

## Student Programs

Student Programs in the Office of the Arts at MIT includes the Freshman Arts Seminar Advising Program (FASAP), [Arts Scholars](#) (a program endowed by the Council for the Arts at MIT), the [Graduate Arts Forum](#) (a series of events and lectures focused on the arts at the graduate level), the ARTalk blog featured on the MIT Admissions page, and the [Student Art Association](#) (SAA), which offers noncredit arts instruction to students, staff, and MIT affiliates. The coordinator of Student Art Programs oversees these programs, as well as exhibitions in the Wiesner Student Gallery, and supports the director of the Council for the Arts in the administration of arts awards, prizes, and grants.

### Current Goals

- Continue to grow the Arts Scholars Program as a community that will cultivate a future generation of leaders in the arts. In addition, the coordinator will reach out to faculty and departments beyond the arts in hopes of facilitating cross-curricular engagement in the arts and raising awareness of the importance of creative thought in both science and technology.
- Continue collaboration with the Graduate Student Council (GSC) and the List Visual Arts Center to further increase participation and the visibility of the arts among the graduate student population.
- Integrate the visiting artists schedule and the new Center for Art, Science, and Technology schedule into all student programs.
- Undertake efforts to ensure that the Student Art Association continues to serve its mission into the future, given that it has grown beyond its original business model.

### Accomplishments

During the 2011–2012 academic year, the Graduate Arts Forum broke several of its own records for attendance. The forum's [Arts Showcase](#), held in March in the Media Lab, was one of the largest graduate student events on campus. In addition, the forum expanded to include panel discussions on the arts featuring the experienced and knowledgeable faculty of MIT architecture and the creative arts.

This year's freshman arts seminar introduced the arts to incoming freshmen and served as a recruitment tool for the arts at MIT. Each student expanded his or her involvement in the arts to include contributions to the ARTalk blog and the Freshman Arts Program, which is part of the Freshman Pre-Orientation Program.

The educational and leadership goals of the Arts Scholars Program continued to build on the success of last year.



*Arts Scholar Rafael Oliveira and partner dancing at the second annual Arts Soiree in the Media Lab, March 2012.*

The number of applicants has increased, and the selection process has become more competitive.

The MIT Student Art Association has continued to grow. This past year it served over 600 MIT community members, teaching them skills in the traditional arts in hands-on, stress-free studio sessions. With the help of our web designer and several student web designers, the Office of the Arts launched a new SAA website and back end that will streamline the management of SAA.

### ARTalk

Shelby Heinecke '13 continued as editor of the ARTalk blog hosted by the Admissions Office website.

### Arts Scholars

The Arts Scholars Program, founded in 1998, is a select group of undergraduate and graduate students who share an exceptional interest in the arts. The Arts Scholars' calendar includes 10 to 12 excursions a year to area arts events. An expert in a given arts discipline accompanies the group on each excursion. On these visits, the group engages in discussion, leaning on the expertise of the guest, with the goal of better understanding the event and how it might impact students' lives and studies at MIT.

In addition to the excursions, the Arts Scholars are asked to give back to the community by acting as mentors for other MIT students interested in the arts, as ambassadors for MIT and the arts to area institutions such as the Institute of Contemporary Art, and as volunteers for MIT arts-related events.

A trip to see 2012 Eugene McDermott Award winner Robert Lepage's production of Wagner's *Götterdämmerung* at the Metropolitan Opera, followed by a workshop offered by Lepage at MIT, was a rare and enriching opportunity for the Arts Scholars and other MIT students interested in the arts. This year's calendar also included a Boston Symphony Orchestra performance by YoYo Ma with Lowell Lindgren, professor of music; a visit to the Peabody Essex Museum; and the play *Remembering HM* with Anna Kohler, lecturer in theater arts. In addition, we attended an Alvin Ailey dance performance and met with two of the company dancers and attended the Boston Ballet's *Nutcracker*, where we had dinner with the ballet mistress and a company dancer. Visiting artist Trevor Paglen also met with the Arts Scholars.



