



Center for the Arts

2023 YEAR-IN-REVIEW

OVERVIEW

Northeastern's Center for the Arts is guided by a core mission: to explore critical creative practice and the role of the arts in contemporary life.

In 2023, our team used this mission to drive exhibitions, programs, and research opportunities that catalyze important, interdisciplinary conversations.

Beyond these activities, our dedication to students, faculty, artists, and community members has resulted in a marked increase in gallery attendance, new partnerships with colleagues at Northeastern Crossing and the LGBTQ Resource Center, and renewed press interest from local Boston news outlets – to name a few.

As we reflect on the last twelve months and work to measure our impact, we're especially proud of some notable endeavors and achievements (see on the right).

Thank you to our staff, colleagues, faculty collaborators, and community members for helping to build a vibrant creative ecosystem within and beyond Northeastern. Looking forward, I am heartened by the possibilities that lie ahead as we continue to shape a world where the arts thrive.

Juliana Rowen Barton
Director, Center for the Arts



BY THE NUMBERS

- Over **3,500** gallery visitors
- Over **300** students served
- **24** public programs (*sponsored + organized*)
- **5** exhibitions organized and/or hosted
- Over **1,000** program attendees
- **23** artists worked with across gallery exhibitions and programs
- **25** NU and community partnerships forged/strengthened
- **14** number of seed grant research projects & faculty collaborations
- **7** Press Mentions, including first *Boston Globe* Review

GALLERY360

In 2023, Gallery360 mounted **three major exhibitions:** *At Play*, *Entanglements*, and *Fluid Matters*, *Grounded Bodies*. In addition to these projects, we were thrilled to continue our longstanding tradition of hosting annual community exhibitions, including the Art + Design Senior showcase and the Children’s Center show – examples of our ongoing commitment to the communities of CAMD and beyond.

Additionally, 2023 was a record-breaking year for Gallery360 press coverage. *At Play* was reviewed in [**Boston Art Review**](#) and [**The Boston Globe**](#); *Entanglements* was covered by [**CAMD News**](#), [**The Huntington News**](#), and [**Northeastern Global News**](#); and though we are only a month into our latest exhibition, *Fluid Matters*, *Grounded Bodies*, it has already been covered by [**Northeastern Global News**](#) and the [**Bay State Banner**](#).

Beyond exhibitions, we’ve continued to serve as a **learning laboratory** for the Northeastern University community. As our community partnerships increase and our communication strategy becomes more sophisticated with additional staffing, our visitor numbers have continued to grow.



The politics of play at Northeastern University’s Gallery 360

A new show interrogates how gender stereotypes and capitalist impulses shape children’s toys and games

By **Cate McQuaid** Globe Correspondent,
Updated March 8, 2023, 2:00 p.m.



MEASURING OUR IMPACT

- Over **3,500** visitors to Gallery 360
- Over **300** Northeastern students served through Gallery 360 curricular engagement
- **24** class visits from across the Northeastern community
- **7** Gallery 360 public programs
- **4** Gallery community partnerships
- **7** Gallery press hits

EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHTS

at play

At Play (November 14, 2022 - April 8, 2023) presented work by five women artists – Aimee Koran, Ani Liu, Department of Play, Ellie Richards, and Angela Washko – who navigate and untangle the tensions of play, paying particular attention to the society expectations placed upon women through these systems. Drawing on methods ranging from material exploration to emergent technologies, each artist grapples with the cultural impact of play as it permeates and mediates everyday life.

At Play was Gallery 360’s first exhibition to receive a stand-alone review in the Boston Globe!



From February - April 2023, we were delighted to welcome several of the exhibiting artists to campus to speak about their work with members of the Northeastern and Boston communities. Ani Liu and Michelle Millar Fisher’s conversation served as a keynote for 2023 Design Research Week – sparking a new collaboration between two of CAMD’s research centers.



Aaron McIntosh interrogates the intertwined relationships between humans and plants—our interdependence, our co-evolution, and our history of hierarchies—across many artistic mediums. In **Entanglements** (June 27 - October 21, 2023), the artist took up the metaphoric potential of plant life, where he finds speculative roots to scaffold and explore queer ecologies. McIntosh rejects colonialist and heteronormative paradigms that dominate botany in its perpetual “othering” of queerness. Instead, he asks how might we imagine queerness through the sexual and gender-variant dynamisms present in the plant world.



The exhibition offered numerous platforms to hear McIntosh talk about the work in his own words – including conversations in our exhibition catalogue, with our students, and members of the Boston arts community.

EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHTS

“Entanglements grips the audience with every sense of the word. The Gallery360 exhibition provokes community, destruction, a certain beauty in deviancy, growth, and above all change or evolvment for the betterment of the LGBTQ+ community and mankind.”

– CAMD student

Over the course of the exhibition, our visitors contributed over 120 quilt squares through the quilting station in the gallery space, which were compiled by the artist into two twin-size quilts inspired by the album or scrapbook quilts. One quilt is now on display in the [LGBTQA Resource Center](#).



