

## Arts Initiatives

Leila Kinney, executive director of [Arts Initiatives](#) and of the MIT Center for Art, Science & Technology (CAST), works on strategic planning, communications, development, and cross-school coordination for the arts. She oversees the staff of the Office of the Arts, whose programs include CAST; the Council for the Arts at MIT (CAMIT); Student Arts Programs; and the Student Art Association (SAA). She chairs the CAST and Visiting Artists Selection Committee and sets the agenda for the Creative Arts Council with the associate provost. She is an ex officio member of the executive committee of CAMIT, and the advisory boards of the Catalyst Collaborative at MIT, the List Visual Arts Center, and the MIT Museum.

### Current Goals

- Raise funds to sustain the future of the Center for Art, Science & Technology;
- Support the new director of the Council for the Arts at MIT and strategic planning for its future and recruitment of new members;
- Complete implementation of strategic reorganization of the Student Arts Programs; and,
- Plan successful 2018 Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts residency and gala.

### MIT Center for Art, Science & Technology

Established in 2012 in the office of the provost with a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation—which has been renewed through 2020—CAST facilitates and creates opportunities for exchange and collaboration among artists, engineers, scientists, and scholars in the humanities. A joint initiative of the office of the provost, the dean of the School of Architecture and Planning (SA+P) and the dean of the School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences, the center is committed to fostering a culture in which the arts, science, and technology thrive as interrelated, mutually informing modes of exploration, knowledge, and discovery. The center’s role is to affirm, energize, and reinforce the inherent synergy between these modes of thought and action.

It does so by collaborating with departments, labs, and centers across the Institute in four primary areas of activity. To integrate the arts across the curricula, we support the development of new classes that reach across disciplines and majors. To enrich and encourage artistic collaborations, we look for unexpected partnerships for visiting artists and seek to embed residencies in ongoing research and teaching at MIT. To encourage the experimental phase of artistic creation, we provide creativity seed funds and research grants for faculty, students, and postdoctoral associates. To share this creative work and knowledge with the public, we produce concerts, symposia, exhibitions, and publications in multiple media platforms. In AY2017, CAST awarded \$546,513 in funding and produced an international symposium, eight residencies, 11 concerts, and two faculty creative projects; in addition it supported five existing classes and the development of a new one, and a lecture series.

## Accomplishments

*Experience: Culture, Cognition, and the Common Sense* was published in fall 2016 by the MIT Press. The book was edited by Professor Caroline Jones, along with David Mather and Rebecca Uchill, previous and current postdoctoral fellows at CAST. The collection of essays and artists' projects emerged from the 2014 symposium, *Seeing / Sounding / Sensing*, which was designed to advance a conversation among artists, scientists, and humanists about the nature of sensation, broadly conceived, and to open possibilities for new research. CAST's second book, *Active Matter*, also published by the MIT Press, is forthcoming in fall 2017. The manuscript originated from the Active Matter Summit sponsored and co-organized by CAST and the Self-Assembly Lab in the School of Architecture and Planning. *Being Material*, the center's second international symposium, was convened in April and attracted a local audience of 400, plus more than 5,000 [online](#) viewers.

In fall 2016, CAST launched the [Dasha Zhukova Distinguished Visiting Artist Program](#) and the Mellon Distinguished Visiting Artist Program to create opportunities for artists to shape new creative projects over a period of two years of sustained, in-depth research and development. CAST established two new types of faculty grants—the Mellon Faculty Grant and the Fay Chandler Faculty Creativity Seed Grant—for MIT faculty and principal or senior research staff from all departments, labs, and centers. The Mellon Faculty Grant is available to full-time faculty to develop classes, research, or creative projects with significant impact on campus or beyond. The Fay Chandler Faculty Creativity Seed Grant supports faculty creative projects that will come to fruition within a year of the award.

The third season of the *MIT Sounding* performance series—curated by Evan Ziporyn, faculty director of CAST, Kenan Sahin Distinguished Professor of Music and head of the music section in the School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences—brought together contemporary and global music to “lay bare” their increasingly blurring boundaries. Since its inception, *MIT Sounding* has been anchored by the work of renowned experimenters in contemporary music, and this series opened with a performance of work by an icon of 20th-century modernism, Karlheinz Stockhausen, who pioneered the use of found sounds and samples of global music. The diverse group of world music performers in the series ranged from the Bulgarian Kaynak Pipers Band and mbira players Fradreck Mujuru and Erica Azim, to the jazz-trained Japanese koto and shamisen player Sumie Kaneko and duo Jalal, a partnership of classical viola and Middle Eastern percussion. The series is also developing a reputation for adventurous new arrangements and commissions; the Rick and Terry Stone Concert this year featured rock icon David Bowie's final album *Blackstar* in a new arrangement by Ziporyn for cellist Maya Beiser, the inaugural Mellon Distinguished Visiting Artist, which will tour to various international venues, starting with Barcelona.

CAST's second major symposium, *Being Material*, drew 426 participants including 105 MIT students and 96 faculty and staff members. In addition, another 1,200 unique users joined the live web stream and more than 3,900 through Facebook Live (see below for more details).

## Programs

### Residency: Pedro Reyes, Dasha Zhukova Distinguished Visiting Artist

**Pedro Reyes** is the inaugural Dasha Zhukova Distinguished Visiting Artist at MIT's Center for Art, Science & Technology. During fall 2016, Reyes and Carla Fernandez developed and taught the studio subject 4.S33 [The Reverse Engineering of Warfare: Challenging Techno-Optimism and Reimagining the Defense Sector – An Opera for the End of Time](#) through MIT's Program in Art, Culture and Technology (ACT). The subject examined the relationship between technology and security, and the ethical questions that arise from the Western fixation on technological advancement. Using examples from their respective practices, Reyes and Fernandez challenged students to reimagine the pervasiveness of modern technology through experimental performance using music, installation, or both. For the final project, each student composed and directed performances in response to the subject themes, designed staging and costumes, and integrated multimedia, including sound and video.

The class took a field trip to New York to visit exhibitions, meet with curators, and attend the opening weekend of Reyes's Creative Time installation "[Doomocracy](#)."

