Arts Plaza by Maya Lin Comes into Focus

The groundbreaking for the Arts Plaza designed by celebrated artist and architect Maya Lin is scheduled for July. The project should be finished in the spring of next year.

Once open, the Arts Plaza is expected to be a campus landmark that will draw visitors from southern California and beyond while providing opportunities for the arts, entertainment and scholarship.

"Maya Lin has created a vision for the Arts Plaza that has the potential to be a public space unlike any other in America," says Nohema Fernández, dean of the Claire Trevor School of the Arts. "We anticipate that it will be a distinctive and important cultural and educational destination for the diverse communities of Southern California."

Lin – known for designing the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., the Wave Field at the University of Michigan and other environmental art installations – is recognized for the ambitious scope of her work. The plaza, she says, fits perfectly with that ambition.

"I've been interested in a university project that presents significant design challenges and opportunities like those present at UCI," Lin points out. "The plaza will be a multifunctional space where students, faculty and visitors can gather for learning or for quiet contemplation. It truly will serve as the heart of the School and must capture the School's creative energy and vibrant spirit."

The 30,000 square-foot plaza, Lin's largest project on the West Coast to date, is expected to cost about $5 million to complete and maintain, with the bulk of the funds coming from private sources. Nearly half has already been secured. Here are the Arts Plaza's key elements:

- An outdoor amphitheater and screening area will seat 200 and offer live performances, films and projections of graphics or video art.
- A "water table," one of Lin's signature sculptures incorporating water, will be flanked by granite "whispering benches" quietly broadcasting "audio art" – from environmental sounds to poetry, folk tales and music.
- A bank of plasma screens at Winifred Smith Hall will display visual art, video, dance and drama, and can be programmed to handle the educational or exhibition needs of visiting groups. Through the School's high-speed Web connection, images from around the world could be shown.

The River – A Dance Runs Through It

Finding just the right offerings for the UCI Symphony's six-concert season isn't always easy for conductor Stephen Tucker. The answer to the orchestra's June performance at the Irvine Barclay Theatre came from an American jazz master.

"I look for works that challenge my students, works that push them to develop as musicians and broaden their experience," says Tucker. "We have classical and jazz disciplines here at UCI, and I wanted to bring these players together." The solution was The River, composed by the legendary Duke Ellington.
Dean’s Message

From the Dean’s Desk

Dear friends,

The atmosphere in the Claire Trevor School of the Arts is positively dynamic. As you read the newsletter, I trust you will share in the excitement that is evident in the many activities and accomplishments reported in these pages.

Building plans for the Arts Plaza are being finalized even as we plan the summer groundbreaking for this unique Maya Lin design. Those of you who visit the School’s administrative offices will also be happy to know that, in the summer, we will be moving to a renovated and permanent location in the Mesa Arts Building.

Create... Explore... Innovate... Our unfailing mantra galvanizes us and makes every day full. Our faculty has been exhibiting its talents abroad, from Beijing and Melbourne to Paris and everywhere in between. Our students have been growing and making us proud with their creativity and intelligence. Our staff has been making everything possible. Our alumni continuously make us proud through their triumphs. And, of course, our friends are always at our side, making our achievements a true collaboration.

Enjoy!

Nohema Fernández, Dean

Celebrate UCI 2004

UCI’s 26th annual open house, Celebrate UCI, will take place April 17 from 9 am to 5 pm. The event features children’s games and rides, an Earth Day celebration, academic information, a car show, campus tram tours, class reunions and the Wayzgoose Medieval Faire with food booths, demonstrations, prize drawings and more. Admission and parking are free. For more information, call (949) 824-5182 or visit www.uci.edu/celebrate.

Arts Plaza by Maya Lin Comes into Focus

The landscape design will reflect Lin’s view that the earth itself is a sculptural element. It will follow natural contours of the area and feature fragrant and colorful plants, including native flowers and orange trees.

Visitors will follow three lighted pathways linking parking areas to the Arts Plaza. The “water table” and amphitheater should be especially intriguing to visitors and the campus-at-large. The “water table,” part of the “drawing room” area and near the Claire Trevor Theatre, will feature an 18- by 8-foot horizontal sculpture with a delicate image carved into its surface. A thin stream of water will emerge from the carving and glide over the sculpture.

The amphitheater’s screening area will be designed to attract the eye even when not being used for films. “During the day, a carefully painted rectangle appears to float on the building’s wall,” Lin explains. “At night this beaded glass-imbedded paint is lit, creating a glowing blank movie screen (that is) directly reminiscent of a Sugimoto photograph and, yet, ready to show a projected movie.”

