

List Visual Arts Center

The [List Visual Arts Center](#), MIT's contemporary art museum, collects, commissions, and presents rigorous, provocative, and artist-centric projects that engage MIT and the global art community. The List Visual Arts Center is a creative laboratory that provides artists with a space to freely experiment and push existing boundaries. Over the past year, the List Center presented a dynamic program of nine special exhibitions in its galleries, including a program of evolving site-specific work by emerging artists known as List Projects, as well as a broad range of educational programs, events, and scholarly publications. The center maintains and adds to MIT's permanent collection, commissions new works through the MIT Percent-for-Art program, manages and conserves a collection of more than 60 site-specific public artworks throughout the campus, and oversees the Student Lending Art Program, which lends approximately 600 works of art annually to MIT undergraduate and graduate students.

COVID Shutdown and Response

On March 13, 2020, as with the rest of MIT, we closed the doors to the List Visual Arts Center. In the week before the shutdown, our staff went into overdrive to collect the 600 works borrowed in the Student Lending Art Program. We worked with students to make the returns as easy as possible as they were focused on leaving campus.

As days turned into weeks and months, we supported our staff as people adapted to Zoom and working from home. We updated our website to support museum at home content and launched List At Home, which began as a weekly content-driven newsletter to share with our 12,000 readers in an effort to stay connected.

After the murder of George Floyd, we joined with the nation in horror and self-reflection. The entire staff has been reflecting on how we can participate in anti-racist work. We have been working to continue staff training and learning to combat hidden bias in the workplace and will expand these efforts with anti-racism training for our staff and deep and thoughtful programming and learning both online and in the galleries when we reopen.

Current Goals

- Reopen the galleries with safe social distancing and strong health and safety protocols for staff and visitors
- Continue to present the finest national and international contemporary art and work with artists to present what is typically their first museum exhibition in the United States
- Join with MIT in the Institute's efforts to combat hidden bias and discrimination
- Offer our expertise and join with the provost's new ad hoc committee of staff, students, postdocs, faculty, and alumni to recommend artistic and cultural responses that will affirm and inspire our community in this complex moment and identify ways to fund them

- Continue anti-bias training for staff and explore ways to bring anti-racism efforts into all of our work in a meaningful way
- Diversify our audience, member base, and Advisory Committee through thoughtful outreach to under-resourced communities
- Continue to provide new scholarship through the publication of catalogs that supplement exhibitions
- Enhance the List Center's website to house digital archives of past exhibitions, ensuring that the center serves as a resource for tracking the careers of artists after they have exhibited at MIT
- Serve as a research laboratory for contemporary artists to experiment, grow, and develop work to present in the galleries
- Preserve, conserve, and re-site works from the permanent collection
- Engage and partner with the MIT community through more in-depth work with professors and continued development of graduate student talks and the MIT Student Tour Guide Program
- Increase cross-disciplinary and collaborative use of the List Center's exhibitions, programs, and facilities
- Increase audience engagement and participation with MIT's community of faculty and students, as well as the Boston area and beyond, by providing more interpretive outreach programs
- Continue to increase our media presence through innovative use of social media and digital marketing
- Maintain steady staffing levels to enhance the center's ability to present ambitious world-class programming
- Continue to build a strong patron program through Director's Circle memberships and add a corporate membership program

Exhibition Highlights

The List Center organized a total of six gallery exhibitions, two of which were postponed or had limited public viewing due to closure during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to our main gallery programming, the center presented off-cycle exhibitions including three List Projects as well as two off-site exhibits, one for the Dean's Gallery in MIT's Sloan School of Management and the other for the Stratton Student Center.

Attendance was on track for a strong year before the shutdown. Through March, we welcomed 13,700 visitors.

