

## MIT Museum

Remarkably, the [MIT Museum](#) continues to grow even as we plan for the move to Kendall Square. Total attendance at 265 Massachusetts Avenue for FY2017 was 147,590. This is the largest figure ever recorded for the museum, and it represents a 15% increase over FY2016. Contributing to the rise in visitation were even more tourists visiting the museum and good reviews of the renovation and reopening of the exhibition *Gestural Engineering: The Sculpture of Arthur Ganson*, as well as for exhibitions in the Kurtz Gallery for Photography. We also hosted two Free Fun Friday events in collaboration with the Highland Street Foundation on August 12, 2016 and June 30, 2017, which brought in several thousand new visitors. Other highlights of the year include contributing artifacts to a major touring exhibition about Polaroid; securing the bulk of the funding required for the Herreshoff Legacy Project; expanding the [Idea Hub](#), the Museum's maker space; and organizing a highly successful 11th annual Cambridge Science Festival. Finally, good progress has been made on planning for the move to Kendall Square, and on June 28, 2017, I signed off on Höweler + Yoon's completed schematic design for the new museum.

## Collections

Kurt Hasselbalch, curator of the Hart Nautical Collections, has led a team of catalogers and digital image specialists working on three major digitization projects. For the Herreshoff Legacy Project, his team has entered 16,000 object records (of 17,000 total) and photographed more than 4,000 plans and related materials. They have cataloged more than 50% of the 5,500 objects in the combined Clark and Forbes collections, including 2,300 new images. (This is part of a digital humanities initiative led by professor of history Jeffrey Ravel and partially funded by a National Maritime Heritage grant.)

Deborah Douglas worked with filmmaker and MIT Media Laboratory research scientist Glorianna Davenport and Brian Bradley to complete a multiyear effort to restore *November Actions*, an unfinished film shot in 1969 by Richard Leacock. The finished film had its MIT debut during MIT reunions in June 2017; a public debut will follow.

Joan Whitlow, registrar and collections manager, oversaw a further upgrade to our off-site collections research and study facility with the installation of new shelving, funded by the provost. Whitlow also oversaw the complex transfer of six large murals by Francis Scott Bradford—formerly displayed in the lobby of the Sloan School building—to the city of Hamilton, OH.

Ariel Weinberg, curatorial associate for science and technology, and manager of the collections database, oversaw the addition of nearly 80,000 new object records and more than 39,000 media records. Rachael Robinson, curatorial associate for the Hart Nautical Collections and general reference, oversaw the revision of our digital image standards, greatly enhancing the online researcher's ability to view large, detailed drawings, maps, and plans. The museum's [online database](#) had 100,000 page views by more than 10,000 unique users. The collections team, supported by three Tufts University interns, three longtime and highly skilled volunteers, and six temporary staff members fielded nearly 1,000 inquiries, worked on or completed the cataloging of nine major collections, contributed to multiple public programs, and participated in international conferences

and other collaborative professional endeavors with museums, scholars, journalists, and researchers from around the world.

### **MIT Museum Studio and Compton Gallery**

In AY2017, the MIT Museum Studio and Compton Gallery, which engages MIT undergraduate and graduate students in a broad range of communication learning opportunities, piloted new models of academic connection with MIT departments. Two mechanical engineering courses were taught in the Museum Studio that resulted in displays: 2.760 Global Engineering and 15.783/2.739 Product Design and Development.

A range of programs were offered, including film screenings, talks, workshops, and discussion groups, which strengthened the identity of the Museum Studio and built community both within and beyond MIT. Two notable workshops were offered: Brought To Light, and Glass + Light. Brought To Light engaged students in the communication challenges facing the field of quantum physics. Referencing the Cosmic Bell Experiment and working with physics professors and researchers, students developed ways of visualizing key concepts of quantum entanglement in an exhibition for MIT Museum audiences. Glass + Light was a collaboration between the Museum Studio and the MIT Glass Lab. Students developed glass objects and light projection techniques for learning about, magnifying, and displaying the material intricacies of blown glass.

