Origami creates beauty from repetition

Denise Brehm
News Office

True, they rattled paper throughout the 90-minute lecture, but the audience—rapt, eager, enthusiastic—hung on every word from the lips of origami master Robert Lang as he demonstrated the basics of the art and described, in a very rudimentary way, the mathematics behind it.

Lang had placed four sheets of 8.5 x 11 inch paper on all 318 seats in Kirsch Auditorium; each page had lines and dotted lines denoting crease-marks to come. Most members of the audience folded at least one of those forms while Lang talked about “From Flapping Birds to Space Telescopes: Origami, Mathematics and Art.”

Lang, a former laser physicist who now does origami full-time, was at MIT to work on an algorithm for computational geometry with Erik Demaine, an assistant professor of computer science. While on campus, he gave the public lecture on Thursday, Nov. 11 and taught a beginning and an advanced origami workshop. He also taught one class in Demaine’s origami course—the first one MIT has ever offered—through the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science.

Although the public talk was an evening event on a mid-week holiday, the auditorium was packed, overflowing with enthusiasts, MIT faculty, and local people in the biotechnology industry.

Demaine, assistant professor of computer science, sculpted the tail of a duck during the beginning origami workshop offered by visiting artist Robert Lang on Nov. 11. Lang was on campus to work with Demaine on a computational geometry problem.

Next generation of researchers honored by Museum of Science

Sasha Brown
News Office

Though far from finished with their own work, three senior MIT researchers passed the torch to a new generation of scientists on Tuesday, Nov. 9 at the Museum of Science in Boston.

For the past two years, the museum has named several young New England scientists as the “Next Generation” of revolutionary researchers whose work already has made a significant contribution to their field. This year, the three honoroess all work in biotechnology at MIT.

Angelika Amon, the Linda and Howard Stern Career Development Associate Professor of Biology; Chris Burge, Whitehead Career Development Associate Professor in the Department of Biology; and Manolis Kellis, assistant professor in the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, were all honored. Each honoree gave a presentation of his or her work after being introduced by a senior MIT faculty member—Phillip A. Sharp, Mary Lou Pardue and Eric Lander.

Amon, the 2003 recipient of the National Science Foundation’s Waterman Award, is “an emerging star in the field of bioscience,” said Institute Professor and Nobel laureate Phillip A. Sharp. “I am sure there will be more awards in the future,” he said.

Amon’s hope is that the work in her lab will only dreamt of using. “Genomes are available that we never thought would be,” said Pardue. “We are hoping we can shed some light on this,” she said.

Amon said she is “obsessed by order,” so her work in cell division—where so many small things need to occur with such precision—is only appropriate. “Humans are especially bad at the cell cycle that creates sperm and eggs,” said Amon. Ten percent of all human conceptions have an incorrect number of chromosomes, said Amon. “This problem can lead to miscarriage and birth defects. ‘We are hoping we can shed some light on this,’ she said.

“We want to understand how every single aspect is controlled.” Amon’s hope is that the work in her lab will “lay the foundation to find cures and drugs for cancer and birth defects in humans,” she said.

Mary Lou Pardue, the Boris Magasanik Professor of Biology and internationally known geneticist and cell biologist, introduced Burge. “It has been a delight to watch the younger generation,” said Pardue, who expects great things from the bevy of young researchers who have tools the younger generation,” said Pardue, who expects great things from the bevy of young researchers who have tools they only dreamt of using. “Genomes are available that we never thought would be,” said Pardue.

Burge’s work in RNA has been revolutionary. Over the past couple of years, Burge and members of his laboratory have learned which specific gene sequences can activate or suppress RNA splicing, and they have developed the first effective models of the human RNA splicing process. Burge said Tuesday night that his ongoing work is a very rudimentary way, the mathematics behind it.

MIT and other researchers are working with The Center for Northeast Studies (CINES) in New Delhi and grassroots groups in India to design and build a cargo boat for use by two villages in Assam state in Northeastern India. Each year, monsoonal rains arrive in June causing the River Brahmaputra to flood its banks, leaving thousands of people at the foot of the Himalayan temporarily homeless while the waters come rushing down from the mountains.

