

FIVE THINGS THAT MAKE UMMA'S PROJECT UNIQUE

A MEETING PLACE FOR THE ARTS

The expanded and restored Museum of Art will result in that rare combination of a dynamic meeting place for the arts backed by the breadth of near universal collections. Embracing its home in the artistic and intellectual community of Ann Arbor, the new Museum of Art bridges campus and community, making scholarship accessible to a broad audience by offering a free, lively cultural experience that serves visitors of diverse backgrounds, experiences and interests.

Over the past decade, the Museum has been credited in national and regional media for combining intellectual substance and wide accessibility in its exhibitions and programs. Attendance doubled during this period, reflecting the engagement of broad regional audiences as well as the campus community. Building upon this success, the newly installed galleries will feature an ambitious range of interpretive strategies that offer multiple voices and points of entry, ranging from freshly conceived traditional tools (such as texts, guides and maps) to new interactive technologies capable of shaping satisfying experiences for both novice and experienced museum-goers.

The new UMMA will:

- ask questions that matter
- create a safe place in which diverse visitors can explore their shared humanity, and thus serve as a new kind of town square

A vastly expanded array of public programs in the expanded facility—including film offerings, performing arts and spoken-word events, alongside traditional programs such as lectures, tours, teacher workshops and family events—will break down the boundaries between art forms and make the new UMMA a true meeting place for all the arts.

AT THE HEART OF A POWERHOUSE UNIVERSITY

The sheer excellence, breadth, scale and diversity of the University of Michigan's multi-disciplinary enterprise is astonishing. Sited at the heart of this leadership research university, the Museum enriches the learning experience of the entire student body, and the Museum's exhibitions and programs are in turn enriched by the distinguished academic brain trust on campus—30,000 faculty and staff and 40,000 students.

For over 150 years, the University of Michigan has recognized the importance of the visual arts in shaping our collective memory of the past, as well as in shaping those issues, artists and forms of expression that will be recognized as some of the central values of the present. Few American universities have such lengthy and distinguished collecting histories and have placed this level of emphasis on the central place of the visual arts in the academic enterprise. The expanded UMMA reflects the University's continuing commitment to this traditional strength.

ARCHITECTURE THAT REFLECTS AND ENHANCES UMMA'S MISSION

By creating a new and visionary architecture to shape the visitor experience, the Museum has reimagined what a university art museum can be. This expansion and restoration project is the realization of a half-century-old dream to bring the Museum spaces up to par with its superb collections, exhibitions and programs. Brad Cloepfil, principal of Allied Works Architecture, met the challenge by bringing the original Beaux-Arts facility back to its former grace and building a new wing that acts as a beacon for the arts connecting campus and community.

The existing building, Alumni Memorial Hall, sits on a prominent corner where the University campus and the city come together. To Alumni Memorial Hall's solidity, this new wing will add a counterpoint of lightness and transparency, through an architecture of glass, steel and limestone that energizes and complements the original museum.

In thinking about the kind of building that was needed, the Museum has been driven by what the new museum would make possible—what experiences its architecture might frame and shape—and by how it would reveal its mission from the inside out.

A SINGULAR COLLECTION

The University of Michigan has been collecting remarkable works of art for more than 150 years. The previously hidden diversity, depth and quality of the Museum's near universal collections—over 18,000 works of art spanning eras, cultures and regions—shaped by a visionary group of donors, directors and curators, reflect the special character of the institution and its place in higher education. Amid this diversity, certain collections stand out as magnets for research and public discovery: its collections of works by Whistler and Picasso, Chinese and Japanese paintings and ceramics, and Congolese sculpture are among the finest in North America.

THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

The new UM Museum of Art brings art to the 21st-century reality of how our students actually live, recognizing the important role these students will play as future leaders. The university experience is itself, at core, one that encourages young adults to question, explore and reexamine their ideas and values. UMMA is forging new connections with our student community at a time when they are developing the habits of learning and leisure that will carry them through their adult lives in an ever more complex society. The Museum will create new opportunities—both as a gathering space and as a place for exploration, questioning and discovery. While the collections and exhibitions directly support classroom teaching, the new Museum will also provoke accidental encounters with art which we hope, in turn, will generate a comfort with museum-going as an essential experience of adult life.