We welcomed McIntosh to campus in October for a series of closing celebrations for the exhibition – including a rich public panel on queer archives and a participatory quilting bee.



fluid matters,
grounded bodies:
decolonizing ecological encounters

SNEAK PEAK

Just as the year wrapped up, Gallery 360 opened a new exhibition, *Fluid Matters, Grounded Bodies*. Here’s a peak:



As our first cross-campus exhibition, ***Fluid Matters, Grounded Bodies*** represents a moment in our history in which we bring our community-oriented ethos to life. For the show, we partnered with staff from City & Community Engagement (including Chimel Idiokitas, Ashanti Brown, Chelsea Lauder, and Elizabeth Enright) to install a satellite exhibition at Northeastern Crossing, the University’s space for the on-campus and off-campus communities to come together.

Stay tuned for more on this exciting project in 2024.

PROGRAMS + PARTNERSHIPS



In 2023, the Center for the Arts enhanced our already robust programming, both within and outside of our Gallery360 exhibitions. In particular, we strengthened our reputation as a cross-campus collaborator, establishing new community partnerships as well as nurturing existing ones. This style of partnered programming is a key part of the CFA mission – well aligned with the university’s model of interdisciplinary research activity.

MEASURING OUR IMPACT

- Over **1,000** program attendees
- **18** programs organized
- **16** Northeastern collaborators
- **8** Co-sponsored programs
- **9** community partners

To complement our Gallery 360 exhibitions, we have continued bringing exhibiting artists to campus for conversations with members of the Northeastern and Boston art communities. In 2023, *At Play* exhibiting artists Aimee Koran, Ani Liu, Kate Balug participated in public programs with curators from the ICA Boston and MFA Boston.

For his campus visit, *Entanglement’s* Aaron McIntosh convened a panel discussion that wove together the exhibition’s themes with faculty research and regional community partners, including [The History Project](#) and [Queer.Archive.Work](#). These exhibition programs offer rich opportunities for curricular engagement, tapping NU faculty such as Cara Michell and K.J. Rawson, to participate in conversations that intersect with their research and teaching interests.

Gallery 360 exhibiting artists have also hosted workshops during their visits to campus, which gives students and community members the chance for hands-on engagement. In fall 2023, we partnered with the LGBTQ Resource Center and McIntosh to host a quilting bee for our community album quilt created during the exhibition. This program has proved to be the start of a fruitful relationship with the LGBTQ Resource Center.



PROGRAMS + PARTNERSHIPS

In 2023, we kicked off our CFA Conversations series, where we invited artists and thinkers to campus for conversations with NU community members.

The Fall 2023 Conversations included visiting artists and thinkers Alex Callender, Gwendolyn DuBois Shaw, Ranu Mukherjee, and Heesoo Kwon in dialogue with CFA Director Juliana Rowen Barton, Sarah Kanouse, and Clareese Hill. The series has been particularly generative for inter-departmental collaborations such as with Africana Studies, the WGSS program, and the Asian American Studies program.

Last year, we launched an annual winter “study break” in the gallery on the fall semester reading day to encourage students to use the gallery and exhibitions as a relaxing spot away from the frenzy of exams. The Gallery360 study break continues to be one of our most popular events. By organizing pop-up snacks and celebrations at the gallery, we have been incredibly successful in building awareness within the Northeastern community.

Along with Gallery360 exhibitions, partnerships are the backbone of Center for the Arts programming. These collaborations allow us to embed the arts into timely topics and social justice issues the university is deeply committed to. For instance, our *Entanglements* exhibition partnership with the LGBTQA Center integrated artist Aaron McIntosh’s quilting work with the Center’s focus on supporting queer students.

On top of organizing our own programming, the Center for the Arts co-sponsored a robust line up of events in 2023 with colleagues across CAMD, Africana Studies, Asian American Studies, Center for Intercultural Engagement, City & Community Engagement, and the Social Justice Resource Center. Highlights include 2023 Peace and Social Justice Week (February 2023), Remember! Asian American Archives Conference (November 2023), and Fall 2023 CAMD Dean’s Distinguished Lecture with Terence Nance (November 2023).



2023 CALENDAR

January 19, 2023: Workshop with artist Tanja Ostojic: Misplaced Women?*

February 2, 2023: At Play: Aimee Koran in conversation with Ruth Erickson

February 26 - March 3, 2023: Peace and Social Justice Week 2023 - Enough Already: Genuine Care and Collective Action*

March 23, 2023: Design and AI at Play: Ani Liu and Michelle Millar Fisher on Design as Research

April 6, 2023: At Play: Department of Play in conversation with Cara Michell

April 6, 2023: At Play: Closing Reception

April 24 - May 7, 2023: Art + Design Annual Senior Showcase

April 27, 2023: Art + Design Annual Senior Showcase Reception

May 22 - June 3, 2023: Annual Children's Center Showcase

June 3, 2023: Boston Kids Comics Festival*

September 11, 2023: AI in Higher Education and Knowledge Production, Part I: Field Exploration

September 16-18, 2023: Dance Hackathon*

September 28, 2023: The Oath of the Sword and Boston Asian American Film Festival Event - Post-Screening Reception*

