

List Visual Arts Center

The [List Visual Arts Center](#), MIT's contemporary art museum, collects, commissions, and presents rigorous, provocative, and artist-centric projects that engage MIT and the global art community. The List Visual Arts Center is a creative laboratory that provides artists with a space to freely experiment and push existing boundaries. The List Center presents exhibitions in its galleries, including a program of evolving site-specific work by emerging artists known as List Projects, as well as a broad range of educational programs, events, and scholarly publications. The center maintains and adds to MIT's permanent collection, commissions new works through the MIT Percent-for-Art program, manages and conserves a collection of more than 60 site-specific public artworks throughout the campus, and oversees the Student Lending Art Program, which lends approximately 600 works of art annually to MIT undergraduate and graduate students.



Left to right: All Right You Guys (1976), Jennifer Where Are You? (1981), and X-TRACTS (1975). Exhibition view of Leslie Thornton: Begin Again, Again. (Photo: Julie Featheringill)

Reopening after Covid-19

In May of 2021, we received the go ahead to reopen our galleries. Our team worked swiftly to adjust our exhibition schedule in order to install a preview version of *Leslie Thornton: Begin Again, Again* so that members of the MIT community who were accessing the campus through the Covid pass system could engage with contemporary art in our galleries. In August, we opened our galleries to the general public using a system for contact tracing. After a quiet fall, attendance numbers have ticked back up to pre-pandemic levels in the spring and early summer of 2022.

Website Redevelopment, Rebrand, and Archive Launch

In May, the MIT List Visual Arts Center unveiled a refreshed brand identity and a new website housing a robust digital archive that includes materials dating back to our opening in 1985 and is designed with best practices in web accessibility for the visual arts. This project would not have been possible if not for MIT's support of our staff during campus closures, which allowed us to redirect our gallery staff members' roles to include working on organizing archival material for the new website.

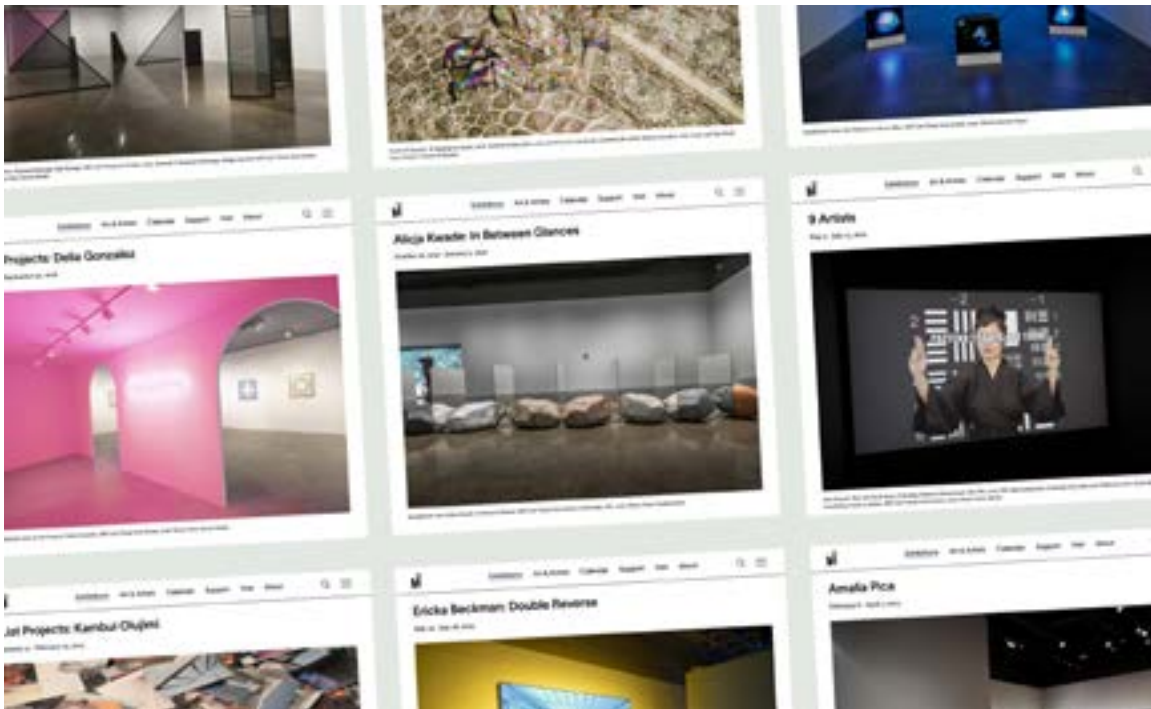
When we began this process in fall 2020, we considered how our values could be reflected through our website and serve audiences across the globe. The term "artist-centric" entered nearly every conversation. This priority is best exemplified by the addition of our exhibiting artist index where viewers can browse the more than 800 artists whose work has been presented since the List Center's founding. Along with the index, viewers can explore an exhibition archive that holds newly digitized photographs, videos, educational texts, and other related media dating back to the center's earliest years.

