



MIT Appoints Janet Echelman Distinguished Visiting Artist

The artist will research and develop new work in 2022-23 academic year

Cambridge, MA, October 3, 2022 — Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) is pleased to announce visual artist [Janet Echelman](#) as a 2022-23 Distinguished Visiting Artist at MIT. The appointment, hosted by the [MIT Center for Art, Science & Technology \(CAST\)](#) will begin this fall. Echelman's time at MIT will be dedicated to the research and development of new work, shaped in collaboration with MIT faculty, students and researchers across the Institute, in fields that may range from fine art, architecture, and urban design, to material science, computer science, and structural engineering. Her final project is yet to be determined as it will be developed after a period of research. Her residency is a collaboration with MIT Associate Professor Caitlin Mueller, CAST Distinguished Visiting Technologist David Feldman, and graduate student Adam Burke, working with computational design methods used in the creation of her work. Together they will explore and test new opportunities for algorithmic design and engineering simulation to contribute to the creation and production of large-scale tensile sculpture, focusing on the fiber-based material systems and software tools that Echelman has pioneered with her studio. The residency will include studio visits, guest lectures, a technology and design-focused IAP workshop in January, and a symposium moderated by Gloria Sutton, a historian of contemporary art.

MIT CAST Distinguished Visiting Artist residencies provide support for visual artists and designers to engage with the creative energy, innovative thinking and advanced technology found throughout the MIT community. The arts have been an integral part of MIT since its founding, and this position builds upon the university's vision for the intersections of art, science and technology as an essential foundation for achieving institutional excellence. The program is supported with funding from the Mellon Foundation. Echelman was chosen by the CAST Distinguished Visiting Artist Curatorial Committee from a pool of nominations by MIT faculty. In addition to Echelman, CAST will support nearly 30 MIT faculty artists and Visiting Artists during the 2022-23 academic year.

"This collaboration opens new possibilities to push the boundaries of my work at the intersection of sculpture, urban art, material science, and computational design," said Janet Echelman, Distinguished Visiting Artist at MIT CAST. "I'm eager to discover what will unfold as I collaborate with Caitlin Mueller and colleagues from departments and centers across MIT, including the Department of Architecture and the Leventhal Center for Advanced Urbanism. My goal is to collaboratively create new artwork that stretches into uncharted territory."



Portrait: Roser Brothers

ABOUT JANET ECHELMAN

Janet Echelman's work defies categorization as it intersects across disciplinary boundaries. Using unlikely materials from fishnet to atomized water particles, Echelman combines ancient craft with original computational design software to create artworks that have become focal points for urban life on four continents.

Recipient of the Guggenheim Fellowship, Harvard Loeb Fellowship, Aspen Institute Henry Crown Fellowship, and a Fulbright Senior Lectureship, Echelman was named an Architectural Digest Innovator for "changing the very essence of urban spaces." Her TED talk "Taking Imagination Seriously" has been translated into 35 languages with more than two million views. Oprah ranked Echelman's work #1 on her *List of 50 Things That Make You Say Wow!*, and she recently received the Smithsonian American Ingenuity Award in Visual Arts, honoring "the greatest innovators in America today."

Her permanent public commissions have transformed urban environments worldwide, and include *Bending Arc* on the new Pier in St. Petersburg, FL (2020), mist sculpture *Pulse* (2018) in front of Philadelphia City Hall, *Dream Catcher* (2017) on the Sunset Strip in West Hollywood, CA, *Impatient Optimist* (2015) at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation in Seattle, *Every Beating Second* (2011) at San Francisco International Airport, the Vancouver Winter Olympics legacy commission *Water Sky Garden* (2010), *Her Secret Is Patience* (2009) in downtown Phoenix, and *She Changes* (2005) in Porto, Portugal.

