

## Arts Initiatives

Leila Kinney, executive director of [Arts Initiatives](#) and of the MIT Center for Art, Science & Technology (CAST), works on strategic planning, communications, development, and cross-school coordination for the arts. She oversees the staff of the Office of the Arts, whose programs include CAST; the Council for the Arts at MIT (CAMIT); Student Arts Programs; and the Student Art Association (SAA). She chairs the CAST Selection Committees, sets the agenda for the Creative Arts Council with the associate provost, and oversees the biennial Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts at MIT. She is an ex officio member of the executive committee of CAMIT, and the advisory boards of the Catalyst Collaborative at MIT, the List Visual Arts Center, and the MIT Museum.

### Current Goals

The programs that fall under arts initiatives are designed to support all of the arts units at MIT, academic and extra-academic, regardless of discipline or school, and to make the outstanding arts faculty and creative work at the Institute more widely known in the world. Our current goals are to build CAST's portfolio of successful projects into a full-fledged research center for the arts, to align the Council for the Arts' support more strategically with the priorities of the leadership of MIT for the arts, and to scale up the entrepreneurship programs in the arts—for which MIT is becoming increasingly known.

### MIT Center for Art, Science & Technology

Established in 2012 in the Office of the Provost with a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, which has been renewed through 2020, CAST facilitates and creates opportunities for exchange and collaboration among artists, engineers, scientists, and scholars in the humanities. A joint initiative of the Office of the Provost; the dean of the School of Architecture and Planning; and the dean of the School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences, the center is committed to fostering a culture in which the arts, science, and technology thrive as interrelated, mutually informing modes of exploration, knowledge, and discovery. The center's role is to affirm, energize, and reinforce the inherent synergy between these modes of thought and action.

It does so by collaborating with departments, labs, and centers across the Institute in four primary areas of activity. To integrate the arts across the curriculum, we support the development of new classes that reach across disciplines and majors. To enrich and encourage artistic collaborations, we look for unexpected partnerships for visiting artists and seek to embed residencies in ongoing research and teaching at MIT. To encourage the experimental phase of artistic creation, we provide creativity seed funds and research grants for faculty, research, and instructional staff throughout the campus. To share this creative work and knowledge with the public, CAST produces concerts, symposia, exhibitions, and publications in multiple media platforms. Since its inception, the center has awarded more than \$2 million in grants to more than 140 projects and worked with more than 80 collaborators, whose proposals are selected by a faculty committee in response to a biannual call.

## Accomplishments

*Active Matter*, a book based on the 2016 conference co-sponsored by CAST and the Self-Assembly Lab in the School of Architecture and Planning, was published by MIT Press in September 2017.

After four seasons, *MIT Sounding* has established MIT as a hub for musical innovation that is accessible to the general public as well as our educational community. Curated by Evan Ziporyn—faculty director of CAST, Kenan Sahin Distinguished Professor of Music, and head of the Music Section in the School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences—the performance series brings together contemporary and global music with an emphasis on border crossings and experimentation. Attendance and press coverage attest the success of the series in showcasing MIT’s leadership in composing, performing, and presenting new music, and in introducing outstanding guest artists to the Boston musical scene, even in the absence of a dedicated concert hall on campus. Since its inception, *MIT Sounding* has presented 12 world and five area premieres.

MIT creative arts faculty grantees exhibited CAST-supported works in international and national venues, including Azra Akšamija’s *Design for a Nomadic World* featured in Amman Design Week and Rania Ghosn’s *Blue Marble Circus* in the Design Biennial Boston.

MIT’s outstanding Visiting Artists program is a cornerstone of CAST’s activities and has a long and evolving history of embedding artists in the curriculum and research at MIT. In November, the MIT Museum hosted the North American premiere of *The Enemy*, developed by Karim Ben Khelifa in collaboration with D. Fox Harrell, professor of digital media and director of the Imagination, Computation, and Expression Laboratory. *Aerocene*, an ongoing project by Tomás Saraceno in collaboration with Senior Lecturer Lodovica Illari and Professor Glenn R. Flierl in Earth, Atmospheric and Planetary Sciences (EAPS), was featured in the Cambridge Science Festival and the Climate Changed symposium in April. Dasha Zhukova Distinguished Visiting Artist Pedro Reyes created *Manufacturing Mischief*, a satirical puppet play featuring Institute Professor Noam Chomsky, which premiered on campus and appeared thereafter at Carnegie Mellon University, the Power Plant in Toronto, and The Tank in New York City.

## Administrative Initiatives

In its early days, CAST had only two funding streams—faculty grants and Visiting Artists grants. Through successful fundraising and in order to meet rising demand, the center now has six funding streams, including two new ones created this year. The Cross Disciplinary Class Development Fund is available to full-time faculty and lecturers to develop new classes that integrate the arts into the core curriculum and engage students from across the Institute in producing new artistic work. The International Performance and Exhibition Fund is intended to defray the costs of a performance, exhibition, installation, or other creative projects that will appear in a major international venue within two years of application.

Faculty, full-time instructors, and principal research and curatorial staff from across the Institute, regardless of discipline, are invited to apply for funding and production support in response to a biannual call, and proposals are awarded by a faculty selection

committee, which includes two graduate student representatives. In AY2018, CAST awarded \$297,202 in funding for 19 projects to commence in AY2019 from a total of 37 submissions, including four Mellon Faculty Grants, five Visiting Artists grants, four Fay Chandler Creativity Seed Fund grants, one Cross Disciplinary Class Development grant, and one International Performance and Exhibition grant. In addition, the center supported a reading of Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Tyehimba Jess and a lecture series in Comparative Media Studies, Hacking HR.

## Programs

### *MIT Sounding*

One of CAST's most important, public-facing initiatives, *MIT Sounding* has been built around combining what is next in music, technology, and culture with a global foundation.

