

MIT List Visual Arts Center Year in Review

July 1, 2020–June 30, 2021

From all of us at the MIT List Visual Arts Center, we hope you enjoy this look back at the past fiscal year and we truly look forward to connecting with you in 2022.



Exhibitions

While the galleries were closed for most of the fiscal year, we were able to present three exhibitions to a global audience through our Museum from Home newsletter, virtual programs, and digital documentation.

Public Programming

This past year, our public programs focused on online options with the goal of supporting the MIT community and connecting with the global art world. Our 28 programs this year reached just under 3,000 participants.

Student Lending Art Program 2020

For the first time, we offered off-campus students the option to extend their borrowing period. Visit our SLAP portal to read student stories about living with work from the collection for nearly two years.

Public Art

With the continued growth of the Institute's public art collection, MIT's campus has become a destination for art lovers, and provides a needed respite for the community.

Director's Letter

Dear Friends,

Writing this letter enters me into a time warp. It is made all the more topsy-turvy as we reflect on a period where months, weeks, and days all blended together.

As I write this in December 2021, we are reporting on the period from July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021. These moments of reflection are helpful in reminding us what we've endured and the impact of our work while providing a framework to guide us through what's ahead.

Much has changed in the six months since this fiscal period closed: The List Center re-opened to the MIT Community on May 13, 2021 after being closed for 14 months. Our incredible staff enthusiastically prepared to welcome visitors who utilized MIT's Covid Access program to visit. We opened with limited hours and revamped visitor policies. We hosted public art tours and offered outdoor programming in the fresh summer air. It really was a thrill to re-open the front doors and welcome back students, faculty, and our hyper-local art fans to see a preview of *Leslie Thornton: Begin Again, Again* and the closing days of *List Projects 23: Cindy Ji Hye Kim*.

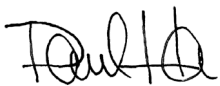
Leading up to the fall, we prepared for our grand reopening. Installation went underway and we hosted a mini version of our SLAP program where 100 enthused students took home a work of their choice from our collection. In October, we reopened our doors with three exhibitions. While it was wonderful to welcome our community back into our space, we continue to exist in a largely hybrid world.

Between our closure and reopening our doors, we welcomed thousands of attendees from at least 45 counties for our virtual programs. Likely an unprecedented record! While we are grateful to welcome audiences back to engage with art in-person, we will continue to consider how to reach this newly engaged connected world.

In the midst of this ever-changing moment, I am grateful for the ways in which art can help us expand our ways of thinking, feeling, and seeing the world around us. As practitioners within contemporary art, we are equally tasked with considering how museums can be a space that serves all. This year, I was honored to serve on MIT's Committee for Arts, Culture, and DEAI (Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion.) Working closely with our team here at the List, we came alongside MIT in considering how to push our work forward with these topics in mind.

I was continually proud of our staff, as everyone supported each other's work and mental health at home. As I worked with museum directors across the country whose institutions were struggling to make it through these difficult times, I was grateful for the institutional leadership and support of MIT.

It has been a pleasure to welcome many of you back inside our galleries this fall. Having audiences engaging with art is what makes our work complete. Thank you for being a part of the List Center community and supporting our work throughout yet another unprecedented year. We truly couldn't do this work without you. Wishing everyone a happy and healthy 2022.



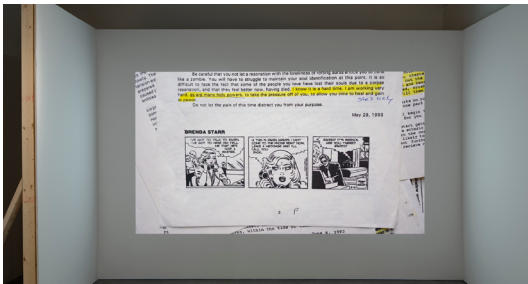
Paul Ha
Director, MIT List Visual Arts Center

Exhibitions

In a typical year the List Center presents 8 — 10 exhibitions in our galleries and around campus. In FY21, we anticipated another year of uncertainty and adjusted our schedules to present 3 exhibitions for a primarily digital audience.

