

THE EUGENE MCDERMOTT AWARD IN THE ARTS AT MIT MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY 77 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE, BUILDING 10-183 CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

PRESS RELEASE

THOMAS HEATHERWICK AT MIT FOR 2020 EUGENE McDERMOTT AWARD IN THE ARTS AT MIT

"Togetherness: How can the physical make us come together?" Public Lecture on April 25, 2020 / 5:00pm / MIT Huntington Hall 10-250

Award includes artist residency, student design challenge, public lecture, \$100,000 prize, and gala

Cambridge, MA, USA, February 28, 2020 – Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) is pleased to announce that designer Thomas Heatherwick, 2020 Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts at MIT recipient, will be at MIT on April 25, 2020 to accept the prestigious honor. In addition to the \$100,000 prize, a series of campus visits are a distinctive feature of the award, in which the artist interacts with MIT students, faculty and staff in a range of academic disciplines on campus. Heatherwick has posed a design challenge for students in the design minor and design major at MIT--to create "hyper-physical" environments as a corrective to the decline in public space and experience of connectedness ushered in by the digital revolution. Heatherwick will present a public lecture about this theme, entitled "Togetherness: How can the physical make us come together?" April 25 at 5pm in MIT lecture hall 10-250, tickets and more information available at arts.mit.edu/mcdermott.

During his lecture and in his interactions with the MIT community, Thomas Heatherwick will describe his studio's approach to embodying emotional response and avoiding cliché in built form. Demonstrating how urban interventions can unlock a neighborhood's potential, Heatherwick will present the ideation behind recent work, including London's Coal Drops Yard, Singapore's Learning Hub, Cape Town's Zeitz MOCAA, Shanghai's 1000 Trees, Tokyo's Toranomon-Azabudai, and New York's Vessel. He will address the questions: How can cities respond to the contemporary phenomenon of increased loneliness that has accompanied increased reliance upon online interactions? What does it take to create meaningful spaces that inspire people to leave the digital realm and directly engage with others in real life?

Heatherwick and his studio will mentor students in the studio Design Techniques and Technologies: Thinking through Making, taught by MIT instructor Jeremy Jih. Their challenge will be to address issues of loneliness and create thriving, sociable, and rich sensory experiences in urban environments. Heatherwick's presence at MIT will culminate in formal critiques of the work students create over the course of the Spring semester, 2020.



CAMPUS RESIDENCY EVENTS AND PROGRAMS

Public Program

Thomas Heatherwick Keynote Lecture

"Togetherness: How can the physical make us come together?"

Saturday, April 25, 2020 / 5:00pm / MIT Lecture Hall 10-250, 77 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA

Free and open to the public, but reservations required: mcdermott2020thomasheatherwick.eventbrite.com

Gala

A private gala will be held on the MIT campus in which Heatherwick will be presented the Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts at MIT. The gala's honorary hosts include Harriet Cross, Her Majesty's Consul General to New England, British Consulate-General Boston, Mahesh Daas, President & ACSA Distinguished Professor, Boston Architectural College, Peggy Fogelman, Norma Jean Calderwood Director, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Sir Tim Berners-Lee, Inventor of the World Wide Web and 3com Professor at CSAIL at MIT, and others. Brit d'Arbeloff is Gala Chair.

Design Challenge

Students in the design major and minor will have the opportunity for mentorship by Heatherwick Studio during the spring 2020 semester. Jeremy Jih is the instructor of the class 4.022 Design Techniques and Technologies: Thinking through Making. This design studio, a foundation course for the MIT School of Architecture + Planning's Minor in Design, introduces students to the creative design process through acts of making and breaking. The design challenge begins with precedent research around affects and emotional embodiment to expose students to the wider discourse and history of design, and Heatherwick Studio's creative approach. Engaging questions of material and fabrication research, students will investigate material properties and behaviors, emergent principles or patterns, or geometrical transformations to produce variable outputs in response to calibrated inputs. These investigations will be transformed into large installation-scale spaces that facilitate an articulated form of human connection and interaction. Engaging Heatherwick's ideas of the hyper-physical as a means to resist the hyper-digital, students will select public spaces where the pavilion will serve to transform the space, foster re-engagement, or change human interactions within the space.

