



**MIT Museum Presents Two Exhibitions of Rare and Never-Before-Seen Photographs from Influential Artist György Kepes:**

***György Kepes Photographs  
From Berlin to Chicago, 1930-1946***  
September 21, 2017 - March 5, 2018

***György Kepes Photographs  
Kepes at MIT, 1946-1974***  
March 16 - August 2018 (date TBC)

Cambridge, MA, July 27, 2017 -- [The MIT Museum](#) will honor Professor György Kepes (1906-2001), one of the most influential art practitioners, educators and writers of the twentieth century, through two exhibitions featuring rare and never-before-seen photographs that span more than four decades of his creative practice. Many of the photographs have been printed from original negatives that are not known to have been printed by the photographer. Many other images are vintage prints made by Kepes himself that have not been previously exhibited or published. Providing a rare opportunity to explore the breadth of his career, ***György Kepes Photographs: From Berlin to Chicago, 1930-1946*** (September 21, 2017 – March 5, 2018) will focus on his time in Europe and Chicago; and ***György Kepes Photographs: The MIT Years, 1946-1974*** (March 16 – August 2018) will concentrate on the body of work he created while working at MIT. The opportunity for this MIT Museum Kurtz Gallery exhibition is the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Center for Advanced Visual Studies at MIT. This will be the first exhibition at MIT to focus on Kepes' photography; his major show at MIT's Hayden Gallery in 1978, closely examined his other work.

Brought to MIT in 1946 to teach visual design in the School of Architecture, Kepes taught at MIT until his retirement in 1974. In 1967, Kepes founded the Center for Advanced Visual Studies (CAVS) at MIT, which had an enormous international impact on art pedagogy and practice. His work as a painter, and his contributions to the academic study and teaching of art have been the subject of numerous exhibitions and scholarship. In contrast, these exhibitions offer the opportunity to explore his contributions to twentieth century photographic practice, an area of his work that, until now, has received much less attention and study.

"These two exhibitions will greatly enhance our understanding of Kepes' contribution to twentieth century photography, particularly by exhibiting work that has never been seen publicly and has been unknown in the history of photography," said Gary Van Zante, Curator, MIT Museum. "This previously unknown work also greatly expands our knowledge of an exciting period of photography before World War II when Bauhaus trained artists such as Moholy-Nagy, who greatly influenced Kepes, settled in America. Kepes' relationship to Moholy-Nagy with whom he worked in Berlin and Chicago, is clarified by the work in the exhibition."

*György Kepes Photographs: From Berlin to Chicago, 1930-1946* will feature a selection of photographs from Kepes' early life in Hungary, as well as highlights from his early work in Berlin, London and Chicago. The second exhibition, *György Kepes Photographs: Kepes at MIT, 1946-1974*, will focus on Kepes' work in the 1950s through the 1980s, after his move to Cambridge, Massachusetts to teach at MIT. The images provide a striking visual record that illuminate some of the most important moments and successes in his career, including the founding of CAVS at MIT, his exhibitions and publications, his teaching, and his work with various photographic media, including photograms, a favorite format for Kepes throughout his career. A common technique of the 1930s and 1940s, the photogram, is a photographic image exposed by placing objects directly onto the surface of the photosensitive material, without the use of a camera. In contrast to the impressionist perception where things shimmer under the influence of changing illumination, photograms are true manifestations of light. The combination of ephemeral phenomena with geometric structures is an integral part of his work.

### **ABOUT GYÖRGY KEPES (1906–2001)**

The Center for Advanced Visual Studies (CAVS) at MIT was created in 1967 by Hungarian born artist György Kepes within the School of Architecture and Planning. Kepes was CAVS director 1967 until his retirement in 1974.

Kepes studied at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Budapest. Originally trained in impressionist styles he soon felt attracted to the abstract visual language of the avant-garde and expressed a keen interest in the technological potential to depict the visible world, in particular the effects of light. Kepes became interested in filmmaking and the visual representation of motion. At the invitation of fellow Hungarian, the Bauhaus professor László Moholy-Nagy, he moved to Berlin in 1930 and then followed Moholy-Nagy's call to teach at the New Bauhaus and the School of Design in Chicago. Kepes was invited to teach at Brooklyn College by Serge Chermayeff, and while teaching at Brooklyn College, Kepes published the *Language of Vision* in 1944, which set out his theories on the impact of the "new" technologies of photography, cinema, and television on visual culture.

