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New home of New York City's Museum of Arts and Design opens

THE CANADIAN PRESS Deepti Hajela, THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
September 28, 2008

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NEW YORK - For years, it was one of the more visually unusual structures in midtown Manhattan - a mostly windowless, white marble construction by Edward Durell Stone known as "The Lollipop Building" after a disparaging comment from an architecture critic's review.

Built in 1964 to house one man's art collection, it sat empty for years at the edge of Columbus Circle before being sold to the Museum of Arts and Design in 2005 to become its new home.

Now, after close to \$100 million for a redesign and more than a little controversy over whether it should have been preserved as it was, the museum opened its doors to the public Saturday.

Gone is the solid facade; concrete was cut away and glass added to allow more light into the building. The facade itself was covered with ceramic tiles with a unique glaze created specifically for the site that allows for different colours to be seen depending on the time of day.



The Museum of Arts and Design in its new space at 2 Columbus Circle is photographed Thursday, Sept. 18, 2008 in New York. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS/Mary Altaffer

"We sort of see this building as the first object in our collection," said Holly Hotchner, the museum's director. "It's actually a piece of sculpture."

As to whether it will become as well-known as what was there before, she said she doesn't know. "I think time will tell if it becomes iconic in its own way," she said, adding, "The other building didn't become iconic for years."

Not everyone is thrilled with seeing a new look to the building, even if it changes what had been a forbidding exterior.

Preservationists had fought against the sale of the building, saying the building should have had a hearing to determine whether it should have been designated a landmark. Author Tom Wolfe supported that effort, as did artists like Chuck Close and Frank Stella. Preservation groups

Upcoming Council Meetings
October 20th, 6:30 p.m.
at Millennium Place

Tonight in Prime Time

	8:00 PM	8:30 PM	9:00 PM	9:30 PM	10:00 PM	10:30 PM
	Wife Swap New, Video		Supernanny New		20/20 HD, New	
	Ghost Whisperer HD, New		The Ex List HD, New		NUMB3RS HD, New	
	Are You Smarter Than a 5th Grader?				Q13 FOX News at Ten New	
	Crosoe HD, New, Video				Life HD, New	
	Air Force-Flight New	Rick Mercer Report	Doctor Who New		CBC News: The National New	
	Crosoe New, Video				Kaya	Everyb Hates Chris New

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- Thursday's late-night TV wrap-up of U.S. election campaign
- Live from New York, it's Sarah Palin; Republican to appear on 'SNL' this week
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- Rodney Dangerfield's widow settles video lawsuit

sued, but the suit was dismissed.

Kate Wood, executive director of Landmark West, which was part of the suit, said it wasn't a question of the old design versus the new design, but about preserving something of historical interest.

"It was really, why did we have to destroy something that was an important work of art?" she said.

"It really doesn't matter what the new facade looks like, the damage has been done."

Hotchner acknowledged that the redesign would always be controversial to some, but it created what the museum was looking for in its new home.

The institution now has the space to display not only temporary exhibits but also its collection, something it didn't have the room to do in its old home.

And the location, near the Time Warner Center, makes it the only museum in the area. In its old location, it was one of three such institutions, and one of the others was among the city's most high-profile - the Museum of Modern Art.

"One of the big issues of moving was the difficulty of having an identity in the shadow of MoMA," Hotchner said.

Visitors weren't likely to come to see the museum's exhibits after having spent hours at MoMA, she said.

Brad Cloepfil, who designed the new building, said the redesign took what had been known more as a mere visual marker because of its odd design and turned it into something welcoming to the public.

"It was an inherently private building that we've rendered public," he said. "We took something that was solid and made it transparent."

The museum's mission is to look not only at what artists create, but also at how they create it.

"We're interested in artists for whom the making is part of the meaning of the piece," said curator David Revere McFadden. "They feel the way their art is put together is part of the message."

The new location allows the museum to explore this even further: There are studios on the sixth floor that will feature a continually changing group of artists whom visitors will be able to watch create their work.

"People are fascinated by process," Hotchner said. "There will always be some artist demonstrating some kind of technique."

The museum is opening with four exhibits: a selection from its collection, a view of pieces that collectors have promised to the institution, "Second Lives: Remixing the Ordinary," and "Elegant Armor: The Art of Jewelry."

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On the Net:

Museum of Arts and Design: <http://www.madmuseum.org>



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