

## Artist and Designer Es Devlin Awarded 2025 Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts at MIT

**Award includes \$100K prize, artist  
residency, gala, and public lecture at MIT**

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Image: Es Devlin in front of her piece *Come Home Again*.  
Photo: Daniel Devlin. Image Courtesy Es Devlin.  
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**Cambridge, MA, USA, October 24, 2024** – Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) is pleased to announce that artist and designer Es Devlin is the recipient of the [2025 Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts at MIT](#). The \$100K prize awarded at a gala in her honor also includes an artist residency at MIT in spring 2025, during which Es Devlin will present her work in a lecture open to the public on May 1, 2025. Es Devlin’s work explores biodiversity, linguistic diversity, and collective AI-generated poetry, all areas that also are being explored within the MIT community. She is known for public art and installations at major museums such as the Tate Modern, kinetic stage designs for the Metropolitan Opera, the Super Bowl, and the Olympics, as well as monumental stage sculptures for large-scale stadium concerts.

Es Devlin’s remarks upon receiving the award:

“I am always most energized by works I have not yet made, so I am immensely grateful to have this trust and investment in ideas I’ve yet to conceive. I’m honored to receive an award that has been granted to so many of my heroes and look forward to collaborating closely with the brilliant minds at MIT.”

The Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts at MIT recognizes innovative artists working in any field or cross-disciplinary activity. The \$100,000 prize represents an investment in the recipient’s future creative work, rather than a prize for a particular project or lifetime of achievement. The official announcement was made at the Council for the Arts at MIT’s 51st annual meeting at MIT on October 24, 2024. Past recipients include Santiago Calatrava, Gustavo Dudamel, Olafur Eliasson, Robert Lepage, Audra McDonald, Suzan-Lori Parks, Bill Viola, and Pamela Z, among others.

From MIT Vice Provost and Ford International Professor of History Philip S. Khoury:

“We look forward to presenting Es Devlin with MIT’s highest award in the arts. Her work will be an inspiration for our students studying the visual arts, theater, media, and design. Her interest in AI and the arts dovetails with a major initiative at MIT to address the societal impact of GenAI. With a new performing arts center opening this winter and a campus-wide arts

festival taking place this spring, there could not be a better moment to expose MIT’s creative community to Es Devlin’s extraordinary artistic practice.”

## **Campus Residency and Public Programs**

A distinctive feature of the Award is a short residency at MIT, which includes a public presentation of the artist’s work, substantial interaction with students and faculty, and a gala that convenes national and international leaders in the arts. The goal of the residency is to provide the recipient with unparalleled access to the creative energy and cutting-edge research at the Institute and to develop mutually enlightening relationships in the MIT community.

## **2025 Public Program by Es Devlin at MIT**

Es Devlin will present a Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts at MIT public lecture on May 1, 2025. Further information about the public programs will be posted at [arts.mit.edu/mcdermott](https://arts.mit.edu/mcdermott).

## **About the Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts**

The Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts at MIT was established in 1974 by [Margaret McDermott](#) (1912-2018) in honor of her husband, Eugene McDermott (1899-1973), a co-founder of Texas Instruments and long-time friend and benefactor of MIT. The award is presented by the Council for the Arts at MIT.

The award is bestowed upon individuals whose artistic trajectory and body of work have achieved the highest distinction in their field and indicate they will remain leaders for years to come. The award recognizes innovative talents in any arts discipline and offers its recipient a \$100,000 cash prize and a campus residency. The McDermott Award reflects MIT’s commitment to risk-taking, problem-solving, and connecting creative minds across disciplines.

## **About the Council for the Arts at MIT**

The Council for the Arts at MIT is a volunteer group of alumni and friends who support the arts at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Appointed by the President of MIT to three-year terms, Council members continuously fulfill their mission “to foster the arts at MIT and to act as a catalyst for the development of a broadly based, highly participatory program in the arts. Since it was established in 1974, the award has been bestowed upon 38 individuals who work in performing, visual, and media arts, as well as authors, art historians, and patrons of the arts.

## **Past Recipients**

2022: Pamela Z, musician and composer  
2020: Thomas Heatherwick, designer  
2018: Audra McDonald, actress and singer  
2016: David Adjaye, architect  
2014: Olafur Eliasson, visual artist  
2012: Robert Lepage, performance and media artist  
2010: Gustavo Dudamel, conductor  
2009: Bill Viola, visual artist  
2006: Suzan Lori Parks, playwright/novelist  
2005: Santiago Calatrava, engineer/architect  
2004: Libby Larsen, composer  
2003: Vinie Burrows, activist/actress/writer  
2001: Isaac Julien, filmmaker  
2000: CORE Ensemble  
1999: Diller + Scofidio, architects  
1998: Junot Díaz, author  
1997: Toni Dove, video artist

1996: Kenny Leon, theater director  
1995: Jeff Wall, photographer  
1994: Tan Dun, composer  
1993: Thomas Hanrahan & Victoria Meyers, architects  
1992: Richard Preston, author  
1991: Rebecca Purdum, artist  
1990: Agnes Denes, artist  
1989: Ida Ely Rubin, art historian  
1988: Yulla Lipchitz, photographer  
1986: Richard Leacock, filmmaker  
1985: Harold E. Edgerton, photographer  
1984: I.M. Pei, architect  
1983: Albert R. Gurney, Jr., playwright  
1982: Roy Lamson, arts administrator  
1981: Henry Moore, sculptor  
1980: Luis A. Ferre, arts patron  
1979: Jerome B. Wiesner, President of MIT, arts patron  
1978: Catherine N. Stratton, Founder, Council for the Arts, arts patron  
1977: James R. Killian, Jr., President Emeritus, MIT  
1976: Paul Tishman, Founder, Council for the Arts, arts patron  
1975: Klaus Liepmann, conductor, founder of the music program at MIT  
1974: György Kepes, artist, founder of the Center for Advanced Visual Studies at MIT (CAVS)

## About Es Devlin

Artist Es Devlin (born London 1971) views an audience as a temporary society and often invites public participation in communal choral works. Her canvas ranges from public sculptures and installations at Tate Modern, V&A, Serpentine, Imperial War Museum, and Lincoln Center, to kinetic stage designs at the Royal Opera House, the National Theatre, and the Metropolitan Opera, as well as Olympic Ceremonies, Super Bowl halftime shows, and monumental illuminated stage sculptures for large scale stadium concerts.

Devlin is the subject of a major monographic book, *An Atlas of Es Devlin*, described by Thames & Hudson as their most intricate and sculptural publication to date, and a retrospective exhibition at the Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum in New York. In 2020, she became the first female architect of the UK Pavilion at a World Expo, conceiving a building which used AI to co-author poetry with visitors on its 20-meter diameter facade. Her practice was the subject of the 2015 Netflix documentary series *Abstract: The Art of Design*. She is a fellow of the Royal Academy of Music, University of the Arts London, and a Royal Designer for Industry at the Royal Society of Arts. She has been awarded the London Design Medal, three Olivier Awards, a Tony Award, an Ivor Novello Award, doctorates from the Universities of Bristol and Kent, and a CBE.

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For more information on the Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts at MIT, please visit [arts.mit.edu/mcdermott](https://arts.mit.edu/mcdermott)