



**NITA STURIALE**

# REVISITING **THE SANDBOX**

The Studio for Interrelated Media at the  
Massachusetts College of Art and Design

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photographer Julie Chen (SIM 2009 - 12),  
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This article is dedicated to  
all SIM students past, present and future.

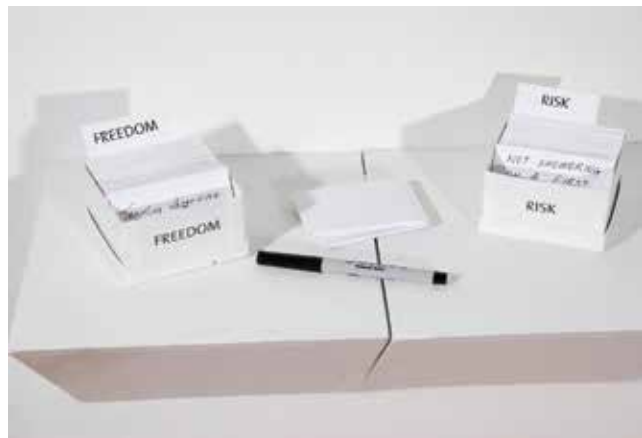


## PREFACE

AS WE BEGIN the second decade of the second millennium, the US is faced with a myriad of daunting problems to overcome, including an impaired financial sector, environmental challenges, an embattled health care industry, and rapidly increasing global competition to be the world leader in productivity and innovation. Daniel H. Pink (2005) has coined this new era as the Conceptual Age where those with inventive, empathic, and big-picture capabilities will thrive. Corporations, government agencies, and start-ups are now looking for employees who have the skills to adapt to this changing world and offer solutions born from fresh perspectives. Many businesses are not finding these ideal 21st century employees in the usual places such as top MBA programs. Instead, these essential agents of change are emerging from an unlikely source: schools of art and design (Anon., 2011).

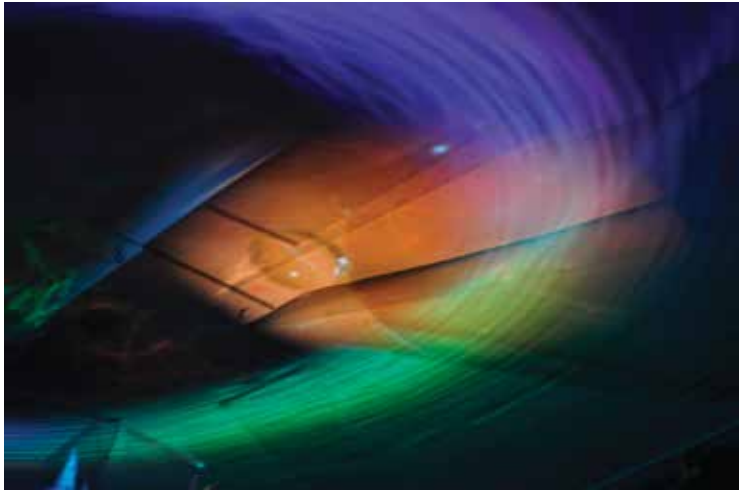
Many companies are discovering that these graduates bring a different, yet crucial, set of skills to the organization: creative problem finding and solving, information synthesis, and the ability to collaborate across disciplines.

**FIGURE 0.1**  
“FREEDOM/  
RISK” from  
San Shoppell’s  
“Running with  
Scissors” exhibit  
in Honolulu, 2006.



**FIGURE 0.2**

Lighting installation by Brooke Scibelli



After years of decline due to a growing dependence on standardized testing, lack of funding, and misconceptions of what arts education can be, we now know that art education is necessary to develop critical 21st century skills and for motivating students to achieve (Wester & Wood, 2010, pg 14). Thankfully, there is a growing movement to bring art back into our schools in a meaningful way (Piro, 2010). The Studio for Interrelated Media (SIM) at Massachusetts College of Art and Design in Boston, has much to offer this movement. Over its 40 year history, it has successfully grown a unique program that combines individualized fine art practice with the development of the very skills necessary for our global health and survival.

**FIGURE 0.3**

Kara Stokowski and Ian Deleon on a VJ DJ set



Massachusetts College of Art and Design (MassArt) offers instruction and degrees to 1752 undergraduates and 187 graduate students in a variety of visual arts disciplines, including design, art history, art education, and the fine arts, all combined with a liberal arts education.



Within this rich and diverse environment, sits SIM, a program that has been preparing students for the Conceptual Age since its first class in 1970. As a SIM alumna, professor, and the current department chair, I can speak intimately about the program. Over the years, its curriculum, procedures, and strategies have been both criticized and copied. From a controversial beginning, SIM has evolved and changed shape over the years, but still holds true to a selection of persistent priorities and principles described throughout this article.

I believe the time is ripe to tell the story of this program in an effort to participate in the educational policy discussions being triggered by current societal needs and the latest research. This article invites readers to expand our expectations of what an art education can be (Expanding Art Education), to look inside the SIM program—its history (SIM Foundations) and current state (SIM in Action Today)—and to replicate the program (Let's Do It Again).

**FIGURE 0.4**

Brooke enjoying a sound, light, and space installation by Nicole Barron



Kevin Clancy and Ben Aron in Kevin's "m,a,n,t,r,a" participatory sound meditation with custom software created with Max/MSP

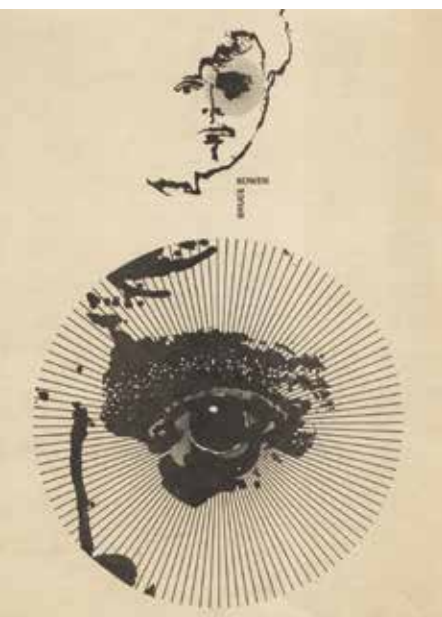
# EXPANDING ART EDUCATION



OFTEN, ART EDUCATION IS MISUNDERSTOOD to be the development of aesthetic skills in the visual arts, including working with line, shape, color, texture, and pattern; mastering materials and techniques; and learning art historical facts (Lexington Massachusetts Public School Dept, 2011). For the assessors, it is fairly easy to measure whether a child has mastered these skills. But where is the essence of artistic thinking and experience (Dewey, 1934) that we love to admire in Leonardo Da Vinci, Buckminster Fuller, or Helen Keller? Where is that ability to invent, to take risks, to find one's personal voice,

to transmit ideas, to intend meaning, to satisfy a deep desire to observe, express, and create? This too abstract, and difficult to measure, artistic thinking must not be kept conveniently out of the way (Robinson, 2009). Nurturing young people to discover and develop their artistic selves, which may emerge as invention, observation, physical movement, music, intuition, and/or drawing, is a non-discipline specific, meta-process that is not easily described in a lesson plan.

Sir Ken Robinson, educator, author, and TEDTalk (<http://www.ted.com>) superstar, calls this self-discovery “The Element... the point at which natural talent meets personal passion. When people arrive at the element, they feel most themselves and most inspired and achieve at their highest levels (Robinson, 2009, pg 14).” There are oasis spots in the educational landscape where



**FIGURE 1.1**

Illustration by one of the earliest SIM majors, Bruce Bowen, 1974

educators are aware of the complexities of teaching creative intellect and have been nurturing their students in unconventional ways as the standardization machine whirls around them. These programs are usually small, not publicly funded, and only a small number of lucky students have benefited from this approach (see Blue School, Sudbury Valley Schools, ArtScience 100K Prize). We all want our students to discover their Element, but in the high-pressure, highly specialized world of college it is hard to find the space required for self-discovery.

In most programs in art education, starting in the earliest of grades, learning to follow the rules comes first. Many educators

believe students must first master an understanding of the rules so that they can then break the rules in a constructive way after much practice. Learning the proper things in the proper order to achieve mastery of one's craft is a quintessential example of a goal-oriented environment. In review of art college websites, it is apparent that courses/departments are usually organized by media such as animation, film, graphic design and sculpture, to name a few. Students are exposed to the materials within a discipline, taught safe studio practices, and trained in basic processes. After they have been cleared to pass the first levels, they may advance to more complex processes and learn to express their own artistic signature. Interdisciplinary exploration comes after mastering several levels. However, this hierarchical approach doesn't work for everyone.

