

Arts Initiatives

The director of Arts Initiatives focused during the first nine months of her position on consultations with the three noncurricular units and eight academic sections in the arts in order to identify their accomplishments, needs, and visions for the future. This information formed the basis of presentations by the associate provost to the Academic Council in December 2008 and the News Information Group in May 2009 and incorporation into a white paper on the history, status, and future of the arts at MIT, reviewed by the 30 members of the Creative Arts Council in April 2009. As chair of the Arts Development Committee, she worked with programs in the arts, the Catalyst Collaborative at MIT (CC@MIT), and senior representatives from resource development to articulate and prioritize fundraising goals. She oversaw the first direct appeal for the arts to alumni, in collaboration with Theresa Lee, acting codirector of the Alumni Fund. In addition, she led the 20-member Arts Communications Committee in efforts to modernize, expand, and coordinate dissemination of news about the arts at MIT.

Current Goals

- Finalize the white paper on the history, current state, and future of the arts at MIT
- Continue to develop a communications strategy that increases the visibility of the arts at MIT internally and externally, including expansion of the Arts at MIT section of TechTV and coordination among the many sources of arts information at the Institute
- Continue to work with the News Office to write strategic stories about the arts and create web spotlights on notable arts events and faculty
- Create an arts at MIT wiki for internal planning and dissemination of information about artists-in-residence, upcoming events, and potential news stories
- Continue to produce video interviews for TechTV of prominent arts faculty and notable visiting artists
- Develop a visual identity for the arts at MIT, including a logo, in anticipation of a broad spectrum of transmedia communications and a revamped website
- Continue to work with the Alumni Fund to build a community of alumni who support the arts and repeat the direct appeal annually
- Build support for CC@MIT
- Work with the director of the Council for the Arts to build recognition and coordinate communications for the Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts
- Establish new formats and collaborations for presenting the arts during Graduate Orientation, Family Weekend, and Campus Preview Weekend

Accomplishments

An important shift in the conception of Arts Initiatives during the current academic year increased collaboration and coordination among the various units within the arts that report to the associate provost and between them and the academic units in the arts. Discussions with the directors of the List Visual Arts Center (LVAC), the MIT Museum, and the Office of the Arts; the deans of the School of Architecture and Planning and the School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences; assistant deans for development; and the heads of Music and Theater Arts, the Visual Arts Program (VAP), and History, Theory, and Criticism of Art and Architecture have been essential to this ongoing endeavor and the emerging consensus about future directions for the arts articulated in the white paper.

Arts Development

The director of Arts Initiatives and the codirector of the Alumni Fund worked together on a direct appeal to alumni to support the arts, which never has been attempted before. Cosigned by associate provost Philip Khoury and deans Adèle Naudé Santos and Deborah Fitzgerald, the letter featured Christopher Adler '94, who came to MIT to study math and physics, joined the Gamelan Galak Tika founded by Kenan Sahin distinguish professor of music Evan Ziporyn, and is now an accomplished composer and performer of new and traditional music; his composition *Music for a Royal Palace* was performed at Carnegie Hall in September 2006. The solicitation was directed towards alumni who had received grants from the Council for the Arts and student loan artworks or belonged to one of the many music and performance groups. This solicitation required new coding of approximately 6,000 names in the alumni database. The appeal raised \$11,700.

Arts Communications

For arts communications, the goals were to introduce new methods to the 20-member Arts Communications Committee, to work more closely with the News Office to develop an overarching narrative about the arts at MIT in the context of individual stories, and to exploit a wider variety of electronic and new media. The following people made presentations to the Arts Communications Committee:

- Suzana Lisanti, web consultant and previous designer of the MIT home page, "Web 2"
- Greg Frost, news manager, and Susan Curran, previous editor of the MIT home page, "Criteria for News Stories and Home Page Spotlights"
- Andrew Yu, mobile services platform manager, Information Services and Technology, "MIT Mobile Web" (<http://mobi.mit.edu/about/>)
- Kris Brewer, TechTV webmaster and communications liaison, "TechTV" (<http://techtv.mit.edu/>)
- Ryan O'Toole, Media Lab graduate student, "Social Networking Media"

