

## Associate Provost

### The Arts

The arts—both on campus and in the world at large—have been severely affected by measures undertaken to curtail the Covid-19 pandemic. In our sector—the List Visual Arts Center and the MIT Museum—along with the rest of campus, closed in March 2020 and all in-person programs—including CAST Visiting Artists, Council for the Arts at MIT, and student programs—have been suspended throughout the 2021 academic year. Yet in spite of these limitations, it has been a remarkably productive year.

### Current Goals

The new building for the MIT Museum at Kendall Square is complete and plans for all aspects of the opening in spring 2022 are under way, including inaugural temporary exhibitions, installations of the permanent collections, updated technology infrastructure, and a newly designed graphic identity and web portal. The List Visual Arts Center is overseeing the installation of numerous additions to the public art collection, including two in the new Vassar Street dormitory and two in Kendall Square. The MIT Center for Art, Science & Technology (CAST) is engaged in long-term planning for its future after the Mellon Foundation’s third round of grant funding concludes in 2024.

### Accomplishments

The greatest challenge for our sector during the last year was to extend artistic experiences to students and audiences online who could not gather in person. The rapid and successful transition to virtual production was a signal achievement and a tribute to the staff’s ability to adapt. Both the List and the MIT Museum developed notable exhibitions to be experienced online. CAST enabled more than 85 visiting artists to contribute to remote classes, and the Museum’s educational programs produced more than 150 events for remote audiences. Both the List’s Wasserman Forum, “Another World,” and CAST’s “Unfolding Intelligence: The Art and Science of Contemporary Computation” symposium reached larger and more international audiences through online presentations. CAST was able to maintain highly successful engagements with visiting artists through remote collaborations and continued to receive wide recognition for its research-based artistic projects; for example, the research, musical installations, and performances based on sonification of spider webs by Professor Markus Buehler, CAST visiting artist Tomás Saraceno, Isabelle Su, Evan Ziporyn, Christine Southworth, Ian Hattwick, and Eran Egozy resulted in more than 200 press clips.

### Administrative Initiatives

The Institute’s renewed commitment to addressing racial inequity at MIT, articulated in the President’s letter to the community on July 1, 2020, led the Provost to appoint an ad hoc committee on the arts, culture, and DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) “to recommend artistic and cultural responses that will affirm and inspire our community in this complex moment.” The committee co-chairs are Philip Khoury and John Dozier, Institute community and equity officer; Leila Kinney, executive director of arts initiatives, and Paul Ha, director of the List Visual Arts Center, are members along with

more than 20 others, including faculty, students, staff, and alumni. The committee will issue recommendations by December 2021.

Local initiatives in our sector were already under way, including trainings, working groups devoted to anti-racist actions, and an analysis of previous practices through a DEI lens. This bottom-up momentum led to a January 2021 all-staff retreat devoted to DEI concerns specific to the arts, which included an emphasis on accessibility as well. A group of staff representatives developed the discussions from this event into a set of recommendations that will be prioritized and refined into action items.

Another important administrative initiative grew out of a review of MIT's fundraising activities by two Institute-wide committees in the aftermath of the discovery of Jeffrey Epstein's donations to MIT. The Council for the Arts at MIT, a legacy organization of approximately 80 supporters of the arts, which is staffed by our office, is approaching its 50th anniversary. In order to bring its governance into compliance with MIT's existing policies and fundraising guidelines, the group's constitution was retired and a new charter adopted.

### **Finances and Funding**

Fundraising for the new MIT Museum at Kendall Square made a giant leap forward in fiscal year 2021. Nearly \$60 million in donations was received, including 12 named spaces—more than 15 times the amount raised in the previous year. The List Visual Arts Center raised \$720,000.

### **Future Goals**

The shift to virtual programming in the last year has made all units in the sector aware as never before of their ability to reach larger and globally dispersed audiences. Our ambition going forward is to find the right mix of in-person and online programming while sustaining our existing staff. There is no substitute for a direct experience of art, but the goal of diversifying audiences and making the arts at MIT more accessible to all can be advanced in part by maintaining offerings online.

The top priorities for the coming year include a successful launch of the MIT Museum in Kendall Square and planning for the future of CAST. The MIT Center for Art, Science & Technology is internationally recognized for its cross-disciplinary collaborations and has become an important platform for the creation of art by faculty and research groups on campus.

### **Personnel**

Associate Provost and Ford International Professor of History Philip S. Khoury oversees the Institute's extra-academic arts programs and institutions. These include the MIT Center for Art, Science & Technology, the List Visual Arts Center, and the MIT Museum. Khoury is the principal investigator for CAST, a joint initiative with the dean of the School of Architecture and Planning and the dean of the School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences. The associate provost chairs the Creative Arts Council and the advisory board of the Catalyst Collaborative at MIT. He is an ex officio member of the executive committee

of the Council for the Arts at MIT and the advisory boards of the List Visual Arts Center and the MIT Museum. He also serves on the International Advisory Committee. He serves with the provost and the dean of engineering on the Collaboration Governance Board of the MIT-Singapore University of Technology and Design collaboration. He chairs the Compton Lectures Advisory Committee and the Emile Bustani Middle East Seminar at MIT, which will begin its 36th year in the fall of 2021.

**Philip S. Khoury**  
**Associate Provost**