New Art Museum for the Uofl Urbana-Champaign Campus

Your project for the 2016 Fall Semester will be an entirely new museum complex. The current facility, even with the addition of the architecturally and functionally highly questionable Kinkead Pavilion, is now inadequate to meet all the requirements of a contemporary university art museum. The architecture of the new building should be able to anticipate the developments and future state and function of the arts, thus also reflecting the international reputation of this educational institution, the university, and its active promotion of the arts (because “art works”).

The new museum will be an 85,000 to 90,000-square-foot building which, in addition to accommodating the existing collection, also aims at expanding it with the display of new forms of art, including those created through digital media and others. Think about the art of Olafur Eliasson, James Turrell, Ai Weiwei, Yayoi Kusama, and so many others. The museum will also include several public functions to better serve the campus and the larger community beyond.

The site of the new KAM is at the west end of the campus E-W cross axis, that borders on 4th Street just north of the current School of Art. This is a very prominent location, which also marks one of the accesses to the quad and the campus. The site is 350’ x 320’ (107’ x 97.5 meters).

Working in teams of two, students will engage--and improve upon their skills--in site analysis, research, then visiting the Chicago Art Institute, and making presentations, before (and during) the design process proper. Moreover, there will be a guided tour of the current Krannert Art Museum (KAM), when members of the staff introduce the facilities, including behind-the-scene places and activities, pointing out also their inadequacies and future needs.

In designing, students are expected to be pro-active and, beyond using the computer in the most creative way, need to keep a sketchbook handy and up-to-date with hand-drawn sketches, diagrams and written comments to record their emerging ideas, then build several study models on various scales to test those ideas. This may be a way to the ART of architecture; enjoy.

I wish you well in class and look forward to working with you all.