

Council for the Arts

Fiscal year 2007 was a time of transition for the arts at MIT, as Philip Khoury settled in as associate provost, and the Office of the Arts experienced staffing changes (the departures of Glenn Billingsley and Mary Haller and the change of Lori Gross's title to director of arts initiatives and advisor to the associate provost). The Council for the Arts at MIT (CAMIT) had a rather quiet year and actually fell behind in fundraising for the first time since 1995. There was no Council trip this year, nor was the Council newsletter published. There were fewer exhibitions at the Wiesner Student Art Gallery, primarily as a result of security and equipment issues. However, regular Council programs continued at their usual pace, with the Grants, Executive, Membership, Schnitzer Prize, Student Art Awards, McDermott Award, and Kepes Prize committees meeting the normal number of times. Collaboration with the Boston Modern Orchestra Project and the Graduate Student Office was an exciting new addition to the Council portfolio.

The great number of Council members who passed away in FY2006 was a stark reminder that attracting younger members should be one of the organization's highest priorities.

Council Standing Committees

Annual Meeting Committee (Ann Allen, chair). The 34th annual meeting began on the morning of October 26, with the official dedication of Mark DeSuvero's *Aesop's Fables II* (which was installed during last year's annual meeting). Associate provost Philip Khoury presided.

Back at the Wiesner Building, attendees were treated to a tour of the exhibition *Sensorium Part 1*, led by List Visual Arts Center curator Bill Arning and director Jane Farver.

Refreshed by a buffet lunch served in the atrium of the Wiesner Building, the group was greeted by Professor Tod Machover with an introduction to a tour of the Media Laboratory, followed by words from visual artist and Professor Chris Csikszentmihályi. With military precision, Media Lab staffers split the group into manageable numbers and took them through the building to many of the individual labs that make up the Media Lab proper. This was the first CAMIT tour of the Media Lab in at least 20 years, and the Council members enjoyed it immensely.

After a break, cocktails and dinner were served in both atria of the Wiesner Building. Dinner was originally scheduled to take place at the Broad Institute, but the location had to be switched Thursday morning on short notice because of a power outage at Broad.

The Council mounted a tribute to Gyorgy Kepes to honor the 100th anniversary of his birth. Kay Stratton, his children Julie Kepes Stone and Imre Kepes, and Otto Piene shared their personal reminiscences of Kepes, interspersed with quotes from Kepes himself in the form of excerpts from a videotape of a 1983 interview. After the tribute, Larissa Harris, associate director of the Center for Advanced Visual Studies, gave the assemblage an update on current happenings at the center.

Finally, Patrick Wang '98, chair of the Kepes Prize Committee and vice chair of the Council for the Arts at MIT, presented the 2006 Gyorgy Kepes Fellowship Prize to Kenan Sahin distinguished professor of music Evan Ziporyn, who offered an eloquent and touching acceptance speech.

The next morning's business meeting began at 9 am in Killian Hall with remarks from MIT President Susan Hockfield, followed by associate provost Philip Khoury. Both Hockfield and Khoury spoke about the proposed Laboratory for the Performing Arts.

Steve Memishian '70 then took the floor with his annual report on fundraising, grants, and other highlights of the year. Memishian stepped down as chair at this time, and Brit d'Arbeloff officially assumed the chairmanship. In a gesture of thanks for Memishian's service, the MIT a cappella group the Chorallaries performed songs about fast cars and undersea life in honor of his hobbies: Memishian collects scrimshaw and classic hot rods.

After a brief refreshment break, members of the MIT arts community gave presentations.

John Durant, director of the MIT Museum, spoke of developments at the museum, including the renovation and occupancy of the museum's ground-floor site, which has Massachusetts Avenue frontage; the Cambridge Science Festival; and the Catalyist Collaborative at MIT.

He was followed by Lori Gross, who gave an overview of the Museum Loan Network, the program she had directed since 1996.

Gross was followed by director of wind ensembles and lecturer Frederick Harris, who told those assembled how much his students enjoy the Council-sponsored free ticket programs.

Finally, Clay Ward '97, coordinator of the Student Art Association (SAA), gave an overview of current goings-on at the SAA and spoke of the potential of its individual studios to thrive with proper funding.

The Council went off to the MIT Museum for lunch, where members were joined by playwright Suzan-Lori Parks, winner of the 2006 Eugene McDermott Award. McDermott Award Committee chair Dorothea Endicott presented the award to Parks, who delighted and charmed Council members and guests with her acceptance remarks. The lunch marked the conclusion of the annual meeting.

Arts Scholars Committee (Brit d'Arbeloff, chair). D'Arbeloff stepped down as committee chair this year and became chair of the Council. Marjory Jacobson will succeed her. The Arts Scholars Committee meets once a year to review applicants to the program. The committee consists of members of the Council and MIT faculty. This year Council member Ann Allen offered a tour of the Museum of Fine Arts for the group at one of the committee's events.