As we did this work, web accessibility was considered every step of the way. In addition to use of the highest standards in accessible web design, we are pleased to note that our new website includes descriptive, screen-reader-enabled alt-text for every archival image written by members of the List Center team. This resource is a feat among our museum peers that will make our archives more accessible to viewers with a range of vision abilities.

Current Goals

- Continue to present the finest national and international contemporary art by utilizing the gallery space as a research lab for contemporary artists to experiment, grow, and develop work to present to our audiences
- Work with emerging artists to present what is typically their first museum exhibition in the United States while providing new scholarship through publications of catalogs to supplement exhibitions
- Lead the selection process and implementation for campus Percent-for-Art commissions, expanding the world-class public art collection on campus
- Relaunch the Student Lending Art Program and prepare for the opening of a major group exhibition that will span all three gallery spaces
- Engage and partner with the MIT community through more in-depth work with professors and departmental collaborations prioritizing MIT students as well as through continued development of graduate student talks and the MIT Student Tour Guide Program
- Explore new programming partnerships with the MIT Museum on the occasion of our related fall 2022 exhibitions to further broaden our audiences
- Spotlight our new website's index of past exhibiting artists, as well as its digital archive, through public relations announcements, a social media series, and a four-part Zoom series scheduled for fall 2023

- Begin to develop interviews with past exhibiting artists to activate the digital archive and build up to the List Center's 40th anniversary in 2025
- Join in the Institute's efforts to combat hidden bias and discrimination, offering our expertise by serving on the provost's ad hoc committee of staff, students, postdocs, faculty, and alumni; recommending artistic and cultural responses that will affirm and inspire our community in this complex moment; and identifying ways to fund such efforts
- Continue anti-bias training for staff and explore new methodologies to further diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion efforts in all of our work in a substantive way
- Continue to expand audiences through cross-disciplinary and collaborative use of the List Center's exhibitions, programs, and facilities
- Continue to promote the List Center's website as a rich digital resource and archive of past exhibitions, ensuring that the center serves as a resource for tracking the careers of artists after they have exhibited at MIT
- Preserve, conserve, and re-site works from the permanent collection
- Continue to increase our media presence through innovative use of social media and digital marketing
- Maintain steady staffing levels to enhance the center's ability to present ambitious world-class programming
- Continue to build a strong patron program through Director's Circle memberships and add a corporate membership program



Moth Design web page collage. (Image courtesy of Moth Design)

Exhibition Highlights

This fiscal year, we opened our doors to the public and presented a total of seven exhibitions.