In my experience, many students benefit from being given the space and time to identify their interests and create their own academic, experiential, and creative paths. The Studio for Interrelated Media is a program that has its inspiration in the

progressive education of A.S Neill's Summerhill School (Neill, 1960), the original alternative 'free' school founded in 1921 in Suffolk, England. SIM founder Harris Barron often referred to Neill's ideas about personal freedom, self-determination, and critical thinking.

He ensured that SIM's early class time structure was as carefully unstructured as possible—little schedule, few lectures, and few instructions. The central requirement was open space defined by the community and time to allow students to find their own individual way, closely supported and facilitated by the faculty.

Cori Spencer, SIM Alumna 2010, writes:

*"There were many instances during my time with the SIM program when I felt frustrated because I wasn't being handed a clear, predetermined path to my goals. I envied*



**FIGURE 1.2**  
Harris Barron  
speaks to Students  
in one of SIM's earli-  
est classes.

*students in more traditional majors because it seemed that they were receiving a level of preparation and training in one craft that I believed was lacking in my education.*

*What I didn't see then was that pursuing a career in the arts isn't solely about rigorous mastery of a craft—countless people have achieved that. Rather, it is about a willingness to take chances and to fail; it is about experimenting, collaborating, and building new relationships. It is about knowing how to improvise with grace when your carefully-designed plan completely falls apart. And without me even being conscious of it, I was learning each of these skills one year at a time.”*

This lack of obvious guidance has been regarded by some as sloppy, time wasting, and irresponsible. An off-hand comment by a past colleague frames the position: SIM was like playing around in the sandbox. Yet, it has allowed SIM students to play between disciplines in ways that contemporary education and business practice is just catching up with. Beginning in 1985, SIM faculty members Donald Burgy and John Holland introduced the

**FIGURE 1.3**

Documentation from “Little Black Topsy and the Magical White Fairy Soap” a performance written, directed and performed by Cori Spencer, 2010





**FIGURE 1.4**  
Dewitt Paterson  
and Travis  
Harrington  
interviewing  
attendees of the  
SIM Depart-  
ment showing  
at the MassArt  
All School Show  
2010.

interdisciplinary courses, “Nature Form Analysis,” and “Nature, Science and Art”, years before many current “art and science” initiatives. In both versions of the class, open-structured classtime, serious discussion, and seed ideas drove media-agnostic practice. The curricular focus on playful exploration allows students to think on their toes when they don’t fully understand the problem (Gray, 2008). It leads directly to the “complex communication and non-routine problem-solving” (Bautz, 2004, ¶37) that Richard Murnane, economist and co-author of *The New Division of Labor: How Computers Are Creating the Next Job Market* (Murnane, 2004), deems necessary to succeed in a pluralistic democracy. SIM has evolved and grown and is not quite as freely structured as it once was. However, many of the core principles introduced at its founding are still in place. SIM expands the possibilities of an art education. The Studio for Interrelated Media has been a place for visionary education since its inception, and I think its time we revisit the sandbox.



**FIGURE 1.5**  
Visiting Speaker,  
Neurobiologist  
Margaret Living-  
stone, partici-  
pates in a small  
group critique.



# Information Symposium



**Noam Chomsky** → **10:00 am. - noon**  
Linguist, Political Activist, and Writer  
"Access to Political Information  
in America"

**Donald Burgy** → **1:00**  
Artist, Studio for Interrelated Media Faculty  
"Art and Information"

**Marvin Minsky** → **2:00**  
Founder, Artificial Intelligence Lab, M.I.T.  
"Recent Developments in  
Artificial Intelligence"

**Don Byrd** → **3:00**  
Musician, Software Engineer  
"Fake Reality, Real Reality,  
Computers & Art"

**WED, APRIL 10, 1985**  
**MASS. COLLEGE OF ART**  
**Space 46**  
**364 Brookline Ave.**  
**Boston**

**4:00**  
**PANEL DISCUSSION:**  
**Burgy, Minsky, Byrd,**  
**Lowry Burgess-moderator**

**Free of Charge**

"Information": 731-2040



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Rube Goldberg type machine by Veronika Kruta.



# SIM FOUNDATIONS







While Barron's approach drove a few students away, most soared. All students were required to confront themselves and responsibly shape time according to their own interests, desires and abilities. Students had to become resourceful, pro-active, and collaborative to make the program work. This multi-media, performative, technically infused explosion, housed within a visual arts college, launched a trajectory that the department is still riding today.

Barron managed to get the new department approved by MassArt's administration with one catch—there would be no budget! So, in order to begin classes the following semester, he had to scrape together audio/visual equipment and meeting space to back up his curricular ideas.



**FIGURE 2.2**

Harris Barron participating in a brainstorming session with students.

Barron reflects:

*"Now, how do you begin a program of the SIM sort without funds, in an empty classroom, with just a few chairs? Come September 1970, I set up SIM shop with a hodge-podge collection of personal, borrowed, and found audio/visual equipment.*

*No budget is a great way to make nothing work. Searching educational media catalogs, I lucked out to find free films, for only the shipping fees... Audio was helped with materials I was able to record from sources I felt were illuminating the possibilities for sound works....*

*When I realized that there was a theater space (in the college's original building) that was hardly used, I moved my classes to the theater as SIM Studio... We had no money, but space luxury, a home!"*

With Barron's tenacious resourcefulness and no beginning budget, the SIM organizational and physical structure emerged out of the needs of the group to make things happen. The curriculum has always been as diverse as the students who have gone through the program. However, as the curriculum has evolved, there have been some fundamental priorities that have been unchallenged since Harris Barron's first class.

- **Ideas.** SIM artists make their art starting with the idea, and they find the best media to express that idea.
- **Time.** Time spent in sharing ideas leads to revelation and action.
- **Heterogeneous Classes.** New SIM students walking in the door are regarded as first-class citizens in the educational environment and sit side by side with older peers. They are included in the decision-making processes, are expected to take responsibility for their learning and participation, and collaborate with upper classmen. To encourage students to jump in, Barron recalls, *"In large letters, I put up Jean Cocteau's quote, 'Caution is the enemy of art!'"*
- **Community and Collaboration.** Students working together on projects were the un-imposed result of the very first class meetings. To this point, Barron states, *"Since the nature of SIM is collaborative, that is, everyone is a teacher, a leader, and a helper. I posted a sign that read 'Shared experience creates community. [And community may alter the landscape.]'"*
- **Events.** Time, idea exchange, and collaboration lead to the production of live events. SIM students organize arts festivals, music shows, exhibits, discussion groups, fund-raisers and sit-ins. These events often showcase 2D, 3D, performance, sound, lights, and video, often at the same time.
- **Skills Acquisition.** SIM students learn tangible skills in a variety of ways; by taking electives, by attending lectures, by



learning from each other, and by self-taught—not textbook—experiences. Students have access to a well-maintained collection of digital and analog audiovisual equipment ranging in vintage and complexity. Students are able to take equipment off campus and keep it for a week of exploration. Clear user's manuals are included with each piece of equipment and studio managers are on hand for one-on-one training and troubleshooting.

- **Non-hierarchical decision-making.** SIM is quite different from other programs because of its willingness to give up faculty control of curriculum instruction. Instead, curriculum is emergent, instruction is experiential, and students are responsible for their learning. The SIM meeting (where students identify challenges, determine agendas and schedules, and discuss curricular instruction) has been an important part of the curriculum since the beginning.
- **Innovation.** SIM encourages new ideas, generative thinking, and connections between people and media. This leads to a culture of innovation. SIM is where many new

**FIGURE 2.3**  
Entrance to a SIM-  
produced event  
launching Art  
Technology New  
England, 2009

media and methods have been introduced to the MassArt community (computers, internet art, video, electro-kinetics, analog and digital audio art, conceptual art).

After Harris Barron retired in 1988, and the numbers of SIM majors continued to grow, the remaining faculty in the SIM program instituted a few changes in order to better advise and manage a larger group, to successfully teach more complex technology, and to solve scheduling conflicts with other areas of the college. These changes, combined with the department's foundational priorities, have come to characterize the program and facilitate an interdisciplinary environment:

- **Required Presentations/Productions.** Students self-organize and learn how to present a weekly program that includes viewing artwork made by their peers, working with visiting artists, participating in organizational meetings, working with audiovisual technology, and conversing in content-rich discussion. The student artists negotiate and coordinate with other students, who learn to take on the roles of curator, producer and technical director. These presentations can be compared to the free/libre/open source software movement that advocates “release early, release often” (Wikipedia, 2011). Students are encouraged to show work in progress, the same work at different stages of refinement, and work that they are doing in other classes.
- **Critique.** Each week students look at work and talk about it. The artists are expected to learn how to guide the critique in their own best interest and to articulate their artistic ideas. The audience is expected to be generous, honest, and clear. This practice in discussion, description, and critical analysis improves multi-disciplinary communication, diplomacy, and public speaking skills.