During two visits in the spring, Reyes conducted research and developed his residency project, which will continue through fall 2017. CAST hosted roundtable discussions with Reyes and the arts scholars, and with ACT students as well as with faculty and staff. Reyes also presented "Art as Conflict Resolution," in ACT's lecture series *Double Agents*.

### Residency: Maya Beiser, Mellon Distinguished Visiting Artist

Cellist and producer Maya Beiser, Mellon Distinguished Visiting Artist at the MIT Center for Art, Science & Technology, defies categories while passionately forging a career path through uncharted territories. She has dedicated her work to reinventing solo cello performance in the mainstream classical arena. Her first visit as part of her 2017 residency was for the Terry and Rick Stone Concert, featuring a new arrangement by CAST faculty director Evan Ziporyn of *Blackstar*, David Bowie's final album. Beiser and the 60 piece Ambient Orchestra performed to an audience of 1,100 concert goers in Kresge Auditorium. The program also included a new arrangement of Erik Satie's *80 Gymnopédies* and Ziporyn's *Frog's Eye* and featured a new app called Concert Q (formerly NoteStream), developed by MIT students and Eran Egozy '95 professor and founder of Harmonix. The audience experience was enhanced with the technology as they were able to stream engaging images and facts about the performance in real time on their smartphones.



*Cellist and producer Maya Beiser, Mellon Distinguished Visiting Artist at the MIT Center for Art, Science & Technology performs David Bowie's Blackstar with the Ambient Orchestra, conducted by CAST faculty director Evan Ziporyn at Kresge Auditorium on March 3, 2017.*

*Photo by Justin Knight.*

As part of the Audible session of CAST's Being Material symposium in April, Maya Beiser performed *Just Ancient Loops*, an "orchestra of cellos" in "just" or "pure" intonation tuning to a live audience of 200, with more watching via the live stream of the concert. A collaboration between Beiser, composer Michael Harrison, and filmmaker Bill Morrison, her rapturous interpretation is based on a type of abstraction and digitization, our ongoing fascination with music as number, and how that manifests in sound and vision, tuning systems and metric cycles. Harrison composes using an elegantly expanded version of Pythagorean just intonation—alchemical intervallic numerology—layering cello resonances and textures into patterns and grooves. Morrison's film juxtaposes deteriorating archival footage with computer-generated images and visualizations of data from NASA.

### **Mellon Faculty Grant: Azra Akšamija**

Azra Akšamija, associate professor of architecture, is the inaugural CAST Mellon Faculty Fellow. She was awarded a grant for *Lightweaver*, an adaptive smart textile created through a culturally sensitive and participatory design process. The project explores how light can be integrated into textiles from artistic, technical, cultural, and design perspectives, with the aim of affecting the emotional and cultural needs of communities affected by conflict and crisis. The *Lightweaver* project expands the notion of shelter beyond physical protection: lighting becomes a means to preserve cultural memory and provide a sense of home and belonging for refugees. The process of making is aimed at fostering transcultural and transdisciplinary exchange, while providing an alternative form of education for young people in refugee camps.

During the spring semester, Akšamija and MIT students enrolled in 4.302 Foundations in Art, Design, and Spatial Practices and 4.S33 Special Subject: Art, Culture and Technology conducted research and prototyped textiles. Akšamija organized a workshop with five MIT students, students and faculty from the German-Jordanian University in Amman, Jordan, and Syrian refugees at the Al Azraq camp. The workshop participants mapped problems and identified needs, which were used to invent design solutions that can be reproduced and multiplied in the camp. Akšamija has been successful in strengthening connections between refugee communities and their cultural backgrounds and artistic craftsman capabilities as well as providing a form of education through mutual learning. Akšamija will conduct additional workshops during the summer in the Al Azraq refugee camp.

### **Fay Chandler Faculty Creativity Seed Grant: Anna Kohler, *MYTHO? Or the Lure of Wildness***

*MYTHO? Or the Lure of Wildness* is a surround-sensorial theatrical experience and experiment, conceived and performed by Anna Kohler and directed by Caleb Hammond, lecturers in the MIT music and theater section. In the workshop phase, the production delved into the areas of a stage actor's performance that overlap with cinematography and with a painter's vision of the human model. Later, the performance, which included several MIT students and alumni, was further developed to create a full sensory experience. The project adapted immersive technology to surround the audience with the aromas of Morocco, Paris, and the south of France, and used autonomous sensory meridian response (ASMR) as a performance technique. This incorporation of

emerging scientific technologies with avant-garde approaches to performance expanded the potential for finding art in science and using science in art. The October workshop performances at Boston Playwrights' Theatre were attended by 280 members of the Boston and MIT communities, and the premiere run in December at Abrons Art Center in New York City drew an audience of 400.

### **Residency: Christian Bök**

Christian Bök has spent the last 15 years working to create an unkillable poem, the *Xenotext*, which may shed light on long-term storage methods for texts. For this ongoing poetry project, Bök uses what he refers to as a “chemical alphabet” to encipher a poem into the genome of *Deinococcus radiodurans*, a bacterium capable of outlasting terrestrial civilization. To create the code, or chemical alphabet, he ascribed letters of the alphabet to the three-letter combinations of A (for adenine), C (for cytosine), G (for guanine), and T (for thiamine) that describe the order of nucleotides in a DNA molecule.

Once integrated into the organism, Bök’s poem acts as a set of instructions that cause the bacterium to manufacture a protein. This response, according to his original chemical alphabet, is itself another text. The *Xenotext* therefore acts as both a repository for texts and a poetry-writing machine. The set of poems is at once dystopian and aspirational, pastoral and futuristic.

During Bök’s residency with Nick Montfort, professor of digital media in Comparative Media Studies/Writing (CMS/W), they collaborated on a poetry project and connected with MIT faculty, students, and researchers in the biosciences to advance the genetic engineering and proteomic engineering phases for the *Xenotext*. Bök also met with CMS/W undergraduate and graduate classes and presented a public lecture entitled “The Poetics of Protein 13: The Writing of Genetic Sonnets,” and a poetry reading “The Unkillable Poet: Excerpts from *The Xenotext* (Book 1).”

