

Arts Communication

In the 17th year of the Office of the Arts, Arts Communication continued to promote and raise awareness of the arts at MIT, both within and outside of the Institute. Initiatives included the following:

- The arts@mit website
- Publication and distribution of print and electronic event calendars
- Assignment and writing of most arts stories and calendar listings for MIT's Tech Talk
- Applications of the arts@mit identity and development and distribution of arts@mit promotional materials
- Communications about the arts through MIT's Admissions Office and Alumni Association
- External media attention achieved through press releases and personal contact with print and electronic media writers and editors

Also, director of arts communication Mary Haller represented the arts as one of 21 members of MIT's Communications Operations Group and as one of 117 members of MIT's Information Group.

Information Gathering and Dissemination

Arts Communication continued to function as a central source of information on MIT arts events, collecting information from nearly 100 various programs, departments, groups, and clubs across campus and disseminating it within and outside of MIT. Information was gathered primarily through members of ArtsNet, a communication network maintained by Arts Communication and made up of student, staff, and faculty representatives from arts-related areas across campus. Information was then published and distributed as detailed in the sections to follow.

arts@mit Website

Billed as a "gateway to the events, people, and programs in the arts community at MIT," the arts@mit website continued to be a primary vehicle for communicating to our many audiences, including prospective students, members of the MIT community, and those outside of MIT. "Spotlight" sections featuring selected events, news, and announcements were updated every two to three days, and the site was continually improved and enhanced. The site continued to attract attention and email to the Office of the Arts from around the world. Senior editorial assistant Lynn Heinemann fielded numerous questions and comments posted to the site, ranging from inquiries from potential applicants about campus visits and MIT arts opportunities to questions from outside artists about the availability of exhibition spaces and music practice rooms.

MIT Website

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.

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 90 arts-related spotlights, as well as numerous news spotlights on the arts. In addition, the three daily spotlights on the Community page (<http://web.mit.edu/life/>) usually included at least one that was arts related.

Print Calendars

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 618 people at their request and to area hotels. On campus, 3,500 copies were available for pick up at various news boxes, libraries, lobbies, and dormitories, as well as at Bates Linear Accelerator, Draper Laboratory, Haystack Observatory, Lincoln Laboratory, and Endicott House.

Arts Communication also continued to produce and mail the "Media Arts Calendar," a monthly set of performance and exhibition listings, to Boston-area media for inclusion in their event listings. The letterhead for the Month-at-a-Glance calendar and Media Arts Calendar was redesigned to correspond with the new look and feel of the arts website.



Page 1 of the May Arts-at-a-Glance publication.

Email Announcements

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 interested recipients, remained another effective tool for communication. A new listserv, OA-Announce, was set up for announcements of events and deadlines for programs sponsored by the MIT Office of the Arts, including visiting artist events, deadlines for the Council for the Arts Grants Program, and announcements and deadlines related to Office of the Arts student programs.

Tech Talk

For the 17th year, Arts Communication provided the vast majority of arts-related articles, items, and images for *Tech Talk* (both the print and online versions), including two arts-related front-page stories and/or images. Mary Haller served as *Tech Talk* arts assignment

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 interns from Boston University's School of Journalism (Paul Crocetti, Kendra Gilbert, Lauren Maurand, Amanda Smyth, and Lola Weinblat). 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, the MIT home page, and on the websites of the Admissions Office and Alumni Association.

Work with MIT Admissions

The arts@mit postcard (promoting the arts@mit website) was again printed in four colors and placed prominently inside the front cover of the 2006 undergraduate application booklet.

For the fifth year, Mary Haller organized the Arts Fair for prospective students and their families during Campus Preview Weekend in April. The event, which featured representatives from and information on MIT's extracurricular and cocurricular arts programs and groups, gave accepted applicants for the Class of 2010 a chance to meet faculty and current students and obtain information on MIT arts programs and opportunities. The Arts Fair once again took place in the lobby of the Zesiger Center, and it included performances by members of MIT's Festival Jazz Ensemble, ongoing airings of the arts@mit video, a drawing for prospective students to win a copy of *NightWork* (the "hack" book), refreshments, and arts giveaways. Promotional postcards and Infinite Corridor slides were produced to advertise the event in advance. The visual appeal of the event space was enhanced this year through new arts@mit signage, balloon arrangements, and arts banners hung in the windows and from the ceiling of the Zesiger Center lobby.

arts@mit DVDs, brochures, and fact sheets were mailed, with a cover letter from associate provost for the arts Alan Brody, to guidance counselors at the Admissions Office's top 400 "feeder" high schools. In addition, DVDs and postcards promoting the website were given to the Admissions Office for use in its recruitment efforts.



Poster for the Campus Preview Weekend Arts Fair.



Infinite Corridor slide advertising the Campus Preview Weekend Arts Fair.

