

Connecticut College

Digital Commons @ Connecticut College

Annual Reports

Ammerman Center for Arts and Technology

2014

Annual Report, 2013-2014

Ammerman Center, Connecticut College

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.conncoll.edu/ammermanreports>

Recommended Citation

Ammerman Center, Connecticut College, "Annual Report, 2013-2014" (2014). *Annual Reports*. 2.
<https://digitalcommons.conncoll.edu/ammermanreports/2>

This Annual Report is brought to you for free and open access by the Ammerman Center for Arts and Technology at Digital Commons @ Connecticut College. It has been accepted for inclusion in Annual Reports by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Connecticut College. For more information, please contact bpancier@conncoll.edu.

The views expressed in this paper are solely those of the author.

Annual Report 2013-2014

INTRODUCTION

Well, this is my last report as director. Having served the center in various capacities since I joined Connecticut College in 1998, it has been my honor to serve as director of the Ammerman Center since 2008. In the last several years the center has built on its academic programs, solidified its operations and broadened its activities. It continues to increase its departmental connections especially through involvement of new faculty interested in interdisciplinary issues that broadly fall under the umbrella of arts and technology. The center connects faculty with similar interests through its activities, serves as a resource for joint work, runs intellectually stimulating academic programs for students and continues to serve the college community through its public programs. The kinds of activities include student advising and collaborative work, curricular and extracurricular activities, research, its flagship symposium, co-sponsored events with other departments, its colloquia series, and publicity. The remainder of the report includes a summary of the Center's activities with highlights from this year's symposium.

STUDENTS

We admitted 9 students and graduated 4 this year. The total number of students currently enrolled in the program is 16. The graduating seniors presented their work at the end of the year through talks, demos and installations. It should be mentioned that the senior projects represent an intense experience that builds on coursework,



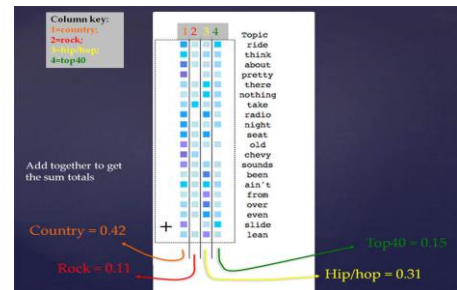
independent studies, internships, colloquia, symposia, faculty advising, critiques, visiting artist interactions, and the senior seminar. It is an intense capstone experience. We believe that this experience is an excellent preparation for real-life since it requires a follow-through from concept to implementation and presentation. The process continually engages the students by requiring them to clearly articulate the utility and/or artistic message of the project. This kind of

experience is usually found at the graduate level and we are able to maintain this program by focusing on the students who are willing to engage in this process.

Public presentations of the senior projects were given on the last day of classes. The previous day, the seniors gave demonstrations in the Alice Johnson Room. On the day of the certificate ceremony, the students repeated their formal presentations for families, faculty and guests. As in previous years, the certificate ceremony took place in the elegant Charles Chu Asian Art Reading Room. President Bergeron attended the ceremony and gave advice to the graduating seniors in her remarks. Below are project descriptions of the seniors and some background about them.

Nicky Haik

Majored in Music and Technology, and completed a pre-med concentration. He interned at 440 Sound Studios in NJ. Nicky is recipient of the Baird Award for excellence in research. His project was advised by Ozgur Izmirli and titled “Genre Guru: analyzing and visualizing popular song lyrics.” As a songwriter he was interested in studying the relationship between genre and word choices in popular song lyrics. His hypothesis was that popular song lyrics could be exclusively used to define and predict genre. He collected data and wrote programs to analyze word relationships. He concentrated on four genres (country, rock, hip/hop, and top 40) and used a statistical and an algorithmic approach to analyze and predict “genre-ness.” He developed various visualizations to communicate the results.



Georgia Naumann

Completed a double major in Art and Anthropology. She did a ConnsSharp internship with Denise Pelletier (Art) at Connecticut College. Her project was advised by Andrea Wollensak (Art) and entitled “Manufacturing Authenticity.” She received the Art Department Merit Award for her installation. Georgia’s project was an installation of porcelain sculptures inspired by vintage jewelry designed by members of her family over several generations. She



saw her work as an experiment and a hybrid between traditional ceramics and contemporary design technologies. Her words during her presentation summarized the outcome really well: “Powerful modern technology has allowed me to resurrect a piece of faded history, artifacts of a creative tradition, and to re-envision them through a lens, several generations removed.”

