OPEN DOORS ALL OVER STANFORD UNIVERSITY and you will find people creating and studying, witnessing and performing art.

On any weekday evening, an undergraduate in his dorm room brushes the last strokes of oil paint onto a self-portrait that fills a large linen canvas.

A few steps away, hundreds of community members and students tap their toes to the live jazz of a Grammy-winning ensemble. In the basement of a building across campus, a documentary film student works with her professor to edit footage about a hotel housekeeper’s daily life while a PhD scholar sits in a nearby library, researching art of the African diaspora.

And hovering over his laptop in the Science and Engineering Quad, an art major uses algorithms to design an interactive installation that simulates the intricacies of our immune system.
The arts have been an integral part of a Stanford education since the university first opened its doors in 1891. The Stanford family planned for a museum and art galleries in the founding grant, and in a letter to the university’s first president, founder Leland Stanford wrote, “The imagination needs to be cultivated and developed to assure success in life.”

As Stanford developed into one of the world’s premier centers of teaching and research over the next century, its fostering of that creative imagination did not keep pace with the remarkable advances it made in other fields. With nationally ranked programs and world-class faculty, the arts enjoyed a strong presence—but they were not a core part of the student experience and the university as a whole.

Today, that has changed. In the last five years, Stanford has undergone an important cultural shift that has expanded and deepened the arts on campus. This momentum must continue. When the university marks the 125th anniversary of its opening in 2016, it will also celebrate a transformative moment in the arts. Doors will swing wide open across campus, revealing a culture where the imagination is cultivated and studied in vibrant and unprecedented ways.

“The arts are central to the Stanford student experience. They expose our students to different ways of thinking, global influences, and the inherent ambiguity of the human experience. We believe the arts are important not only because they celebrate our creativity, but because they also help students deal with some of the most complex issues in our society and our world. For all of these reasons, they deserve significant investment.”

John Hennessy, President, Stanford University
This historic cultural shift began in 2006 with the launch of the Stanford Arts Initiative. Part of The Stanford Challenge, this new agenda began with an ambitious mandate: to reimagine the role of the arts in a 21st-century education and integrate art more fully into student life.

And it has succeeded. The Arts Initiative and the Stanford Institute for Creativity and the Arts (SiCa) have strengthened Stanford’s arts departments and programs, forged connections across campus, fostered student creativity, and furthered the creation of new spaces for the arts. The initiative established six endowed faculty positions and 18 graduate fellowships that support students in doctoral and MFA programs. Thanks to the initiative, the university was able to recruit Nancy Troy, chair of the Department of Art & Art History, to Stanford in 2010 to become the first Victoria and Roger Sant Professor in Art.

The success of the Arts Initiative has catalyzed research and curricular innovation and sponsored hundreds of visiting artists. In five years, SiCa has given more than $1 million in grants to faculty and students for events, programs, and symposia. These programs ensure that creativity can thrive in every corner of the university.

The initiative has also made great strides toward its goal of building new spaces for the arts. By 2016, a dynamic new arts hub will redefine the main gateway to campus. Anchored by the Iris & B. Gerald Cantor Center for Visual Arts, an arts district is beginning to take shape with the construction of Bing Concert Hall. Planning is also under way for the McMurtry Building, the new home for the Department of Art & Art History, and the new building that will house the Anderson Collection at Stanford University, one of the world’s preeminent collections of post–World War II American art.

From the creation of a delicate watercolor by an arts grantee to the majestic concert hall rising up alongside Palm Drive, this much is clear: the arts are now at the forefront of the Stanford experience. But this journey of transformation has only just begun. Students still yearn for better spaces to create art, more opportunities to take perpetually over-enrolled classes, and a stronger arts community.

The accomplishments of the Arts Initiative, says Matthew Tiews, executive director of Arts Programs, have set the stage for the next phase known as Art 2016. This effort will focus on the student experience, multidisciplinary collaborations among departments and schools, and programming in the emerging arts district. “These facilities will create amazing new opportunities that will not only bring the arts deeper into student life but also establish Stanford as a leader in the arts,” Tiews says.

As visions develop into blueprints and blueprints develop into buildings, Stanford is becoming a destination for the arts. The new arts district, coupled with existing facilities across campus like the Hasso Plattner Institute of Design and the Center for Computer Research in Music and Acoustics, will shape Stanford into a premier place to study, create, and experience the arts.