Members of the committee contributed substantially to a revision of the mission statement for the arts at MIT:

The arts at MIT connect creative minds across disciplines and encourage a lifetime of exploration and self-discovery. They are rooted in experimentation, risk-taking, and imaginative problem-solving and strengthen MIT's commitment to the aesthetic, human, and social dimensions of research and innovation. The knowledge and creations generated by the arts, exemplary of our motto—mens et manus, mind and hand—are an essential part of MIT's effort to build a better society and meet the challenges of the 21st century.

MIT Home Page Spotlights

The Arts Communications Committee collaborated on two spotlights for the MIT home page which each featured a dozen or so arts events. Another 135 arts events were featured in individual spotlights or listings on the home page.



MIT home page spotlight, March 21, 2009: "Spring Arts: Cool things from many disciplines."

Tech Talk

The director of Arts Initiatives worked with the News Office on a select number of feature stories for *Tech Talk*, including one that highlighted the Artist-in-Residence Program on the occasion of video artist Bill Viola's visit to MIT to receive the 2009 Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts (April 1, 2009) and another that surveyed music at MIT to coincide with Institute Professor John Harbison's 70th-anniversary celebratory concert.



Tech Talk, April 1, 2009: "Back to School: Video artist Viola, winner of the McDermott award, samples new technologies during weeklong residency at MIT."

TechTV

Arts Initiatives also began a new section on TechTV, MIT Arts (<http://techtv.mit.edu/collections/artsontechtv/>), producing video interviews with McDermott award winner Bill Viola (<http://techtv.mit.edu/collections/artsontechtv/videos/2222-bill-viola/>), Institute Professor John Harbison (<http://techtv.mit.edu/collections/artsontechtv/videos/2242-john-harbison-on-mit-students/>), and artist Matthew Day Jackson (<http://techtv.mit.edu/collections/artsontechtv/videos/3075->

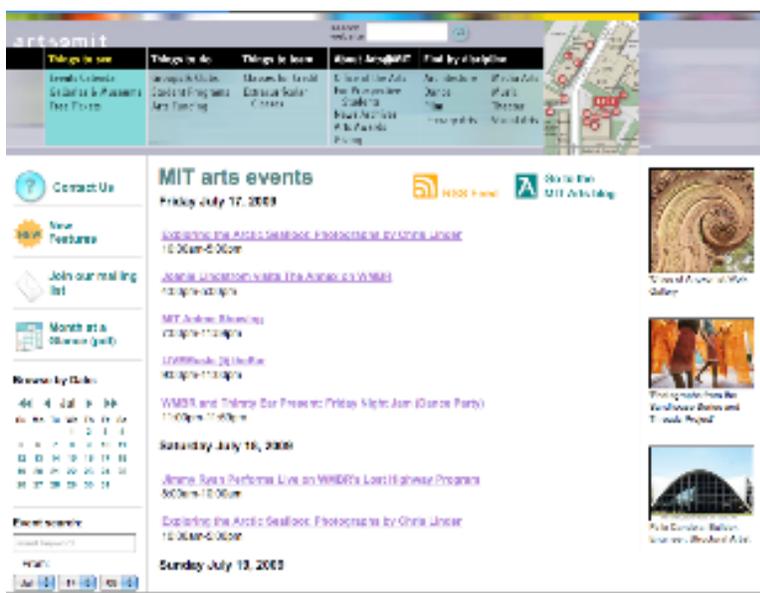


Tech Talk, April 15, 2009: "Music at MIT: Hitting all the right notes."

