

GIRARD FOUNDATION COLLECTION SPARKS EXPANSION PLANS

*By Paul Winkler
Assistant Director,
Museum of International Folk Art*

*Alexander Girard, one of the world's
foremost private collectors of folk art,
installs Mexican village array in "Fantasy
and Enchantment."*



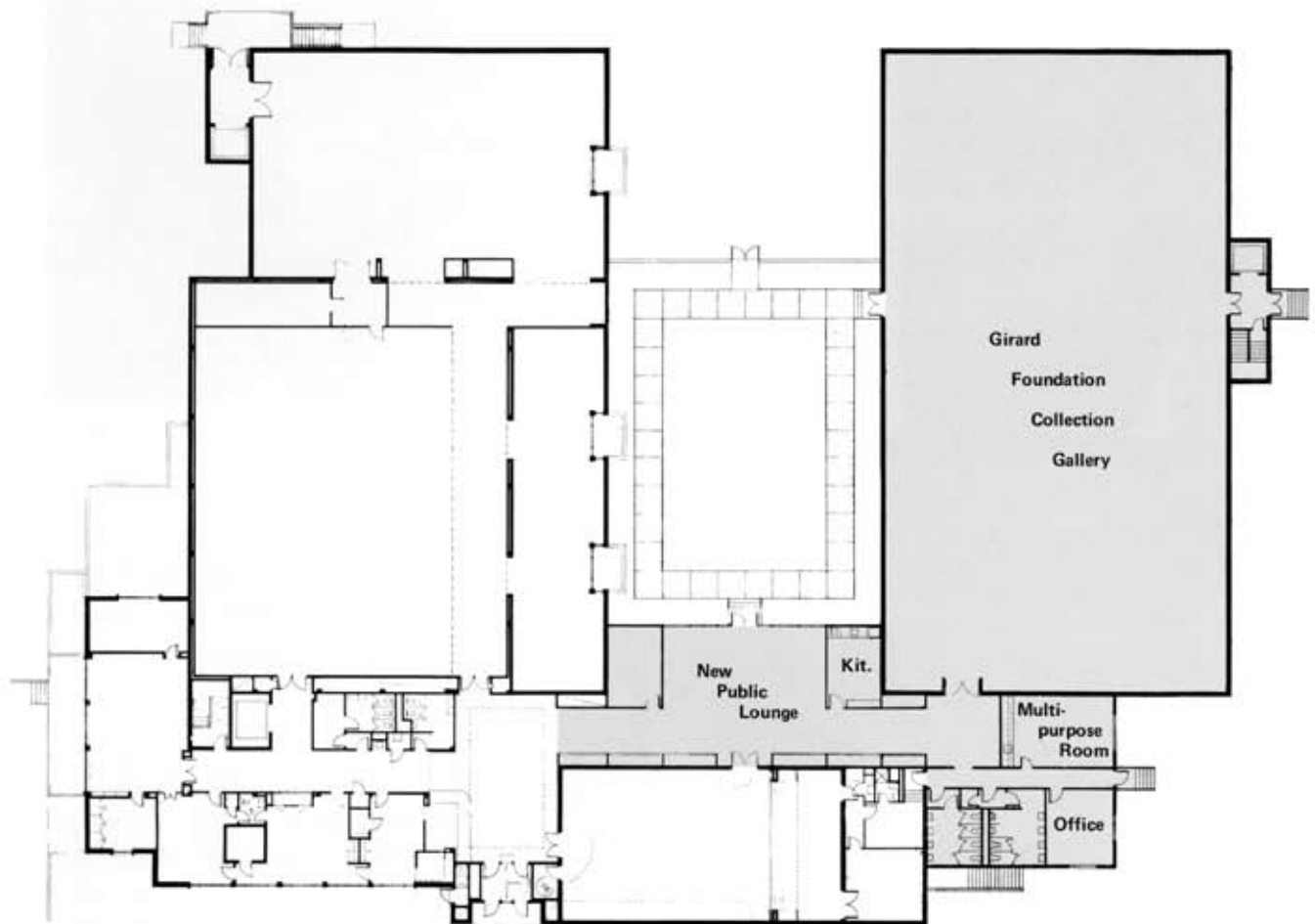
THE SILVER JUBILEE of the Museum of International Folk Art also heralds its greatest period of expansion. The recent gift of the Girard Foundation Collection is the single most important acquisition of the museum since its beginning. A lifelong endeavor of Mr. and Mrs. Alexander H. Girard, the collection contains sculptures, toys, paintings, textiles and other related objects originating from a wide number of countries and varying time spans.

