

TRAVEL

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Get past facade to heart of Museum of Arts & Design

Permanent, current exhibits a draw at ridiculed building

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By Bonnie Friedman
Special to The Advertiser

Where: Museum of Arts & Design, New York City

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What: In 1964, the heir to the A&P supermarket chain, Huntington Hartford, commissioned Edward Durrell Stone to design a modernist structure for his world-class art collection.

The building at 2 Columbus Circle — on an irregular trapezoidal lot — has been the subject of conversation, controversy, and, frankly, some ridicule ever since. It became known as The Lollipop Building after one architecture critic called it a "die-cut Venetian palazzo on lollipops."

Its days as a modern art museum were numbered, too, a brief five years — I vividly remember an astounding Dali exhibit — and for 20 years after that it was, basically, an office building. During years of battles over whether or not it should be granted landmark status (it never was), it stood vacant and in disrepair.

Finally, in 2008, with a controversial new facade by Oregon-based designer Brad Cloepfil, it reopened as the permanent home of the Museum of Arts & Design. And it was immediately and soundly criticized by The New York Times architecture critic Nicolai Ouroussoff who said the new building should be torn down.

Let's go inside, shall we? The permanent collection — glassware, textiles, three-dimensional objects useful and decorative, jewelry — is a good one.

Other features: Two current exhibitions are fantastic. "Slash — paper under the knife" (through April 4, 2010) shows what can be done with paper and cardboard in the hands of extreme creative types.

Reason enough to go, though, is "Read My Pins" (through Jan. 31, 2010), a masterfully installed exhibit of dozens and dozens of Madeleine Albright's pins. They became her trademark accessory when she was ambassador to the U.N. and then secretary of state.

There are photos of her wearing many of them with statements about what they mean to her. The stories range from the hysterical to the heartbreaking.

If you go: Turn right when you exit the building, cross the street and take a stroll through Central Park — weather permitting, of course. Turn left and you'll be steps from the huge Time Warner Center with lots of shopping and dining options. Chef Michael Lomonaco's Porter House New York is a particularly great choice.



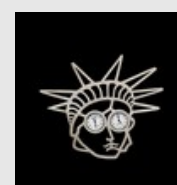
The Museum of Arts & Design features a controversial facade by designer Brad Cloepfil.

HÉLÈNE BINET | MAD



Former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright understood that fashion, rather than being a burden, could be another tool in her diplomatic arsenal. An exhibition at the Museum of Arts & Design in New York features 200 of the brooches she collected at flea markets and costume jewelry boutiques. The exhibit is open through Jan. 31.

State Department via Washington Post



Liberty brooch.

Museum of Arts & Design, 2 Columbus Circle, New York, NY 10023; Tuesdays to Sundays 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Thursdays 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Closed Mondays and major holidays. 212-956-3535, www.madmuseum.org.

John Bigelow Taylor