- **Group Size Matters.** Different types of work require different types of forums. The SIM Major Studio class meeting, the backbone of the program, alternates between Big Group days and Small Group days. Every other week, the class breaks up into 3 or 4 smaller groups that are often theme, content or media specific. The Big Group meetings, with all department members present, can be chaotic at times, but they allow students to get to know everyone in the department. This promotes opportunities for collaboration. The smaller groups offer the possibility for more intimate conversations to emerge that are not possible with an audience of 75+. Also, many types of work are best presented to a smaller audience , including artists' books or a poems about potentially sensitive subjects).
- **Review Boards and Advising Sessions.** Like most other departments at the college, SIM ends each semester with review boards. Review boards are important because they give students an opportunity to share the results of their efforts, to organize their work, and to self evaluate. In SIM, the student decides the content of their review board. Usually all SIM faculty attend all review boards in order to develop a multi-dimensional understanding of each student.

Learning in SIM relies heavily on individualized advising as well as a significant amount of student volition, opportunities to fail, and self-discipline. SIM's early priorities, enhanced by these contemporary adaptations, have created a robust educational environment. With this rich history and fluid foundation, current

students, though invited to invent their futures, have a legacy to live up to.



**FIGURE 2.4**

Dawn Kramer, SIM faculty, facilitates a class critique of student work

Acoustician and Architect of WSDG  
Adjunct Professor at Berklee

**John Storyk, AIA**

Acoustics and



MASSART  
CHUSETTS COLLEGE  
T AND DESIGN

rozen Center

**SIM FALL 20**

**1:45PM**

**DEC**

What



Studio for Interrelated Media at MassArt



Architecture

7th 1:15PM

2010 SPEAKERS

2nd

Art Can Tell Us  
About the Brain



Margaret  
Livingstone,  
Professor of Neurobiology,  
Harvard Medical School



Olga Gerasymiv performing.

# SIM IN ACTION TODAY



A SIM UNDERGRADUATE MAJOR at MassArt is required to take 120 credits to graduate with a BFA. In addition to their SIM Major requirements (6 credits every semester), SIM majors are required to take a variety of Art History, Liberal Arts, and college-wide studio and academic electives to complete their degree. On average, students take 5 classes each semester and can complete their BFA degree in 4 years.



**FIGURE 3.1**  
Retiring Studio  
Manager, Bruce  
Bowen, enjoying  
applause at his  
send-off event.

During a semester, three of the required six credits are earned by taking the SIM Major Studio class, where all SIM majors—sophomores, juniors and seniors—come together and self-produce a weekly event of individual or team project presentations, experimentation, and critique. Each of these class meetings begins with announcements and department business, after which the presentations begin. At least four of the SIM faculty and both studio managers are present for this class. All the students who present artwork during this class, as well as the students who have organized the day, engage in a critique discussion of their ideas as well as requisite craft. These Thursday afternoons are at times rambling and unfocused while at other times professionally produced and profoundly provocative. They are always dense, containing

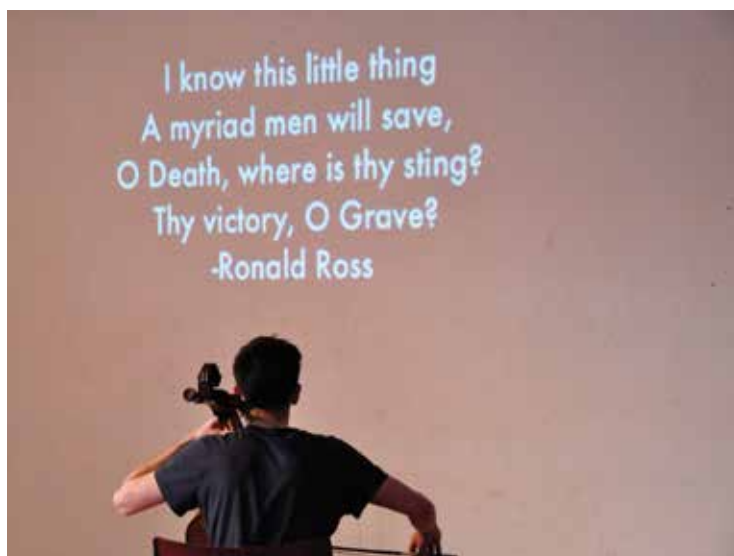
many opportunities for students to take responsibility for their next moves. The Major Studio class is a required course that meets weekly for five hours during both the fall and spring semesters. Six semesters of SIM Major Studio are required for all SIM majors to graduate.

To give some idea of the variety of the artwork shown in this Major Studio class, here is the program for a recent Big Group: two junior majors produced the day by coordinating communication with all the artists involved, signing out technical equipment, setting up audiovisual systems for the presentations and taking care of all the other necessary logistics. The first presentation was a solo piano medley performed by a junior that is part of a larger musical he is working on. This was followed by a presentation of another junior's

sketchbooks. Next, a sophomore played guitar and sang an original song. Next, a hanging sculpture was shown that explored ideas from science, ritual and performance. The fifth presentation was a senior/junior duet performing a live musical piece along with video projections. Finally, a senior did a performance with live painting. All of these presentations were followed by a lengthy critique for the day's producers about the subtleties of production—timing, technical sophistication, lighting, etc. The “audience” is encouraged to see themselves as active participants in a dynamic day of generosity and inquiry. They are asked to reflect on previous work by the presenters, pay attention to detail, and share their considered observations.

In the “Major Studio” class, the SIM curriculum transforms along with the student body. The content of each class depends on the presentations of a particular day. Often a critical mass of interest accrues on a particular topic and a significant amount of class time might be spent on that. For example, someone may present a tutorial on running the sound system or, perhaps, discuss the politics of food).

In addition to the “Major Studio” class, each semester SIM majors also take elective studio courses in a wide variety of media and content that is particular to their personal academic focus. These electives vary from semester to semester, but usually



**FIGURE 3.2**

Benjamin Brown  
performing on  
cello with project-  
ed scrolling text.



cover topics such as movement and choreography, electronics, audio and moving image digital editing, sound art, performance practice, stagecraft, lighting, and organizational skills. From time to time the students are polled on which classes they'd like to see made available. Often students will lobby for a particular skill-set to be taught. In any given graduating class, SIM may have a major whose transcript reflects the work of an artist who has focused on computer animation and sound design, while another might reflect a poet and spoken word performer. Electives are taught by faculty with scholarship in a variety of disciplines ranging from modern dance to robotics. It is this wide variety of experience and the uniqueness of the individual that makes the SIM program so vitally successful and so challenging to manage.

**FIGURE 3.3**

SIM Circus  
produced by  
Mariela Cerda  
and performed  
by SIM students.



Within the academic structure required of all MassArt students, the SIM department attempts to create somewhat of a rogue state within the organizational limitations of the college environment. We follow the rules but protect as much individual initiative as possible—at times with inconvenient results. Many, many times it is these results that are at the heart of the innovation, adaptability, and civic engagement exhibited by our most successful students.



# eventworks

by contemporary composers

presented by  
Studio for Interrelated Media

February 2-12  
Longwood Theater  
Massachusetts College of Art  
Brookline and Longwood Avenues  
performances at 8:00 p.m.  
free workshops at 12 noon  
general admission \$2.50  
with college I.D. \$1.25  
information 731-2340 ex. 34

Wednesday, February 2  
Studio for Interrelated Media  
Joel Rubin, R. Wilce

Thursday, February 3  
free Sound Sculpture Workshop

Friday, February 4  
Museum of Fine Arts School  
Larry Johnson, Richard Lehman

Saturday, February 5  
Boston Electronic Music Ensemble  
Jen Michnerhuizen, Mika Chalekas,  
Michael Gilbert, Joni Lewanska, Don  
Levett, Claudia Nostrand, Ken Perlin

Sunday, February 6  
US Steel Cello  
Robert Rutman, Steve Baer, Rux Monell,  
Kalpana Mazumdar, David Smith, David Zaig

Monday, February 7  
Transfiguration — a work in progress  
noon to 5 p.m.  
Robert Rutman  
free workshop  
free movie (to be announced) 8 p.m.

Tuesday, February 8  
Transfiguration — a work in progress  
noon to 5 p.m.  
Robert Rutman  
free workshop

Wednesday, February 9  
Sunrise to Sunset  
Carl Favel, Phil Harmonic, Larry Johnson,  
Hugh Robbins  
American Soundgroup  
John Holland, John Appleby, Robert Godin,  
Kathleen Starr

Thursday, February 10  
Free Composers Workshop  
noon to 5 p.m.

