



AUSTIN MUSEUM OF ART (formerly Laguna Gloria Art Museum)

Architects: Venturi, Scott Brown and Associates, Inc. in association with RIOGroup

Location: Austin, TX

Client: Austin Museum of Art; The City of Austin

Area: 86,000 gsf

Completion: 1988 (construction documents); 1997 (project resumed)

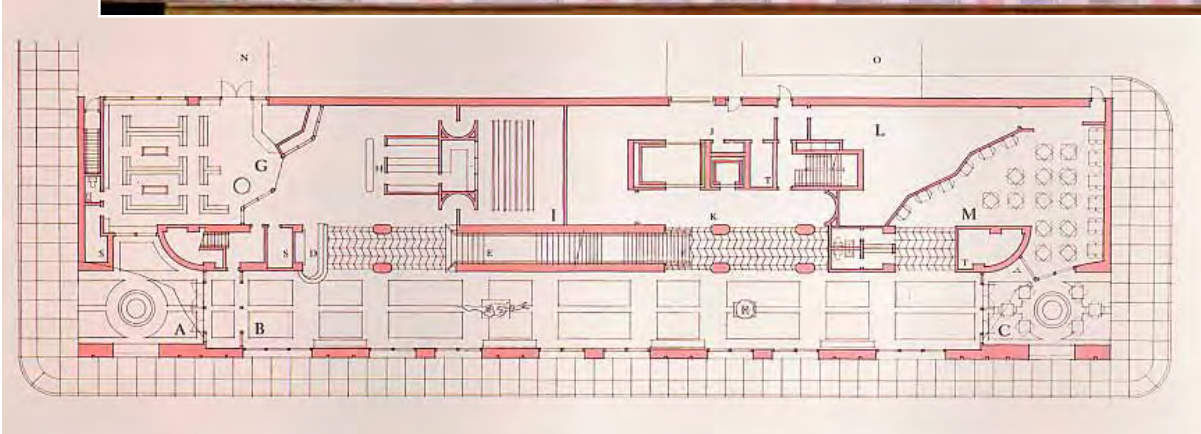
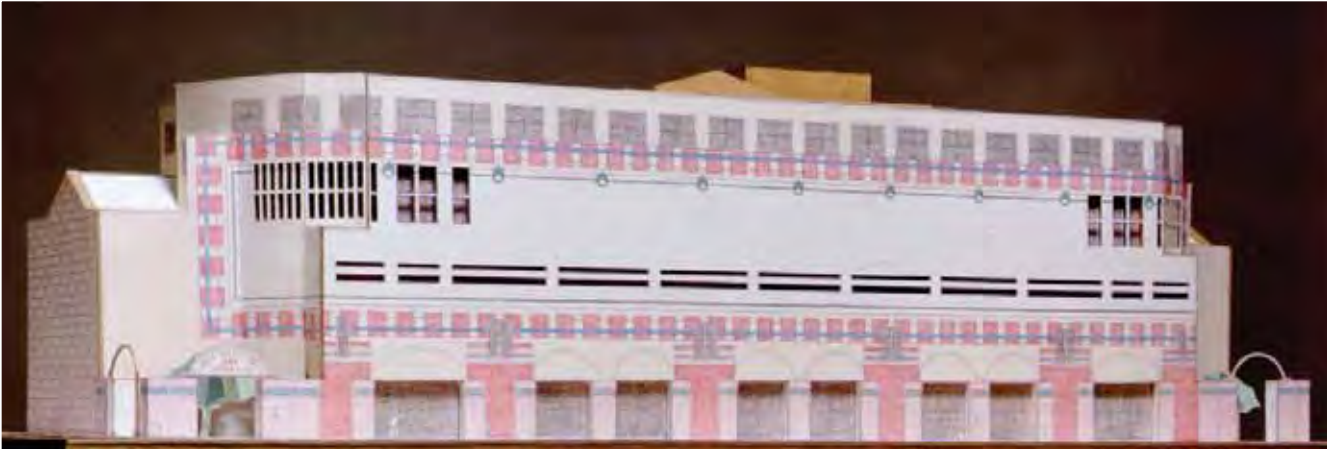
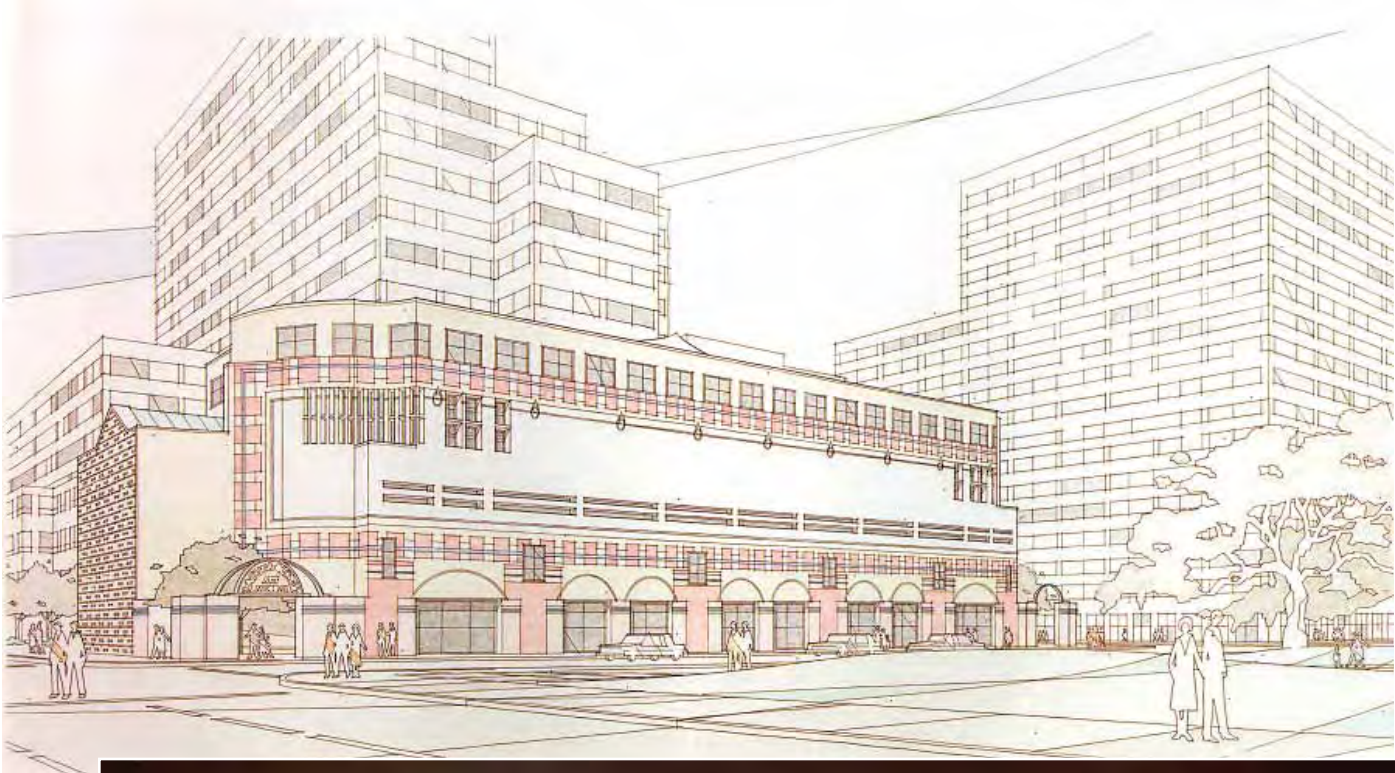
The Museum, specializing in 20th-century American art, was designed to serve as a focal point for its immediate neighborhood, visually and programmatically.

