2016 REPORT

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Council Members,

In my first months here at MIT and with the Council, I have had so many wonderful interactions with students. Whether speaking with undergraduates about starting a new student group or listening to graduate students describe research for a thesis project, my conversations with MIT students have been invigorating, humbling and altogether inspiring. Supporting students and nurturing their participation in the arts is so important, and is what drew me to the Council.

We are grateful to you for your involvement with CAMIT, and I hope you will continue to discover, enjoy and support the arts at the Institute. I am excited to join you and to share this brief report about the Council’s activities.

Warm regards,

Rachel Bennett
Director of the Council for the Arts at MIT

REPORT ON ALLOCATIONS

This year, CAMIT will give more than $160,000 to important arts organizations and programs at the Institute, including the List Visual Arts Center, the MIT Museum, the CAST Visiting Artists Program, the Student Art Association (SAA), the MIT Program in Art, Culture and Technology (ACT) and more.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2016-17 ALLOCATIONS</th>
<th>AMOUNT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List Visual Arts Center</td>
<td>$30,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>MIT Museum</td>
<td>$30,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAST Visiting Artists Program</td>
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<td>Arts Communications</td>
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<td>Student Art Association (SAA)</td>
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<tr>
<td>MIT Program in Art, Culture and Technology (ACT)</td>
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<td>Catalyst Collaborative</td>
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<td>Artists Beyond the Desk</td>
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<td>Kepes Prize</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$162,500</strong></td>
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ALLOCATION SPOTLIGHT: THE STUDENT ART ASSOCIATION

Student registration for extracurricular classes at the Student Art Association (SAA) continues to soar. Starting this month, the SAA will offer MIT students advance registration before other members of the MIT community, as classes in ceramics, printmaking, drawing, painting and photography continue to rise in popularity. Last year, more than 430 MIT students enrolled in classes at the SAA.

The START Studio, a makerspace located in the SAA, is also at capacity. Students and groups apply for membership in the studio and receive 24/7 access to the space and tools to support work on arts-related entrepreneurial and business projects. Past participants have successfully used the space to participate in arts entrepreneurship activities on campus, including Hacking Arts, which took place in November, and the $15K Creative Arts Competition, which takes place in the spring.

30% of the Student Art Association’s operating budget is provided by the Institute, while 70% is generated by course fees and the generous allocation from the Council. With CAMIT’s support, the SAA can continue to keep course fees reasonable and accessible for MIT students.
REPORT ON GRANTS

This year, the Council will distribute $150,000 to support art projects at the Institute. During the first application cycle of fiscal year 2017, which was held in October, the Grants Committee awarded $48,500 to support 12 projects. Professor Daniel Jackson’s project, Soulsong: Portraits of Resilience, received $10,000, the largest grant given this cycle. Soulsong: Portraits of Resilience, a book that will be published by the MIT Press next fall, uses photographs and interviews to celebrate members of the MIT community who have demonstrated resilience in the face of depression.

In October, 50% of the projects funded were proposed by students, 25% were proposed by faculty and 25% were proposed by staff. 50% of the projects supported were in the visual arts, while other projects involved animation, architecture, documentary filmmaking, photography and virtual reality.

GRANTS SPOTLIGHT: STUDENT PROJECTS

During the October application cycle, the Grants Committee supported six student projects.

• Nicolas Kisic Aguirre, a graduate student in the MIT Program in Art, Culture and Technology (ACT), received funding to create and install Modular Rhythm Machine, a sound-making installation, in the Wiesner Building. His project will be on view on the lower level of the lobby in February and March, 2017. He also is exploring future exhibitions at the MIT Museum and the Wiesner Student Art Gallery. (Installation pictured below.)

• Xin Liu, a graduate student in the Media Lab, was awarded funding for Tree, a virtual reality film experience about climate change that will debut at the Sundance Film Festival this month. Liu will also show Tree at SXSW and the Tribeca Film Festival later this year. (Rendering pictured right.)

• Vaishnavi Rao, an undergraduate who founded MIT INSPIRE, the nation’s first comprehensive high school research competition in the humanities, arts, and social sciences, received funding for the competition’s annual award for most innovative research project. This conference, organized by the INSPIRE team and supported by the Office of the Dean of the School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences, will take place on MIT’s campus April 10-12, 2017.

