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Oklahoma Contemporary to Launch Public Campaign

OKLAHOMA CITY (June 16, 2015) - Oklahoma Contemporary Arts Center will publicly announce its \$26 million capital campaign at 6 p.m. Tuesday by unveiling renderings of an arts campus, planned for Midtown's Automobile Alley, and honoring leadership donors whose gifts have taken the campaign to the halfway mark.

Board President and Co-Founder Christian Keesee said the new arts campus at NW 11th and Broadway will allow Oklahoma Contemporary to greatly expand its mission of "art for all" through a wide variety of accessible arts education and arts experiences for children and adults.

Unlike traditional museums, Oklahoma Contemporary does not collect art. "Our focus is on visual and performing arts education for youth, teens and adults," Keesee said. "Our contemporary art exhibitions enhance that mission as our students and community learn from the artists of the contemporary era."

Oklahoma Contemporary will also announce the campaign's distinguished honorary chair. Ed Ruscha, one of the world's most noted contemporary artists, grew up in Oklahoma City and graduated from Classen High School. His role as honorary chairman makes an important statement about the significance of the project: for Oklahoma City and for contemporary art nationwide.

Currently located at the state fairgrounds, Oklahoma Contemporary was founded in 1989 as City Arts Center by Keesee and the late Marilyn Myers. From the beginning, the organization has been dedicated to keeping art accessible with free exhibitions and public programs, outreach to underserved communities and scholarships for youth in arts classes and camps.

A 2011 study by a national arts consulting firm found that Oklahoma Contemporary could make a much greater economic and cultural contribution in a modern building located closer to other Oklahoma City attractions and to major workplace and residential areas.

"Arts and culture have a tremendous effect on our state," said Allied Arts President and CEO Deborah McAuliffe Senner. "It's a \$314 million annual economic impact for the state of Oklahoma." In addition, Senner said, the arts and culture industry creates more than 10,000 jobs in the state.

Oklahoma City Mayor Mick Cornett also noted the impact the arts and the new campus can bring. "We're continuing to market Oklahoma City to job creators throughout the country," Cornett said. "Every time they see this active, living arts component, they're going to realize that this is a city that gets it."

At NW 11th and Broadway, Oklahoma Contemporary will become a new north gateway to downtown Oklahoma City. The 4.6-acre arts campus will be home to a new 50,000-square-foot building, a renovated 10,000-square-foot building, a three-block arts park and space for outdoor exhibitions, education programs and public performances.

The arts campus will include:

- A variety of classrooms and an Industrial Arts building to facilitate a vastly expanded visual arts curriculum, including new-media classes in animation, filmmaking and 3-D printing and design; industrial programs such as metalwork and jewelry-making; and expansion of successful programming in ceramics, sculpture, fiber and 2-D arts. These programs are expected to attract about 20,000 youth and adult students each year, more than six times as many as Oklahoma Contemporary can accommodate in its present space.
- 8,000 square feet of gallery space built to meet the requirements of major art lending organizations, allowing Oklahoma Contemporary to draw an expected 75,000 annual visitors for major contemporary art exhibitions.
- A 3,000-square-foot dance studio, facilitating an expanded program of dance education and performance.
- A 150-seat flexible performance space to host a range of dramatic and public-speaking classes, performances and other events.
- Numerous interior and exterior spaces, supported by a catering kitchen, available for private events.

The four-story building, designed by renowned Oklahoma architect Rand Elliott, is called "Folding Light" because of the way the Galvalume metal exterior will reflect Oklahoma's ever-changing sky.

"Architecture is a reflection of the cultural values of a city. The new Oklahoma Contemporary building is a statement of belief and investment in the arts," Elliott said. "This building embodies the aspirations of our city."

Oklahoma Contemporary has reached the halfway mark of its campaign with \$13 million raised to date. Leadership donors include the Kirkpatrick Family Fund, Kirkpatrick Foundation, Nancy and George Records, Christian Keese, Love's Travel Stops, E.L. and Thelma Gaylord Foundation, Inasmuch Foundation, Clements Foods Foundation, Charles and Laurie Givens, Herman and LaDonna Meinders and Ann Simmons Alspaugh.

The \$13 million remaining to be raised will include \$1.5 million for initial operations on the new campus and \$1 million for endowment.

"We plan to open the main building in 2018," Keese said. "In the meantime, we are going to continue building our campus and programming at both the fairgrounds and at NW 11th and Broadway."

Oklahoma Contemporary installed *Terra*, Orly Genger's knotted rope sculpture, in Campbell Park in October 2014. The Showroom at Oklahoma Contemporary, made of four shipping containers, opened on the site in March 2015.

"The progress is exciting for us and for the state of Oklahoma," said Donna Rinehart-Keever, Oklahoma Contemporary's executive director. "The new arts campus will allow us to extend our reach throughout the region."

Keese offers an even broader vision: "What we're doing is not just building an arts center, but a way of life."

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A media kit including high-resolution images (renderings, photos of exhibitions and programming and a map), multimedia elements (interviews, animated renderings and b-roll), an art impact fact sheet and student stories is at <http://bit.ly/OCAClaunch>. Past press releases and additional information are archived at <http://oklahomacontemporary.org/about/media>.