The new boat will help people in villages on the river banks by bringing emergency supplies in during flooding, something that boats currently used by the Assam government can’t always do because they lack the power necessary to forge the current during monsoons. People who need to be transported to dry ground will also use the boat.

See INDIA
Page 4
Composer Elena Ruehr used a red plastic flute, a moment from early childhood and an instinctive sound system to reflect on her own music-making process in a four-hour-long talk at the Kirsch Auditorium.

Ruehr, 41, a lecturer in music and theater arts at the MIT Women’s League in residence at the Boston Modern Orchestra Project. Her lively, intimate presentation, titled "Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Modern Music—Ancient Traditions in the Modern World," was organized by the MIT Women’s League.

Ruehr spoke without notes. There was no threat of power points. Occasionally, she waved the toy flute, which belongs to her daughter, Sophie, now 8. The flute worked in Ruehr’s talk like the madeleine pastry in Marcel Proust’s novels: it brought back the moment that set a life in motion.

“When Sophie was two, we had one of those long days at home sitting on the couch. I was a little bored. I picked up this flute and came up with this song. My third string quartet started with these four notes,” Ruehr said, playing the tune.

For “Shimmer,” an orchestral work, Ruehr traced more cerebral routes. “Shimmer” premiered in Jordan Hall in 1997 and will be performed there again by the Boston Modern Orchestra project.

“Shimmer” derives its complexity and cyclical structure to both modern and classical works. Ruehr was “influenced by two very different new music composers—Steve Reich, who is very interested in cyclical structures, and Milton Babbitt, who is interested in complex structures. And I was also influenced by Xenakis, whose string music inspired the orchestral structures,” she said.

As Ruehr played a two-minute excerpt from “Shimmer,” her arms revealed a musician at play. She pointed to signify music she wanted to play as if the notes could be seen in the room, like tame birds.

Since composing “Shimmer,” Ruehr’s interests have included computesters (“Not programmin. My brother’s a computer scientist. I don’t like programmin.”) and recently, experiments with bird songs. She whistled one.

“That’s a song I heard when I was a little kid. I liked it. I also liked what happened when I recorded woodpecker sounds off the Internet and slowed them down. Inside each ‘digga-digga-digga’ is another ‘digga-digga’. They’re in transit with so much information I couldn’t hope to write it all down,” she said.

Ruehr played a recorded segment of “The Law of Floating Objects,” inspired by computers and bird songs, to illustrate.

Circling back to her topic, Ruehr said, “Forget about bird songs. Forget about the computer. For get about the computer I’m interested in flutes. I’m back to ancient instruments,” said Ruehr. Her newest piece, a string quartet, responded to the Cypress Quartet to respond to works by Mozart and Beethoven.

Elena Ruehr’s compositions have been commissioned and performed internationally by orchestras including the Boston Modern Orchestra Project and the Metropolitan Opera Chamber Ensemble. Her dance opera “Toussaint Before the Spices” opened to critical acclaim as part of Boston’s Opera Unlimited Festival in June 2003.

Ruehr studied at both the University of Michigan and the Juilliard School of Music. Her early orchestral works also received prizes from the Cincinnati Symphony, the Omaha Symphony, and the Civic Orchestra of Chicago. Ruehr began teaching at MIT in 1991. In 1995 she received MIT’s Baker Undergraduate Teaching Award. She teaches the music theory course (Harmony and Counterpoint 1 and 2) and has also taught composing with Computers, 20th Century Music and Women in Music.

A CD of “Shimmer” is available from Albany Records.
Dean Fischer hopes to use peer mediation to solve student conflicts

Sarah H. Wright

On a clear day, you can see forever. But on a day when your laptop died, your paper is due and two roommates arrived, you can make out the dim shapes of the surrounding buildings. That’s the moment that William Fischer, the new assistant dean for student conduct and risk management, felt a personal connection to MIT. “Conflict is inevitable. It’s part of life and part of all relationships. And one way to deal with some conflicts is to stay away from the person or, in a roommate situation, to change the roommates. But there are more positive and healthier approaches to solving conflict that not only build community but also offer students life skills they can rely on when they leave college,” Fischer said.

