

Arts Communication

In the 16th year of the Office of the Arts, Arts Communication continued to maintain and increase awareness of the arts at MIT, both within and outside of the Institute. Its activities focused on publishing and distributing up-to-date information on MIT arts events and exhibitions; actively promoting arts-related activities, programs, and people at MIT through publications, products, and media relations; and working with the Admissions Office to inform prospective students about the arts at MIT. Redesign and programming work was completed on the arts@mit website (<http://web.mit.edu/arts/>), and the site was launched in September 2004. Feedback suggests that the redesign succeeded in making the site more inviting and navigable.

Highlight: Launch of Arts@Mit Website

Billed as a “gateway to the events, people, and programs in the arts community at MIT,” the site has a number of new features: frequently updated “spotlight” sections, featuring selected arts events, news, and announcements; a “For Prospective Students” section, where visitors can request an arts@mit brochure and link to the Admissions website; more prominent links to information on student programs; more prominent links to MIT “Galleries and Museums” and “Groups and Clubs” listings; a prominent link to the nine-minute arts@mit video; and a bank of images that change with each reloading of the page.

Postcards announcing the new website were produced as part of a larger project to design and print new arts postcards for next year’s undergraduate application (see “Student Recruitment and Communication,” below). These postcards were mailed to the entire Office of the Arts mailing list of over 3,000 individuals and institutions on and off campus.

The site continues to attract attention and email to the Office of the Arts from around the world. Senior editorial assistant Lynn Heinemann fielded the numerous questions and comments, which included inquiries from potential applicants about campus visits and MIT arts opportunities, questions from outside artists about the availability of exhibition spaces and music practice rooms, and numerous other queries.

Arts Communication within MIT

Lynn Heinemann publicized arts events on MIT’s web-based Events Calendar and maintained the arts@mit website, updating calendar listings, linking to each week’s *Tech Talk* arts stories, creating hypertext mark-up language (HTML) documents for arts stories not published in *Tech Talk*, and creating new links. The electronic sign in Building 16 continues its announcements, written and programmed by Heinemann, of MIT arts events and activities. The “Arts Hotline” (617-253-ARTS) was discontinued and replaced with a recorded announcement directing callers to the arts@mit site, which contains detailed, comprehensive, and up-to-date information.

Thanks in part to the close relationship developed with Susan Curran of the MIT Home Page Team, the main MIT home page (<http://web.mit.edu/>), which receives an average

of 300,000 hits per day, featured approximately 100 arts-related spotlights, as well as numerous news spotlights on the arts. In addition, the Community page (<http://web.mit.edu/life/>), which has three spotlights, generally includes one that is arts-related.

The “Month-at-a-Glance” calendar (monthly listings of MIT’s arts events and activities) was published eight times during the school year, distributed around campus, and mailed monthly to 603 individuals at their request and to area hotels. On campus, 3,500 copies were available to be picked up at various news boxes, libraries, lobbies, and dormitories, as well as at Bates Linear Accelerator, Draper Laboratories, Haystack Observatory, Lincoln Lab, and Endicott House.

Other communication outlets included 15 individual banners depicting a variety of arts activities at MIT. The banners were installed five at a time in the plaza between Buildings E15 and E23 and were changed seasonally. The Arts-Announce email list remained another effective tool for communication, delivering announcements about MIT-related arts, free and discounted ticket offers, and information on special MIT arts events to interested recipients. In addition, Arts Communication continued to oversee ArtsNet, which consists of about 90 campus arts representatives.

Director of arts communication Mary Haller represented the arts as a member of the Communications Operations Group and Information Group. She also worked as part of an inaugural communications team to promote the many arts-related events surrounding the inauguration of Susan Hockfield as MIT’s 16th president.

