

University of Arkansas—Fort Smith Windgate Art & Design Fort Smith, AR

For over four decades the faculty and students of the visual arts programs at the University of Arkansas—Fort Smith were spread across campus. The Windgate Art & Design building has created one place for all the programs to collaborate, share and inspire. The architectural solution places focus on the craft of art not only inside but outside the building, welcoming the community, visitor or chance passerby an opportunity to introduce more art into their lives.

Transparency was used throughout to showcase the process of creating art as being nonlinear and messy. Art program components include letterpress, drawing/painting, photography and graphic design. The majority of studios have a consistent character and function; they are interchangeable to address surges of interest. Function-specific studios for screen printing and utilizing century-old letterpresses have been tailored to unique equipment and processes.

Our biggest challenge was to maintain the design of the building as a simple, supporting backdrop to the programs within. We drew

New Construction/Addition Media/arts/performing arts center

WER Architects/Planners

901 West Third Street • Little Rock, AR 72201
 www.werarch.com
 Eldon Bock • 501/374-5300

DESIGN TEAM

Eldon Bock, AIA, LEED AP, Principal
 David Sargent, AIA, LEED AP, Principal
 Russell Fason, AIA, LEED AP, Associate/Project Architect
 James Meyer, AIA, LEED AP, Staff Architect
 CDI Contractors, General Contractor

OWNER/CLIENT

University of Arkansas—Fort Smith
 Fort Smith, AR
 Don Lee, Head of Art Department
 479/788-7542

KEY STATS

Grades Served: Undergraduate and Graduate
 Capacity: 500
 Size of Site: 2.5 acres
 Building Area: 57,000 sq. ft.
 Space per Student: 114 sq. ft.
 Cost per Student: \$26,936
 Square Foot Cost: \$236
 Construction Cost: \$13,468,000
 Project Cost: \$15,000,000
 Completion Date: August 2015

PHOTOGRAPHY: AARON KIMBERLIN



inspiration from Piet Mondrian, abstract and on the forefront of modern art, and how he layered his rhythmic, yet basic forms, with brushwork to provide depth. Our goal was to leave this building a canvas full of white space, an understated backdrop for the creativity of the artists within.