Fischer, one of the most productive approaches to conflict resolution is mediation, a process in which the two people in conflict meet with a neutral third person and allow those involved to come to a long-lasting solution. “At the time the alienated roommates get into a fight, we’re dealing with the fight as a disciplinary matter and not the issues that led up to the physical altercation. Keeping disagreements from escalating is a lifelong skill,” Fischer said.

Fischer, a lawyer, has been involved with the field since 1985, when he hel his private law practice in New Jersey to work in the field of student judicial affairs and develop mediation programs at colleges and universities to benefit students. “I saw there were peer mediation programs for elementary schools and high schools, but the programs dropped off at the level of higher education. I wanted to study how effective mediation was. I knew the marks and the power of peer review when it came to disciplinary processes. I went to work in the area that I thought offered a meaningful educational opportunity for students—a way to learn to keep conflicts from escalating,” Fischer said.

A resident of Natick, Mass., Fischer worked in several university settings before coming to MIT. He has served as assistant director of the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution at Northeastern University. Before that, he was associate director of Student Life for Judicial Programs at the University of New Hampshire in Durham, N.H., and director of the Student Judicial Office, at Illinois State University, Normal, Ill.

Fischer has also conducted mediation training programs at colleges around the country. He is a contributing author of “Mastering Mediation in the College and University Setting” (LRP Publications). He received the B.A. in English from Villanova University and the J.D. from Seton Hall University School of Law.

Dean for Student Life Larry Benedict said, “I am delighted that Bill Fischer has agreed to join us at MIT. Bill is an internationally recognized expert on matters of mediation and college judicial affairs, and he brings years of experience with him. My staff and I are very excited about working with him.”

MIT has offered training programs in mediation to faculty and staff over the years, and it was partly this commitment that attracted Fischer to the Institute, he said. “Mediation is part of the culture here,” said Fischer. “So in respect for students.”

Himalayan folktales tell about cultural differences

Sarah H. Wright

A writer in residence at MIT who spent his childhood in the foothills of the Himalayas has been awarded a 2004-2005 Fulbright grant to research folktales from the mountainous region that is home to Mount Everest and people who have battled countless storms on that peak. “I want to understand the ways in which people’s experience, mythological narratives and natural history intertwine,” said Alter.

A writer of four novels, he has written a memoir, “All the Way to Heaven: An American Boyhood in the Himalayas” (Holt, 1987), and two travelogues, “Amritsar to Lahore: A Pilgrimage up the Ganges River to the Source of Hindu Culture” (Harcourt Brace, 2003).

In commenting on “Sacred Waters,” Alters said, “I see myself as a pilgrim who seeks to find the subtle and mysterious connections between human experience, mythological narratives and natural history.”

Alter’s newest work, “Elephas Maximus: A Portrait of the Indian Elephant” (Harcourt, 2004), explores the mythology and natural history of the Asian elephant. The Fulbright Scholar Program is the U.S. government’s flagship academic exchange effort, conducted since 1947 by the Council for International Exchange of Scholars (CIES) on behalf of the United States Department of State. CIES annually recruits and sends nearly 800 U.S. faculty and professionals to 140 countries and brings 800 foreign faculty and professionals to the U.S. to lecture and conduct research.
ORIGAMI

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even, thanks to an article about Lang that appeared in the Boston Globe that day.

Joan Madison of Newton, a neurobiologist at Massachusetts General Hospital, says she saw Lang in the Globe and made his way across the river for Lang’s talk. A novice, Madison had been working at the craft for three weeks, trying to teach her three-year-old daughter to fold farm animals.

“Turned out she’s not that interested, but I’m hooked,” said Madison, who came to hear Lang talk “because he was impressed by the idea that you can apply mathematics to something I always thought was just a game.”

At least a dozen youngsters age 10 or under were present, as well as many septuagenarians and all ages in between. Neat, conserva-

tively dressed, middle-aged couples sat beside some-thing men wearing long hair and barrettes. They leaned forward in their seats, shouted questions to Lang well before the Q-and-A period, and exclaimed when he dem-

onstrated the “One Cut” property.

That prop-

erty, defined by Demaine and others in 1997, says that any shape or combination of shapes can be created by folding a single sheet of folded paper, with a single, straight cut through it. Lang folded a sheet several times, cut once and unfolded it, and pointed out the center. He folded another sheet, made the cut, and unfolded it to reveal a triangle, a square and a pentagon lined up in a row. His final demonstration revealed the MIT letterform.