Student Lending Art Program Exhibition and Lottery
Hayden and Reference Galleries
August 27–September 5, 2021

List Projects 23: Andrew Norman Wilson
Bakalar Gallery
October 22, 2021–February 13, 2022

Leslie Thornton: Begin Again, Again
Hayden Gallery
October 22, 2021–February 13, 2022

Sreshta Rit Premnath: Grave/Grove
Reference Gallery
October 22, 2021–February 13, 2022

List Projects 24: Sharona Franklin
Bakalar Gallery
March 25–June 5, 2022

Matthew Angelo Harrison: Robota
Hayden Gallery
March 25–July 24, 2022

Raymond Boisjoly: The Explanatory Void
Reference Gallery
March 25–July 24, 2022

List Artists in the News

Given that we typically work with artists at the beginning of their careers, it is interesting to note some of the past artists in the news across the globe:

- Current List Center artist Azza El Siddique was shortlisted for the 2022 Sobey Art Award.
- Andrew Norman Wilson, who exhibited *List Projects 23* in October, recently won the Best International Short award at the 2022 Palm Springs International ShortFest.
- Shreshta Rit Premnath, who exhibited *Grave/Grove* last fall, is included in *The Distance from Here*, an international group show in Saudi Arabia. *Grave/Grove* will travel to the San Diego Museum of Art in fall 2022.
- Christine Sun Kim, who had a solo exhibition at the List Center in 2020, has drawings that are now part of the Britain Permanent Collection. She also debuted a new mural at the Queens Museum in New York and a major solo exhibition at Haus Der Kunst in Munich, Germany.
- Rami George, who exhibited *List Projects 21* in 2020, is included in *Documenta 15* in Kassel, Germany.

- Following a public vote, two photographs and a wallpaper by Farah Al Qasimi, who exhibited *List Projects 19* in 2019, have been acquired by the city of Miami from Art Basel in Miami Beach through the Legacy Purchase Program.
- Adam Pendleton, who exhibited a List Center project in 2018, had a monumental work titled *Who Is Queen?* installed at the Museum of Modern Art.
- Past exhibiting artists Nayland Blake, Adam Pendleton, Aria Dean, Sable Elyse Smith, and Rose Salane were included in the 2022 Whitney Biennial.
- Kapwani Kiwana, who had a solo presentation in 2018, was featured in the main exhibition of the Venice Biennale and had a solo show at New York’s New Museum in June 2022.
- Following her retrospective at the List Center in 2021, Leslie Thornton presented at Art Basel Unlimited in 2022.

Programs and Student Outreach

After two years of remote or online programming, we were pleased to reintroduce in-person programs and engagement opportunities for List Center audiences. Throughout the pandemic, we were able to grow our national and international audiences through virtual events. In order to continue engaging with our global audiences as well as to be flexible with those who were not ready to engage in in-person events, we explored offering hybrid events and event recordings. Offering points of engagement for in-person and remote audiences in accordance with the full standards of accessibility to which MIT and our office are committed has proven to require significant additional effort. To facilitate this, we hired an additional staff member to join the center as public programs coordinator. As we continue to explore engagement with these different audiences, our outreach to MIT staff, students, and faculty remains central to our programmatic mission.



Group public art tour. (Photo: Chloe Tomasetta)

Tours and Student Guides

As MIT continued to strategize on-site policies and procedures for community and public gatherings on campus, the List Center started its engagement focus on outdoor opportunities with an emphasis on highlighting the public art collection. To accommodate this, we increased the frequency of summer tours offered from monthly to weekly. We also accommodate additional departmental requests for facilitated tours of the public art collection for returning students, new students, and staff. In addition, we hired and trained three new student guides to assist with on-site programs and occasional gallery staff to provide more financial support and job opportunities for current MIT undergraduates. With this sharp increase in interest, we updated our self-guided tour options available through a mobile browser and transitioned to a new platform that would better accommodate GPS mapping.

Campus and Public Programming Highlights

Graduate Student Talks

After a two-year hiatus, we were thrilled to reintroduce the graduate student talk series. This program series invites MIT graduate students and postdocs to share their field research in conjunction with work on view to provide audiences with a deeper understanding and promote thoughtful conversations. We grew the scope and reach of this program by offering high-quality recordings and livestreams. This enabled the graduate students to invite friends and family to their talk as well as easily share with our academic university contemporaries as a prime example of how to meaningfully connect exhibitions on view to student research happening on campus.

