

## Hamilton Regional Arts Center

Creation of the Hamilton Regional Arts Center advances the missions and enhances the services of both The Exhibition Alliance (TEA) and Colgate University. The Center will serve the Central New York region, as well as draw artists from the downstate area who are seeking affordable and accessible storage and studio facilities. The Center will serve as a nexus, enriching the cultural life of the regional community and providing a venue for educational and cultural experiences for students, residents and visitors to the area. Additionally, the Center will serve as a focal point for local artists and collectors, who will benefit from increased access to both exhibition and safe storage space. Through easier access to University collections and facilities for curation, the Center will also help Colgate connect its students to the larger arts community and increase interest in the variety of professions and skills from the field. On a broader level, the Center will provide a mechanism for sharing important resources within the local and regional arts and museum communities and serve as a center of regional arts expertise that can serve artists from across the state.

The new facility will serve as a home base for TEA's activities, which provide vital services to the arts and museum communities. To meet TEA's requirements, the facility will include administrative offices for staff that support both administration and programs. Programs include the internship program for under-represented groups in the museum field, preparator's institute, exhibition design and production departments, publications and insurance programs and traveling exhibitions.

Colgate University will participate largely in project development and will be a primary user of the facility. Portions of Colgate's art and archaeology collection will be stored in the facility. The activities at the Center will also help Colgate develop its Arts Internship program where students of color are given the opportunity to explore career paths in the art world.

Artists and museums from across the state will be able to use the facility. Rising rent costs and limited space have created a predicament for New York City artists. They are no longer able to afford to create and store their work in the downstate region. With changes in technology and the affordability of the internet for showing work to galleries and potential customers, artists no longer have to view New York City as the locus of the art world. The Hamilton Regional Arts Center will allow artists from across the state access to affordable world class storage and studio facilities.

Other facets of the Hamilton Regional Arts Center will include:

1. A state-of-the-art secure storage facility that will serve a critical need for affordable fine art storage in the state. Storage facilities will provide revenue for the Arts Center that will help support other projects such as exhibitions, workshops and classes. This revenue will be critical in ensuring the long term stability of the Center and its importance to supporting multiple facets of the arts community. Additionally, storage will be developed to meet the needs of a wide

variety of users ranging from museums, private collectors, local artists, artists from the downstate region and Colgate University classes, professors and students. Serving such a wide audience will require flexibility in storage types, terms and management. However, such a wide audience will also ensure that there is revenue from multiple areas to support the ongoing work of the Center.

Both long and short term storage will be monitored for temperature and humidity control, as well as proper lighting to enhance long term viability of the collections. Institutions and individuals will be able to store single pieces or entire collections based on their space and accessibility needs. Storage options include:

- a. "*Deep storage*" for long-term preservation of museum collections and the holdings of arts organizations with limited access requirements. Organizations might use this storage during museum renovations or expansions.
  - b. "*Accessible storage*" for shorter-term housing of museum collections during temporary processes of expansion or renovation, for traveling exhibitions between venues, for museum collections that need more frequent access for study, and for artists and collectors who wish to store their work responsibly, but need occasional access for sales, exhibition, loan, or study. This storage will have open viewing space for common use. Viewing space can be used for inspection, photography, conservation work or appraisal.
  - c. "*Open storage*" for Colgate collections, which will be shown in secure, yet visible ways that allow art and artifacts to be the focal point for teaching and study. Open storage will provide a long term storage solution with easy access for teaching and research.
2. A public exhibition space that supports the exploration of art and ideas thereby enriching the cultural life of the local and regional community. The gallery space may feature:
- a. Traveling exhibitions from The Exhibition Alliance, including those developed by Colgate student interns.
  - b. Work of local artists who do not currently have a venue for showing their work.
  - c. Work of local students, particularly projects encouraged by Colgate students through the Upstate Institute (such as art in education programs).
1. A learning lab that would facilitate professional training and education through The Exhibition Alliance's programs, including:
- a. A *classroom facility* for lectures and multi-media presentations

b. A *computer lab* outfitted with computers and scanners for use by students and professionals in TEA's training programs, particularly its internship program. The lab can also be used by artists who want to create digital records of their work as a way to show them to dealers, museums or other interested parties. By providing this type of service to the statewide arts community, the Center will be able to draw a new pool of artists to the area.

c. A "*prep area*" used for activities related to the development of exhibitions, including model making, framing and matting, mount making and other such activities. Again, Colgate University students and faculty will be able to use this area as another tool for learning and developing internships and joint projects.

d. A *production shop* for the fabrication of selected exhibition components and cases.

Development of the Regional Arts Center will produce benefits on many levels:

*For The Exhibition Alliance*, the project will sustain and enhance our on-going work in the field, including exhibition design, planning and production, traveling exhibit program and others. It will build our organizational capacity and expand our ability to meet the needs of the field for storage and related services. Finally it will enhance TEA's position as a center for expertise and services in the arts field.

*For Colgate University*, the project will provide a center for material-culture based instruction, as art and anthropology collections will be accessible for student learning and faculty study. Extensive storage facilities that can meet the University's needs will not only provide a means to preserve the collection, but also to provide a higher level of access for students and faculty. The Center's learning lab and curation facilities can connect students with professional mentors in various aspects of museum studies, design, art and administration. Lastly it will connect Colgate University and its faculty with a growing community of artists and museum professionals.

*For the local community*, the project will enrich the life of the community by providing an important site for the exploration of art and cultural ideas and artifacts in otherwise under-served Madison County. There will be a site in which students and families can share the work of school children and enhance their development through community support and educational programs. Use of the Center will create a focus for tourism that would facilitate community growth as groups and individuals (artists, museum professionals, visitors, etc) come to Hamilton and share in various programs and exhibitions offered at the center.

*For local artists and collectors*, the project will provide affordable, secure, and accessible storage that would not normally be available to them. It will link them with resources to preserve, insure, crate, and circulate their artwork through contact with TEA and its

network, including museum registrars. The Center will also provide a viable venue for local and regional artists to show their work to the Central New York Community.

*For the regional arts and museum fields*, the project will meet a significant need for secure, state-of-the-art storage to preserve artwork and artifacts for museums and historical societies throughout the region. Through its facilities, programming and services the Center will assist in the development of a steady stream of educated and trained young people who are prepared to accept entry-level professional positions in the field. Ultimately it will provide a single site from which to access expertise and assistance to meet a wide variety of needs.