at MIT.



In addition to the excursions, the Arts Scholars are asked to give back to the community by acting as mentors for other MIT students interested in the arts, as ambassadors for MIT and the arts to area institutions such as the Institute of Contemporary Art, and as volunteers for MIT arts-related events, such as the MIT 150th anniversary FAST events.

This year's Arts Scholars calendar included a workshop with visiting artist Aaron Koblin; an excursion to Wagner's *Das Rheingold* at the Metropolitan Opera in New York City, directed by Robert Lepage, winner of the 2012 MIT Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts; a visit to the Dale Chihuly exhibition at Boston's Museum of Fine Arts; and a meeting with Roxy Myrhum, a Cambridge puppeteer (after viewing the ballet *Petrushka* by Basel Twist). The scholars also attended two operas composed and directed by MIT faculty, *The House in Bali* and *Death and the Powers*; participated in a discussion with Reb Julie Appel before seeing the play *My Name Is Asher Lev*; and had a chance to see the Boston Symphony Orchestra with CAMIT member and choral singer Peter Wender.

Student Origami Exhibit

The Student Origami Exhibit was well received this year and was previewed in the *Boston Globe*.

The exhibit was on display for the month of April in the Wiesner Student Art Gallery. The same time slot is reserved for AY2012.

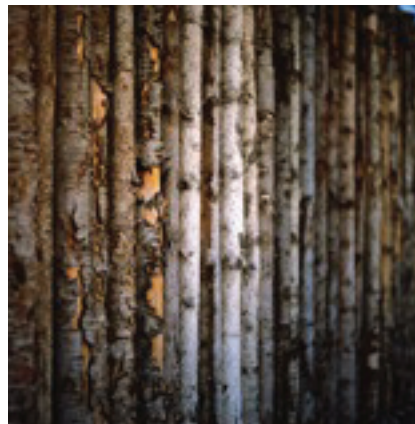


Graduate Arts Forum

The MIT [Graduate Arts Forum](#) is designed to build an interdisciplinary community of graduate students who admire and create art as part of their graduate studies or through independent practice. The Graduate Arts Forum, now in its eighth year, enjoyed significant growth, and provided graduate students the experience of presenting their work to the larger MIT graduate student body as well as the opportunity to see what their peers and local artists were creating. The forums generate discussions around

creative thinking and practice that help stimulate research and ensure communication among disciplines. Additionally, the forums serve as a springboard for collaboration with other artists, scientists, engineers, and creative thinkers in the larger MIT community.

This year's forums included a very successful arts showcase, held on the sixth floor of the new Media Lab, with over 350 graduate students in attendance and 20 MIT artists showcasing their work, and a private gallery opening at the Copley Society on Newbury Street in Boston, America's oldest nonprofit artist collective, for which there were more than 200 RSVPs (only 70 could be accommodated). Both of these events were co-hosted by GSC, which has, in reaction to their popularity, written an arts subcommittee into its constitution and funded the effort. Other forums included presentations of two graduate students' sketchbooks in relation to the Smart Cities Folding Car project, a series called Talk-Draw orchestrated by ACT master's student Tomashi Jackson, and discussion of a new format for graduate student orientation in September.



The growing popularity of the Graduate Arts Forum will undoubtedly carry forward into AY2012. Plans are already in process for a graduate student orientation at an area gallery or museum in late September 2011.

Student Mural Competition

The eighth annual Student Mural Competition was held in May 2010. There were 11 submissions. The panel consisted of arts administrators, facilities staff, and current faculty. The winning submission was *Taos Material*, a stunning photograph created by master of architecture candidate Sarah Hirschman. The winning mural will be hung in the Stata Center this September for the duration of AY2012.



Student Art Association

The [Student Art Association](#) is a suite of three studios, founded in 1969, that provides space for hands-on exploration of the visual arts, photography, and ceramics.

It offers more than 70 student-focused extra-academic classes during the fall, spring, summer, and Independent Activities Period. SAA enrolled approximately 550 MIT community members this year, close to 60% of whom were matriculated MIT students; the balance consisted of staff, alumni, and spouses of students, staff, and alumni. SAA offers 24-hour access to its members enrolled in ceramics, photography, drawing, painting, and open studios. SAA has enjoyed steady growth and provides university-level arts instruction in a relaxed, creative atmosphere.

With over 20 instructors and with 20–25 classes offered each term, the MIT community

has at its disposal a wealth of traditional arts classes taught by local artists. We often receive great reviews of the offerings and of our dynamic and accomplished roster of technical instructors. For example:

I'm a grad student who has taken several drawing classes with the SAA. Tonight was the last session of the drawing class that Sadie Smith helped to teach this semester, and I just wanted to write and say that Sadie has been my favorite instructor out of all of my classes. She always has clear, critical, and easily understood advice that concisely captures tricky ideas and useful tips. She is also very hands-on and proactive in offering suggestions and corrections as students work, and keeps the classroom atmosphere brisk and energetic. I really love Sadie's teaching style and energy, and would love to see her teach more classes in the future!

—Diana Chien

Wiesner Student Art Gallery

The Wiesner Student Art Gallery, located on the second floor of the Student Center (W20), is reserved for a show each month through January 2012. The shows range in media and format from photography to installation and from solo shows to group exhibitions of student art award recipients. Our monthly exhibition openings are growing in popularity and attract between 20 and 50 visitors in the two-hour reception period. As the reputation of the gallery grows, demand increases and the breadth and quality of students' art are unveiled for the larger MIT community.

Sam Hunter Magee
Coordinator of Student Art Programs
Office of the Arts at MIT

More information about Student Programs can be found at <http://arts.mit.edu/>.