

# University of Melbourne - Arts West Redevelopment

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The increasing sophistication and accessibility of on-line learning requires educational institutions to reassess the meaning and value of the on-campus learning experience. The Faculty of Arts, University of Melbourne has re-focused its attention on providing enriched, campus-based, face-to-face experiences for its undergraduate students. The Arts West Redevelopment reflects this commitment and provides a rich, memorable and meaningful student experience that cannot be replicated online.

ARM Architecture + Architectus were engaged to support this aspiration in the form of a new building for future generations of Bachelor of Arts students. The challenge was to translate the Faculty's vision for the student learning experience into architecture.

The ambition was to create an environment which promoted active, experiential and peer learning. Fostering student/teacher engagement and collaboration within and beyond the classroom is at the core of the design. The building's emphasis on interactive, collaborative learning and media-based activities connect traditional disciplines with new tools and methodologies. Informal learning spaces are integrated with formal teaching zones. These spaces feel homely; students can study, engage or simply hang. Arts West has become an identifiable hub for Arts students.

An exciting initiative was to create a purpose-built building that realised the full teaching potential of the University's significant cultural collections and supported object-based learning (OBL). OBL provides a springboard for deep learning with improved retention and ability to recall. It offers a tactile and authentic learning experience that cannot be mimicked digitally.

This modality was embraced not only in the specialised OBL Labs but also in the manifestation of the built form, inside and out. The entire building can be curated. The circulation spaces incorporate display cases for cultural collections. The teaching rooms include selected spaces elaborated as cabinets of curiosity using historically themed interior decoration. This approach generates a remarkable atmosphere for the learning environment.

The exterior of the building continues the theme of OBL. The façade contains images of objects from the University's cultural collections making visible the rich, cultural and historical interdisciplinary traditions that underpin the Faculty. Images appear and evaporate as you pass by. The architecture celebrates scholarship as an interactive and celebratory experience.

In this presentation the Faculty of Arts (UoM) will describe the impetus and aspirations of the Arts West Redevelopment, while ARM + Architectus will outline the process and design response. The Faculty will then explain how the building works today to transform the on-campus experience of their students.