Exhibitions at the Hayden and Reference Galleries

Student Lending Art Program Exhibition and Lottery

August 27–September 15, 2019



Installation view of the 2019 Student Lending Art Program Exhibition. (Photo: Mel Taing)

Alicja Kwade: In Between Glances

October 18, 2019–January 5, 2020



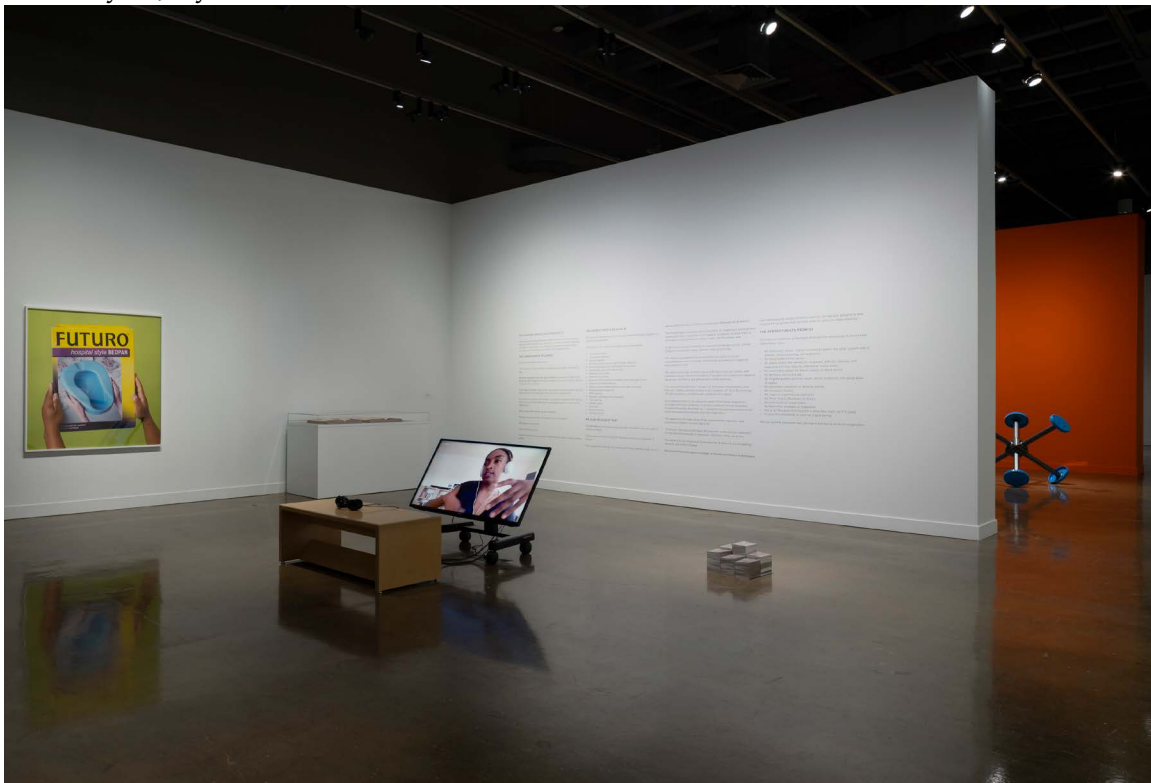
Installation view of Alicja Kwade: In Between Glances. (Photo: Peter Vanderwarker)

Christine Sun Kim: Off the Charts
February 7–July 19, 2020



Installation view of Christine Sun Kim: Off the Charts. (Photo: Peter Harris Studio)

Colored People Time: Mundane Futures, Quotidian Pasts, Banal Presents
February 7–July 19, 2020



Installation view of Colored People Time: Mundane Futures, Quotidian Pasts, Banal Presents. (Photo: Peter Harris Studio)

List Projects at the Bakalar Gallery

Farah Al Qasimi

July 30–October 20, 2019



Installation view: Farah Al Qasimi. (Photo: Charles Mayer)

Becca Albee

December 12, 2019–February 9, 2020

Rami George

March 19–October 11, 2020

Off-Site Special Projects

Public Art at MIT

Dean's Gallery

July 1, 2019–July 31, 2021

Art Across Campus: Public Art and the Permanent Collection at MIT

Stratton Student Center

July 1, 2019–July 31, 2021

List Center Artists in the News

Given that we typically work with artists at the beginning of their careers, it is interesting to note some of the past artists in the news across the globe:

Christine Sun Kim, who had a solo exhibition in 2020, performed the National Anthem in American Sign Language at the Super Bowl in February 2020. Kim was also commissioned by Times Square Arts, For Freedoms, and Poster House to create a digital billboard in Times Square to show support and gratitude for essential workers during COVID.