Bing Concert Hall will open in 2013 as the university’s new main stage for live performances at Stanford. The hall’s acoustic and state-of-the-art technical capabilities will create an exceptional performance venue for both renowned and up-and-coming performers, and will lift the aspirations and abilities of artists on campus to new heights.
“Stanford students should leave not only with knowledge from their disciplines but also with a sense that art will always be a part of their lives—whether they are creators, consumers, or supporters of art. They should know they are part of a world in which their creativity and the world’s creativity are linked.”

Roberta Bowman Denning, ’75, MBA ’78, Chair, Arts Initiative Advisory Council and H&S Council

The Anderson Collection at Stanford University comprises 121 works by 86 artists from one of the world’s most outstanding private collections of American art. Scheduled to open in a custom-designed building in 2014, the collection will not only provide a rich educational resource on campus but also a research setting for scholars and art lovers worldwide.

Due to open in 2015, the McMurtry Building will be the new home for Stanford’s Department of Art & Art History. By bringing programs in art practice, design, art history, film and media studies, and documentary film under one roof, together with the Art and Architecture Library, it will maximize interactions among different arts disciplines. The 90,000-square-foot building will also help satisfy demands for more art practice courses for students who are currently unable to enroll because of space constraints.

These new buildings will join Stanford’s museum, the Cantor Arts Center, which already plays a vibrant role in the cultural life of campus and beyond. With well over 200,000 visitors annually, it is the best attended university art museum in the country. At the heart of the new arts district, the Cantor Arts Center will be better positioned to enrich its collections, create a lively exhibition program, and strengthen its ties across campus, the community, and alumni nationwide.

Connie Wolf, ’81, the John and Jill Freidenrich Director of the Cantor Arts Center, points to the burgeoning arts district as a new—but not unfamiliar—chapter in Stanford’s evolution. “It reminds me a bit of why the Stanford family founded the museum in the first place,” she notes. “They believed in the power of a museum to educate, to connect, to engage, to enlighten, and to be an instrument of someone’s education and intellectual development. I feel like we’re returning to that centrality of the arts now.”

Together, these facilities along with programming across campus will allow faculty, students, and the public to engage with the arts in powerful new ways. By 2016, this thriving community will redefine not only how art contributes to Stanford, but also how Stanford will contribute to art.

Reframing Art for the 21st Century

WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF LIVE PERFORMANCE IN THE DIGITAL WORLD? WHAT FORMATS WILL BEST meet the artistic needs of tomorrow? How will the arts be integrated with medicine and science? And what, ultimately, will be the role of the arts and art scholarship in the 21st century?

These are just some of the critical questions that Stanford is uniquely positioned to address. When it combines its strengths in collaboration, discovery, and education with a renewed
An Investment in the Future

STANFORD'S RENAISSANCE IN THE ARTS HAS BEEN NOTHING SHORT OF TRANSFORMATIVE. It has enhanced existing arts programs, added new facilities, created opportunities for students and faculty, and integrated the arts throughout university life. Now, the momentum must continue.

It is our hope that alumni and friends will partner with the university at this pivotal moment and help move the arts even further forward at Stanford. At a time when arts funding is in decline nationwide, it is critical to support this vital component of a well-rounded education.

“Any great university needs to be strong across all dimensions of human study and experience,” says Richard Saller, the Vernon R. and Lysbeth Warren Anderson Dean of the School of Humanities and Sciences and Kleinheinz Family Professor of European Studies. “Art

Jenny Bilfield, the artistic director of Stanford Live (formerly Stanford Lively Arts), calls universities, and Stanford in particular, the centers for 21st-century art innovation. “The conversation about art can be much more interesting and multifaceted here because of the sheer intellectual firepower, curiosity, and sense of invention that Stanford cultivates,” she explains. “It’s all the people in a learning mode, an investigative mode, a process of critiquing and absorbing that challenges us to go deeper.”

And, at Stanford, the arts are not only in conversation with each other. That sense of creative invention pulses across campus, from an MFA student constructing installations that grapple with environmental concerns to an ophthalmologist studying eye disease through the blurring lines of cataract-ridden Impressionist painters. With the arts facilities located so close to the university’s world-class medical, engineering, and law schools, Stanford can foster interdisciplinary art collaborations that draw on the university’s great strengths.

These cross-disciplinary relationships are not only supported at the level of infrastructure and programming but also through professorships that span departmental lines. Pivotal faculty include Jonathan Berger, the Denning Family Provostial Professor, whose research and teaching lie at the intersection of arts, science, and technology. The Carl and Marilynn Thoma Provostial Professorship in the Arts and Humanities has also allowed Stanford to recruit leading art historian Alex Nemerov, whose instruction will connect different modes of thinking across the humanities and arts. Such faculty are ushering in a new era of arts learning and will help attract future generations of scholars.