#### ***MIT Sounding: Mr. Harrison's Gamelans***

As a co-production with the Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston, *MIT Sounding* opened its AY2018 season with a centennial celebration of composer Lou Harrison. MIT's Gamelan Galak Tika teamed up with violinist Johnny Gandelsman and pianist Sarah Cahill to present a program of Harrison's groundbreaking works for gamelan and Western instruments, performed on instruments built by the composer and William Colvig and curated by Jody Diamond. The concert on October 12, 2017, attended by 321 guests, included the world premieres of composer and MIT professor Evan Ziporyn's "By the Numbers," an homage to Harrison for violin and piano, and Diamond's "At Lou's Table." Gandelsman also visited 21M.065 Introduction to Musical Composition to discuss his work with students.

#### ***MIT Sounding: "Stillness Moves"***

The culmination of Maya Beiser's Mellon Distinguished Visiting Artist residency was "Stillness Moves," a solo cello workshop performance featuring "Three Parts Wisdom," composed by Glenn Kotche from her album *TranceClassical; Just Ancient Loops*, composed by Michael Harrison for Beiser with video by Bill Morrison; and music by Bach and Hildegard von Bingen. The works were deconstructed and reimagined in a reactive environment of self-assembling materials made by assistant professor of design research Skylar Tibbits and the Self-Assembly Lab. Lighting designs by technical instructor of theater arts Joshua Higgason and structural experiments for the body designed by Chromat responded to, and interacted with, her music. Three sold-out performances were held in the new Theater Arts building (Building W97) on December 1 and 2, 2017.



*"Stillness Moves" by Maya Beiser, Mellon Distinguished Visiting Artist at the MIT Center for Art, Science & Technology, performed December 1 and 2, 2017 at Building W97.*

*Photo by L. Barry Hetherington.*

### **MIT Sounding: Faculty Recital by Marcus Thompson**

The AY2018 Terry and Rick Stone Concert was a faculty recital by violist Marcus Thompson, who was named Institute Professor in June 2015. The February 23, 2018 concert looked backward to April 4, 1968, the day that Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated. With the 50th anniversary of that cataclysmic event on the horizon (and marking the 50th anniversary of his own debut recital in Boston), Institute Professor Marcus Thompson planned a program around healing and transcendence.

The evening included the Boston premiere of the chamber version of “Shadow/Light” for solo viola and string orchestra, written for Thompson by MIT composer and lecturer Elena Ruehr; Vivaldi’s Second Concerto for Viola d’Amore and Strings; Feldman’s “Rothko Chapel” for soprano, alto, mixed choir, percussion, and solo viola, conducted by Evan Ziporyn; and Vaughan Williams’s “Flos Campi” for solo viola, small wordless chorus, small string orchestra, flute, oboe, bassoon, and harp, conducted by William Cutter, director of choral ensembles.

### **MIT Sounding: The Great Clarinet Summit**

This unique event in Kresge Auditorium on May 11, 2018 attended by more than 600 people, featured renowned clarinetists Don Byron, Anat Cohen, Evan Ziporyn, Billy Novick, and Eran Egozy along with the MIT Festival Jazz Ensemble and MIT Wind Ensemble led by Music Director Frederick Harris. Visiting artists Byron and Cohen also met with select students for individual music lessons. The eclectic and broad-reaching program included a movement from Byron’s Concerto for Clarinet and Wind Ensemble, music for jazz and chamber ensembles featuring the clarinet and a special world premiere of Jamshied Sharifi’s “Ornament of the World,” a community play-along piece featuring all guest soloists and 100 attending clarinetists of all ages who came together to bring his composition to life.

### **Mellon Faculty Grants**

Full-time faculty may apply to develop research or creative projects with significant impact on campus or beyond.

#### **Mellon Faculty Grant: Azra Akšamija, Associate Professor, MIT Program in Art, Culture and Technology and Director, MIT Future Heritage Lab**

Azra Akšamija is an artist and architectural historian who explores how art, architecture, and design can address the emotional, cultural, and aesthetic needs of refugees, while fostering a better cross-cultural understanding and a social cohesion between migrant and host communities. As a CAST Mellon Faculty Fellow in 2017, her project, *Lightweaver*, features the collaborative research and creative work produced by the Future Heritage Lab that she leads, with the German Jordanian University’s Department of Architecture, CARE Jordan, and Al Azraq refugee camp residents.

*Lightweaver* is a kinetic lighting sculpture, which was prototyped at MIT and developed as a co-creation with the artists, engineers, and inventors of the Al Azraq refugee camp in Jordan. The project represents both a poetic and utilitarian response to everyday life problems in the refugee camp: it addresses the visual austerity of shelters through the design of lamps that function as an educational tool and means for cultural preservation

and individual expression. *Lightweaver* translates stories from textiles and calligraphy into a sensory play of light, aiming to preserve cultural memory and inspire hope. In October 2017, Akšamija curated *Design for a Nomadic World* for Amman Design Week, which included co-creation workshops for *Lightweaver* prototypes.

### **Mellon Faculty Grant: Meejin Yoon, Professor and Department Head, Architecture**

Meejin Yoon's work as an MIT CAST Mellon Faculty Fellow focused on *FloatLab*, a project in Philadelphia's Schuylkill River. *FloatLab* is a platform, a vessel, a lens, and a threshold through which the public will experience the Schuylkill River and its ecology in a meaningful and unprecedented way. Offering an eye-level view of the river, *FloatLab* is designed to reconnect Philadelphians and visitors with their natural setting. As a programmatic loop, the project combines its educational functions with unexpected visual and physical relationships with the water's surface. This shift in perspective creates a space that indexes and measures the invisible properties of the water, examining the relationship between environmental science, experience, and stewardship.

