

## Artist and Designer Es Devlin Creates Collective Portrait with the MIT Community

Pop Up Exhibition of *MIT Face to Face*, from Devlin's Residency for the Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts at MIT, on view April 28-30

Public lecture with Devlin and MoMA's Paola Antonelli at MIT May 1

Register for free public events: [arts.mit.edu/mcdermott](https://arts.mit.edu/mcdermott)

Media Contacts:

Leah Talatinian | Arts at MIT | 617-253-5351 | [leah@mit.edu](mailto:leah@mit.edu)

Erica Bolton | Bolton Quinn | [erica@boltonquinn.com](mailto:erica@boltonquinn.com)

[Press images](#) for use with credit H Erickson, courtesy MIT.



**Cambridge, MA, USA, April 29, 2024** – Artist and designer Es Devlin and more than 100 members of the MIT community have created *MIT Face to Face*, a series of portrait drawings by MIT students, faculty and staff, that together form a collective portrait of the MIT community. The project is part of Devlin's residency for her [2025 Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts at MIT](#). The installation of drawings will be on view in a pop up exhibition on April 28-30 at the new Edward and Joyce Linde Music Building at MIT. Es Devlin 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. While at MIT, Devlin will present a pop-up exhibition and an artist talk, and meet with MIT faculty and students in the areas of design, AI, environmental sciences, theater, and more.

*MIT Face to Face* is a collective event and pop-up exhibition inspired by [Congregation](#), an art project and exhibition created by [Es Devlin](#) that was recently exhibited in London. For this project, members of the MIT community attended one of several facilitated drawing sessions in which they interviewed and then drew a partner they didn't know before. Most of the drawings were done by hand, and a few were created through a combination of hand drawing, photography, fine tuning with AI, and projections. The resulting multi-part installation is a collection of these portraits that will be displayed in MIT's new concert hall in the round in the recently opened Edward and Joyce Linde Music building for the pop-up. Devlin and those who participated in the project will convene to discuss the project at 5pm on Tuesday, April 29, 2025 ([registration](#)).

In addition, the public will have the opportunity to learn about her practice during an artist talk by Devlin, in conversation with MoMA Senior Curator of Architecture and Design Paola Antonelli, part of the free MIT Artfinity arts festival on May 1, 2025 at 5pm in MIT Huntington Hall 10-250 ([registration](#)).

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, founded in 1974 by Margaret McDermott in memory of her husband Eugene McDermott, is a biennial award that recognizes innovative artists working in any field or cross-disciplinary activity. The official announcement of this year's recipient 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 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 work."

## **2025 Public Events Celebrating Es Devlin at MIT**

Information about the public programs is posted at [arts.mit.edu/mcdermott](https://arts.mit.edu/mcdermott).

Both programs are free and open to the public, presented as part of the MIT Arts Festival Artfinity and the Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts at MIT.

### **Pop up exhibition: *MIT Face to Face***

April 28, 2025 / 12pm-6pm, April 29 / 10am-9pm, April 30/ 10am-4pm

Public event with participants and Es Devlin at 5pm

Edward and Joyce Linde Music Building at MIT, building W18, 201 Amherst st, Cambridge, MA

Artist Es Devlin and members of the MIT community who created the drawing will be present during select times during the pop up exhibition.

No ticket required, first come, first entry. Due to space limitations, some members of the public may need to wait outside the space before entering.

### **Artist talk: Es Devlin and Paola Antonelli**

May 1, 2025 / 5pm

MIT Huntington Hall, room 10-250, 77 Mass Ave, 2nd floor, Cambridge, MA

Es Devlin in dialogue with Paola Antonelli, Senior Curator of Architecture and Design at MoMA about Devlin's artistic practice.

Tickets are required for the public lecture

Reserve tickets:

[arts.mit.edu/mcdermott](https://arts.mit.edu/mcdermott)

### **About Artfinity**

Artfinity is a festival of the arts at MIT featuring 80 free events across the performing and visual arts, celebrating creativity and community at MIT. The festival launches with the opening of the new Edward and Joyce Linde Music Building at MIT on February 15, 2025, continues with a concentration of events Feb 28-March 16, and culminates with the Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts public lecture by 2025 recipient Es Devlin on May 1, 2025, and a concert by Grammy-winning rapper and Visiting Scholar Lupe Fiasco on May 2, 2025.

Artfinity features the work of MIT faculty, students, staff, and alumni, alongside guest artists from the Greater Boston area and around the world. All 80 events are open to the public, including dozens of concerts and performances plus an array of visual arts such as projections, films, installations, exhibitions, and augmented reality experiences, as well as lectures and workshops for attendees to participate in. With a wide range of visual and performing arts events open to all, Artfinity embodies MIT's commitment to the arts and the intersection of art, science, and technology. Artfinity is an Institute-sponsored event, organized by the Office of the Arts at MIT, with faculty leads Institute Professor of Music Marcus Thompson and Professor of Art, Culture and Technology Azra Aksamija.

All official Artfinity events are free and open to the public. More at [artfinity.mit.edu](https://artfinity.mit.edu)

### **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 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.

----

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