Stanford is now better positioned to support—and elevate—the creativity that thrives among students and faculty. Cesar Torres, ’13, who is pursuing a joint degree in art and art history and computer science, is already creating art that transcends disciplinary boundaries. His work ranges from sweeping murals inspired by San Francisco’s Mission District to “Chroma Clock,” an intricately coded timekeeping device that remaps the convention of time and illuminates the cultural conventions that frame our day.

“My goal is to study all forms of media and engineer a new form of visual communication that redefines the relationship between humans and the environment,” he says. “I want to go down this avenue of investigation and figure out what the next great medium is.”

As Torres pushes the limits of conventional media, he is energized by Stanford’s commitment to the arts. “I think these new facilities are going to help create an environment that gives Stanford that art school feeling. Every field at Stanford will get a boost from the arts.”

YoungSmith has embraced—and influenced—arts on campus. She has received several arts grants, spearheaded creative projects, and organized an exhibition of work by undergraduate art students.

“There’s no reason Stanford can’t be the best university in the country if it expands its arts programs,” she says. “I’ve seen massive improvements here since my freshman year because of people’s efforts.”

Art and art history major Lauren YoungSmith, ’13, transferred to an East Coast school her sophomore year because she was not satisfied with Stanford’s visual arts program. But after one semester away, she returned to the Farm.

“I chose Stanford twice,” she says. “I wanted a full-rounded education and felt that Stanford supported a free-spirited exploration that I don’t think I could pursue anywhere else.”

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STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

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SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES & SCIENCES
fundamentally enriches human experience and causes our students, our faculty, and our broader Stanford community to see things in ways they haven't seen them before."

An investment in the arts at Stanford is also an investment in the future of art. With support for more programs, fellowships, and interdisciplinary collaborations, the university has the capacity to define what it means to make, experience, and study art in the modern era.

At Stanford, we believe that art prepares us to better understand the complexities of today and the possibilities of tomorrow. We hope you will join us in this vision and help open up doors to the boundless potential of Stanford Arts.

In Stanford Live master classes, students get the opportunity to play with—and receive instruction from—leading musicians such as jazz trumpeter Etienne Charles.

THE ANDERSON COLLECTION AT STANFORD UNIVERSITY comprises 121 works by 86 artists in one of the most outstanding private collections of American art in the world. Scheduled to open in a new custom-designed building in the spring of 2014, the collection will provide a rich resource for teaching and learning, and become a research destination for scholars and art lovers from around the world.

BING CONCERT HALL will open in 2013 as the university’s new main stage for music as well as selected theatrical and dance productions. The hall’s acoustics and state-of-the-art technical capabilities will create an exceptional performance venue for both renowned and up-and-coming performers, provide audiences with a superb listening experience, and lift the aspirations and abilities of campus artists to new heights.

CANTOR ARTS CENTER plays a leading role in the vibrant cultural life of the campus and surrounding area. As its collections grow, students have an increasing hand in exhibitions and installations, gaining special access to collections and firsthand experience in professional museum practice. The center continues to focus on strengthening its collections, presenting a nationally and internationally recognized exhibitions program, and deepening its ties with the academic program.

THE MCMURTRY BUILDING, due to open in 2015, will be the new home for Stanford’s Department of Art & Art History, bringing programs in art practice, art history, film, and design under one roof and maximizing interactions among different arts disciplines. The building’s location adjacent to the Cantor Arts Center and the Anderson Collection at Stanford University will support closer integration of Stanford’s academic programs with the museum’s substantial collections and curatorial expertise, enriching the experience of the campus and surrounding communities.

PROGRAMMING IN THE ARTS: As the programmatic and strategic center of the Arts Initiative, SiCa and other campus partners have sponsored academic and extracurricular programs designed to encourage interdisciplinary collaboration and facilitate arts experiences across campus. In its next phase, the Stanford Arts Initiative seeks to expand support for visiting artists, undergraduate internships, faculty research and program grants, and arts intensive and immersion programs that will integrate the arts even more deeply into the student experience at Stanford.

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Giving Opportunities

“The Arts Initiative made significant progress not only in enhancing the arts, but also in transforming the culture at Stanford. We must build on that momentum and continue shaping Stanford into a destination for the arts,”

Stephen Hinton, Denning Family Director of the Stanford Institute for Creativity and the Arts and Avalon Foundation Professor in the Humanities

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