



## HARVARD ART MUSEUMS 2006 – 2014 Cambridge, USA

The new Harvard Art Museums bring together the university's three collections under one roof – the Fogg Museum, Busch-Reisinger Museum and Sackler Museum. The project by the Renzo Piano Building Workshop upgraded the Fogg Museum building to contemporary museum standards while adding a new wing on Prescott Street that expanded the exhibition area by 18,500 square meters and set the majestic internal courtyard at the center of the project.

Located between Quincy Street and Broadway, on the Harvard University campus and next to Le Corbusier's renowned Carpenter Center, the Fogg Museum dates from the 1920s, designed in Georgian Renaissance style by the architects Coolidge, Shepley, Bulfinch and Abbott, pupils of Henry Hobson Richardson. The Fogg was one of the first museums in the United States to attempt to fuse exhibition galleries, research centers and restoration and conservation laboratories. The Renzo Piano Building Workshop was asked to preserve this museum concept, while expanding the exhibition area with the addition of a new wing.

The project is divided into two parts. The earlier building has been restored to its original state, demolishing the additions and incongruous surfacing added after 1925 and upgrading the systems and utilities. On the opposite side, along Prescott Street, a new wing of the museum has been designed and built that almost connects with the entrance ramp to the Carpenter Center. The new building, clad with wooden slats rotated at the corners, is interrupted by two glazed volumes with views of a winter garden and crowned by the roof lantern.

The refined steel-and-glass structure of the pitched roof relates the earlier building to the new wing, controlling the light shed on the large court below – the Calderwood Courtyard – which is the true spatial and functional heart of the new museum. Ranged around this piazza and drawing their light from it are the exhibition galleries and spaces for study and research. The piazza's form retraces the front of the parish church of San Biagio in Montepulciano, designed by Antonio da Sangallo in the sixteenth century.

The piazza is accessible even without a ticket. Onto it face the entrance hall, a café and restaurant and a bookshop. It is modeled as a real public place serving the communities of scholars and visitors. While the original entrance overlooks the university campus, a new entrance to the museum from Prescott Street symbolically opens the museum to the local community.

The galleries, laid out on the first two floors of the museum, have been significantly expanded, as befits the importance of the works exhibited by figures such as Beato Angelico, Lorenzo Lotto and Vincent Van Gogh. The conservation laboratory will continue to occupy the upper part of the building (above the study center on the third floor), below the glazed



roof which rests respectfully on the massive walls below. The workshops are left in view so that, as a final stop on the museum itinerary, we can appreciate the delicate work of the restoration workers. Supporting spaces for special events have been expanded and modernized. They include a 294-seat auditorium in the semi-basement level.