Farah Al Qasimi, who had a List Projects exhibition in 2019, received a Public Art Fund commission to premiere a new body of photographs installed on public bus shelters throughout New York City in 2020.

Sculptor Beverly Pepper, whose work is in the public art collection, passed away at the age of 97.

Adam Pendleton, who had a List Projects exhibition in 2018, is scheduled to present a solo exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art.

Artist Anicka Yi, who had a solo exhibition at the List Center in 2015, was granted a monumental commission by Tate Modern for its Turbine Hall.

Jeffrey Gibson, whose Percent-for-Art Commission at the Vassar Street residence was commissioned this past year, was awarded a John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation “genius grant” in September 2019.

Sarah Sze, who has a Percent-for-Art Commission at MIT’s Sidney-Pacific Graduate Residence, received a public art commission for the new LaGuardia airport in New York City.

Helen Mirra, who was featured in the 2014 List Center exhibition *Hourly Directional*, received a Guggenheim Award this year.

Programs and Student Outreach

This past year, the goal of furthering our outreach to MIT remained very much at the center of our programming efforts, along with prioritizing accessibility initiatives in both facilitated programs and gallery experiences. Standing program series such as our graduate student talks continued and were strengthened, and new programs, including our January Interactive Activities Period artist film screenings and discussions with MIT students, were developed based on the desires and interests of students. The Student Lending Art Program and its coinciding events were a resounding success. The addition of resident artist Evelyn Rydz’s A La Mesa participatory project in the lobby added an element of direct engagement to the program. With respect to future program development, the List Center will continue to grow audiences built in the last two years by offering strong exhibition-related programming geared toward the MIT and art world communities, providing access to exhibiting artists, and supporting contemporary scholarship in the arts.

The student guide program continued into its fourth year with four undergraduate students, all returning from previous academic years. Three of these students graduated in May 2020, and thus two new student guides were hired and trained during the spring semester, initially in person and then remotely as students departed the campus. Students conducted approximately half of the 65 group tours provided and offered visitors an educational, personal engagement with the List Center’s extensive public art collection.

Alicja Kwade: In Between Glances served as a bridge between the indoor exhibitions and outdoor public art, with the inclusion of both a Percent-for-Art work and an augmented reality installation in collaboration with Acute Art. An interdepartmental collaboration with MIT Earth, Atmospheric and Planetary Sciences culminated with *Visibility of*

Time, a panel discussion in which Professor Taylor Perron, Jimena Canales, and Alicja Kwade talked about the visibility of time and how this concept is seen from different perspectives. This discussion was the initial program offering real-time captioning to attendees, and captioning will be continually offered as part of future lecture programs.

Christine Sun Kim: Off the Charts provided opportunities for discussions centered on how we engage the deaf and hard of hearing community. Expanding accessible offerings in relation to the exhibition served as a catalyst for further engagement with this community and provided a framework for continued accessibility efforts in our public and digital programming initiatives. Prior to the COVID-19 closure, the List Center was able to host American Sign Language tours and in-gallery discussions for our public audiences and the MIT community alike.

Colored People Time, a traveling exhibition from the Institute of Contemporary Art at the University of Pennsylvania, allowed for collaboration with another academic institution. This exhibition examined several academic strains of thought rooted in Black studies. The List Center developed an extension of the exhibition in the shape of a reading resource lounge in the lobby space. Prior to the COVID-19 closure, the center hosted a panel discussion with exhibition curator Meg Onli, exhibiting artist Aria Dean, and catalogue contributor Amber Rose Johnson.

These examples are only a sampling of the work done over the course of the past year, marking progress toward our long-term goals of strengthening outreach to the greater MIT community and providing a greater breadth of offerings.

Permanent Collection

The permanent collection includes public art, the Student Lending Art Collection, and the Campus Loan Art Program.

Public Art

A sculpture by Jean Robert Ipoustéguy was recently installed at Endicott House after many years in storage. *Cénotaphe*, a 1957 steel sculpture, was a gift from Leon A. Kolker. The Endicott House staff was excited to receive the work and will be adding benches to secure a spot for reflection on the grounds.

