

**VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY  
UNVEILS DESIGN FOR NEW MULTIDISCIPLINARY ARTS INSTITUTION  
DESIGNED BY STEVEN HOLL ARCHITECTS**

*Institute for Contemporary Art Will Serve as a Catalyst for Exhibitions, Programs, Research and Collaboration, Working With VCUarts Top Public University Graduate Arts & Design Program in the U.S.*

**Richmond, VA** – April 25, 2012 – Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) today unveiled the design for a new Institute for Contemporary Art (ICA) designed by Steven Holl and Chris McVoy. Part exhibition and performance space, part lab and incubator, the 38,000-square-foot building will feature a series of flexible programming spaces for the presentation of visual art, theater, music, dance and film by nationally and internationally recognized artists. The facility also encompasses a 240-plus seat performance space, outdoor plazas, a sculpture garden, classrooms, a café and administrative offices. Scheduled to open in 2015, this non-collecting institution is designed to facilitate the way artists are working today by accommodating the increasing lack of barriers among different media and practices, mirroring the cross-disciplinary approach at VCU’s School of the Arts (VCUarts). VCUarts has long been the top public university graduate arts and design program in the

country, according to *U.S. News & World Report*. The ICA will complement and enhance the offerings of VCU while also serving as a new destination for contemporary arts and culture in the region.



Rendering of ICA exterior. Image courtesy of Steven Holl Architects.

Steven Holl Architects’ design for the ICA will be presented in an exhibition opening April 26 at New York’s Meulensteen gallery. “Forking Time” includes more than 30 study models and concept drawings that depict the design’s evolution.

“The ICA will be a transformational resource for arts education, experimentation and for the enhancement of VCU and Richmond as a capital city committed to the arts,” said Virginia Commonwealth University President Michael Rao. “The ICA brings a vital new dimension to us as a national research university, providing highly motivated students with opportunities to engage the arts in their learning experiences and to work across a range of disciplines. Steven Holl Architects’ design captures our global vision and commitment to human excellence. We look forward to the dynamic collaborations that the ICA will spark at VCU, within the region and around the world.”

Sited at the corner of Belvidere and Broad Streets directly off of Interstate 95, and one of Richmond’s busiest intersections, the ICA will form a gateway to the University and the city. The ICA will feature dual entrances—one facing Richmond and the other fronting VCU’s campus. At the heart of the building will be an inviting, double-height “forum,” a flexible space for both spontaneous encounters and planned events that connects to the ground-floor performance space and also opens to the sculpture garden and cafe. The galleries radiate out from the forum in forked arms, shaping the space of the garden. Large pivot doors open to the garden in order to create a seamless interplay between interior and exterior spaces. The open circulation serves to remove the formal protocols associated with entering traditional arts facilities. The three levels of galleries are linked through the open forum, allowing artists to create works that extend across, and visitors to circulate through, the spaces via a variety of paths. The ICA's exterior walls of pre-weathered satin-finish zinc will complement its urban setting. Additional clear and translucent glass walls will create transparency, bringing natural light into the building during the day and radiating light at night, signaling the activities taking place within.

“We have designed the building to be a flexible, forward-looking instrument that can illuminate the transformative possibilities of contemporary art,” said architect Steven Holl. “Like many contemporary artists working today, the ICA’s design does not draw distinctions between the visual and performing arts. The fluidity of the design allows for experimentation, and will encourage new ways to display and present art that will capitalize on the ingenuity and creativity apparent throughout the VCU campus.”

“The ICA will be a catalyst for new kinds of artistic explorations and discourse for the VCU community while contributing to the national and international conversation in the arts. It will allow us to mount large-scale exhibitions, installations and commissions in all media,” said Joseph H. Seipel, dean of VCU’s School of the Arts. “We envision that the ICA will become a new destination and the building will serve as a beacon for contemporary art and ideas.”

In advancement of VCU’s commitment to science, technology, and environmental responsibility, the ICA’s design incorporates many environmentally-friendly elements, making use of natural resources whenever possible. This includes the use of geothermal wells to provide heating and cooling energy for the building, green roofs to absorb storm water and maximize insulation, and glass walls designed to exhaust heat in the summer and harness it in the winter. The project is designed to meet LEED platinum certification standards. BCWH is the architect of record in Richmond.

The ICA will serve as a cornerstone of Richmond’s already vibrant arts community, joining the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, the Science Museum of Virginia, the Virginia Opera, Barksdale Theatre, Richmond Ballet and the Richmond Symphony. VCUarts is one of the nation’s leading arts schools, with distinguished alumni and noted artists on faculty across its more than 16 areas of study at campuses in Richmond and Qatar. VCU is also home to the Anderson Gallery, which for 35 years has organized and presented exhibitions, programs and publications that explore a broad range of currents in contemporary art and design.

A capital campaign is underway for the \$32 million project, with \$14 million raised to date, including two lead gifts of \$5M apiece from Kathie and Steve Markel and Pam and Bill Royall, who together chair the ICA’s Campaign Committee. A director search is in process.

#### **About Steven Holl Architects**

Based in New York City and Beijing, Steven Holl Architects has realized architectural works nationally and overseas, with extensive experience in the arts (including museum, gallery and exhibition design), campus and

educational facilities, residential work and master planning. The firm has been internationally recognized with many of architecture's most prestigious awards for quality and excellence in design, most recently the AIA 2012 Gold Medal Award. Other accolades include the 1998 Alvar Aalto Award, the 2001 Grande Medaille D'Or, and the 2009 BBVA Foundation Frontiers of Knowledge Award. Named by *Time Magazine* as America's Best Architect, Steven Holl has a unique design sensibility for "buildings that satisfy the spirit as well as the eye." Completed museums include Kiasma: The Finnish Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki; The Herning Museum of Contemporary Art, Denmark; the Cité de l'Océan et du Surf in Biarritz; and the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, named by *Time Magazine* "#1 Architectural Marvel of 2007" and called "one of the best buildings of the last generation" by *The New Yorker*. Steven Holl Architects has also designed the School of Art & Art History at the University of Iowa, an interior renovation of NYU's Department of Philosophy building, and is currently working on the Campbell Sports Center at Columbia University and the Center for Creative and Performing Arts at Princeton University, as well as an expansion for the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. For more information: [stevenholl.com](http://stevenholl.com)

### **About VCU and VCUarts**

Virginia Commonwealth University is a major, urban public research university with national and international rankings in sponsored research. Located on two downtown campuses in Richmond and a satellite campus in Qatar, VCU enrolls more than 31,000 students in 216 certificate and degree programs in the arts, sciences and humanities. With a distinguished faculty of professional artists and 16 departments, including Craft/Material Studies, Fashion Design and Merchandising, Dance and Choreography, Graphic Design, Music, Painting and Printmaking, Photography and Film, Sculpture + Extended Media and Theatre, VCUarts has been the top ranked public university visual arts and design graduate program in the country for nine years, according to *U.S. News & World Report*. Its campus in Qatar provides students and faculty with a direct tie to the Middle East, a region of increasing significance in the contemporary art world.

For more information on VCUarts, please visit: [arts.vcu.edu](http://arts.vcu.edu)

For more information on the ICA, please visit: [ica.vcu.edu](http://ica.vcu.edu)

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