

INTRODUCTION

There's something palpable about expectation. It allows you to visualize what is yet to come. I'm expecting many good things in the days ahead at the Bass School and at UT Dallas, driven in part by the momentum of the growth of the arts at the University.

This is a historic time for the University with the fall 2024 introduction of the Edith and Peter O'Donnell Jr. Athenaeum to the world. The opening of Phase I and the groundbreaking of Phase II of the O'Donnell Athenaeum on Sept. 24 showcase the magic of what's possible when we come together to expect the best, and bring it to life with imagination, focus and fortitude. Thus, it gives me even more joy to invite you to read this special issue of the *Athenaeum Review*.

You'll learn more about the O'Donnell Athenaeum – designed by architectural firm Morphosis – as a cultural and arts district, and about the vision that drives the creation of spaces as activators of thought, creativity, experience and connection. It's exciting to see how the big ideas and the tiniest of details interact to breathe life into design. As Arne Emerson, design partner with Morphosis, told me, “The basis of the master plan is that the arts district is a place where life happens all the time.” You can read more about Arne's thoughts on interconnectedness and the convergence of architecture and its surrounding landscape in my interview with him.

The pages that follow include contributions by Crow Museum of Asian Art Senior Director Amy Lewis Hofland, who illuminates the ethos of the second location of the museum – Phase I of the O'Donnell Athenaeum – and its “primary role as teacher to the more than 35,000 students, faculty and staff at the building's footsteps.” Phase I also includes two galleries dedicated to works of art on long-term loan from the Dallas Museum of Art. Dr. Michael Thomas – Director of the Edith O'Donnell Institute of Art History, Richard R. Brettell Distinguished University Chair and Professor of Arts, Humanities, and Technology – discusses in an interview how the landmark partnership between UT Dallas and the Dallas Museum of Art was forged as well as the “From Texas to the World” theme in the inaugural exhibition, which marks the opening of Phase I. The excitement of shaping the future of the arts is also driving the planned construction of Phase II. Dr. Jonathan Palant, Associate Dean of the

Arts and Director of Choral Activities, writes about the “dedication to excellence in both technology and acoustics” that lies at the heart of the Bass School’s new performance hall and music building and the thoughtful design that “promises to create an environment where musical excellence can truly flourish.”

There’s more for you to enjoy in these pages. My hope is that you’ll discover ideas worth sharing and be inspired and enriched by the range of perspectives within. Like the O’Donnell Athenaeum, this special issue of the *Athenaeum Review* invites engagement and dialogue from all directions. Expect good things.

Dr. Nils Roemer

Dean of the Harry W. Bass Jr. School of Arts, Humanities, and Technology
Director of the Ackerman Center for Holocaust Studies
Arts, Humanities, and Technology Distinguished University Chair
Stan and Barbara Rabin Distinguished Professor in Holocaust Studies