

## LACMA's New David Geffen Galleries, Designed by Peter Zumthor, Open April 19

**Sculptural Building Spanning Wilshire Boulevard Offers New Vision for a Global Art Collection**



(Image captions on page 6)

(Los Angeles, CA—April 15, 2026) Following two decades of physical and programmatic transformation as the largest and most comprehensive art museum in the western United States, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) will celebrate the ribbon-cutting for its new David Geffen Galleries on Sunday, April 19. Designed by renowned architect Peter Zumthor, the building was created as the home for LACMA's permanent collection and a vision of what a global art museum might be in today's world.

The building's elevated exhibition level offers sweeping views of Los Angeles while creating open plazas and new outdoor public space below. The horizontal design enables LACMA to present all artworks on a single level without giving precedence to any culture, tradition, or era. The installation enables curators to make original, revelatory connections unbounded by traditional classifications, and visitors are freed from prescribed paths to follow their own curiosity, as they encounter a wealth of new artworks and see old favorites in a fresh light. New works from LACMA's collection of 155,000 objects spanning 6,000 years of world history will continue to be added over time, so visitors can always expect to see something new in the galleries.

Michael Govan, LACMA CEO and Wallis Annenberg Director, said, "On April 19, we will be welcoming the first visitors to the long-awaited David Geffen Galleries. Designed by the incomparable Peter Zumthor, this new home for our permanent collection holds millennia of global artistic exchanges, illuminating traditions and innovations from the many cultures that are present in Los Angeles today. We welcome our neighbors and visitors from both near and far with immense gratitude to

the civic and philanthropic leaders who championed the public-private partnership that has built the David Geffen Galleries, to the architect who has created this beautiful building, and to the curators and artists whose astonishing work has brought these spaces to life.”

### **Architectural Design**

Peter Zumthor’s organic, sculptural design for the David Geffen Galleries is a 900-foot-long, horizontal, glass-and-concrete structure that curves freely as it stretches along Hancock Park and across Wilshire Boulevard.

The main floor, elevated almost 30 feet above street level, is the dedicated exhibition space for LACMA’s permanent collection, comprising galleries with varied scales, configurations, and lighting conditions. No single path through the galleries is prescribed by the architecture.

Rather than providing uniform illumination, Zumthor’s design allows light and shadow to work in dialogue. The exhibition spaces vary from terrace galleries around the perimeter, where light streams into the building through floor-to-ceiling glass panels, to sheltered interior galleries. Custom curtains made of sputter-plated chrome textiles by Tokyo-based textile designer Reiko Sudō have a metallic sheen but are transparent, and add further dimension to the building’s architecture while providing protection for light-sensitive works. Subtle changes in the natural light will make every visit feel new, depending on the time of day, season, and weather.

### **Inaugural Installation**

Forty-five curators working across areas of study collaborated on the inaugural installation of the David Geffen Galleries, in which works of art from the museum’s collection fill 110,000 square feet of gallery space.

Departing from traditional narratives, the installation uses the Pacific, Indian, and Atlantic Oceans and the Mediterranean Sea as a framework to explore innovative ways to connect cultures and artistic traditions, and tell multiple stories that renew a singular art historical narrative, creating vital and surprising connections across time and place.

Works in the Atlantic Ocean galleries tell the story of how artistic traditions developed independently around the Atlantic rim for millennia and how the arrival of Europeans in the Caribbean initiated permanent contact between Europe and the Americas, transforming trade and artistic practice. Works in these galleries include African and Black American textiles; modern Latin American paintings, sculpture, and furniture; LACMA’s deep holdings of 20th-century photography; art of the United States across media; and highlights from LACMA’s expansive collection of decorative arts and design.

The Pacific Ocean galleries explore the dynamic exchange of the region, shaped by Indigenous voyaging, imperial expansion, and global trade. In this section are works from across Oceania; figurative ceramics from West Mexico to the Pacific Coast of Peru; objects reflecting Spanish America as a global mercantile center; and blue-and-white porcelain from East Asia; works that explore the historical and mythical aspects of the American West; and experimentation in design, printmaking, and engineering long associated with California.