### **Mellon Faculty Grant: Ian Condry, Professor of Comparative Media Studies/ Writing, Anthropology, and Japanese Cultural Studies**

[Dissolve Music: Future Concepts in Sound](#) was a two-and-a-half-day conference, workshop, and sound festival held March 7 to 9, 2018. *Dissolve Music* brought together music scholars, sound studies specialists, musicians, and sound creators to explore the diversity of experimental sound, music, acoustics, and related research. The event—co-organized by Ian Condry, author of *Hip-Hop Japan*; Jan St. Werner, musician, member of Mouse on Mars, and professor at the Academy of Fine Arts Nuremberg; and Rekha Malhotra, producer, curator, educator, and activist—included the local premiere of *Dimensional People*, the latest album by Mouse on Mars, using an innovative spatial array of speakers and object-based mixing software developed by d&b audiotechnik. More than 300 people from the MIT community and the Cambridge area as well as academics and sound artists from around the world attended.

### **Mellon Faculty Grant: Pawan Sinha, Professor of Vision and Computational Neuroscience**

The course [9.S52/9.S916 Vision in Art and Neuroscience](#) introduced students to core concepts in visual perception through the lenses of art and neuroscience. The course was taught by Professor Pawan Sinha; Seth Riskin, director and co-founder of the MIT Museum Studio, and the manager of the Holography and Spatial Imaging Initiative and the Emerging Technology Initiative at the MIT Museum; and Sarah Schwettmann, PhD student in Intuitive Physics in the Department of Brain and Cognitive Sciences.

Students engaged with these concepts through hands-on studio practice, as a means to explore and visualize the principles of perception. Using light as a medium and the darkroom as a canvas, students externally visualized stages of internal neural processing, ultimately synthesizing the material in their own studio work, which culminated in the exhibition [Perceiving Perception](#) at the MIT Compton Gallery from December 2017 to February 2018. The course was the first Brain and Cognitive Sciences course of its kind and will be offered again in fall 2018.



## Fay Chandler Faculty Creativity Seed Grant

Full-time instructional staff may apply for grants to subsidize a creative project that will come to fruition within a year of the award.

### Fay Chandler Faculty Creativity Seed Grant: Rania Ghosn, Assistant Professor of Architecture and Urbanism

Rania Ghosn is founding principal of DESIGN EARTH with El Hadi Jazairy. Her project *Blue Marble Circus* is a monument to industrial humanity's plastic footprint, which—although at a planetary scale—seems beyond our geographical imagination. The installation appropriates Rome's ancient Pantheon, known for its spherical "architecture of the cosmos," to create a geodesic sphere referencing NASA's iconic "Blue Marble" photograph of the earth from space, the iconic symbol of the environmental movement. The blue, shrink-wrapped globe is also a camera obscura, an optical device that projects site-specific views of the surroundings into the chamber. The blue miniature is hence an aesthetic invitation to relearn, like Atlas, how to carry the world—and all there is above it—on our shoulders.

Ghosn's installation was produced for Design Biennial Boston in summer 2017. Recognizing architects with innovative practices, the juried biennial program commissions a series of four small-scale installations on the Rose Kennedy Greenway Conservancy.

### Fay Chandler Faculty Seed Grant: Marcus Thompson, Institute Professor of Music

The concert in *MIT Sounding* celebrating the 50th anniversary of Professor Thompson's career, described above, was supported by a Chandler grant.

## Visiting Artists

Faculty or program directors may apply for grants for a collaborative project with visiting artists. Visiting artist projects must include student engagement and a public presentation and may include master classes, participation in the regular curriculum, or research and development of new artistic work. CAST also offers small grants for exploratory visits for potential visiting artists, which can be helpful for establishing the basis for collaborations and full-fledged proposals. In addition, two distinguished visiting artists are appointed by a curatorial advisory committee for one academic year and are renewable once. The positions are designed for research and development of new work. The Dasha Zhukova Distinguished Visiting Artist Program is for creators from across the disciplines of art, architecture, and design. The Mellon Distinguished Visiting Artist Program is for creators from any performing arts discipline.

### Dasha Zhukova Distinguished Visiting Artist: Pedro Reyes

Pedro Reyes was the inaugural Dasha Zhukova Distinguished Visiting Artist at CAST and also served as lecturer in the MIT Program in Art, Culture and Technology in fall 2016. As part of his research, Reyes met with Institute Professor Noam Chomsky, to whom he proposed making a play featuring him as the protagonist. Reyes has integrated theater into his repertoire since 2008, often using handmade puppets from Japan, inspired by the Bunraku tradition. In *Manufacturing Mischief*, the character of Noam Chomsky finds an antagonist in Ayn Rand, in a satirical plot that also includes the characters of

Elon Musk and Steve Jobs. *Manufacturing Mischief* premiered at MIT April 26 to 27, 2018 and went on to Carnegie Mellon University (May 10 to 13, 2018), The Power Plant in Toronto (May 24 to 25, 2018), and The Tank in New York City (June 4 to 24, 2018).



*Manufacturing Mischief* by Pedro Reyes, Dasha Zhukova Distinguished Visiting Artist at the MIT Center for Art, Science & Technology, performed April 26, 2018 at MIT's Simmons Hall (Building W79). Photo by Sham Sthankiya.

### **Mellon Distinguished Visiting Artist: Maya Beiser**

Cellist Maya Beiser was the Mellon Distinguished Visiting Artist at CAST. She has dedicated her work to reinventing solo cello performance in the mainstream classical arena. *MIT Sounding* included the culminating concert of her residency, described above.

