

*I wanted to share a few excerpts from architect Charles Gwathmey's keynote address as part of the groundbreaking ceremony held in July.*

Enjoy! Lial A. Jones

This has been a great day for all of us – and I am very happy that we are going to realize the new Crocker....

The commitment, foresight, relentless advocacy and belief in the Crocker's cultural contribution have been inspiring and motivating. We believe this expansion, long overdue, will establish a major art/architecture resource and destination, as well as a new incentive for future projects in Sacramento that will enrich both the intellectual and physical environment...

Rather than attempt to describe the design, which is always difficult, I would prefer to elaborate on what I believe are relevant ideas that relate to intention and obligation as a modern architect. As history has proven art prevails – even in the most difficult of times....

The creative process embodies risk, which must be regarded as positive, natural and transformative. Thus, change is the only true way to respect the past and embrace the future. In other words, to reconstitute or reinstate the known is intellectual and artistic heresy.

Jonathan Swift said, "Vision is the art of seeing the invisible." Picasso said, "If you know exactly what you are going to do, why do it?"...

For an architect, the museum building is the ultimate project. It engages the past, present and future, establishing and enriching the critical dialogue between art and architecture. It is the bridge, the connector, the extender, literally and philosophically, of the legacy on the continuum.

At the Crocker, we have engaged an existing historic context both architecturally and urbanistically. The park is its garden extension and the new courtyard its cloister. Rather than designing the extension as imitative or replicative, which as I said would be an artistic and creative contradiction, we have respected the classic precedents.

We have in our architecture created, in painting terms, a collage – one that embraces differences to provoke new perceptions, experiences, anticipations and memories. We also believe that this strategy fulfills these objectives while simultaneously enriching the legacy and mission of this most vital institution. The ability to re-engage the past to speculating about the future is the goal....

I look forward with positive anticipation and confidence to our opening together, and thank you most sincerely for your collaboration, critiques, support, confidence and loyalty. This has been a truly energizing, provocative, creative and maturing process, which has made me a better architect. For that, I am most rewarded and appreciative.

– Charles Gwathmey



photography by Roger Cline

From left to right: Lial Jones, Museum Director; Tom Weborg, CAMA Board President; Charles Gwathmey, architect; Mort and Marcy Friedman, Campaign Co-Chairs; Joyce Teel, Honorary Campaign Chair; Don Nottoli, Chairman, County Board of Supervisors; and Heather Fargo, Mayor, City of Sacramento.