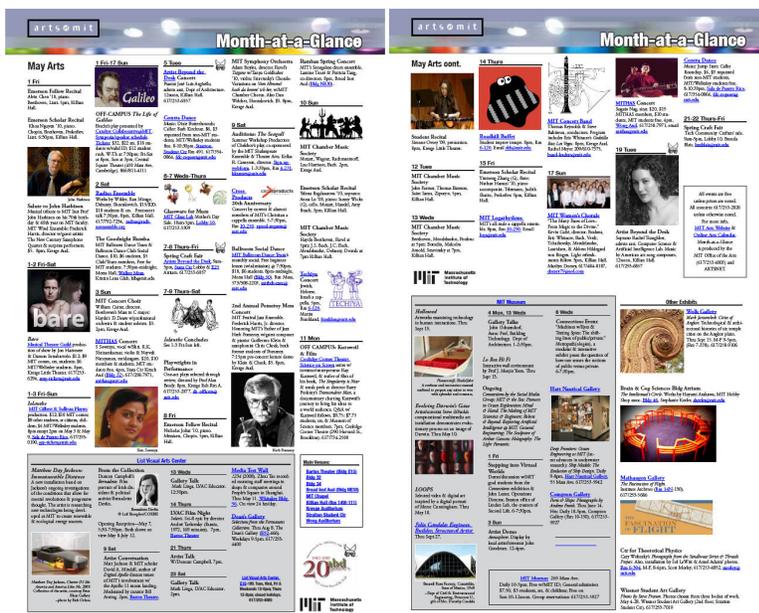
matthew-day-jackson/), whose exhibition *The Immeasurable Distance* opened at LVAC in May. We intend to build upon this successful experiment (the Viola piece has been viewed over 3,600 times) and create a video archive of interviews with outstanding artists on our faculty or who visit MIT.

MIT Arts Calendar

An upgrade of the code and new features for the online arts calendar (<http://artscal.mit.edu/>) were completed, including a link to the interactive map of MIT's public art, an RSS feed, an option to download events to various electronic calendars, and the ability to download or sign up for email delivery of the Month-at-a-Glance PDF calendar. The Month-at-a-Glance calendar now has approximately 800 subscribers and



New features on the online arts calendar.



May arts events featured on the Month-at-a-Glance calendar.

is produced and distributed at substantially less expense than in its previous hard-copy format. Weekly page views for the online calendar, the major source of information about arts events at MIT, increased from less than 1,000 page views in October 2008 to a peak of more than 2,500 in April 2009.

ARTalk Blog

Ken Haggerty '10 remains a superb editor of the popular "Music & the Arts" (http://www.mitadmissions.org/topics/life/music_the_arts/) blog section on the MIT admissions website, where seven undergraduates posted during the academic year on topics ranging from "Exhibitions@MIT" (http://www.mitadmissions.org/topics/life/music_the_arts/exhibitionsmit.shtml), in which Leah Bruneto '12 wrote about student art displayed at the Wiesner Gallery in the Student Center, to "Writing Science Fiction" (http://www.mitadmissions.org/topics/life/music_the_arts/writing_science_fiction.shtml) by Susan Shephard '11.

External Media Coverage

Exhibitions at LVAC and the MIT Museum, along with art, architecture, performances, and books created by MIT artists, garnered national and international attention in spite of the general decline in news coverage of culture and the well-known difficulties afflicting traditional journalism. The following items are selected from a more comprehensive list of MIT arts coverage.

Architecture

Larry Sass' "shotgun house," exhibited at New York's Museum of Modern Art, was covered on artnet.com and in *New York Magazine*, the *Boston Globe*, *Architectural Record*, *Business Week*, WNYC's *Leonard Lopate Show*, *Philadelphia Weekly*, and the *Times-Picayune* (New Orleans).

Yung-Ho Chang's China Pavilion at the Venice Architecture Biennale was reported in the *Los Angeles Times*.

Antoni Muntadas received the 2009 Vazquez Prize, reported in artdaily.org.

Authors at or from MIT

Junot Díaz won the Dayton Literary Peace Prize, as reported in the *Dayton Daily News*; spoke on NPR's "This American Moment" feature on *Talk of the Nation* and on "Becoming an American" on *Morning Edition*; and was featured in the *Bay State Banner*. His local appearances sparked articles on <http://www.jsonline.com/> (*Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*) and in the Lawrence, MA *Eagle Tribune*, *Miami Sun*, and *Miami Herald*. The *Boston Globe* and *Cambridge Chronicle* reported on Junot Díaz Day in Cambridge; "Small Talk" Q&A with Díaz was published in the *Financial Times*; *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* was named as a finalist for the International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award; and a Q&A with Díaz was published in the *Jamaica Observer*.

