

THE JOSLYN Galerie

Snøhetta Completes \$100 Million Expansion of Nebraska's Largest Art Museum

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Galerie

September 20, 2024



The Joslyn recently unveiled the Rhonda & Howard Hawks Pavilion, designed by Snøhetta.

Photo: Nic Lehoux

The Joslyn in Omaha reopens with a new 42,000-square-foot pavilion, a terrific show of Ed Ruscha's works on paper, and several special commissions



The Joslyn's new Rhonda & Howard Hawks Pavilion, designed by Snøhetta, ties its campus together for the first time. Photo: Nic Lehoux

Nebraska's largest art museum just got even bigger thanks to a \$100 million expansion by internationally acclaimed architecture firm Snøhetta. Designed in conjunction with Alley Poyner Macchietto Architecture, the Joslyn Art Museum's newly unveiled Rhonda & Howard Hawks Pavilion adds some 42,000 square feet to the esteemed cultural institution, which was founded in 1931 and sits on a prime parcel in the heart of downtown Omaha, the state's most populous city.

Sheathed in a striking medley of glass and curving bands of ultra-high performance concrete, the new two-story volume helps unite the institution's existing buildings—the original Art Deco landmark plus Norman Foster's 1994 expansion—by providing a soaring main entrance hall befitting the museum's impressive art holdings. Now, visitors pass under a deep cantilever to enter a light-filled atrium equipped with curving staircase that allows a closer view of the richly veined Georgia Pink marble that clads the site's older buildings.



The Rhonda & Howard Hawks Pavilion complements the Joslyn's existing Art Deco landmark building. Photo: Nic Lehoux

Notably, the three-year project increased the total exhibition space by some 40 percent—all the better to show off the Joslyn’s incredible permanent collection, which includes the Phillip G. Schrager Collection, acquired in 2016 and comprised of 52 works by artists such as Gerhard Richter, Jenny Holzer, Brice Marden, and Robert Gober. (The inauguration of the Hawks Pavilion will be the first time the museum is displaying this trove.) The new wing is also debuting with the exciting exhibition “Ed Ruscha: Paper,” which features works that the Omaha native recently gifted to the museum. Additionally, a special commission by Native American artist Dyani White Hawk occupies the new space, paying homage to the traditions of beadworkers with some half a million glass bugle beads woven into glistening strips.



Inside the museum’s soaring new entrance. Photo: Nic Lehoux

Besides refreshing the interiors throughout the entire museum, the project also gave the three-acre grounds a facelift, courtesy of Snøhetta’s landscape team. Now, a postcard-perfect great lawn is fringed with native grasses, while a series of sculpture gardens wrap around the campus to create a new entry sequence for visitors arriving on foot. There’s also a newly acquired work by Hank Willis Thomas, plus a commissioned piece by Los Angeles–based sculptor Alison Saar made of cast stainless steel sheathed in heat-applied paint.

“Honoring The Joslyn’s historic character while creating a fresh expression for the Museum’s future has guided our design,” said Craig Dykers, founding partner of Snøhetta, in a statement. “Our comprehensive reconsideration of the Museum grounds, the existing interiors, and the newest building all work together to create a more inviting entry for the growing spectrum of people that visit the Museum. Our goal has been to provide a harmonious place for guests, art, and gathering that will become a vessel for inspiration and creativity to flourish.”

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