

ARTS AT MIT

The arts (<http://arts.mit.edu>) are a fundamental component of MIT's core curriculum and research community, reflecting and enhancing the Institute's creativity, innovation, and excellence while advancing the self-discovery, problem solving, and collaborative skills needed by leaders meeting the challenges of the 21st century.

More than 50 percent of all MIT undergraduates enroll in arts courses each year—with nearly half of students participating in music and theater classes or performance groups—and many minor or concentrate in arts subjects. MIT's arts faculty includes eminent artists: musician Miguel Zenón won a Grammy and writer Junot Díaz won a Pulitzer, and others share many distinguished awards and prizes, including composer and musician Evan Ziporyn, composer Tod Machover, director Jay Scheib, architect Antón García-Abril, and visual artist Renée Green.

Each year MIT's performing groups and outside artists present more than 300 music, theater, and dance events. Productions range from chamber music to electronic "hyperinstruments," and from Shakespearean plays to science theater. MIT's music program features Boston's only Balinese gamelan, a Senegalese drumming ensemble, and an acclaimed South Asian performance series.

Art, Culture and Technology. The Department of Architecture's Art, Culture and Technology Program (ACT) (<http://act.mit.edu>) operates as a critical production- and education-based laboratory focusing on artistic research, advanced visual studies, and transdisciplinary collaboration within the context of MIT's technological community. Its lecture series is open to the public.

Dance. Extracurricular dance activities at MIT are sponsored by the Dance Troupe, Tech Squares, Ballroom Dancing Club, and various international student groups, providing regular opportunities for dancers at all levels of ability.

Architecture and Design. The Department of Architecture's Design Minor is consistently ranked as one of the most popular minors among undergraduate MIT students. Students from majors including Computer Science, Physics, and Biology often enroll in the numerous entry-level Architecture and Design studio courses that count toward the HASS-A General Institute Requirement. A Major in Design is also offered. MIT's Bachelor of Science in Art and Design (BSAD) is a major that combines studio-based learning with seminars and lecture-based subjects, where students learn the fundamental principles of art and design—principles they can apply to careers spanning from information design to 3D art. Learn more about our undergraduate degrees (<https://architecture.mit.edu/undergraduate-admissions/#degrees-overview>) and see examples of student work (<https://www.instagram.com/designatmit>).

Media Arts. An international leader in the development of innovative digital media and information technologies, MIT's Media Lab (<http://media.mit.edu>) is a uniquely flexible organization where faculty

members, research staff, and students from numerous, seemingly unrelated disciplines—with backgrounds ranging from computer science to psychology, music to graphic design, and architecture to mechanical engineering—work together "atelier style," doing the things that conventional wisdom says can't or shouldn't be done. The goal is to develop technologies and concepts that foster creativity—empowering people of all ages, from all walks of life, in all societies, to design and invent new possibilities for themselves and the communities around them. Research opportunities for students are available through the Program in Media Arts and Sciences (<https://catalog.mit.edu/schools/architecture-planning/media-arts-sciences>), based in the School of Architecture and Planning, and through the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program.

MIT Comparative Media Studies/Writing (CMS/W) (<https://catalog.mit.edu/schools/humanities-arts-social-sciences/comparative-media-studies-writing>) is an innovative humanities section that applies critical analysis, collaborative research, and design across a variety of media arts, forms, and practices. It develops thinkers who understand the dynamics of media change and can apply their insights to contemporary problems. It cultivates practitioners, scholars, and artists who can work in multiple forms of contemporary media. In its unique approach to humanities, arts, and science writing education, CMS/W offers undergraduate and graduate degree programs centered on teamwork and research laboratories; engages with media practices across historical periods, cultural settings, and methods in order to assess change, design new tools, and anticipate media developments; supports a distinguished studio and workshop curriculum featuring the techniques and traditions of contemporary science writing, fiction, poetry, creative non-fiction, journalism, digital media and video, and games; and extends its educational work into industry, the arts, and the public sphere by offering socially and critically informed expertise and events. Its own publications and the Ilona Karmel Writing Prizes highlight and disseminate the very best in MIT student writing.

The **Literature Section** (<https://catalog.mit.edu/schools/humanities-arts-social-sciences/literature>) sponsors readings by visiting authors that are open to the MIT community as well as the public. Its Pleasures of Poetry series meets every weekday during IAP, bringing together faculty, staff, students, and others from the local community who share a love of poetry. Together with the MIT Libraries, the Literature Section also sponsors the MIT Literary Society, an undergraduate reading group focused on literary discussion outside the classroom.

