

MIT Arts Scholars

MISSION STATEMENT

Started in 1998, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Arts Scholars Program was created to help foster an active community of undergraduate and master's student artists through which arts experiences can be shared. Arts Scholars are students who are passionate about exploring the diverse array of arts available at MIT and in the Boston area, and interacting with fellow students, faculty artists, and other experts in the art world.

DESCRIPTION

The program is directed by student interest, and administered by the Coordinator of Student and Artist-in-Residence Programs. The Arts Scholars program is structured around monthly excursions or workshops, accompanied by a meal or coffee, with an expert in a relevant field of art in attendance. Arts Scholars plan these events, which range from on- and off-campus performances to behind-the-scenes tours to workshops with visiting faculty. Recent outings have included Adelheid Roosen's *The Veiled Monologs* and *Copenhagen* at the A.R.T., and the *Seamless: Computational Couture* fashion show. Previous workshops include a writing workshop on revision with research scientist Karl Iagnemma and a Filipino Tinikling-dancing workshop. Scholars can also plan informal gatherings at which they meet to create and share art as a group.

Program Outline

ADMISSIONS

Admission to the program is open to sophomores, juniors and seniors, and masters graduate students regardless of major. The application process will take place at the end of the fall semester for admission at the beginning of the spring term.

Students may apply to the program by completing and submitting an application form including an essay expressing his/her interest in participating in the Arts Scholars Program (1-2 pages), and a brief, fun bio describing the student's arts interest and other hobbies (approx. 100 words). Also required are one letter of recommendation (preferably from an MIT Arts faculty or staff) and an interview with a member of the MIT faculty or the Council for the Arts accompanied by a current Arts Scholar. Optional: students may also submit supplementary materials such as a portfolio, recording, or writing sample.

Arts Scholars will be chosen by a committee made up of the interviewers, Arts Scholars Officers, the Director and the Program Coordinator of the Student and Artist-in-Residence division of the Office of the Arts, and the Director of the Council for the Arts at MIT. All parts of the application process will be weighed in the selection process.

EVENT PLANNING

As teams, scholars get to plan at least one monthly event per school year. These teams are formed at the fall semester meeting, during which they also choose the month that their event will take place. Thus it is required that every Art Scholar be at the first meeting (see the "Semesterly Meeting & Feedback" section). If, after the fall semester meeting, a team wishes for their event to take place in a different month, they can arrange to switch with another team.

An event is defined as an excursion to an on- or off-campus performance, gallery, show, etc. accompanied by an expert, or a workshop facilitated by an expert (see "Expert" section). Excursions enable Scholars to experience arts in the area while workshops provide an opportunity for hands-on learning and collaboration with other artists on campus. Events also include a meal after the event at a nearby restaurant during which Scholars and the expert can discuss their experience. Teams should begin planning their events no less than one month prior to their chosen month. The steps for planning an event are:

1. selecting an event and/or workshop venue
2. contacting the Program Coordinator for assistance/approval
3. choosing an optimal date and time (such that the majority of Arts Scholars can attend)
4. soliciting the participation of an Expert (see "Expert" section)
5. collecting a confirmed and finalized list of RSVPs*
6. outlining expected expenses (when applicable)
7. arranging for transportation
8. finding a restaurant and making reservations

Due to the time-sensitive nature of purchasing tickets, steps 1-7 need to be completed and the details submitted to the Program Coordinator at least one month in advance. (Restaurant reservations can be made after the event is finalized, but keep in mind large groups are often hard to accommodate on short notice.)

* Many of the events require reservation of tickets in advance. For this reason alone, we request that students RSVP for ticketed events well in advance. The cancellation policy is outlined in the "Attendance" section.

Once these details are known, the Program Coordinator will purchase tickets for the group and send a reimbursement form to the team to be processed after the event. In order for expenses to be approved, an itemized list of projected expenses must be sent in with the other event details prior to the event. After the event, in order to be reimbursed, the team should submit the reimbursement form and *itemized* receipts from all approved purchases within one week of the event. Note that it will take 10-14 business days for reimbursements to be processed.