A second property, “Two-color-ability,” is origami’s prop-

erty of keeping the colors in a fold. If they can convince the Inland Waterways Department in Assam that building many of these boats is a worthwhile endeavor.

Continued from Page 1

First proposed by journalist Sanjoy Hazarika of CNES, the project is taking life, thanks in part to Mani Prakash, a graduate student in the Center for Bits and Atoms and Sivaraman, a post-
doctoral associate in the Biotechnology and Process Engineering Center.

CNES is raising money for the boat and working with the approximately 150 families to develop small-animal husband-

ry (mainly Cotter chickens, which have high feeding requirements) and other small scale industries like weaving so that dur-

ing drier times, the new will allow the children and Swarvaram to make the necessary goods to market.

Eventually the boat also might be used as a fishing boat and the in-depth knowledge of the local community for a boat that can help act as a relief vessel during flood emergencies,” said Sivaraman.

The first boat, expected to cost about $25,000 to build, is a prototype for what the group hopes will become a fleet, if they can convince the Inland Waterways Department in Assam that building many of these boats is a worthwhile endeavor.

Working with independent design engineer Hari Nair in Boston, who is responsible for designs protos, the proposal prepared by the MIT pair and CNES became one of 15 selected from 1,500 entries to receive a $20,000 development marketplace grant from the World Bank.

Using that money, Sivaraman said, local shipbuilders in India have begun building the prototype boat.

If that prototype is effective, the Inland Waterways Department in Assam has agreed to fund the construction of an alternative transport means of trade. They’ll be able to use it to trans-

port agricultural crops, such as eggs, and will be a relief vessel during flood emergencies,” said Sivaraman.

The project has been wholly non-governmental, said Prakash. “The objective is to retrofit commercially available heavy automobile parts to design most of the mechanical components as the least amount of customized machining is required.”

Thus far, the project has been wholly unique, said Sivaraman. “A practical engineering project that relies on their mea-

surements and calculations together with the locals who understand the needs of the community more intuitively has been humbling, he said.

“We are working with people who do not need calculations to know that something is not going to work,” said Sivaraman.

The provincial government of Assam, India, uses boats like the one above on the River Brahmaputra. During monsoons, this boat can’t forge the currents to get upstream.
A look back at 10 years of sheltering CASPAR

Denise Brethm
News Office and
Rachel Jellinek
Government and Community Relations

MIT administrators and City of Cambridge representatives looked back with satisfaction on the occasion of intense siting process for the CASPAR homeless shelter at a celebration Nov. 10 honoring the shelter’s 10th anniversary. Officials spoke of their remembrances of the process and offered gratitude for the outcome; but the real message of hope came from Leona Bennett, a former shelter client who is now an employee of CASPAR.

CASPAR Emergency Service Center was my home for over four years—first in the trailers, and later in the new shelter facility. As an unsheltered homeless woman, I was made to feel like a subhuman species, as if I somehow deserved what I had become,” said Bennett. “The [shelter] offered me what no other shelter provides: a safe place for those afflicted with the disease of addiction. It was the only door other shelter provides: a safe place what I had become,” said Bennett.

Bennett talked about the shelter’s role along the way, but I wasn’t going to have to play an important part in that. The form of the agreement was not the important thing. What really mattered was the goal: that was not the important thing. What was imperative, and that MIT was around the Institute that a solution came to was regarded as a first. The cooperation of MIT, including Ron Suduiko, Paul Healy. “With the cooperation of MIT and Somerville Program for Alcoholism and Cambridge representatives for the homeless, and Cambridge residents, all of whom had a stake in the decision. It was the only door other shelter provides: a safe place what I had become.”

Bennett credited the shelter with providing her with the tools to overcome addiction. “I am now a dedicated women’s advocate, a full-time counselor at CASPAR’s Womanplace, a residential advocate, a full-time counselor at CASPAR’s Womanplace, a residential advocate, a full-time counselor at CASPAR’s Womanplace. Any hope for tomorrow must begin with life today, and CASPAR offers that hope,” she said.