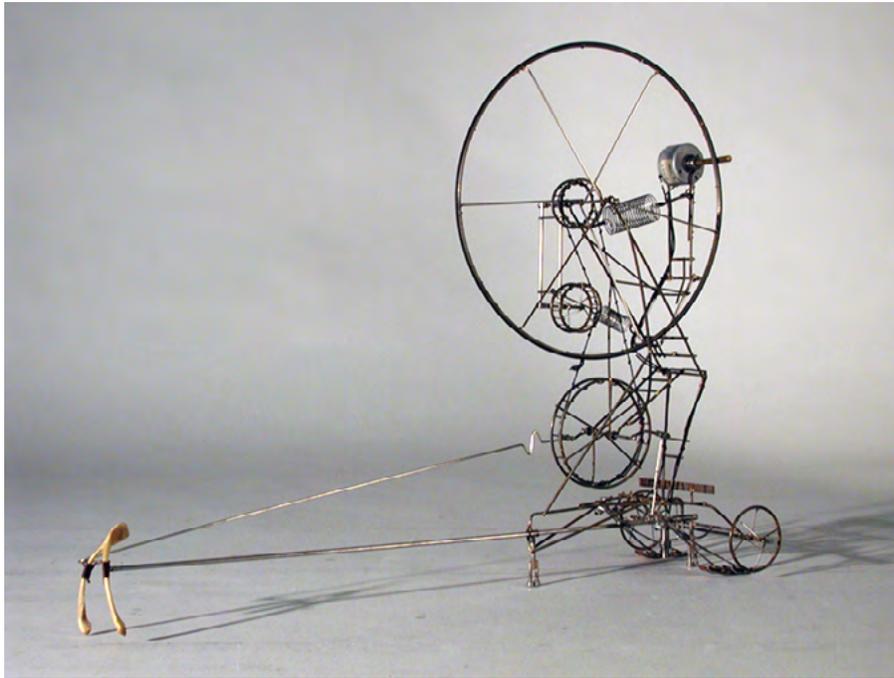
The Museum Studio's annual course, STS.035 Exhibiting Science, offered through the Program in Science, Technology, and Society, addressed the challenge of developing an exhibit on gravitational-wave detection. Working with the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory team and Professor Emeritus Rainer Weiss, the class developed a two-part exhibit, Making Waves, covering the essential science and history of gravitational-wave detection at MIT. The exhibits, located in the Compton Gallery and in the cases that connect Compton and the Infinite Corridor, were opened for Commencement Day 2017.

The Museum Studio organizational and facility infrastructures were improved, including development of Museum Studio projects and events archives, expense tracking and communications databases, and communications improvements through enhanced social media and website platforms. The Museum Studio continued its participation in MIT maker space community development, contributing unique perspectives and experiences to the work of professor Martin Culpepper and his team.

### **Exhibitions**

The exhibitions program saw significant activity with the opening of new exhibitions and the reinvention of visitor favorites.

A perennial visitor destination, *Gestural Engineering: The Sculpture of Arthur Ganson*, received a complete gallery upgrade, with a reinstalled exhibition for improved visitor understanding and the physical protection of the sculptures. Lighting infrastructure improvements, funded by the Facilities Department, brought the gallery into alignment with MIT's energy efficiency standards. The gallery reopened in October 2016.



*Cosmic Bell: Exploring Quantum Weirdness*, about the Cosmic Bell Experiment, opened in April 2017 along with a specially commissioned play, *Both/And*. The project developed as an innovative collaboration with MIT professor David Kaiser, combining physical exhibits interpreting the scientific experiment and the underlying physics concepts, and a dramatic interpretation of quantum physics in the form of a play. This integrated approach to communicating the results of a complex topic was developed in collaboration with MIT students at the MIT Museum Studio, and the Catalyst Collaborative at MIT in partnership with the Central Square Theater, and was funded by a grant from the National Science Foundation.

*Rapid and Deployable: An Experiment in Fast Construction* documented the work of Professor Skylar Tibbitts's Open Studio class—an architectural research experiment that has developed modular, self-assembling structures. This installation in the Mark Epstein Innovation Gallery was a large-scale student experiment with radical materials and processes.

*Right Now: Polaroid's Invention of Instant Photography*, highlighting the large format camera from our Science and Technology Collection, as well as the work of renowned Cambridge photographer Elsa Dorfman, was installed on the first floor in the collections showcase.