Works by Junot Díaz and Helen Lee were included in a *Publishers Weekly* review of best African American fiction.

Scott Campbell's book and film versions of *Aftermath* were featured in the *Christian Science Monitor*, and he was interviewed in *Bay Windows*.

Center for Advanced Visual Studies

Elizabeth Goldring's seeing machine received coverage in *The Scientist*, *El Comercio* (Peru), *El País* (Spain), the *Mumbai Mirror*, *PresseText* (Germany), *photonics.com*, *TG Daily*, *Network World*, *pcworld.com*, *Rapid* (United Kingdom), and the *Washington Post*, among others.

List Visual Arts Center

The Student Loan Art Collection was featured in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*.

David Claerbout's exhibition was reviewed in *Art in America*.

Adel Abdessemed's exhibition was reviewed in *Art Forum* and the *Boston Globe*, and Abdessemed was named as a fashion icon in the *New York Times* fashion blog.

Chantal Akerman's exhibition was named in the *Boston Globe's* year-end 10-best list.

Bill Arning's departure from MIT to Houston was widely reported in both Boston and Houston media.

Matthew Day Jackson's exhibition was covered in the *Boston Globe* and *Art New England*.

Media Lab

Tod Machover was featured in NPR's Music and Technology series, and Machover's opera *Skellig* received accolades from the *London Telegraph*, the *London Times*, the *Guardian*, the *British Theatre Guide*, and the *Glasgow Herald*.

The Center for Future Storytelling and Plymouth Rock Studio collaboration was reported widely across the country.

MIT Museum

The Compton Gallery's Damon Rich/Center for Advanced Visual Studies (CAVS) *Red Lines* exhibition was featured in the *Boston Herald*, *Boston Phoenix*, *Boston Globe*, and *New York Times*.

Compton's *Ports and Ships* exhibition of photographs by Andrea Frank was reviewed in *Popular Mechanics*.

The MIT Museum received major *boston.com* coverage as an ideal "tween/teen" destination, with a slide show of 16 images.

Music

Artist-in-Residence Mulatu Astatke was featured in the *Ethiopian Review*.

Evan Ziporyn was featured in the *San Diego Union-Tribune*.

The MIT Wind Ensemble's "Three Generations of British Composers" concert received a very positive review from the *Boston Musical Intelligencer*.

MIT's John Harbison celebration was featured in the *Cambridge Chronicle*, the *Boston Globe*, and the *Boston Herald*. The Boston Modern Orchestra Project (BMOP) Boston premiere of Harbison's *Winter Tale* was reviewed in the *Boston Globe*, and BMOP's recording of Harbison's *Ulysses* was included in *Time Out New York's* best albums of 2008 list.

Theater

CC@MIT's opening production of *QED* received rave reviews from local media and an Elliot Norton Award nomination. *The Life of Galileo* was reviewed favorably by *The Edge*, the *Boston Globe*, *New England Entertainment Digest*, and the *Boston Phoenix*.

Jay Scheib's *Making of Americans* was featured in the *Minneapolis Star Tribune* and on Minnesota Public Radio; his Peter Lorre project was featured in the *New York Times*, the blender.com blog, forbes.com, and *Scene4 Magazine*. Scheib was named the number one director on *Time Out's* New York theater director list.

The Musical Theatre Guild's original *Star Wars: Musical Edition* was performed at Vanguard University's Arts and Learnings Conservatory (Costa Mesa, CA).

Urban Studies and Planning

The opening of the Central Square Theater was covered in the *Boston Herald* and the *Cambridge Chronicle*.

