

New directions for digital design on display

"Digital_minimal," a new exhibition in the School of Architecture and Planning's Wolk Gallery, explores a number of alternative directions for our digital future, from the use of mobile devices that describe urban space in real-time to new tangible user interfaces that redefine the design process.

Italian architect and planner Carlo Ratti and his design team, Carlo Ratti Associati, based in Turin, Italy, and Cambridge, collaborated on the exhibit with colleagues in the MIT SENSEable City Laboratory.

The exhibit is a presentation of some of the projects under development by the SENSEable City Lab and Ratti, who currently holds joint appointments in the Department of Urban Studies and Planning and the Media Laboratory.

The collaborative projects include iSPOTS, which was developed as a way of studying wireless usage on the MIT campus. Completed in October 2005, iSPOTS now allows researchers to track when and where members of the MIT community take most advantage of the school's 9.4 million-square-foot wireless network.

Most of the exhibition is interactive, featuring video and live computer links.

The one stand-alone object in the gallery is part of the SandScape project, developed with the Tangible Media Group at the Media Lab.

A digital sandbox of sorts, SandScape projects images onto a surface of tiny glass beads through which visitors may run their hands, thus changing the "landscape." The project aids design and understanding of landscapes through computational simulations that analyze such natural elements as slope and drainage.

As a measure of its success, SandScape has taken on a double life as an analytic tool and an artwork.

"Although this project was started to support landscape design, interactive art museums such as the Arts Electronica Center (in Linz, Austria) commissioned us to exhibit SandScape as a 'media art piece,'" said Hiroshi Ishii, associate professor of media arts and sciences and founder/director of the Tangible Media Group.

The Wolk Gallery is located in Room 7-338. The exhibit is open weekdays from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. and runs through March 29.



IBM's Everywhere Display is part of the 'Digital_minimal' exhibit now on display in the School of Architecture and Planning's Wolk Gallery through March 29. The installation is a video projector with a rotating mirror that allows any surface around it to become a potential screen.

Students fold under pressure



The winning entries from the fourth annual juried Student Origami Competition are on view at the Wiesner Student Art Gallery on the second floor of the Stratton Student Center, through March 15.

Freshman Jason Ku submitted an origami model of one of the Nazgul, or ringwraiths, from "The Lord of the Rings" trilogy (right photo). Ku's entry won a prize for Best Original Model.

Above is a model of MIT's mascot, the beaver, submitted by Brian Chan, a graduate student in mechanical engineering.



Karger moves in the best circles

Engineering prof to perform in folk dance festival

Lynn Heinemann
Office of the Arts

When David Karger isn't teaching algorithms in the Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory (CSAIL), he's got dancing on his mind.

Karger, a professor of electrical engineering who specializes in information retrieval, and three of his four children will be among the dozens of performers taking part in the Israel Folkdance Festival, a gathering of folk dancers from across the country, on Sunday, March 5, in Kresge Auditorium at 3 p.m.

Israeli folk dancing has a mysterious appeal for Karger, he said. Is it the music? The movement? "Maybe it's just fidgeting carried to an extreme," he joked.

Karger started folk dancing at MIT when he was still a junior in high school in Brookline, adding modern dance to his repertoire while in college.

Dancers in the Israel Folkdance Festival create specially choreographed routines, some drawing heavily from the standard folk dancing, but modifying the formations and steps, said Karger.

Others create entirely new steps to traditional music, he says, and some groups use entirely new music and movement.

Karger associates dances with particular memories, he said. One dance is

special because it was the one he shared with his wife at their wedding, while another is special because he broke his foot doing it.

Mainly, dancing is a "neat kind of social experience in which you interact with a large group of people without an extensive spoken dialogue," he said.

According to Miriam Rosenblum, director of MIT Hillel, several people from the MIT community are involved in the festival, including some who helped found the event 30 years ago.

George Kirby (S.B. 1979) originated the festival in 1977 and remains active, serving on the coordinating committee and coordinating the sound system this year; Ira Vishner (S.B. 1974) danced in the first festival and is now on the coordinating committee; and Joshua Musher (S.B. 1987), who danced in the festival while a student, remains an active participant. This year, his children are also performing.

Admission to the Israel Folkdance Festival is \$12, \$11 for seniors and children under 12.

The performance, sponsored by MIT Hillel and the Israel Folkdance Festival of Boston Inc., a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization, will be preceded by an Israeli market, with booths selling Israeli merchandise and crafts, from noon to 3 p.m.

For more information, call x3-2982.

N.E. Philharmonic to premiere Peter Child choral work

Lynn Heinemann
Office of the Arts

MIT composer Peter Child may have been born in England, but these days he's steeped in "Americana."

"Americana" is the title of a program to be presented by the New England Philharmonic, where Child is composer in residence. The program will include the world premiere of Child's choral piece, "The Sifting: Three Songs of Longfellow."

The orchestra presents "Americana" on Saturday, March 4, in Kresge Auditorium at 8 p.m. Admission is free with an MIT ID.

"The Sifting" will be performed with the Simmons College Chorale, directed by Sharon Brown, and the Boston Conservatory's Women's Chorus, directed by Miguel Felipe.

Child selected the three Longfellow poems with the Philharmonic's theme in mind, he said. The trio express a "compelling Romantic philosophy," he said.

"They condemn worldly ambition,

express a sense of ideal reality that underlies appearance and everyday illusion, and extol a sense of divinity contained in human beings. It is this 'transcendentalist' quality, combined with their lyricism, that attracted me," Child writes in his program notes.

The concert will also include Elliott Carter's "Variations for Orchestra"; Gunther Schuller's "Violin Concerto No. 2" (Danielle Maddon, violin); and Charles Ives' "Three Places in New England."

For more information, visit www.nephilharmonic.org.



Professor of music Peter Child.