THE ARLENE AND HAROLD SCHNITZER CENTER FOR ART AND DESIGN is a historic federal building reimagined with a striking contemporary interior by award-winning architect Brad Cloepfil of Allied Works Architecture.

The generous design offers PNCA’s ten undergraduate and five graduate programs light-filled studios, classrooms, gathering spaces, and state of the art media labs. There is also the Mediatheque black box theater for time-based art, and eight exhibition spaces, including project spaces, galleries, and critique spaces in the tower. Brad Cloepfil centered the redesign around a new 2.5 story atrium with a glass roof, and he added a dramatic cable-supported mezzanine level to increase flow through the core of the building.

The new design brings natural light into nearly every working space in the building by both adding new and opening existing skylights, including enormous sawtooth skylights in the New Commons and opening the tops of ground-floor arched windows. It recaptures vertical space by removing non-original dropped ceilings and reveals original maple hardwood and tiled floors. Green features of the building include original, openable windows in the tower.


NEW CABLE-SUPPORTED MEZZANINE LEVEL FLOWS AROUND THE CENTRAL ATRIUM UNDER A NEW EXPANSIVE SKYLIGHT.

BUILDING HIGHLIGHTS

511 Gallery for national and international art exhibitions
Albert Solheim Library with a special focus on the arts
Ann Payne Edlen Creative Corridor with original gilded coffered ceiling and marble floor
Vivian and Gordon Gilkey Printmaking Center supporting traditional and experimental print
Hallie Ford Tower classrooms, studios, and media labs
Dorothy Lemelson Innovation Studio encompassing PNCA’s BridgeLab entrepreneurial resource and development program
Shipley / Collins Mediatheque black box theater for performance, screening, and video installation
New Commons central gathering space at the heart of the building

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Designed by noted San Francisco architect Lewis P. Hobart, the building opened in 1919 to serve as Portland’s main post office. From 1966 through 2014 it was home for various federal offices managed by the General Services Administration. The building was added to National Register of Historic Places in 1979. It is recognized as a fine example of its era’s Italian Renaissance Style (incorporating elements of Neo-Classical and Second Renaissance styles, as well as Chicago Commercial styles in the tower) with defining features on exterior facades, primary east-west corridor on first floor, Postmasters’ Office, marble-walled corridors on upper floors, and marble and maple hardwood floors.

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ARLENE AND HAROLD SCHNITZER CENTER FOR ART AND DESIGN


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PNCA’s $34 million transformation of the nearly century-old federal building was supported by a $15 million capital campaign, CREATIVITY WORKS HERE, launched in 2012 with a $5 million lead gift from The Harold and Arlene Schnitzer CARE Foundation. The Portland Development Commission (PDC), a significant partner in the project, was granted the deed for the 511 NW Broadway building from the National Park Service through a national monument transfer in 2013. The PDC agreed to lease the building back to PNCA for 99 years at $1 per year and with support from the City of Portland, committed to $20.3 million in bridge and long-term financing to PNCA for the project.

While the process to acquire the building from the federal government was initiated in 2008, construction did not begin until 2014. Classes began in the new building in February 2015.

THE ARLENE AND HAROLD SCHNITZER CENTER FOR ART AND DESIGN
511 NW Broadway

THE PROJECT

PNCA CAMPUS

A ARLENE AND HAROLD SCHNITZER CENTER FOR ART AND DESIGN
511 NW BROADWAY

B MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY CRAFT
724 NW DAVIS

C ARTHOUSE
33 NW PARK

D STAGECRAFT BUILDING
1302 NW KEARNEY

NOT SHOWN
BISON BUILDING
420 NE 9TH

THE ARLENE AND HAROLD SCHNITZER CENTER FOR ART AND DESIGN IS THE FLAGSHIP OF PNCA’S CAMPUS, CENTERED ON THE TREE-LINED NORTH PARK BLOCKS IN DOWNTOWN PORTLAND IN A NEIGHBORHOOD THAT IS HOME TO MOST OF THE CITY’S ART GALLERIES WITH REGIONAL, NATIONAL, AND INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITIONS.

The campus includes PNCA’s Museum of Contemporary Craft and Arthouse student housing on the North Park Blocks, the Stagecraft Building, housing 3D Fabrication Labs and studios, and the Bison Building, across the Willamette River, home of the MFA in Applied Craft and Design, jointly offered by PNCA and Oregon College of Art and Craft.