We closed our doors the same week that Rami George's List Project exhibition opened. Like museums across the world, we re-imagined what an exhibition could be when the doors to the show were locked tight. Our Museum from Home newsletter, remote programs, in-depth artist videos, and virtual curatorial talks all helped to bring the work alive for our communities at home.

By the fall of 2020, we had prepared exhibitions that could be opened at a moments notice should the risk surrounding COVID-19 subside all while planning for virtual engagement opportunities. For Nayland Blake's retrospective, our curators worked through video calls to install over ninety works inside our galleries. For Cindy Ji Hye Kim's List Project exhibition, the artist was granted special access to create a site-specific mural. While the doors for these exhibitions remained closed, we relished in the opportunity to reach audiences around the globe.



LIST PROJECTS 21: RAMI GEORGE

March 19 – October 11, 2020

Working in installation and video, and with found images and texts, Rami George uses autobiography to reveal broader untold histories and reappraise enduring civic and social issues. For their first institutional solo exhibition, George presented a new body of work that extends their ongoing inquiry into their family's entanglement with the Samaritan Foundation, a New Age spiritual cult that was active in the 1990s.



LIST PROJECTS 22: CINDY JI HYE KIM

October 29, 2020–September 12, 2021

Referencing a wide range of art and visual culture, from the styles of propaganda posters to early black-and-white animations to painterly representations of biblical narratives, her works exploit the strategies of image making with a critical attention to their conventions. *List Projects 22: Cindy Ji Hye Kim* is the artist's first institutional solo presentation.



NO WRONG HOLES: THIRTY YEARS OF NAYLAND BLAKE

October 16, 2020–February 14, 2021

For over thirty years, artist, educator, and curator Nayland Blake (b. 1960 United States; lives and works in New York) has been a critical figure in American art, working between sculpture, drawing, performance, and video. *No Wrong Holes* marks the most comprehensive survey of Blake's work to date and traveled to the List Center from the Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles.

Student Lending Art Program

A Year Without SLAP

Since 1977, the Student Lending Art Program Exhibition and Lottery has provided MIT students the enviable opportunity to borrow, appreciate, and live with a museum quality work of original art for the academic year. Lovingly known as SLAP, this unique and popular tradition is free and available to all MIT students.

For the first time since its inception, the annual exhibition, lottery, and lending was paused while our doors remained shut. While much of the collection took an extended hibernation in storage, 185 lucky students opted to hold onto their artworks. While most students get to live with a work for 8 months, these students sheltered-in-place and took on remote learning with artwork by their sides for over a year and a half.

To capture this special opportunity, select students were interviewed about their experiences and added to the "Student Stories" section of our SLAP portal. Here you can explore the entire collection, view recent acquisitions, and see artwork find new homes inside student housing.



The Annual Exhibition

During the course of a two-week annual exhibition at the List Center, MIT students view available artworks in our galleries and select their top five preferences. After the conclusion of the exhibition, List Visual Arts Center staff administer the lottery. Students receive their result via email and are invited to pick up their artwork along with hanging materials from our staff.

The Lottery

Typically about 900 students enter the lottery, vying for 600 works of art. After the lottery matches students with art, there is a LAST CALL for any remaining unclaimed artwork. Students line up (pictured above) in the morning to claim an available piece, thus ensuring that all of the works find a home!

About the Collection

The exhibition included recently acquired works by Edgar Arceneaux, Rosa Barba, Nicole Eisenman, Cerith Wyn Evans, Alicja Kwade, Steve Locke, Barry McGee, Nick Mauss, Charlotte Moth, Albrecht Schneider, Myron Stout, and Rosemarie Trockel. In addition MIT students have the opportunity to borrow favorite works by artists such as Berenice Abbott, Louise Bourgeois, Harold "Doc" Edgerton, and Cindy Sherman, among many others.