Sara Rubino

Majored in Architectural Studies and minored in Computer Science and Art. She interned at Turkois Design in NYC. Her project was advised by Andrea Wollensak (Art), Bridget Baird (Computer Science) and Ozgur Izmirlı, and was entitled “Phenomenology.” It was an interactive installation exploring the similar phenomena of the human brain and the universe. The installation sought to highlight the intriguing parallels between neural



networks in the brain and galaxies – the essential connecting elements of each system. In this project, Sara brought together the elements of the microcosm and the macrocosm in one space, that were abstractly represented through the use of interactive sounds, lights, and projections by means of body tracking, interactive processing and real-time control.

Dan White

Majored in Film Studies with a Computer Science minor. He interned at eCast Productions in MA. He is recipient of the Center’s Smalley-Zahler Award. His project was advised by Ozgur Izmirlı and entitled “Harken.” It was an audio game aimed at both visually impaired and sighted users. The game used 3D location based sound to position the user within a totally aural world. Dan included optional visuals to help sighted users learn and navigate the environment. In the actual game, users navigate mazes, vanquish enemies, and avoid deadly traps using nothing but their hearing. Dan thought about designing this game because of the lack of audio-dominant commercial or experimental games.



CURRICULAR AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

The requirements for the Center’s certificate remain the same from last year but we anticipate some changes in the coming years to align the center’s curriculum with the campus-wide new General Education initiative.

Cross-listed and Center Courses Taught in 2013-2014

Fall 2013

- AT104/ART104 TIME-BASED DIGITAL ART - Nadav Assor (Art)
- AT203/ART203 ELECTROACOUSTIC MUSIC I - Art Kreiger (Music)
- AT209/COM209 GRAPHICS & VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENTS - James Lee (Comp. Sci.)
- AT213/ART213 SOUND ART - Nadav Assor (Art)
- AT305/ART305 EXPERIMENTAL 3D - Nadav Assor (Art)
- AT401 SENIOR SEMINAR IN ARTS & TECH - Ross Morin (Film Studies)

Spring 2014

- AT104/ART104 TIME-BASED DIGITAL ART - Nadav Assor (Art)
- AT214/ART214 VIDEO INSTALLATION - Nadav Assor (Art)
- AT218/COM218 MULTIMEDIA - Ozgur Izmirli (Comp. Sci.)
- AT304/MUS304 ELECTROACOUSTIC MUSIC II - Art Kreiger (Music)
- AT402 SENIOR SEMINAR IN ARTS & TECH - Ross Morin (Film Studies)

Newly Cross-listed Courses

- AT217/COM217 ENTERTAINMENT SOFTWARE DESIGN
- AT308/ART308 TECHNE/TECHNOLOGY: INVESTIGATIONS IN 3D
- AT230/THEATER230 TECHNE: PROJECTS IN PERFORMANCE AND TECHNOLOGY

AT 401 (Fall 2013) and AT 402 (Spring 2014): Senior Seminar in Arts and Technology – Ross Morin and Libby Friedman (staff)

According to our requirements, each senior takes two independent studies in their final year and these projects are advised by faculty with expertise in the related fields. In addition, the year-long seminar provides structure to the senior projects and is mandatory for all seniors in the Ammerman Center's certificate program. The seminar involves many different activities including discussion of individual projects, visiting professor critiques, project management, technology research, discussions with visiting artists, presentations and demonstrations at the Arts and Technology Symposium, the senior show and graduation weekend presentations. The main purpose of the seminar is to provide an environment for discussion and critique, but, through the mentioned activities it paces the student projects, provides systematic feedback and prepares them for their multiple presentations and demos. This year Ross Morin (Assistant Professor in Film Studies) taught the seminar. He introduced new assignments and discussions to maintain student engagement throughout the year.