### **Residency: Agnieszka Kurant**

Conceptual interdisciplinary artist Agnieszka Kurant explores how complex social, economic, and cultural systems can operate in ways that confuse distinctions between fiction and reality or nature and culture. She investigates the economy of the invisible, in which immaterial and imaginary entities, fictions, phantoms, and emergent processes influence political and economic systems. As the AY2017 Ida Ely Rubin Artist in Residence at CAST, Kurant collaborated with Boris Katz, principal research scientist at MIT’s Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory (CSAIL) and head of the InfoLab Group, to explore the crossover between collective intelligence and artificial intelligence. Kurant and Katz are analyzing how collective intelligence and emergence—in nature and culture—could be applied to creativity and art production. Their research will be used to develop crowd-sourced artworks that will be shaped and animated by a new creative class: workers in online, crowdsourcing marketplace platforms.

During Kurant’s three visits to MIT in AY2017, she met with Katz and InfoLab researchers and students to develop a system that takes images and amalgamates the inputs into one essence of a three-dimensional object. The collaboration will continue through fall 2017.

### Residency: Karim Ben Khelifa

In collaboration with D. Fox Harrell, associate professor of digital media and director of the Imagination, Computation, and Expression (ICE) Laboratory, CAST visiting artist Karim Ben Khelifa has developed an immersive virtual reality (VR) installation to bring the audience into conversations between enemies within longstanding global conflicts. Harrell is human-computer interaction producer on the project and has introduced a dynamic model for *The Enemy* that responds to user behaviors, nervousness, and biases. This model impacts the narrative through dialogue, experiences and effects in the virtual world, transformations of users' virtual identity, and more.

During an intensive visit in the fall semester, Ben Khelifa and teams from Emissive and Camera Lucida presented an updated prototype of *The Enemy* to 65 MIT faculty, staff, and students. The teams worked with ICE Lab researchers to refine measurement modifications in the VR prototype such as user responses including increase in stress, cognitive load, or emotion, which are detected by an algorithm that customizes user experiences and adjusts the VR program based on peak detection parameters. During the fall visit, the *New York Times* reporter Randy Kennedy participated in the prototype demonstration and later published "[Meeting 'the Other' Face to Face.](#)"

Ben Khelifa, Harrell, and ICE Lab researchers, including PhD student Danielle Olson, continue to refine methods for tracking user reactions to create individualized experiences. *The Enemy* premiered in May 2017 at the Institut du monde arabe in Paris, and the [MIT Museum](#) will host the North American premiere in October 2017.

### Residency: Tomás Saraceno

Visiting Artist Tomás Saraceno continued the *Aerocene* project with Lodovica Illari, senior lecturer in Earth, Atmospheric and Planetary Sciences (EAPS), Glenn Flierl, professor of oceanography, and Bill McKenna, research associate in EAPS. *Aerocene* is an artistic and scientific exploration of environmental issues that promotes links among social, mental, and environmental ecologies. *Aerocene* manifests as a series of air-fuelled sculptures, lifted by the sun and carried by the wind, to demonstrate the possibilities of emission-free flight.

Saraceno's *Aerocene* sculpture installation was featured at the 2017 World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos-Klosters, Switzerland, accompanied by the [Aerosolar Trajectory Predictor Tool](#) developed at MIT by Illari and Flierl. Illari, Flierl, and McKenna developed the software, visualizations, and interface for the project's trajectories display with support from CAST. More than 200 WEF participants tested the interactive online simulation, which allows users to virtually launch an *Aerocene* sculpture and explore how evolving wind patterns affect where the structure floats, using wind forecast data from the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association Global Forecast System. At WEF, Saraceno also participated in a discussion that envisioned a world [beyond the anthropocene](#). Saraceno's collaboration with EAPS will continue and *Aerocene* will be presented at MIT during the 2018 Cambridge Science Festival.

Saraceno also continues to collaborate with Markus J. Buehler, professor and head of the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering (CEE), whose groundbreaking research in the structural makeup of silk webs complements Saraceno's own pioneering

cross-disciplinary explorations in visualizing 3-D webs. Saraceno; Buehler; Zhao Qin, research scientist in CEE; and Isabelle Su, CEE graduate student, are developing new methods of creative modeling to learn more about the structural properties of the silk web, and its complex network of connected proteins. Su presented this research at the Society of Engineering Science 54th Annual Technical Meeting at Northeastern University in July 2017.

### **Residency: Erica Azim and Fradreck Mujuru**

Visiting artists Erica Azim and Fradreck Mujuru shared their passion for traditional forms of Shona music of Zimbabwe through concerts, lecture demonstrations, and hands-on mbira (thumb piano) workshops at MIT. Performer and master craftsman Fradreck Mujuru is widely considered the greatest living maker of the intricately designed and spiritually potent mbira dzavadzimu, and Erica Azim is a respected performer and leading American teacher of Shona mbira music, an entrancing and virtuosic tradition. During their three-week residency at MIT in October, they visited several sections of 21M.030 Introduction to World Music classes and a 21M.293 Music of Africa class, teaching 80 students the art and history of the mbira. Mujuru led two weekend-long workshops with 20 students on building mbiras from scratch in the MIT Metals Lab, where Mujuru and the students carved wood bases, forged metal keys, and tuned two complete mbiras, which now reside with MIT Music and Theater Arts.

As part of the African instrument-making residency, MIT's Lamine Touré ran a children's workshop on creating drums from found objects on October 22 for 12 children from the Cambridge community, followed by a short drum lesson on sabar drums from Senegal. Azim and Mujuru presented their work with the students and gave a short performance to 50 members of CAMIT at their 2016 annual meeting. As the capstone of their residency, Azim and Mujuru performed in Killian Hall on October 30 to 60 audience members, featuring a video of Mujuru and the students building mbiras during the weekend workshops.

### **Residency: Jacob Collier**

*Imagination Off The Charts—Jacob Collier at MIT*, Jacob Collier's first-ever college residency, brought together the MIT Festival Jazz Ensemble, MIT's Ben Bloomberg, and other members of the MIT music community. In 2014, Collier began working with Bloomberg (a graduate student at the MIT Media Lab), who helped transform Collier's video productions into live, one-man-show performances. Bloomberg also designed and created a custom, unique vocal harmonizer, which has provided Collier a way to simultaneously combine his vocal and keyboard talents live.