As Lisa Roetzel, the School’s director of development who is active in the project, puts it: “It should be wonderful, like a theater that never closes.”
Drama

In Dec 2003, Alan Terricciano, chair of dance and co-chair of music, and Leslie Peck, assistant professor of dance, represented the ballet program at UCI (the only invited university) in the 1st International Ballet Forum in Paris at the invitation of the National Conservatoire of Paris. Other participants included the National Ballet of Canada, the Hong Kong Ballet, the Berlin Ballet and the Royal Ballet of London.

Peck also staged George Balanchine’s Serenade for the University of Arizona and for the Virginia School of the Arts in Lynchburg, and his Concerto Barocco for the Richmond Ballet, VA in Jan-Feb 2004.

In Dec 2003, professors Simon Leung and Bruce Yonemoto participated in Easy Riders: Dance alumni who recently joined the professional ranks: Adam Young (BA 2003) with the Nashville Ballet; Seth Williams (BA 2001) with the Joffrey Ballet; and tap choreographer Bob Boross. Each will take one of the six sections, and McKayle will weave them as a whole in the final passage. “I want each of the choreographers to bring their own vision to the work and it will be my problem to find their commonality in the finale.

The new work brings together the department’s modern dance choreographers Lisa Naugle, Loretta Livingston, and McKayle, ballet choreographers Leslie Pack and Eloy Barragan, and tap choreographer Bob Boross. Each will take one of the six sections, and McKayle will weave them as a whole in the final passage. “I want each of the choreographers to bring their own vision to the work and it will be my problem to find their commonality in the finale.

“The River’s" treatment incorporated classical ballet, modern and jazz dance to capture the changing character of the river in its transformation from a quiet stream, then into a powerful river. Our concept will be quite different because it is a collaboration of six choreographers instead of one.”

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From Software to Sharp Images for Frank Peters

"I am inspired by landscape, topography and natural phenomena, but it’s landscape from a 21st century perspective, landscape through the lens of technology."

- Maya Lin, from her presentation

Maya Lin has created a design for the Arts Plaza that could revolutionize how we experience the arts. It combines her highly praised aesthetic sensibility with the use of technology to display the arts from around the world. What she calls “a garden of the arts” will bring the arts outdoors, beyond the walls of the theater, the gallery and the classroom.

When Lin visited the Claire Trevor School of the Arts in December 2003 to present her final design for the Arts Plaza, she brought plans for a space that invites visitors to linger. At the same time, the Arts Plaza will be enriched by the latest technologies, bringing flexibility for displaying art forms and receiving works from artists, choreographers, dramatists and musicians of all kinds, living anywhere in the world. These works will be shown on plasma screens or heard through an integrated sound system. The performing arts will be presented live in a 200-seat amphitheater.

What does this mean to Southern California? The Arts Plaza will put Southern California on the map as a center for innovation. The School is excited about expanding its involvement in creating the Arts Plaza: “Maya Lin’s work will convert the Arts Plaza into a unique and visible public space, putting both UCI and southern California in the national limelight. It is important, therefore, that it be clear to all that the Plaza is the result of a partnership between the university and the local community – that, together, we get things done!” We will keep you updated on the progress of the Arts Plaza in the coming months. If you are interested in giving to the project, please contact the School’s Development Office at (949) 824-8792.

The Arts Plaza: “A Garden of the Arts”

The UCI Dance Department is lucky that Frank Peters decided to pick up a camera after retiring from his successful software company several years ago.

“My brother and I started Plaid Brothers Software (which provides financial tools for Wall Street) in Irvine,” says Peters. “After fifteen years, I retired at forty-five. I had time to play golf, travel and spend quality time with my wife, Barbara, and two sons. But I was too young for a leisure life. All my friends were busy with their careers. Retirement was isolating. I was wrestling with the direction of my life.”

Peters moved his family to a home on the California coast, where the beautiful sunsets prompted him to take out his cameras. “I've always had cameras and taken lots of pictures. Slowly, I turned a pastime into a passion. I set up a studio in my garage, recruited volunteers to sit for portraits and logged hundreds of hours polishing my skills.”

Peters also kept an apartment in New York City. On one visit, a friend introduced him to Michelle "Mickey" Mathesius, director of the dance department at Fiorello H. LaGuardia, the performing arts high school that inspired the movie and TV series, Fame. Peters was soon producing portraits for student portfolios and capturing dancers in the classroom and on stage. In 2003, he self-published the book, Dreams of Grace, a remarkable photographic survey of his experience at LaGuardia. (Peters would later use the proceeds from book sales to establish an instructor exchange between UCI and LaGuardia.)

