

ART, CULTURE, AND TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM

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The Art, Culture, and Technology (ACT) Program (<http://catalog.mit.edu/schools/architecture-planning/architecture/#art-culture-technology-ms>) is an academic program and hub of critical art practice and discourse within the School of Architecture and Planning (SA+P). ACT is headed by distinguished artist-professors and supported by a dynamic cast of practitioner graduate students and staff, visiting artist-lecturers, affiliates, and guests. Through an integrated approach to pedagogy, hosting, public event programming, and publication, ACT builds a community of artist-thinkers around the exploration of art's complex conjunctions with culture and technology. It is not an art school in the traditional sense. The program's mission is to promote leadership in critical artistic practice and deployment, developing art as a vital means of experimenting with new registers of knowledge and new modes of valuation and expression; and to continually question what an artistic research and learning environment can be and do.

Born out of the 2009 merger between MIT's influential Center for Advanced Visual Studies (founded in 1967 by György Kepes) and Visual Arts Program (founded in 1989), ACT shares in a rich heritage of work expanding the notion of visual studies and pushing the capacity of art to enlist science and technology in cultural production, critique, and dissemination at the civic scale. As part of SA+P, ACT inhabits a vibrant ecosystem of programs, centers, and labs that continue to promote this interplay between science, technology, art, and design.

A cornerstone of the ACT program is what we call "embedded research," engaging sites and publics beyond the MIT campus. CAVS inspired this commitment with its sustained, culturally significant engagement with the city of Boston. Embedded research is not only a way for our program to build bridges to other sites and communities in flux or in conflict, it is also a way for us to encourage our students to foster meaningful, sustained engagements as part of their practice, as artists and as citizens. This emphasis on embedded research, we believe, is part of what makes ACT unique.

ACT offers a rigorous and highly selective two-year graduate program, the Master of Science in Art, Culture, and Technology (<http://catalog.mit.edu/degree-charts/master-art-culture-technology>), as well as an undergraduate minor and concentration. It also offers a variety of introductory courses to the general MIT student population and subjects tailored to undergraduates majoring in architecture. Advanced courses related to specific media and topics are offered as electives for both undergraduate and graduate students. ACT studio courses are complemented by practical workshops and discussions in theory and criticism, often provided by fellows and visitors to the program. Studios also regularly involve research field trips, which, in addition to their research/pedagogical value, help ACT promote new circuits of artistic and scholarly collaboration.