Music. The faculty of MIT's music program (<https://catalog.mit.edu/schools/humanities-arts-social-sciences/music-theater-arts>) includes internationally acclaimed composers, performers, and musicologists. Students can pursue a full or joint major, a minor, or a HASS concentration in music. They can also take private lessons with financial support from the Emerson/Harris scholarship program; music subjects in theory, composition, history, jazz, music technology, and world music; or participate

(for credit or not) in faculty-led performance ensembles. These include the MIT Symphony Orchestra, Wind Ensemble, Festival Jazz Ensemble, Chamber Music Society, Concert Choir, Chamber Chorus, Laptop Orchestra, Balinese Gamelan Galak-Tika, and Rambax MIT (a Senegalese drumming ensemble). In addition to ensemble performances and student recitals, concerts are also presented by MIT faculty, affiliated artists, guest artists, and MIT Heritage of the Arts of South Asia. Artists of national and international stature frequently come to perform at MIT and to interact with students in and out of the classroom.

In addition to the performance opportunities offered by the music program within the School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences, there are many student-directed ensembles and a capella groups that perform on campus as well. A new music building will open on campus in the 2024–2025 academic year.

Theater. MIT's programs in theater arts (<https://catalog.mit.edu/schools/humanities-arts-social-sciences/music-theater-arts>) afford opportunities for serious study and training in acting, directing, playwriting, dramaturgy, stagecraft, and design and theater studies. Classes are small, and students work directly with renowned faculty and guest artists, or initiate independent student workshop productions. Students may choose a full or joint major, minor, or HASS concentration in theater. Each semester there is one faculty-directed production. These productions, directed by professionals in their fields, often offer interested students opportunities to further develop their work in professional settings. Extracurricular student organizations such as Shakespeare Ensemble, Musical Theatre Guild, and the improv group Roadkill Buffet offer additional performance and production experience.

A theater arts building, opened in 2017, houses a two-story flexible black-box theater with 150–180 seats, state-of-the-art rehearsal spaces and design studios, offices, and dressing rooms. The building was designed with production in mind and to maximize the possibilities for experimentation with new theater technologies. Other studios in the building provide space for smaller performances, faculty and student workshops, rehearsals, and classes in theatrical practice, design, and technical arts.

Visual Arts. From large-scale public art to film and photography, the visual arts are celebrated in innovative ways at MIT. Excellent opportunities exist for members of the MIT community to view and create art in a variety of media (see Student Art Association, List Visual Arts Center, and MIT Museum below). The Art, Culture and Technology Program offers undergraduate classes in public, installation, and media arts, and has a prominent master's program. MIT students can take classes in the visual arts at Harvard, the Massachusetts College of Art and Design, and Wellesley College through cross-registration programs (<https://registrar.mit.edu/registration-academics/registration-information/cross-registration>).

The **Office of the Arts at MIT** oversees, coordinates, supports, and facilitates arts activities. The office supports the MIT Center for

Art, Science & Technology, the Council for the Arts at MIT, multiple student arts programs (notably the Arts Scholars and Arts Startup Incubator), and arts communications across all sectors. For general information on arts programs and activities (<http://arts.mit.edu>) at MIT, visit the website and see the arts calendar (<http://arts.mit.edu/events-visit/calendar>).

The **MIT Center for Art, Science & Technology (CAST)** (<http://arts.mit.edu/cast>) facilitates and creates opportunities for exchange and collaboration for artists with engineers and scientists. The center is committed to fostering a culture where the arts, science, and technology thrive as interrelated, mutually informing modes of exploration, knowledge, and discovery. As an umbrella organization, CAST's activities include soliciting and supporting cross-disciplinary curricular initiatives; managing visiting artist residencies; overseeing undergraduate, graduate, and postdoctoral research; and organizing programs such as performances, exhibitions, installations, and a biennial symposium.

A flourishing **Visiting Artists Program** (<http://arts.mit.edu/visiting-artists>) complements the curriculum, allowing students to engage with distinguished visiting artists, and fosters collaborations with MIT faculty and research staff. An impressive roster of visitors has included visual artists Tomás Saraceno, Vik Muniz, Anicka Yi, and Trevor Paglen; architect Santiago Calatrava; filmmaker Katerina Cizek; and musicians Maya Beiser, Jacob Collier, Johnny Gandelsman, Lupe Fiasco, and Jason Moran, among many others.