The collection is not simply an amassment of objects but reflects the idea of Alexander Girard that such objects incorporate incalculable educational value. With his view that the collection "will communicate a few of the unsophisticated but inspired qualities of creative thought," the items were gathered for the purpose of illustrating and communicating the art,

philosophy, and lifestyles of different peoples of the world, the underlying motives and bonds which exist among them, and the value of the objects in their relationship to contemporary life.

A perfect complement to the existing collections at the Museum of International Folk Art, the Girard Foundation gift increases the size of the museum's holdings *fivefold*, to over 120,000 items. Realizing the importance of such an acquisition and the physical expansion it demands, the Legislature of the State of New Mexico appropriated \$1.5 million in February 1978 for the construction of a new wing at MOIFA where the collection will be housed.

The firm of Harvey Hoshour, Architect, Ltd. is in charge of designing the expansion project. Noted for sophistication and thoroughness in all aspects of its



New Girard Foundation Wing will greatly increase exhibit area, as indicated on this floorplan of the main level, prepared by Harvey Hoshour, Architect, Ltd.

works, this architectural office has won numerous awards for design excellence. Recent projects have included the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center and the University of New Mexico Health Sciences Learning Resources Center, both in Albuquerque.

To a great extent, the design for the Girard Wing is based on the museum's approach to the presentation of objects. Exhibitions are developed according to a variety of concepts, and installations should be designed individually in order to project specific ideas the museum desires to convey. Where exhibitions are interpretative they demand a set traffic pattern of viewing for the sake of coherence; in contrast, those that stress visual delight ask for total freedom in the installation design. This kind of flexibility is best facilitated by an open shell building.

The Girard Wing will have 27,323 square feet of floor space. The exhibition area, encompassing 10,500 square feet, has been designed as a column-free, flexible space which will permit a maximum of varied approaches to installations. In keeping with modern trends, special electrical, lighting, temperature, humidity control, security and safety systems are being provided for throughout the wing. Non-display areas will be arranged for storage of that part of the collection not on show, a reception/lounge for the public, and offices.

The firm of Johnson, Hotvedt, DiNisco and Associates, Inc., Architects and Planners, Boston, was engaged in 1977 to compile a *Master Plan Report* for the museum, concurrent with the planning phase of the Girard Wing. Its purpose was to set guidelines for the

A part of the vast Girard Foundation Collection being prepared for cataloguing in MOIFA's auditorium.



Mrs. Susan Girard, Alexander Girard, and Harry Wugalter, Secretary of the Department of Educational Finance and Cultural Affairs, sign agreement gifting Collection to the state on October 19, 1978.

renovation of the existing MOIFA building and guidelines for potential new facilities whose establishment is made all the more imperative by the construction of the Girard Wing. Such new facilities are to include curatorial office and collections research areas, exhibition preparation and workshop areas, and a permanent gallery for the display of the important Spanish Colonial Art collection. Harvey Hoshour has produced schematic drawings for these projected additions. The comprehensive master plan was made possible through the generous support of the International Folk Art Foundation, the Museum of New Mexico Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

The museum now has a logical and sound plan for long-range development. Phased implementation is now a matter of meeting the financial requirements. It is the earnest hope of the Museum of New Mexico that strong support from several quarters will be forthcoming, as the Museum of International Folk Art has an unexcelled potential for ranking as one of the great folk art museums of the world. The \$1.5 million appropriation by New Mexico's state legislators is a mark of confidence in such a future and sets the museum firmly on the road to excellence. ☒