

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 14, 2020

Media Contacts:

Angel Galloway

agalloway@arkansasartscenter.org

ArkansasArtsCenter.org



Maria Davison

mdavison@arkansasartscenter.org

ArkansasArtsCenter.org

New Arts Center website tracks construction progress

MacArthur Park project continues to evolve with opening expected in 2022

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. – The Arkansas Arts Center has launched a new website to update the community on the transformational renovation of its MacArthur Park campus: reimagining.arkansasartscenter.org.

Designed by renowned architecture firm Studio Gang, the new building's distinctive architectural identity signifies the Arts Center's role as a cultural beacon for the future of Arkansas while celebrating the institution's proud legacy. Scheduled to open in 2022, the project will strengthen the Arkansas Arts Center as the region's leading visual and performing arts institution.

"The reimagined Arkansas Arts Center will be a place that showcases art that educates, inspires, provokes and beautifies our lives," Executive Director Victoria Ramirez said. "This new website offers an extensive look at this new space and everything it will have to offer. It's also an opportunity to recognize the supporters – both public and private – who are integral to the success of this project."

Watch Executive Director Victoria Ramirez discuss the reimagined Arkansas Arts Center: <https://youtu.be/GLfN7oDG72c>

At the site, foundations for the new additions have been installed, and construction on the steel structure for the second-floor gallery space and the curved walls of the building's central axis – a key element of the project's architecture – are in progress. The new website will be updated regularly with photos, videos and details on the phases of the construction project.

The transformation of the Arkansas Arts Center into a state-of-the-art facility is being realized through a \$128 million special fundraising campaign, *Reimagining the Arkansas Arts Center: Campaign for Our Cultural Future*. The campaign will also provide transition and opening support, while also strengthening the Arkansas Arts Center Foundation's endowment, yielding support for operations, exhibitions, acquisitions, and education and outreach programming in the new building. In October 2019, capital campaign co-chairs Harriet and Warren Stephens announced that the campaign has raised more than \$122.7 million of its \$128 million goal.

Through the project website, the community can also learn how to support the campaign to establish a significant architectural treasure in the heart of Arkansas that serves the community, stimulates tourism, and drives the economy. Recognition opportunities are available to honor gifts at every donation level.

“The plans for the newly reimagined Arkansas Arts Center are transformative,” Warren Stephens said. “We believe in the Arkansas Arts Center and know together we can make it a thriving and influential cultural institution for present and future generations.”

Studio Gang’s design for the reimagined Arkansas Arts Center creates a space where people can enjoy all the benefits of engaging with the arts. The new building will feature two entrances – the north courtyard entrance features a nod to past in the beautifully preserved 1937 façade of the Museum of Fine Arts. The south entrance opens into MacArthur Park. Prominent glass-enclosed spaces at either entrance welcome visitors into the building from MacArthur Park at the south and downtown Little Rock at the north.

Inside, visitors will find expertly lit galleries to feature the Arts Center’s 14,000-work collection of international art. A full schedule of dynamic special exhibitions will celebrate the artistic history and current work of the Delta region while bringing world-class exhibitions from around the world to Little Rock. The Museum School will feature fully equipped studios for drawing, painting, printmaking, ceramics, glass, wood, and metalsmithing classes for children and adults, along with a gallery space for displaying student work. State-of-the-art main stage and black box theatre spaces will host Children’s Theatre programming, films and performing arts events. The innovative “Living Room” will create space for community and social gatherings, quiet reflection, and everything in between with views of downtown Little Rock. A full-service restaurant will feature indoor and shaded outdoor seating overlooking MacArthur Park. The design also includes a Museum Shop, collections research room, and a lecture hall for public programs.

The project also features a revitalized MacArthur Park landscape, designed by Kate Orff and SCAPE. The landscape, inspired by Little Rock’s unique ecologies, will expand the connections between the building and MacArthur Park through native and sustainable planting and water reclamation. Landscape pathways, a great lawn and open areas will allow for vibrant, outdoor community programming.

Studio Gang is an architecture and urban design practice headquartered in Chicago, with offices in New York, San Francisco and Paris. Founded and led by MacArthur Fellow Jeanne Gang, Studio Gang’s award-winning work ranges in scale and typology from the 82-story Aqua Tower to the 14-acre Nature Boardwalk at Lincoln Park Zoo, both located in Chicago. Gang has been recognized for a design process that foregrounds the relationship among people and their environments, and is the only architect named to TIME Magazine’s list of the 100 Most Influential People of 2019. Studio Gang is currently designing cultural and civic projects across the Americas, including an expansion to the American Museum of Natural History in New York, a new Center for the University of Chicago in Paris, a new United States Embassy in Brasilia, and a Global Terminal at O’Hare International Airport in Chicago. This is Studio Gang’s first project in Arkansas.

SCAPE, founded by landscape architect and MacArthur Fellow Kate Orff, is a design-driven landscape architecture and urban design studio based in New York. They believe landscape architecture can enable positive change in communities through the creation of regenerative living infrastructure and public landscapes. SCAPE works to integrate natural cycles and systems into environments across all scales, from the urban pocket-park to the regional ecological plan. They do this through diverse forms of landscape architecture – built landscapes, planning frameworks, research, books, and installations – with the goal of connecting people to their immediate environment and creating dynamic and adaptive landscapes of the future.

Arkansas Arts Center programs are supported in part by: Arkansas Arts Center Foundation; City of Little Rock; City of North Little Rock; Little Rock Convention and Visitors Bureau; and the Arkansas Arts Council, a division of Arkansas Heritage, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Contact: [501-372-4000](tel:501-372-4000)

Website: ArkansasArtsCenter.org

Arkansas Arts Center: 9th and Commerce, Little Rock, AR 72202

Arkansas Arts Center Riverdale: 2510 Cantrell Road, Little Rock, AR 72202