Winter Workshop: Physical Computing – Matt Richardson (Visiting Instructor, Interactive Telecommunications program, NYU)

The winter workshop took place in January over the last week of winter break. Several faculty and 7 center students attended the workshop. The five-day course focused on designing interactive experiences that are outside of the realm of a computer's keyboard, monitor, and mouse. It explored how users interact with objects ranging from consumer products to artwork. Projects were built using the Arduino programmable microcontroller boards and an assortment of sensors and switches such as pressure, light, or motion sensors, buttons, dials, and sliders. The microcontrollers were also used for creating sound, light, and mechanical output. Throughout the week, the students practiced creative brainstorming, sketching user experiences, user testing, and core interaction design concepts. At the end of the week, the projects were presented to the public in a showing and reception. Each project was unique and the final presentations demonstrated that the week was very productive for the students. The projects were very well received.



Internships - Summer 2014:

The following internships are scheduled for this summer:

Student	Company	Type of work	Amount	Source	Dates
Forsyth, Colin	New Frontiers in Learning	Social media	3000	CELS	June 2 – Aug 23
Rusk, Annie	CC – CONNSSHARP w/Prof.Wollensak	Design	3000	CONNSSHARP	May 19 – July 4
Weinstein, Ben	Mashwork, NY	Social media	3000	CELS	Jun 9 – Aug 26
Van de Put, Max	Red Bull	Social media	3000	Employer	Summer

The Arts in the Digital Age Panel

As part of president Bergeron's inauguration activities two panels were held over the weekend. One of the panels was on "The Arts in the Digital Age" and took place on April 4. The panelists were Andrea Wollensak (Art), Ginny Anderson (Theater; new fellow), Getchen Halpert '81 (Illustrator, educator), Pheobe Bakanas '10 (CAT alumna), Matt Safian '15 (Graphic Arts, Computer Science and Psychology). Ozgur



Izmirli chaired the panel. It was a dynamic panel with multiple perspectives shared by the panelists. A large inauguration dinner followed the panel. The related news article can be found at the link in the summary section.

THE SYMPOSIUM

The Ammerman Center's Biennial Symposium on Arts and Technology took place February 27 - March 1, Thursday through Saturday in the Cummings Art Center. This year's theme was "Presence, Immersion and Location." We had three days of talks, a gallery exhibition in Downtown New London, video showings, a large-scale internet music performance, three multimedia and music concerts/performances with a different programming each night. Three commissioned artist groups were in residence during the week prior. The detailed schedule of the symposium can be found at <http://www.conncoll.edu/CAT/sym2014>.



This year we revised the electronic submission site and made several changes to the submission interface. We worked with Information Services (Tom Palazzo and Laurie Schaeffer) and made sure to cover possibilities for multiple submissions and many different types of uploaded media files. This in-house system has been praised by the attendees. Another advantage of the electronic submission is that reviewing can also be done electronically. We created accounts for the reviewers so that the reviewing can be done remotely. Working with accounting and IS, this year we modernized the registration / online credit card payment system so that all registration and fees could be submitted using this system. We are very grateful to IS for supporting these initiatives which greatly streamlined many aspects of the management of the symposium.

As in previous years, the call, schedule, and publicity designs were done by graphic designer, Susan Lindberg. This year we had live Facebook and Twitter updates during the symposium mainly led by Libby, Andrew Nathanson '13, CAT alumna and the college's social media strategist in College Relations. Janet Esquirol '98 CAT alumna, professor of New Media at CUNY served as Visiting Faculty: Social Media Curator and also moderated a paper session. Andrea Wollensak (Art) and Art Kreiger (Music) served as co-associate directors for events. The organizing group consisted of Andrea Wollensak, Art Kreiger, Libby Friedman, Nadav Assor (Art) and Ozgur Izmirli. Libby was the coordinator for all events.

Here is a color-coded bird's-eye view of the symposium schedule (printed original is in white):



Keynote Address

This year's keynote speaker was Golan Levin, Director, Frank-Ratchye STUDIO for Creative Inquiry, Associate Professor of Electronic Art, Courtesy Associate Professor of Design and Computer Design at Carnegie Mellon University. Levin's research explores new intersections of machine code and visual culture, combining equal measures of the whimsical, the provocative, and the sublime in a wide variety of media. His talk was titled "Interaction Art, Information Design, Critical Making." He explained how "critical making" can enrich and find realization in the poetics of interactive art and information design. His presentation included a wide range of projects with a particular attention to how the use of embodied interactions, tactical information visualization, and networked collaboration systems can support new modes of education, play, and self-realization. He also discussed speculative examples that serve to frame a mode of inquiry through novel experiences. A large group of CAT faculty had dinner with Levin the night before his talk.



