

Expressionism in Germany and France: From Van Gogh to Kandinsky

Expressionism in Germany and France: From Van Gogh to Kandinsky is the last of four consecutive exhibitions designed by Frederick Fisher and Partners Architects (FFP) for the Los Angeles County Museum of Art's (LACMA) Resnick Pavilion. The first three exhibitions were *Bodies and Shadows: Caravaggio and His Legacy*, *Hans Richter: Encounters*, and *See the Light—Photography, Perception, Cognition: The Marjorie and Leonard Vernon Collection*. The design challenges for four consecutive exhibits have been: to develop an exhibition architecture in keeping with the vast scale, structural order, and day lighting of the loft-like Renzo Piano–designed Resnick Pavilion; to create an environment that enhances four dramatically different themes and eras; and to demonstrate sustainable design and construction strategies for LACMA's prolific exhibition program.

FFP's approach is to create, through simple architectural structures, four divergent emotional and intellectual spaces. The emotional space relates to harmonizing the emotional experience of the artwork with the galleries. The intellectual space relates to the communication of formal and conceptual content about the artwork through the characteristics of the space. The experience of the space and artwork is dramatically varied over the four installations through manipulations of light, color, and media, while the basic construction remains unchanged.

The architectural framework is a series of simple L-shaped walls that create nine spaces. These L walls respond to the existing building character and create a dialogue with the space. The nine staggered elements appear as masses on approach from the gallery entrance and are revealed as spaces when viewed from the opposite direction.

The central spine—or pathway through the gallery—changes with each show. The spine has previously included a series of walls with no artwork, a series of didactic information, cinematic surfaces, and a series of painting displays. For each installation the variations occur with color, material, lighting, and adjustments to the walls to accommodate video installations, vitrines, and seating.

The reuse of the walls within the gallery is evidence of LACMA's interest in creating a green and sustainable approach to exhibition design.

For *Expressionism in Germany and France: From Van Gogh to Kandinsky*, the palette consists of two paint colors: black and blue. The blue is used as the connecting tissue of the

work to Paris. To further illuminate the Paris connection, the existing white paint color selected by Renzo Piano on the ceiling is lowered to a 14' height off the floor, creating a contemporary frieze and the feeling of the "Paris Atelier." To enhance this experience, fluorescent up lighting is color corrected for a daylight experience and the artwork is illuminated to create a sensorial atmosphere.

The terminus of the exhibit ends with a photo mural and the bookstore/shop.

—Frederick Fisher and Partners, Architects