### **Visiting Artist: B. Stephen Carpenter II and Lawrence Susskind, Ford Professor of Urban Studies**

B. Stephen Carpenter II, Ida Ely Rubin Artist in Residence at CAST and Professor Lawrence Susskind combined art, science, and social practice to demonstrate how to enhance sustainability in a series of programs designed for MIT's OpenCourseWare platform, entitled RES.11-002 Intentional Public Disruptions: Art, Responsibility, and Pedagogy. During his fall 2017 residency, Carpenter provided new perspectives on how his art practice offers ways to increase access to potable water in politically marginalized communities in the United States and abroad. Working with the [Environmental Policy and Planning Group](#) in the Department of Urban Studies and Planning, Susskind hopes to encourage social entrepreneurship in the water sector among students at MIT and as a model for K-12 educators to incorporate in their teaching.

### **Visiting Artist: Newton Harrison and Anne Whiston Spirn, Cecil and Ida Green Distinguished Professor of Landscape Architecture**

Among the leading pioneers of the eco-art movement, the collaborative team of Newton Harrison and the late Helen Mayer Harrison has worked for over 40 years with biologists, ecologists, architects, urban planners, and other artists to uncover ideas and solutions that support biodiversity, often tuned to community development. Past projects have addressed watershed restoration, urban renewal, agriculture, and forestry. At MIT, Harrison collaborated with Anne Whiston Spirn, as part of her course [4.213/11.308 Ecological Urbanism](#), and on field trips with her research team to the West Philadelphia Landscape Project, which investigates how to re-create a river that was buried in a sewer in Philadelphia in the 1880s.

**Visiting Artist: Karim Ben Khelifa and D. Fox Harrell, Professor of Digital Media and Director of the Imagination, Computation, and Expression Laboratory**

Working with Professor D. Fox Harrell, CAST visiting artist Karim Ben Khelifa has developed an immersive virtual reality installation to bring the audience into conversations between enemies in longstanding global conflicts. Harrell is human-computer interaction producer on the project and has introduced a dynamic model for [The Enemy](#) that responds to user behaviors, nervousness, and biases. This model impacts the narrative through dialogue, experiences, and effects in the virtual world, transformation of the users' virtual identity, and more. *The Enemy* premiered in May 2017 at the Institut du monde arabe in Paris, and the MIT Museum hosted the North American premiere October 5 through December 31, 2017, which received wide press coverage and was experienced by 4,336 visitors.

**Visiting Artist: Agnieszka Kurant and Boris Katz, Principal Research Scientist, Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory and head of the InfoLab Group**

Conceptual interdisciplinary artist Agnieszka Kurant explores how complex social, economic, and cultural systems can operate in ways that confuse distinctions between fiction and reality or nature and culture, what she calls “the economy of the invisible.” As an Ida Ely Rubin Artist in Residence at CAST, Kurant collaborated with Boris Katz’s InfoLab Group to explore the crossover between collective intelligence and artificial intelligence. Working with mechanical Turks employed on many projects in Katz’s lab, Kurant created a work to test the limits of collective creativity. *Assembly Line* is composed of more than 10,000 selfies by anonymous online workers, amalgamated into a 3-D printed and bronzed sculptural object.

Kurant also was the featured artist at the 2017 Hacking Arts Festival. She worked with a team of MIT graduate students and researchers—Agnes Cameron, Ishaan Grover, Adam Haar Horowitz, Timothy Robertson, Owen Trueblood, and Gary Zhang—to create a [signature hack](#), a new feature of the festival. The project, *Animal Internet*, was later exhibited at La Panacée, Montpellier in France and was featured along with [Assembly Line on SFMoMA’s Open Space platform](#).

**Visiting Artist: Diemut Strebe and Brian Wardle, Professor of Aeronautics and Astronautics and Director of the necstlab and Nano-Engineered Composite aerospace SStructures (NECST) Consortium**

Professor Brian Wardle’s necstlab and Nano-Engineered Composite aerospace SStructures Consortium, and Diemut Strebe, an Ida Ely Rubin Artist in Residence, are applying new research in engineered materials and structures to artworks. One treatment of carbon creates an intense reflection of light, while another absorbs 99.965% of it. *Redemption of Vanity* exploits the paradox of reducing a 16-carat yellow diamond to a tiny black hole after the diamond’s surface is covered with a forest of carbon nanotubes (CNTs), grown on single-crystal silicon wafers (which are used to make microelectronics).



The second work in this collaboration, *House Kundmannngasse 19*, applies the same technique to an architectural 3-D-printed model scaled at 1:150 of an actual house designed by Austrian philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein, on which carbon nanotubes will be grown. The CNT coating absorbs almost all light and creates a sculptural object that is actually hiding its plasticity and three-dimensionality, in an analogue to Wittgenstein's discussion of the limits of thought and the "unsayable" in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. Wardle intends to make his process to create the "blackest black" material on earth available as open source, which has been a point of contention in the art world, after Anish Kapoor's claim of exclusive rights to Surrey Nanosystems' Vantablack in 2016.

**Visiting Artist: Hyphen-Labs and William Uricchio, Professor of Comparative Media Studies and Principal Investigator, Open Documentary Lab**

Hyphen-Labs, Ida Ely Rubin Artists in Residence at CAST, is a collective of artists hosted by William Uricchio and Sarah Wolozin, research associate of Comparative Media Studies/Writing and Open Documentary Lab director. Hyphen-Labs are developing the next phase of *NeuroSpeculative AfroFeminism*, a three-part digital narrative at the intersection of product design, virtual reality (VR), and neuroscience, which explores the lack of multidimensional representations of black and brown women in technology and futurism. Through collaborations with the Open Documentary Lab and MIT researchers in several MIT labs—Imagination, Computation, and Expression Lab; Synthetic Neurobiology; and the Center for Civic Media—Hyphen-Labs will examine co-creation, embodied cognition, critical design, and digital disruptions in the speculative design space. During visits to MIT, Hyphen-Labs participated in CMS.339/CMS.839 Virtual Reality and Immersive Media Production and presented in the Hacking XR lecture series sponsored by the Open Documentary Lab with support from CAST.