Gallery Exhibit at the Hygienic Art Gallery

This was a collaborative exhibit with the Hygienic Art Gallery, 79 Bank Street, New London, CT, featuring international artists, curated by the Ammerman Center. The opening of the two-week exhibit was on Friday preceding the symposium dinner. The list of contributing artists can be found at <http://www.conncoll.edu/CAT/sym2014/concerts.html>.

For the first time, the Ammerman Center collaborated with the Hygienic Art Galleries in downtown New London for its symposium gallery show. The show included interactive installations, projections, videos, digital painting and musical kinetic sculptures. This collaboration was the result of a relationship launched by donations Connecticut College made through the Community Foundation that were then directed toward the Hygienic Galleries in 2012.

“This show presents a sampling of the myriad and exciting ways in which contemporary artists working with technology engage both time and place and delve into the intersection of the political and the personal,” said Andrea Wollensak, professor of art and an associate director of the Ammerman Center. “Through their innovative and articulate work, the selected artists draw us into the contemplation of fundamental questions about what it means to be situated by place, oriented by time and contextualized by identity.” Libby Friedman, assistant director of the center, added, “This year’s symposium is a true reflection of the collaborative nature of arts and technology, reflecting global and local partnerships. The symposium ties together the center, the College’s art departments and, this year in particular, the College and the Hygienic Galleries.” Much publicity was generated about this collaborative exhibit in *The Day*, as well as on the Hygienic’s web site, and in the community. The exhibit extended two weeks beyond the weekend of the symposium – many school groups and community members were able to attend and appreciate the exhibit during this extended time.



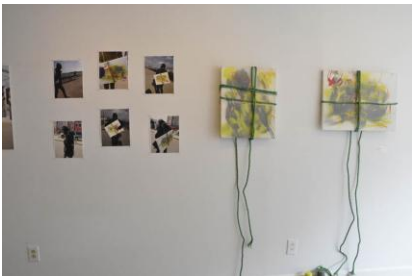
Nadav Assor at the Hygienic Galleries Exhibition opening



"Industrial Opus" by SoA Experimental Lab at George Mason Univ.



"Becoming Visible: Looking Out, Looking Up, Eyes on Me" Eto Otitigbe



A New London on-site project "Walks" by Christie Blizard



"The Frequency of Space/Time" by Alex M. Lee



"Velodrome" by Marco Ferrari

Commissioned Artists

Commissioned Artists arrived on Sunday, Feb 23 for their week-long residencies. They were each assigned spaces to work throughout the week. We awarded commissions to three teams, representing a selection of multi-disciplinary and collaborative work. Our review panel awards commissions to proposals that combine an area of creative expression with a technological component. The work should be new and specifically developed for the symposium. During the week of these residencies several classes and individual students met with the artists and learned about their work, creative process, and technical details. Students wrote reflection/summary papers about these visits, performances and talks. All three groups gave talks in the paper sessions. Their performances were premiered during the evening concerts.

“Four Directions Home” by Noisefold; members: Cory Metcalf (Univ. of Denver) and David Stout (Univ. of North Texas). The technologically heavy piece was a live cinema, sound and music performance that explores real-time audio-visual processes. It critically examines the traditions of landscape painting utilizing unlikely media elements including, system noise, signal glitches, topological displacement and video sonification techniques. They maintain that in today’s transfigured land of environmental disruption their work presents a different kind of elemental awareness.



“Chronicled” by Keith Kirchoff (pianist, MA), Christopher Jette (composer, AK) was an audiovisual representation of the contemporary state of journalism, dissemination of news, and the average person’s interaction with this news. They presented the two forms of disseminated information and their associated technologies together on stage. During the performance while Christopher was typing on a typewriter, Keith was entering text using a cell phone. The text written on the typewriter was projected to the screen in the hall whereas the text entered on the cell phone was available as a shared document available over the wireless network. In essence, two performers were commenting on the same event while using different perspectives and technologies. Audience members could follow both by using their cell phones. The electronic text triggered modified sounds captured at the offices of the local New London newspaper ‘The Day’ earlier that month.



