

Council for the Arts

Fiscal year 2009 was not as successful from a fundraising perspective as FY2008, but our final figures were not as bleak as originally projected. The funding, programs, and allocations of the Council for the Arts at MIT (CAMIT), especially its grants program, are becoming more and more important to the arts community at MIT as budgets are cut across the board in response to the economic downturn. Twenty-three members and guests of the council enjoyed a spectacular excursion to Prague in late September, and the next excursion to Chicago has been scheduled for the week of April 19, 2010.

Council Standing and Prize Committees

Annual Meeting Committee (Ann Allen, chair). The 36th annual meeting took place on Thursday and Friday, October 30 and 31, 2008. Fifty-two members were in attendance, and approximately 135 people attended at least one session or meal. This year's meeting coincided with the Corporation Executive Committee's annual meeting, and a number of their members were able to join us for our dinner at MEDITECH in Canton, MA.

Thursday's program took place entirely in the Stratton Student Center, where we expanded on the breakout sessions of last year with the following programs, running from 10 am until noon: Student Programs in the Arts, led by Michèle Oshima, Sam Magee, and Becca Motola-Barnes; MIT's 150th Anniversary Celebration, led by David Mindell, Tod Machover, and John Durant; Preserving the MIT Art Collection, led by Jane Farver and Patricia Fuller; and the Council Grants Program, led by Martin Rosen and Susan Cohen.

These sessions were followed by an informal box lunch and discussion of the breakouts moderated by Steven Tepper, associate director of the Curb Center for Art, Enterprise, and Public Policy and assistant professor in the Department of Sociology at Vanderbilt University. Following lunch, Tepper presented the plenary session, "The Creative Campus and Engaging Art at MIT."

After a break, council members and guests gathered at the MEDITECH campus in Canton for cocktails and dinner, featuring a talk by Institute Professor John Harbison. We were honored to have MIT president Susan Hockfield in attendance. MEDITECH, the health care informational software company founded by Neil Pappalardo '63, features a collection of artwork by area artists curated by Sheila Lemke (an architect and the Pappalardos' daughter). Lemke offered our guests a tour of the collection, which is sited throughout the campus. In addition, the MIT Glass Lab provided glass pumpkins to adorn the tables as centerpieces; these items were also for sale to attendees.

Friday morning began bright and early at the Tang Center's Wong Auditorium with our business meeting. Deborah Fitzgerald, Philip Khoury, and Brit d'Arbeloff presented in that order. Dean Fitzgerald spoke about the just-ended Music and Theater Arts Visiting Committee meeting; Associate Provost Khoury concentrated on the development of the Catalyst Collaborative at MIT (CC@MIT), fundraising for the preservation and conservation of the permanent collection, and the McDermott Award. He also

introduced the new director of Arts Initiatives, Leila Kinney. Brit gave a rundown of FY2008's expenditures and fundraising, as well as special programs. Martin Rosen presented the highlights of the year in grants.

Following a break, Janet Sonenberg and Diana Henderson presented a talk titled "Learning from the Past," in which they described the seminar they cotaught. That seminar concentrated on a period in English history (1642–1660) in which Puritan rulers closed theaters but in which there was also intense interest in experimental science. As a result of this class, a play was developed (eventually produced in London); the presentation showed videotaped excerpts of the MIT students' creative process.

The next speakers to present were Rebecca Motola-Barnes '08 and Michèle Oshima, program coordinator and director, respectively, of the Student and Artist-in-Residence Programs in the MIT Office of the Arts. Motola-Barnes outlined the Freshman Arts Seminar Advising Program (FASAP), the Freshman Arts Program, the Arts Scholars Program, the Art Representatives Program, and the Graduate Arts Forum, all of which she oversees. Several students from each of these groups spoke about the individual programs, with Tarick Walton '11 discussing the Art Reps Program, Ben Bloomberg '11 and Sila Sayan '11 covering FASAP, Talieh Rhani and Nadeem Mazen representing the Graduate Arts Forum, and Carmel Mercado '09 and Paula Te '09 discussing Arts Scholars. This section of the meeting was particularly well received by council members.

The 36th annual meeting concluded with lunch at the MIT Museum and a stirring talk by Tarick Walton '11 about the role of the arts in his life since his arrival at MIT, followed by a song performed by Walton.

Development Committee (Anne Street '60, chair). In FY2009, we raised \$339,836 from 66 members and \$7,319 from 20 nonmembers, for a grand total of \$347,155. This year was quite far behind FY2008 in terms of funds raised due to the economic downturn (which resulted in the loss of two major gifts and several "average" gifts).