Tech Talk Coverage

For the 16th year, Arts Communication provided arts-related articles, items, and images for *Tech Talk* (both print and online versions), including three arts-related front page stories and/or images. Mary Haller served as *Tech Talk* arts editor and Lynn Heinemann as primary arts writer. Other *Tech Talk* contributors included members of the News Office staff, members of the MIT arts community, and Jean Chemnick, a writing intern from Boston University’s School of Journalism. Arts Communication also provided major content for *Tech Talk*’s back page calendar listings, with arts prominently on display as Editor’s Choice items and in photo captions. The Arts News column featured coverage of off-campus arts created and/or performed by members of the MIT community and alumni. Many of these arts-related stories and items were spotlighted on the News Office website.

Student Recruitment and Communication

The arts postcard was redesigned for the 2005 undergraduate application to reflect the look and feel of the new arts@mit website. For the first time, the card was printed in four colors and was placed prominently inside the front cover of the application booklet.

In an attempt to attract more prospective students to the redesigned website and to limit the number of brochures that are mailed out to prospective students (many of whom may never apply), changes were made to the content of this year’s arts postcard. Formerly a mail-in postcard used for requesting arts brochures, this year the card directed prospective students to the arts@mit website, where they could find out

more about the arts at MIT and request an arts brochure through a new online form. Brochures (accompanied by an arts@mit postcard, flyer, and letter from associate provost for the arts Alan Brody) were mailed to 166 individuals who used the online request form. Because of rising postage costs, Arts Communication adopted the Admissions Office's policy of mailing out brochures only to addresses in the United States and Canada.

For the fourth year Mary Haller organized an arts reception for prospective students and their families during Campus Preview Weekend. The event took place in the lobby of the Zesiger Center and included performances by members of MIT's Festival Jazz Ensemble, who were periodically joined by tap dancing senior James Tolbert. The event gave accepted applicants for the Class of 2009 a chance to meet faculty and current students and obtain information on MIT arts programs and opportunities. Office of the Arts programs were also represented once again at the campus-wide Activities Midway at the start of the fall term.

Haller advised and assisted students in promoting various student-run programs and events, including "Silkscreens," the first Boston Asian American film festival, held at MIT; a high-profile, one-day summit entitled "Regarding Evil"; and a composition by alumna Christine Southwork performed at the Museum of Science, Boston, entitled *Zap! Music for Van de Graaff Generator, Robots, Instruments, and Voices*.

Special Media Attention

In addition to the student-run programs mentioned above, the following people and projects across the Institute received external media attention through publicity efforts initiated by Arts Communication:

- The public appearances at MIT of dancer/choreographer Elizabeth Streb, writer/director Angus Gibson, origami master Robert J. Lang, jazz artist Kenny Werner, author/filmmaker Ruth Ozeki, writer Paul Auster and clarinetist Don Byron, tap dance artist Dianne Walker, and film director Michel Gondry
- The 4th annual "Great Glass Pumpkin Patch" show and sale
- The awarding of the 2004 Kepes Prize to Professor Krzysztof Wodiczko
- Assistant professor J. Meejin Yoon's *White Noise/White Light* soundscape at the 2004 Summer Olympic Games in Athens, Greece, and its repeat appearance at MIT as a highlight of festivities surrounding the inauguration of Susan Hockfield as MIT president.



White Noise/White Light lights up May 2 as Yi Fan runs through the exhibit on Kresge Oval. The boy's father is a Sloan professor visiting from Beijing. Photo by Donna Coveney.

Mary Haller also worked closely with the New York public relations firm the Kreisberg Group to attract media attention for the selection of architect/engineer Santiago Calatrava as recipient of the 2005 Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts. Media attention included a story in the *Boston Globe* by its architecture critic Robert Campbell and items in the *Dallas Morning News*, *Boston Herald*, and *Financial Times*.

Other Media Attention

Associate professor Thomas DeFrantz made the “Best of the New: Ideas” list compiled by *Boston Globe Magazine* for “Moves Across the Water: Tap and Hip-Hop,” a long-distance (via videoconference) dance event at MIT in collaboration with Patrick Loo at the National University of Singapore in September 2004. His book, *Dancing Revelations: Alvin Ailey’s Embodiment of African American Culture*, also won critical praise and prizes, including the de la Torre Bueno Prize for outstanding English-language publication in dance.

