

Art museum gets facelift

Officials say the building will have an expanded museum and education suite, and should be completed by winter term 2004

Jillian Daley

Family/Health/Education Reporter

It was an earth-shattering event of artistic proportions.

The University of Oregon Museum of Art broke ground Sept. 10 for the renovation that has been pending since it was first constructed.

UOMA was designed in the 1920s and built in the early 1930s, but because of funding difficulties caused by historical events — starting with the Depression — it was not completed. Builders left space for the building to be completed at a later date.

Now, after years of saving money and planning, the original designers' vision will be realized, and the University community will gain a new artistic resource. UOMA received \$6.36 million in state-serviced bonds to build, but the remainder of the \$12.72 million budget for the project came from sources such as grants from federal and private foundations as well as donations from 750 individuals.

The construction is expected to take from 16 to 20 months, and the museum is scheduled to be re-opened winter term 2004.

"It's a real thrill," UOMA Director Del Hawkins said. "We're keeping faith with the pioneers who started it."

The plans double the size of the current museum, by expanding the gallery to include a wing for new American and regional art. Plans also include the addition of the Gordon Gilkey Research Center for prints, drawings and photographs.

The research center would house an education suite with a discovery gallery, studio and auditorium. The auditorium will enable the museum to present lectures or films. The museum currently runs an education program that reaches thousands of K-12 students and acts as a space to train teachers.

Designers also plan to add an events hall available for the public to rent and a hands-on area for patrons to work with art supplies. There will also be a cafe, new security measures and an improved climate control system.

UOMA spokeswoman Katie Sproles said the new plans would mean that the gallery could show more art than ever, and that the new venue would attract high-caliber art work.

"This community is in for a treat when they see the art (we) have here," she said.

Sproles also said that the new changes will advance art research, and that more scholars may visit for the opportunity to study and restore the pieces the museum has in storage.

"It will be an absolutely wonderful resource for students to do research," she said.

Students have participated in



Adam Jones Emerald

Donors to the project Jim (left) and Ginevra Ralph gleefully participate in the groundbreaking of the Museum of Art addition.



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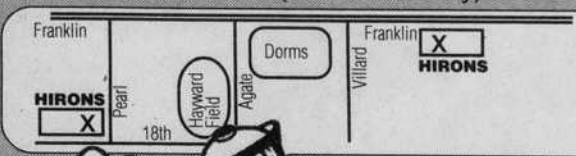
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