*The Arts Scholars after the Q and A with two Alvin Ailey company dancers.*

## Freshman Arts Seminar Advising Program

Sam Magee, the coordinator of Student Art Programs, co-taught the Freshman Arts Seminar Advising Program with Sara Brown, lecturer in theater arts. They continued the efforts of the executive director of Arts Initiatives, who led the seminar the previous year, to enhance the academic rigor of the program. FASAP included guest lectures from MIT creative arts faculty, which allowed students to become familiar with the distinctive nature of arts at MIT and to understand the breadth and depth of arts offerings on campus. Guest lecturers and studio and arts visits included Anna Kohler, “Acting for the Camera”; Eric and Marty Demaine, “Computational Folding”; Chris Areeza, “Experimental Music”; Peter Houk, “Glassblowing”; and a visit to Boston’s Institute of Contemporary Art.

## Graduate Arts Forum

The MIT Graduate Arts Forum is designed to build an interdisciplinary community of graduate students who appreciate or create art as part of their graduate studies or through independent practice. In its ninth year, the Graduate Arts Forum again showed significant growth. With the continued collaboration of the Graduate Student Council, our three annual arts events drew more than 1,000 graduates in total. The forums provide graduate students the opportunity to present their work to the larger MIT graduate student body as well as to see what their peers and local artists are creating. The forums generate discussions around creative thinking and practice that help stimulate research and ensure communication among disciplines. Additionally, the forums serve as a springboard for collaboration with other artists, scientists, engineers, and creative thinkers in the larger MIT community.

This year’s forums included a capstone to Graduate Orientation Month, a gathering in Harvard’s Natural History Museum and a viewing of its marvelous glass flowers exhibit; a very successful Arts Showcase with over 550 graduate students in attendance and 26 MIT artists showcasing their work; and our second annual private gallery opening at the Copley Society, America’s oldest nonprofit artist collective, on Newbury Street in Boston. The latter two events were co-hosted by GSC, which has, in reaction to their popularity, written an arts subcommittee into its constitution and funded the subcommittee’s activities. In addition, architecture student Timothy Cooke moderated a panel discussion on the “Designer as Researcher.” The panel included Mark Jarzombek, associate dean of the School of Architecture and Planning; John Fernandez, associate professor in the School of Architecture and Planning; Beth Hennessey, professor of psychology at Wellesley College; and Gediminas Urbonas, associate professor in the Program in Art, Culture, and Technology.



*Flyer for the “Designer as Researcher” Graduate Arts Forum panel discussion.*

## Student Art Association

Founded in 1969, the Student Art Association is a suite of three studios that provides space for hands-on exploration of the visual arts, photography, and ceramics. It offers more than 70 student-focused extra-academic classes during the fall, spring, summer, and Independent Activities Period (IAP). SAA enrolled approximately 600 MIT community members this year, close to 60% of whom were matriculated MIT students; the balance consisted of staff, alumni, and spouses. The Student Art Association offers 24-hour access to its members enrolled in ceramics, photography, drawing, painting, and open studios. The association has enjoyed steady growth and provides university-level arts instruction in a relaxed, creative atmosphere.

With over 20 instructors and 20 to 25 classes offered each term, the MIT community has at its disposal a wealth of traditional arts classes taught by local artists. We often receive great reviews of the offerings and of our accomplished roster of technical instructors.

This past semester I elected to take an SAA class. I have done art for most of my life but never had the chance to take an oil painting class. The class was fantastic. The teacher was knowledgeable, patient and encouraging. I ended up completing two paintings. I'm so glad I took the class, it was a great stress relief.

—Sarah Bindman '13



*Instructor Graham Ramsay with his Student Art Association photo class.*

## Wiesner Student Art Gallery

The Wiesner Student Art Gallery, located on the second floor of the Student Center (W20), displays exhibitions of student work ranging in media and format from photography to installation and from solo shows to group exhibitions of student art award recipients. The monthly exhibition openings are increasingly popular and attract between 20 and 50 visitors each. As the reputation of the gallery grows, demand increases, as has the breadth and quality of the student art that is being displayed for the MIT community.

## **Future Plans**

With the addition of a new communications manager in the Office of the Arts as well as a social media assistant, we will continue efforts to efficiently disseminate information on our various programs to the MIT student body. We hope to expand Student Programs to reach new MIT populations such as international student groups and postdoctoral fellows and associates.

## **Personnel**

SAA includes Ceramics Studio head Darrell Finnegan, Photography Studio head Thery Mislick, and 18 to 22 technical instructors in the arts. Sam Jacobson, a graduate student in architecture, is the 2012–2013 student curator of the Wiesner Gallery.

**Sam Hunter Magee**  
**Coordinator of Student Art Programs**  
**Office of the Arts at MIT**