More at the artist's website: <https://www.echelman.com/>

COLLABORATORS

Janet Echelman will collaborate with:

Caitlin Mueller, Associate Professor of Architecture and Associate Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering

David Feldman, CAST Distinguished Visiting Technologist

Gloria Sutton, Associate Professor of Contemporary Art History and New Media at Northeastern University and Affiliate, MIT Art, Culture, and Technology Program

PREVIOUS CAST DISTINGUISHED VISITING ARTISTS

Previous CAST Distinguished Visiting Artists have included Pedro Reyes (2016-18), Maya Beiser (2017), Lisa Dwan (2019-21), Matthew Ritchie (2018-21), and Iva Bittová (2022).

HISTORY OF VISITING ARTISTS AT MIT / RECENT ARTISTS

Since the late 1960s, MIT has been a leader in integrating the arts and pioneering a model for collaboration among artists, scientists and engineers in a research setting. CAST's Visiting Artists Program brings internationally acclaimed artists to engage with MIT's creative community in ways that are mutually enlightening for the artists and for faculty, students and research staff at the Institute. Visual artists who have worked extensively at MIT include Mel Chin, Olafur Eliasson, Agnieszka Kurant, Rick Lowe, Vik Muniz, Trevor Paglen, Tomás Saraceno (Inaugural CAST Visiting Artist) and Anicka Yi. Artists in the performing arts have included Audra McDonald, Gustavo Dudamel, Lupe Fiasco, and Robert Wilson.

CURRENT ARTISTS SUPPORTED BY CAST

CAST grants for the 2022-23 academic year support visiting artists, faculty artist projects, and artistic collaborations by:

Visiting Artists

Clarice Assad

Ballet des Porcelaines

Iva Bittová

Carsten Höller

Jackson 2bears Leween

Andreas Refsgaard

Guerilla Opera

Witness Relocation

Mellon Faculty Grants

Rania Ghosn, Climate Inheritance

Delia Duong Ba Wendel, Memory Atlas for Racial Justice

Hiroshi Ishii, TeleAbsence

Ana Miljački, Bootleg Futures

Fotini Christia, Ways of Seeing: Documenting Endangered Built Heritage in Afghanistan

Fay Chandler Creativity Grants

Lara Baladi

Yolande Daniels

Deborah Garcia

Charles Shadle

Anne Whiston Spirn
Ken Urban
Christine Walley

International Exhibition and Performance Grants

Gediminas Urbonas, The Swamp Observatory

Cross-Disciplinary Classes

Cristina Parreño Alonso, The Deep Time Project

MIT & Black Public Media Visiting Artists

Damien McDuffie
Kidus Hailesilassie

ABOUT THE CENTER FOR ART, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

A major cross-school initiative, the MIT Center for Art, Science & Technology (CAST) creates new opportunities for art, science and technology to thrive as interrelated, mutually informing modes of exploration, knowledge and discovery. CAST's multidisciplinary platform presents performing and visual arts programs, supports research projects for artists working with science and engineering labs, and sponsors symposia, classes, workshops, design studios, lectures and publications. The Center is funded in part by a generous grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Evan Ziporyn, Faculty Director; Leila W. Kinney, Executive Director.

Since its inception in 2012, CAST has been the catalyst for artist residencies and collaborative projects with MIT faculty and students—cross-disciplinary courses and workshops, concert series, and numerous multimedia projects, lectures and symposia. The visiting artists program is a cornerstone of CAST's activities, which encourage cross-fertilization among disciplines and intensive interaction with MIT's faculty and students.

ABOUT THE ARTS AT MIT

More than 70 percent of incoming first year students have prior training in the arts and nearly 50 percent of all MIT undergraduates enroll in arts courses each year. The arts at MIT connect creative minds across disciplines and encourage a lifetime of exploration and self-discovery. The arts strengthen MIT's commitment to the aesthetic, human and social dimensions of research and innovation. Artistic knowledge and creation exemplify MIT's motto—*mens et manus*, mind and hand. The arts are essential to MIT's mission to build a better society and meet the challenges of the 21st century.

For more information, visit arts.mit.edu

Media Contact

Leah Talatinian | Arts at MIT | +1-617-253-5351 | leaht@mit.edu