Spotlight Talks

Spotlight talks are a new weekly programmatic offering during the academic year. These 15-minute conversations explore current exhibitions and offer deeper insights into artists' practices. They also serve as an additional opportunity for List Center student guides to be involved on a more regular basis with our audiences.

Artist-Led Programs

Over the past fiscal year, we worked with artists to create durational experiences with a focus on using expanded practices of contemporary art as a means of understanding, giving voice to, and processing the world around us.

- At the beginning of the school year, Jonathan Santos was invited to create a participatory project that could be facilitated in an hourlong workshop setting and as a kit to be handed out as a means of broadening audience reach. *Exchange Value: The Economy of Giving*, created by Santos, provided participants a creative outlet to cement coming together on MIT's campus. MIT students were invited to collectively convene to conceptualize ideas and learn wood burning and carving techniques to create a work of art on the wooden discs provided.
- The winter term workshop is highlighted in the next section on Independent Activities Period (IAP) programming.

- Over the past two summers, the List Center has offered remote participatory opportunities designed by artists. As an example, the center organized *This Way*, a series of nine artist-designed walks and experiences offering diverse points of entry—some intimate explorations of physical embodiment and sensory experience, others guided modifications of scale, space, and geography or novel considerations of language, architectures, or landscapes. *This Way*, offered in the summer of 2021, was a successful way of engaging artists in creating work but also engaging audiences who were not able to visit our physical site. We are continuing this unique program format in summer 2022, when our MIT community audience travels and our international audience can continue to participate in our programmatic offerings. This summer, our remote summer series *On The Table* will present six artist-designed “menus” to respond to what is “on the table” when it comes to sharing a meal today.

Independent Activities Period Programming

Specific to the MIT audience, the List Center designed programs during the January Independent Activities Period to bring together contemporary art practices reflective of the moment and provide an opportunity for community members to utilize visual arts as a means of communication and building community. During the 2022 IAP session, the feature-length documentary *Paper & Glue* about artist JR was screened. In *Paper & Glue*, JR uses his vision and style to desensitize the general public’s “out of sight, out of mind” approach to those who are suffering. JR uses his platform to weave together these emotionally reflective present-day portraits to represent the global voice of women and men unheard. Inspired by this film, List Center program educators created a hands-on opportunity for the MIT community titled Giving Voice: A Poster Project. This project challenged participants to consider how we communicate and “give voice” to people, places, and things that are too often silenced. With just a marker in hand, participants were encouraged to use text and visuals to send a message and create a poster that speaks for someone or something without a voice, be it an underrepresented community, one’s favorite pet, or an inanimate object. Posters could be provocative, funny, unsettling, calming, or sublime and were on display in the lobby outside the List Center galleries for the remaining weeks of IAP.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

This past year, the List Visual Arts Center continued to build on diversity, equity, and inclusion practices within our own staff while also joining along with Institute-wide initiatives.

- Audio transcripts: In the fall of 2021, continuing efforts in previous years to provide transcripts for programming and artist interviews, we expanded this practice for video artworks. The List Center featured two exhibitions, *List Projects 23: Andrew Norman Wilson* and *Leslie Thornton: Begin Again, Again*, that primarily displayed video works. Audio transcripts were available for all films.
- Alt-text for digital images: Building on the workshops offered in previous years and the backlog of creating alt-text for the archive of images, this year staff were able to confidently incorporate this practice in their positions. All who contribute imagery for digital publication on behalf of the List Center now are given alt-text. This lives on all social media platforms run by the center as well as web images

for exhibitions and programs, which are continuously ongoing. New mobile platforms for public art now are also able to incorporate alt-text for all images.