Friday, February 11  
Beepistics  
Bob Ceely, Rick Boulanger, Clyde Cinner,  
Chris Hill, Hankus Neteky, Don Sanders

Saturday, February 12  
Boston Conservatory of Music  
Joel Kabakov, Basil Boua, David Martin,  
George Cordeiro, Avram Gharabekian,  
Mark Stambough

Sunday, February 13  
Collaborative Work  
Lyri Davidson (New England Conservatory  
of Music), Paul Earls (Center for Advanced  
Visual Studies — MIT), Joyce Mekel  
(Boston University)

IN 2016, THE SIM faculty clarified some long-standing requirements and introduced new ones to the SIM Major Studio class. These changes infused several generations of student feedback, alumni reviews, as well as MassArt's accrediting institutions' mandates to employ more articulate evaluation methods. Additionally, the students are in a perpetual state of change as they respond to an ever-shifting educational foundation within environmental and economic pressures. **Below are the requirements stated in the 2016 Syllabus for the SIM Major Studio class:**

- (1) **Attendance for the duration of class.** Attendance is required to fully benefit from the SIM curriculum. Please communicate if you need to miss a class for significant reason.
- (2) **Presentations of your work for critique at least twice per semester** - This is an Interrelated Media Fine Arts program: to make best use of this program, the work you bring in should be moving towards interrelating media, ideas, methods, etc. You are being asked to move beyond categories and conventions in your practice and educational experience. For example, if you present photographic work, also be prepared to address your plans for, or present evidence of, how this work may expand into other media/methods/practices. It is expected that presentations of work for course credit articulate your individual artistic vision and ideas. You may present work that you have created for a client, but in order to receive course credit for this work, it should be demonstrated that you were the author, founder, and/or creative director of the project. Throughout the semester your presentations should demonstrate a progression of concept, technical proficiency, and contextual awareness over time. Any work is welcome to be presented throughout the semester, but in order to receive course credit for this work, the above guidelines must be considered. You are responsible for scheduling these presentations throughout the semester by communicating with Thursday's student producers. You should present at least once (or more) before mid-term, and once (or more) after. We encourage you to present your work as soon and as often as possible; and especially works in progress where, by presenting works at varying levels of completion, you can have more opportunities to incorporate feedback as your work evolves.

- (3) **Active participation in critiques** - Both in terms of a.) the practice of giving thoughtful, informed, generous critique when your colleagues present work and b.) openly receiving and implementing critical feedback with the aim of improving your work and progressing toward your artistic goals.
- (4) **Collaborate with a Thursday's class production team at least twice per semester** - Since the Studio for Interrelated Media educational vision relies on collaboration and event production, it is required that you either take a leading or supporting role in the design and production of Thursday Major Studio in either a Big or Small group. It is expected that you work with a group of students, in advance of class time, to practice designing, coordinating, organizing, and teaching a Thursday class, which includes determining critique methods to be used for that day. You should produce 1 (or more) before mid-term, and 1 (or more) after. Helping out "day of" is encouraged and helpful, but may not be enough to count towards this requirement, as this requirement also demonstrates your development of time-management skills while in SIM.
- (5) **Complete Semester Planning Form** - this form is an opportunity for you to invent your educational and artistic path. It is not intended to be "busy work." Please take careful time in filling out this form. Ask for help if you need it. It will be returned to you for a redo if sufficient effort is not evident.
- (6) **Complete Semester Assessment Form** - this form is an opportunity for you to reflect on your educational and artistic experience. It is not intended to be "busy work." Please take careful time in filling out this form. Ask for help if you need it.
- (7) **A minimum of one Advisory meeting** with your SIM faculty advisor or any other SIM faculty you choose. Sophomores, and those new to the SIM Major, will be scheduled for an Advising Session at the beginning of their first semester. All others are required to make an appointment outside of class time with any of the SIM faculty over the course of the semester, preferably before the course registration period begins. Your official SIM faculty advisor will be identified during the first few weeks of the semester.
- (8) **Read the Semester Required Readings** and be ready to discuss them. Mandatory reading groups will

be scheduled during the semester. Readings are linked from the research page of the SIM site.

- (9) **A Review Board** is required for Juniors (45 minutes - fall semester) and Seniors (1 hour - spring semester). Students having a review board are required to secure a space and a scribe for their review board.
- (10) **Practice the Principles of the SIM Major** - Civic Responsibility, Self-agency, and Embracing Failure (see below\*).

## PRINCIPLES OF THE SIM MAJOR

### (1) Civic Responsibility

- Participate in the work of the program (volunteer for jobs, steward the spaces, participate meaningfully in SIM meetings).
- Respect each other.
- Engage in the evolution of the SIM community - if you are dissatisfied with something, work towards an improvement that will transform your concern for the better of all.
- Follow Studio Management space and equipment usage policies, including returning equipment on time and reporting thefts or damages. Leave no trace behind you, and leave SIM spaces better than how you find them.

### (2) Self-Agency

- Evoke the courage necessary to ask for help when you need it.
- Take ownership of your own educational path at Massart.
- Trust your own curiosity.
- Take time management seriously.

### (3) Embrace Failure


- Experiment.
- Be willing to seek out, rather than fear, criticism.
- Explore discomfort and disruption through art making.
- Manage the consequences of risk taking.

*With the most recent printing of “Revisiting the Sandbox,” we decided to include these changes to demonstrate how SIM is continuously evolving and adjusting to students, cultural shifts, and faculty praxes. Additionally, on the next page are the department’s learning goals that we have developed.*

## LEARNING GOALS

- (1) Exercise critical thinking through making and analyzing the work's role in contemporary contexts.
- (2) Acquire the ability to think conceptually across many disciplines.
- (3) Acquire the ability to collaborate.
- (4) Learn how to translate articulated artistic goals and concepts into actualized projects.
- (5) Practice self-study in the skills or topics that the student requires to meet their project goals.
- (6) Acquire the ability to respond creatively when the parameters in a given project change.
- (7) Practice descriptive critique techniques (learn how to ask and formulate questions that will help the artist move forward and how to verbalize one's perceptions).
- (8) Practice speaking and presenting to the public.
- (9) Acquire hands-on skills in audio/visual technology, curatorial practice, community building, and interdisciplinary practice.
- (10) Be exposed to the widest range of artistic mediums, ideas, and practice.
- (11) Engage in the cross-pollination of ideas and views in a diverse community.
- (12) Mentor and be mentored amongst students from different cohorts.
- (13) Identify one's strongest interests and seek out opportunities for pursuing them.
- (14) Work towards a high level of self-motivation, educational agency, and self-imposed standards.
- (15) Practice self-governance, engage in the process of deconstructing assumptions about educational systems, and work towards making change.

While we are always in experimentation mode—we feel the above expectations, requirements and goals will withstand the test of time—for now. We are always looking for the next barrier to break or structure to fail. This attraction to seeking out the edges and discomforts of our educational *Temporary Autonomous Zone* (see “The Temporary Autonomous Zone, Ontological Anarchy, Poetic Terrorism” Hakim Bey, 1985) is part of the success of the department. Challenging has been the articulation of the freedom that is possible in the learning trajectories of our many majors in light of the current economic, political, and academic framework that incentivizes standardized test results, data driven decision-making, and short term expectations of success. However, each time we hear from an Alum that gushes about how their SIM experience has given them the flexibility, tenacity, and skills to tackle just about anything, our commitment to protect the open space of SIM is reinforced.



Danielle Freiman, assemblage of  
scents attached to memories.

# INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP





INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP is a way of life in SIM. The personal computer, video technology, sound art, Internet art, animation, robotics, and the interconnection of science and art have all been introduced to the college by SIM students and faculty. For example, Animation and Video, sparked within SIM, have grown and spun off into two independent departments. SIM is a place where students who are working in frontier technologies congregate.

SIM students are also extremely proactive in finding real world applications for their interests and skills. They trail-blaze internships at theater companies and tattoo shops in and around Boston. They start recycling programs within the college, organize skill-shares and punk rock flea markets. Two notable student-launched initiatives are the Eventworks experimental arts festival and the department's own Godine Family Gallery (GFG) exhibition space.

Eventworks was launched in 1977 by a group of SIM students. It continues to be run annually by students who produce events throughout the year culminating in an annual month-long festival of multimedia and performing arts.

**FIGURE 4.1**

SIM students in video conference with Derek while he spends a semester abroad at the Gerrit Rietveld Academy in Amsterdam





SIM students run and control all aspects of the production—artistic programming, logistics, directing the technical operations, fundraising, budgets, and publicity.

