

# Tarble Arts Center

Eastern Illinois University, Charleston, Illinois

**Role:** Architect and Museum Planner for Museum Expansion

**Program:** Art galleries, lobby, function space, classroom, and support areas

**Building Area (expansion):** 10,000 sf

**Status:** Opened in 2006

**Description:** This university arts center serves as a focal point of the visual arts for a seven-county area in central Illinois as well as an integral hub for inspiration and creativity on the Eastern Illinois University campus. Informed by the Museum's mission to "take the arts to the people," the building was constructed along a well-established campus pedestrian path leading from the central academic part of the campus to student dormitories. Unique to this Museum is its transparency to the community; the building's forms, integrated landscaping and site elements transform the pathway into outdoor rooms featuring both permanent sculptures and changing installations. A physical manifestation of the Museum's desire to reach a number of important communities is the existence of two main entrances, one along the pedestrian path used by members of the University and another facing the adjacent residential neighborhood, inviting Illinois residents to make use of the facility as well.

In addition to gallery space, the Museum includes robust art studios and work areas, a carpentry shop, a theater and an E-Gallery for multimedia art. The gallery spaces were designed for maximal flexibility, and include movable partitions. Skylight monitors with electrically operated black-out shades and concealed artificial lighting provide completely controllable natural and artificial light. This system eliminates reflection problems and "visual noise," as well as respects the conservation requirements of the art. All galleries and collection storage areas have strict humidity and temperature control. A dynamic multi-purpose gathering space features a curved glass façade and clerestory lighting. During the day, black-out curtains can transform the space for a variety of installations or performances. In the evening, the transparency of the façade creates a seamless relationship between indoors and outdoors.

VernerJohnson designed the original building and because of our unique and successful design process and our commitment to building consensus at all levels, when the Tarble Arts Center was looking to expand, VernerJohnson was again hired for the addition. The resulting addition seamlessly joins the original Museum building without affecting the existing ease of the visitor experience.