- **Public programs:** All online programs were accompanied by a live transcriptionist during live presentation, and all recorded programs were sent out for post-production transcripts prior to their being posted on the website. As we returned to on-site programming, all lecture-based programs were accompanied by Communication Access Realtime Translation services.
- **General:** With the launch of the newly designed website, we were able to better highlight the List Center’s accessible practices and update to current offerings. Also, we were able to note access services available for programs and exhibitions more clearly for visitors.

Permanent Collection

The permanent collection includes public art, the Student Lending Art Collection, and the Campus Loan Art Program.

Public Art

Agnieszka Kurant’s project *The End of Signature* completed installation of the second sculpture at site 4 in June 2022. The project, a collaboration with Katie Lewis, Divya Shanmugam, Jose Javier Gonzalez Ortiz, and Professor John Guttag, was commissioned with MIT Percent-for-Art funds. The moving LED sculpture accompanies a similar neon sculpture installed during the previous fiscal year on the cantilever of site 3. *The End of Signature* is a series of works that translates hundreds of signatures into one “communal signature” by way of an algorithm that determines the median line. The signatures featured for the MIT iteration of the project were solicited from the MIT community for site 3 and the broader Cambridge community for site 4. A lecture with the artist will be forthcoming in the fall.



Installation view of Agnieszka Kurant’s The End of Signature. . (Photo: Charles Mayer Photography)

Ongoing and Future Percent-for-Art Projects

Percent-for-Art commissions are ongoing for four building projects. Artists have been invited for these commissions, and contracts are under way and will soon be publicly announced.

The commissions for the redesigned ground floor of the Department of Earth, Atmospheric, and Planetary Sciences (EAPS) building and the new MIT Stephen A. Schwarzman College of Computing building will be installed sometime in the spring of 2023. The EAPS building will include three bodies of work to be installed in the courtyard as well as the lobby, and the MIT Schwarzman College of Computing building will include an interior work of art to be sited on the main stairwell landing.

Commissions for the new Music Building and the new School of Architecture and Planning at the Metropolitan Warehouse will be installed in 2024 and 2025, respectively.

Campus Loan Art Program

The List Center installed 232 artworks for faculty and staff participating in our Campus Loan Art Program and moved an additional 177 pieces this year to accommodate office relocations or renovation projects. Currently there are 1,652 artworks sited in various locations on MIT's campus.

Twelve artworks from the permanent collection are on exhibition at the Dean's Gallery. Featured artists include Sonia Almeida, James Casebere, Willie Doherty, Annette Kelm, Armin Linke, Oscar Palacio, and Fred Wilson.

Student Lending Art Program Collection

The List Center added 30 artworks to the Student Lending Art Collection this year with support from Friends of Boston Art, Sara-Ann and Robert Sanders, Karen and Greg Arenson, the John Taylor Endowment, the Alan May Endowment, the List Visual Arts Center Advisory Committee, and gifts of art.

The Student Lending Art Program exhibition resumed with a new remote sign-up process to improve accessibility. The 2021–2022 program featured 152 exhibited artworks, and 120 MIT students had the opportunity to select artworks for their residences.

Loans to the Permanent Collection

- The Zairja Collective, *Neuropit #13 (gradient descent / visual cortex neuron)* (2016 to present; collage of a wire-frame design for geo-modeling of existing mining open pits and visual cortex neuron of a mouse)
- *Neuropit #14 (spidergram/visual cortex neuron)* (2016 to present; collage of a wire-frame design for geo-modeling of existing mining open pits and visual cortex neuron of a mouse)
- *Psychepit #11 (Amygdala)* (2015 to present; collage of a wire-frame design for geo-modeling of existing mining open pits and slice of a mouse brain with highlighted outreach of the amygdala)