Grants Program Committee (Martin N. Rosen '62, chair). CAMIT awarded 38 grants and 46 Director's grants, totaling \$113,107, to such projects as "Waves and Signs," a special dance floor designed for deaf dancers (Wendy Jacob); the Beeline Festival of new music at the Broad Institute (Evan Ziporyn); and the construction (from scratch) of a large-format camera by Biyeun Buczyk '10.



MIT and Gallaudet students explore Wendy Jacob's dance floor. (Photo by Donna Coveney)

Membership Committee (Bernard G. Palitz '47, chair). Bernard Palitz stepped down as chair this year after many years of invaluable service to the council; Marilyn Breslow is the new chair. Membership currently stands at 102, including six ex officio members. Since last year's report, the following individuals have joined the council: Cristina Dolan '94, Karen Arenson '70, and Karen Kaufman.

Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts Committee (Peter Wender '71, chair). Bill Viola, pioneering video artist, was on campus for the week of March 9, 2009; his public talk was held March 10 in Room 10-250. After his talk, approximately 80 council members and guests enjoyed an informal buffet dinner at Craigie on Main. Viola's week was filled with classroom and laboratory visits and meals with students and faculty. Viola was so invigorated by the preplanned events that he added even more to an already-busy schedule.

The mechanics of the McDermott Award selection process remain a work in progress with the inception of an outside "nominating committee." This committee, made up of experts in numerous fields—artists, critics, and administrators—provides nominations for the award committee's consideration. Also, a McDermott Award event-planning committee has been established, chaired by Susan Poduska. A public relations firm, Blue Medium, has been hired to help increase public awareness of the award.

Student Art Awards Committee (Claude Brenner '47, chair). At the Institute Awards Convocation on May 5, 2009, Provost Rafael Reif presented the Louis Sudler Prize to Michael R. Miller '09. Michael, who graduated in June with degrees in music and electrical engineering and computer science, was recognized for his accomplishments in music. Three Laya and Jerome B. Wiesner Awards were presented this year, to the MIT Salsa Club, Samuel Kronick '10 for his achievements in the visual arts, and Simone Ovsey '10 for her musical accomplishments.

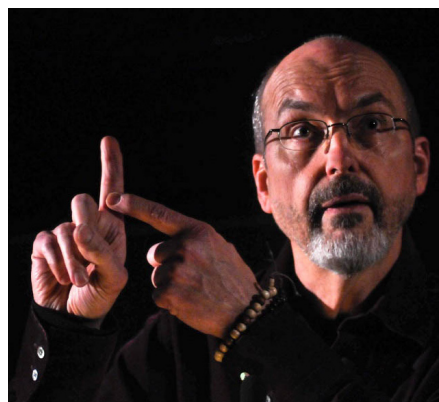
Schnitzer Prize in the Visual Arts Committee (Peter Athens '52, chair). This year's Schnitzer jury, which



Evan Ziporyn at the Beeline Festival.



Biyeun Buczyk and her camera.



Bill Viola during his talk. (Photo by L. Barry Hetherington)

met on April 14, 2009, consisted of Peter Athens, last year's first-prize winner Caitlin Berrigan G, Blake Brasher, Brit d'Arbeloff, Colleen Messing, Sam Magee, Jane Pappalardo, Magda Fernandez, and Susan Cohen. This year's first-prize winner was sculptor and performance artist Matthew Mazzotta G (visual arts program). Second place went to Media Lab graduate student Jay Silver, for his remarkable invention "drawdio." Video and performance artist Jess Wheelock G (visual arts program) came in third. An honorable mention was awarded to Leah Brunetto '12 for her pastel drawings.

Special Programs

Stratton Medal

CAMIT awarded the second Catherine Stratton Medal in the Arts to Margaret McDermott at her home in Dallas on September 16, 2009. Council members Bill Booziotis '60 and Margaret Anne Cullum read letters of tribute from Susan Hockfield, Philip Khoury, and Brit d'Arbeloff to an intimate group of friends, followed by a champagne toast. Designed by Suzana Lisanti and manufactured by Peter Houk at the MIT Glass Lab, the medal is truly an MIT original.

Prague Excursion

The council's excursion to Prague took place from September 23 to 28, 2008. Attending were Philip Khoury, Beth Raffeld, Anne and John Kern, Ann Allen and Bill Macurdy, Glenn and Kathie Strehle, Peter Wender, Anne Alden, Al and Pepi Weis, Jane Pappalardo and her daughter Sheila Lemke, Colleen Messing, Sara-Ann and Bob Sanders, Brit d'Arbeloff, Donna and Chuck Hieken,



Provost Reif presents first place in the Harold and Arlene Schnitzer Prize in the Visual Arts to Matthew Mazzotta G (All photos this page by William B. Yee)



Provost Reif presents a Laya and Jerome Wiesner Award to Simone Ovesey '10.