**Visiting Artist: Jason Levine and Eran Egozy, Professor of the Practice of Music**

Musician, performer, and computational poet [Jason Levine](#) collaborated with Professor of the Practice of Music Eran Egozy, who encourages students to use code in an improvisational or artisanal mode, in contrast to the traditional problem-solving approach. Levine's residency focused on the interactive and generative qualities of coding to create real-time software systems for live performance. In April 2018 Levine visited the 21M.385/21M.385[J]/21M.585 Interactive Music Systems class, gave a public lecture and performance for 70 guests at the MIT Museum, and led a workshop where participants learned how to use the Extempore live-coding language to synthesize sounds and create rhythmic patterns.

**Visiting Artist: Tomás Saraceno, Glenn R. Flierl, Professor of Oceanography and Lodovica Illari, Senior Lecturer in Earth, Atmospheric and Planetary Sciences**

Lodovica Illari and professor of oceanography Glenn R. Flierl have created flight trajectories for CAST visiting artist Tomás Saraceno's [Aerocene](#) project. *Aerocene's* zero-emission, lighter-than-air structures, rely on infrared and solar radiation and are a part of the artist's larger vision of floating cloud-like cities that people might inhabit in the future. They draw attention to the environmental impacts of air pollution and carbon emissions by suggesting an alternative technology for air transportation using

atmospheric physics. Illari and Flierl have developed simulated flight patterns under real-world conditions, and visualizations that allow the public to think about fossil-free flight in relation to climate science. *Aerocene* was presented at MIT April 19 to 21, 2018, during the [Climate Changed symposium](#) and the Cambridge Science Festival. The program included a panel moderated by Professor John Fernández, director of MIT's Environmental Solutions Initiative, "Aerocene and the Future in a Fossil-Free World," with Saraceno, Illari, associate professor of atmospheric chemistry Daniel Cziczo, and Morningstar Professor of Physics Robert Jaffe. On April 20 and 21, the MIT community and general public were invited to Killian Court to take part in test flights of *Aerocene Explorer* kits. EAPS scientists and Saraceno used the solar sculptures to take measurements of weather variables and pollutants in the atmosphere's boundary layer. Attendees learned about atmospheric winds that make sustainable flight possible through an interactive display in Building 10's Memorial Lobby.

### **Lecture Series: Hacking XR, Open Documentary Lab, Comparative Media Studies/Writing**

During the spring semester, the MIT Open Documentary Lab hosted [Hacking XR](#), a series of talks by leading makers in the industry who explore the fundamentals of VR creation and develop innovative ways to build immersive experiences. The lecture series complemented CMS.339/CMS.839 [Hacking VR: Exploring Oculus and Immersive Media Production](#), taught by Sandra Rodriguez, lecturer and fellow at the Open Documentary Lab. The course and lecture series surveyed historical developments and current innovation in virtual reality—gear, software, and storytelling techniques.

### **Communications**

The communications effort in the Office of the Arts is devoted to making the arts at MIT more widely known, regardless of discipline or department. External coverage in prominent news outlets and periodicals is a primary concern and fills a gap not addressed by the News Office or elsewhere at MIT. Thirty-five blog posts and 48 Campus News articles were published in AY2018, written by CAST research writer Sharon Lacey and by freelancers. The most popular blog post, "Behind the Artwork: Ben Bloomberg Creates Live Performance Systems for Virtuoso Multi-instrumentalist Jacob Collier," reached almost 1,400 readers. Articles on the Arts at MIT featured visual and performing artworks made or produced by MIT visiting artists, faculty, and students, as well as exhibitions and arts events on campus.

### **Media Coverage**

The McDermott Award to performer Audra McDonald received strong media interest from the moment the first press release announcement was distributed. The *Boston Globe* covered her residency in three different installments, including her public program with Oskar Eustis, artistic director of the Public Theater in New York. *Boston Magazine*, Edge Media, and Gatehouse Media also featured articles about her award at MIT.

Coverage of CAST programs remained strong in AY2018. Jon Pareles, lead music critic for the *New York Times* made a trip from New York to cover Dissolve Music, which culminated in an article entitled "[Mouse on Mars at M.I.T.: A Symposium Becomes](#)

a Dance Party.” The *Times* also published an interview with Pedro Reyes, “[Noam Chomsky, Elon Musk and Ayn Rand Walk Into a Puppet Show,](#)” about his puppet play *Manufacturing Mischief*.

*The Enemy* at the MIT Museum garnered greater media interest than any recent exhibition. The *Wall Street Journal* reporter Edward Rothstein wrote “[‘The Enemy’ Review: Facing Down Conflict.](#)” WGBH Television produced a feature including an on-air interview with Karim Ben Khelifa and Professor Harrell that aired on *Open Studio*, and reporter Jared Bowen included a segment about *The Enemy* on the television program *Greater Boston* and on 89.7 WGBH radio. Radio programs covered the exhibition with feature segments on 90.9 WBUR and Public Radio International.

The *Boston Globe* continued to cover MIT Museum Kurtz Gallery of Photography exhibitions, as they have for nearly every exhibition since the gallery opened. The György Kepes photography exhibitions part I and part II were very well received in two *Boston Globe* reviews and were also covered in the international photography news site LensCulture, a first for MIT.

CAST was featured in the leading German visual arts magazine *ArtMagazin*, which included CAST visiting artists, symposia, and mission. “State of the Art,” a podcast about art and technology, featured an interview with Evan Ziporyn and Leila Kinney.

