About MOCA - Museum of Contemporary Art - LibGuides at University of Southern California

Museum of Contemporary Art

Location

MOCA Grand is located at 250 South Grand Avenue in Downtown Los Angeles.

MOCA Geffen is located at 152 North Central Avenue in Downtown Los Angeles, in the Little Tokyo area.

MOCA Pacific Design Center is located at 8687 Melrose Avenue in West Hollywood.

The URL for the main MOCA website is www.moca.org

Description

Founded in 1979, the Museum of Contemporary Art is devoted to, as the name implies, post-World War II art. In 1984, the museum purchased the Panza Collection (from the Count and Countess Giuseppe Panza di Biumo), which encompassed major works of Abstract Expressionism and Pop Art. The museum's collection now numbers over 5,000 works and is steadily growing. Today the museum is housed in three facilities: MOCA Grand Avenue, The Geffen Contemporary, and the Pacific Design Center.

In December 1986 the museum's main venue on Grand Avenue, designed by architect Arata Isozaki, opened to international critical and public acclaim. The museum was built by the California Plaza Partnership, an affiliation between Metropolitan Structures; Cadillac Fairview/California, Inc.; Shapell Industries, Inc.; Goldrich Kest and Associates; and the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company.

While MOCA Grand was under construction, the museum opened an interim exhibition space called the Temporary Contemporary (now Geffen Contemporary) in fall 1983. When it was built in the 1940s, the space was a hardware store; subsequently, it was used as a city warehouse and police car garage. It was renovated by the architect Frank Gehry; the first public event at the Temporary Contemporary was the presentation in September 1983 of a newly commissioned performance piece, Available Light, with music by John Adams, stage design by Frank Gehry, choreography by Lucinda Childs, and costumes by Ronaldus Shamask. In November 1983 MOCA presented its first exhibition, The First Show: Painting and Sculpture from 1940-1980, comprised of approximately 150 works from eight private collections in the United States and Europe.

The inaugural exhibition for the completed museum, Individuals: A Selected History of Contemporary Art, 1945-1986, filled both the Grand and the Geffen Contemporary museum buildings with more than 400 works by 70 artists. This included specially commissioned works by Chris Burden, Richard Fleischner, Rebecca Horn, Robert Irwin, Sol LeWitt, Matt Mullican, Richard Serra, and James Turrell. The museum also staged a production of Zangezi: A Supersaga on Twenty Planes by Russian futurist poet Velimir Khlebnikov in December 1986-January 1987. Directed by Peter Sellars, the piece included original music by Jon Hassell and sets by George Tsypin, and starred David Warrillow, Ruth Maleczech, and Rod Gist.

Comments (0)


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**Books about the Architects**

**Arata Isozaki**


**Frank O. Gehry**


*The architecture of Frank Gehry*. Available at the Architecture and Fine Arts Library, call no. NA737.G44A39 1986
Selections


John Dreyfuss, "L. A. will get two modern art museums," Los Angeles Times, December 5, 1980. Article located online through Proquest.


"Great space for new art," Los Angeles Times, November 30, 1986. Article located online through Proquest.