Plans to relocate the Beverly Pepper sculpture were put on hold as MIT shut down for COVID-19, but a site has been selected and approved by all parties and we expect to move forward with the relocation to McCormick Hall as soon as possible. Pepper passed away this year at the age of 97, and we are looking forward to giving this work, one of the few by a female sculptor in the collection, a more prominent setting.

Percent-for-Art Projects Approved

Agnieszka Kurant's Percent-for-Art project *The End of Signature* is moving toward completion of the design and engineering phase for sites 3 and 4 in the Kendall Square redevelopment. *The End of Signature* is a series of works that translate hundreds of signatures into one "communal signature" by way of an algorithm that determines the median line. The signatures to be featured for the MIT iteration of the project were

solicited from the MIT and broader Cambridge community. The artwork will take the form of an illuminated, moving LED sculpture occupying the cantilevers of sites 3 and 4. The List Center is coordinating the production and implementation of the project as well as beginning contract negotiations with the artist. The artwork is to be installed in late 2020, with timelines shifting given the pause on construction due to COVID-19.

Alicja Kwade's *Against the Run* was temporarily installed in Building E15 as part of her exhibition at the List Center. This outdoor clock will be relocated to Kendall Square when the site is ready in 2021.

Vassar House

As the Vassar House project is nearing completion, the art is moving forward. The selection committee chose a painting by mid-career multidisciplinary artist Jeffrey Gibson, *I DON'T WANT TO SEE MYSELF WITHOUT YOU*. A citizen of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians who identifies as half Cherokee, Gibson often incorporates his heritage into his work, which includes abstract sculptures, paintings, and prints. Gibson was awarded a 2019 MacArthur Foundation Fellowship.

There are two additional works coming to Vassar House: Matt Johnson's sculpture, which was a gift, and Robert Engman's *Untitled* (1968), a work from our permanent collection to be installed in the open space outside of the apartments of the head of house and associate head of house. The latter work was installed for a number of years in the dome of Barker Library, where it was admired by many, including the incoming head of house. The head and associate head of house, along with a small group from Facilities, selected *Untitled* from a group of permanent collection pieces.

Ongoing and Future Percent-for-Art Projects

MIT and the US Department of Transportation have executed an agreement with artist Maya Lin to produce a site-specific artwork for the grounds of the new Volpe Center in Kendall Square. The List Center facilitated the negotiations and will work with the artist, the architects involved, and the General Services Administration to realize the project, scheduled to be installed by 2022.

We are currently in the early stages of discussion and planning for the forthcoming Percent-for-Art commissions for the new Music Building and the MIT Stephen A. Schwarzman College of Computing.

Campus Loan Art Program

The List Center installed 227 artworks on campus this year for faculty and staff participating in our Campus Loan Art Program. Currently there are 1,600 artworks sited in various locations on MIT's campus.

Twelve artworks from the permanent collection are on exhibition at the Dean's Gallery. Featured artists include Mark Di Suvero, Elizabeth Murray, Louise Nevelson, and Sarah Sze.

Thirteen artworks are on exhibition at the Stratton Student Center featuring works by Jennifer Bartlett, Dan Graham, Theodore Roszak, and Lawrence Weiner.

Student Lending Art Collection

The List Center added 13 artworks to the Student Lending Art Collection this year with support from Friends of Boston Art and gifts of art.

The AY2020 Student Lending Art Program featured 624 exhibited artworks. MIT students borrowed 604 artworks. There were 4,700 visitors and 917 lottery entrants during the run of the exhibition.

