

**MICA'S BROWN CENTER BECOMES A MAJOR LANDMARK ON THE BALTIMORE SKYLINE
Named in honor of Eddie and Sylvia Brown, this center for digital art & design was
dedicated on October 17, 2003 and became fully occupied in January 2004**

BALTIMORE, MD – The boldly sculptural Brown Center was dedicated at Maryland Institute College of Art on October 17, 2003, and became fully occupied in January 2004. The 61,410 square-foot contemporary structure at 1301 Mount Royal Avenue is designed to accommodate the College's nationally recognized programs in digital art and design and provide an important new performance space in Baltimore.

Brown Center's translucent geometry creates a dynamic counterpoint to the white marble of the College's 1907 Renaissance Revival Main Building, designed by Pell & Corbett of New York, and one of two campus structures listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Known for its creative reuse of historic structures since it saved the B&O Railroad's Mount Royal Station from extinction in the mid-1960s, MICA turned to Baltimore-based architects Ziger/Snead and Charles Brickbauer to design the first new academic building to be constructed on its eclectic, urban campus in nearly a century.

The design is a crowning creative achievement of Charles Brickbauer, a nationally respected architect whose former firm, Peterson and Brickbauer, was responsible for various Baltimore landmarks including Baltimore/ Washington International Airport (BWI). Brown Center, designed with Ziger/Snead LLP, showcases the creativity and energy of this highly respected Baltimore-based firm known for its approach to design that balances the requirements of site, client, and community. Plaza and landscape design is by Higgins-Lazarus Landscape Architects, and construction management by The Whiting-Turner Contracting Company.

According to MICA President Fred Lazarus, the design and construction of Brown Center is emblematic of the MICA's commitment to education programs in digital arts and design. "This structure, standing in counterpoint to the Main Building, is a metaphor for the College's strength in balancing traditional practice in art and design with the demands and opportunities presented by new technologies," explains Lazarus. MICA is consistently ranked among the nation's top colleges of art and design, and is especially known as an innovator in curriculum for the education of the artist. Particularly recognized as one of the very best schools for the study of painting and drawing, MICA is increasingly acknowledged as a leader in design and digital arts.

Brown Center will house studios, instructional space, and offices for undergraduate majors in graphic design, experimental animation, interactive media, and video, as well as graduate programs: a new

master of fine arts program in graphic design, headed by MICA faculty member Ellen Lupton, an internationally renowned designer and curator at the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum in New York; the master of fine arts program in photography; and the one-year master of arts in digital arts program. Additionally, the building will house a 525-seat hall equipped to feature work in digital media, as well as film, video, music, and small-scale performances of theatre, dance, and time-based art. This performance space will allow MICA to enhance its public programs and create opportunities to partner with other nonprofits and cultural organizations in the region.

Brown Center's crystalline form was generated directly from the complex geometry of its site, and is based on the 62-degree angle created by the intersection of the adjacent streets. Rising from a parallelogram-shaped site bounded on one side by a former shoe factory converted to studios and gallery spaces, on another by Mount Royal Avenue, and on a third by a deep grade leading down to a busy railbed, the building's geometric forms were developed and refined using the same computer-aided design techniques that MICA students will master in the College's digital arts programs. The form and position of Brown Center combine to create a new urban space where only a year ago there was only a parking lot. The core of this new space will be an ample landscaped plaza with gathering spaces, a water feature, and institutional identification signage, which will provide a central focus for the College's campus, which stretches along Mount Royal Avenue in Baltimore's historic Bolton Hill neighborhood.

A soaring, 60-foot-high atrium at the building's entrance provides the focus of circulation in Brown Center. Each of three upper floors is ringed by a hallway that features gallery space. An open plan allowed for interiors tailored to the diverse needs of growing departments at the College. Material juxtapositions create an aesthetic of contrast. The exposed concrete structure supports a sophisticated four-sided, silicone-glazed curtain wall system. A white frit pattern unifies the building's exterior glass skin while providing a translucent, energy-efficient sunshade. No metal supports are visible on the exterior.

The building both literally and figuratively reaches towards the Main Building across the street, acting as an anchor between the past and present while actively embracing the future. Brown Center's atrium echoes the Main Building's elegant court, ringed by College offices, with a grand marble staircase and etched and frosted glass-panel skylight. The new structure "stimulates a dialogue between contemporary and traditional forms," says architect Charles Brickbauer.

Brown Center is named in honor of Eddie and Sylvia Brown, whose 2001 gift of \$6 million (\$5 million towards the building's construction costs and a \$1 million challenge grant creating an endowment towards its operating costs) was the largest single gift ever received by the College and one of the largest gifts from an African-American family in the nation's history. In May 2003, a long-time supporter of the College who wishes to remain anonymous made the College's second-largest gift, totaling \$5 million with \$2 million earmarked for Brown Center. Other six- and seven-figure gifts to the project are

from The William G. Baker, Jr. Memorial Fund, Thomas and Patricia Barry, Jacqueline and Stephen Boesel, George and Anne Bunting, The Jane and Worth B. Daniels, Jr. Fund, M. Gwen Davidson, Rosalee and Richard Davison, the late Alonzo Decker and Virginia Decker, Alice Falvey Greif, John J. Leidy Foundation, Anne S. Perkins, T. Rowe Price Associates Foundation, Inc., and Hackerman Foundation/The Whiting-Turner Contracting Company, as well as a major grant from the State of Maryland.

Maryland Institute College of Art, founded in 1826, attracts to Baltimore outstanding students in the visual arts and design from around the world, regularly enrolling more Presidential Scholars in Visual Art than any other institution, and graduating students who go on to successful careers in a wide range of fields and to top graduate schools. MICA is also recognized as a major regional cultural resource, sponsoring many public and community-outreach programs, including exhibitions, artists' residencies, film series, lectures, readings, and performances. Public programming at MICA will expand with the opening of Brown Center.

For more information about MICA, visit www.mica.edu or call (410) 225-2300. To view a virtual campus tour and images of Brown Center, visit www.mica.edu/admission/undergrad_visit_campus_virt.cfm and click on "Campus Tour."

Maryland Institute College of Art, founded in 1826, has consistently been ranked among the top tier of visual arts undergraduate and graduate programs in the nation. In addition to its academic standing, MICA is recognized throughout the Baltimore/Washington, D.C. region as a cultural resource, sponsoring many public and community-outreach programs, including more than 100 exhibitions by students, faculty, and nationally and internationally known artists annually, as well artists' residencies, film series, lectures, readings, and performances. Brown Center, which opened in January 2004, features a performance space especially designed to feature work in digital media.