Programs

This past year, our public programs focused on online options with the goal of supporting the MIT community and connecting with the global art world. Our 28 programs this year reached 2,959 participants from 45 countries and 595 virtual tour attendees.

Remote programs like our MIT Postcard Exchange and One-Use Camera Photo Project engaged participants by delivering art-kits for collective art projects. MIT List Visual Arts Center invited community members to capture new daily routines. Visualizing Daily Rituals hopes to help participants overcome physical distance with another offline project that encourages members of the MIT community to be aware of their daily rituals and immediate surroundings.

In the fall of 2020, We hosted an online series "Shifter: Waiting" in collaboration with *Shifter* (a publication) and the Contemporary Art Center in Cincinnati and organized by fall 2021 presenting artist, Sreshta Rit Premnath. The eight-part series invited artists, scholars, historians, architects, and other experts within their fields to join in conversation around themes of waiting. The virtual talks reached participants in 45 countries and led to the creation of "This Way," a remote summer series of artist-designed walks or experiences that could be done from anywhere.

The 2021 Max Wasserman Forum: Another World brought together artists, educators, and writers at the forefront of discourses on art in the digital realm. This was the first year The Max Wasserman Forum was held on an online platform. Their keynote speaker was Hito Stereoyl while other programs considered "What are we building?" and "What are the barriers?" for a primarily digital world.

Program Highlights



POSTCARD EXCHANGE

When students couldn't return to campus in the fall, this program allowed them to keep in touch from afar. Participants of the Postcard Exchange reflected on ongoing personal projects by decorating a blank postcard, and through the exchange, later received one in the mail in return.

IAP VISUALIZING DAILY RITUALS

MIT List Visual Arts Center invited community members to participate in a one-use camera photo project and capture new daily routines. Participants of Visualizing Daily Rituals reflected on routines and developed habits, and considered the limited number exposure camera as a measure of time. The project encouraged us to think about sharing images and the temporal delay between taking, processing, digitalizing, and sharing images.

IAP ALT TEXT AS POETRY

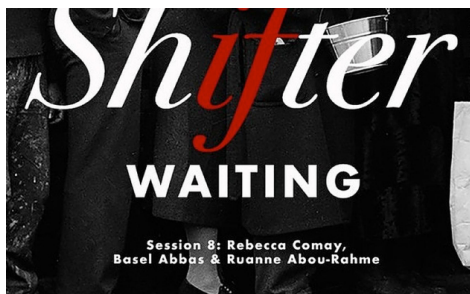
In this workshop, led by Bojana Coklyat and Shannon Finnegan, participants reframed alt-text as a type of poetry and practiced writing it together. By looking at examples of poetic and creative approaches to alt-text, then doing several writing exercises designed to focus on issues that often come up in alt-text, we paid attention to language and word economy, alt-text as translation, structuring and prioritizing, subjectivity, identity, and representation.



MAX WASSERMAN FORUM 2021: ANOTHER WORLD

The 2021 Max Wasserman Forum, Another World, brought together a diverse slate of artists, educators, and writers at the forefront of discourses on art in the digital realm to share their understandings on digital media's potential for more radical and imaginative forms of cyber expressions. This was the first online presentation of the forum, and it was attended by over 2,000 people Zooming in from around the globe.

The goal of this forum was to analyze ideas of power and building, with a particular interest in the fluidity between human and artificial experiences, while contemplating what humanity is now in light of our current climate driven by the endeavors of artists. The forum culminated in a live webinar titled Decolonize the Digital Sphere and Transition it Towards the Commons, by renowned visual artist, filmmaker, and writer, Hito Steyerl.



SHIFTER: WAITING DISCUSSION SERIES

This series of eight sessions offered glimpses into the thought and practices of artists, architects, historians, and theorists who grapple with the various conditions of waiting. Participants shared their own research into an aspect of waiting while touching on some of its registers: enforced waiting, chronic waiting, natural waiting, existential waiting, and even those desirable modes of waiting that we long for.



