

Leading collector plans contemporary art space in Mexico City

The museum will be drawn from the Jumex Foundation's 2,000 works

JASON EDWARD KAUFMAN

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Mexico's leading collector and sponsor of contemporary art, Eugenio Lopez Alonso, has hired UK architect David Chipperfield to design a new museum in Mexico City to display his international collection. Mr Lopez plans to break ground in January 2010 and complete the project in 2011 to coincide with the 50th anniversary of Jumex, his family's fruit-juice manufacturing company, after which he named his art foundation.

"It will be something significant for the city," says Mr Lopez, who is based in Mexico City and serves on the boards of the New Museum of Contemporary Art in New York, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles and the Tamayo Contemporary Art Museum in Mexico City. "I want something that has meaning for Mexico, something the citizens will remember as a good project...so that in ten or 20 years people will say, 'Wow, they brought good exhibitions to Mexico!'"

The new building is modest in scale, around 2,300-2,800 sq. m, but it will double the size of Jumex Foundation's existing facilities at the company's factory north of the city. Mr Lopez says the Jumex museum programme will include up to three exhibitions a year, mostly guest-curated shows. These will be drawn from nearly 2,000 works he has amassed by prominent international and emerging artists. The museum will also host travelling

shows organised elsewhere, just as the foundation does now. “The only thing that will change will be the size and the location,” says Mr Lopez.

But the shift in location is crucial. The new showcase will be near the affluent Polanco district, easily accessible to visitors who must currently endure dreadful traffic to reach the factory gallery. And it will be adjacent to the future home of the Soumaya Museum, a collection of old masters, Hispanic colonial, Mexican folk and modern art belonging to Mexico’s richest man, telecommunications magnate Carlos Slim Helú.

Two years ago, Mr Lopez bought the 2,500 sq. m site from Mr Slim’s conglomerate, Grupo Carso, which is developing commercial towers on adjoining land. Mr Slim’s son-in-law, architect Fernando Romero, has designed a glass structure for the Soumaya Museum, expected to be completed around the same time as the Jumex museum.

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