

North Carolina Museum of Art

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NORTH CAROLINA MUSEUM OF ART, ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT MUSEUMS IN THE AMERICAN SOUTH, REOPENS IN APRIL 2010 FOLLOWING TRANSFORMATIVE EXPANSION

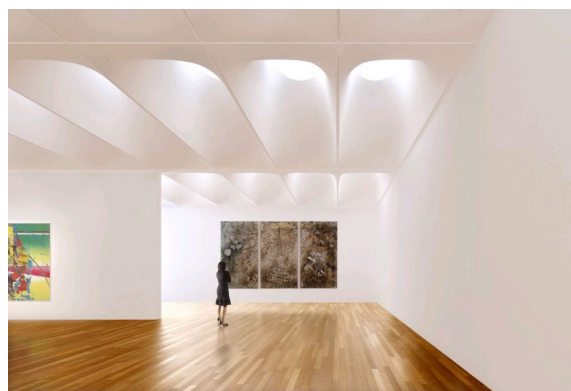
Project includes new building and landscape design, major growth in collection

The **North Carolina Museum of Art** (NCMA)—one of the most important and distinguished museums in the South—is in the final stage of a three-year expansion and will **reopen to the public in April 2010**, following a seven-month closure. The completed expansion will dramatically transform the visitor experience of the Museum, which, sited in a 164-acre park in Raleigh, offers a unique blend of art, architecture, and nature.

The centerpiece of the expansion initiative is a new 127,000-square-foot, light-filled building designed by New York-based architects **Thomas Phifer and Partners**. The single-story structure, surrounded by gardens and courtyards, was created specifically to showcase the Museum's encyclopedic collection. Established in 1947, this was the first major art-museum collection in the country to be formed by state legislation and funding—an extraordinary example of public support for the arts. Since that time, it has been immeasurably enriched by acquisitions that include many generous gifts, and today spans more than 5,000 years of history. Particular strengths include European painting, Egyptian funerary art, ancient Greek and Roman sculpture and vase painting, American art of the 18th through 20th centuries, international contemporary art, and Jewish ceremonial objects.

On the occasion of the expansion, the Museum has acquired many additional works, some commissioned and others donated. These encompass important

examples by both contemporary and historical artists from around the world, and will be installed in the new building and the surrounding landscape. Highlights include work by such internationally acclaimed artists as Roxy Paine and Ursula von Rydingsvard, to be sited in



Rendering of the Modern and Contemporary Gallery. Courtesy Thomas Phifer and Partners.

the landscape, and El Anatsui, Patrick Dougherty, Jaume Plensa, Jackie Ferrara, Ellsworth Kelly, David Park, and others, to be installed in the new building.

NCMA Director Lawrence J. Wheeler states, “The North Carolina Museum of Art is thrilled to be nearing completion of its expansion. With a glorious new building, many important new works of art, and an enhanced landscape, this project is in many ways a paradigm of 21st-century values: It has been undertaken with great environmental sensitivity; it embraces new forms of creativity; and, throughout it all, the Museum and Museum Park remain admission-free, enabling broad access. Moreover, the Museum’s new building has been entirely paid for with public funds—a truly inspiring example of enlightened government, one that ensures that the NCMA really is the *people’s* museum.”

In addition to creating a significantly larger home for the Museum’s collection, the West Building also contains a new restaurant, retail store, and other visitor amenities. The expansion project will also enable the NCMA’s 1983 East Building, designed by the eminent architect Edward Durell Stone (1902–78), to become a dynamic center dedicated to temporary exhibitions, education and public programs, and public events, as well as a place

for collections management and other administrative functions.

The two Museum buildings are located on a campus of softly rolling hills edged by native woods. Major works of sculpture and artist-conceived environmental projects are sited throughout this landscape, which also includes an outdoor amphitheater created in collaboration with artist Barbara Kruger, as well as trails for walking and biking.



Rendering of the Rodin Court. Courtesy Thomas Phifer and Partners.

The New Building

The low rectangular volume of the new building blends seamlessly into the NCMA’s reconfigured arrangement of architecture, gardens, and uncultivated landscape. Indeed, approached via a serpentine road that leads from a nearby highway into the Museum campus, the building—clad in anodized aluminum panels with large areas of glass—appears to dematerialize into soft reflections of the surrounding landscape and sky. The structure’s

distinctive roofline is defined by a rhythmic series of curves that expresses a system of vaults and coffers that bring daylight into the building.

Mr. Phifer states, “We had three important goals in designing the new NCMA building: to design a space in which the art in the Museum’s permanent collection could be seen anew and to best effect; to ensure an intimate relationship between the building and the surrounding landscape; and to foster a sense of belonging on the part of Museum visitors. We determined that a single-story building with great expanses of glass, soft natural light, and a plan that invites exploration, both within its walls and between the building and the outdoors, was the best way to make all of this possible.”

