JSMA Addition and Adaptation: The Academic Art Museum in the XXI century after the pandemic

The Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art (JSMA) has been the premier art institution of the University of Oregon and Eugene/Springfield area since 1933. The JSMA primarily serves the students and academic community of the UO and it receives close to 9,000 university students each academic year. It also serves K-12 students across the state providing training and educational programs that integrate the arts into the classroom. The Museum building was designed by Ellis F. Lawrence, UO dean of the School of Architecture and Allied Arts (1914-1946) and it’s listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The JSMA has been studying ways to expand and adjust its existing facilities to better serve the academic community and the general public and to house its ever-growing art collection. The projected new spaces would include collections and crate storage, classrooms, art labs, open collections storage, events storage, and flexible multimedia exhibition spaces and galleries to expand the JSMA’s cultural offerings to UO and the City of Eugene and to become a center for the Pacific Northwest’s regional art community. In light of the current pandemic the museum and UO administration need to envision how to provide the much needed additional spaces and address the new health guidelines for effectively and safely serve its community.

The architectural design studio will investigate strategies to create new additional space for storage, exhibitions, new media, education and circulation while transforming the existing museum installations to meet the new spatial health guidelines. Students will study intervention strategies in historic buildings, adaptive reuse, urban design strategies to address the evolving UO campus, and the design of art installations and support spaces. Students will work in groups and individually in historical research, precedent studies, site assessment, and historic building documentation and design proposals. Site and guided building documentation visits might be provided under strict UO official health guidelines. Students are expected to be available Monday through Thursday from 8 to 11:50am class time. Due to online format, the hours will include all class sessions, work groups, individual desk-crits and work time. Some learning and feedback may occur asynchronously to accommodate individual needs.