Maya Hayuk (Hayuk, 2011), SIM Alumna '92, reflects:

*Co-producing Eventworks was one of the most important parts of my education because it taught me to be resourceful in my community and it helped me realize that part of my responsibility in life is to help open up other peoples' worlds.... SIM helped me believe in the art practice that I have forged on with for the last 20 years which involves constant inquiry, never settling and deep and dear pleasure and fulfillment."*

In the 33 years since, Eventworks has presented over three hundred artists and groups working in music, installation, film, video, performance, dance, sound, spoken word, and more.

Eventworks produces events in spaces and places within the MassArt campus as well as in theaters, galleries, and cultural centers throughout the metro-Boston area. Each year the festival reflects the themes and personalities that emerge from the production team and is always new. The students learn from hands-on experience how to manage all aspects of these productions.

Much like Eventworks, The Godine Family Gallery serves as an educational tool for SIM students who are interested in curatorial work and event production. Since its inception, the gallery has been entirely student-run. The GFG exhibits student, faculty and staff work as well as many visiting artists. As one of the many busy gallery spaces on the college campus, the gallery managers must



**FIGURE 4.2**

Maya Hayuk, "The Egg", Mural at the MU Art Center, Eindhoven, The Netherlands, 2010

learn to work within a bureaucracy, to delegate tasks, to write critical essays about each show, master exhibition standards, and produce a professional catalog at the end of the academic year.

Lina Maria Giraldo (Giraldo, 2011), the first GFG manager in 2005, is now a media artist and interaction designer based in New York City. After graduating from SIM, she earned a Masters degree in Interactive Communications from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts ITP program. She is the recipient of many awards and honors.

**FIGURE 4.3**

"Fractal World"  
by Lina Marie  
Giraldo, 2009



She has this to say about her gallery management experience:

*"This experience taught me how to attend to the process, rather than the result. I also improved my communication skills and my ability to create bridges between the community and artists. As a media artist and interaction designer, I constantly rely on these elements both professionally and personally. With all the new technologies and resources emerging daily, I need to understand and be able to adapt to my surroundings. I also need to be very sensitive to the users' needs. This is only possible if I understand the process clearly."*

In addition to hands-on skills acquisition and resume references, both the Eventworks production team members and the GFG

managers receive academic credit for their work. In addition to running hundreds of their own events each year, SIM students also have the chance to be on the technical support teams that are hired to handle the many events that occur in a 300-seat flexible-use performance space on campus. This space is SIM's home base and main classroom while also a desired rental by many groups on and off campus. Students have to learn to balance their own needs/desires with those of "outsiders" who also use the same space. Their maturity, diplomacy and communication skills are tested repeatedly throughout their 3 years in the program.

Another example of SIM students' innovative spirit and ability to solve problems is the story of the SIM website. In 2001, there was much desire by students and faculty to improve on the paper mailing



**FIGURE 4.4**

The contact information page of the SIM website designed by Matt Karl and August Kaiser.

list that had been used as a fundamental tool in maintaining the SIM community. This list was used to invite SIM majors to parties, contact collaborators, and feed mail art projects. In order to create a department website, SIM faculty member, Dana Moser, installed a GNU/Linux operating system and free webserver software on a computer. His efforts were quickly joined by students, August Kaiser and Matt Moore, who had many ideas about how to make the website fit the department's needs. Acknowledging both their skills

and their ambitions for the server, Moser quickly just gave them the root password on the system so they could do the development on their own. Eventually they developed and refined an entire content management system (thousands of lines of code) custom designed for the department that is still in use today. This website serves as a database of student work, a bulletin board of time-critical announcements, a discussion forum for student concerns, ideas, and opportunities, a calendar of events and space use, a private face book, a gallery, and finally an up-to-date informational brochure about the department. It continues to evolve and has become a model for other department-based social websites at MassArt.

SIM also inspires innovation and entrepreneurship within many of our elective courses and visiting artist talks. The courses, “Event Planning and Production”, “Art, Life and Money” and “Electronic Projects” are a few recent course offerings where these skills are explicitly addressed. Students are asked to be inventive, to visually model their ideas, to demonstrate proactive behavior, and to practice self-promotion. In experimental choreographer Dawn Kramer’s “On the Spot” course, students learn to apply improvisation techniques to everything from spoken word to dance. Additionally, SIM frequently invites guests who are at the cutting edge of their fields, have invented new inter-disciplines, and have the ability to make their innovative ideas known to a large audience. Amidst all this activity, there is a general sense in the department that the expectations are high for each student to chart their own path in an authoritative, personalized way.

**FIGURE 4.5**

Eventworks  
production team  
2010-2011

*Left to right:*

Scott Hadley

Aly Stosz

Darby Ruggeri

Brendan Antonelli

Dyllan Nguyen



March 20  
**THE 9th VERNAL EQUINOX CELEBRATION**  
 Boston's Annual Spring Art Bash  
 Longwood Bldg.,  
 364 Brookline Ave.  
 16 general / 12 students +

March 27  
**WILLIAM WIGMAN**  
 legendary Americanist trainer  
 slide talk/video screening  
 Tower Auditorium,  
 621 Huntington Ave.,  
 8 pm free

March 28, 29, 30  
**JACK SMITH**  
 seminal N.Y. film maker/  
 performer  
 March 30  
 "SACRIFICING SALMON"  
 live performance  
 A formalization of time and  
 space into Jack's reality.  
 location and time TBA  
 March 28, 29  
 films  
 "NORMAL FANTASIES" and  
 "FLAMING CREATURES"  
 artist will be present  
 BFFV 1126 Boylston St., Boston  
 8 pm \$5.

April 8  
**BARBARA KRUGER**  
**ROBERT RABBIT**  
**HOWARD ZINN**  
**"INFORMATION SYMPOSIUM"**  
 A day of presentations and  
 discussions of information,  
 technology and culture  
 Palace Road Theatre, Collins Bldg.,  
 621 Huntington Ave., Boston  
 10 am - 4 pm free

April 3 - 6  
**CAROLIE SCHNEIDMANN**  
 joyful and outrageous master  
 of mixed media  
 April 3 - 6  
 "DIZZY / SPACE / OBJECT"  
 a live day workshop / exploration  
 Palace Road Theatre, Collins Bldg.,  
 621 Huntington Ave., Boston  
 Thurs., 10 - 4, 6, 10 - 4, Sat. 10 - 4,  
 free for NCA students,  
 others \$20, for entire workshop  
 April 4  
 "TITCH'S LAST MEAL"  
 film  
 Longwood Bldg.,  
 364 Brookline Ave., Boston  
 7:30 pm \$4,  
 (continued above)

(continued)  
 April 4 - 6  
**"FRESH BLOOD"**  
 slide installation  
 Longwood Bldg.,  
 364 Brookline Ave., Boston  
 all-day into evening - free

April 11  
**PING CHONG**  
 NY's reigning avant-garde  
 discussion and talk  
 Palace Road Theatre, Collins Bldg.,  
 621 Huntington Ave., Boston  
 11 am free  
 Ping Chong's show will be premiering  
 in Boston at Northeastern University

April 12  
**WILLIAM FISCHER**  
 Zappa's endearingly eclectic protégé.  
 First time show on East Coast  
 singing and performing.  
 Palace Road Theatre, Collins Bldg.,  
 621 Huntington Ave., Boston  
 8 pm \$6.

April 15  
**SLIM SHOW**  
 Performance and media brilliance  
 from our own backyard.  
 location and time TBA

April 18  
**"BIGFOOT STOLE MY WIFE"**  
 and other stories.  
 ROYSTER BIERNSFORD SCOTT,  
 PAIGE MARTINEZ,  
 LAURIE MCKINNA,  
 DANIEL CROWLEY.  
 A historic theatrical extravaganza  
 based on the DAILY WORLD  
 newspaper story.  
 Palace Road Theatre, Collins Bldg.,  
 621 Huntington Ave., Boston  
 8 pm \$3.

April 18  
**PERFORMANCE FROM THE UNDERGROUND**  
**"HITLER ATE CHOCOLATE FOR BREAKFAST"**  
 A mini-opera composed and produced by  
 Boston's untold social commentator,  
 MARK "DOC" DRISCOLL.  
 video installations by  
 BOB GIBSON  
 videotape by  
 DANIEL HARTNETT,  
 along with other Boston subterraneans.  
 115 Causeway St., Boston  
 across from North Station  
 8 pm \$3.

April 20  
**"SPEECHLESS: A DAY OF SILENCE"**  
 This is an opportunity for non-verbal  
 communication attempting to quiet extraneous  
 human chatter and enable individuals to  
 re-view and re-assess and re-discover their  
 words and the meaning of the spoken word.  
 everywhere  
 all-day - prices

April 22  
**SHUMMI MUSIC**  
 EXTRA/BATT recording artists  
 STEVE WEISBERG,  
 KAREN MANTLER,  
 NEIL LEONARD.  
 courtyard, 621 Huntington Ave.,  
 Boston  
 8 pm \$4.