“Biomediation” by Yago de Quay (Univ. of Texas at Austin) and Joao Beira (Univ. of Texas at Austin) was an augmented meditation audiovisual performance. They define Biomediation as an exercise to represent and perform “aura” as an audiovisual instrument. Through the use of biosensors, they track emotions and analyze the performer’s physical space and body. In the process, brain waves become sound waves and space becomes augmented. During the performance, the performer (Yago) meditated and gesticulated while wrapped by an interactive 3D visual display. Yago during their performance (right), my Multimedia class visiting their workspace earlier in the week (below).



The Global Net Orchestra Performance

The Global Net Orchestra is a project by Roger Dannenberg (Carnegie Mellon University). The premise of the project is to connect many musicians from around the world to perform music together. This is facilitated by a program written by Roger Dannenberg and Tom Neuendorffer distributed to participating musicians who can perform on their own computers. Sixty-four musicians around the world connected and performed during the symposium



performance. Dannenberg conducted the entire performance and we had four performers on stage. The performers were Ozgur Izmirli, Max Van de Put '15, Ben Webber '16 and Nicky Haik '14. In the picture on the left, Dannenberg shows the map of connecting performers during talk. Carnegie Mellon University issued a press release about the GNO performance at our symposium (see media placements for the link). They wrote “Dannenberg, CMU professor of computer science, music and art, will serve as “semiconductor” of the Global Network Orchestra. He will lead the collective performance from 12:15 to 1:15 p.m. ET March 1 at the Ammerman Center 14th Biennial Arts and Technology Symposium at Connecticut College.”

Select Photos from Concerts



Art Kreiger opening the Thursday night concert



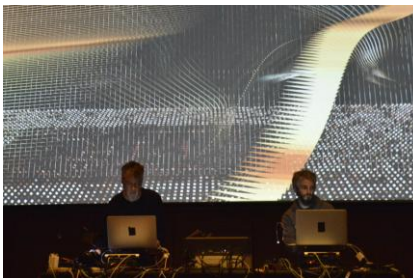
Keith Kirchoff performing "seed. signal" by Robert Seaback



"Not Not 0.1" by Catherine Siller



"no one can hear you dream" by Mark Zaki



"Four Directions Home" by David Stout and Cory Metcalf (Noisefold)



"of the survival of images" by Butch Rován



"Biomediation" by Yago De Quay and Joao Beira



"Sonic Constructions" by Thomas Ciuffo and Curtis Bahn



"Casting" by Jon Bellona



"#chronicled" by Keith Kirchoff and Christopher Jette



"Galatea Reset" by Maurice Wright



"Electrobot" by Andrea Mazzariello

Student Presentations

We have traditionally asked our CAT seniors to talk about their projects at the symposium and this year was no exception. Although this seemed like a daunting task to the students at first they rose up to the challenge and presented their projects in a very impressive way.



The symposium attendees provided encouraging feedback and generously discussed the projects with the students. The photo on the right shows Georgia Naumann during her presentation in the Center's lab in Olin 214.

Paper Sessions

There were six paper sessions during the symposium. These include presentations of theoretical works as well as new technology and artist position statements. The commissioned groups are given extended time to discuss their work. All papers are published in the proceedings of the symposium. The paper sessions run during the day and are scheduled without overlap with other events. The moderators were Andrea Wollensak, Ginny Anderson, Charles Hartman, Janet Esquirol, Bridget Baird and Steve Lubner.



STAFF AND FELLOWS

The two-semester senior seminar was taught by Ross Morin (Film Studies). Ross prepared new assignments to engage and pace the students from the beginning of the year. In the first day of class he handed out what he calls the pre-production document that contains critical questions about the 'why,' 'how' and 'when' of the projects. He led the class discussions and steered the students toward their individual goals. Libby Friedman worked together with Ross on all aspects of the seminar: the schedule, attended the seminars, participated in the discussions, gave feedback to the students, organized all related events and faculty visitors, and advised the students on their projects and presentations.

The following faculty joined as fellows of the Ammerman Center this year: James Lee (Computer Science), Ginny Anderson (Theater), Steve Lubner (Theater), Karen Gonzales-Rice (Art History). Andrea Wollensak and Art Kreiger served as co-directors of events for the symposium.

We hired Matt Richardson from the Interactive Telecommunications Program at NYU to teach the winter physical computing workshop. The workshop and instructor were suggested by one of our fellows, Nadav Assor. Nadav served as gallery curator for our Hygienic exhibit for the symposium. I continued to serve as the Associate Director for Technology.