Visual Arts Program

VAP's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) trailer project was covered at various points in its progress on NPR and in *Abitare* and the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

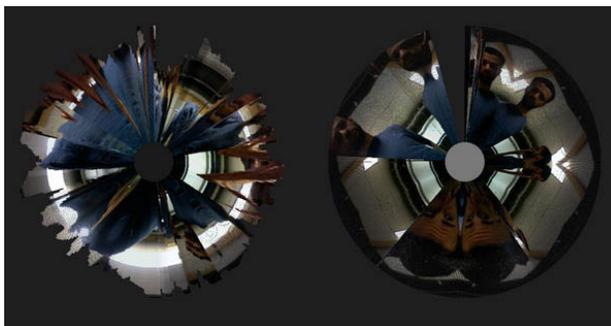
Krzysztof Wodiczko's installation for the Polish Pavilion at the Venice Biennale received accolades from the *Boston Globe* and the *Sunday Times* (London).

Administrative Initiatives

The ongoing effort to increase the effectiveness of arts communications has led to a reorientation from print toward electronic production and distribution, beginning with the Month-at-a-Glance and Media Arts calendars; the former is available on the website and by email subscription, and the latter is a monthly listing of exhibitions and performances at MIT distributed to Boston-area media. In addition, senior editorial assistant Lynn Heinemann has compiled a list of online sites and blogs that cover the arts for use by Arts Communications Committee members, and she tracks print and online coverage of MIT arts events in order to analyze the level of penetration in local, national, and international media markets. She continues to maintain the arts@

MIT website (<http://web.mit.edu/arts/>) and the Arts-Announce email listserv, which delivers announcements about MIT-related arts, free and discounted ticket offers, and information on special MIT arts events to 600 subscribers, and to distribute press releases for the entire arts community at MIT.

The director of Arts Initiatives collaborated with associate professor of digital arts Nick Montfort on “Processing Time,” a code-jam and competition to design digital clocks with the computer assembly language Processing, organized as part of the Boston Cyberarts Festival (May 2009). Ten teams participated, and awards were given by the coauthors of Processing, graduate students Ben Fry '04 and Casey Rees '01. The first-place entry, *Stillness Clock, Motion Clock* (<http://www.perspectum.com/stillnessMotionClock/>), was exhibited at the MIT Museum following the competition.



Seth Hunter and Eric Rosenbaum's Stillness Clock, Motion Clock was winner of the code-jam competition at the Boston Cyberarts Festival (May 2, 2009).

Pardis Parsa organized a panel on the arts at MIT for Family Weekend and arranged representation from MIT's cocurricular and extracurricular arts programs and groups for Campus Preview Weekend.

Future Plans

- Publish the white paper on the arts at MIT and translate it into a plan of action and publications useful for communications, development, and dissemination to alumni
- Coordinate communications and development opportunities for the arts more closely
- Redesign the arts website and continue to develop the visual identity of arts at MIT
- Develop greater coordination among the Artists-in-Residence programs in LVAC, the Office of the Arts, the Music and Theater Arts Section, CAVS, and VAP
- Create an arts and technology component for the Cambridge Science Festival
- Collaborate with LVAC on locating funding for curatorial crossdisciplinary fellowships
- Collaborate with the curator of public art and the Cambridge Arts Council to develop podcasts about the public works of art on campus
- Publish a biannual HTML newsletter on the arts in collaboration with the director of communications of the Alumni Association

- Increase coverage of the arts on the Alumni Association blog, Slice of MIT (<http://sliceofmit.wordpress.com/>)
- Develop a strategic plan for arts communications, including a redesign of the arts website and expanded use of new media such as video, blogs, and social networking
- Work with the Space 2030 Committee on long-range planning for arts facilities
- Work through the Arts Education Advisory Group in Cambridge to extend MIT's educational outreach to K–12 public school students in the arts

Personnel

The director of Arts Initiatives served on the search committee for an LVAC curator. She also presented a series of lectures on art nouveau at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, in October 2008.

Leila W. Kinney

Director of Arts Initiatives

More information about MIT Arts can be found at <http://web.mit.edu/arts/> and <http://artscal.mit.edu/>.