April 23 - 26  
**LINDA MONTANO**  
 performer art's evolving conceptual  
 April 23 - 25  
 "RADIO TAROT CARD READINGS"  
 participatory radio program,  
 stations and times TBA

April 23 - 24  
**"SCIENCE OF PERFORMANCE"**  
 individual sessions with the artist  
 free workshops: artist/counselor  
 TBA

April 26  
**"HOW TO MAKE ART OF EVERYDAY LIFE"**  
 slide talk and piano performance  
 Longwood Bldg.,  
 364 Brookline Ave., Boston  
 8 pm free

April 23, 24  
**INTERPLAY**  
 Spontaneous and compositional improvisation  
 on weekly/other weekly hours  
 ELIOT LEVINE,  
 ED WATKINS,  
 RICK JANNAGONE,  
 wigman N. LEONARD  
 courtyard, 621 Huntington Ave.,  
 Boston  
 8 pm \$4.

April 25  
**"TRANSFORMATIONS"**  
 MIGUEL NOYA and LUCIA PADILLA  
 American Premier!  
 South American Anthro-Techno performance  
 direct from Venezuela.  
 wigman Kerry Feller  
 Longwood Auditorium,  
 364 Brookline Ave., Boston  
 8 pm \$5.

May 1  
**ICARUS NICARAGUA**  
 Festival culminating in a concert, dance and  
 event to benefit a cultural exchange with  
 NICOLE, the Nicaraguan film collective.  
 Huntington campus, 621 Huntington Ave.,  
 Boston  
 2pm - midnight donation: \$4.

May 2  
**"REALITY: AN AERIAL VISUAL AID"**  
 TUCKER STELLEY,  
 BRIAN CAREY  
 multimedia  
 Palace Road Theatre, Collins Bldg.,  
 621 Huntington Ave., Boston  
 7:30 pm \$3.

May 4  
**VILLAGE GAYELAN JAVANESE ORCHESTRA**  
 Inexplicably live re-created classical  
 Javanese music.  
 Longwood Auditorium,  
 364 Brookline Ave., Boston  
 8 pm \$4, students \$6 general

May 7  
**"REACTING TO THE CRISIS"**  
 EVENTWORKS at MAN RAY  
 a multi media musical collaboration  
 by local luminaries.  
 JANE GILLOOLY,  
 KAREN AGUA,  
 CINDY KLEIN,  
 KEN FELD, HENLEY DOUGLAS (SKIN),  
 BOB MOSES (BUSTED STATUES),  
 KEN WINKOR (SAM SAM),  
 MARTIN SWOPE (BROGOWSKI),  
 ROBERT POSS (PLAYS CHATHAM ENEM.)  
 Brookline St., Central Sq.,  
 Cambridge  
 8 pm \$5.

- Sponsored by Visiting Artists Program
- ⊕ Sponsored by Leisure Fund
- ⊕ Sponsored by Spectrum
- Sponsored by BFFV

SERIES TICKETS AVAILABLE \$45

A limited portion of seating at all events except  
 VERNAL EQUINOX, BFFV and MAN RAY are free  
 to NCA.

For information call 733-2040

poster designed and layout on Composita's W3 10000 by DABBY



Blair Waters, assemblage of  
a fictional personality



# CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY



MASSACHUSETTS COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN is the nation's first and only freestanding public art school, established in 1873. Because of its close ties with the Commonwealth, MassArt has always had a deeply civic calling. The college's mission statement states that the school's priorities are based on a set of shared values, one of which is "We aspire to an ideal of service to the wider community and of advocacy for the value of the arts (Trustees of the Massachusetts College of Art and Design, 2011)." MassArt students have long echoed this sense of civic duty expressed at the very foundation of MassArt as an organization. When many schools in the Boston area shut down during the heat of the Vietnam War student opposition, MassArt students set up a large silk-screened poster facility that worked from dawn to dusk. In particular, SIM students have often been at the forefront of political activism on and off the MassArt campus. They populate the school's student government association, are chosen as student trustees, and have been on the hot seat for various highly visible acts of civil disobedience. SIM Students have organized art/service auctions and events to benefit earthquake and flood victims in Haiti, Chile, New Orleans, and Japan. They have volunteered as tutors and mentors in public schools, helped with educational programs at the MFA, Boston Cyberarts Festival, 826 Boston and many other organizations in and around the city. SIM students have a deep understanding of the power of governance, collaboration and public service.

San Shoppell, SIM Alum '84:

*"While in SIM, I developed a sense of belonging to a community, which required commitment. I learned a life long lesson of responsibility and the need to be involved, be active and contribute to the community you live in."*

Another example of SIM students intertwining art practice with political action is the Portable Utopia project initiated by 2010 graduate, Kevin Clancy. After winning a travel scholarship, Clancy traveled to South Africa and created a mobile resource library and expandable social space in partnership with the Keleketla! Library in Johannesburg, South Africa. The mobile unit circulated through the city and surrounding townships and provided a transient platform



**FIGURE 5.1**

Portable Utopia is a mobile resource library and expandable social space created by Kevin Clancy in partnership with Keleketla!Library in Johannesburg, South Africa.

for learning, sharing and creating. The mobile unit contains a library of books, a computer, flat files for prints and works on paper, a micro-museum, a collapsible stage for lectures and performances, and an inflatable geodesic dome used for group meetings. In Clancy's words, "Portable Utopia is an open platform that will adapt to the energy and desires of the community (Clancy, 2011, ¶ 3) ."

The SIM community is strong and sometimes accused of being cult-like and exclusive. Though a bit self-protective in its public perception, SIM has an open door to anyone interested in joining, visiting, or using our facilities. A few years ago, a handful of SIM majors volunteered to produce a show exclusively for freshman students (who are faced with choosing a major at the beginning of their second semester at the college) in order to acquaint them with the diversity of ideas and media that are SIM. This event has now been repeated several times. SIM students have also begun to organize on-campus meetings to discuss everything from national and international events (such as the revolutionary movement in the Middle East and North Africa) or to simply make artwork together at the same time and in the same place. Another student initiative was the decision that incoming SIM majors needed a bit more support to settle into the department once they arrived. We now start the year with a "SIM buddy" system so that each new student has a name to call when they are feeling overwhelmed by

what can appear to be a chaotic and confusing world full of choices without much direction. In SIM, there is a belief that this confusion is educational and a great opportunity to trigger collaborative practice early on. Collaboration is an antidote to confusion.



Matt Karl SIM Alum '05:

*"A little knowledge  
and a lot of people can  
create more than a lot of  
knowledge and one person."*

**FIGURE 5.2**

Dave Schlafman (Executive Producer, SIM Alum '04) and Matt Karl (Interactive Director, SIM Alum '05) in L.A. as Nominees for a Day-time Emmy Award for their work on PBS' Fizzy's Lunch Lab, 2011.

# 2 THE CREATIVE TIME SUMMIT: REVOLUTIONS IN PUBLIC PRACTICE

**SUMMIT**  
MASSART  
MASSACHUSETTS COLLEGE  
OF ART AND DESIGN

**OCTOBER 9 10AM - 6PM + OCTOBER 10 10AM - 6:30PM**

**LIVE VIDEO BROADCAST + DISCUSSIONS  
IN THE MASSART POZEN CENTER**

THE POZEN CENTER  
MASSART NORTH BUILDING  
TETLOW STREET ENTRANCE  
621 HUNTINGTON AVENUE  
BOSTON, MA 02115

**FREE SCREENING**

The Creative Time Summit is a two-day conference that brings more than forty cultural producers together to discuss how their work engages pressing issues affecting our world. Their international projects bring to the table a vast array of practices and methodologies that engage with the canvas of everyday life. The participants range from art world luminaries to those purposefully obscure, providing a glimpse into an evolving community concerned with the political implications of socially engaged art. The Creative Time Summit is meant to be an opportunity to not only uncover the tensions that such a global form of working presents, but also to provide opportunities for new coalitions and sympathetic affinities.

Please join us in the Pozen Center for a free  
LIVE broadcast of the Creative Time Summit.