Collier's December residency at MIT—culminating with a nearly sold-out concert in Kresge Auditorium on December 10 with over 1,000 audience members—involved several first-time elements. Performing a number of compositions from Collier's 2016 debut recording "In My Room," the MIT Festival Jazz Ensemble (FJE), Collier, and others premiered arrangements of "Down the Line," "Saviour," (created by Jamshied Sharifi) and "Hajanga," arranged for big band and orchestra by Collier himself. The concert also featured a newly created experimental improvisation system developed by Bloomberg, allowing Collier to communicate with members of the FJE in real time,

sending fragments of musical notation, articulation and other directions to mobile devices of the musicians. This concert was the first time Bloomberg and Collier explored how such a system may be used to generate spontaneous large-scale arrangements, with the goal of allowing both the performers and Collier to be more emotionally connected to each other and the audience.

This concert brought together the MIT FJE, Bloomberg, the MIT Vocal Jazz Ensemble (VJE), a large choir from MIT, Boston Arts Academy, Berklee College of Music, New England Conservatory, and University of New Hampshire, and a symphony orchestra composed of MIT and Berklee students. In addition to the concert, Collier gave a public lecture on December 7, sharing his creative process with 120 members of the MIT community.



*Visiting artist Jacob Collier performs with student musicians at MIT's Kresge Auditorium on December 10, 2016. Photo by Justin Knight.*

#### **Class: 4.S67 Landscape Experience: Seminar in Land/Art**

In fall 2016, Rebecca Uchill, CAST postdoctoral fellow, in collaboration with Caroline A. Jones, professor from History, Theory, and Criticism of Architecture and Art, offered 4.S67 Landscape Experience: Seminar in Land/Art, which examined “land” as a genre, theme, and medium of art and architecture of the last five decades. Focusing largely on work in the United States, the subject explored how the use of land in art and architecture is bound to complicated entanglements of property and power, the inheritances of non-US traditions, and how the term “landscape” is deployed in the service of a range of political and philosophical positions.

CAST provided support for the field trip through the southwestern United States to visit several significant landscape art installations, including Nancy Holt’s *Sun Tunnels*, Michael Heizer’s *Double Negative*, Walter De Maria’s *The Lightning Field*, Donald Judd’s artworks in the town of Marfa, Robert Smithson’s *Spiral Jetty*, and others. In addition to the art installations, the group of two MIT instructors and 13 MIT graduate students had the opportunity to visit sites such as the Navajo Nation Council Chambers and White Sands Test Facility to learn about the socio-political and military history of the lands of which the art installations are a part. In November 2016, students presented [The Travelogue of the Undocumentable](#), a video about the trip that brings together their individual voices and experiences, at the Lavine Lecture at the List Visual Arts Center.

The subject has been selected for inclusion in [MIT’s OpenCourseWare](#) online resource repository.



### Lecture Series: Hacking VR

Throughout the spring semester, MIT Open Documentary Lab hosted Hacking VR, a [series of talks](#) by distinguished virtual reality storytellers who explore how the medium is evolving and what works—or doesn't.

The lecture series complemented [CMS.S60/CMS.S96 Hacking VR: Exploring Oculus and Immersive Media Production](#) taught by William Uricchio, professor of comparative media studies and principal investigator of the Open Documentary Lab; Sandra Rodriguez, lecturer and visiting scholar at the Open Documentary Lab; and Deniz Tortum, research assistant and graduate student at the Open Documentary Lab. The subject and lecture series enabled the MIT community to experiment with VR technologies and explore new approaches to immersive storytelling. The lunchtime lecture series surveyed historical developments and current innovation in virtual reality—gear, software, and storytelling techniques. CAST provided support for the 12 guest speakers and eight lectures, which were attended by more than 300 members of the MIT community and general public.

### Symposium: Being Material

[Being Material](#), the MIT Center for Art, Science & Technology's second international symposium, used Nicholas Negroponte's book *Being Digital* as a touchstone to explore the current, and sometimes unexpected, convergence of the digital and material worlds across many disciplines. Convened by Stefan Helmreich, section head and Elting E. Morison Professor of Anthropology; Leila W. Kinney, executive director of Arts Initiatives and MIT CAST; Skylar Tibbits, assistant professor of architecture and co-director of the Self-Assembly Lab; Rebecca Uchill, CAST postdoctoral fellow and lecturer in the Department of Architecture; and Evan Ziporyn, Kenan Sahin Distinguished Professor, head of Music and Theater Arts, and faculty director of MIT CAST. Organized around four sessions and musical performances—Programmable, Wearable, Livable, Invisible, and Audible—the symposium showcased recent developments in materials systems and design, placing this work in dialogue with kindred and contrasting philosophy, art practice and critique.

Negroponte opened the two-day event with a talk entitled "Been Digital," a reflection on his pioneering work in the MIT Media Lab and the future scenario he anticipates, in which biotechnology will be the "new digital." Many of the panelists' work in this domain supports Negroponte's prediction, including synthetic biologist Tal Danino's research into programming bacteria to detect cancer cells and biologist and artist Christina Agapakis's bioart objects, such as cheese made from bacteria found on the human body.

In addition to examining how materiality has reasserted itself since the digital revolution and how the digital-material divide is porous at best, the 24 speakers also addressed the broader social, environmental, and political ramifications of their work. "One of the lessons we learned [at the symposium] is that our machines have people inside them—social relations and economic relations are built into the technologies that we create even when those are at scales we cannot see. So, programmable matter, even at the nanoscale, is something that has to be thought of sociologically, culturally, and politically," says Helmreich.



*Lucy McRae and Christina Agapakis  
present at the Being Material  
symposium, April 21-22, 2017.*

*Photo by L. Barry Hetherington.*

### **MIT Sounding: Simon Smith**

Launching the AY2017 season of *MIT Sounding*, pianist Simon Smith brought his courageous and prodigious musicality to MIT for a rare all-Karlheinz Stockhausen program, featuring career-spanning selections from the seminal German composer's 19 Klavierstücke (Piano Pieces), composed by Stockhausen over a 50-year period from 1952–2003. Smith's public performance in Killian Hall on September 23 drew 100 guests, and his September 21 composer forum on Stockhausen's work was attended by 20 members of the MIT community. His class visits to Tod Machover's MAS.S68 *Here, There and Everywhere: The Future of Music in Sound, Space and Place* and Keeril Makan's 21M.310 *Techniques of 20th-Century Composition* reached more than 45 students.