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November 17, 2004
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Political progressives focus on the future

Sasha Brown
News Office

As the first snow of the season fell outside the Student Center, political progressives gathered together in the Mezzanine Lounge on Nov. 12 to find the proverbial silver lining following the Presidential election.

The forum, organized by Rev. Amy McCraith, MIT’s Episcopal Chaplain, was planned to focus efforts on the next few years. The Technology and Culture Forum sponsored the event, which was publicized as “an open forum on positive next steps for all those who were disappointed by the election results.”

McCraith said she decided to hold the forum after hearing from many disappointed students. “I had a lot of conversations with students over the last week who have a lot of concern,” said McCraith, who urged speakers to focus on the positive. “What kind of bridge and strategies can we build?” she asked.

Guests encouraged the political left to choose battles more carefully and also enter into a dialog about moral values with people of faith in this country. “There is space for us to enter into a conversation about that,” he said.

Rev. McCraith was troubled by an e-mail that circulated after the election depicting the “blue” states—whose electoral votes went to George Bush—as “Jesuuland.”

“As a progressive Christian, I find myself nowhere on that map,” said McCraith. “Where are the millions of liberal people of faith on that map?”

The political left, McCraith said, has a lot of conversations with people of faith in this country. “They have been taken too far for ever,” she said.

The shifting of political power throughout the decades “will go on for more than four years,” said McCraith. “It will be a long process, and they may have been taken too far.”

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PHOTO COURTESY / CASPAR

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PHOTO COURTESY / CASPAR
Chocolate will mark MIT's observance of World AIDS Day

The theme for World AIDS Day 2004 is "Women and AIDS" to focus attention on accelerating global response to the disease and providing increased access to treatment.

The highlight of the MIT observance of World AIDS Day on Wednesday, November 17, will be the Chocolate Buffet in Lobby 10. Tickets for the buffet are $5. Participants can pass by the tables of chocolate, peering at the assortment before deciding among the three items that hold most appeal. These can be eaten in the lobby while viewing panels at the AIDS Memorial Quilt or taken back to the office or dormitory to share. Chocolate tokens for the buffet are being donated by local bakeries, hotels, restaurants, catering services and members of the MIT community.

The MIT Women's League, a social and service organization operated by the MIT community, also celebrated its annual observance of World AIDS Day on November 16 and has continued to coordinate the event each year. The group seeks additional volunteers to donate store-bought pastries, to bake, sell raffle and buffet tickets in advance, and to staff the buffet. To volunteer, contact Sadie Di Borda at 253-3656 or esdela@mit.edu.

The Women's League also will hold its annual raffle of goods and services donated by Boston-area businesses. Tickets for the raffle are $5. Proceeds from the buffet and raffle dollars donated to The Names Project Boston, a non-profit organization that assists with HIV prevention education, raises money for community-based AIDS service organizations, and sponsors the AIDS Memorial Quilt. The quilt provides a creative means for remembering and celebrating the lives lost to the epidemic.

Other participating groups at the Lobby 10 event will have information booths. Those groups include Health Education at MIT, the Children's Hospital AIDS Program, the Children's AIDS Program at Boston Medical Center, the AIDS Action Committee, the Names Project Boston, MedLINKS, United Trauma Relief, the African Student Association and the LGBT Issues Group.

World AIDS Day events are coordinated by the World Summit of Ministers of Health on Programs for AIDS Prevention in 1988 to open channels of communication, strengthen the exchange of information and experience, and forge a spirit of social tolerance. Since then, World AIDS Day has received the support of the World Health Assembly, the United Nations, and governments around the world.
Italian pianist and conceptual artist Cesare Pietroistui will bring his process-oriented, interactive practice to MIT’s Center for Advanced Visual Studies Nov. 16-18.

Pietroistui’s work may not be easily recognized as art, and that’s the way he likes it. “An artist’s intervention in an urban context should not be easily recognizable as ‘art.’ It’s better to contribute to creating a moment of uncertainty and doubt in the casual observer than to confirm expectations,” he preaches. “Who knows what it is? Rather than, ‘It’s art, so it’s not intended for...’” Pietroistui has said about his focus on the art of plumbing—and even planning—peculiar, provocative moments or events.