## **SUNDAY OCTOBER 10**

**TREVOR PAGLEN, SHAUN  
GLADWELL, DINH Q. LE, REGINA  
JOSE GALINDO, PHIL COLLINS,  
EYAL WEIZMAN, LAURIE JO  
REYNOLDS, LAURA KURGAN,  
AARON LEVY, PLATFORM, OLIVER  
RESSLER, AARON LEVY, PERRY  
CHEN, CHUS MARTINEZ, CLAIRE  
DOHERTY, BISI SILVA, ANDREA  
FRASER, THOMAS KEENAN, DAN-  
IELLE ABRAMS, OTABENGA  
JONES & ASSOCIATES, W.A.G.E,  
BASEKAMP, STEPHEN WRIGHT,  
CHTO DELAT/WHAT IS TO BE  
DONE?, EATING IN PUBLIC, THE  
INTERNATIONAL ERRORIST**

## **PRESENTATIONS BY:**

### **SATURDAY OCTOBER 9**

**SASKIA BOS, JULIA BRYAN-WIL-  
SON, ANTON VIDOKLE, J. MORGAN  
PUETT, SURASI KUSOLWONG,  
SUPERFLEX, JAKOB JAKOBSEN,  
THE BRUCE HIGH QUALITY FOUN-  
DATION, DILOMPRIZULIKE, LEARN-  
ING SITE, GRIDTHIYA GAWEEWONG,  
SOFIA HERNANDEZ CHONG CUY,  
CLAIRE PENTECOST, AMY FRANCE-  
SCHINI, AGNES DENES, INCUBATE,  
FEAST, WENDELL PIERCE, RICK  
LOWE**

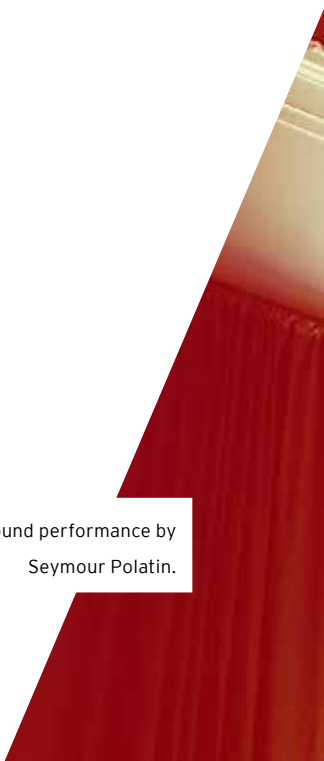
FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT KARA STOKOWSKI : KARAMSTO@GMAIL.COM

THIS SCREENING IS SUPPORTED BY THE STUDIO FOR INTERRELATED MEDIA AND MASSACHUSETTS COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN

**WWW.CREATIVETIME.ORG**



Sound performance by  
Seymour Polatin.





# SIM IMPACT



HOW DO WE KNOW that a Studio for Interrelated Media education works? To be responsible to its students, MassArt, just like any other organization, needs to show evidence of success. As suggested earlier, standardized tests won't do it. We should depend on other forms of assessment that are neither immediately available nor in multiple-choice form—it is the lives of our alumni. The best way to get a sense of SIM's impact is to hear from alumni. Their success is operationalized in the world and exceeds disciplinary boundaries. Sensible assessment needs to take on another shape, a longer-range view with questions that transcend specific skill-sets. We invited alumni from our Facebook and Yahoo online

communities to comment on their SIM experience and how it has influenced their ability to adapt, innovate and succeed. We include a few of their stories and thoughts here.

After Matt Moore (Moore, 2011), '04, launched the SIM website while still a student, he went on to become an award-winning designer and interactive engineer specializing in connected and new media for children.

Matt has worked as a senior designer at the Disney Online Studios where he was a recipient of the Disney Inventor Award. Matt is currently the Web Director of the PBS Kids' Fizzy's Lunch Lab.

Moore writes:

*“Prior to SIM, not once did a teacher hand me the keys to my own education. SIM has been the sole place in my formal education where I felt creatively, socially and intellectually empowered. When you are producing a SIM group, there is a responsibility to provide a space for other students. There's an unspoken social contract to not fail your peers or do a disservice to their art. It is the component of self-selecting, student-driven production*



**FIGURE 6.1**  
A impromptu  
SIM group hug.

*which creates an environment where students depend upon each other—whether they want to or not. This mutual respect is the heart of the SIM program.”*

Fish McGill (McGill, 2011), also '04, has received commissions to create drawings and design projects for Harmonix Music Systems, MTV, ICA Boston, Nike, MassArt, iTunes, MIT, Deitch Projects, IdN, Adobe and more. Fish has been an artist-in-residence at MassArt and at Montserrat College in Maine to work on an ongoing drawing project called “Robot GUTS” with students.

McGill writes:

*“The concept of producing each week is held with the same regard and reverence as the artwork being shown. Producing is an art in itself that requires juggling personalities, content, promotion, flow, experimentation and critique. It prepared me for a lot of the soft skills that are so important in getting your foot in the door after graduation.”*

Monika Pizzichemi, a 1991 alumna, was a double major in SIM and Photography. After a move to western Massachusetts, she has held several positions as a gallery owner and manager, art teacher, and director of the North St. Arts Collaborative in Pittsfield, MA. Her gallery, Empty Set Projects (Pizzichemi, 2011) was launched in 2001. She works in photography, performance, and 3-D assemblage.

Pizzichemi writes:

*“I think what SIM gave to me the most was a sense that if you can think it, you can do it. The professors rarely said “no” to any ideas that were presented, no matter how whacky, or even dangerous. In retrospect this was the best gift they could have given; we could make real mistakes and have real successes, too. This helped me to cultivate that impromptu “can do” attitude that is so necessary in*



**FIGURE 6.2**

The iPhone App  
Soundtracker  
Tribe of animal  
characters en-  
joying music  
illustrated by Fish  
McGill, 2010



© Monika Pizichemi 2008

**FIGURE 6.3**  
Selections from  
the “Prick”  
sculptural series  
by Monika Piz-  
ichemi, 2008

*artistic endeavors that allows you to make something from nothing.’ This lesson I use every day as a gallery director, studio/ performance space owner and teacher.”*

Tucker Stilley (Stilley, 2011) graduated from SIM in 1986. After moving to LA in the early 90’s, Tucker enjoyed a professional career in the movie business as a musician and sound engineer. In 2004, Tucker was diagnosed with ALS or Lou Gehrig’s disease; a degenerative condition that leads to paralysis and frequently claims the patient’s life. Since his diagnosis, Tucker has lost the use of his limbs as well as his voice, and now uses a reflective bindi-dot on his forehead to control a complex system of computer technology and accessibility tools. A collaborative team made up of Tucker, friends and family, doctors and engineers have designed this original system. Tucker references his SIM education when he describes how he approaches his current

situation. His determination to create has turned accessibility, innovation and empowerment into an art form. Tucker is able to create significant art at an amazing rate. He writes comics, sells his original and complex digital prints, makes music, and edits video.


You can see the lived results of the SIM impact on its graduates by taking a look at the staggering variety of their accomplishments over time. SIM alumni have started companies, schools, consulting firms, galleries, and coffee shops, not to mention hundreds of independent music bands at varying levels of success. They have gone on to become master chefs and massage therapists. They have become Broadway and off-Broadway lighting designers. David Armstrong, a 1973 alumnus, a member of SIM’s very first class, is now the Director of Information Technology Services for Colorado College and has recently published a book of his photo collages. Ron Wallace, 1977, who is now a senior software architect at a leading international media software corporation, was hanging lights, tinkering with

synthesizers, writing plays, and performing solo performance art while a student in SIM. After Joel Rubin, also a 1977 graduate, earned a PhD from Harvard, he became the director of the New England Aquarium's Education Department and is now a high school science teacher. San Shoppell (Hill, 2009), a 1984 alumna, led her chef school team to win the American Culinary Federations Student National Competition while also maintaining an active visual arts career. Gail Wight, 1988, now a tenured Associate Professor at Stanford University, started a multimedia arts program at Mills College partially modeled after the SIM program. Kate Redmond, 1989, after years of teching Oscar parties, cruise ship entertainment, and rock shows, is now concert production and facility manager at University of Denver. Maya Hayuk, 1991, became an Absolut Vodka ad campaign art star with her street art painting in NYC. Rich Streitmatter-Tran 1998, now based in Vietnam, is a media artist, teacher and leader in the contemporary art and design culture of Southeast Asia. While still a SIM student, Heidi Kayser, 2005, started her own award-winning gallery, Axiom Center for New and Experimental Media, and is now assistant director of the Boston Cyberarts Festival. This is a partial list (Studio for Interrelated Media, 2001).

**FIGURE 6.4**

A page from Tucker Stille's comic "The Permanent Record of New Jack Rasputin", 2009





Kayvon Edson's "Natural Selections"  
Fashion Show at the 2015 SIM Big Show.



LET'S  
DO IT AGAIN



In preparation for this article, we sent a recent SIM graduate on a reconnaissance mission to find other intermedia fine art post-secondary programs that are SIM-like in attitude, structure and result. He visited many colleges and universities on the east and west coast discovering that, at first glance, a few seemed to have departments similar to SIM. These excellent programs nurture interdisciplinary practice, embrace innovation and new technologies, and practice collaborative production. However, upon further study the similarity broke down. We couldn't find a program that includes all the elements of SIM: student initiated event production, community-building practice embedded in the curriculum, many opportunities for failure, and an emphasis on the process rather than the product. Additionally, the weekly SIM major studio course structure is unusual. Finally, the amount of power and shared responsibility SIM artists have over their program is remarkable.