Public Art Collection Works Conserved

- Cai-Guo Qiang, *Ring Stone* (granite and seven Japanese black pine trees, 2010)
- Anish Kapoor, *Non-Object (Plane)* (stainless steel, 2010)
- Robert Engman, *Untitled* (painted aluminum, 1968)
- Beverly Pepper, *Trinity (Formerly Dunes I)* (Cor-ten steel, 1971)
- David Bakalar, *TV Man or Five-Piece Cube with Strange Hole* (mountain rose granite, 1993)
- Matt Johnson, *Untitled (Swan)* (bent train track, 2016)
- Frank Stella, *Loohooloo* (room-size installation, acrylic, 1994)
- Richard Fleischner, *Upper Courtyard* (benches, 1985)
- Henry Moore, *Three-Piece Reclining Figure, Draped* (bronze, 1976)
- Henry Moore, *Working Model for Reclining Figure (Lincoln Center)* (bronze, 1963)
- Jacques Lipchitz, *Bather* (bronze, 1923–1925)
- Jacques Lipchitz, *Hagar in the Desert* (bronze, 1957)
- Jacques Lipchitz, *Sacrifice III* (bronze, 1949–1957)
- Jacques Lipchitz, *Birth of the Muses* (bronze, 1944–1950)
- Ursula von Rydingsvard, *Scientia* (bronze, 2016)
- Pablo Picasso, *Figure Découpée (Cut-Out Figure)* (cast concrete with aggregate interior, 1975)
- Jaume Plensa, *Alchemist* (stainless steel, white enamel paint, 2010)
- Dimitri Hadzi, *Elmo-MIT* (bronze, 1963)
- Antony Gormley, *Chord* (905 stainless steel elements of varying section sizes and 541 stainless steel balls, 2016)
- Olafur Eliasson, *Northwest Passage* (stainless steel, LED lights, diffusers, 2018)
- Dan Flavin, *Untitled (for Conor Cruise O'Brien)* (fluorescent light construction, 1990)

Permanent Collection Works Conserved

- Luisa Lambri, *Untitled (De La Warr Pavilion)* (2008)
- John Walker, *Diagonal Hollyhocks* (2003)
- Richard Florsheim, *Untitled* (circa 1968)



Graduate student talk: Christopher Joshua Benton. (Photo: Chloe Tomasetta)

Marketing and Development

Marketing and development was centered around reopening, new public programs, and the launch of our new brand and website.

We have had continued success in growing all social media platforms and now have over 20,000 followers on Instagram and 8,000 on Twitter. We have been successful in growing our global audiences by promoting both in-person and remote events.

List Center exhibitions and artists received press in multiple outlets including *Art Agenda Reviews*, *Arts at Cern*, *Artforum*, *Frieze*, *Sculpture* magazine, *The Arts Fuse*, the *Boston Globe*, *The Tech*, and WBUR.

The List Center produced media content including artist interviews and artist talks with Andrew Norman Wilson, Sreshta Rit Premnath, Leslie Thornton, Matthew Angelo Harrison, and Raymond Boisjoly. We began recording graduate student talks and already have two recorded talks in our video gallery.

We redesigned the public art map and distributed it to the MIT Visitor Center, Human Resources, MIT Admissions, the Atlas Center, the MIT Arts Office, and other sites on campus to promote and publicize MIT's public art and architecture collections.

Administrative Highlights

Staffing

Public Art and Collections Manager Sarah Oh joined the List Center in September 2021. Prior to her role at the center, she worked at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in operations and exhibition planning. Chloe Thomasetta joined the List Center as the new marketing and communications associate in January 2022, and, thanks to a three-year grant for public programs, Elizabeth Ponce was hired full time as of February 2022.

Finances/Funding

We raised \$720,000 from 80 donors and foundations in support of the List Center. With member events and travel still postponed, we are deeply grateful to the continued support of our donors. Looking ahead to FY2023, we hope to be back in a growth cycle where we increase our membership and have opportunities to engage in person with our key supporters.