Communications Committee (Pepi Weis, chair). The newsletter *Council Currents* was not published in fiscal year 2007.

Development Committee (Anne Street, chair). A total of \$322,590 was raised from 66 Council members (an average gift of \$4,887); \$17,330 came from nonmember donors. The grand total raised for FY2007 was \$339,920.

Grants Program Committee (Martin N. Rosen '62, chair). A total of \$110,420 in the form of 48 grants and 42 Director's grants was awarded to students, staff, and faculty. Highlights included support for a retrospective exhibition of MIT photojournalist Donna Coveney's work; a project to create the "world's largest drawing," which will be visible only through satellite mapping; and a new dance floor for the immensely popular student organization Dance Troupe.

Membership Committee (Bernard G. Palitz '47, chair). Council membership stands at 101, with five ex officio members and 96 regular members. This year three longtime members passed away: Marianne Teuber, Kitty Carlisle Hart, and Robert Greenes. Former member Ray Nasher also died this year.

The following new members have joined the Council since our last Report to the President: Sunny Dupree, Mary Jane Bezark, Barbara Barry '00, and Donna Hieken. Alex Dreyfoos, Patrick Wang, and Jan Fontein resigned.

This year marked the first time a recent graduate (Barry) was sponsored for membership in the Council. Henry Lichstein '65 and Janine Lichstein have pledged to contribute \$3,500 for the first three years of Barry's CAMIT service, as she is not in the position financially to do so herself. Perhaps this will become a regular practice for attracting new, younger members to Council service.

Affiliated Committees

List Visual Arts Center Advisory Board (Jennifer Frutchy, chair). The List Visual Arts Center (LVAC) continues to provide the MIT community and the entire Boston area with the highest caliber contemporary art exhibitions. The LVAC staff also oversee the Percent-for-Art Program, in which a percentage of the budget for any new building or renovation on campus is put toward the purchase or commission of a work of art. The Council allocates \$30,000 annually to the List Visual Arts Center, to be expended at the discretion of LVAC's director.

MIT Museum Advisory Board (David Ellis, chair). In April 2007, the MIT Museum spearheaded the first Cambridge-wide science festival in collaboration with Harvard University and some of the area biotech firms. By all reports it was a splendid success. The Council allocates \$30,000 annually to the MIT Museum, to be used (if possible) to support the operation of the Compton Gallery and the Friday After Thanksgiving Chain Reaction event. The Council also provided support for several other arts-related activities, from the Cambridge Science Festival through the Grants Program.

Special Programs

At the Executive Committee meeting in June, the location for the next Council excursion was chosen: Prague. The trip will take place in September 2008. Before this event, a smaller-scale trip will be offered, somewhere in the United States.

This year the Council for the Arts received a grant from the Graduate Student Life Grants program to launch a new series of events directed at the MIT graduate student community. Three times over the course of the 2006–2007 academic year, MIT graduate students, their spouses or guests, and local MIT alumni were invited to attend a special concert evening at the Club Café in Boston, presented with the Boston Modern Orchestra Project. Although two of the events took place on bitterly cold evenings, each proved very successful, attracting an average of 40 attendees. The Council will apply for funding for a similar program for the 2007–2008 academic year. It is hoped that audience members at these events can be cultivated as future Council members.

The Council provides an annual allocation of \$7,500 to the Artists Behind the Desk Program, which organizes concerts, readings, performances, and a visual arts exhibition by staff members.

The Council allocates \$20,000 to Student and Artist-in-Residence Programs, \$12,500 to Arts Communication, and \$20,000 to the Student Art Association. In 2007, CAMIT allocated \$15,000 to the Center for Advanced Visual Studies for general operating support and awarded \$30,000 for FY2008 and FY2009 to the Catalyst Collaborative at MIT.



MIT graduate students and their guests enjoy a Boston Modern Orchestra Project concert at Club Café. Photos by Justin Knight.



Since 1980, the Council has underwritten MIT's enrollment in the University Membership Program offered by Boston's Museum of Fine Arts (MFA). This program provides free admission and discount benefits to all MIT undergraduate and graduate students, as well as 10 day passes for use by MIT faculty and staff.

The Council for the Arts also sponsors a student membership program with the Photographic Resource Center (PRC) at Boston University. The PRC provides a range of programs, including exhibitions by national and international photographers and educational programs. MIT undergraduates and graduate students have free unlimited access to the PRC galleries and library and receive member discounts on admission to lectures, workshops, and other special events. They can also enter their work into the juried members' exhibition.

The Council underwrites MIT's institutional membership at the Harvard Art Museums, allowing all MIT graduate and undergraduate students free admission to the Fogg, Busch-Reisinger, and Sackler museums as well as to the Agnes Mongan Center for the Study of Prints, Drawings, and Photographs.

