

Associate Provost for the Arts

The 2004–2005 academic year saw a number of new initiatives in arts programs and the continued growth in existing ones.

Perhaps the most important success of the year was the appointment of John Durant as director of the MIT Museum. His appointment ended a two-year search during which Mary Leen served superbly as acting director. Durant also joined the Program in Science, Technology and Society as adjunct faculty, a position that will help him realize his vision of creating a full program focused on public engagement with science. The museum will be the centerpiece of this ambitious program, and the teaching appointment will ensure even greater communication between the museum and the faculty.

A series of videoconferences with the Center for Fine Arts at the National University of Singapore served to introduce the arts as a component of MIT education in the Singapore-MIT Alliance. MIT participants included Professor Thomas DeFrantz in dance, professor and associate provost for the arts Alan Brody in writing, and lecturer George Ruckert in Indian music. Professor Brody also ran two extended playwriting workshops in Singapore as an outgrowth of the videoconferences. One was for established professional Singaporean playwrights and the other was part of the Creative Arts Program (CAP), a two-week summer workshop for gifted students in high school and junior college. In addition, he delivered the CAP plenary address, “Theater in the Modern World.”

In a new initiative in science and theater, associate provost for the arts Brody addressed the STAR Conference (“Science, Theatre, Audience, Reader: Theoretical Physics in Drama and Narrative”) as an invited speaker at the Kavli Center for Theoretical Physics, University of California at Santa Barbara. Adjunct professor Alan Lightman was on the steering committee for this event, which may be the seed for an ongoing discourse.

In collaboration with the Underground Railway Theater, Alan Brody’s new play about Sir Isaac Newton, *Small Infinities*, had a professional staged reading in Room 10-250 early in the fall term. As a result of this reading, a new group called the Catalyst Collaborative began making plans for future similar events. The collaborative consists of representatives from MIT, staff of the Underground Railway Theater, and playwright and director Jon Lipsky of Boston University.

Because of the growing student awareness of the Office of the Arts and the consequent volume of work, the Human Resources Department supported the addition of a new support staff member who will be responsible for all Systems, Applications, and Products in Data Processing (SAP) transactions, as well as reception and numerous other duties.

Clay Ward became the new program coordinator of the Student Art Association. He began work to bring more focus and professionalism to its operation.

The arts were a prominent part of the week-long inauguration ceremonies for President Susan Hockfield. The installation of assistant professor J. Meejin Yoon's *White Noise/White Light* on the Kresge Oval was the opening event. During the week, associate provost Brody moderated a well attended panel on "Art and Technology," with Professor Evan Ziporyn, assistant professor Jay Scheib, and professor Kyzysztof Wodiczko representing music, theater, and the visual arts, respectively. The Inauguration Ceremony was graced with music commissioned from Institute Professor John Harbison, Professor Ziporyn, Professor Peter Child, and lecturer Elena Ruehr, as well as the music of Gamelan Galak Tika and Rambax, assistant professor Patty Tang's Senegalese drumming group.



White Noise/White Light installation at MIT for the inauguration of President Susan Hockfield. Photo by J. Meejin Yoon

The Council for the Arts conducted two major events during the academic year. The first was an excursion to Dallas with about 50 members. A highlight of the trip was a tour of the new Nasher Sculpture Garden, led by council member Andrea Nasher. The other major event was presentation of the first of the Eugene McDermott Awards for the Arts to be supported by the recent \$1 million gift from Margaret McDermott. The award for 2005 went to architect Santiago Calatrava. It included a gala dinner and a residency during which the recipient met with faculty and conducted design workshops with students in the Department of Architecture.

Alan Brody
Associate Provost for the Arts

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