• Neil Sanzgiri, a graduate student in ACT, received a grant to support At the Top of Grasshopper’s Hill, a film installation that uses three architectural sites in Mexico to explore complex relationships between time, memory and trauma.

• Rikas Shen, a graduate student in ACT, received funding to start work on an interactive video installation, Resonance Ver.M, that illustrates an artist’s inside world by mapping brain activity. Shen plans to complete this project in summer 2017.

• Undergraduate students Jessie Wang and Magnus Johnson were awarded a grant to help start a new student group for animation. The MIT Animation Group already has 25 members, and plans to submit four short films to the Boston Short Film Festival. The films will be completed for a deadline in April, and if accepted, debut during the festival at Somerville Theatre on July 12-15, 2017.
SUMMER GRANTS SPOTLIGHT: THE MERCHANT OF VENICE PROJECT

Last spring, the Grants Committee awarded a substantial grant to Diana Henderson, Professor of Literature, for MIT’s involvement in The Merchant in Venice Project in Venice, Italy in July.

The Merchant in Venice Project commemorated the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare’s death and the 500th anniversary of the founding of the world’s first Jewish Ghetto with the first ever performance of *The Merchant of Venice* in its main square. Staged by Compagnia de’ Colombari in five performances during the week of July 26–31, 2016 (performance pictured left), this project engaged Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, who presided over a mock trial between Shylock and Antonio as part of the week’s events.

Literature Professor Diana Henderson coordinated MIT Global Shakespeare’s multimedia contribution to the project and participated in the Ca’ Foscari University of Venice’s summer school course, as did Professor Shankar Raman. MIT President Rafael Reif attended the event, along with several CAMIT members, and MIT students played key roles in recording the stage production, including rehearsals and interviews with the company as well as public performances. The grant from the Council helped the MIT contingent participate and is now supporting additional documentation of the live event online, which will be an important component in MIT Global Shakespeare’s module about *The Merchant of Venice* on the residential MITx platform.

STUDENT AWARD SPOTLIGHT: DANIEL PARKER

Daniel Parker ’16, the recipient the 2016 Sudler Prize for Excellence in the Arts awarded by the Council last spring, performed during the Annual Meeting in October (pictured below). Daniel graduated from MIT in spring 2016 with a degree in Music and started in the Master of Music (MM) in Piano program at Juilliard this fall.

He is an astounding young performer and his former advisor, Institute Professor Marcus Thompson, has said on behalf of the MIT Music Faculty, “We have not in recent memory had a student cover so much important repertoire and scholarship as performer and scholar at such depth . . . Daniel’s public profile as a pianist in prodigious recitals is by itself enough to astonish . . . We have identified and embraced him as an outlier among the many brilliant and capable musicians we encounter.”

Music and Theater Arts are thriving at MIT. Currently headed by Evan Ziporyn, who is also the Faculty Director of MIT’s Center for Art, Science & Technology (CAST), Music and Theater Arts enrolls more than 2,000 students annually and has two Institute Professors.

OTHER STUDENT AWARD RECIPIENTS

HAROLD AND ARLENE SCHNITZER PRIZE IN THE VISUAL ARTS: 2016 RECIPIENTS

First-Prize Winner: Joshua Jest (SMACT ’17)
Second-Prize Winner: Emily Tow (PhD, Mechanical Engineering ’17)
Second-Prize Winner: Laura Perovich (PhD, Media Lab, Object-Based Media Group)
Third-Prize Winner: Chris Kerich (Masters, CMS ’17)
Honorable Mention: Qiuying Lai (Electrical Engineering & Computer Science ’17)
Honorable Mention: Deniz Tortum (Masters, CMS ’16)

LAYA AND JEROME B. WIESNER STUDENT ART AWARDS: 2016 RECIPIENTS

Angel Chen (SMACT ’17)
Samantha Fomon (Physics ’16)
Samantha Harper (Civil & Environmental Engineering ’16)
REPORT ON TICKETS PROGRAM

The Council for the Arts at MIT continues to underwrite Boston area museum memberships for MIT students to the Museum of Fine Arts, the Institute of Contemporary Art (auditorium pictured below), the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum and the Harvard Art Museums. CAMIT also supports discounted or free tickets to local performing arts organizations, including the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the Boston Ballet and several area music ensembles. The Council gives more than $80,000 annually to this program, which last year resulted in more than 7,000 student experiences at area cultural institutions.