### **MIT Sounding: Kaynak Pipers Band**

Kaynak Pipers Band uses the kaba gaida (or Rhodope Mountains bagpipe) to create an avant-garde compositional experience of their folk roots. The band's appearance at MIT was part of their first US tour, an effort to make kaba gaida accessible to more people globally. They worked with eight MIT world music students in an interactive workshop focusing on the history of kaynak bagpipes and traditional Bulgarian singing and dancing. Their performance in Killian Hall on September 28 exposed 75 members of the Boston community to the progressive musical qualities of this traditional form, ending in a group dance with the performers and audience together.

### **MIT Sounding: Joe Lovano**

Joe Lovano's longstanding collaboration with MIT faculty and students dates back to a 2002 performance of works by senior lecturer Mark Harvey with the MIT Festival Jazz Ensemble under the direction of Fred Harris. The sold out October 4 concert honored Lovano's mentor and collaborator, the late Boston musical titan Gunther Schuller, in a quartet performance of Schuller's music by Lovano, Harris, vocalist Judi Silvano, and MIT affiliated artist Keala Kaumeheiwa. Lovano also joined violinist Young-Nam Kim, affiliated artist and collaborative pianist at MIT Eileen Huang, and cellist Katherine McShane in a performance of MIT composer and professor of music Peter Child's *Moonsculptures*. The 150 concertgoers also enjoyed a guest solo by legendary Third Stream pianist and educator Ran Blake.

### **MIT Sounding: World Music Day featuring Sumie Kaneko**

World Music Day showcased MIT's world music ensembles and celebrated their non-Western cultures. The events on December 3 began with a Gamelan Galak Tika concert, bringing together traditional and new music from Bali, Senegal, and Japan, featuring MIT ensembles in performance with master musicians Samuel Solomon, Lamine Touré, and visiting artist Sumie Kaneko. Kaneko, a Japanese koto and shamisen player and jazz singer and songwriter, is a master in the traditional repertoire of these ancient instruments and has also pioneered their use in jazz and experimental music. The concert included world premieres by Evan Ziporyn and Sam Schmetterer, traditional Balinese and Senegalese dance, a solo set by Kaneko, and the debut of Cambridge Youth Gamelan, Anak Tika.

Following the gamelan concert was a food festival featuring the cuisines of Senegal and Indonesia, segueing into a concert by Rambax, MIT's Senegalese drumming ensemble led by Lamine Touré. Four hundred concertgoers attended the day's festivities.

### **MIT Sounding: Nik Bärtsch's MOBILE**

Swiss composer and pianist Nik Bärtsch's music seamlessly blends the hypnotic shifting textures of postminimalism with a precision groove honed in the spirit of James Brown. Mainly known in the United States for his amplified RONIN ensemble, Bärtsch has recently explored a new palette of chamber music-like colors with his acoustic MOBILE ensemble, featured on his critically acclaimed 2016 ECM album *Continuum*. The group, featuring the equally unique and essential bass clarinet virtuoso Sha, as well as bass and drums, made its Boston-area public debut on January 5 with this single Killian Hall appearance to 80 audience members.

### **MIT Sounding: duoJalal**

DuoJalal's diverse and stunning artistry captures the spirit of our global society. Duo partners, violaist Kathryn Lockwood and percussionist Yousif Sheronick, have a chamber music foundation but skillfully move from classical to klezmer, traditional Middle Eastern music to jazz. Sheronick gave a composer forum entitled "Bringing World Music and Improvisation to Classical Compositions," exploring his experiences with classical Western composers (including Evan Ziporyn) and how he and Lockwood adapt world and improv elements into their performances. They presented commissions and adaptations from such composers as Kenji Bunch, Zhao Jiping, and David Krakauer to 20 members of the MIT community. Their performance to 75 audience members in Killian Hall on February 23 focused on work from their latest album, *The Rumi Experience*—designed to cultivate "sama," or deep listening—combining Rumi's poetry with commissioned works by composers Evan Ziporyn and Lev Zhurbin.

### **MIT Sounding: MIT Symphony Orchestra**

The central mission of the MIT Symphony Orchestra (MITSO) is the cultural enhancement of education at MIT by promoting music performance at the highest level of artistic excellence among MIT students, by nurturing new works and young artists, and by developing and sustaining the widest possible audience. The orchestra's repertoire centers around postromantic masterpieces and 20th-century classics, as well

as works by MIT composers. MITSO's March 17 concert in Kresge Auditorium was attended by 500 and featured Institute Professor John Harbison's "Double Concerto for Oboe and Clarinet," with solos by alumnus Paul Ragaller and professor of the practice Eran Egozy. The program also included Haydn's "Symphony no. 100" and Shostakovich's "Symphony no. 5."

### **MIT Sounding: Luciana Souza and Guillermo Klein**

Two of South America's greatest jazz artists, Luciana Souza and Guillermo Klein, joined the MIT Wind Ensemble, MIT Festival Jazz Ensemble, and MIT Vocal Jazz Ensemble in creating innovative new compositions and arrangements. The performance on April 28 in Kresge Auditorium to 600 guests was the culmination of Souza and Klein's MIT residency and a semester-long exploration of their music by the three MIT student ensembles. The evening's highlight was the world premiere of "Works on Hope" by Klein for Souza and the MIT Wind Ensemble to perform under the direction of Fred Harris. During a preconcert talk as part of ArtWeek, VJE director Liz Tobias and select MIT students discussed collaborating with Souza and Klein, the rationale behind the project, and the challenges and rewards of developing new works remotely and onsite with guest artists.

## **Communications**

### **Media Coverage**

CAST continued to work with public relations agency Resnicow and Associates for AY2017 to generate greater media coverage of the visiting artist program, the CAST symposium Being Material, and the Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts at MIT.

The *New York Times* published on October 26, 2017 (in print October 30, 2016) a feature article, "[Meeting 'the Other' Face to Face](#)," about the collaboration between visiting artist Karim Ben Khelifa and associate professor in CSAIL and CMS/W D. Fox Harrell on the virtual reality project *The Enemy*. This article was reposted on social media and the arts portal and republished in the CMS/W magazine, *In Medias Res*.