Once again, after six annual reports, I remain fascinated by Libby Friedman's dedication to the Center; her energy, motivation, and sound judgment. She is the Center's Assistant Director and runs the daily operations of the center with utmost attention to detail, refined planning skills and great sense of responsibility. I will once again list her responsibilities to show the range of work she does: tasks including student recruitment, advising, internships; meeting with students individually to organize their project-related events and to work on their project presentations; organizing the logistics of all center related events including the student presentations, installations, ceremonies, awards etc.; coordinating all events of the symposium; maintaining center related communication with other academic departments, Advancement, College Relations, Admission, CELS and other centers; maintaining budgets; and coordinating the center's publicity. This year, Libby completed her two-year term as Chair of the Staff Council. Among other new initiatives, she led the development of the brand-new Staff Award Recognition Program and reconfigured the council to better represent staff across campus. Libby is an asset to the Ammerman Center and she brings a wealth of professional experience, knowledge and great interpersonal skills to this position. No doubt she will be very helpful with the transition to the new director.

SUMMARY: PUBLIC EVENTS, PRESENTATIONS AND MEDIA PLACEMENTS

Below is a summary of Center events (most of which have been explained above) that were open to the public and media coverage of some of these events. The events given in chronological order below enable us to demonstrate work done at the Center, engage interested parties at the College, advertise our programs and make connections with students who have an interest in pursuing study with the Ammerman Center.

- Oscar and Edgardo Monteon news, Oct. 2013.
<http://www.conncoll.edu/news/news-archive/2013/identical-twins-now-visualizing-online-battles---.htm#.U1LyMWTXjAY>.
- David Pogue (technology writer and TV science presenter) dinner and talk. CAT faculty, staff and students attended. Oct. 10, 2013.
- CAT Certificate Program Information Session, October 14, 2013.
- Winter Workshop – physical computing workshop, Jan. 20-24, 2014.
- CC News: College to host arts and technology symposium, Feb. 21, 2014.

-
- Carnegie Mellon University Press Release: Global Network Orchestra Concert Unites Laptop Performers From Around The World, Wednesday, February 19, 2014, http://www.cmu.edu/news/stories/archives/2014/february/feb19_globalorchestra.html.
 - Top 10 coolest moments from the Arts and Tech Symposium 03/6/2014 Connecticut College News: <http://www.conncoll.edu/news/news-archive/2014/top-10-coolest-moments-from-the-arts-and-tech-symposium.htm#.U5dTKvmwlfw>.
 - The Inauguration panel: “The Arts in the Digital Age.” Panelists: Wollensak, Anderson, Halpert, Bakanas, Safian; moderator: Izmirli. April 4, 2014.
 - CC News: College community discusses arts and technology, global competence at Inauguration panels April 14, 2014. <http://www.conncoll.edu/news/news-archive/2014/college-community-discusses-arts-and-technology-global-competence-at-inauguration-panels.htm#.U1FilPldVyJ>.
 - Academic fair and Open House for admitted students, April 15 and 22, 2014.
 - CAT senior student project demos. May 8, 2014 in the Alice Johnson Room.
 - CAT senior presentations to the public. May 9, 2014 in Olin 014.
 - CAT senior presentations to families, guests and faculty. May 17, 2014 in Olin 214.
 - CAT graduation ceremony. May 17, 2014 in Chu Room – Shain Library.

FUNDING

There were additional contributions to the Center’s regular budget this year. Bridget Baird donated \$5K to the Center establishing a research fund in Ozgur’s name. Sonalysts committed to a \$5K contribution as our corporate sponsor. Additionally, we received \$500 as a matching donation from Johnson & Johnson, matching the \$500 from the family of Sara Lesko ’09.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Once again I am honored to have served as director for two consecutive terms. We have made many changes and enhancements to the center’s programs and put in new structures to enable more collaborations. Overall, the center is in good shape and has a lot of potential to grow in many different directions. Interest in actively participating in the center’s work is growing among new faculty and currently we have a strong and motivated group of fellows to embark on new initiatives. And of course, the center will be in able hands. Andrea Wollensak will be the new director starting July 1 and I wish her all the best in her 3-year term.

Ozgur Izmirli

Judith Ammerman ’60 Director, Ammerman Center for Arts and Technology
Associate Professor, Computer Science Department