Public Art Collection Works Conserved

Cai-Guo Qiang, *Ring Stone* (granite and seven Japanese black pine trees, 2010)

Anish Kapoor, *Non-Object (Plane)* (stainless steel, 2010)

Dan Graham, *Ying/Yang Pavilion* (tempered glass, steel, gravel, water, 2003)

Gary Wiley, *Invaders* (wrought iron, soft steel, mirrored and colored Plexiglas, marbles, paint, 1981)

Frank Stella, *Looooloo* (room-sized installation, acrylic, 1994)

Frank Stella, *Heads or Tails* (acrylic and enamel, 1988)

Mathew Ritchie, *Games of Chance and Skill* (mixed media hallway installation, 2002)

Mark Di Suvero, *Aesop's Fables, II* (painted steel, 2005)

Kenneth Noland, *Here-There* (interior, painted aluminum, 1985)

Permanent Collection Works Conserved

Max Papart, *Andrei Rublev* (lithograph, 1973)

Bill Thompson, *GYRO* (aquatint, 2009)

Kamila Wozniakowska, *Untitled (From Figures For My Friends Who Drink, Lie And Rob Me)* (etching, 1992)

Sergio Gonzalez-Tornero, *At Sea* (etching, 1966)

Louise Lawler, *Why Pictures Now (traced); Red, Yellow, Blue, Green, Sometimes Silver or Gold* (archival pigment print, 1981–2013)

Barbara Norfleet, *Placing the target inside Nova, the world's most powerful laser* (silver gelatin print, 1990)

Kiki Smith, *Litter (Fireplace Editions)* (lithograph, 1999)

Joan Snyder, *Oasis* (lithograph, 2006)

Barry Le Va, *Plazas in Transition* (aquatint, 1979)

Linda Francis, *Untitled* (chalk, 1979)

Alexis Rockman, *Kaitour Falls Broelia* (IRIS print, 2002)

Marketing and Development

We continued the successful development of the Director's Circle membership and raised almost \$850,000 even though we shut down in March and stopped all programming. Also, we continued our success in growing all social media platforms. The List Center hosts one of MIT's largest and most active social media platforms.

In terms of press highlights, we received coverage and reviews in multiple media outlets including *Artforum*, *Art in America*, *ARTnews*, *Art New England*, *The Art Newspaper*, *Artnet*, *The Bay State Banner*, the *Boston Art Review*, the *Boston Globe*, *The Brooklyn Rail*, *Contemporary Art Daily*, *Hyperallergic*, *Mousse* magazine, the *New York Times*, *Tank* magazine, *Vogue*, *Vogue Arabia*, and WBUR.

The List Center produced media content including artist interviews with Alicja Kwade and Christine Sun Kim. The center also produced a short video documenting the production of *Against the Run*, Alicja Kwade's MIT Percent-for-Art commission, as well as a panel discussion featuring Kwade, Jimena Canales (historian of the physical sciences), and Taylor Perron (associate professor of earth, atmospheric, and planetary sciences at MIT).

We continued to distribute the List Center's public art map to the MIT Museum, the MIT Visitor Center, Human Resources, MIT Admissions, the Atlas Center, the MIT Arts Office, and other sites on campus to promote and publicize MIT's public art and architecture collections.

Administrative Highlights

Staffing

Selby Nimrod was hired as our curatorial assistant after completing her master's degree at Bard.

Natalie Bell was hired as curator in January 2020. She replaced Henriette Huldish, who left to become chief curator at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis.

Christopher Ketchum left the List Center after a brief tenure to accept a faculty position at the Massachusetts College of Art and Design. Susie Allen is stepping into his role to manage public art projects until we are able to complete a job search.

The List Center staff provided training for approximately 15 interns from programs and institutions including Northeastern University, the University of Massachusetts Boston, the Massachusetts College of Art and Design, Boston University, and Hampshire College.

The center continued with formal training sessions for gallery staff to enhance the visitor experience in keeping with museum best practices. In addition to training focused on the content and context of exhibitions, hidden bias training was led by a diversity and inclusion specialist at MIT.

Finances/Funding

When the museum shut down in March, we pulled back on fundraising efforts as we saw our donors support MIT's COVID-19 and research efforts, and we felt that work needed to take precedence. We renewed almost all of our major gifts and exceeded our budget, so we did not feel that we should be competing with direct COVID-19 needs. Accomplishments included the following:

- Raised almost \$850,000 from donors and foundations in support of the List Center, reflecting almost a \$100,000 increase from the prior year
- Ended the year with 12 exhibition sponsors, representing individuals, foundations, or MIT departments providing gifts of more than \$25,000
- Ended the year with seven members of the Chairperson's Visionary Council, representing individuals, foundations, or MIT departments providing gifts of more than \$10,000
- Ended the year with 16 members at the presenters level, representing individuals, foundations, or MIT departments providing gifts between \$5,000 and \$9,999
- Ended the year with 22 members at the leaders level, representing individuals, foundations, or MIT departments providing gifts between \$1,500 and \$4,999