The **Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts at MIT** (<http://arts.mit.edu/mcdermott>) recognizes innovative talents who have demonstrated excellence in the creative arts. It offers recipients a \$100,000 cash prize and campus residency. Past recipients include musician Pamela Z, designer Thomas Heatherwick, singer/actress Audra McDonald, architect David Adjaye, visual artist Olafur Eliasson, multidisciplinary performance and media artist Robert Lepage, and conductor Gustavo Dudamel.

The **Council for the Arts at MIT** catalyzes the development of a broadly based, highly participatory program in the arts, firmly founded on teaching, practice, and research at the Institute, and conducts arts-related fundraising activities on behalf of MIT. Council members are alumni, friends, and volunteers with a strong commitment to the arts and serving the MIT community.

The council's Grants Program provides students, faculty, and staff with the opportunity to apply for funding for arts projects in all disciplines. The council also supports MIT's partnerships with several Boston-area cultural organizations, including the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Boston Ballet, the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, the Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston, and the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, helping students experience the arts off campus for free or at a discount. Support is also available for faculty to take their classes to exhibitions, films, concerts, theater, and other performances throughout the year. Lastly, the council administers three annual student prizes in the arts: the Sudler Prize,

the Layla and Jerome B. Wiesner Student Art Awards, and the Harold and Arlene Schnitzer Prize in the Visual Arts.

Student Programs. Several programs encourage students to engage in the arts. First-year undergraduate seminars led by MIT faculty and staff introduce participants to the many academic and performance programs in the arts at MIT and the Boston area. Arts Scholars (<http://arts.mit.edu/participate/arts-scholars>) is an honors program that enables students who are active in the arts to attend exhibitions, plays, and concerts with experts in the respective disciplines. The Grad Arts Forum (<http://arts.mit.edu/groups/grad-arts-forum>) encourages artistic collaboration and intellectual discussions among MIT graduate students from different departments through a series of presentations and social gatherings. Student Programs also administers the MIT Arts Startup Incubator, which provides mentoring and awards \$15,000 to the team whose business plan has arts at its core.

The **MIT Arts Studios** (<http://arts.mit.edu/saa>) (formerly the Student Art Association) offers noncredit classes and facilities for many visual arts activities, including ceramics, photography, painting, drawing, and printmaking.

List Visual Arts Center (<http://listart.mit.edu>) is the contemporary art museum at MIT. Just as MIT pushes the frontiers of scientific and intellectual inquiry, the mission of the List Visual Arts Center is to explore contemporary art in all media. Each year, the center presents a dynamic series of changing exhibitions that provide contemporary artists with a space to freely experiment and push existing boundaries beyond art's traditional aesthetic functions to examine the cultural, social, political, scientific, or economic contexts that inform the art of our time. Exhibitions are presented in three galleries on the first floor of the I. M. Pei-designed Wiesner Building (Building E15) and the Dean's Gallery in the Sloan School (Building E60). All are free and open to the public. Nationally distributed catalogs, artist talks, gallery tours, and symposia accompany the exhibitions. The List Center also manages MIT's permanent collection of artworks, including a student lending art program of over 600 works that enables students to borrow original pieces of art, such as prints and photographs, for up to a year, and a sizable collection of paintings, sculpture, drawings, prints, and photos sited throughout the campus. Through the Institute's Percent-for-Art Program the List Center also commissions contemporary artists to create new site-specific works in conjunction with new building construction and renovation projects.

The **MIT Museum's** (<http://web.mit.edu/museum>) mission is to make research and innovation accessible to all. The museum collects and preserves artifacts that are significant in the life of MIT, creates exhibitions, face-to-face programs, and online services that are firmly rooted in MIT's areas of endeavor, and engages MIT faculty, staff, and students with the wider community.

The MIT Museum opened in fall 2022 in the newly imagined MIT Kendall Gateway, where it occupies more than 58,000 square

feet of galleries, classrooms, and state-of-the-art program and performance spaces. Visitors will encounter a destination for curiosity, exploration, and fun, as well as a venue for conversations and interactions between Cambridge residents, the MIT community, and the companies that have made Kendall Square their home.

In addition to the main collection of over 1.5 million items, which is used by the public and MIT students and faculty for research and teaching, the MIT Museum directs the Hart Nautical Gallery in Building 5, and the MIT Museum Studio and Compton Gallery in Building 10. Here, students from art, science, and engineering fields come together to work on projects for display in the Compton and other galleries. The studio supports project-based coursework, including an undergraduate subject, "Exhibiting Science," offered through the Science, Technology, and Society Program, and "Vision and Neuroscience," offered through the Department of Brain and Cognitive Sciences.