“By uniting Stanford’s visual arts programs in a new space close to the university’s art collections, the McMurtry Building will promote the kind of exchange that sparks innovation.”

Nancy Troy, Victoria and Roger Sant Professor in Art
Chair of Department of Art & Art History

McMurtry Building, Stanford University

AT STANFORD, THE ART AND ART HISTORY PROGRAMS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN A PART OF THE SAME department, creating a unique culture in which the study and practice of art are strongly intertwined. In 2015, this distinct connection will attain even greater importance with the opening of the McMurtry Building, the new home for the Department of Art & Art History. By bringing programs in art practice, design, art history, film and media studies, and documentary film under one roof for the first time, the building will maximize interactions among these diverse disciplines.

Named in recognition of lead support from Deedee and Burt McMurtry, MS ’59, PhD ’62, the 90,000-square-foot building will physically embody the relationship between the studying and making of art. Equally divided between art history and studio art programs, the design of the building features two L-shaped wings that mirror each other in a loose embrace around an outdoor courtyard.

Each wing contains a part of the arts program: studio spaces in one—the making strand—and art history teaching and presentation spaces in the other—the studying strand. The Art & Architecture Library connects and facilitates these two modes of inquiry, physically positioned between them in a glass-walled structure comprising the entire second floor.

The McMurtry Building will also place the department next to the Cantor Arts Center and the Anderson Collection at Stanford University. This emerging Arts District will catalyze and reinforce the relationship between scholarship, creation, and experience of art.

Strengthening the Core

WITH ITS STATE-OF-THE-ART STUDIOS, CLASSROOMS, GALLERY SPACE, AND SCREENING ROOMS, the McMurtry Building will bolster the art and art history programs housed within it, and strengthen the department as a whole. Stanford will have more opportunities to train the best graduate students to create and produce new knowledge about art. And undergraduate art majors will be better supported in a more vibrant arts community.

“It will transform the department to have a building with studio space, where our work is not limited to the classroom and people can interact with each other in a community while creating art,” says Daniel Smith, ’13, a double major in art and art history and computer science.

This core will be further reinforced by the library, which already houses one of the top research collections in the United States. The new facility will contain study spaces and carrels, a seminar room, exhibition space, multimedia artwork stations, and the Visual Resources Center for digital image production and processing.
Sparking Exchange

The McMurtry Building’s design and location will foster radical interactions and collaborations across artistic disciplines. Students and faculty will be able to inspire and challenge each other as they push the boundaries of creating and studying art in the 21st century.

With its proximity to Cantor Arts Center and the Anderson Collection at Stanford University, students and faculty will have access to great works of art that can be integrated into their aesthetic and intellectual experience. And with Bing Concert Hall only steps away, the possibilities for connections between the visual and performing arts will be stronger than ever.

An Integrated Design

Diller Scofidio + Renfro, a firm renowned for its integration of architecture and the visual and performing arts, is designing the McMurtry Building. Boora Architects, the firm behind Stanford’s new Graduate School of Business campus and the Science and Engineering Quad, will be the project’s executive architect.

Together, these firms are designing a space that reflects a forward vision of art practice and study. The building’s design encourages movement throughout and makes it possible for art history and art practice to, quite literally, find a common ground. The two strands of studying and making provide opportunities to showcase the activities within and allow them to spill out into the adjacent courtyards.

With your support, the McMurtry Building will be a vibrant home for the next generation of artists and scholars and an interdisciplinary hub for creativity across campus.

Giving Opportunities

Timeline and Cost | Construction began in early 2013, with completion in 2015. Projected cost is $85 million, a portion of which is covered by university funds. In addition to the named gift from the McMurtrys, Stanford seeks to raise $20 million for the facility, which offers significant opportunities for donor recognition.

Many opportunities exist to support the project, including naming options beginning at $100,000.

Art and Architecture Library | Home to over 150,000 volumes as well as study spaces. Will set a 21st-century standard for research facilities in the humanities.

Studio Spaces | For painting, photography, film, sculpture, digital media, print-making, and drawing.

Art Yard | This outdoor art-making and art-studying space is located on the roof of the building. Planters and trees divide the open area into a series of outdoor classrooms and ad hoc studio space for making art.

Gallery Spaces | For exhibiting student and faculty work.