Its front facade presents a bold image, as a flag-like limestone panel framed by a colorful stone and tile border and supported on a giant order of piers. Curves at the ends of the great panel create a small entrance courtyard on the east and a dining patio for the Museum restaurant on the west. Inside, a glassed-in gallery connects the courtyard and patio and parallels the sidewalk -- making the transition from outside to inside gradual and inviting. Opening onto the lobby, two parallel spatial zones contain the Museum store, information and service areas, elevators, and a grand stairway.

On the second floor are two parallel series of galleries in traditional long configurations, dictated here by the elongated site. The front galleries receive natural northern light indirectly from high windows; occasional small windows at eye level invite one to peek at the beautiful park and skyline. These galleries permit a flexibility of shape, size, and lighting appropriate for a contemporary art gallery. The rear galleries, neutral in character and lit artificially, are even more flexible. They are joined at the outer ends by places to sit and rest and look outside.

The upper two floors contain more gallery space; a classroom and children's activity area; art handling, storage, and curatorial spaces; and administrative offices. Two below-grade levels contain a 300-seat theater and lobby as well as service and mechanical spaces.

The Museum Board paused the project to adapting the program to accommodate art from the community's ethnic cultures, address other changes in the Museum's function and focus, and reconsider the location and size of the Museum's site.



Austin Museum of Art