CAMIT also provides $15,000 annually for tickets to specific arts events requested by faculty to supplement course syllabi. This fall, the Council received requests from faculty totaling more than $13,000 and awarded close to $7,000. More than 300 students, enrolled in 14 different courses, attended course-related arts events as a result of this program. Requests for the spring semester will begin this month.

CAMIT TRAVEL: A REFLECTION ON THE RECENT TRIP TO MASS MOCA

-Karen Arenson, Vice Chair of CAMIT

About 25 CAMIT members, MIT staff members and guests went on a delightful field trip to Western Massachusetts November 4 and 5, 2016. It was shorter than our usual trips and more leisurely, but we saw a lot and had a great time. We had wonderful tours at Mass MoCA, the Clark Museum and the Williams College Museum of Art, an interesting mix of art and institutions. And we had a lovely convivial dinner at Mezze, one of the best restaurants in the area.

At Mass MoCA, the colorful walls of Sol LeWitt (three floors worth) reminded me of his bright floor for the physics building at MIT; they are there for 25 years. The enormous Nick Cave installation at Mass MoCA was both glittery and sobering, with little wheels with guns and bullets mixed in among so many other shimmering pieces. Then there was the centerpiece, a small landscape of birds, flowers and black-faced jockeys, reached by four ladders and inspired by his question, “Is there racism in heaven?” There were other exhibitions, too, which one of the museum’s curators led us through. Mass MoCA was contemporary, but the Clark Museum was much more traditional, except for its new architecture: Degas, Renoir, Winslow Homer, George Inness, Lautrec and an ornate Steinway piano that we would have loved to have heard Jane Pappalardo play, but that was off limits, except to ogle. Finally, we saw the Williams College Museum of Art, where there was another splashy Sol LeWitt (pictured above) and other contemporary art and another good curator-led tour. We talked a little about the role of museums in college life; they had a room with pieces used specifically by professors teaching courses ranging from material sciences to literature to the arts. We finished before 4pm on Saturday and people dispersed. A wonderful trip!

We hope you will join us on our next excursion to San Francisco the week of April 24 – 28, 2017!

REPORT ON MEMBERSHIP

This year, we welcomed nine new members to the Council for the Arts at MIT. We are thrilled to count them among our Council members, and hope you will all help us continue to make them feel welcome in the months ahead.

Our Membership and Nominating Committee, with support from the Executive Committee, is actively recruiting new members. We encourage you all to think about friends and acquaintances who would contribute to CAMIT’s mission. We are looking for individuals who will serve as passionate advocates for the Arts at MIT and have demonstrated commitment to the arts and to MIT.

Please contact Rachel Bennett, Director of the Council for the Arts at rdben@mit.edu or (617) 253-4005 with ideas or recommendations. Hyun-A Park, Membership and Nominating Committee Chair, Marcel Botha, Membership and Nominating Committee Vice Chair, Rick Stone, Chair of the Council for the Arts, and Karen Arenson, Vice Chair of the Council for the Arts are leading this effort.

NEW CAMIT MEMBERS

David Altshuler (nominated by Hyun-A Park)
George Beal (nominated by Hyun-A Park)
Valeria Degroof (Spouse SM ’93, PhD ’02) (nominated by Karen Arenson)
Larisa Leventon (’91, MBA ’02) (nominated by Marcel Botha)
Bethany Millard (Spouse ’73) (nominated by Karen Arenson)
Sachi Sato (Spouse ’92) (nominated by Eran Egozy)
Larry Sayah (’56) (nominated by Ellen Berman)
Bob Stearns (SM ’74) (nominated by Elizabeth Coxe)
Tracy Taylor Wydra (MArch ’04) (nominated by Cindy Reed)