

Arts Initiatives

In fiscal year 2008, the Office of the Arts' Arts Initiatives (in collaboration with the communication subcommittee, a committee composed of faculty and staff throughout the Institute) continued to maintain and increase awareness of the arts at MIT both within and outside the Institute by 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. The following innovations were completed:

- Redesign of the online arts calendar, which is now directly linked to the MIT Events Calendar. It is now a searchable entity with changing spotlights highlighting performances, lectures, and exhibitions.
- Distribution of a new two-sided color arts poster that highlights more than 80 student and faculty-led groups and curricular programs on campus along with their websites.
- Initiation of ARTalk, a series of arts blogs written by students and hosted on the Admissions Office website and linked from the arts site.
- Launch of a text messaging service to provide up-to-date times and locations of arts events occurring throughout the remainder of the day.
- Finalization of the mission statement for the arts at MIT, which reads as follows: "The arts at MIT are rooted in risk-taking and problem-solving, connecting creativity across boundaries, and shaping a lifetime of exploration and discovery. The languages and processes of the arts, the mind and hand, mens et manus, are essential to confronting the challenges of the 21st century to build a better society."

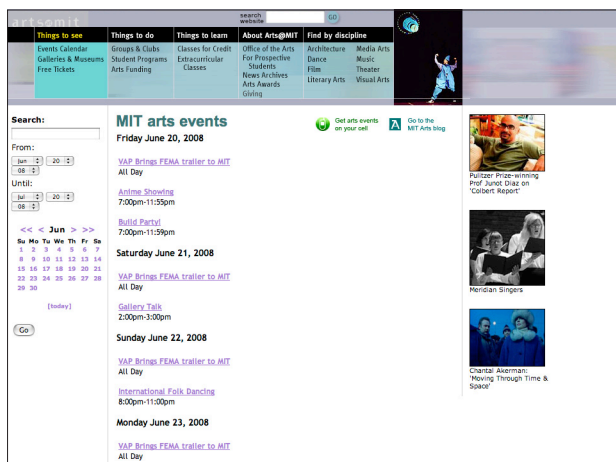
Information Gathering and Dissemination

Arts Communication continued to function as a central source of information on MIT arts events, collecting information from nearly 100 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 Initiatives 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 that follow.

MIT Arts on the Web

A new version of the online arts calendar was launched at artscal.mit.edu. Now searchable by date or discipline, the calendar was redesigned to better meet the needs of the MIT community, which are constantly evolving in this digital age of mass communication. Spotlights on the calendar are updated each week to highlight performances, lectures, and exhibitions.

Links from artscal.mit.edu connect visitors to information on the new text messaging service and to an ARTalk blog available through the MIT Admissions Office website. The blog focuses on the active arts scene at MIT, with students (as well as faculty and staff) discussing exhibitions or concerts they have attended, plays they have acted in, or any other art-related activities or ideas. Blog titles have ranged from “Art Keeps Me Sane at MIT” to “Mens et Manus: Building a Camera at the Hobby Shop.”



Online arts calendar.

The arts@mit home page, billed as a “gateway to the events, people, and programs in the arts community at MIT,” continues to be a primary vehicle for communicating to our many audiences, including prospective students, members of the MIT community, and those outside MIT. “Spotlight” sections featuring selected events, news, and announcements are updated every two to three days, and the site is continually improved and enhanced. The site attracts attention and emails to the Office of the Arts from around the world. Senior editorial assistant Lynn Heinemann fields numerous questions and comments posted to the site, ranging from inquiries about past artists-in-residence to access to music practice rooms to the process of submitting a portfolio with an application for admittance.

Heinemann publicized arts events on the new web-based events calendar (artscal.mit.edu) 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 with Susan Curran of the MIT Home Page Team, the main MIT home page (<http://web.mit.edu/>), which receives an average of two million hits per day, featured approximately 80 arts-related spotlights as well as numerous news headlines on the arts. In addition, the three daily spotlights on the community page (<http://web.mit.edu/life/>) usually included at least one item related to the arts.

Print Arts 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 approximately 600 individuals at their request and to area hotels. On campus, 3,800 copies were available for pickup at various news boxes, libraries, lobbies, and dormitories, as well as the Bates Linear Accelerator Center, 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.

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 nearly 600 subscribers, remained another effective tool for communication.

Internal Promotional Efforts

The new Arts at MIT poster was distributed throughout MIT, to Council for the Arts at MIT members, and handed out at the Academic Midway, Office of Undergraduate Education freshman seminars, and at the spring Campus Preview Weekend.

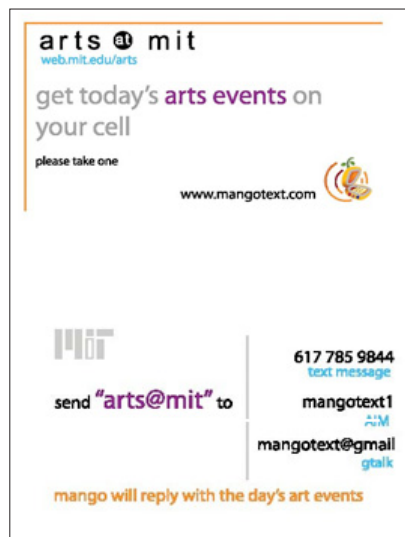


Arts at MIT poster.

