

Report to the President year ended June 30, 2024, Vice Provost for the Arts
July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024
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Vice Provost

The Arts

Transitions and the new opportunities they offer were the hallmarks of the 2023-24 academic year for the arts sector under the provost's office—encompassing the List Visual Arts Center, the MIT Museum, as well as the Center for Art, Science & Technology and other programs under the executive director of arts initiatives, including the Council for the Arts at MIT (CAMIT) and student art programs. Successful searches for new directors of the MIT Museum and CAMIT and an assistant director for the List have already begun to bring fresh thinking to the sector, as each unit simultaneously undertakes a strategic reassessment of immediate goals and long term planning.

Record attendance at the MIT Museum as it settled into its new location—more than 150,000 visitors—reaffirmed the benefit of the move to Kendall Square. With most of the new space devoted to galleries, the Museum was required to move more than 1.5 million objects in its permanent collection to an offsite facility. The massive relocation was completed successfully and brings to a close a long process of determining how to make the Museum's holdings more available for teaching, research, and online access. The Museum has also emerged as one of the top destination sites on campus, hosting the MIT faculty at breakfasts and different events and gatherings.

The List Visual Arts Center outfitted the atrium of E15 outside the galleries as a reading and seating area, fulfilling a longstanding desire to make the entrance lobby more lively and welcoming. Meanwhile, the List's exhibition series attracted considerable positive attention within MIT and in the Boston area and beyond.

The CAST x MITM collaboration was launched, a pilot program to co-produce exhibitions, installations, and related programming in the Museum based on art-science projects developed through CAST faculty and visiting artists grants during the last several years. *Arachnodrone* opened in September 2023; *Cosmograph: Speculative Fictions for the New Space Age* will open in September 2024; and a net sculpture commissioned from CAST Distinguished Visiting Artist Janet Echelman will premiere in 2025. In addition, CAST provided production, documentation, and financial support for 15 new and 8 ongoing projects and awarded \$225,870 in grants for 11 projects to commence in 2024-25.

Administrative Initiatives

The implementation phase of the recommendations made by the Ad Hoc Committee on Arts, Culture and DEI report got underway. A Steering Committee led by Vice Provost Philip S. Khoury and interim ICEO and Interim Vice Provost Dan Hastings completed its work and presented action plans for each of four recommendations. The executive director and her staff will work with faculty leads Professor Azra Akšamija and Institute Professor Marcus Thompson to curate and produce an arts festival for spring 2025. A new set of guidelines will accelerate the diversification of MIT's public art collection, under the leadership of the List director. Support for student performing and visual arts groups, which suffered unavoidable setbacks during the pandemic, will be put into effect by the Division of Student Life. Plans for a campus tour that presents a more inclusive view of MIT's past and present are still under development, but substantial research was begun in a class led by Deborah Douglas, director of collections at the MIT Museum, The History of MIT (STS.050).

Vice Provost Philip Khoury, in conjunction with the deans of the School of Architecture and Planning and Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences, worked with the provost to commission an Institute-wide committee to envision [The Future of the Arts at MIT](#), the first study of this kind since the "Joskow Report" on the arts was completed in 1987. The Committee is chaired by vice provost, associate vice president for research, and Thomas A. Frank (1977) Professor of Physics Peter Fisher. Paul Ha and Leila Kinney were appointed to the committee, which will submit a report by the end of the 2025 academic year.

Finances and Funding

Fundraising for the MIT Museum was somewhat lower and differently constituted than in previous years, with a new Corporate Membership Program contributing \$200,000 out of a total \$980,520 in gifts or new pledges for the year. The List, similarly, saw a decline in donations, raising \$387,000 from 55 donors and foundations. CAST received a gift of \$562,500, and CAMIT raised \$355,000.

Personnel

Vice Provost and Ford International Professor of History Philip S. Khoury oversees the Institute's extra-academic arts programs and institutions. The arts programs include the MIT Center for Art, Science & Technology (CAST), the List Visual Arts Center, and the MIT Museum. Khoury is the principal investigator for CAST, a joint initiative with the dean of the School of Architecture and Planning and the dean of the School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences. The vice provost chairs the Creative Arts Council and the advisory board of the Catalyst Collaborative at MIT (CC@MIT). He is an *ex officio* member of the executive committee of the Council for the Arts at MIT (CAMIT) and the advisory boards of the List Visual Arts Center and the MIT Museum. He also serves on the International Advisory Committee (IAC). He directs the HASS Concentration and HASS Minor in Middle Eastern Studies, serves as Faculty Director of the MIT (MISTI) Arab World Program, and chairs the Emile Bustani Middle East Seminar at MIT, which began its 38th year in the fall of 2023.

Deputy director of the MIT Museum Kathryn Gunsch served as interim director during the search that led to the appointment of Michael John Gorman as the second Mark R. Epstein

(Class of 1963) Director, which was co-chaired by Institute Professor Emeritus Phillip A. Sharp and Deborah Fitzgerald, the Leverett Howell and William King Hutten Professor of the History of Technology and Director of the Program in Science, Technology. Kristen Wawruck was appointed assistant director of the List Visual Arts Center. Emily Peckham was named as the director of the Council for the Arts at MIT.

For other staff changes in the individual sectors, please see the following sections on Arts Initiatives, the List Visual Arts Center, and the MIT Museum.

Philip S. Khoury
Vice Provost

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