ATTENDANCE

A \$50 deposit will be collected from all Arts Scholars at the beginning of their first semester to protect against no-shows. Students who are unable to make an event for which they have RSVP'd can find a substitute from within the Art Scholars group. If a substitute cannot be found, the scholar must give one week's notice to the Program Coordinator to avoid loss of deposit. No-shows and students who cancel with less than one week's notice will have the full cost of their ticket subtracted from their deposit. If cancellation costs add up to more than \$50 deposit, students will be charged the difference. The remainder of the deposit will be refunded when the Scholars leave the program.

SEMESTERLY MEETING & FEEDBACK

A general meeting of all Arts Scholars and associated members of the Office of the Arts staff takes place at the beginning of each semester. These meetings are required for participation in the program. Scholars are strongly encouraged to bring their calendars to these meetings for planning purposes.

At the fall semester meeting, scholars elect officers for the coming year (see "Arts Scholars Officers" section). They also form teams based on their area of interest. Each of these groups gets to plan a monthly event within the realm of their interest. The month in which each group will plan an event is determined at the fall semester meeting. The meeting also includes a catered meal and a fun activity like an improv comedy workshop.

At the spring semester meeting, new Scholars will join the group for the first time. They will be paired with a veteran scholar mentor who will introduce them to the rest of the group and the event planning process. This will also be an opportunity for the Arts Scholars to take care of any necessary business. This meeting will include a meal.

Finally, at the end of each year, a feedback form will be sent out to all Arts Scholars to gather information on the success of the program in the past year, and ideas for the future.

EXPERT

Formal events are attended by an expert with knowledge related to the event. These experts can be MIT faculty, artist-in-residence, or graduate students, Council for the Arts at MIT members, or a professional involved with the event and/or venue. Part of the planning process for arranging events is to solicit the participation of an expert, which is done by the teams. The Program Coordinator can help the Scholars brainstorm potential experts when needed.

INFORMAL GATHERINGS

Arts Scholars are encouraged to meet outside of the formal monthly events. These informal gatherings are a facility to create and share art as a group. Each such gathering has a budget of up to \$100 for supplies and food, and an invitation must be sent out with sufficient notice to the entire group. Because the budget for these gatherings comes from the Arts Scholars program, only Arts Scholars can attend. In order to be reimbursed, *itemized* receipts must be submitted within

one week of the event with a reimbursement form. A room can be reserved by the Program Coordinator if requested ahead of time. This can be done up to two days in advance, but room selection may be limited, so the sooner rooms are reserved the better. Please keep in mind that Campus Facilities are very strict about the misuse of rooms (i.e., paint on the floor, improperly disposed of food, etc.), and the privilege to reserve rooms could be revoked.

ARTS SCHOLARS OFFICERS

At the fall semester meeting, officers will be elected to school-year long positions. The officers are as follows:

- President – in charge of coordinating the scheduling of events. Responsibilities include emailing teams when they should start the event planning process and keeping in contact with both the team and the Program Coordinator during the planning period. They will also act as a liaison to the Office of the Arts and be part of the Arts Scholars Selection Committee.
- Secretary – in charge of maintaining the Arts Scholars calendar, which includes team-planned events, performances/exhibitions in which Arts Scholars participate, and other pertinent dates. Other responsibilities are to keep a history of all past events with detailed descriptions and attendance records. They will also be part of the Arts Scholars Selection Committee.

IMPORTANT POLICIES

Tickets will NOT be purchased for persons outside of the Arts Scholars Program. Non-Arts Scholars are NOT allowed to substitute for ticket cancellations or to attend any other Arts Scholars-sponsored event.

There will be NO ALCOHOL at Arts Scholars events, workshops or art parties. We will not subsidize the expense of alcohol for any event.

There will be no use of cell phones during Arts Scholars events except to contact other Arts Scholars and in emergency situations. This ban includes text messaging. Cell phones must be off or on silent during all performances.