

Advocacy and the Creative Economy

The impact of the creative economy, the relevance of arts education, and future opportunities for artists and designers in society are increasingly intertwined topics, for which Otis has become a leading advocate in Los Angeles. Recently, within the span of a few weeks, I represented Otis three times in related conversations. First, I testified for the industry sectors of Communication Arts, Fashion and Toys in a public hearing held by the Joint Legislative Committee on the Arts that focused on the growth of creative economy jobs in the State of California. Then, I participated in an arts education roundtable discussion with Rocco Landesman, Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, when he visited Southern California to learn more about the landscape for arts in this region. The ever-expanding role and multi-faceted impact of creative professionals was again a key theme for my remarks at a think tank panel organized by Arts for LA to imagine “The Future of the Arts in Los Angeles in the Next 15-20 Years.”

Otis has embraced such advocacy because central to Otis’ educational philosophy is a conviction that art and design matter socially, culturally, and economically. Virtually every article in this issue of [OMAG](#) displays the outcomes of this guiding belief and commitment. A compelling arts advocacy tool is the [Otis Report on the Creative Economy of the Los Angeles Region](#), which Otis has commissioned and published annually since 2007. It is the first and only report to focus on the arts, design and entertainment industries as a combined economic force in Southern California. Its goal is to spotlight this under-recognized driver of the regional economy, and to demonstrate the utter viability of careers in the creative fields. The Report puts real numbers to creativity. The response from the regional community to the report has been tremendous. The data and analysis have been widely used by cultural organizations, foundations, schools, and public policy makers. It is easy to command attention when it is shown that one in six jobs in the region is either generated or supported by the creative industries.

At Otis College of Art and Design, we prepare our students to broaden their role as artists and designers in the world. The lives, work and achievements of our alumni illustrate the power of art, design and creativity in our economy, culture and communities. To us, the data in the 2009 Otis Report on the Creative Economy of the Los Angeles Region are more than the facts of creativity’s economic impact; it is the story of possibilities made real by a combination of talent, imagination and education. **Samuel Hoi, President**