The CAST symposium Being Material received significant press coverage from *Dezeen*, *SciArt Magazine*, *Discover Magazine*, and *Frieze* magazine, almost all of which had writers come from New York to MIT specifically to cover the symposium. Precoverage mentions of the symposium appeared in *Art in America* and *Surface*. A journalist from *Metropolis* magazine came to MIT twice this year resulting in mentions of an architecture lecture as well as a publication by associate professor of architecture Gediminas Urbonas.

*MIT Sounding*, the CAST new music series, was covered in articles in the *Boston Globe* and *Dig Boston*, and on NPR, 90.9 WBUR, and 89.7 WGBH radio broadcast programs. The programs included interviews with Mellon Distinguished Visiting Artist Maya Beiser and faculty director Evan Ziporyn about their collaboration for the David Bowie *Blackstar* cello concerto arranged by Ziporyn and performed by Beiser and a full orchestra.

The Boston Globe continued to cover the MIT Museum Kurtz Gallery of Photography exhibitions, as they have for nearly every exhibition since the gallery opened.

## Website

Traffic to the [arts portal](#) increased 15% since last year with more than 130,000 unique visitors from July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017. After the homepage, the most frequented pages were the Student Art Association, Being Material symposium, About CAST, Arts Events Calendar, Visiting Artists, and Academic section listings. After a redesign of the visiting artist pages, the average amount of time users spent in this section has increased by 25%.

## Writing

In AY2017 CAST published 46 blog posts and produced 51 MIT News articles. CAST research writer Sharon Lacey wrote the majority of these posts and articles, and outside freelancer Amelia Mason wrote about *MIT Sounding*. The most popular blog post, “[Biologic’s Living Textile](#),” reached more than 1,280 readers. Articles on the Arts at MIT blog featured visual and performing art works made or produced by MIT visiting artists (17 articles), MIT faculty (13 articles), and MIT students (12 articles), as well as exhibitions and arts events on campus (four articles).

The 2017 CAST symposium Being Material warranted multiple articles. Prior to the symposium, CAST featured individual interviews with the five conveners on the blog. We also conducted video interviews with speakers, MIT faculty, and students during the two-day event. Lacey’s overview piece about the symposium, “[The Convergence of Bits and Atoms](#),” was published by Voices in Contemporary Art.

In addition, this year’s coverage emphasized the work of student artists, including recipients of the [Wiesner Student Art Awards](#), [Schnitzer Prize](#) in the Visual Arts, [Louis Sudler Prize](#), and the [Creative Arts Competition](#) winners. Exceptional collaborations between MIT students and faculty were also highlighted on our blog, including [Ben Bloomberg’s contribution to Jacob Collier’s residency](#), and [Nathan Gutierrez’s work on Concert Q](#) (formerly NoteStream).

## Electronic Communications

The Arts at MIT continued publishing the very well-received biannual alumni newsletter, which is sent to 11,480 individuals worldwide. In an effort to consolidate some of the clutter of multiple e-blasts about arts events, Arts at MIT continued to distribute a weekly email [newsletter](#) to a list that grew from 2,200 to 3,100 subscribers in one year; it lists all arts events and exhibitions on campus, press clips that appeared during the week, blog posts, and campus news articles.

## Social Media and Video

Our social media efforts this year resulted in significant metric increases across platforms.

- The Arts at MIT [Facebook](#) following increased by 50%;
- The Arts at MIT [Twitter](#) following increased by 19%;
- The Arts at MIT [Instagram](#) following increased by 53%; and,
- The Arts at MIT [Flickr](#) views increased by 92%.

This year we focused intently on the social media campaign for Being Material, a symposium hosted by the CAST. We took primarily to Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to promote the two-day conference, which showcased recent developments in materials systems and design, placing this work in dialogue with kindred and contrasting philosophy, art practice, and critique. We implemented the hashtag #BeingMaterial to tie together our cross-promotional efforts. The hashtag was used by panelists, guests, and our international audience in anticipation of, during, and following the symposium. Approximately 1,200 viewers joined the symposium via the livestream on our website, representing more than 45 countries including Australia, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Peru, and the United Kingdom. We also experimented with Facebook Live on both days of the event from which we witnessed global engagement reaching 14,569 people (2,564 video views) on day one, and 9,509 people (1,399 video views) on day two.

## **Council for the Arts at MIT**

### **Current Goals**

Rachel Bennett was appointed director of the [Council for the Arts at MIT](#) in September 2017. Working closely with the executive director of arts initiatives, the associate provost with responsibility for the arts, and the executive committee of the council, she is responsible for long-range planning, implementation of strategic vision, recruitment of new members, and the overall fiscal and operational activities of the council.

### **Eugene McDermott Award Selection Committee (Susan Poduska, chair)**

The Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts at MIT was established in 1974 by Margaret McDermott in honor of her husband, a co-founder of Texas Instruments. It is awarded every other year to an artist in any field who has shown both great achievement and promise of future great achievement.

The McDermott Award Selection Committee met throughout the year and selected the 2018 recipient, who will be announced in fall 2017.

### **Awards Committee (Ann Allen, chair)**

Garrett Parrish '17 received the 2017 Louis Sudler Prize in the Arts for his outstanding musical performance, large-scale media performance, and work at the intersection of technology and the humanities. The Louis Sudler Prize recognizes a graduating senior who has demonstrated excellence or the highest standards of proficiency in any artistic discipline.

The Laya and Jerome B. Wiesner Student Art Awards are presented annually to up to four students (undergraduate or graduate), living groups, organizations, or activities for outstanding achievement in and contributions to the arts at MIT. The AY2017 winners were: Jacob Gunter '17, Nathan Gutierrez '17, Rachel Osmundsen '17, and Hallie Voulgaris '17.

First prize for the Harold and Arlene Schnitzer Prize in the Visual Arts was awarded to Ani Liu, second prize was awarded to Angel Chia Ling Chen, third prize was awarded to Jessica Rinland, and honorable mention was awarded to Anne Graziano and Edwina Portocarrero. The Harold and Arlene Schnitzer Prize was established in 1996 through an endowment from Harold and Arlene Schnitzer of Portland, Oregon, and awards first prize \$5,000, second prize \$3,000, third prize \$2,000, and honorable mentions \$1,000.