Future Goals

Going forward, we aim to sustain momentum by presenting outstanding exhibitions and scholarly research. In addition to maintaining exceptional and high-quality programming in the List Center galleries, our goals include the following:

- Continue to engage local, national, and international donors to contribute to the List Center's programs and endowment
- Increase awareness of the List Center's activities among MIT's student, faculty, and administrative audience
- Increase the local, national, and international visibility of the List Center's programs and activities
- Expand the Advisory Committee and improve long-range planning efforts
- Increase the collection and utilize the Student Lending Art Program to create additional programming
- Leverage technology to better provide information about exhibitions, public programs, the Student Lending Art Program, the permanent collection, and the Percent-for-Art program
- Attract major new gifts of art
- Seek gifts for the endowment fund for art conservation

- Explore options for additional space for exhibitions, art storage, and offices
- Meet appropriate staffing needs required to maintain the comprehensive exhibition, publications, and public programming expected of the List Center
- Enhance the List Center’s website to house digital archives of past exhibitions, ensuring that the center serves as a resource for tracking the careers of artists after they have exhibited at MIT
- Continue to grow the List Center’s collections as well as administer conservation for acquisitions, including the public art collection
- Continue to grow the newly launched travel program, which will serve as a vehicle for connecting List Center donors to MIT alumni in new and engaging ways
- Augment an endowment fund for the acquisition of works of art for the permanent collection
- Develop comprehensive educational materials about all of the MIT Percent-for-Art projects, the Student Lending Art Program, and art on campus
- Seek naming opportunities for staff positions and galleries

Personnel Information

Director Paul C. Ha served on the Career Support Committee and Mentorship Program of the American Association of Museum Curators and on the Herb Alpert Award in the Arts committee. He also was a board member of the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, the Madison Square Park Conservancy, the World Chess Hall of Fame and Museum, the Fabric Workshop and Museum, and White Columns. In addition, he serves as a member of the Creative Arts Council at MIT and on the board of the MIT Museum.

Curator Natalie Bell joined the List Center in January 2020. She recently served on the jury to award the forthcoming artist fellowships at the American Academy in Berlin and as a nominator for the Nam June Paik Award, which recognizes artists working with moving images and new technology. She also was a mentor for students at the School of Visual Arts and guest lectured at Harvard University. In addition, she is the invited curator of the Artpace fall 2020 artist residency program (now postponed until 2021).

Campus and Public Program Manager Emily Garner served as a portfolio reviewer of student work at the Massachusetts College of Art and Design. Also, she led the annual National Art Education Association Preservice Division workshop and is a member of the Forum for Leadership in Art Museum Education.

Marketing and development associate Jameson Johnson juried the Boston Center for the Arts’ biannual studio exhibition. She also served as a guest reviewer and critic for the 2019 MFA Low Residency Thesis Presentations at the Massachusetts College of Art and Design. Most recently, she juried Fountain Street Gallery’s annual open call exhibition in Boston.

Assistant Curator Selby Nimrod was awarded an Etant Donnes Curatorial Research Fellowship by the French American Cultural Exchange to conduct research on a repository of Net.Art and new media artworks in French public collections (the research will take place between fall 2020 and summer 2021). She also served as a guest critic for Artspace's 2019 CityWide Open Studios in New Haven, CT, and attended Teaching and Learning with Museum Exhibitions: Innovations across the Discipline, a conference hosted by the Tang Museum at Skidmore College.

Advisory Committee

The List Center Advisory Committee, composed of MIT alumni, artists, and collectors, met twice at MIT during the 2019–2020 season. Currently there are 23 active members, including three ex-officio members: Philip Khoury, Paul C. Ha, and Leila W. Kinney.

Audrey Foster will serve as chair elect with current chair Geoff Hargadon for one year and assume leadership in fall 2021.

Paul C. Ha

Director, List Visual Arts Center