The home of innovative performance, screening and presentation spaces, the Lenfest Center for the Arts will allow Columbia University School of the Arts to realize the creative visions of its students and faculty and provide a vibrant, publicly accessible venue for Columbia's Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Art Gallery, enhancing the University in its role as an active, engaged partner with the thriving cultural life of Upper Manhattan.

A Showcase for Art and Culture

Designed by Renzo Piano Building Workshop, the 60,000-square-foot Lenfest Center for the Arts will be the second building to open on the University's Manhattanville campus. The building will host exhibitions, performances, screenings, symposia, readings and lectures that present new, global voices and perspectives.

It will also serve as a major focal point for engagement in the rich cultural life of Columbia, Harlem and New York City. With a range of spaces suited to presentation of work in multiple genres, the Lenfest Center for the Arts presents an unprecedented opportunity to expand partnerships between Columbia University’s School of the Arts, the University's Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Art Gallery and the diverse, dynamic arts institutions that have long defined Harlem's cultural legacy.

The building was made possible by a gift from Trustee Emeritus H.F. “Gerry” Lenfest (LAW ’58, HON ’09), an admired patron of the arts who has also served on the boards of Philadelphia’s Museum of Art, the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and the Curtis Institute of Music.
Design: Multiple Artistic Destinations

Renzo Piano Building Workshop designed the eight-story structure with Davis Brody Bond, LLP as executive architect and Body Lawson Associates, a Harlem-based certified Minority Business Enterprise (MBE), as associate architect—the same team that designed the Jerome L. Greene Science Center.

THE LENFEST CENTER FOR THE ARTS WILL CONTAIN:

• The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Art Gallery, moving from Morningside campus to a larger, more publicly accessible space

• The Katharina Otto-Bernstein Screening Room, a 150-seat film theater with both advanced digital technology and traditional 35mm capability

• A flexible performance space, for developing and presenting new work in theater and innovative cross-disciplinary work

• An open presentation space, for public programs and events including readings, lectures, symposia and exhibitions

The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Art Gallery

An important resource for exhibitions and scholarship on the Columbia University campus since 1986, the Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Art Gallery will dramatically increase its public profile in New York City in spring 2017, when it moves into Columbia’s new Lenfest Center for the Arts. The new floor space is double the gallery’s previous home, with higher ceilings and a flexible floor plan that offers a multitude of new opportunities to share art with neighbors.

Led by director and chief curator Deborah Cullen, who came to Columbia from El Museo del Barrio, the gallery has invested in building programs to the mutual benefit of the University and its surrounding community. The gallery recently set up the Wallach Network, a working group of creative community members comprised of leading area artists and stakeholders committed to helping the Wallach Art Gallery identify, connect with and better serve new and diverse constituencies.

The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Art Gallery’s inaugural schedule of exhibitions includes the presentation of the annual MFA Thesis Exhibition; Uptown, a survey of contemporary work by artists active in Northern Manhattan; Living in America: Frank Lloyd Wright, Harlem and Modern Housing, an examination of Frank Lloyd Wright’s visionary housing designs in dialogue with simultaneous modern housing design in Harlem; and Posing Modernity: The Black Model from Manet to Matisse and Beyond, an exploration of the changing representations of black women in modern art from 19th century Paris to the Harlem Renaissance and successive generations. Later in its second year, the Gallery will present, among other exhibitions, Arthur Mitchell: Harlem’s Ballet Maverick, a celebration of the life and accomplishments of the New York City Ballet’s first African-American star and the founder and longtime director of the Dance Theatre of Harlem.

Learn more at manhattanville.columbia.edu