

Broad Contemporary Opens in Los Angeles

The Broad Contemporary Art Museum opened to fanfare, as well as some controversy in February. Entrepreneur Eli Broad and his wife Edythe gave \$56 million to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art for its construction, as well as \$10 million for acquisitions.

It was assumed that Broad would donate his vast collection to the space named for him, but in January he announced to the surprise of many that he plans to control his 2,000 piece collection of modern and contemporary works rather than donate them to the institution. Broad felt that the collection would reach more people if the art could be lent to other museums instead of largely remaining in storage at LACMA.

1,600 of the artworks are currently held by his non-profit Broad Art Foundation, the other 400 in his personal collection. 160 works from his collection were lent for the inaugural exhibition of 220 works. In the deal that Broad and LACMA signed in 2003, it was never stipulated that all or part of the collection would be given to the museum. To date, Broad Art Foundation has reportedly made 7,000 loans to 400 institutions. Museum directors rely on gifts from prominent collectors and this move makes most extremely nervous. BCAM is just one element of LACMA's three-part expansion, and this revelation has left some doubting the museum's ability to complete the transformation.

Additionally, the inaugural exhibition was criticized for not being adequately diverse. Only one artist, Jean-Michel Basquiat, of 29 is not white and only four women were included. An overwhelming majority of the artists are New York based, a disappointment to those who thought the vibrant Los Angeles contemporary community would be better represented.

The new building on the LACMA campus was designed by Renzo Piano. The three-story space features a semi-permanent display of works from the collections of LACMA and Broad, as well as three and sixth month temporary exhibitions. There are impressive works by Andy Warhol, Jasper Johns, Ellsworth Kelly, Robert Rauschenberg, Damien Hirst, Richard, Serra, Jeff Koons, and Cindy Sherman.

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