THIS WAY: 9 REMOTE ARTIST DESIGNED WALKS

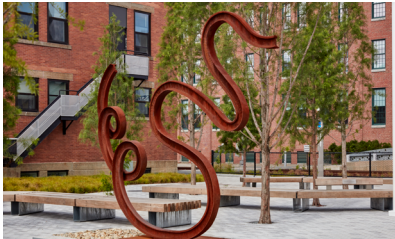
MIT List Visual Arts Center organized This Way, a series of nine artist-designed walks and experiences that offer us diverse points of entry—some intimate explorations of physical embodiment and sensory experience, others guided modifications of scale, space, and geography, or novel considerations of language, architectures, or landscapes. Borrowing its title from a 1961 series by conceptual artist Stanley Brouwn, while also drawing inspiration from Fluxus and the *dérive* or "drift" of the Situationists, This Way takes up themes of movement and performance, ritual and meditation, and both abstract and concrete explorations of a range of spaces we occupy.

Public Art on Campus

With the continued growth of the Institute's public art collection, MIT has become a destination for art lovers and a site for respite and reflection across campus.

This year, the New Vassar Dorm building welcomed two new public art acquisitions with work by Jeffrey Gibson and Matt Johnson and re-sited a work by Robert Engman. On the east side of campus, the first half of Agnieszka Kurant's *End of Signature* was installed in MIT's latest expansion into Kendall Square, and Alicja Kwade's beloved *Against the Run* was moved from outside our building to its final home in Kendall Square. Conservation/installation of the collection included works by Jacques Lipchitz, Joan Miro, Kenneth Noland, Beverly Pepper, and others.

In order to support the growing interest in the collection from the community at large, the List Center offers a new expanded public art map coupled with a mobile website to engage visitors. You can visit listart.oncell.com for a GPS enabled self-guided tour of the collection which includes suggested routes, and transcribed audio and video interviews by artists, curators and art historians.



Matt Johnson, *Untitled (Swan)*

Matt Johnson's bent train track sculpture *Untitled (Swan)* is positioned on the west plaza within close proximity to the historic Grand Junction Railroad tracks.



Agnieszka Kurant, *The End of Signature*

Agnieszka Kurant's Percent-for-Art project, *The End of Signature*, is moving towards completion. The neon work on Site 4 was installed in the spring, and the LED for Site 3 will be installed in 2022. *The End of Signature* is a series of works that translates hundreds of signatures collected from the MIT and Cambridge communities into one "communal signature" by way of an algorithm that determines the median line.



Jeffrey Gibson, *I DON'T WANT TO SEE MYSELF WITHOUT YOU*

The New Vassar dorm welcomed three new public artworks this year. The lobby features a painting by multidisciplinary artist Jeffrey Gibson, *I DON'T WANT TO SEE MYSELF WITHOUT YOU*. A citizen of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Nation who identifies as half Cherokee, Gibson often incorporates his culture into his work, which includes abstract sculptures, paintings, and prints.



Beverly Pepper, *Trinity (formerly Dunes I)*

Beverly Pepper's *Trinity (formerly Dunes I)* sculpture was relocated to the front lawn of McCormick Hall. This important work by a pioneering woman artist now sits prominently on the lawn of MIT's first women-only residence.



Alicja Kwade, *Against the Run*

Alicja Kwade's *Against the Run* was temporarily installed at E15 as part of her exhibition at the List Center. This outdoor clock was successfully relocated to its permanent home in Kendall Square in July 2021.

Thank You

The MIT List Visual Arts Center Advisory Committee, Paul Ha, and the entire staff extend our profound gratitude to the following donors for contributions between July 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021.

Their philanthropy ensures our ability to present experimental and engaging contemporary art that serves our local and global communities . Thank you for your support, we couldn't do this work without each of you.

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