

Center for Advanced Visual Studies

The Center for Advanced Visual Studies (CAVS), an artist fellowship program founded in 1967, produces new artworks and artistic research within the context of MIT. A laboratory for interdisciplinary art practice, CAVS facilitates exchanges between artists and MIT's faculty, students, and staff through public programs, support for long-term projects, and residencies for MIT students.

Public Programs

CAVS's public programs increase the visibility both of the center and the School of Architecture and Planning while providing informal opportunities for exchanges across disciplines and age groups.

During the past year, visitors to CAVS met with undergraduates, graduate students, and professors of such subjects as architecture, computation and design, computer science and artificial intelligence, materials science and engineering, microphotonics, and nanotechnology. Visitors included Vito Acconci, a foundational figure in contemporary art and experimental architecture; Turner Prize winner Simon Starling; and pioneering director, performer, and activist John Malpede. Their three-day site visits included public presentations that garnered expanded public and MIT attendance. At the spring 2006 Technology and Social Responsibility Symposium, nine MIT faculty members and graduate students, including Noam Chomsky, spoke about energy use and conservation, the open source movement, the engineering curriculum, the history of activism and defense funding at MIT, and more.

Along with these visiting artists, CAVS fellow Pia Lindman presented work in progress; senior fellow Judith Barry presented a history of her work; and graduate affiliate Azra Aksamija and collaborators planned "The Lost Highway Expedition."

In a pilot program to be formalized in 2006–2007, all CAVS visitors are "cohosted" by Visual Arts Program graduate students. Cohost duties include assisting center staff with organization, text production, installation, and so forth.

New Programs and Positions

Center Fellowships

Artist fellows are the cornerstone of CAVS, and 2005–2006 was the first year of the fellowship program's new configuration. As emerging or established contemporary artists working for a period of up to a year at MIT, fellows are expected to use their stays to create significant new artistic work and/or research that provides opportunities for long-term graduate and undergraduate involvement.

Pia Lindman, an emerging performance and video artist, worked with Media Lab and Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory (CSAIL) researchers to compile and then reenact a topology of their movements, focusing in particular on Aaron Edsinger and Lijin Aryananda, graduate students in Rodney Brooks's group at

CSAIL, and their robots. Four Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP) students assisted Lindman. A solo exhibit of the new work was mounted at the Luxe Gallery in New York, NY (February 2006) and at the MIT Museum's Compton Gallery (April 2006). Lindman's project was featured in the *Boston Globe*, *Weekly Dig*, *Phoenix*, and *Art Papers* and on WBUR. The fellowship resulted in an invitation to a departmental residency at CSAIL through 2006–2007.

Michael Smith, an established performance, video, and installation artist, worked with Visual Arts Program faculty, graduates, and undergraduates and CAVS staff member Joe Zane to conceive, storyboard, and shoot a tragicomic 10-minute video about a middle-aged self-learner who discovers MIT through its OpenCourseWare program. The project is scheduled for completion in fall 2006, and international screenings and distribution are planned.

Graduate Affiliate

Another innovation in 2005–2006 was the addition of a new graduate affiliate position. Any MIT graduate student who considers himself or herself an artist may apply for CAVS studio space, a small grant for materials, and studio visits from the center's staff and senior fellow. In turn, the graduate affiliate helps link CAVS and visiting artists to his or her home department or laboratory.

Tad Hirsch (PhD candidate, MIT Media Lab, Smart Cities Group) conducted ongoing research into models of participation and civic engagement afforded by mobile communications technology, including dial-up radio, a communications system for activists in sub-Saharan Africa, and an interactive map of Chinatown's surveillance cameras and police incident data intended to provide residents with a tool to evaluate the Boston police department's program of deploying of closed-circuit television technology in the neighborhood. Research results are scheduled to be presented at the center in the fall of 2006.

Azra Aksamija (PhD candidate, Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture) has been working on wearable mosques—clothing that can be transformed into prayer environments—to examine the notion of mosque space and its formal limits. She also co-organized "The Lost Highway Expedition" with pioneering artist-architects Marjetica Potrc and Kyong Park. The expedition sprang partly out of Potrc's workshop at CAVS in spring 2005, conducted when she was a visiting scholar in the School of Architecture and Planning. Aksamija, along with center curatorial associate Meg Rotzel and students from the Visual Arts Program, Department of Urban Studies and Planning, and Media Lab, will join a massive group of people moving through the Balkans in August 2006. The expedition will be discussed in a short symposium to be held at CAVS in October 2006.

Senior Fellow

Finally, the center created a new position, senior fellow, for an established artist of international stature who will advise and help represent the center. This individual is free to pursue an art project at MIT with student involvement but is not required to do so.

Judith Barry, a pioneer in video, performance, and new media, was our first senior fellow. Her artwork has been shown internationally since the early 1980s in exhibitions such as the Venice Biennale, the São Paulo Biennial, the Whitney Biennial, the Carnegie International, the Sydney Biennial, the Berlin Biennial, and InSite.

Research Affiliate

Research affiliates are artists, often but not exclusively longtime CAVS affiliates, who receives access to the center's resources but no studio or stipend. The position is currently being redefined.

Nell Breyer cocurated and participated as an artist in the Ideas in Motion Conference during Boston Cyber Arts. Her work was on view on Lumen Eclipse in Cambridge, MA, ("RE:actions"), at the World Financial Center in New York, NY ("Time Translations"), during a video dance series at the DTW Gallery in New York ("Walking Wall"), and at Art Interactive in Cambridge ("Fenway I & II"), among other exhibitions. She was awarded grant funds from the Cambridge Arts Council and MIT's Arts Council for upcoming projects.

