



# JCCC Opens a Signature Museum

## New Building

Cover: Artist Leo Villareal stands under his light installation at the Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art. (story pages 4-5)

**C**ontemporary art is taking a threefold quantum leap locally, regionally and nationally with the opening of the Nerman

Museum of Contemporary Art in October.

The former JCCC Gallery of Art moved from its 3,000-square-foot one-room exhibition space in the Carlsen Center to a 38,000-square-foot free-standing building with multiple galleries, auditorium, classrooms, store, offices and Café Tempo, making it the largest contemporary art museum in the four-state region. Designed by the internationally award-winning firm, Kyu Sung Woo Architects, Cambridge, Mass., working with the local architectural firm Gould Evans Associates, the Nerman is visually stunning, its Kansas white limestone and glass exterior transforming the northeast corner of the JCCC campus from prairie grass to a geometric architectural icon.

In October, visitors will have their first chance to see the interior of the building with two openings. The first is a gala fund-raiser from 7-10 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 20. Tickets are \$125 per person, available by calling the JCCC Foundation, 913-469-3835. Proceeds benefit

the Nerman Museum. Patrons will meet well-known artists, view the Oppenheimer Collection of Contemporary Art and receive the new Oppenheimer Collection book. The evening includes hors d'oeuvres, champagne and wine.

A sneak preview for faculty and staff will be from 2-4 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 25.

The public opening begins with a formal dedication from 1-2 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 27, in the M.R. and Evelyn Hudson Auditorium, second floor NMOCA. JCCC president Terry Calaway, NMOCA director Bruce Hartman and benefactors will speak.

Immediately following the formal dedication, the public is invited to tour the museum and art across campus from 2-5 p.m. Activities for the entire family include refreshments, giveaways (t-shirts, magnets, sketchbooks, pencils, bags) and hands-on art activities – a scratch-art drawing project for family groups and t-shirts and fabric markers for children. Docents will be



in all the galleries to speak with visitors, and a video featuring three artists in the collection will play in the Hudson Auditorium.

Between the art and architecture, visitors will have a lot to absorb during a first visit. Entering from the northeast under the cantilever (itself a work of art, see pages 4-5), one enters an almost three-story lobby, which functions as one of 10 museum galleries. Gray Spanish limestone covers the floors in all public areas, and a 16-foot high, 140-foot long expanse of glass defines the south wall. The first floor holds the museum store, Café Tempo, storage and three changing galleries for temporary exhibitions – the H. Tony and Marti Oppenheimer Gallery and two smaller galleries. The first and second floors are connected by two monumental stairways – one cascading and one a switchback centered under a pyramidal skylight. Each step of both stairways is made from a contiguous piece of Spanish limestone.

Six galleries are on the second floor – three permanent, three changing; the Tearney Art Education Center with two classrooms – one for children K-12, one for adults; the Lichtor Conference Room; the 200-seat Hudson Auditorium, wrapped in beech wood and engineered with high-performance projection and acoustics; and administrative offices. Controlled natural lighting is provided for all the galleries except for the Oppenheimer New Media Gallery, which is specifically designed for showing video and computer art enhanced by 16 surround-sound digital speakers. All galleries, except the lobby gallery, have four-inch white oak flooring.

The museum’s six changing galleries will change

exhibits every 10 weeks on a rotational basis – with 16 exhibitions presented annually.

The museum is linked to the Regnier Center by a two-story atrium, to the landscape by a future Jerome and Margaret Nerman Sculpture Garden and to distant landscapes by strategically placed windows such as the 15 1/2-foot by 7-foot ocular window on the east wall of the second floor.

The first exhibition for the NMOCA will be *American Sojourn*, curated by the Nerman’s director, Bruce Hartman, from Oct. 27-Jan. 31, featuring works by Tomory Dodge, Nicola Lopez, Angelina Gualdoni and other rising stars of American art.

The museum is named for Jerome and Margaret Nerman and their son, Lewis, whose lead gift in 2003 helped to establish the museum. Tony and Marti Oppenheimer, well-known patrons of contemporary art, together with the Oppenheimer Brothers Foundation, have pledged more than \$2,100,000 since 1993 toward the Oppenheimer Collection, which includes sculptures across campus as well as their collection exhibited in the permanent collection galleries of the Nerman Museum.

Hours for the museum are 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday; 10 a.m.-9 p.m. Friday; noon-5 p.m. Sunday. Closed Mondays and all JCCC holidays. For information, call 913-469-3000. Admission to the museum is free.

Art Miller, exhibition preparer, and Kent Smith, museum coordinator, discuss locations for artwork in a new gallery.