**FIGURE 7.1**

Nita Sturiale, SIM faculty, giving graduation gifts to SIM Seniors, Fall 2010

*Left to right:*

*Rajuli Khetarpal*

*Veronika Kruta*

*Josh Stedman*

*Paige Peterson*

*Cori Spencer*

*Sondra Aronson*

SIM's home within a visual arts and design college, and its focus on students' individualized creative paths, protects its students from the pressures of having to solve the world's problems, making anything of obvious value, or from public opinion. There is a freedom in making non-commercial, individually motivated art that is unparalleled in any other human activity. The process of making



art is inventive by definition (Hetland et al., 2007). Students are not given a problem to solve or a topic to consider, nor is there an expected outcome in content or form. It is wide open, spontaneous, and holistic. This freedom of the mind has far-reaching implications. If we could protect this level of free thought among young artists along with direct access to hi-tech resources, scientists, scholars, and materials, what would happen? Ideal 21st century artists are those that can assert themselves into contemporary life, invent solutions, and maintain the necessary bravery to pursue their individual hunches, dreams, and talents. And for employers with vision, these artists are also the most employable job seekers.

The Studio for Interrelated Media is notably unique. We believe using SIM as a model for developing new programs of study in higher education will invigorate efforts to make real change in education. These programs will be able to educate individuals, who are ready to take on the future. Our research is incomplete, and we invite readers to recommend other similar programs so that we may share strategies, strengthen the public perception of such programs, and evangelize these ideas to students across the nation. We want to see more SIM-like ideas propagating through the academic info sphere.

In 2011, Christian Marclay (SIM, 1980) received the Gold Lion Award at the Venice Biennale for his installation “The Clock.” Marclay’s video installation has been called “an abundant, magnificent work” (The Financial Times), “relentless and compelling” (The Guardian), and “utterly transfixing” (The Huffington Post). Upon this exciting news, Kay Sloan, MassArt’s President at the time, wrote to the MassArt community, “A graduate of our SIM Department, Marclay’s work is a testament to the interdisciplinary approach to art and design that is a hallmark



**FIGURE 7.2**

Painting by KT  
James, 2005.

of Massachusetts College of Art and Design.” In the late 70’s, Marclay found SIM as a refuge in order to pursue his innovative ideas. In 2011, this refuge is a thriving laboratory for each new generation of students that find their way to SIM’s Pozen Center for Interrelated Media (SIM’s main studio, classroom, meeting, and performance space) in the North Building on the MassArt campus.

The disconnection between what/how we teach and societal need is having a profound effect on our socio-economic health (Olson, 2006). I believe the place to start reworking our education system, while also increasing its accessibility, is in the hands of each individual student gently facilitated by adult mentors. Carved over the west portal of MassArt’s original Longwood building in Boston’s Longwood Medical area is a statement by Ralph Waldo Emerson: “Every work of art has as much reason for being as the Moon and the Sun.” Every student deserves a chance at fully becoming. Societies that nurture and sustain creativity of this kind are more likely to thrive in the long run (Gardner, 2007). Give individuals time and materials and they will invent, draw, construct, perform, debate, organize and model their responses to the challenges we face.

In discovering their own path, these students will shape the future.



# EVENTWORKS FESTIVAL

## APRIL 7

### MARK MOTHERSBAUGH of DEVO

Post Card Diaries 2006 Opening Reception

Mass Art's Godine Gallery, 7 pm. FREE

### IRON POUR

MAHI MAHI - MAD MAN FILMS - WILDLIFE - HOLY GHOST REVIVAL

Mass Art Courtyard, 8pm, \$7.

## APRIL 14

### I.D.M (INTELLIGENT DANCE MUSIC)

Featuring: RICHARD DEVINE - MISSION ON MARS - SQUARE -

DATACHI - TWO SHEDS - DEVINULL - DIESLOW AND ROT - JUNKY

MATTERS AND DUNAWAY - DJ C - ROB from ALIENS AT HOME

Visuals by VJ ZEBBLER Mass Art - North 181 and Pazen Center, 8pm.

\$7 Mass Art Students - \$10 general admission

## APRIL 15

### PUNK ROCK FLEA MARKET 8

Plenty of D.I.Y. vendors, record distros, and second hand clothing.

Plus DJs and prizes.

Mass Art Gym, 12pm - 6pm, \$1.

## APRIL 21

### MASS ART PROM

Featuring: ROLLER DERBY GIRLS, DJ COMFORTABLE MATT

and live performances by world class drag queens

MISS NICOLE PAIDE - FENA BARBITALL - MARTISHKA

and SIR LIONS. Hosted by: CASEY SPECTACULAR.

Mass Art Gym, 7:30 - 11pm, \$5. Open to everyone!

## APRIL 22

### ANARCHIST BOOK FAIR

Featuring: book and information tables from distros, radical bookstores and publishers.

Mass Art - North Hall, 10am - 7pm. FREE.

## APRIL 28

### BIKE-IN-MOVIES

Free screenings of RAD and PEE WEE'S BIG ADVENTURE

Free tune-ups, scavenger hunt, bike stuff and food!

Evan's Way Courtyard, 12pm. Screenings start at 9pm. FREE

## APRIL 29

### CLOSING DANCE PARTY

Featuring: WE ARE CASSETTE - MUFFSTACHE - and others

Mass Art - North 181, 8pm. FREE

Massachusetts College of Art  
621 Huntington Avenue, Boston, MA  
Green Line or 39 bus to Longwood Ave. Stop

APPROVED  
OFFICIAL NOTICE  
The Boston University

EVENTWORKS  
FESTIVAL  
2006

For More Information: [www.babel.massart.edu/~eventworks](http://www.babel.massart.edu/~eventworks) - [eventworks@gmail.com](mailto:eventworks@gmail.com) - 617.879.7726

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THE STUDIO  
FOR INTERRELATED  
MEDIA PRESENTS  
DANCE COLLECTIVE  
IN

# light

LONGWOOD THEATRE  
MASSACHUSETTS COLLEGE OF ART  
FRIDAY & SATURDAY BROOKLINE AVENUES  
7 PM \$5.00 ADVANCE TICKETS MARCH 3-4, 1978  
INFORMATION CALL LISA KUNDSTADTER  
617 253-4051 Free Parking Rear of Bldg.  
A Concert to Benefit MITSA



## SIM CAST OF CHARACTERS

### FACULTY - PAST AND PRESENT

Harris Barron, *Professor Emeritus (1969-1988)*

Lowry Burgess, *Professor (1987-1989)*

Donald Burgy, *Professor Emeritus (1974-2001)*

Leila Daw, *Professor Emeritus (1990-2001)*

Kianga Ford, *Assistant Professor (2006-2009)*

John Holland, *Professor Emeritus (1980-2010)*

Dawn Kramer, *Professor Emeritus (1976-2014)*

Elaine Buckholtz, *Professor (2010-present)*

Juan Obando, *Professor (2015-present)*

Dana Moser, *Professor (1986-present)*

Nita Sturiale, *Professor and Chair (2001-present)*

### SIM STUDIO MANAGEMENT

Max Azanow *(2010-present)*

Bruce Robert Bowen *(1978-2010)*

Richard Collier *(1974-1978)*

Eric Freeman *(2005-present)*

Joe Upham *(1970-1974)*

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Nita is a Professor and Department Chair in the Studio for Interrelated Media at the Massachusetts College of Art and Design. As an undergrad, she earned a BFA from the SIM program before continuing her studies at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and Tufts University Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (in collaboration with the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston) where she earned a MEd and MFA respectively.



Nita's art explores human cognition, social networking, and pyschogeography. Most recent projects have investigated the psychology, biology, and spirituality of motherhood. She often flirts with new and experimental technologies. She has exhibited her work online and internationally, including the Boston Cyberarts Festival, Cambridge River Arts Festival, Consciousness Reframed International Conference in the UK, in China, Italy, San Francisco and New York. She is included in Stephen Wilson's book, *Information Arts* (MIT Press, 2001).

For balance, Nita and her husband, Giuseppe Taibi, import organic extra virgin olive oil, *Olio Taibi*, from the family's olive orchard in Sicily. They live outside of Boston with their two daughters, two guinea pigs, and a dog.



# **HARRIS BARRON**

Sculpture in Bronze and Wood

October 18 to November 16, 1963

Stanhope Gallery 27 Stanhope Street  
Boston

*Preview Friday, October 18 from 8 to 11 p.m.*







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For more information about SIM, please visit  
<http://sim.massart.edu>