Provost Rafael Reif presents the Louis Sudler Prize to Michael R. Miller '09.



Provost Reif presents a Laya and Jerome Wiesner Award to Samuel Kronick '10.



Provost Reif presents a Laya and Jerome Wiesner Award to Salsa Club representative Steve Leman.

Susan Cohen, and Magda Fernandez. On the advice of the MIT Alumni Association, the council hired International Seminar Design Inc. to handle the logistics of the trip, although much of the programming was researched by Susan Cohen. Events included a tour of the Princely Collections at the Lobkowitz Palace (followed by dinner), a tour of the Mayor’s Rooms at the Municipal Building, and visits to the Strahov Monastery, the Kampa Museum, the Karlin Studios, the DOX Contemporary Art Centre, the Hunt/Kastner Gallery, the State Theater, and the opera. The highlight, in my opinion, was a visit to Trebecice Castle, a villa about an hour outside Prague that houses an artist residency program and doubles as a B&B.

Special Grants

The council completed its pledge of \$30,000 per year for FY2008 and FY2009 to CC@MIT, a program designed to bring knowledge of science into the community through drama. CC@MIT was founded by professors Alan Brody and Alan Lightman, and works with the Underground Railway Theater.

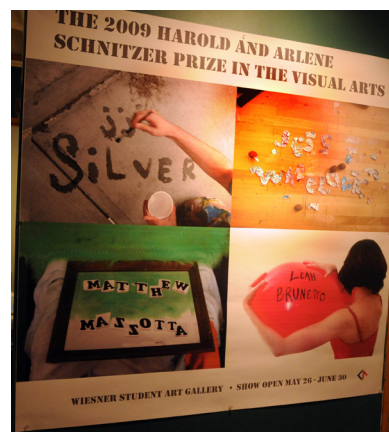
The council allocated \$15,000 to the Music and Theater Arts section in support of the celebration of John Harbison’s 70th birthday and also supported the effort to conserve the permanent sculpture collection by pledging \$30,000 a year for FY2009–FY2013. In addition to this pledge, CAMIT has spearheaded the effort to raise a \$1 million endowment for conservation.

Annual Allocations

The council continues to provide an annual allocation of \$7,500 to the Artists Beyond 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 Communications, and \$20,000 to the Student Art Association. In FY2009, CAMIT allocated \$15,000 to the Center for Advanced Visual Studies for general operating support.

Since 1980, the council has underwritten MIT’s enrollment in the University Membership Program offered by Boston’s Museum of Fine Arts. This program provides free admission and discount benefits to all



Students and visitors view projected work of Matthew Mazzotta at the opening reception. (Above photos by Monica Gallegos '11)



Margaret McDermott at her home in Dallas, receiving her Stratton Medal. (Photo by Susan Cohen)



Council for the Arts tour of Trebesice Castle in Prague (which houses a contemporary artist residency program).

MIT undergraduate and graduate students, as well as 10 day passes for use by MIT faculty and staff.

At its meeting on June 4, 2009, the council's Executive Committee approved a payment of \$7,000 for an institutional membership at the Boston Institute of Contemporary Art(ICA). This membership allows all MIT students, staff, and faculty free admission to ICA and includes discounts for performances as well as at the shop and café.

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.



Members of the Council for the Arts under the stage at the State Theater, where Don Giovanni premiered in 1787.

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.



Members of the Council for the Arts at dinner on their final evening in Prague.

The free-ticket program with the Boston Symphony Orchestra (underwritten by the council) 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 and the Radius Ensemble, a chamber group founded by CAMIT member Eran Egozy '95.

The successful Student Performing Arts Excursions Series continued, with \$16,500 expended on free tickets for MIT students for such performing arts events as *Another Evening: Serenade/The Proposition* by Bill T. Jones and the Arnie Zane Dance Company at ICA, performances by kora player Toumani Diabaté from Mali and the Throat Singers of Tuva (both at the Somerville Theater on different dates), the Boston Lyric Opera production of *Don Giovanni*, and the Huntington Theater's *Two Men of Florence*. Tickets are distributed to MIT students by the MIT Office of the Arts.

Travel

Susan Cohen traveled to Portland, OR, with Sam Magee (coordinator of the Student Art Association) to visit Harold and Arlene Schnitzer. The Schnitzers were extremely generous hosts, and although our goal (to secure funding for the Student Art Association) was not met, the Schnitzers agreed to allow some of the unspent funds in the Schnitzer Art Award account to be used for the improvement of the Wiesner Student Art Gallery.

Cohen also attended the Americans for the Arts convention in Seattle from June 18 to June 20, 2009.

Susan Cohen
Director

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