

Associate Provost for the Arts

Associate 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 associate provost chairs the Creative Arts Council and the advisory board of the Catalyst Collaborative at MIT. He is an ex officio member of the executive committee of the Council for the Arts at MIT and the advisory boards of the List Visual Arts Center and the MIT Museum. He is also a member of the International Advisory Committee and serves with the provost and dean of the School of Engineering on the Collaboration Governance Board of the MIT–Singapore University of Technology and Design Collaboration. He chairs the Compton Lectures Advisory Committee; directs the Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences (HASS) Concentration and HASS Minor in Middle Eastern Studies; serves as faculty director of the MIT-Arab World Program; and chairs the Emile Bustani Middle East Seminar at MIT, which will begin its 36th year in the fall of 2022.

The Arts

Returning to in-person, on-campus arts events was the highlight of the past academic year. The Center for Art, Science & Technology resumed artists' residencies and live performances, gradually at first, with many precautions required by pandemic protocols. The List Visual Arts Center reopened its galleries, first to on-campus visitors and eventually to the general public. The Student Art Association ended an 18-month closure and classes filled to capacity with substantial waiting lists in all three terms. The MIT Museum made the decision not to reopen its Massachusetts Avenue location and instead to focus on the move to Kendall Square, with the new galleries slated to open in September 2022.

Current Goals

The MIT Museum has been entirely focused on installing exhibits in its new location. The annual meeting of the Council for the Arts at MIT, the first since fall 2019 to host members on campus, will be held in conjunction with the celebration of the Kendall Square venue. The List Center is shepherding an unusually high number of Percent-for-Art commissions given the recent building boom on campus.

Accomplishments

The MIT Museum celebrated its 50th anniversary in fall 2021 with a farewell event at the 265 Massachusetts Avenue location. Both the MIT Museum and the List Center capitalized upon pandemic closures to develop new brand identities and websites. The museum seized the opportunity to digitize a much greater portion of its collection and make the objects available online, and the List Center was able to develop an exhibiting archive where viewers can browse the more than 800 artists whose work has been presented since the center was founded in 1985. The new List Center website paid

particular attention to accessibility by including alt-text to enable visually impaired individuals to appreciate the content. The center also completed the installation of two public artworks by Agnieszka Kurant (previously a CAST visiting artist) in the Kendall Square Open Space, the new eastern gateway to MIT.

The Ad Hoc Committee on Arts, Culture, and DEI (diversity, equity and inclusion), co-chaired by Associate Provost Philip Khoury and Institute Community and Equity Officer John Dozier, finalized its recommendations and presented them to the provost. Leila Kinney, executive director of arts initiatives, and Paul Ha, director of the List Visual Arts Center, served on the committee along with more than 20 other faculty, students, staff, and alumni.

Finances and Funding

At the close of the MIT Campaign for a Better World in June, the MIT Museum had raised a total of \$73 million for the new facility and an additional \$11.3 million in endowments—an unprecedented amount for the arts sector. The List Visual Arts Center raised \$720,000 from 80 donors and foundations, and the Council for the Arts at MIT raised \$419,000 from 77 donors.

Personnel

Brenda Pepe, who had served a number of years as an assistant to Department of Biology chair Robert Sauer before retiring from MIT, came out of retirement to work part time in the Office of the Associate Provost, where she concentrated on reorganizing the office and rationalizing its filing system.

Future Goals

The opening of the new MIT Museum will offer greatly expanded opportunities to disseminate research and innovation from MIT as well as to connect the campus to Cambridge residents and the wider public. CAST and the MIT Museum are planning a greater presence for art-science exhibitions and installations in the new galleries that will capitalize on these spaces to showcase internationally recognized creative collaborations among MIT faculty, research groups, and visiting artists. The MIT Museum still needs to locate and lease an appropriate and affordable new collections management facility or facilities to replace its current facility in Somerville, whose lease will expire toward the end of 2023.

Philip S. Khoury
Associate Provost