

The Arts at MIT

At MIT, the arts are widely practiced, performed, and celebrated — in corridors, classrooms, on stage, and in the studio. Hundreds of exhibitions, performances, and readings enliven MIT’s campus annually, enhancing and enriching campus life while drawing tens of thousands of visitors from local and international communities.

Students

MIT is known for attracting students who apply creative thinking and excellent problem-solving skills to diverse endeavors, from manufacturing and polymer science to music and poetry. In fact, 75 percent of incoming freshmen come to MIT with strong interest and involvement in the arts. Encouraging the artistic inclinations inherent in the student body, we welcome students of all artistic talents and abilities and provide opportunities for learning and participation at every level.

Many students pursue their artistic interests through participation in our Symphony Orchestra, Dramashop, or one of nearly 50 other music, theater, and dance groups. There are excellent academic programs and classes in the arts, but MIT also offers the freedom to pursue one’s arts interests independently. Students have formed their own chamber music ensembles and hip-hop dance troupes. Emerson scholarships allow up to 50 students per year to continue private instruction in music. Whether you are discovering the arts for the first time or continuing a lifelong engagement, providing an opportunity for exploration is paramount to our mission.

Faculty and Staff

These opportunities often come in the classroom, where students benefit from the guidance of scholars, practitioners, and mentors who possess excellent credentials and an abiding love of art. The Institute is home to distinguished arts faculty such as Pulitzer Prize-winning composer John Harbison, “Hyperinstrument” developer and composer Tod

Machover, Pulitzer Prize-winning writer Junot Diaz, and conceptual artist Gediminas Urbonas. They come here because MIT offers a compelling combination of creativity and rigor as well as small classroom settings for teaching and coaching. In addition to the Institute’s faculty, visiting artists from around the world come to campus for periods ranging from three days to a semester or more through our Visiting Artists program, providing opportunities for students and faculty alike to collaborate with some of the world’s most innovative people.

Setting

Exploring the cultural landscape in which MIT is situated is a wonderful way to enrich your student experience. The Council for the Arts at MIT enables students to secure free admission to Boston’s world-renowned Museum of Fine Arts, free tickets to Boston Symphony Orchestra concerts, and many other off-campus arts events.

It all comes down to inspiration. MIT is a community of visionaries, united by a mission to apply technology in the service of humanity. Creative expression is a logical outgrowth of the Institute’s motto, *mens et manus* (“mind and hand”). Making cool stuff is a huge part of MIT’s reason for being; this includes paintings and poems, monologues and music, gamelan concerts and gallery shows.

MIT’s non-arts faculty also embraces the multi-faceted approach to life at MIT. Institute Professor and Professor of Physics and Electrical Engineering Mildred Dresselhaus is an enthusiastic chamber music player, playing violin and viola; roboticist Karl Iagnemma, a principal research scientist in the Department of Mechanical Engineering, wrote a series of short stories that was optioned by Warner Brothers; and Erik Demaine, Associate Professor of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, is an

origami master who combines his passions into creative work involving algorithms and computational geometry. Part of the fun of the arts community is that everyone is involved.

Did you know...

MIT has nine a cappella singing groups, including the all-male Logarhythms, the all-female Muses, and the co-ed Chorallaries.

MIT is home to Boston's only Balinese gamelan as well as a Senegalese drumming ensemble and a South Asian performance series.

MIT's List Visual Arts Center is considered the leading gallery of contemporary art in New England and has been voted "Best Gallery" in *Boston Magazine's* "Best of Boston" awards.

MIT's renowned outdoor sculpture collection features works by international figures such as Alexander Calder, Henry Moore, Pablo Picasso, and Anish Kapoor.

The MIT Museum is home to the world's largest collection of holograms.

MIT regularly hosts visiting artists. The roster has included novelist Margaret Atwood, cartoonist Art Spiegelman, dancer/choreographer Elizabeth Streb, visual artist Cai Guo-Qiang, filmmaker Michel Gondry, graffiti artists Tats Cru, architect Santiago Calatrava, and conductor Gustavo Dudamel.

The Council for the Arts at MIT — one of the nation's most active campus-based arts foundations — has given over \$1 million through its Grants Program to MIT arts projects ranging from the installation of a temporary mosque at the Vienna Secession to a student hip hop dance competition.

MIT established the nation's first architecture program in 1865 and maintains one of the world's

leading collections of architectural drawings.

Programs and Opportunities

Academic opportunities in the arts at MIT are many and varied — from a single course to a full major. The Institute offers degrees in design and visual arts through the School of Architecture and Planning as well as majors and minors in music, theater, and writing in the School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences. Some students pursue combined majors or special concentration programs or participate in faculty-sponsored research. Others enroll in arts-related elective courses, independent projects, or courses at affiliated institutions in the Boston area.

Outside the classroom, students can participate in a wide range of campus-based performing arts groups, write or photograph for a host of MIT publications, or present exhibitions at the Wiesner Student Art Gallery. Many get involved in less formal creative activities, such as taking extracurricular classes in painting, drawing, or ceramics in MIT's Student Art Association.

Contact Information

One of the best ways to learn about what's going on in the arts at MIT — and how you can become involved — is through the Institute's Office of the Arts at MIT, which administers and publicizes many of the programs described here. For more information, visit the arts portal, <http://arts.mit.edu>, or email arts@mit.edu. We look forward to your participation.

The MIT Course Catalog contains further information on the Institute, including all graduate and undergraduate courses and programs. For details on ordering the course catalogue, please visit the MIT Press Bookstore website at <http://web.mit.edu/bookstore/www/bulletin.html>.

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