Future Goals

Going forward, we aim to sustain momentum by presenting outstanding exhibitions and scholarly research. In addition to maintaining exceptional and high-quality programming in the List Center galleries, our goals include the following:

- Continue to engage local, national, and international donors to contribute to the List Center's programs and endowment
- Increase awareness of the List Center's activities among MIT's student, faculty, and administrative audience
- Increase the local, national, and international visibility of the List Center's programs and activities
- Expand the Advisory Committee and improve long-range planning efforts
- Increase the collection and utilize the Student Lending Art Program to create additional programming
- Leverage technology to better provide information about exhibitions, public programs, the Student Lending Art Program, the permanent collection, and the Percent-for-Art program
- Attract major new gifts of art
- Seek gifts for the endowment fund for art conservation
- Explore options for additional space for exhibitions, art storage, and offices

- Meet appropriate staffing needs required to maintain the comprehensive exhibition, publications, and public programming expected of the List Center
- Continue to grow the List Center’s collections as well as administer conservation for acquisitions, including the public art collection
- Continue to grow the newly launched travel program, which will serve as a vehicle for connecting List Center donors to MIT alumni in new and engaging ways
- Augment an endowment fund for the acquisition of works of art for the permanent collection
- Continue to produce comprehensive educational materials about all of the MIT Percent-for-Art projects, the Student Lending Art Program, and art on campus
- Seek naming opportunities for staff positions and galleries

Personnel Information

Director Paul Ha served as the board chair for the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts. He also served as a board member for the Madison Square Park Conservancy, the World Chess Hall of Fame, The Fabric Workshop and Museum, and the Creative Arts Council. He was an advisor to the 59th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia 2022, where the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston presented a solo exhibition by Simone Leigh for the US Pavilion. In addition, Director Ha was a member of the Ad Hoc Committee on Arts, Culture, and DEI; an external advisor to the Graduate Thesis Committee at the Tufts University School of the Museum of Fine Arts (SMFA); and a juror for the 2022 Emily Hall Tremain Foundation Curatorial Awards and Exhibition Research Grant ceremony in New Haven, CT.

Curator Natalie Bell was the invited curator of the Artpace fall 2020 artist residency program (postponed to 2021). She also served as a visiting critic for the 2021 McKnight Foundation visual artists, a mentor for 2021 Artadia awardees, and a guest critic for the Engaging Artist Fellows at More Art. She participated in the 2022 Curatorial Forum at Expo Chicago as well as a virtual program for Viewfinder: Women’s Film and Video from the Smithsonian. She was interviewed about her role as a curator, including footage shot at the List Center, as part of the *Harvard Business Review’s* Career Crush video series.

Campus and Public Program Manager Emily Garner served as a portfolio reviewer of student work at the Massachusetts College of Art and Design (MassArt). Also, she led the annual National Art Education Association Preservice Division workshop and is a member of the Forum for Leadership in Art Museum Education.

Communications and Development Manager Jameson Johnson served as a juror for the Fitchburg Art Museum’s regional exhibition. She also gave guest lectures for art history and design courses at Northeastern University and MassArt and was a thesis reviewer at MassArt and Tufts SMFA.

Assistant Curator Selby Nimrod served as a juror for Creative Capital’s 2023 award cycle and the Lighthouse Works artist residency and as a guest critic for various studio

residency programs. She formally mentored students at the School of Visual Arts in New York as well as mentoring Triangle Arts Association curatorial fellow Maya Bamberger. In fall 2021, she guest lectured in the Art Film and Visual Studies Department at Harvard University. The Phileas Fund for Contemporary Art invited her on a curatorial research trip to Vienna scheduled for July 2022.

Advisory Committee

The List Center Advisory Committee, composed of MIT alumni, artists, and collectors, met twice virtually during the 2021–2022 season. Currently, there are 22 active members including three ex-officio members: Philip S. Khoury, Paul C. Ha, and Leila W. Kinney.

Audrey Foster continues to serve as an exemplary leader in her role as committee chair.

Members of the committee have agreed to lengthen their terms for two years to compensate for the lost time of 2020–2021. Looking ahead, we will begin to seek out new members and reconnect with the existing committee.

Paul C. Ha
Director, List Visual Arts Center