Arts brochures (accompanied by an arts@mit postcard, flyer, and letter from Alan Brody) were mailed to 86 of 108 individuals who used the online request form. Because of rising postage costs, Arts Communication continued to follow the Admissions Office's policy of mailing out brochures only to addresses in the United States and Canada. This year, the online request form was modified so that requests from outside the US could be answered with a personalized email.

Haller facilitated meetings between Ben Jones of the Admissions Office and Clarise Snyder and Fred Harris of the Music Section with the goal of improving information about music opportunities on the Admissions Office website and in the office's publications, as well as clarifying information about tape submissions in the MIT undergraduate application. As a result of these meetings, a guest blog by Snyder was posted on the popular MyMIT portal on the Admissions website, the Admissions Office web text was revised, and tape submission procedures and information were both revised for the undergraduate application.

Arts-related stories from *Tech Talk* and other arts content continued to be featured on the Admissions Office's website and MyMIT portal. Arts mentions and images (including photos originally commissioned for the arts@mit brochure) were included throughout the Admissions Office's stunning new viewbook, which is sent out to high school juniors and seniors who have expressed interest in MIT.

Work with MIT Orientation Programs

At the invitation of Monica Lewis, a coordinator for the Freshman Arts Program fall preorientation program, Haller put together an agenda for an hour-long "tea time" session and invited selected members of MIT's arts community to talk about their programs and offerings. Free-lance writer Jim Smith, who was researching a story for *Technology Review* about the arts at MIT, also attended. At the event, Haller presented a demo of the arts@mit website. During fall orientation, Office of the Arts programs were represented at the Health, Wellness, and Community Fair; the Activities Midway; and Family Weekend.

Work with MIT Alumni Association

Haller hired MIT writer Amy MacMillan to rewrite an existing story about the arts at MIT for the Alumni Association's website. The story was posted online in June 2006 and can be found at <http://alum.mit.edu/ne/noteworthy/news-features/arts.html>.

Arts-related stories, including those from *Tech Talk*, continued to be featured on the Alumni Association's website. Haller worked to develop new contacts in the Alumni Association and to pitch to them more arts-related stories involving alumni for publication as *Tech Talk* rarely publishes alumni stories now.

Other Internal Promotional Efforts

Fifteen individual banners, depicting a variety of arts activities at MIT and installed five at a time in the plaza between Buildings E15 and E23, were changed seasonally.

Heinemann continued to write announcements of MIT arts events and activities for the electronic sign in the lobby of Building 16.

Initial research was done and estimates provided to replace the current arts@mit bulletin board outside the Office of the Arts (E15-205) with a new, magnetic board. The design of the new board will echo the look and feel of the arts@mit website and other materials.

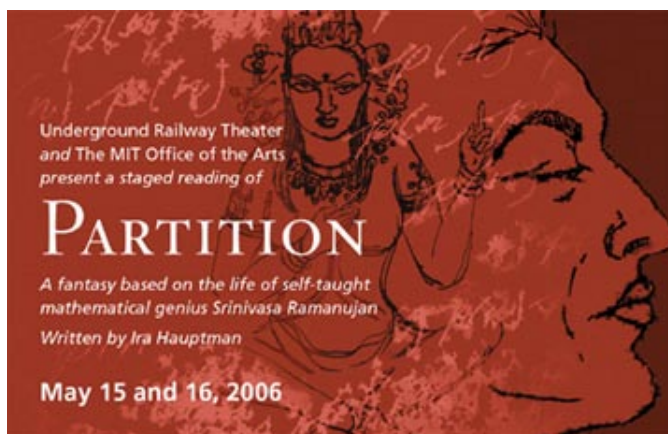
External Media Relations

MIT arts events, programs, and people continued to receive attention in the local and national media, despite a general decline in serious coverage of arts news and events and the loss of some long-time *Boston Globe* arts writers.

Heinemann continued to act as a “clipping service” for MIT arts-related stories and items that appear in the external media, finding and emailing these items on an almost daily basis to the associate provost for the arts, members of the Office of the Arts, and other members of the MIT community (including the News Office) as appropriate.

Highlight: Catalyst Collaborative at MIT

Haller and Heinemann made special efforts to work with members of the Underground Railway Theater on publicity efforts for the Catalyst Collaborative at MIT (CC@MIT), a cooperative venture by MIT and the theater designed to introduce complex, thought-provoking scientific and technological subjects to a diverse nonspecialist audience. Arts Communication generated press for well-received staged readings and discussions of two plays: *Partition* and *Einstein's Dreams*. The CC@MIT program and this year's two events (both of which drew large, appreciative audiences) received numerous listings and were the focus of Editor's Picks and stories appearing in local and regional newspapers, including the *Boston Globe* and the *Nashua Telegraph*.