The Indian Ocean is one of humankind's longest maritime exchange networks and home to many of the world's oldest port cities, connecting robust maritime networks with overland routes, including the so-called Silk Road. Artworks in these galleries span the full chronological range of the collection. Sculptures from South and Southeast Asia—one of the LACMA collection's strengths—are considered in a variety of contexts, including religious practice, historical significance, and stylistic development. Textiles are also prominently featured, from Indonesian batiks and Kashmir shawls to the grand Ardabil Carpet.

The Mediterranean Sea galleries consider the region's cultural interconnectedness expressed through shared materials, techniques, and stylistic practices. They feature paintings, drawings, sculpture, and decorative arts from the Islamic world and Europe; highlights of the arts of territories once ruled by Spain; Egyptian, Greek, and Roman antiquities; Baroque masterpieces that represent classical revivals in Europe and America alongside objects from which they drew inspiration; an elaborate reception room from Damascus, Syria, and much more.

LACMA has commissioned four major new artworks for installation in the David Geffen Galleries. One of the first works that visitors will see when they enter the galleries will be Todd Gray's *Octavia's Gaze* (2025), a three-dimensional assemblage of framed photographs of landscapes, people, architectural details, and museum interiors including a portrait of the author Octavia Butler, who lends her name to the work. Also on view is Do Ho Suh's *Jagyeong Hall, Gyeongbok Palace* (2026), a meticulous, ghost-like installation comprising an actual-size contemporary re-creation of a section of the primary Joseon royal palace in Seoul. Two works commissioned from Lauren Halsey—a 10-foot-long reclining sphinx sculpture and a wall-filling relief—and a newly acquired bust by Tavares Strachan, *Fulani (A Map of the Crown)* (2024), are installed in the Mediterranean galleries, among works that reflect Egypt's ancient interplay with Greco-Roman culture on the one side and Nubia on the other. Installed in LACMA's new restaurant on the plaza level will be Sarah Rosalena's *Threading the Boundless: Omnidirectional Terrain* (2025), a 27-foot-long tapestry woven with handweaving patterns using satellite images the artist distorted of planetary terrains such as Mars and Earth.

## **Plaza and Public Art**

The exhibition level of the David Geffen Galleries is supported by seven pavilions that provide space for education and public programs, a theater, retail, and restaurants. The spaces between and around the pavilions, shaded by the main floor above, offer thoughtfully designed open areas for public art at the plaza level, including the **East West Bank Commons** and the **W.M. Keck Plaza** on the north side of Wilshire Boulevard. The **LACMA Store** and **Erewhon at LACMA** will open on April 19, with the **W.M. Keck Education Center** opening May 3. LACMA's restaurant will open in the fall, along with the theater and wine bar.

The entire 207,000-square-foot ground plane of the plaza is a commissioned artwork by Mariana Castillo Deball titled *Feathered Changes*. Working closely with Peter Zumthor, Castillo Deball created a work that connects the new building to the site's history as a nourishing marshy ecosystem, in an expansive meditation on time, place, and geologic history.

Additional commissioned works installed on the plaza include Pedro Reyes's *Tlali* (2026), an 18-foot-high stone carving set against the backdrop of the museum's façade, and Diana Thater's light installation *Five Days in Claude Monet's Garden* (2026), which takes shape beneath the portion of the building that crosses Wilshire Boulevard. A sculpture by Shio Kusaka titled *Beam* (2026), commissioned for the plaza, will be installed this summer.

Anchoring the spaces south of Wilshire Boulevard is Jeff Koons's Split-Rocker, the 37-foot-tall living sculpture that was recently acquired by LACMA. Inspired by the tradition of topiaries in 18th-century European gardens, Split-Rocker comprises more than 45,000 flowering plants that have been chosen for Southern California's climate.