His small-scale book, “Non-functional Thoughts” (1957), contains approximately 100 useless or incongruous ideas to be realized as art projects by anyone. Like Freud, Pietroistui finds that unconscious motives seep into ordinary actions and daily life. Like Yoko Ono, he creates “instructions” that may (or may not) access individual depths. His practice is often centered on setting himself or others a task that is “nonfunctional” and an adventure to complete, as a choreographer might do.

According to Center for Advanced Visual Studies (CAVS) associate director Larissa Harris, following his instructions can shed humorous light on everyday life and illuminate experiences of architectural and social spaces.

While at MIT Pietroistui will present his work and conduct a workshop with a class of undergraduate architecture majors. As part of the workshop, students will present public “microperformances” today (Nov. 17) from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. throughout buildings N51 and N52. The house CAVS and MIT’s Visual Arts Program. Because of the spontaneous nature of the event, says Harris, “We won’t know exactly who will be doing what until that day.”

Art and social change series shown

Pietroistui’s visit and “microperformances” are part of “Europe in Motion: New Practices in Art and Social Space,” a series of events hosted by CAVS. The series includes screenings of two documentary films, “The Invisible Object: Art and Architecture in Social Change” (2003) and “Fluid Cities: Berlin to Istanbul” (2004) today at 6:30 p.m. in Room N52-390. Both films document artistic and architectural projects designed and built for public space in post-Cold War Europe. Bartolommeo Pietroistui, director of the two documentaries, and Pietroistui will be present at the screening.

Public art works featured in these documentaries will also be on view at CAVS today and tomorrow from 12:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. in Room N52-390.

Starting today, “The Traveling Magazine Table,” a traveling library of publications by non-profit organizations, groups, and artists’ collectives, is on view at the CAVS through spring 2005. Organized and circulated by the international artists’ collective, Nomads & Residents, which was founded by Werner, the “Traveling Magazine Table” is updated with new materials at each venue. The collection is on view in Room N52-390 on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from noon to 6 p.m. or by appointment.

Jazz pianist to share ‘Effortless Mastery’

Jazz pianist, composer, author and recording artist Kenny Werner will participate in three public events over the course of two days, Nov. 17 and 19, as part of a four-day residency at MIT.

The Nov. 19 concert will mark the first time local audiences will have the rare opportunity to see Werner perform in solo, duo, combo and jazz ensemble settings all in the course of one performance. The concert features the world premiere of a new work by Werner, “Higher Learning,” commissioned by the MIT Festival Jazz Ensemble.

Werner has been a jazz pianist and composer on the national and international scene for more than 25 years. He has worked with such jazz giants as Charles Mingus, Ron Carter, Bobby McFerrin, Gunther Schuller and Toots Thielemans. He has led his own trio and recorded with it on labels including Sunnyside Records, RCA/BMG, and most recently, Half Note Records. A noted composer, Werner has received numerous commissions and is currently artist in residence at New York University.

He has written several articles and his book, “Effortless Mastery,” influenced many musicians’ approach to practice, play and listening. The “Effortless Mastery” method applies Eastern philosophy, Christian and Jewish mysticism and ancient disciplines such as yoga and t’ai chi to help remove blocks to creativity.

Werner’s event schedule

Today, Nov. 17, Werner will perform with MIT faculty and student poets who will share their work with him. Werner will respond to it with piano improvisations. “Words and Music” will be held in Killian Hall from 3:30 to 5 p.m.

Effortless Mastery with Kenny Werner: Liberating the Master Musician Within,” a lecture-demonstration based on his book, will be held on the evening of Thursday, Nov. 19 at 7 p.m. in Killian Hall.

Some of MIT’s musicians will perform for Werner, who will offer his insights into their performances.

Friday, Nov. 19, the MIT Festival Jazz Ensemble, directed by Frederick Harris, Jr. will perform a program with Werner. “The Musical World of Kenny Werner” will feature the world premiere of a composition commissioned from Werner by the ensemble entitled “Higher Learning,” as well as other of Werner’s original works for jazz ensemble. Werner will perform in big band, small group and solo settings. Admission is $5 at the door. The concert begins at 8 p.m.