While—unusually—there are four doors into the new building, enabling visitors in the gardens to enter freely, many people will be drawn to the main entrance by an allée of trees sited in a new entry-garden. This is part of a new 5,650-square-foot plaza that links the new and existing architecture with the landmark 1997 amphitheater. Upon entering the building, visitors will find themselves in a capacious sculpture hall, immediately engaged with art, rather than in the more typical museum lobby, which divides the outdoor environment from the works of art inside.

Oriented on an east-west axis, the sculpture hall serves as the spine around which 40 exhibition galleries are organized. It will contain examples of classical sculpture, and will culminate at its west end with an installation of more than 30 works by Auguste Rodin, part of a major gift from the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Foundation. In just one of the many points at which the architecture seems to blend with its outdoor surroundings, a glass window-wall behind the Rodin works will offer vistas of, and access to, a courtyard containing additional sculptures by the artist, as well as a reflecting pool and views of the unfolding landscape beyond.

All together, there are five such courtyards, each of which seems to enter the building, breaching the perimeter of what would otherwise be a rectangular structure. All are visible through glass walls, and all but one are accessible directly from the sculpture hall, as well as from the outdoors. In addition to the Rodin courtyard, these include a landscaped



New building, detail. Photo Courtesy NCMA.

courtyard on the north side of the building that will house a three-part sculpture by Ronald Bladen and a reflecting pool; a rock garden on the south façade containing 14 large granite boulders from western North Carolina; a courtyard next to the main entrance, also on the building's south side, that will serve as an outdoor seating area; and a reflecting pool—approximately 100 feet long and 25 feet wide—that appears to enter the east end of the building.

The new facility, which has white oak floors and white interior walls, provides more than 65,000 square feet of exhibition space. The galleries will house examples from the Museum's collections of antiquities, Renaissance art, European painting and sculpture, 18th- and 19th-century American art, African art, pre-Columbian art, Jewish ceremonial objects, and modern and contemporary art. Rather than being organized into a set pathway, the galleries contain entry and exit points throughout, inviting personal exploration and encouraging visitors to make their own connections among the works on view.

The quantity of natural light that enters the building may be controlled by the Museum as needed. Removable scrims in the ceiling oculi are calibrated to meet the lighting requirements for particular kinds of artwork, while fabric curtains on the glass walls are of three different densities, ranging from nearly opaque to diaphanous, depending on the type of work to be protected. In addition, roll-down shades enable a complete black-out. All window coverings are in shades of white.

Changes to Existing Building

Until now, the Edward Durrell Stone-designed East Building has housed both special exhibitions and long-term installations drawn from the NCMA's permanent collection. Upon completion of its renovation, more than 12,000 square feet of gallery space formerly devoted to the collection will have been transformed into galleries for special exhibitions—an increase of more than 40 percent.

The East Building will include an expanded box office and renovated lobby that will visually connect it to the West Building. It will also be the site of the NCMA's popular family and public programs, its administrative offices, and new art-storage facilities.



Gallery Plan

Key Project Professionals

The NCMA has assembled an exceptional team for the expansion and renovation. In addition to Thomas Phifer and Partners, this includes the architect of record for the new building, Pierce Brinkley Cease + Lee Architects, Raleigh, N.C., and landscape architects Lappas + Havener, PA, in Durham, N.C. Natural and artificial lighting design has been created in a collaboration between Fisher Marantz Stone, in New York City, and Ove Arup, in London and New York City.

Project Funding

The State of North Carolina, Wake County, and the City of Raleigh have provided \$67 million for the construction of the new gallery building to house the NCMA's distinguished permanent collection, as well as a \$6 million commitment for the repair and renovation of the existing building, bringing the public commitment to the project to \$73 million. This confident governmental investment demonstrates North Carolina's belief that the arts are important to the character of the state and its people.

North Carolina Museum of Art

The North Carolina Museum of Art houses the art collections of the State of North Carolina. The State's initial 1947 appropriation of \$1 million was used to purchase 139 European and American paintings and sculptures. In 1960, the Museum's collection was immeasurably enriched with the gift of 75 works of art from the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, making the NCMA the country's second-largest repository of Kress gifts, exceeded only by the National Gallery of Art, in Washington, D.C.

Today, in addition to presenting selections from its encyclopedic collection, the Museum organizes and hosts a diversity of special exhibitions and offers a rich complement of education and public programs.

The North Carolina Museum of Art first opened to the public in April 1956, in a renovated state office building in downtown Raleigh, the state capital. It launched the present Edward Durell Stone-designed facility on April 5, 1983. In 1997, as part of the Museum's 50th-anniversary celebration, it opened its performing arts and film venue, the Joseph M. Bryan, Jr., Theater, in Museum Park. With its present expansion and renewal, the Museum is poised to become one of the nation's most vital cultural destinations.

The Museum Web site is located at www.ncartmuseum.org.

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