The Kurtz Gallery for Photography featured two significant explorations of the built environment, each curated by Gary Van Zante, curator of architecture and design. *Grazia Toderi and Désiré Despradelle: Spectacular Cities* opened in September 2016. The exhibition was conceived as a meditation on the Tower of Babel, and presented a fascinating parallel with Despradelle's *Beacon of Progress*, an historical work that is one of the treasures of our architecture and design collection. The spring exhibition, *The Diamond Trace: Kimberley, South Africa in Photographs by Patrick Tournebouef*. Through his photographs, Tournebouef examines the aftermath of a city that grew following the discovery of large diamonds, and was all but abandoned once the gemstones became scarce.



With significant funding secured, the Herreshoff Legacy Project moved forward. An advisory panel was formed, concept development for the exhibition was completed, and exhibition and multimedia design teams were selected. They are Studio Joseph and Bluecadet, respectively. Planning will continue through next year, and the exhibition is scheduled to open in fall 2018.

### **Education and Public Programs**

In FY2017, more than 29,000 visitors participated in workshops or public programs at the MIT Museum, meaning, roughly one in five visitors connected with a museum educator or volunteer, MIT researcher, student, or alumni to gain special insights into current MIT research, innovation, and history. The programs team offered numerous unique programs on MIT-based topics designed for a variety of audiences, including families and adult learners, as well as local, national, and international middle and high school students. This year the team focused on creating new connections with local audiences, including teenagers, with whom we produced a Teen Science Café series. To increase access, we waived museum admission fees for more than 650 individuals from underserved communities and provided 21 educational workshops—roughly 14% of all workshops taught during AY2017—free of charge or at reduced cost for student groups in the greater Boston area.

The programs team continued efforts to create resources for the MIT community to connect with the public through part-time teaching positions for graduate students; weekend programs for undergraduate groups to publicly showcase their interests; product usability tests by current researchers and alumni in the Idea Hub maker space; year-round volunteer opportunities; and science communication sessions including workshops during MIT's Independent Activities Period.

## Cambridge Science Festival and Science Festival Alliance

The 11th annual Cambridge Science Festival welcomed nearly 100,000 visitors and offered more than 225 hands-on, engaging programs and events throughout the greater Boston region from April 14 to 23, 2017. More than 1,000 science and technology professionals led events, from MIT Planetary Science and Physics professor Sara Seager discussing the possibility of other intelligent life in the universe on opening night, to the Koch Institute's pop-up mini golf course featuring hazards such as circulating tumor cells, immune checkpoints, and signaling cascades. The MIT Museum alone had 35,000 visitors in conjunction with festival programs; all annually recurring festival events showed record attendance.

Nord Anglia Education, the premier sponsor of the festival, completed the first year of its five-year collaboration with the festival. In addition to launching three academic challenges in Nord Anglia schools worldwide, 132 middle school students and teachers spent one week in May on MIT's campus taking workshops and tours, plus 56 teachers spent one week in June participating in a professional development program run by the Museum's Cambridge Science Festival staff.

The festival's outreach initiative, Science on the Street, increased its delivery of engaging science, technology, engineering, art, and math programs to cultural, community, and arts events around the state. Science on the Street visited 27 unique communities in AY2017, up from 21 in AY2016; went to 45 events in AY2017, up from 31 in AY2016; and reached an estimated 200,000 visitors.

In FY2017 the Science Festival Alliance (SFA) reported on the activity of its member festivals, with a total of 45 celebrating in 2016, collectively reaching 2.6 million people with the help of over 19,000 scientists and engineers. The SFA selected nine new communities as science festival start-ups participating in the Science Festival Accelerator, funded by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. The SFA concluded work on the first iteration of the Just Add Science program, which involved new activity at 12 sites throughout the United States that "reaches people where they are." Just Add Science was funded by a gift from the Simons Foundation. The SFA organized the sixth International Public Science Events Conference in June 2017, drawing 150 attendees to Madison, WI.

## Administration

### The New MIT Museum at Kendall

Development of a vision for the new museum was advanced through an exhibition master planning process. The exhibitions team hosted a series of planning sessions with staff and key stakeholders throughout the late winter and spring 2017, facilitated by Atelier Brückner. This firm was selected after a rigorous international request for proposal process to assist in refining our goals, developing initial frameworks and concepts for the visitor experience, and coordinating with the project architects. The resulting report, including draft budget assessments, was presented to the Advisory Board in May. Funding for this consultation was provided by the Facilities Department. A major milestone was achieved in June with completion of and sign-off on the schematic design for the new museum.