### Website and Electronic Communications

Traffic to the [Arts Portal](#) remained steadfast with more than 130,000 unique visitors between July 1, 2017 and June 30, 2018, with an increase in returning visitors compared to new visitors. When art highlights are featured on the main MIT homepage, traffic to the portal consistently doubles. The Arts at MIT continued publishing the very well received biannual alumni newsletter, which is sent to 11,480 individuals worldwide. The weekly Arts at MIT email newsletter reaches 3,100 subscribers; it lists all arts events and exhibitions on campus, press clippings, blog posts, and Campus News articles.

The Arts at MIT social media efforts this year resulted in significant metric increases across most platforms:

- Facebook following increased by 8% to 13,239 (12,274 in AY2017)
- Twitter following increased by 10% to 11,356 (10,319 in AY 2017)
- Instagram following increased by 12% to 7,670 (6,758 in AY 2017)

On Facebook, the #McDermottAward campaign reached an audience of 3,319 with a total of 104 engagements. On Instagram, the #McDermottAward campaign totaled 6,327 impressions and 163 engagements. The most popular post totaled 1,368 impressions and 20 engagements. On Twitter, the #McDermottAward campaign totaled 37,394 impressions and 269 engagements. The most popular post totaled 25,098 impressions and 126 engagements.

We continued efforts to grow our YouTube audience. The Arts at MIT created a video for social media with the video production company Trillium that used the hyperlapse style to show brief moments of the arts around campus, from music, theater, architecture, MIT Museum, List Visual Arts Center, public art, and more. The video was very well received and shared widely on social media when it was released in December 2017. It received 3,000 views on YouTube and ranked second highest in engagement on Facebook with 60 engagements, reaching 11,014 people. The video was also shared by the official MIT Facebook and Twitter accounts, where it was retweeted with totals of 4,606 views and 123 reactions.

### **Council for the Arts at MIT**

The Council for the Arts at MIT was founded in 1972 by MIT president Jerome B. Wiesner. With its enthusiastic advocacy for all the arts at MIT, the council's mission is to act as a catalyst for the development of a broadly based, highly participatory program in the arts, firmly founded on teaching, practice, and research at the Institute. Council members are alumni and friends with a strong commitment to the arts and serving the MIT community, and the council's programs are funded by the annual contributions of its members.

Rachel Bennett, director of the Council for the Arts at MIT, continued working closely with the executive director of arts initiatives, the associate provost with responsibility for the arts, and council leadership to develop a strategic vision for the council. Recruiting members, executing the McDermott Award Gala, and streamlining operational activities of the council were other goals this year.

### **McDermott Award Selection Committee (Susan Poduska, Chair)**

The Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts at MIT was established in 1974 by Margaret McDermott (1912–2018) in honor of her husband, Eugene McDermott (1899–1973), co-founder of Texas Instruments and long-time friend of MIT, and is presented by the Council for the Arts at MIT. It reflects MIT's commitment to risk taking, problem solving, and connecting creative minds across disciplines. Singer and actor Audra McDonald, best known for her record-breaking six Tony Awards, was the 2018 McDermott Award recipient. Two hundred and fifty cultural leaders, faculty members, and supporters attended a gala celebration, chaired by Cynthia L. and John S. Reed, in MIT's Walker Memorial (Building 50) where the award was presented. The evening also featured a performance by the MIT Vocal Jazz Ensemble and was the most successful fundraising event for the Arts at MIT to date.

### **Campus Visit: Audra McDonald**

Audra McDonald, the 2018 Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts at MIT recipient, made three visits to MIT in AY2018. A highlight of her first visit on November 29 and 30 was an intimate vocal presentation in the MIT Chapel with MIT students Talia Khan and Amalia Lee, top vocalists from the MIT Vocal Jazz Ensemble (led by Laura Jaye) and Chamber Chorus (led by William Cutter). McDonald also attended rehearsals by the Vocal Jazz Ensemble and Chamber Chorus and a special open session of Music and Theater Arts' opera class, which included a question-and-answer session led by Associate Professor Emily Richmond Pollock and Senior Lecturer Martin Marks.

On February 15, 2108 McDonald came to campus to give a master class to students from the Vocal Jazz Ensemble focusing on the pieces they were preparing to perform at the gala: “Flying Home,” a new arrangement by Jaye based on Ella Fitzgerald’s 1945 all-scat performance with music from Benny Goodman and Lionel Hampton, and “Quiet Place” by Ralph Carmichael arranged by Jerry Rubino for Take Six. McDonald also performed Jaye’s arrangement of “Flying Home” at her Celebrity Series performance in Boston on April 13. McDonald participated in an open class session of 21M.283 The Musical led by Marks, “‘The Show Business I Know’: A Conversation with Audra McDonald about Modern-Day American Musical Theatre.”

During McDonald’s culminating visit to MIT on April 14, she gave a public presentation in Huntington Hall (Building 10-250) to 415 guests and a livestream audience, where she shared timely stories from her career, in conversation with Oskar Eustis, artistic director of the Public Theater in New York. Eustis and McDonald also discussed how theatrical revivals—such as McDonald’s performances in *A Raisin in the Sun*, *Ragtime*, *Porgy and Bess*, and more recently, *Lady Day at Emerson’s Bar and Grill*—reflect their times and the evolution of social attitudes and cultural experiences.