### **Annual Meeting Committee (Wendy Kistler, chair)**

Forty-three CAMIT members and guests, in addition to MIT students, faculty, and staff, attended the 44th annual meeting on October 26–28, 2016. This year’s annual meeting began with a grants committee meeting followed by an informal dinner at Café ArtScience on Wednesday, October 26. Thursday, October 27 featured the business meeting, with a report on the state of the Arts at MIT by Associate Provost Philip Khoury and Executive Director of Arts Initiatives Leila Kinney. Caroline Jones, John Ochsendorf, and Debora Mesa gave a report about SA+P’s recent participation in the Venice Architecture Biennale. Attendees enjoyed lunch in the new Samberg Conference Center, followed by architecture tours of the Building 2 renovation and an arts showcase featuring Fred Harris, Peter Houk, and other recent CAMIT grants recipients. That evening, the group enjoyed dinner at the Academy of Arts and Sciences, with remarks by Khoury and CAMIT chair Rick Stone, followed by a wonderful performance by Daniel Parker ’16, a recipient of the Louis Sudler Prize in the Arts currently enrolled in Juilliard’s graduate program. Friday, October 28 featured a visit to the Harvard Art Museum and lunch at the Harvard Faculty Club, followed by a hard hat tour of the new theater arts building with Professor Jay Scheib and a sculpture dedication ceremony with artist Ursula von Rydingsvard and CAMIT member Lore Harp McGovern at the McGovern Institute.

### **Grants Committee (Colleen Messing, chair)**

This year, the CAMIT grants committee awarded \$133,789 to support 44 projects by students, faculty, and staff. Some highlights include the following:

- Undergraduates Magnus Johnson and Jessie Wang for the newly formed MIT Animation Club;
- Professor Daniel Jackson for *Soulsong: Portraits of Resilience*, a book that will be published by the MIT Press using photographs and interviews to celebrate members of the MIT community who have demonstrated resilience in the face of depression; and,
- Undergraduate Julia Rue for The Borderline Mural Project, a mural project in the tunnels created by more than 25 MIT-affiliated artists. The mural project also uses augmented reality and a mobile app.

Projects funded this year represent six undergraduate recipients, five projects by student group recipients, 19 graduate student recipients, nine faculty and lecturer recipients, and five staff recipients. (Graduate student recipients include 10 ACT students, four Architecture students, four Media Lab students, and one CMS/W student.) The Director’s Grants program supported 39 projects and distributed \$10,000.

### **Membership and Nominating Committee (Hyun-A Park, chair)**

At the end of fiscal year 2017, the council membership totaled 76 full members. It also had eight ex officio members, two honorary members, and nine associate members. Recruitment was particularly strong in summer 2016, and the council welcomed 10 new members this fiscal year: David Altshuler, George Beal, Valeria Degroof, Larisa Leventon, Bethany Millard, Sachi Sato, Lawrence Sayah, Robert Warren Stearns, Doreen Wang, and Tracy Taylor Wydra. Longtime members Leo Beranek, E. Verner Johnson, and Joan Rudy passed away; Gerald M. Appelstein and Federica Olivares resigned this year.

## **Annual Allocations and Ticket/Membership Programs**

This year, the council continued its annual support for the List Visual Arts Center, the MIT Museum, the CAST visiting artists program, the Student Art Association, the MIT Program in Art, Culture and Technology, and other arts organizations on campus. It also continued to underwrite Boston-area museum memberships for MIT students to the Museum of Fine Arts, the Institute of Contemporary Art, the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, and the Harvard Art Museums. CAMIT also supported discounted or free tickets to local performing arts organizations, including the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the Boston Ballet, and several Boston-area music ensembles. Lastly, the council continued to provide funding for tickets to specific arts events requested by faculty to supplement course syllabi.

## **Excursions**

### ***Western Massachusetts (November 4–5, 2016)***

Nineteen CAMIT members and guests, in addition to MIT staff, attended a short trip to western Massachusetts. Starting on Friday, November 4, the group enjoyed lunch and a tour of MASS MoCA, including the newly opened Nick Cave exhibition, with Denise Markonish, curator of contemporary art. Later that evening, the group enjoyed a private dinner at Mezze in Williamstown. Saturday, November 5 concluded the short trip with docent-led tours and lunch at the Clark Art Institute, followed by a tour of the Williams College Museum of Art, led by Lisa Dorin, deputy director of curatorial affairs.

### ***San Francisco (April 24–28, 2017)***

Fifteen CAMIT members and guests, in addition to MIT staff, enjoyed a week together in San Francisco. The trip began on Monday, April 24 with a private visit to Pier 24 Photography, followed by a welcome dinner at Mourad. On Tuesday, April 25, SFMOMA opened early for the group and they enjoyed *Stillness in Motion – Cloud Cities*, a new, site-specific exhibition by Tomás Saraceno, the inaugural visiting artist at the Center for Art, Science & Technology, followed by lunch at In Situ, SFMOMA's restaurant. Later that day, they visited Gretchen and John Berggruen's private collection, followed by dinner at One Market and a performance by celebrated American pianist Murray Perahia at the San Francisco Symphony. On Wednesday, April 26, the group visited the Asian Art Museum, where they were greeted by Jay Xu, director of the Asian Art Museum, and Karin Oen PhD '12 curator of contemporary art (and a recent graduate of the History, Theory, and Criticism program). They continued to the California Academy of Arts and Sciences and the DeYoung Museum, where they enjoyed lunch and a tour by Emma Acker, curator of American Art; they were greeted by Max Hollein, director of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco. Next, they toured Minnesota Street Project, a visionary mixed use space for San Francisco artists and were greeted by founders Deborah and Andy Rappaport. A busy day concluded with a lively performance at Beach Blanket Babylon, followed by a quick dinner at Original Joe's. On Thursday, April 27, the group visited California wine country, starting in Napa with a tour and wine tasting at the Hess Winery and Art Collection and ending in West Marin with a private tour and outdoor lunch at the McEvoy Ranch estate. Thursday evening concluded with the group selecting to enjoy a performance by the Wayne Shorter Quartet at the SF Jazz Center or a performance by the Paul Taylor Dance Company at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts. Friday, April 28 concluded the trip, with a



visit to the Computer History Museum, where the group was greeted by president and chief executive officer John C. Hollar in the morning, followed by a private lunch at Zola in Palo Alto. During the afternoon, the group traveled to Stanford University, where they met Matthew Tiews, Stanford's associate vice president for the arts, and enjoyed tours of the McMurtry Building for the Department of Art and Art History, the Cantor Arts Center, the Anderson Collection, and the Bing Concert Hall. The excursion concluded with dinner at CAMIT member Lore McGovern's home in Hillsborough.

