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Architects compete to design new center for arts

By **Julia Morse**
News Office

The Center for the Creative and Performing Arts will move one step closer to fruition next week as five architectural firms compete for the chance to design the 180,000-square-foot building.

The architects will present drawings and models of their designs on Monday, Nov. 20 and Tuesday, Nov. 21, in a private, juried session with members of the selection committee, which includes University administrators and faculty members. The winner will be announced during Winter Quarter.

The proposed \$100-million center will turn six years of behind-the-scenes planning and the longtime dreams of students, faculty and administrators into a reality. It will serve as home to all areas of artistic expression at the University—visual arts, theater and performance, music and film—and will include a 350-seat performance hall.

“The University’s long-standing commitment to the arts will be more fully realized in the Center for the Creative and Performing Arts,” President Zimmer said. “It will provide our faculty and students with an exceptional facility in which to conduct their work while enriching the broader community through an expansion of innovative arts programming.”

Five internationally renowned architectural firms have been invited to compete for the design contract. They are Hans Hollein of Vienna, Austria; Studio Daniel Libeskind of New York City; Morphosis of Los Angeles; Fumihiko Maki and Associates of Tokyo; and Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects of New York.

The competing firms include three recipients of the esteemed Pritzker Architectural Prize: architects Hollein, Maki and Thom Mayne of Morphosis.

Hollein’s work includes the Museum of Modern Art in Frankfurt, Germany, the Guggenheim Museum in Salzburg and the Austrian Embassy in Berlin.

Maki’s firm is well known for the designs of several academic facilities in Japan, in addition to the Iwasaki Art Museum, the Embassy of Japan in Brazil, a public-housing project in Lima, Peru, and the National Museum of Modern Art in Kyoto.

Libeskind’s firm was selected last year to design the new World Trade Center in New York City and recently completed the design of an extension of the Denver Art



Five internationally renowned architects and members of their teams visited campus this quarter and toured the Midway Studios, where visual arts students make their art. The new Center for the Creative and Performing Arts will provide these and other students with new spaces in which to create. Laura Letinsky (center), Chair of Visual Arts, describes the existing space and its current use.

Museum. His resume also includes the Jewish Museum in Berlin, the Creative Media Center in Hong Kong and the London Metropolitan University Graduate Center.

Mayne's work with Morphosis includes the University of Cincinnati Student Recreation Center, the San Francisco Federal Building, the Olympic Village for the 2012 Olympics in New York City and the Cornell School of Architecture.

Williams and Tsien's accomplishments include New York City's American Folk Art Museum, the Cranbrook Natatorium in Bloomfield Hills, Mich. and the Neurosciences Institute in San Diego, Calif.

But the Center for Creative and Performing Arts will bring much more to campus than an architectural landmark; it will fulfill many hopes of administrators, faculty members and students.

"My dream is for us to have facilities that are worthy of our students and worthy of our great faculty," said John Boyer, Dean of the College. Boyer, who also is the Martin A. Ryerson Distinguished Service Professor in History and the College, noted that there has been a great increase of interest in the arts over time among College students. He said that this year, 500 students are involved in visual arts; 400 with theater; 700 in musical groups; 80 working on films with Fire Escape Films; 100 are participating in dance and performing arts; and 11 different a cappella groups on campus.

All in all, over 1,600 undergraduates enroll annually in creative and performing arts classes and studio-based courses that combine theory and practice, Boyer added.

"The center represents an enormous opportunity to bring together the diverse range of curricular and extracurricular happenings we already have on campus, providing a true home," said Laura Letinsky, Chair of Visual Arts and Professor in Visual Arts and Cinema & Media Studies. "Right now, our film, theater, music and visual artists are scattered around campus, with no one place for student art to be exhibited, seen and heard. The center will allow for creative fomentation, providing a backbone for all the areas of the arts to live and grow."

Although the University has traditionally been more famous for its Nobel Prize-winning faculty, liberal arts education and graduate research, the list of alumni who have successful careers in the arts is far from short. Those alumni include Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright and screenwriter David Auburn (A.B., '91); the late choreographer Katharine Dunham (Ph.D. '36); musician-composer Philip Glass (A.B., '56); author Philip Roth (A.M., '55); novelist Susan Sontag (A.B., '51); filmmaker Kimberly Peirce (A.B., '90) and author Kurt Vonnegut (A.M., '71).

"Over time, the vibrancy of our city and the creativity of our students combined to encourage all kinds of other artistic activities among our students," Boyer said.

The Creative and Performing Arts Center will provide the space for those activities to continue to thrive. Danielle Allen, Dean of the Division of the Humanities, said, "The new center will spur and facilitate cross-disciplinary, cross-media creativity at faculty, graduate and undergraduate levels by providing contexts for collaboration across creative and critical domains."

William Michel, Assistant Vice-President for Student Life in the Office of the Vice-President and Dean of Students in the University and Associate Dean of the College, agreed. Michel pointed out that the Center for Creative and Performing Arts would be the venue for students to continue their artistic passions and to create their

works in much the same way that the faculty develops research.

“Some of the most exciting art our students have created on campus is art that is a product of collaboration,” Michel said. “It is when the students studying film, theater, visual arts and music come together that they are most innovative and creative.”
