

New Crocker is a Focal Point of Sacramento's Emergence as a Cultural Center

On October 10, 2010 the Crocker Art Museum—the first art museum established in the Western United States—will unveil a new 125,000-square-foot building designed by Gwathmey Siegel & Associates Architects that will more than triple the museum's current size. The new building will complement the museum's historic structures and expand the



Crocker Exterior Rendering. Courtesy of the Crocker Art Museum.

Crocker Art Museum's ability to originate and present traveling exhibitions and educational programs, exhibit significantly more of its growing collection, and enhance its role as a cultural resource for California and the state's many visitors. The project's capital campaign has elicited unprecedented support, with more than \$90 million raised to date towards a \$100 million goal.

The Crocker Art Museum, which became a public institution in 1885, will mark its 125th anniversary in 2010. The museum's holdings and programs have burgeoned as the population of Sacramento—the State Capital—has increased and diversified. Today, the museum houses contemporary paintings, sculpture, and multi-media works, a comprehensive collection of California art dating from the Gold Rush to the present day, exceptional holdings of master drawings, Dutch and Flemish paintings from the 16th and 17th centuries, 19th-century Central

and Northern European paintings, one of the largest and most comprehensive international ceramics collections in the United States, and a rapidly growing collection of Asian art. The Crocker continues to build its programs and strengthen its collection in new and existing areas in anticipation of the increased capacities its new building will provide.

“The new Crocker Art Museum will be a point of pride for our city and our state,” said Marcy Friedman, Campaign Co-Chair and Board Member, Crocker Art Museum Association.

“Sacramento is not only the Capital of California, it is in the midst of some of our state’s greatest destinations—from Napa Valley and the Bay Area to Lake Tahoe and Yosemite—and the Crocker Art Museum is at the heart of Sacramento. I have long believed that Sacramento and the Crocker would emerge and flourish as cultural leaders, and I am deeply proud to have been able to play a role in making that vision a reality. The tremendous support for this project shows a strong commitment to the value of the arts by both the city and the people of Sacramento.”



Crocker Interior Rendering. Courtesy of the Crocker Art Museum.

“The opening of our new facility next October marks a dynamic phase in the evolution of the Crocker,” said Museum Director Lial Jones. “We will be able to exhibit works that have rarely—or never—been on public view and significantly expand our educational programming and public events. All of us at the Crocker are very excited to serve our community in ways that literally weren’t possible before and to be an even more integral part of civic life in Sacramento and the region.”

“This is an exhilarating time for the city of Sacramento, and the Crocker Art Museum’s expansion exemplifies the changes taking place here,” said Sacramento Mayor Kevin Johnson. “The museum is vital to the region’s cultural and economic development, and the new Crocker is an important icon for Sacramento’s ongoing emergence as a cultural destination and a world-class city.”

Design

Judge Edwin B. and Margaret Crocker commissioned the construction of a Victorian-Italianate building to serve as a gallery for their art collection in 1869, a year before the founding of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Boston Museum of Fine Art, and a decade before the founding the Art Institute of Chicago. In 1885, Margaret Crocker presented both the building and collection to the city as a public art museum.

While the Crocker Art Museum undertook a series of renovations and additions in the last century, the facility could not keep pace with the museum’s growing collection. In 2000, the Crocker Art Museum began a master planning process with Gwathmey Siegel & Associates Architects and in 2002 commissioned the firm to design a major expansion of the museum.

Charles Gwathmey’s classic, contemporary design will enhance the visitor’s experience and the museum’s programming capacity, while paying tribute to the institution’s existing architecture. The expansion reflects and complements the historic Art Gallery building, echoing design elements including the three-story configuration, porches, window placement and balconies. Gwathmey Siegel’s design directly connects the new galleries to the Art Gallery building, allowing for seamless movement from the new to the existing structure. The plan also integrates the various buildings of the complex and creates engaging and flexible interior spaces for exhibitions and public programs.

The design for the Crocker Art Museum, and most of the building construction, was completed before the death of Charles Gwathmey in August 2009. Gwathmey Siegel Associate Partner Gerald Gendreau, who has worked on the design since its inception, is overseeing the project’s completion.

Upon arriving at the museum, visitors will enter a dramatic two-story, glass-walled court adjacent to a new 7,000-square-foot open-air courtyard. The indoor and outdoor spaces of the building’s first floor will be open to the public free of charge and will provide a community gathering place. Free Wi-Fi will be available and a new 260-seat auditorium and meeting center will host films, performances, lectures, panel discussions and other public programs and community events.

The new Crocker will provide resources for people of all ages and interests. The building's features will include expanded educational and art studio space, a teacher resource center, a space for participatory arts programming for children and adults, an expanded library and student exhibition galleries. A Works on Paper Study Center will greatly improve access for visiting scholars studying the Crocker's outstanding master drawings collection. The expansion will provide space for onsite collections care and storage, as well as a new conservation lab. New public amenities, including a café with indoor and outdoor seating and a redesigned Museum Store, are also being added.

City of Sacramento

A few words of love about a great city... Founded in the early years of the Gold Rush, Sacramento became the capital of California in 1854. In 2009, Sacramento was cited as one of America's 10 favorite cities by the Pew Research Center. Greater Sacramento, with a population of 2.1 million, is one of the fastest growing regions in the United States.

Located at the intersection of the American and the Sacramento rivers in California's Central Valley, the City of Sacramento offers a cosmopolitan convergence of old and new, from notable historical sites to a vibrant cultural and civic life.

Sacramento features a range of museums, art galleries, and performing arts organizations, including the Sacramento Philharmonic Orchestra, the Sacramento Opera, the Sacramento Ballet, California Musical Theatre, B Street Theatre, and the Sacramento Theatre Company, as well as the California State Railroad Museum and the California Museum for History, Women, and the Arts. The city's award-winning restaurants highlight local produce and wines from the surrounding region, including nearby Amador County, an area poised to rival the Napa Valley. In Old Sacramento, a 28-acre town of historic buildings just two blocks from the Crocker, visitors can immerse themselves in the city's early history. The tree-lined American River Parkway, running along a 23-mile stretch of that river, provides equestrians, joggers and cyclists a place to enjoy one of the region's many natural attractions.

Crocker Art Museum

Museum hours are 10 a.m. – 5 p.m., Tuesday – Sunday; and 10 a.m. – 9 p.m. on the first and third Thursdays of the month. Admission ranges from \$3 – \$6 and is free every Sunday from 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. More information is available at (916) 808-7000 or www.crockerartmuseum.org.