Timothy Savas

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Tim Savas is a computational and mechanical tool builder working at the intersection of technology and human expression. He is currently stationed with Harman X as an embedded researcher at MIT Media Lab. His research groups' work has been featured in research publications, the BBC, The Wall Street Journal, and other media outlets.

Tim is also an independent visual artist, songwriter, and comedian based in Cambridge, MA.

EDUCATION

New York University
Bachelor of Arts 2009
Honors in Environmental Studies

RESEARCH & PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Visiting Scientist, MIT Media Lab

Manager of Technology Scouting, Harman X

Harman International, Cambridge, MA June 2019 - present

Embedded researcher at MIT Media Lab for Harman's future product's group, Harman X. Scouting collaborations and managing research projects between MIT Media Lab and industry, focusing on future audio technology, health and sleep, and autonomous vehicles.

Special Projects Assistant, The Open Agriculture Initiative

MIT Media Lab, Cambridge, MA May 2016 - May 2019

Hardware fabrication lead for future-of-food lab, designing desktop-to architectural-scale custom controlled environment growth chambers. Led electromechanical design and build of custom Tree Computer COB LED lighting system; manufacturing for Personal Food Computer v3.0; infrastructure design and build of OpenAg Food Servers in Boston, MA and Anjar, India.

Research Assistant, Temporal Ecology Lab

Harvard University, Cambridge, MA 2014 - 2016

Designed and built robotic camera control systems for the study of plant responses to future climate change. Published novel visual data set and artwork through combination of computational photography and mechanical engineering. Oversaw two-year international climate change study; publication under review by Nature Climate Change.

Photographer

Hitched Studios, Boston, MA 2014-2015

Second lead photographer for Best of Boston 2011 (Boston Magazine) wedding photography studio. Still reluctant to have own photo taken.

Research Assistant, The Ecosystems Center

Marine Biological Lab, Woods Hole, MA 2010 - 2013

Independently designed and deployed robotic chamber system for climate change study at renowned biology research lab. Built and operated custom modifications for field instrument applications. Enjoyed role as lead mentor to six semesters of visiting undergrads.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Johnson AJ, Meyerson E, de la Parra J, Savas TL, Miikkulainen R, Harper CB (2019) Flavor-cyber-agriculture: Optimization of plant metabolites in an open-source control environment through surrogate modeling. PLoS ONE 14(4): e0213918. [link]

T. Savas, D. F. B. Flynn, and E M. Wolkovich (2017) A standardized photographic guide to woody plant spring phenology. Knowledge Network for Biocomplexity. [link]

SELECTED SPEAKING

“Decoding Plants: Using Art and Design as Powerful Scientific Tools”
TEDx Talk, TEDxBeaconStreet 2017 [link]

"Digital Farming at MIT Media Lab”
Invited lecture, Harvard Weld Hill Research Lecture Series 2017

SKILLS

Mechanical

Software: SolidWorks, Fusion 360, SketchUp, some Eagle
Digital fabrication, multi-axis and manual tooling, 3D printing; pick-n-place operation; rapid prototyping, DFM; LED lighting design

Computer Science

Proficient: Javascript, HTML/CSS, C++, Arduino, GitHub
Beginner: Python, Node.JS
(upcoming coursework, Spring 2020)

Audiovisual

Lightroom, Final Cut Pro X, Logic Pro X, Pro Tools, LRTimeLapse, Motion, Sony, Canon, Nikon; pro studio lighting
Intermediate: InDesign, After Effects, Ableton Live

Post-Graduate Coursework

Design Across Scales, Audio Product Design, Intro to Computer Programming Using Javascript, Fundamentals of Website Development, Harvard University Machine Shop Certification, Video Lighting, Creative Explorations in Physical Computing, Experiments in Art, Audio, and Augmentation;
Spring & Fall 2020: Digital & Analog Circuit Design