

The museum is, in essence, a single 65,000-square-foot room, separated by partial height walls into galleries, none a discrete, fully enclosed room. Overhead, hundreds of elliptical oculi bathe the interior in even, full-spectrum daylight, modulated to filter out damaging rays. In this gently luminous setting, the artwork takes on heightened vividness. Outside, matte anodized aluminum panels that enclose the building continue the discourse with the landscape. From oblique vantage points on the exterior, underlying strips of polished stainless steel capture unexpected and scintillating reflections. The project is recipient of a 2011 American Institute of Architects (AIA) Honor Award for Architecture.



© Scott Frances Inside the North Carolina Museum of Art, the light of day and the lush surrounding hills have a presence unusual in institutional galleries for art. Overhead, hundreds of elliptical oculi, in long, parallel, coffered vaults bathe the museum's interior in even, full-spectrum daylight, modulated in intensity by layered materials that filter out damaging rays. In the gently luminous setting, against pure white walls, the artwork takes on heightened immediacy and vividness. {sidebar id=2}

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A departure from traditional hierarchies, the museum, in some respects, is a single 65,000-square-foot room. Within this spatial continuum, a succession of wall planes, many

freestanding without reaching the ceiling, delineate separate galleries. But none of the spaces forms a discrete, fully enclosed room. Instead, a corner or two of each gallery remains open, inviting flow from one area to the next.



© Iwan Baan Outside the building skin—a rain screen of pale, matte anodized-aluminum panels, sheaths the museum and carries on the discourse with the landscape. These aluminum sheets, arrayed like great vertical pleats or shingles, softly pick up surrounding colors and movement. From oblique vantage points, the underlying strips of mirror-polished stainless steel that angle the panels off the facade capture unexpected, fragmented, and scintillating reflections. The expansion galleries at the North Carolina Museum of Art will provide a distinct visitor experience in a state-of-the-art "energy smart" building.

Naturally illuminating the interior environment provides color rendering and light levels ideal for viewing art, while efficient temperature and air quality controls, lighting and envelope systems provide the ideal interior environment for preserving North Carolina's priceless collection of art.

AIA's Honor Award Jury comments:

Worthy of recognition for the precision and technology that went into the design of the ceiling and light well – the way daylight is brought into this building is ingenious.

From a distance, the building appears as a normal industrial building fitting into its context – upon approach it is an amazingly precise and elegant box.
Very unique for a museum in that it contributes to the overall master plan for this part of the city.

Project Credits:

Architect: Thomas Phifer and Partners

Local Architect: Pearce Brinkley Cease + Lee

Structural Engineer: Skidmore, Owings & Merrill LLP

Mechanical Engineer: AltieriSeborWieber

Landscape Architect: Lappas + Havener

Lighting Design: Fisher Marantz Stone

Natural Lighting Design: Arup, London and New York

Environmental Design: Artifex ED, Inc

Civil Engineering: Kimley-Horn Associates

Acoustics: Creative Acoustics

General Contractor: Balfour Beatty; Barnhill

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