### **Awards Committee (Ann Allen, Chair)**

The Student Art Awards Committee recognized nine MIT students for outstanding accomplishments in the arts. Bertrand Stone (Department of Mathematics) received the 2018 Louis Sudler Prize in the Arts for excellence as a composer, violinist, and scholar. The Sudler Prize recognizes a graduating senior who has demonstrated excellence in any artistic discipline. Laura Serejo Genes (Program in Art, Culture and Technology), Adam Haar Horowitz (Program in Media Arts and Sciences), Julia Rue (Department of Mechanical Engineering), and Tal Scully (Department of Physics and Music and Theater Arts) received the 2018 Laya and Jerome B. Wiesner Student Art Awards. Wiesner Student Art Awards recognize outstanding achievement in and contributions to the arts at MIT. Andrea Ling (Program in Media Arts and Sciences) received first prize in the 2018 Harold and Arlene Schnitzer Prize in the Visual Arts. Nicolás Kísic Aguirre (Program in Art, Culture and Technology) received the second prize, Brian Huang (Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science) received the third prize, and Gary Zhang (Program in Art, Culture and Technology) received an honorable mention. The Schnitzer Prize, established by Harold and Arlene Schnitzer in 1996, is awarded for excellence in a body of artistic work.

### **Annual Meeting Committee (Wendy Kistler, Chair)**

The Council for the Arts at MIT’s AY2018 annual meeting was the council’s 45th and took place on November 15, 16, and 17, 2018. It coincided with the Celebration of the Performing Arts at MIT hosted by President Rafael Reif and Christine Reif at the new Music and Theater Arts facility (Building W97). Fifty CAMIT members and guests joined MIT students, faculty, staff and supporters for the dedication of the building on Thursday, November 15, which featured a performance of Branden Jacobs-Jenkins’s *Everybody*, directed by Senior Lecturer Anna Kohler.



### Grants Committee (Colleen Messing, Chair)

The CAMIT Grants Committee awarded \$128,536 to support 40 projects by MIT students, faculty, and staff in two application cycles this year. Some highlights include the following:

- Undergraduates Nick Curtis and Tchelet Segev for video equipment to continue *Tea with Teachers*, a student-run YouTube program profiling MIT professors
- Undergraduate Kedi Hu for MIT Trashion Show, an annual fashion show organized by the MIT Undergraduate Association Committee on Sustainability; this year's show featured a special guest artist, Francis Sollano
- Undergraduate Julia Rue to expand the successful The Borderline Mural Project; located under Ames Street in the MIT tunnels, Borderline is a 200-foot-long mural project, animated by an augmented reality app, that features work by more than 25 MIT student artists
- Graduate student Paula Countouris for *Murals of Senior Haus*, an exhibition in the Wiesner Student Art Gallery featuring full-size prints of murals students painted in Senior House
- Graduate student Jonny Sun for *The Laughing Room*, an art installation that uses artificial intelligence to trigger laugh tracks in response to participants' speech; Sun is collaborating with associate professor of literature Stephanie Frampton and Cambridge Public Libraries
- Senior Lecturer Ken Urban for MTA Playwrights Lab, weekend-long festival of staged readings featuring the work of the student writers, performed and directed by professional theater artists

Fourteen undergraduates and student groups, 12 graduate students, eight faculty members and lecturers, and six staff members received funding this year. In addition to this support, the Grants Committee created a special fund to support projects by graduate students in the MIT Program in Art, Culture and Technology and the Director's Grants program, which was reconfigured this year to support projects by undergraduates and student groups.

### Membership and Nominating Committee (Hyun-A Park, Chair)

By the end of FY2018, 77 full members, eight ex officio members, two honorary members, and nine associate members compose the council membership. This year, the council welcomed nine new members: Mimi Jensen, Sheila P. Lemke, Anne Stark Locher, Tricia Wilson Nguyen, Janet Plotkin, Sara Sprung, Caroline Wang, Doreen Wang, and Cherie Wendelken. Anne Alden and Marjory Jacobson resigned at the end of FY2017. Katherine Freiburger, Rosanne Goldstein, Arnold Judson, Robert Warren Stearns, and Alice Vlcek resigned in FY2018. Bruce Blomstrom, life member Bradford Endicott, and long-time friend of CAMIT Margaret McDermott, passed away in FY2018.

## Annual Allocations, and Ticket and Membership Programs

In 2018, the council allocated support to the MIT Program in Art, Culture and Technology, the Center for Art, Science & Technology, the List Visual Arts Center, the MIT Museum, Student Arts Programs, and other arts organizations on campus.

It also continued partnerships with Boston-area cultural organizations including the Boston Ballet; Boston Symphony Orchestra; the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum; Harvard Art Museums; the Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston; and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, providing free and discounted tickets and admission for MIT students. It also continued to finance faculty requests for tickets to specific arts events to supplement students' course work. More than 7,000 student experiences in the arts are supported every year through the council's ticket and membership programs.



*CAMIT Grant Recipient, 2018 MIT Trashion Show. Photo by Rachel Wu.*

## Student Programs

Student arts programs managed by Sam Magee include the Arts Scholars (a program endowed by the Council for the Arts at MIT), the Grad Arts Forum, and arts entrepreneurship programming, which includes the Creative Arts Competition and the START Studio. Stacy DeBartolo manages the Student Art Association and the Freshman Arts Advising program.

## Arts Scholars

The Arts Scholars, founded in 1989, is a select group of undergraduate and graduate students who share a special interest in the arts. The Arts Scholars calendar includes excursions to on-campus and local arts events. An expert in the relevant discipline accompanies students on each excursion. Discussion, learning from the expertise of the guest, and the arts experience positively affect students' lives and their studies at MIT.

In AY2017, 53 arts scholars participated in the program, who represent every class year, from first years to PhD candidates, with 33 undergraduates and 20 graduate students. Of that number, 11 were men and 42 were women. We conduct rolling interviews to fill the spots vacated by graduating students, and will have more than 50 for AY2018. This year's Arts Scholars calendar included a trip to New York's Metropolitan Opera

and McKittrick Hotel where more than 30 students were able to see either two operas or two plays. Boston-area trips included the Peabody Essex Museum, the Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston, the Boston Symphony Orchestra, a gallery walk and talk in the SoWa art and design district, the South End of Boston, and more. This year, we also had informative lunches with several CAST visiting artists. 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 and as volunteers for MIT arts-related events.

