

## **Associate Provost for the Arts**

The 2004 academic year was a busy one for the arts at MIT. Much of it was focused on fund-raising for the Laboratory for the Performing Arts and on transitions as new units joined the Office of the Arts.

### **Resources and Programs**

#### **Laboratory for the Performing Arts**

During the fall term, work moved steadily ahead on designs for the laboratory. Architect William Rawn thoroughly understood the urgency of the need for teaching spaces for the performing arts and developed initial designs that generated a great deal of excitement among the faculty and met the approval of the Committee for the Review of Space Planning and the Building Committee. The site for the building on Massachusetts Avenue, fronting the nuclear reactor, was also approved. The associate provost unveiled the designs and the model at the annual meeting of the Council for the Arts at MIT. As of this writing, all forward movement on the project has halted until we find a naming donor. As soon as that occurs we will be able to go into schematic drawings.

#### **Budget Crunch**

After the provost announced the budget cutbacks and salary freezes for FY2005, the response on the part of all the units reporting to the associate provost for the arts was remarkable for its goodwill and creativity. Through some redistribution of programs and exercises in prioritization we were able to absorb the losses to individual units without having to cut back on personnel.

#### **Student Art Association and Wiesner Gallery**

With the departure of Ed McCluney, its longtime director, the Student Art Association joined the Office of Special Programs with Michèle Oshima as its supervisor. Clay Ward served as part-time acting director and, after a careful search, was appointed to a permanent position. Working together, Clay and Michèle researched the association's past practices, instituted major changes, and, in a very short time, realized major positive changes in morale and procedures. Most of the decisions focused on making the association more accessible and transparent for the student body. Susan Cohen, director of the Council for the Arts, shared responsibility by taking over the supervision of the Wiesner Art Gallery and the Schnitzer Art Awards.

#### **Council for the Arts and the McDermott Award**

Over the summer of 2003 and into the fall, a newly constituted McDermott Award Committee of the Council for the Arts met in response to an additional gift of \$1 million

from Margaret McDermott. It was Mrs. McDermott's wish that the award be enlarged and the events surrounding the presentation enhanced. The committee chose Spanish architect Santiago Calatrava as the first recipient. We will present this award at an invitational black tie dinner in the spring of 2005.

Another highlight of the year was the council's excursion to Venice structured around the American pavilion for which Kathy Goncharev, then a member of the staff of the List Visual Arts Center, was commissioner. Peter Houk, artist, in residence in the Materials Science and Engineering Department, coordinated visits to a number of the best glass blowing studios on Murano.

### **Office of Arts Communication**

Mary Haller, director, agreed to extend her part-time maternity arrangement permanently both in response to the budget cuts and as a personal preference. This has not prevented her from pursuing the redesign of the Arts web site.

### **Museum Loan Network**

This was the last year of full funding from the Knight Foundation and Pew Charitable Trust. In preparation for a new profile, the Museum Loan Network launched a pilot program, Searching for Treasure, to utilize the Museum Loan Directory in the service of a wholly new educational initiative. Lori Gross, director, has been unflagging in her creativity and perseverance, developing new fundable initiatives while maintaining the quality and pace of the current program and the integrity of the directory. In the late spring she unveiled many of the new initiatives to a meeting of 13 funding organizations, foundations and corporations, in New York City.

### **MIT Museum**

The MIT Museum continued through the year without a permanent director. Mary Leen, acting director, did a superb job of maintaining morale and direction as the search for a new director began to show fruit. John Durant, currently chief executive of the Bristol Harbourside Science and Natural History Centre, has provisionally accepted the position pending an appointment as adjunct professor of the public understanding of science in the Program in Science, Technology, and Society. The prospect of John's joining us has brought a new vitality and sense of anticipation to the entire staff of the museum. The search committee, which has been in operation for over a year and a half, did a superb job of holding to its standards and finding creative ways to attract applicants as highly qualified as Durant.

The museum completed its permanent exhibition commemorating Building 20 and installed it in the newly completed Stata Center along with artifacts from its permanent collection. These included the original radar scanner developed in Building 20.

Due to budget cuts, the Alumni Association has had to discontinue its support of the Compton Gallery, necessitating a cutback in the exhibition program there. The gallery will remain dark through the summer and cut its exhibitions down to three per year.

## List Visual Arts Center

The List Visual Arts Center continued its series of successfully and internationally recognized exhibits while it pursued a vigorous Percent for the Arts program. This year saw the dedication of Dan Graham's *Yin and Yang* in Simmons Hall. The List also agreed to take over the exhibition program in the Dean's Gallery of the Sloan School and hung a series of shows from the permanent print collection. This, along with the continuous programming of the Media Wall in Building 56, reinforced the List's commitment to making its presence more available campus-wide.

## Other Events

### Theater

Associate professor Thomas DeFrantz was promoted to tenure. His book, *Dancing Revelations*, was published by Oxford University Press.

Assistant professor Jay Scheib, in his first year at MIT, directed a successful production of Tolstoy's *The Power of Darkness* for Dramashop and De Musset's *Lorenzaccio* for Harvard. He also directed the world premiere of Kevin Oakes's *The Vomit Talk of Ghosts* at the Flea Theatre in New York City.

Program head Michael Ouellette mounted a popular production of Alan Brody's *The Company of Angels*. The play was later performed in staged reading at the Scarsdale Jewish Community Center. Brody's play *The Housewives of Mannheim* was also performed in staged reading at Theatre J in Washington, DC.

Brody represented MIT in the Culture and Commonwealth Task Force for the Boston Foundation. He also served on the education committee of the Board of Trustees for the Museum of Fine Arts.

### Music

Professor Evan Ziporyn had a phenomenally successful year; he composed the score for the American Repertory Theatre production of *Oedipus*; his recently commissioned piece premiered at BMOP (Boston Modern Orchestra Project); he performed as soloist in the Artie Shaw Clarinet Concerto with the Boston Pops for Tech Night; he continued his work with Bang on a Can through its summer residency at Mass MOCA.

Mark Harvey and Fred Harris collaborated on a tribute to Duke Ellington, supported by a gift from a member of the Council for the Arts.

Libby Larson's very successful residency included the world premiere of "The Nothing That Is," a choral piece commissioned by Brad and Dorothea Endicott, also members of the Council for the Arts.

## **Visual Arts**

The Program in the Visual Arts continues its search for a director. The arrival of Adèle Santos as the new dean of the School of Architecture injected a new urgency and forward movement in the process.

**Alan Brody**

**Associate Provost for the Arts**

**Professor of Theater**

*More information about the Office of the Associate Provost for the Arts can be found at <http://web.mit.edu/arts/about/office/provost>.*