Professor Tod Machover garnered extensive attention for projects in Minneapolis (*Music in the Garden*) and for his Boston Pops–commissioned composition *Jeux Deux*, which premiered on Tech Night 2005.

Senior lecturer Martin Marks’s project, “More Treasures from the American Film Archives,” won praise in major journals and publications.

“Silkscreens,” MIT’s first Asian American independent film festival generated attention and praise from the Boston-area press.

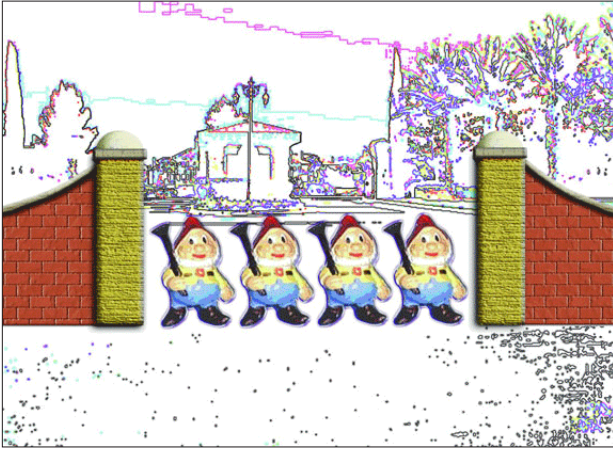
“Regarding Evil,” a transnational summit organized by Visual Arts Program graduate student Ross Cisneros and featuring artists, musicians, scholars and a satanic priest, caught the eye of publications ranging from local media to the *Village Voice*.

A Media Lab–sponsored fashion show titled “Seamless: Computational Couture” intrigued everyone from technology writers to fashion editors and even financial news publisher American Banker–Bond Buyer.

Kenan Sahin professor Evan Ziporyn and his ensemble Gamelan Galak Tika favorably caught the ear of critics for their performance in John Adams’s “In Your Ear” festival at the opening of Zankel Hall in New York City’s Carnegie Hall.

Exhibitions presented by the List Visual Arts Center garnered great praise. They included *Cerith Wyn Evans* and *Body Parts: A Self-Portrait by John Coplans*, which were named to the *Boston Phoenix*’s Best of 2004 list. The final show of the year, *Sturtevant: The Brutal Truth*, generated not only coverage of the exhibition per se but also discussion on the nature of originality and creativity.

Office of the Arts administrative assistant Magda Fernandez secured kudos from the *Boston Globe's* Cate McQuaid and Boston-based artist, curator, and critic Charles Giuliano for her installation titled *Home Sweet Gated Home* at the Allston Skirt Gallery.



Safe from you, 2003-2004.
Digital drawing by Magda Fernandez. Image courtesy of the artist..

Arts Faculty Off Campus

In addition, the following MIT arts faculty received media attention for their work off campus:

- Professor Evan Ziporyn, who received rave reviews for his score for the American Repertory Theater's *Oedipus*
- Lecturer Elena Ruehr, whose *String Quartet No. 4* was premiered by the Cypress String Quartet in San Jose, CA, and received a very positive review by the *Mercury News*
- Adjunct professor Alan Lightman, whose fourth novel, *The Reunion*, was released in paperback, generating praise for the work and coverage for the author's national tour to promote it

Personnel

As part of her Strategic Planning Document for FY2006, Mary Haller proposed a new administrative assistant II position for the Office of the Arts and spearheaded efforts to get it approved. Happily, the position was approved by the Office of the Provost, and Keith Hampton was selected and hired as the first person to serve in the position. Various front desk, financial, and office manager responsibilities that are currently in the job description of the senior editorial assistant (Lynn Heinemann) will be transferred to this new position, allowing Heinemann to devote her time and concentration more fully to the work of Arts Communication.

Haller continued working on a part-time schedule, primarily from her home.

Mary L. Haller
Director

More information about the Office of the Arts can be found online at <http://web.mit.edu/arts/>.