Beloved sculptures that have become synonymous with the museum, such as Tony Smith's monumental *Smoke* (1967), are back on view. Alexander Calder's *Three Quintains (Hello Girls)* (1964), one of his few fountain works, has been reimaged within a new pool designed for it by Zumthor. LACMA's significant collection of large-scale works by Auguste Rodin has been reinstalled in the new 8,000-square-foot **Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Sculpture Garden** along the north side of Wilshire Boulevard, paired with sculptures by Los Angeles contemporary artist Liz Glynn.

### **Opening Events**

On April 16, the museum will inaugurate the building with an **Opening Gala** for the David Geffen Galleries, co-chaired by LACMA trustees Willow Bay and Tony Ressler. The opening events will culminate with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on April 19.

From April 19 through May 3, LACMA members will have priority access to the inaugural exhibition and will receive invitations to special events. For the latest conversation in [The Genesis Talks](#) on April 22 on the East West Bank Commons,

Peter Zumthor and Michael Govan will dive into the design of the Geffen Galleries, exploring light, space, and the power of architecture to shape the museum experience. To mark the opening of the W.M. Keck Education Center, the museum will offer free museum access and a full day of programming and activities on May 3 for **NexGenLA**, a free youth membership for L.A. County residents 17 years and younger.

On June 20, LACMA will host a **Block Party**—the first free, public event on the reimagined campus—from 10 am until 7 pm. The festivities will include free admission to the David Geffen Galleries as well as other exhibitions. Other activities will include guided gallery tours, art activities for kids, DJ sets and live music throughout the day, as well as global culinary offerings for purchase.

The block party will conclude with [The Art Parade](#), a large-scale public procession on Museum Row. The Art Parade ran annually in New York from 2005 to 2008, conceived by art dealer and curator Jeffrey Deitch. This Los Angeles edition will bring artists, musicians, performers, art students, and the entire creative community together for a collaborative reimagining of Deitch's original vision that both celebrates this cultural moment and brings the museum directly to the city.

Activating LACMA's campus and surrounding public space through artistic participation and shared experience, both the block party and The Art Parade underscore the museum's longstanding commitment to celebrating artists, presenting art in public spaces, and engaging broad and diverse audiences. The entire day is part of [Third Weekends at LACMA](#), a monthly series of programs and events.

### ***Building LACMA Campaign***

The Building LACMA campaign has raised more than \$875 million toward the expansion and transformation of the museum, including nearly \$724 million for the design and construction of the David Geffen Galleries. The David Geffen Galleries is the fruit of the long-term public-private partnership between the museum and Los Angeles County, which invested \$125 million. A commitment to building new galleries for LACMA's extraordinary permanent collection has inspired some of the most significant gifts of funds and art in the museum's history, from a broad-based community of supporters.

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**Credits:**

The Opening Gala is presented by Genesis



Additional Support by Gucci

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The Series of David Geffen Galleries opening events is presented by East West Bank



The Block Party is presented by East West Bank Foundation



The Genesis Talks is presented by Genesis



**About LACMA:** Located on the Pacific Rim, LACMA is the largest art museum in the western United States, with a collection of 155,000 objects that illuminate 6,000 years of artistic expression across the globe. Committed to showcasing a multitude of art histories, LACMA exhibits and interprets works of art from new and unexpected points of view that are informed by the region's rich cultural heritage and diverse population. LACMA's spirit of experimentation is reflected in its work with artists, technologists, and thought leaders as well as in its regional, national, and global partnerships to share collections and programs, create pioneering initiatives, and engage new audiences.

**Location:** 5905 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA, 90036. [lacma.org](http://lacma.org)

**Image captions:** (Left) Exterior view northeast from Wilshire Boulevard with Chris Burden's *Urban Light* (2008) in foreground, David Geffen Galleries at LACMA, art © Chris Burden/licensed by The Chris Burden Estate and Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York, photo © Iwan Baan; (right) view southeast from exhibition level with *The Bateman Mercury* (2nd-century copy after a Greek original of the 4th century BCE), David Geffen Galleries at LACMA, photo © Iwan Baan

**Press contact:** [press@lacma.org](mailto:press@lacma.org)

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