Peters and his family also began attending dance concerts at UCI, which proved to be pivotal. Impressed, Peters introduced himself to artistic director Donald McKayle and showed him his portfolio. "Donald invited me to photograph his Endude Ensemble," he recalls, "and that’s how I got started at UCI." Peters is now a regular presence in dance classes and at rehearsals. Last spring, he donated 14 poster-sized, framed dance photographs that decorate the department’s halls. His involvement with UCI Dance as a volunteer continues to grow.

"Frank Peters has been a great supporter and a true friend to the department," says Alan Terricciano, chair of dance. "His gifts as an artist have allowed for a deep level of engagement in the practices of the program. He has an artistic vision that dovetails nicely with our own and this connection will continue to lead to new and exciting initiatives."

"For example," Terricciano continues, "Frank recently donated three Sony PD170 pro digital camcorders which will enable the department to professionally document our dance concerts. He’s also throwing his energy and support into creating a dance festival in conjunction with Dance for the Camera, a showcase for international works in film and video. This will certainly strengthen the profile of the department regionally and nationally, enrich our curriculum and keep our focus on the emerging directions of the art form for years to come." Peters is equally enthusiastic. "I've started a new career that has turned out to be one of the most exciting things I've done in my life," he says. "Now it's become my mission to help promote dance and attract new audiences in anyway I can."
Artists Find Room to Grow at the UAG

Anna Chin visited the University Art Gallery for the first time in the early weeks of the fall quarter. Chin, a computer sciences major, says she was so impressed that gallery exhibits are now on her regular to-do list.

“A friend [in the Drama Department] was always saying how great the art was so I decided to go with her during a long break between classes,” Chin recalls. “The stuff was really interesting and I felt good about seeing what [fellow] students are up to. I watch for shows now and try to bring my friends.”

The Studio Art Department loves to hear that. The UAG, located in the Arts Plaza adjacent to the CyberA Cafe and the Beall Center for Art and Technology, is a showcase for students, alumni, faculty and guest artists. Along with the smaller ROOM gallery in room 1200 in the nearby Arts, Culture and Technology Building, the UAG provides the campus and the public with opportunities to see art in all forms, from painting and sculpture to photography and video.

“The gallery can be an invaluable means to educate and enliven not only the student population, but also the public-at-large,” says Yong Soon Min, Studio Art Department chair. “It is a key site of public interface for creative ideas generated by the artist or the art student. Many prominent art programs are associated with a strong exhibitions program.”

More visitors are coming as the galleries have increased the number of offerings each year, often centering on student and alumni art. Recently, the paperplate exhibit displayed dozens of pieces by seniors. That was followed by eclectic shows featuring undergrads and first-year MFA students. It’s all part of the plan to expose all levels of students to the exhibit experience while offering the public aesthetic diversity.

Andrea Bowers, a veteran lecturer in the department, has overseen the UAG and ROOM for the past two years. Creative development and the insight that comes from working with other artists – and their methods of expression – are the main focus for her students.

“Experimentation, growth and developing a sense of community are my primary goals for the gallery,” Bowers says. “I also hope that through the experience of using the gallery, students invent alternative modes of production outside the gallery system.”

The UAG also tries to provide professional artists with a show at least once a year. Students, Min notes, should have the opportunity to interact closely with established artists, and visitors are exposed to an array of contemporary work from outside the university. She adds that the department is searching for a gallery director who will also be on faculty, teaching curatorial studies. The director, expected to be hired by this year’s fall quarter, would help organize student shows and bring in more professionals, either to exhibit or curate.

Bowers is gratified by the quality of the student art that has been spotlighted at the UAG and ROOM. She, along with others in the department, also stresses the variety – just keep strolling, you’re sure to find something compelling.

It’s just this type of diversity that appeals to someone like Chin. “It really is fun to see what people my age are doing, all the different directions they’re going,” she says. “I couldn’t come up with this stuff, but I’m glad they can.”

(The University Art Gallery and ROOM are open Tue. through Sat., noon to 5 pm. Admission is free. See the calendar, page 6, for exhibit information.)

Mapping Norman Klein at the Beall Center

The Beall Center has collaborated with Norman Klein, Los Angeles writer, historian and new media maven, on Mapping the Unfindable, the first-ever retrospective of his diverse work that continues through April 24.

This installation/exhibition ties together all of Klein’s major pieces. They include his books, The History of Forgetting: Los Angeles and the Erasure of Memory (a tour of the real and imagined Los Angeles), Seven Minutes (a history of animation), and the long-awaited The Vatican to Vegas: The History of Special Effects.

