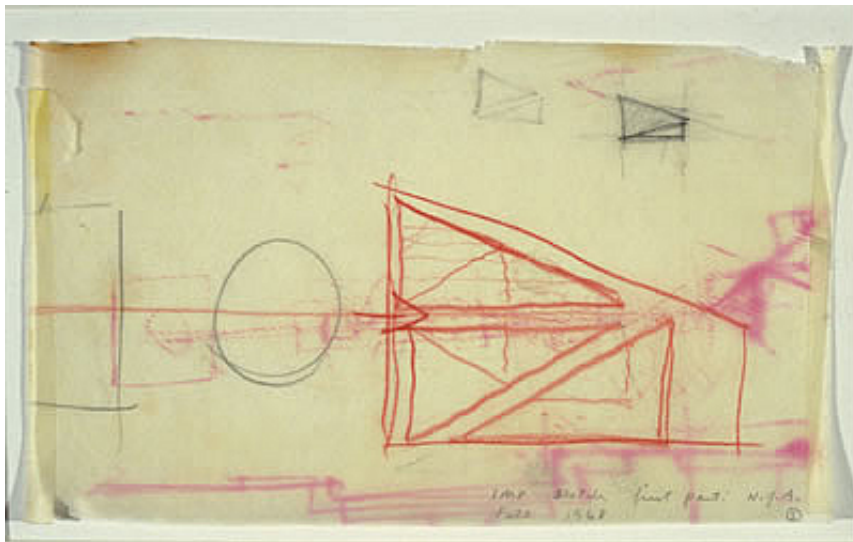


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25th ANNIVERSARY OF NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART EAST BUILDING CELEBRATED WITH EXHIBITION AND PROGRAMS; Special installation reveals architect I.M. Pei's design process



I. M. Pei, Design sketch for the East Building, fall 1968.

Washington, DC - A special installation at the National Gallery of Art marks the 25th anniversary of its acclaimed East Building, designed by renowned architect I. M. Pei and voted one of the top ten buildings in the United States by the College of Fellows of the American Institute of Architects.



The East Building: Celebrating 25 Years-on view through June 1, 2004, in the East

Building reception room--explores the building's history from concept and initial programming in the late 1960s through its opening on June 1, 1978. Highlights include a three-dimensional model demonstrating Pei's acclaimed triangular solution to the challenges of the site, as well as photographs, copies of drawings, oral history transcripts, and other archival materials, many on display for the first time. Architectural walking tours, films, concerts, and related programs continue through May.

"This brilliant building has had a profound impact not only on the museum and its visitors, but also on the design of museums around the world," said Earl A. Powell III, director, National Gallery of Art. "The East Building works. It makes art accessible in a setting that is one of the most versatile and flexible exhibition spaces in the world, a high point of modernist museum design. As we celebrate the 25th anniversary of this building that continues to delight visitors every day, we salute I.M. Pei for his vision, foresight, and creativity."

Background

Designed for the Gallery's 20th-century art collection and its Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, the East Building is known for its triangular shapes and dramatic skylit atrium, a sculptural space framing a 16,000-square-foot open interior court. Linked to John Russell Pope's 1941 neoclassical West Building in part by use of the same Tennessee marble, the modernist East Building has been recognized not only for its path-breaking design, but for its technical innovations and--with 23 craft awards--exquisite craftsmanship.

With remarkable foresight, National Gallery of Art founder Andrew W. Mellon requested that Congress set aside a plot of land adjacent to the original 1941 John Russell Pope neoclassical building for the museum's eventual expansion. In 1967, Mellon's children, Paul Mellon and Ailsa Mellon Bruce, along with the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, offered to fund an extension of the museum, in keeping with their father's vision. Under the leadership of Paul Mellon and former Gallery directors John Walker and J. Carter Brown planning moved forward, and in July 1968 architect I. M. Pei was selected. He devised a radical design solution for the trapezoidal site by drawing a diagonal line through it, creating two triangles--one to house the museum's public functions, the other

for the Gallery's study center and library. Construction began in 1971. On June 1, 1978, President Jimmy Carter and Paul Mellon dedicated the new building to the people of the United States.

Pei's innovative use of geometric shapes as a space for the public display of art attracted wide public attention and critical acclaim, with attendance at the East Building reaching 1,000,000 less than two months after the building opened. Deemed "the elder statesman of American architecture" by *New York Times* critic Herbert Muschamp, Pei, now 86, is the recipient of the Smithsonian Institution 2003 National Design Award for lifetime achievement.

For additional information on the East Building's history, design, construction, and impact, visit </exhibitions/anniversaryinfo.htm> (<http://www.nga.gov/exhibitions/anniversaryinfo.htm>) .

Related Activities

Information on related activities can be found at www.nga.gov/press/2003/releases/fall/25ann/activ.htm (<http://www.nga.gov/press/2003/releases/fall/25ann/activ.shtm>) and at </exhibitions/anniversaryinfo.htm> (<http://www.nga.gov/exhibitions/anniversaryinfo.htm>) .

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General Information

The National Gallery of Art and its Sculpture Garden are at all times free to the public. They are located on the National Mall between 3rd and 9th Streets along Constitution Avenue NW and are open Monday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The Gallery is closed on December 25 and January 1. With the exception of the atrium and library, the galleries in the East Building will be closing gradually beginning in July 2013 and will remain closed for approximately three years for Master Facilities Plan and renovations. For specific updates on gallery closings, visit www.nga.gov/renovation (<http://www.nga.gov/renovation>).

For information call (202) 737-4215 or the Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) at (202) 842-6176, or visit the Gallery's website at www.nga.gov. Follow the Gallery on Facebook at www.facebook.com/NationalGalleryofArt and on Twitter at twitter.com/ngadc.

Visitors will be asked to present all carried items for inspection upon entering. Checkrooms are free of charge and located at each entrance. Luggage and other oversized bags must be presented at the 4th Street entrances to the East or West Building to permit x-ray screening and must be deposited in the checkrooms at those entrances. For the safety of visitors and the works of art, nothing may be carried into the Gallery on a visitor's back. Any bag or other items that cannot be carried reasonably and safely in some other manner must be left in the checkrooms. Items larger than 17 by 26 inches cannot be accepted by the Gallery or its checkrooms.

For additional press information please call or send inquiries to:

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