Kepes who came to MIT in 1946, edited and published the influential seven-volume *Vision and Value* series in 1965-66. In 1967 he founded MIT's Center for Advanced Visual Studies (CAVS), a laboratory for interdisciplinary art practice and artistic research and the first one of its kind. Kepes is the first and only visual artist of MIT's faculty to have been awarded the highest honor at MIT, the title of Institute Professor, (there are now in 2017 two Institute Professors of Music and just 13 total across all disciplines).

Throughout his life, Kepes continued to paint, while at the same time exploring different techniques, such as double exposure, photograms and "photo-drawings" as new ways to use light.

### **ABOUT THE MIT Center for Advanced Visual Studies (CAVS)**

Though the fine arts at MIT have a long history, contemporary art made its effective entry in the form of the Center for Advanced Visual Studies (CAVS), which was established in 1967. Its founder, the artist and MIT professor György Kepes, conceived of CAVS as a fellowship program for artists. Its initial mission was twofold: to facilitate "cooperative projects aimed at the creation of monumental scale environmental forms" and to support participating fellows in the development of "individual creative pursuits." A range of important innovators in the visual arts, environmental arts, dance, and new media were CAVS fellows: composer Maryanne Amacher, avant-garde filmmaker Stan van der Beek, artist and educator Lowry Burgess, video artist Peter

Campus, performance artist Charlotte Moorman, artist Nam June Paik and many others. CAVS's purpose for bringing artists to campus was for them to engage and collaborate with the scientists and engineers of the MIT community, conducting work with emerging technologies (e.g. laser, video, holography) or novel ways of utilizing existing technologies (e.g. steam).

Otto Piene, a member of the ZERO group, succeeded Prof. Kepes as director in 1974. Following Piene's retirement in 1994, the internationally-known artist and VAP faculty member, artist Krzysztof Wodiczko, became director of CAVS. Steve Benton, inventor of the white-light "rainbow" hologram, directed CAVS from 1996 until his death in 2003; and in 2004, Wodiczko returned as director. The Visual Arts Program and the Center for Advanced Visual Studies merged, and in December of 2009, the combined group was renamed the [MIT Program in Art, Culture and Technology](#) (ACT). A celebration of the new program was held on April 15, 2010 with exhibitions, conversations, and performances. The Center for Advanced Visual Studies (CAVS) is celebrating its 50th anniversary with a series of events in 2017-18.

### **ABOUT THE MIT MUSEUM**

[The MIT Museum](#)'s mission is to engage the wider community with MIT's science, technology and other areas of scholarship in ways that will best serve the nation and the world in the 21st century. The Museum features two floors filled with ongoing and changing exhibitions, currently with an emphasis on robotics, photography and holography, MIT history, and current MIT research. The Museum presents a wide range of programs that appeal to audiences ranging from middle school students to adults, including the annual Cambridge Science Festival in late April. For more information, visit [mitmuseum.mit.edu](http://mitmuseum.mit.edu)

### **ABOUT THE ARTS AT MIT**

70 percent of incoming freshmen have prior training in the arts, and nearly 50 percent of all MIT undergraduates enroll in arts courses each year. The arts strengthen MIT's commitment to the aesthetic, human and social dimensions of research and innovation. Artistic knowledge and creation exemplify MIT's motto—*mens et manus*, mind and hand. The arts are essential to MIT's mission to build a better society and meet the challenges of the 21st century. For more information, visit [arts.mit.edu](http://arts.mit.edu)

### **Visitor Information**

MIT Museum

265 Massachusetts Avenue  
Central Square Cultural District  
Cambridge, MA 02139 USA

Phone: 617-253-5927

<https://mitmuseum.mit.edu/>

Open daily 10 a.m.– 5 p.m.

Closed major holidays.

General admission to the Museum only: \$10.00 for adults; \$5.00 for youth under 18, students, seniors; free admission for MIT card holders and alumni. Discounts are listed online. Some special exhibitions may have different pricing.

Parking: Metered street parking and area lots

Public Transportation: Red Line "T" to Central Square or #1 bus