Tim Anderson continued advising the MIT Electronic Research Society student group and led its participation in the IDEAS Competition and D-Lab projects. He also continued to write the quarterly "Heirloom Technology" column for *Make Magazine*.

Elizabeth Goldring continues to develop a portable nonlaser version of her "seeing machine" to present images to visually challenged people, a project covered by AP and CNN in spring 2006. She worked with three UROP students and continued working on *CenterBook*. Her writing was included in a new poetry anthology, *Chance of a Ghost*.

Jessica Rylan, a well-known sound artist, investigated and experimented with chaotic approaches to sound synthesis and constructed a prototype chaotic oscillating instrument in collaboration with UROP student Dugan Hayes. Hayes and Rylan played three concerts, including a CAVS event, and made several recordings.

The Manhattan Group, a student group linked to the Visual Arts Program, worked with established performance artist William Pope L on a performance ("Singing the House") at the former residence of Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

Director emeritus Otto Piene participated in a number of overseas exhibitions, including a retrospective in Karlsruhe, Germany. At CAVS, he continues to work on *CenterBook*. A catalog for the 2002 Sky Art Conference, coordinated by Piene, was published.

Publicity

In 2005–2006 CAVS launched a new website and initiated a pilot publications program. All printed matter is downloadable from the website, and all events are available via podcast. Booklets produced to date include a history of the center and an interview with visiting artists John Malpede and Harrell Fletcher. An event introducing the historical and redeveloped center to a key audience was held during the College Art Association conference in Boston in February 2006. The event attracted approximately 400 artists, art

historians, and other professionals and was mentioned on the website of the premiere industry magazine *Artforum*. Other press coverage included mentions in the *New York Times*, *Boston Globe*, *Phoenix*, *Weekly Dig*, *Artforum.com*, and *BigRedandShiny.com*.

Fund-raising

Donations were received from several outside sources: \$6,000 from the Milton and Sally Avery Foundation (general fellowships), \$5,000 from the LEF Foundation (general fellowships), \$5,000 from the New York State Council for the Arts (fellowship), and \$4,000 from French Cultural Services (Xavier Leroy public program, spring 2007).

In addition, the MIT Council for the Arts funded several programs: \$2,000 for the Center for Urban Pedagogy (public program); \$4,000 for N55 (public program) [unused due to illness, rescheduled for 10/06]; \$5,000 for “The Lost Highway Expedition” (graduate affiliate); \$7,000 for the Pia Lindman fellowship, and \$1,500 for Lindman’s public program. Lindman also received \$5,000 from the Office of the Arts and an additional \$5,000 from CSAIL through the departmental Artist-in-Residence Program.

Staff

Krzysztof Wodiczko continued his directorship at CAVS and professorship of architecture in the Visual Arts Program. His “If You See Something . . .” installation in fall 2006 at Galerie Lelong in New York, NY, was reviewed in the *New York Times*, *Artforum*, *Art in America*, and *Art Press*. *Monument Therapy*, a retrospective at Zacheta National Gallery of Contemporary Art in Warsaw, was accompanied by a public projection. In February, the Kunstmuseum Basel sponsored another public projection. In addition, Wodiczko is collaborating with Julian Bonder on a memorial to the abolition of slavery, commissioned by the city of Nantes, France, and scheduled to be completed in 2007–2008. He lectured at Cornell, Columbia, and Carnegie Mellon universities and gave the keynote lecture at the National Conference of Art Educators in Chicago.

Associate director Larissa Harris, who spearheaded the redevelopment of the center when she arrived in 2004, continued to design, implement, and oversee new programs, grant writing, and publicity while selecting and hosting visiting artists and assisting them in making new contacts both inside and outside MIT. She also published regularly in *Artforum International* magazine, participated in a six-week critics’ panel at the Yale School of Art, was a juror for the American Academy in Berlin awards (held at the Whitney Museum in New York), and lectured at New York’s Sculpture Center as a part of a major group exhibition, “Grey Flags.”

Meg Rotzel was given the title of curatorial associate (part time) to acknowledge her expanded responsibilities in all aspects of fellowships and public programs, in particular redesigning the affiliate program and coordinating the 2005–2006 Center for Urban Pedagogy fellowship project. Rotzel traveled in August with graduate affiliate Azra Aksamija to document “The Lost Highway Expedition” and help organize upcoming CAVS events and exhibitions associated with the expedition. She is also the director of the Boston-based Berwick Research Institute, where she curates and runs residency programs in studio and public art. This year Rotzel was named the *Improper Bostonian’s* Best New Curator.

Production manager (part time) Joe Zane's responsibilities grew this year from managing technical aspects of public programs to include coproducing Michael Smith's project, designing exhibitions, and providing support for CAVS affiliates. This year he had a solo show at Allston Skirt Gallery in Boston, was exhibited at the Portland Art Fair, and was included in group shows at Lumen Eclipse in Cambridge and the Andrew Kreps Gallery in New York. His work was reviewed in the *Boston Globe*, *Art in America*, *Tema Celeste*, and *Artworld Digest*.

Krzystof Wodiczko

Director

Professor of Architecture

More information on the Center for Advanced Visual Studies can be found at <http://cavs.mit.edu>.