October 4, 2023: CFA Conversation: Alex Callender and Gwendolyn DuBois Shaw

October 6, 2023: Disruptive Simulations in New Media Arts and Games Student Workshop: Alex Callender

October 11, 2023: CFA Conversation: Ranu Mukherjee and Sarah Kanouse

October 19, 2023: Queer Materials in Queer Hands: Archives + Accessibility

October 20, 2023: Entanglements Quilting Bee

October 20, 2023: Entanglements Closing Celebration

November 2, 2023: CFA Conversation: Heesoo Kwon and Clareese Hill

November 3, 2023: Disruptive Simulations in New Media Arts and Games Student Workshop: Heesoo Kwon

November 13, 2023: AI in Higher Education and Knowledge Production, Part II: Data Literacy

November 16, 2023: The Moors Community Night

November 17, 2023: Remember! Asian Americans and the Archive*

November 28, 2023: CAMD Dean's Distinguished Lecture with Terence Nance*

December 7, 2023: Gallery 360 Study Break

* = co-sponsored

RESEARCH

Beyond the research initiatives embedded in Gallery 360's exhibition program, the Center for the Arts continued to serve as a dedicated thought partner for research projects and programs. The transformative impacts of the arts for advancing social justice goals and supporting equitable, inclusive community development has long been underrecognized in academic settings. Given our commitment to community engagement, our research endeavors contribute to developing interest in this area and offer an opportunity to put principles into practice.



MEASURING OUR IMPACT

- **12** NU faculty collaborators
- **8** research gatherings organized/co-sponsored (workshops, symposia, roundtables, etc)
- **2** strategic seed grant research projects



RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS PARTICIPATORY MAPPING PROJECT

In 2023, we hosted a final workshop as part of our “Participatory Mapping Frameworks” research project. Over the course of 9 months, the Participatory Mapping Frameworks team – comprised of CAMD faculty Cara Michelle and Sylke Meyer, and CFA Director Juliana Rowen Barton, partnered with 826 Boston to host a series of workshops with 20 high-school aged students to develop a community-led mapping framework for documenting Roxbury and surrounding neighborhoods. Using Emergent Strategy, we uncovered new methods for understanding and documenting place. Together, we built a framework for a participatory mapping strategy that subverts the power dynamics of base-mapping. Using this framework, the YLAB participants requested that our team create a visual map that illustrates how they see and experience specific places in Boston.

RESEARCH

AI MICROGRANT SYMPOSIUM

During the Fall 2023 semester, CFA was also a thought partner on “the Micro Lab for Experiential Learning and AI,” an emerging research project centered around artificial intelligence and education. The group, including CAMD faculty Sylke Meyer, Gloria Sutton, Laura Forlano, Clareese Hill, Cliff Lee, and CFA Director Juliana Rowen Barton, convened two salon-style research gatherings to explore the role of art and AI in higher education and knowledge production. Keynote lectures by Dr. Lisa Gotto (September 2023) and Dr. Nettrice Gaskins (November 2023) spurred rich roundtable discussions as our group seeks to develop new strategies for experiential learning informed by the increased influence of artificial intelligence in research and teaching.



MILLS DANCE HACK

As Northeastern’s Global Network grows, so too does the reach of our research initiatives. In September 2023, CFA partnered with arts colleagues at Mills College at Northeastern to host a biannual DanceHack. The program invited dancers and technologists of all levels and interests to explore this year’s theme of **Post-Reality**. This particular theme was intended to provoke multiple possible questions such as: What is it to live in a world dominated by swift technological change that challenges our ability to discern truth from fiction? What is the role of human creativity as AI demonstrates increasing capacity to mimic our artistic thinking? How will our embodied selves be forever altered by robotics? Through panel discussions, workshops, presentations, and a final showcase, DanceHack participants investigated these questions in a high energy, open and slightly anarchic environment.

LOOKING AHEAD



2023 marked a year of tremendous growth for the Center for the Arts – punctuated by significant additions to our team. Over the summer, we welcomed Evelyn O’Donoghue, our Administrative Coordinator, and Claire Ogden, our Communications Specialist to CAMD. With this additional staffing, we have been able to increase our capacity dramatically, kicking off the CFA Conversations series and developing ambitious cross-campus partnerships. Through their expertise, we’re able to proceed more strategically and systematize our operations.

The Center for the Arts and Gallery 360 continue to serve as a learning laboratory for Northeastern students by hosting two co-ops every calendar year. Over the past year, we were thrilled to work with two wonderful

CAMD students – Madeleine Camplese (‘25) in the winter/spring and Olivia Olson-Roberts (‘25) in the summer/fall. Our 2022 co-ops both took the skills and experience they learned at Gallery 360 down Huntington Avenue to work at the MFA Boston. Arielle Frey (‘24) spent the spring semester as a Studio Art Class Program Assistant in the Education Department and Anna Nasi (‘25) completed a summer internship in the Department of Contemporary Art. We’re always excited to see where the experiential learning components of their time at Northeastern take these students.

Looking ahead, the Center for the Arts team is eager to continue growing and building relationships across our communities at Northeastern and Boston.