Brevity is soul of MTL list

Tom Pickard, a new Canadian writer who left school at 14 and fell swiftly under the spell of American Beat poetry and prose, was not only present on the birth of the British Poetry Revival in 1965 but also is credited with leading the charge.

The author of 10 books of poetry and prose, Pickard will present a poetry/nut reading on Thursday, Nov. 18 at 7 p.m. in Room N52-390.

The poet, Pickard is known for his poetic range, from erotic to political, from lyrical to picaresque and to brashly exploitive-driven. He was described as a “very fine, serious and powerful emotional poet” by The Guardian (UK). In the preface to “F***wind,” former Beatle Paul McCartney offered "Something Blue,” featuring music by John Harle. “The Ballad Of Jamie Allan” is based on the 18th-century gypsy and love story. "An artist’s intervention in an urban context should not be easily recognizable as art, it’s better to contribute to...” Pietroistui has said about his focus on the art of plumbing—and even planning—peculiar, provocative moments or events.

His small-scale book, “Non-functional Thoughts” (1957), contains approximately 100 useless or incongruous ideas to be realized as art projects by anyone. Like Freud, Pietroistui finds that unconscious motives seep into ordinary actions and daily life. Like Yoko Ono, he creates “instructions” that may (or may not) access individual depths. His practice is often centered on setting himself or others a task that is “nonfunctional” and an adventure to complete, as a choreographer might do.

According to Center for Advanced Visual Studies (CAVS) associate director Larissa Harris, following his instructions can shed humorous light on everyday life and illuminate experiences of architectural and social spaces.

While at MIT Pietroistui will present his work and conduct a workshop with a class of undergraduate architecture majors. As part of the workshop, students will present public “microperformances” today (Nov. 17) from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. throughout buildings N51 and N52. The house CAVS and MIT’s Visual Arts Program. Because of the spontaneous nature of the event, says Harris, “We won’t know exactly who will be doing what until that day.”

Art and social change series shown

Pietroistui’s visit and “microperformances” are part of “Europe in Motion: New Practices in Art and Social Space,” a series of events hosted by CAVS. The series includes screenings of two documentary films, “The Invisible Object: Art and Architecture in Social Change” (2003) and “Fluid Cities: Berlin to Istanbul” (2004) today at 6:30 p.m. in Room N52-390. Both films document artistic and architectural projects designed and built for public space in post-Cold War Europe. Bartolommeo Pietroistui, director of the two documentaries, and Pietroistui will be present at the screening.

Public art works featured in these documentaries will also be on view at CAVS today and tomorrow from 12:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. in Room N52-390.

Starting today, “The Traveling Magazine Table,” a traveling library of publications by non-profit organizations, groups, and artists’ collectives, is on view at the CAVS through spring 2005. Organized and circulated by the international artists’ collective, Nomads & Residents, which was founded by Werner, the “Traveling Magazine Table” is updated with new materials at each venue. The collection is on view in Room N52-390 on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from noon to 6 p.m. or by appointment.

Jazz pianist to share ‘Effortless Mastery’

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**LIBERATING THE MUSICIAN WITHIN**

**Nov. 17**

**Kresge Auditorium** 7:30 p.m.


- **Zakim Bridge, Boston**
  
  The Leonard P. Zakim Bunker Hill Bridge was Christian Meng’s first project outside of Switzerland. Meng’s work is one subject of “The Art of Structural Design: A Swiss Legacy” at the Compton Gallery through Dec. 30. 

**MIT EVENT HIGHLIGHTS NOVEMBER 22 - 28**

**Mit Museum**

- **Nov. 22**
  
  **Free Admission** Third Sunday of every month. Always free with MIT ID. Noon–5pm. 253-9597.

- **Nov. 21**
  
  **“In the Middle of the Street” Dance Thou shall not do.**
  
  7:30 pm. Little Kresge Theater.

- **Nov. 18**
  
  **MIT Chamber Players**
  
  Concert by faculty, students and their guests. Berg’s Four Pieces for Clarinet and Piano; Brahms’ Horn Trio; Schoenberg’s “Verklaerte Nacht.” 4pm. Kresge. 253-9800.

- **Nov. 21**
  
  **International Folk Dancing (Participatory)**
  
  International folk dancing. 8pm. Lobdell Dining Hall. 253-FOLK.