The free-ticket program with the Boston Symphony Orchestra continued this year. MIT students can obtain, with their student ID, free admittance to an average of 24 concerts per year. The Council also provided 50 free tickets for MIT students to three of the four concerts of the Boston Chamber Music Society's season. Similar arrangements provide tickets to the Boston Modern Orchestra Project's season and to the concerts presented by the vocal ensemble Boston Secession.

The successful Student Performing Arts Excursions Series continued, offering free tickets to MIT students for many performing arts events, including *Miss Witherspoon* at the Lyric Stage, *Surviving the Nian* presented by the Theater Offensive at the Boston Center for the Arts, the Aardvark Jazz Orchestra's presentation of *Jazz in Film: Ellington and Beyond* at the MFA, and the Bebe Miller dance troupe and the Ying Quartet, both at the new Boston Institute of Contemporary Art. More than 500 MIT students took advantage of this program.

The Gyorgy Kepes Fellowship Prize was presented this year at the annual meeting dinner to Evan Ziporyn. Since Patrick Wang has resigned from the Council, the Kepes Prize Committee will need to find a new chairman for this upcoming year.

The Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts was presented to playwright-novelist Suzan-Lori Parks at the annual meeting luncheon on October 27, 2006. Parks was back on campus from February 19–22, 2007, to complete her residency. She gave a public talk in the form of an interview, with MIT Theater faculty member Jay Scheib as the interviewer. The event took place in the Broad Institute Auditorium and was followed by an intimate dinner for Council members, faculty, staff, and Parks. Prior to the Parks event, Council members toured the Donna Coveney exhibition at the Compton Gallery. The next morning they gathered in the Bush Room for a wonderful series of presentations by the MIT Libraries. Committee chair Dorothea Endicott stepped down; Peter Wender '71 has agreed to serve as the new McDermott Award chair.

At the Institute Awards Convocation on May 9, provost Rafael Reif presented the Laya and Jerome B. Wiesner Student Art Awards to Diana Nee '07 (architecture) for architectural design, Christine Yu '07 (chemical engineering) for music, and Hope Ginsburg G (architecture) for visual arts. The Louis Sudler Prize was presented by the provost to Lori Huberman '07 (biology) for her accomplishments in music. Each award winner receives \$1,250. Wiesner Student Art Awards winners are chosen by a committee made up of Boston-area Council members and chaired by Claude Brenner '47.

The first-prize winner of the Harold and Arlene Schnitzer Prize was Visual Arts Program graduate student Hope Ginsburg. Second prize was a tie, with honors going to Katherine James and Neri Oxman, both architecture graduate students. One honorable mention went to architecture graduate student Stephanie Hsu for photography. The prizes were larger this year: first prize was \$3,500, second prize was \$2,000, and the honorable mention was \$1,000. Schnitzer Prize winners are chosen by a committee made up of Council members, former Schnitzer winners, faculty, and staff, led by Council member Peter Athens '52.

The Council also serves as the administrator of the Wiesner Student Art Gallery in the Stratton Student Center. The fall season in the gallery opened with a wonderfully conceived and executed exhibition of models, drawings, and video from the undergraduate students in the School of Architecture and Planning. Designed and installed by Professor Jan Wampler and technical instructor Chris Dewart, with student assistants, this show was one of the best-designed and most professional-looking exhibitions to have graced the Wiesner Gallery.



Christine Yu '07, winner of a 2007 Laya and Jerome B. Wiesner Student Art Award, and Lori Huberman '07, winner of the 2007 Louis Sudler Prize. Photo by Thomas Maxisch.

Other exhibitions appearing in the gallery this year include *Composing a Life* from the Experimental Study Group; *Amorous Intent*, the second annual Valentine's Day show; the Origami exhibition; and the Schnitzer Prize exhibition. To improve the gallery, the old, cumbersome, display cases were donated to the Campus Activities Complex, and a new, built-in wall case was built by Dewart. Two free-standing cases for the display of 3D work were purchased.



Winners of the 2007 Harold and Arlene Schnitzer Prize (from left): Katherine James, Neri Oxman, Stephanie Hsu, and Hope Ginsburg. Photo by Shaunalynn Duffy.

Wampler and two of his students proposed and have undertaken a study of the gallery space for the purposes of a redesign that will better serve the MIT student population in the future. The space currently cannot display video art securely, and the artwork has to be locked into cases.

Susan Cohen, director of the Council, attended the Grantmakers in the Arts conference in Boston in November, a Council for the Advancement and Support of Education conference in New York City in February, and the annual convention of the Americans for the Arts in Las Vegas from May 31 through June 3. Cohen also arranged a farewell party for Mary Haller in March 2007 at the Endicott World Music Center in Building N52. Lamine Touré, Rambax MIT, and Evan Ziporyn offered brief performances, and Ellen Harris, Alan Brody, Barrie Gleason, Evan Ziporyn, and Lynn Heinemann gave speeches. Philip Khoury was the host.

Susan Cohen
Director

More information about the Council for the Arts can be found at <http://web.mit.edu/arts/about/office/council/>.