### **Student Programs**

Student arts programs include the Freshman Arts Seminar Advising Program, Arts Scholars (a program endowed by the Council for the Arts at MIT), the Grad Arts Forum, and the START program, which includes the \$15,000 Creative Arts Competition and the START Studio.

Sam Magee, manager of student arts programs, oversees these programs, as well as exhibitions at the Wiesner Student Gallery, and supports the director of the Council for the Arts for student arts awards, prizes, and grants.

### **Arts Scholars**

The [Arts Scholars](#), founded in 1989, is a select group of undergraduate and graduate students who share a special interest in the arts. The Arts Scholars calendar includes excursions to on-campus and local arts events. An expert in the relevant discipline accompanies students on each excursion. Discussion, learning from the expertise of the guest, and the arts experience positively affect students' lives and their studies at MIT.

In AY2017, we hosted 49 Arts Scholars that represent every class, from freshmen to PhD candidates. We had 31 undergraduates and 18 graduates. Of that number, 38 were women and 11 were men. We conducted spring term interviews to fill the spots vacated by graduating students, and will have 50 Arts Scholars for AY2018. This year's Arts Scholars calendar included a trip to the Metropolitan Opera House, the Peabody Essex Museum, the Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston, the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and more. The group was accompanied by artists, curators, journalists, and scholars. The overlap with the Arts at MIT visiting artist program has also provided great access and insight to the MIT Arts Scholars. In addition to the excursions, the Arts Scholars are asked to give back to the community by acting as mentors for other MIT students interested in the arts and as volunteers for MIT arts-related events.

The Arts Scholars have continued to evolve as effective ambassadors for the arts by becoming increasingly involved with the resources and opportunities the Office for the Arts at MIT offers. For example, we have managed to increase the student applications to the CAMIT grants cycle, offering funds for arts initiatives to the MIT community. The Arts Scholars also exhibited a group show as the inaugural opening for the newly renovated Wiesner Student Gallery in the Stratton Student Center.

Arts Scholars alumni continue to spread the word after graduation about the vibrant arts scene on campus. The number of applicants increased and the selection process is more focused and streamlined. The Arts Scholars program has become a selective and dynamic organization that looks to continue to increase their impact for AY2018.

### Graduate Arts Forum

The [MIT Graduate Arts Forum](#) is designed to build an interdisciplinary community of graduate students who admire or create art as part of their graduate studies or through independent practice. This was the Graduate Arts Forum's 14th year. We enjoyed continued collaboration with the Graduate Student Council. The largest of our events, the Grad Arts Showcase, provided graduate students an opportunity to present their work to the larger MIT graduate student body. This event, in its eighth year, generated discussions around creative thinking and practice that help stimulate research and ensure communication among disciplines. This year's Grad Arts Showcase was visited by more than 350 students and 20 MIT artists.

### START Programs

The [START Studio](#) is an ideation and maker space for student arts-focused enterprises. Students from around the Institute signed up for to use the space to work on their projects and have 24-hour access to the studio. The space includes a 3-D printer, 48-inch plotter, filming and editing equipment, and more. The START Studio is a practical space for students to prototype and grow their arts enterprises. At the end of AY2017 there were 70 students cleared to use the maker space.

### Wiesner Student Art Gallery

The newly renovated [Wiesner Student Art Gallery](#), located on the second floor of the Stratton Student Center (W20), was reserved for a show each month. The exhibitions ranged in media from photography to installation and in format from solo shows to group exhibitions of student art award recipients. The monthly exhibition openings are growing in popularity. As the reputation of the gallery grows, demand has increased, as has the breadth and quality of the student art that is being exhibited for the MIT community. The student curator and assistant for the Wiesner Student Art Gallery and the Student Art Association, Carmen Castaños, has been crucial to our success. Castaños is an Arts Scholar and has done a wonderful job overseeing the space, artists, and vibrant shows.



*The newly renovated Wiesner Student Art Gallery in W20. Photo by Sam Magee.*

## Student Art Association

The [Student Art Association](#), founded in 1969, is a suite of three studios overseen by Stacy Pyron DeBartolo that provides space for hands-on exploration of the visual arts, photography, and ceramics. This year, the SAA offered more than 60 classes during the fall, spring, summer, and independent activities period (IAP). Total enrollments for the year were nearly 700, of which 60% were matriculated MIT students; the balance consisted of staff, alumni, and spouses of students, staff, and alumni. This year, in consultation with the executive director of arts initiatives and the manager of student arts programs, DeBartolo made the mission-based decision to give priority registration to matriculated students one week prior to opening general registration for other MIT community members.

The SAA continues to collaborate with the MIT-Singapore University of Technology and Design Office to offer art classes in architectural drawing and ceramics to a mix of MIT and SUTD students over three weeks in IAP and eight weeks in the summer.

The SAA hosted two ceramics master classes this year, welcoming Miraku Kamei, a 15th-generation master potter of the Takatori ware, and Nicole Aquillano, a nationally recognized slipcast potter based in Massachusetts. Each class had 25 or more attendees and the group was a mix of MIT students, staff, alumni, and members of the ceramics community in Boston. The format was a slideshow followed by two hours of wheel throwing, slip casting, and surface decorating demonstrations, as well as a question-and-answer session.

## Personnel

Leila Kinney served as acting director of the Council for the Arts at MIT from March through August 2016 and was a member of the search committee for a new director, which also included MIT Corporation member James A. Champy '63, Associate Provost Philip S. Khoury, chair of the council Charles (Rick) F. Stone SM '76, and vice-chair Karen Arenson '70. Kinney continues to serve on the executive committee of the Alliance for the Arts in Research Universities.

Rachel Bennett was appointed the new director of the Council for the Arts at MIT on September 19, 2016.

**Leila Wheatley Kinney**  
**Executive Director**