

"My first love was and will always be contemporary, local art." – Jordan Schnitzer.



A dream no longer: the new Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art on the University of Oregon campus.

Reaching Out

New directions for the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art BY SYLVIE PEDERSON

With the opening on Sunday, Jan. 23 of the expanded UO Museum of Art under its new name as the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, Eugene and Oregon acquire a brand new museum. Having more than doubled in size, the museum is now the 13th largest university museum in the country. JSMA solidly affirms Eugene as a city of the arts.

More than an expansion of physical space, the re-opening heralds new directions for the museum through rotating exhibits and

community outreach — a museum not only for students and academics but also for the community at large.

The museum's executive director David Turner's expertise is in connecting art museums with their communities and involving artists in public programs. Changing exhibits are crucial to keep the public interested, Turner noted. "We're planning to have rotating exhibits. We're trying to eliminate the word 'permanent' from our vocabulary," he said.

The community connection is paramount to Jordan Schnitzer, Portland philanthropist and namesake of the remodeled museum, who contributed the largest gift to the project.

"One of the reasons why I'm so excited about the opening of this expanded museum is the chance now for the students on campus to make coming to the museum a regular part of their university experience," Schnitzer said. "It's also the chance for the children in Lane County and the whole mid-valley to get used to coming to this museum and seeing works from the region and outside. We have fabulous children's workshop areas with programs on Saturdays and Sundays, when they

can come on rainy days to see shows and participate in arts activities and experience going to a museum. This is just as important as experiencing the mountains, river-fishing and beaches," Schnitzer said.

Previous executive director David Robertson, who oversaw the preliminaries to the expansion, also wanted to create greater community outreach. However, the original building needed additional gallery and educational spaces; a proper loading dock; climate control, which would allow hosting traveling exhibits; an auditorium for lectures, films and performances; improved access and circulation for disabled visitors; and amenities such as a café.

One of the country's leading architectural firms in museum expansion, Hammond Beeby Rupert Ainge Inc. of Chicago, has implemented all these changes. The firm designed the project in collaboration with SRG Partnership of Portland, which prepared the museum's master plan. They took great care to preserve the aesthetic integrity of the original building, which is listed on the National Register for Historic Places.

"The people of Eugene and Oregon now

have the chance to take advantage of the wonderful programs that can be offered because we have the space, the humidity controls, the security and the staff to help make this museum the cultural centerpiece of the region," Schnitzer said enthusiastically.

Lifelong Involvement with Art

Schnitzer's contribution to the arts on campus goes back to the 1970s. As a young English major about to graduate in 1972, he wanted to honor three professors: Carlisle Moore, Clark Griffith and Constance Bordwell. Graduate student Hope Pressman assisted Schnitzer in making his wish come true. In 1974, Schnitzer donated to the university James Lee Hansen's sculpture, *The Falconer*, which stands by Prince Lucien Campbell Hall in the east courtyard.

"Two years later, after I finished law school at Lewis and Clark Law School, Hope Pressman came to see me and asked if I would join the newly formed Museum of Art Council," Schnitzer said. "I agreed." In 1979-80, he headed a \$500,000 fundraising campaign for an elevator to make the museum accessible to people with disabilities.

"While working on the elevator project, I noticed that the museum's original plans included an expansion that doubled the size of the museum," Schnitzer said. "I decided we should work to try to expand the museum,"



Barbara, lithograph by Robert Longo, 1998

GIFT OF JORDAN D. SCHNITZER

JORDAN SCHNITZER MUSEUM OF ART UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

Museum Hours are 11 am–8 pm Wed. and 11 am–5 pm Thurs–Sun.

Admissions: Adults, \$5. Seniors (62 and older) and students (high school and non-UO college with ID), \$3. Free to museum members, UO students, UO faculty and staff members, and children 13 and under. Free general admission to everyone the first Friday of each month.

Marché (Café) and Museum Store Hours: 9 am–4:30 pm, Mon–Fri. Also 9 am–7:30 pm extended Wednesday hours. And 11 am–4:30 pm Sat. and Sun.

MusEvenings: Extended hours from 5 to 8 pm each Wed. feature lectures, gallery talks and music. Visitors "pay as you wish."