About Thomas Heatherwick

Thomas Heatherwick is a British designer whose prolific and varied work over two decades is characterized by its ingenuity, inventiveness, and originality. Defying the conventional classification of design disciplines, he founded Heatherwick Studio in 1994 to bring the practices of design, architecture, and urban planning together in a single workspace.

Thomas leads the design of all Heatherwick Studio projects, working in collaboration with a team of 200 highly-skilled architects, designers, and makers. Thomas' unusual approach applies artistic thinking to the needs of each project, resulting in some of the most acclaimed designs of our time. Based in London, Heatherwick Studio is currently working in four continents.

Following the success of the UK Pavilion for the Shanghai World Expo in 2010, Heatherwick Studio has gone on to win exciting design briefs



including the Learning Hub at Singapore's Nanyang Technological University, the new Google campuses in London and California in collaboration with BIG (currently under construction), and a new terminal for Singapore's Changi Airport in partnership with KPF. Heatherwick has been appointed a Commander of the Order of the British Empire, a Royal Academician, and in 2004 became the youngest Royal Designer for Industry.

About the Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts

The Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts at MIT was established in 1974 by the Council for the Arts at MIT and Margaret McDermott in honor of her husband, a co-founder of Texas Instruments. The award reflects MIT's commitment to risk-taking, problem solving, and to the idea of connecting creative minds across disciplines. The award may be given to an artist working in any field or cross-disciplinary activity and is considered an investment in the recipient's future creative work, rather than a prize for a particular project or lifetime of achievement.

About the Council for the Arts at MIT

The Council for the Arts at MIT is a volunteer group of alumni and friends who support the arts at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Since its founding in 1972 by MIT President Jerome B. Wiesner, the Council for the Arts at MIT has bestowed the award upon 37 individuals who work in performing, visual, and media arts, as well as authors, art historians, and patrons of the arts. Appointed by the President of MIT to three-year terms, Council members continuously fulfill their mission "to foster the arts at MIT and to act as a catalyst for the development of a broadly based, highly participatory program in the arts." Hyun-A Park is the current Chair of CAMIT.

Past Recipients

- 2018: Audra McDonald, actress and singer
- 2016: David Adjaye, architect
- 2014: Olafur Eliasson, visual artist
- 2011: Robert Lepage, performance and media artist
- 2010: Gustavo Dudamel, conductor
- 2009: Bill Viola, visual artist
- 2006: Suzan Lori Parks, playwright/novelist
- 2005: Santiago Calatrava, engineer/architect
- 2004: Libby Larsen, composer
- 2003: Vinie Burrows, activist/actress/writer
- 2001: Isaac Julien, filmmaker
- 2000: CORE Ensemble
- 1999: Diller + Scofidio, architects
- 1998: Junot Díaz, author
- 1997: Toni Dove, video artist
- 1996: Kenny Leon, theater director
- 1995: Jeff Wall, photographer
- 1994: Tan Dun, composer
- 1993: Thomas Hanrahan & Victoria Meyers, architects
- 1992: Richard Preston, author
- 1991: Rebecca Purdum, artist
- 1990: Agnes Denes, artist
- 1989: Ida Ely Rubin, art historian
- 1988: Yulla Lipchitz, photographer
- 1986: Richard Leacock, filmmaker
- 1985: Harold E. Edgerton, photographer
- 1984: I.M. Pei, architect
- 1983: Albert R. Gurney, Jr., playwright
- 1982: Roy Lamson, arts administrator
- 1981: Henry Moore, sculptor
- 1980: Luis A. Ferre, arts patron
- 1979: Jerome B. Wiesner, President of MIT, arts patron
- 1978: Catherine N. Stratton, Founder, Council for the Arts, arts patron
- 1977: James R. Killian, Jr., President Emeritus, MIT
- 1976: Paul Tishman, Founder, Council for the Arts, arts patron
- 1975: Klaus Liepmann, conductor, founder of the music program at MIT
- 1974: György Kepes, artist, founder of the Center for Advanced Visual Studies at MIT (CAVS)

For more information on the Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts at MIT, please visit arts.mit.edu/mcdermott/

Image credits: Learning Hub, Singapore. View from the atrium at level one upwards. Photo by Hufton and Crow.

Photo of Thomas Heatherwick by Elena Heatherwick

Media Contact:

Leah Talatinian | Communications Manager, Arts at MIT | 617-253-5351 | leaht@mit.edu