

## Press Release

### Grimshaw reveals plans for a new ‘Factory of Creativity’ at Santa Monica College



*Aerial view of proposed design for the new Santa Monica College arts complex*

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**For Immediate Release**

Santa Monica, CA – Grimshaw, with Little Diversified Architectural Consulting (Little) as architect of record, is pleased to reveal initial concepts of the new 21,000 sf arts complex for Santa Monica College (SMC) in Santa Monica, California. Situated on the corner of 14<sup>th</sup> Street and Pico Boulevard, the building will replace an existing surface car park and serve as a new western gateway for the college. Utilizing an industrial aesthetic yet elegant in its detailing, the new Arts Complex endeavours to become a ‘factory of creativity’ inviting students, faculty and the community of Santa Monica to immediately feel at home.

With 57% of Grimshaw’s project completions across the US, UK and Australian studios last year being college or university buildings, the practice brings a robust understanding on future-proofing the built environment for higher education. Grimshaw unites this expertise in sustainability, adaptability and renewal with a focus on flexibility and cross-collaboration to provide a vibrant, enriching environment for Santa Monica College. Working closely with the arts faculty of SMC, the new building prioritizes a progressive vision for arts education. Leaving behind the dated approach of isolated disciplines, Grimshaw’s open design

promotes discovery and experimentation that is a vital component for contemporary artistic practices.

Andrew Byrne, Managing Partner of the Grimshaw LA studio stated, “Working alongside the arts faculty of SMC to design a building that bolsters their visionary take on the importance of the arts in an evolving entrepreneurial landscape has been inspiring and energizing. We are excited to work with such a supportive college to create this landmark building for the community.”

Celebrating the temperate weather of Southern California, Grimshaw’s design is comprised of three distinct volumes that are linked through external, shaded areas providing ample opportunities for informal teaching and gathering in open-air weather protected courtyards. The external circulation and gathering areas drastically reduce the need for air conditioning, minimizing the overall energy use of the new complex and further supporting Grimshaw’s sustainability mission.

Prioritizing function over discipline, the three volumes of the complex separately house three arts education pillars: studios, teaching spaces and workshops. The volumes are woven together by a loose-fit external perforated metal screen that acts as a neutral backdrop for the life of the building: the artwork. The industrial screen unifies the visual identity of the complex and provides a utilitarian artifice for the students to reimagine and reinterpret how to exhibit artwork. Ephemeral in nature, the building’s skin is meant to create a dappled sunlight effect, allowing the lighting conditions to change over the course of the day in the circulation areas.

At the heart of Grimshaw’s ambition is a desire to design a space for the students, faculty and surrounding community of SMC to feel a sense of ownership and pride in. The volumes are sited due to their relevant size but also in orientation to the core SMC campus, providing an open armed welcome for students moving from east to west. With a mission to improve urban conditions for the college’s adjacent neighbors and a sensitivity to the single-family homes to the south, the new arts complex is set away from the property line with a landscaped buffer to decrease ambient noise from busy working art students.

The entrance sequence is a dynamic layering of open areas and volumes that reveal the internal operations over time. The initial external plaza provides a degree of permeability, allowing the flow of students between the core campus and the arts complex. The external environment of the plaza generates opportunities for programming such as exhibitions, potential media screenings or impromptu gatherings.

SMC offers an Associate Degree in Art, as well as Associate in Arts for Transfer degrees in Studio Arts and Art History. The college’s graduates are recruited and given scholarships by the best art and art history programs in the nation including UCLA, Berkeley, California Institute of the Arts, Art Center College of Art and Design, San Francisco Art Institute, the Chicago Art Institute, & Rhode Island College of Art and Design.

Walter Meyer, SMC’s Art Department Chair states, “The adaptable design for the new SMC arts complex will bolster our mission to bring students together to gain a greater exposure to the potential of the art program. Grimshaw shares our belief in the importance a robust arts education and we are thrilled to see it come to life.”

**-ENDS-**

## Notes to Editors:

Images can be downloaded via: <https://we.tl/t-Do2LuYkR7T>

All images credited to Grimshaw

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## About Grimshaw

Grimshaw was founded by Sir Nicholas Grimshaw in 1980. The practice operates worldwide, across all major sectors, with offices in London, Paris, New York, Los Angeles, Dubai, Melbourne and Sydney, employing over 650 staff.

Grimshaw has been honoured with over 200 awards for its commitment to excellence and innovation, including 'Practice of the Year' and 'Building of the Year' at the 2019 AJ100. In 2019, Founder Sir Nicholas Grimshaw was awarded the Royal Gold Medal for Architecture by the Royal Institute of British Architects.

[www.grimshaw.global](http://www.grimshaw.global)

## About Santa Monica College

Founded in 1929, Santa Monica College is a California Community College accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). In addition to being California's leader in transfers to the University of California system, the University of Southern California, and Loyola Marymount University, SMC also offers more than 110 career training degrees and certificates. SMC provides news and cultural enrichment through its NPR radio station KCRW (89.9 FM) and The Broad Stage at the SMC Performing Arts Center as well as lifelong learning through distinctive programs such as its Emeritus Program for older adults.