The show features Klein’s new media collaborations, among them the U.S. debut of Bleeding Through: Layers of Los Angeles, 1920-1988, a cinematic database novel (on DVD) created with Rosemary Comella and Andreas Kratky as a co-production of the Labyrinth Project and ZKM (Center for Art and Media in Karlsruhe, Germany).

A lecture series and separate film series in conjunction with the Beall Center installation ends April 24. Check the Center’s Website at beallcenter.uci.edu for locations and times. Admission to the Klein show is free and open to the public noon to 5 pm, Mon. through Sat., and Fri. until 8 pm. For more information, call (949) 824-4339.
April
Beall Center for Art and Technology*
Norman Klein:
Mapping the Unfindable
April 6-24
The Beall Center presents the first retrospective of Norman Klein, Los Angeles writer and new media experimentalist.
Curated by Indi McCarthy and Celia Pearce. (see story page 5)

UCI Chamber Series
Music Without Borders
Noema Fernández, piano
Wed, April 10, 8 pm
Winifred Smith Hall, $12/10/8
Works by Harrison, Gershwin, and Technology.

Drama at UCI Stage 2
The Portrait of a Lady
Henry James’ 19th-century novel of love and betrayal is the portrait of Isabel Archer, a young American heiress lured into a loveless marriage from which there is no escape.

University Art Gallery and Room*
Undergraduate Select Exhibition
April 20-29
Drama at UCI Mainstage
The War to End War
by Charles L. Mee
Arnie Loui, director
Nathan Bimbam, composer
Robin Buck, vocal director
Stephan Tucker, music director
Fri-Sat, April 22-24, 8 pm
Thur-Sat, April 28-May 1, 8 pm
Matinees: Sat, April 24 & May 1, 2 pm
Clare Trevor Theatre
Fri-Sat eve: $17/15/13
Weeknight & matinees: $15/14/12
This world premiere of Mee’s daïda ballet/ opera zeros in on the nature of war, moving from the Treaty of Versailles, through the chaotic eruptions between nations represented in a cabinet performance, to an eerie poker game played by the creators of the atom bomb at Los Alamos.

May
University Art Gallery and Room*
MFA Graduate Show
May 4-14
2nd and 3rd Year Students
Active Space: Interactive Videodance
Lisa Naugle, John Crawford
Opening Reception: Wed, May 12, 8-9 pm
Matinees: May 15 & 22, noon
Interactive Videodance premiers in a performance and installation. During the performances, dancers and choreographers will demonstrate the artistic potential of the project. The installation component (May 13-22, Sun-Fri 12-5 pm, Sat 1-5 pm) enables visitors to “play” the space, improvising and exploring new ways to interact with others through computer technology.

UCI Symphony Orchestra
The Romantic Symphony
Stephen Tucker, conductor
Fri-Sat, May 7-8, 8 pm
Clare Trevor Theatre, $12/10/8
Wieniawski: Violin Concerto No. 2
Soloist: Landon Vayle
2004 UCI Concerto Competition Winner
Schnittke: Dance Overture
Bruckner: Symphony No. 4
“Romantic”

UCI Chamber Series
The Poet, The Painter and Alice
Sat, May 15, 8 pm
Winifred Smith Hall, $12/10/8
Robin Buck, baritone
Nina Scoikin, piano
Schuman: Lieberkinds
Poulenc: Le Rezard du Peintre
Premiere of Alan Terrizano’s Wonderland

Music Section of Town and Gown presents
Honors Concert
Sun, May 16, 8 pm
Winifred Smith Hall, $12/12/8
Proceeds support UCI music scholarships.
Beall Center for Art and Technology*
Spring Quarter Senior Exhibition
June 3-17
Drama at UCI
All-Undergraduate Production
Blood Brothers
Book, Music, & Lyrics by Willy Russell
Mynona Delaney, director
Dennis Castellano, musical director
Fri-Sat, June 4-5, 8 pm
Winifred Smith Hall, $12/12/8
Matinees: Sun, June 6 & Sat, June 12, 2 pm
Clare Trevor Theatre, $12/10/8
Willy Russell’s smash hit musical is the saga of Liverpudlian twins separated at birth by a mother who cannot afford to keep them both.

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Production/Photographer: Philip Channing
Maya Lin Photographer: Valerie Smith

Convenient Parking:
General and hand-capped parking are available in structures (P4A) on Mesa Bl for the School of the Arts venues and (P6) for the Irvine Barclay Theatre.
Parking is $5.