## Development

The Patrons Program recognizes those who give \$10,000 or more annually. We thank each of these donors for their generosity: Gregory '70 and Karen '70 Arenson; Steven Cherny '87; Ronald '64 and Barbara Cordover; Brit d'Arbeloff '61; Mark Epstein '63; Daniel Grunberg '82; Imre Halasz Trust; Ulf '60 and Elizabeth Heide; Martin Klein '62; Ronald '64 and Carol Kurtz; Elizabeth Goldring Piene; Tim Rutter; Amar and Deepika Sawhney; Phillip and Ann Sharp; Eric Silverman '91; Harvey Steinberg '54; Anne Street '69; and two anonymous donors.

A few of the new gifts to note include a \$500,000 pledge to support the Herreshoff Legacy Project, \$50,000 for the AY2018 Science on Saturday series, and contributions by a group of individuals to honor our late Advisory Board member E. Verner Johnson.

## Retail and Functions

The MIT Museum Store continues to operate as a highly successful business. The store achieved significant percentage increases in sales ranging from 17% to 54% in each month of FY2017, and is expected to achieve a total of over \$900,000 in sales by the close of FY2017, for the first time in the store's history. Net profit reached a new high, surpassing projections by 24%.

The functions business continued to bring in consistent revenue, seeing only a slight decrease from FY2016 revenue, despite vacancies in key positions during FY2017. Functions served 60 clients, 85% of them MIT-affiliated and 15% external, including local partners such as the Cambridge Historical Society and the Central Square Theater.

## Public Relations and Marketing

In August, the museum's website was redesigned, rebuilt, and relaunched as a dynamic, mobile-friendly, audience-centric portal. A campaign was launched to revitalize the Museum's brand, and generate greater visibility, especially to the MIT and Cambridge communities. Elements included giant window graphics, street banners, rack brochures, tickets, digital display screens, and print advertising. The *Gestural Engineering* exhibition refresh and Patrick Tournebeouf's photography exhibition received favorable reviews from Boston Globe art critics.

## Personnel

The Cambridge Science Festival team expanded in summer 2016 with the hiring of Aimee Gillespie '13 and Carole Urbano as the two coordinators for the MIT Museum and Nord Anglia Collaboration. Gillespie was previously on the staff of OpenCourseWare at MIT, and Urbano managed communications and outreach for The Education Arcade at MIT. Cathleen Nalezty '16 joined the team as the Science on the Street coordinator, a position that is supported through a generous grant from the Biogen Foundation. MaryCat Chaikin was hired in November as the new Cambridge Science Festival manager. Chaikin co-founded a consulting company that helped to activate public spaces and has worked with local municipalities on permitting and logistics issues.

Karen Costello, part-time event rentals manager for three years, left in September for a full-time position at the Harvard University Art Museums. Costello consistently achieved record performance in the event rentals business during each of her years at MIT. Krista Kitowicz joined the staff in November, succeeding Costello. She previously served as assistant director of events in Resource Development.

Josie Patterson resigned in July 2016 as director of public relations and marketing, after eleven years of dedicated service. Martha Davis was hired as communications officer to succeed Patterson, and began work in November. Davis worked for eleven years as marketing manager at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Ulrike Heine, curatorial associate for architecture and design, who helped to curate and produce several fine exhibitions in the Kurtz Gallery for Photography and the School of Architecture and Planning's Wolk Gallery, resigned in December to move to Florida.

Ilana Schoenfeld was hired as exhibit developer in May, succeeding Susan Timberlake who resigned in November. Schoenfeld was previously with The Education Arcade at MIT, where she served as education content manager.

Cody Oliver was hired in May as technology assistant after serving superbly in this role on a temporary basis since September 2014.

### **Advisory Board**

[E. Verner Johnson '60](#), passed away in February 2017. Verner founded the firm Verner Johnson, specializing in museum architecture and planning. As one of this country's most experienced museum architects, his expertise proved invaluable to us on numerous occasions. We worked with him to prepare plans for the expansion of the museum, and MIT contracted with his firm for the design of the new ground floor spaces of the museum, which opened in 2007. Thereafter, Johnson was a regular source of sage advice as well as a generous supporter. In recognition of his longstanding service to the Museum, he was made a Lifetime Member of the Advisory Board.

**John Durant**  
**Director**