Publicity post card announcing staged reading of *Partition*.

Press Releases

In addition to our Media Arts Calendar mailings, Arts Communication wrote and distributed 14 press releases regarding selected arts announcements and events, garnering media attention. Examples include the following:

- MIT visits/residencies by graffiti artists TATS CRU; Jewlia Eisenberg, and Charming Hostess; conceptual artist Ann Lislegaard; and film director Katia Lund

- The fifth annual Great Glass Pumpkin Patch show and sale
- Marcus Thompson's concert series celebrating Mozart's 250th birthday
- The "Bayou Bash" benefit concert featuring top New Orleans musicians
- The awarding of the Kepes Prize to Professor Ellen Harris by the Council for the Arts
- Collage New Music's concert honoring the late Edward Cohen
- CC@MIT's staged readings of *Einstein's Dreams*
- Broadway star Darius de Haas's performance/talk at MIT
- The Museum Loan Network's special program to aid hurricane-affected museums on the Gulf Coast
- CC@MIT's readings of *Partition*
- MIT senior Matthew Roitstein's acceptance into the international Nielsen Flute Competition in Odense, Denmark

Also, individualized press releases about 35 MIT students who received arts awards at end-of-the-term ceremonies were emailed to 45 hometown newspapers. In addition, Heinemann provided free, customized press labels to numerous MIT art makers and presenters, allowing them to mail their own press releases for specific events.

Other Media Attention

Other people, programs, and projects receiving media attention, on their own or with assistance from Arts Communication (or both), included:

- Jazz at MIT, which was featured in an article for *Jazziz* magazine about jazz on four American college campuses (Columbia, Harvard, Washington University, and MIT).
- MIT's arts and culture opportunities and offerings, which were featured in a story for the WBUR website on how MIT and other area schools promote the arts on campus.
- "When Science Meets Art," a series involving a musical hybrid of Western and traditional Balinese music performed by Gamelan Galak Tika, robot performers, and computers. The series, presented at the Museum of Science, featured premieres by Professor Evan Ziporyn and alumna Christine Southworth. The series also included the second Seamless fashion show, produced by Christine Liu and Nicholas Knouf of the Media Lab.
- The Musical Theatre Guild's staging of its original musical version of *Star Wars Trilogy: Musical Edition*.
- Selection of MIT Resonance as one of the 20 college ensembles included on *Varsity Vocals's Best of College A Cappella 2006* compilation CD.
- *Amorous Intent*, a curated exhibition on love at MIT at the Wiesner Student Art Gallery.

- Several exhibitions presented by the List Visual Arts Center that garnered praise in the press. Christian Jankowski: *Everything Fell Together* was included on several of the year's "best of" lists.
- *The American War*, an exhibition presented concurrently at MIT's Center for Advanced Visual Studies and White Columns in New York City that garnered high praise from art critics.
- *A Safe Bed is a Human Right*, an artistic response to the burning of a Boston homeless man staged by Student Art Association coordinator Clay Ward and Office of the Arts staffer Magda Fernandez.
- MIT poet and Center for Advanced Visual Studies senior fellow Elizabeth Goldring, who developed a "Seeing Machine" for the blind and visually challenged.

Arts Faculty Off Campus

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

- Associate professor Thomas DeFrantz, who was quoted as an expert on hip-hop and the phenomenon of 50 Cent's fame.
- Institute Professor John Harbison, for works including *Mottetti di Montale* (which earned critical praise and a Grammy nomination) and the world premiere of *Abu Ghraib*, performed by senior lecturer David Deveau on piano and cellist Rhonda Rider at the Rockport Chamber Music Festival. Deveau also performed in a Bank of America Celebrity Series concert featuring a host of renowned musicians, including violist and professor Marcus Thompson, and a new piece (*Revoicing Echoes*) by Professor Peter Child.
- Professor of media arts and sciences Tod Machover, who presented the world premiere of *Another Life* (for nine players and live electronics) with Collage New Music and the Boston premiere of *But Not Simpler* (an acoustic work) for the Ying Quartet.
- Krzysztof Wodiczko, professor of visual arts in the Department of Architecture, who was one of the featured artists in the first episode of the PBS series *Art in the Twenty-first Century*.
- Senior lecturer Martin Marks, who continued to earn kudos as curator of *More Treasures from American Film Archives: 50 Films, 1894–1931*, a box set showcasing rare films and trailers recorded during the first four decades of American filmmaking.

Personnel

Thanks to the introduction of a new administrative assistant II position in the Office of the Arts and the hiring of Keith Hampton in that position, Lynn Heinemann was able to devote her time and energies more fully to the work of Arts Communication.

Mary L. Haller
Director

More information about Arts Communication can be found at <http://web.mit.edu/arts/about/office/artscomm/>.