The arts scholars also created a group show in the Wiesner Student Gallery in the Stratton Student Center (Building W20). The Borderline augmented reality mural initiative was also started by a number of our most active arts scholars and has been displayed beyond campus in Cambridge and Boston. Arts Scholars alumni continue to spread the word after graduation about the vibrant arts scene on campus.

### **Graduate Arts Forum**

The MIT Graduate Arts Forum, now in its 15th year, is designed to build an interdisciplinary community of graduate students who admire or create art as part of their graduate studies or through independent practice. We enjoy ongoing collaboration with the Graduate Student Council. We hosted an arts-focused event that drew 200 graduate students at Harvard's Natural History Museum, and the largest of our events, the Grad Arts Showcase, provided graduate students an opportunity to present their work to the larger MIT graduate student body. This event, in its 10th year, generated discussions around creative thinking and practice that help stimulate research and ensure communication among disciplines. This year's Grad Arts Showcase was attended by more than 350 students, among them more than 30 who are practicing artists.

### **START Programs**

The START Studio is an ideation and maker space for arts-focused student enterprises and teams in the arts-entrepreneurship space. Students from around the Institute sign up to use the space to work on their initiatives and have 24-hour access to the studio. In AY2018, the studio employed a 40% full-time equivalent maker-in-residence there to guide students, teach classes, and manage the Wiesner Gallery logistics and installations. The space includes a 3-D printer, 48-inch plotter, filming and editing equipment, and more. The START Studio is a practical space for students to prototype and grow their arts enterprises. At the end of AY2018 there were 70 students cleared to use the maker space.

### **Wiesner Student Art Gallery**

The Wiesner Student Art Gallery, located on the second floor of the Stratton Student Center (Building W20), was reserved for a show every month this academic year and is booked for the coming academic year as well. The exhibitions ranged from photography to installation and from solo shows to group exhibitions. The monthly exhibition openings are well attended and will be held on first-Thursdays, beginning in the fall. As the reputation of the gallery grows, demand has increased, as has the breadth and quality of the student art exhibited to the MIT community. The START maker-in-residence has done a wonderful job as the gallery coordinator in overseeing the space, artists, and vibrant shows.

## Creative Arts Competition

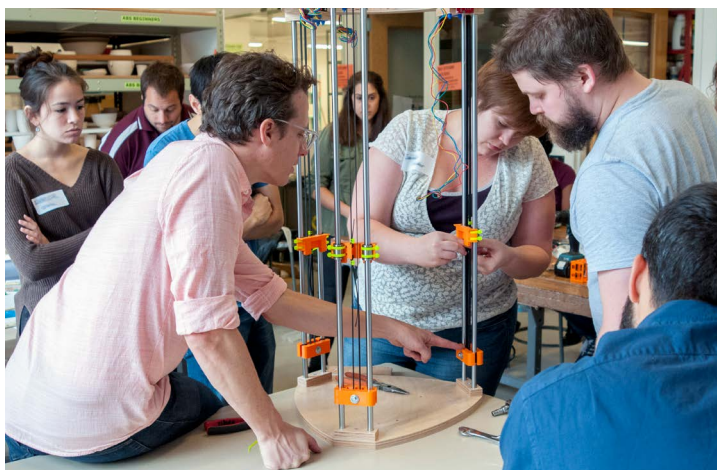
The Creative Arts Competition, an incubator for arts-focused start-ups, held its sixth annual competition in AY2017. More than 20 teams applied, narrowed by an extensive roster of preliminary judges, to eight finalists. All teams received three hours of mentorship from experts in the field to develop their plans and pitches. After a series of workshops led by industry experts, a panel of seven judges viewed the final pitches on April 30, 2018. The winners of the competition earned \$15,000 to launch their business. The Creative Arts Competition has drawn recognition beyond MIT and has growing momentum moving into AY2019. With peer-school partnerships and a life cycle extending throughout the academic year, the 2019 \$15,000 Creative Arts Competition is sure to increase its impact and continue to cultivate significant startups in the creative industries.

## Student Art Association

The Student Art Association, founded in 1969, is a suite of four studios that provide space for hands-on exploration of drawing, painting, printmaking, darkroom photography, ceramics, sculpture, and metalworking. This year, the SAA offered more than 60 classes and workshops during the fall, spring, summer, and independent activities period. Total enrollments for the year were nearly 800, of which 67% were matriculated MIT students; the balance consisted of staff, alumni, and spouses of students, staff, and alumni. Priority registration is given to matriculated MIT students one week prior to opening general registration for other community members.

New course offerings this year were Metalsmithing and Kinetic Sculpture, both taught by the maker-in-residence in the START Studio; a 3-D ceramic printer building workshop taught by Bryan Czibesz, a collaboration with the Harvard Ceramics Program; and a partnership with the New Hampshire Institute of Art to host advanced SAA ceramics students for a multiple week wood fire kiln workshop.

The SAA hosted one ceramics master class this year, welcoming Stuart Gair, an artist-in-residence at the Harvard Ceramics Program. The workshop had 35 attendees, a mix of MIT students, staff, alumni, and members of the ceramics community in Boston.



*MIT SAA ceramics students participate in a 3-D ceramic printer workshop with Bryan Czibesz, co-hosted with the Harvard Ceramics Program. Photo by Jason Pastorello.*

**Personnel**

Leila Kinney serves as vice chair the executive committee of the Alliance for the Arts in Research Universities.

Lydia Brosnahan was hired in a new assistant producer position supporting CAST and CAMIT on August 14, 2017.

Justin Playl was hired in a new maker-in-residence position on October 23, 2017.

Harry Bachrach was hired as communications assistant on March 12, 2018.

**Leila Wheatley Kinney**  
**Executive Director**