A text messaging service designed by three MIT graduate students, MANGO text, was launched this year. Cell phone users can text “arts@mit” to 617-785-9844 and receive a message providing times and locations of the arts events occurring throughout the remainder of the day. The service is free, but individual carriers may charge fees for text messaging.

Work with MIT Admissions

For the seventh year, the Office of the Arts organized an arts presence for prospective students and their families during Campus Preview Weekend in April. The Arts Fair, which featured representatives from and information on MIT’s extracurricular and cocurricular arts programs and groups, gave accepted applicants for the Class of 2012 a chance to meet faculty and current students and obtain information on MIT arts programs and opportunities. The arts tables were among the academic tables in the Johnson Athletic Center, while other arts activities took place in the adjacent Zesiger Center, including live music performed by members of MIT’s Festival Jazz Ensemble, a T-shirt silk-screening activity, and a drawing for prospective students to win copies of Junot Díaz’s Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, and *Bringing Down the House*, the story of MIT students who took on the gaming tables of Las Vegas. The visual appeal of the event space was enhanced through arts@mit signage and arts banners prominently displayed in the Zesiger Center. In addition, Arts Initiatives



Postcard announcing new MANGO text messaging service.

provided a panel of MIT faculty and staff for Family Weekend and greeted students at freshman orientation.

Arts brochures (accompanied by an arts@mit postcard, flier, text messaging card, and letter from the Office of the Arts) were mailed to 38 individuals who used the online request form.

Work with MIT Alumni Association

Arts-related stories, including those from *Tech Talk*, continued to be featured on the Alumni Association's website. Heinemann forwarded news clips and emails from alumni to relevant personnel at *Technology Review* and the Alumni Office.

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 longtime local 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, members of the Office of the Arts, and other members of the MIT community (including the News Office) as appropriate.

Work with the Underground Railway Theater on publicity efforts for the Catalyst Collaborative at MIT (CC@MIT) resulted in large, enthusiastic audiences at CC@MIT performances and readings. CC@MIT is 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 *The Water Engine* and a full production of *QED*. The CC@MIT program and this year's events received numerous listings and were the focus of numerous Editor's Picks and stories in local and regional newspapers.

Press Releases

In addition to monthly Media Arts Calendar mailings, Arts Communication wrote and distributed 26 press releases regarding selected arts announcements and events, as follows:

- Grammy Award-winning musician Don Byron to be Martin Luther King Jr. visiting professor at MIT
- Herb Pomeroy, founder of MIT Festival Jazz Ensemble, dies
- MIT presents 7th Annual "Great Glass Pumpkin Patch" (October 5–6) and 10th Annual Page Hazlegrove Lecture in Glass Art (October 11)
- "Eye on the Future": MIT Symphony Orchestra welcomes Adam Boyles
- Drag-king troupe Nappy Grooves to present lecture-demonstration at MIT
- Brazilian artist Ana Maria Tavares to visit MIT

- Zehetmair String Quartet to perform at MIT
- CC@MIT presents staged reading of *The Water Engine*
- Pianist Ivan Illic presents US premiere of MIT assistant professor Keeril Makan's *Afterglow*
- MIT Symphony Orchestra performs with guest bassoonist John Miller, MIT class of 1964
- Open auditions held for MIT Symphony Orchestra
- Violist Marcus Thompson joins top string quartets in MIT's celebration of Mozart's 250th birthday
- Alumnus Carlos Prieto returns to MIT
- Thierry Nlandu, founder and member of artist-collective Le Groupe Amos, to visit MIT
- Violist Marcus Thompson to perform at MIT
- South African writer, publisher, musician, and DJ Ntone Edjabe to visit MIT
- Boston Symphony Orchestra to premiere John Harbison commission
- CC@MIT presents preview performance of *QED*, a play written by Peter Parnell
- "The Mathematics in Music—A Concert-Conversation with Elaine Chew" held at MIT
- MIT to hold Edward Cohen Memorial Concert
- MIT Wind Ensemble releases world premiere recordings of three maverick performer-composers on Albany Records
- Concerto Competition winner Jennifer Lai '11 performs with MIT Symphony Orchestra
- Herb Pomeroy Memorial Concert to celebrate MIT's "father of jazz"
- MIT brings Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) trailer project to campus
- MIT alumna Helen McCreery to make screen debut in the film *Radio Cape Cod*
- Daniel Goodman's Memorial Day piano concert at MIT to feature "Babar the Elephant"

Also, individual press releases were emailed to 43 hometown newspapers for those students who received arts awards at end-of-the-term ceremonies. In addition, Arts Communication 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 arts-related people, programs, and projects that received media attention this year include:

- The MIT Museum's makeover received praise, even being named a boston.com "Best of the New Diversions."
- *Live Action Anime 2007: Madness in Mokuba*, a collaboration between MIT's Dance Theater Ensemble and associate professor Ian Condry, received much local coverage, including extensive feature articles in the *Weekly Dig* and the *Cambridge Chronicle*.
- *Bars of Color within Squares (MIT)*, the new floor mural by Sol LeWitt installed in Building 6C was called a "secret garden at MIT" by the *Boston Globe's* Robert Campbell. "The mural and the building lock together in a perfect marriage," he wrote. Later, in his annual round-up, Campbell named the mural his "favorite small gem of the year."
- In other year's-end accolades, the *Globe's* Jeremy Eichler included Professor John Harbison's appointment as acting artistic director of Emmanuel Music, the Zehetmair Quartet's MIT concert, and MIT alumnus Alan Pierson's Alarm Will Sound concert at the Gardner Museum in his list of the year's best.
- Alumna Anna Wexler '07 was named one of three filmmakers in residence at WGBH.
- The List Visual Arts Center's Cameron Jamie survey was named one of 2007's top exhibitions by the *Boston Phoenix*.
- Joe Zane won praise for his Allston Skirt Gallery show *Joe* (in which he collaborated with Joe Gibbons) and was named one of four finalists for the Foster Prize, the Boston Institute of Contemporary Art's biennial award. The winner will be named in January 2009.
- Holographic pioneer and former Center for Advanced Visual Studies (CAVS) fellow Harriet Casdin-Silver was featured in a January *Boston Globe* article chronicling her loss of her Fort Point Channel studio. In March, the *Globe* covered her death with a lengthy obituary and appreciation.
- Major coverage was given to the MIT preview screening of *Jumper*, with appearances by director Doug Liman and star Hayden Christensen.
- The Museum of Science's "Seamless: Computational Couture" fashion show, coproduced by MIT students Christine Liu and Amanda Parkes, was covered by both print and television journalists.
- The CAVS Giant Art Party rated a major feature in the *Boston Globe* with the headline "For artists at MIT, perfecting wacky ideas can be popular science."
- MIT alumni Alex Rigopoulos (SB '92, SM '94) and Evan Egozy (SB '95, MNG '95) were named to *Time* magazine's 2008 top 100 artists and entertainers list for their creation of the video games Guitar Hero and Rock Band.

Arts Faculty Off Campus

Numerous MIT arts faculty members received media attention for their work off campus, as follows:

- Associate professor Junot Díaz earned nationwide praise for his latest novel, which won several of literature's weightiest awards, including the National Book Critics Circle Award and the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction.
- Associate professor Jay Scheib won accolades as "one of contemporary theater's brightest young visionaries" (*Harp Magazine*, August 2007). His *Untitled Mars* played first at the MIT Museum and later at PS 22 in New York City. Coverage of Scheib's endeavors included a major feature in *American Theatre Magazine*. His participation in New York's Under the Radar festival with *This Place Is a Desert* (also developed at MIT) prompted Helen Shaw of the *New York Sun* to call the piece "a jaw-dropping doozy" and to call Scheib "an already major talent coming triumphantly into his own."
- Lecturer Martin Marks' National Film Preservation Foundation project "Treasures III: Social Issues in American Film" was included on the *New York Times* list of the year's "most ambitious and interesting projects" and was named one of the year's top DVD boxed sets of 2007 by the *New Yorker*.
- Lecturer Laura Harrington is making a name for herself for book and lyrics of musicals that have been staged in the past year. Her *Crossing Brooklyn* (music by Jenny Giering) "is probably the most heartbreaking and deeply felt musical that will be seen in New York during 2007–2008," wrote Andy Propst for *Theater Mania*. In June she received an Ed Kleban Award as America's most promising musical theater lyricist, tying with Pulitzer Prize–winning dramatist David Lindsay-Abaire for the honor.
- Professor Alan Lightman's new novel *Ghost* was called "elegantly provocative and understated" by the *Los Angeles Times*.
- Professor Evan Ziporyn won one of 50 unrestricted grants given by the United States Artists Fellowship.
- In April, it was announced that assistant professor Keeril Makan had been awarded a prestigious Luciano Berio Rome Prize for musical composition by the American Academy in Rome for 2008–2009.
- A.C. Kemp, lecturer in foreign languages and literatures, made a name for herself as civility expert Lady Arabella Snark in her new book, *The Perfect Insult for Every Occasion*.
- Associate professor J. Meejin Yoon and her husband, Eric Höweler, were featured in a *Boston Globe* article on their innovative architecture and art. Headlined "Thinking Outside and Inside the Box," the article included four photographs of the couple and their work.

Personnel

After 13 years at MIT, as director of the Museum Loan Network and in the past year as director of Arts Initiatives and advisor to the associate provost, Lori Gross left the Institute in June 2008 to become associate provost of arts and culture at Harvard University.

Kerry Powell, who served as administrative assistant to Gross from August through January, accepted a position with Moshe Safdie and Associates.

In May, Pardis Parsa joined the Arts Initiatives team as administrative assistant after working at MIT's Laboratory for Information and Decision Systems (LIDS).

Lynn Heinemann

Senior Editorial Assistant

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