

Texas Architect

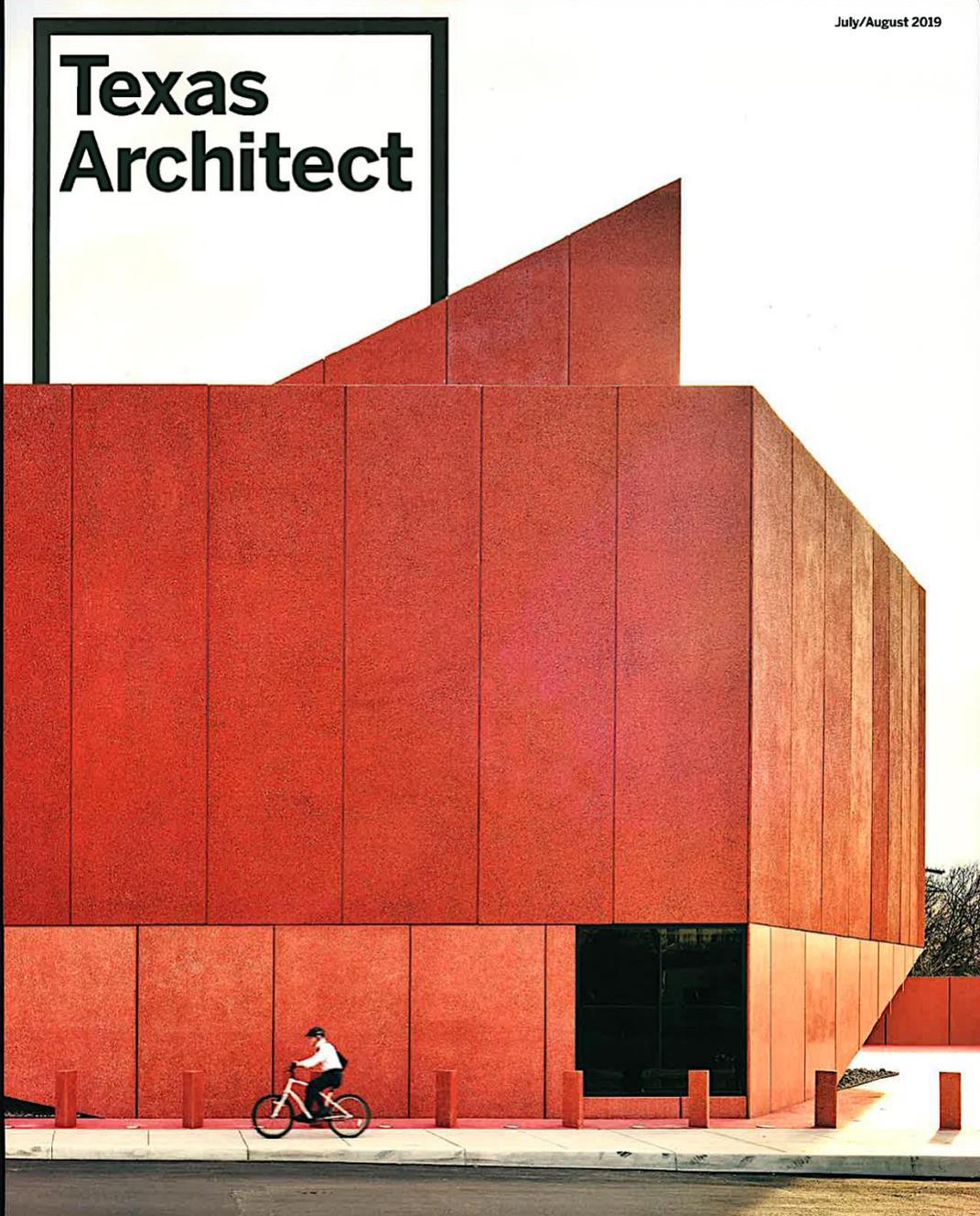
August 2019

July/August 2019

Texas Architect

Texas Society of Architects The Voice for Texas Architecture

69
10





Dreaming in Red

Ruby City is the new exhibition space of the Linda Pace Foundation in San Antonio. Defined by precast panels in three shades of red, it's an intriguing figure, suggesting a sort of magic.

Architect Adjaye Associates

Architect of Record Alamo Architects

General Contractor The Whiting-Turner Contracting

Structural Engineers Guy Nordenson and Associates; Datum Engineers

MEP Engineer WSP

Civil Engineer KFW Engineers and Surveyors

Landscape Madrone Landscape Design and Construction

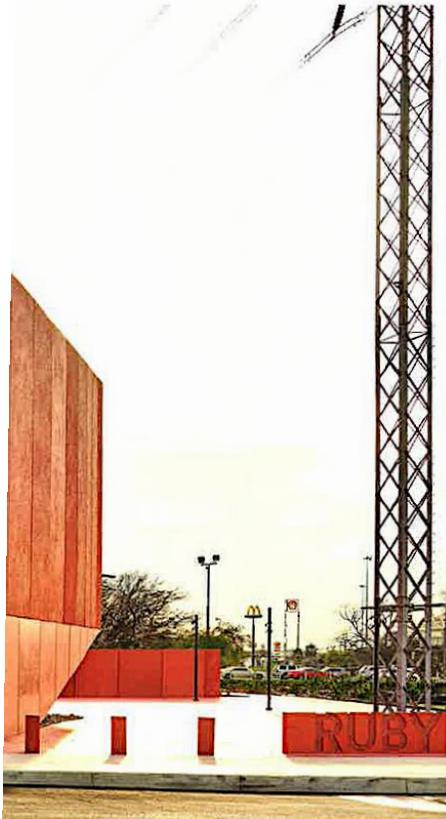
by **Anastasia Calhoun, Assoc. AIA**

The legacy of San Antonio artist, collector, and philanthropist Linda Pace lives on in her posthumous gift to San Antonio, Ruby City — a contemporary art center and new home to the Linda Pace Foundation — designed by world-renowned Ghanaian-British architect Sir David Adjaye in association with San Antonio-based Alamo Architects. Dedicated to building community through contemporary art, the art center and the foundation's programs are notably all free and open to the public.

“Ruby City fits into a narrative that is incredibly important to me: making civic and social spaces that are about bringing in diverse constituents from the city, a socially constructed architecture that can edify the community,” says Adjaye.

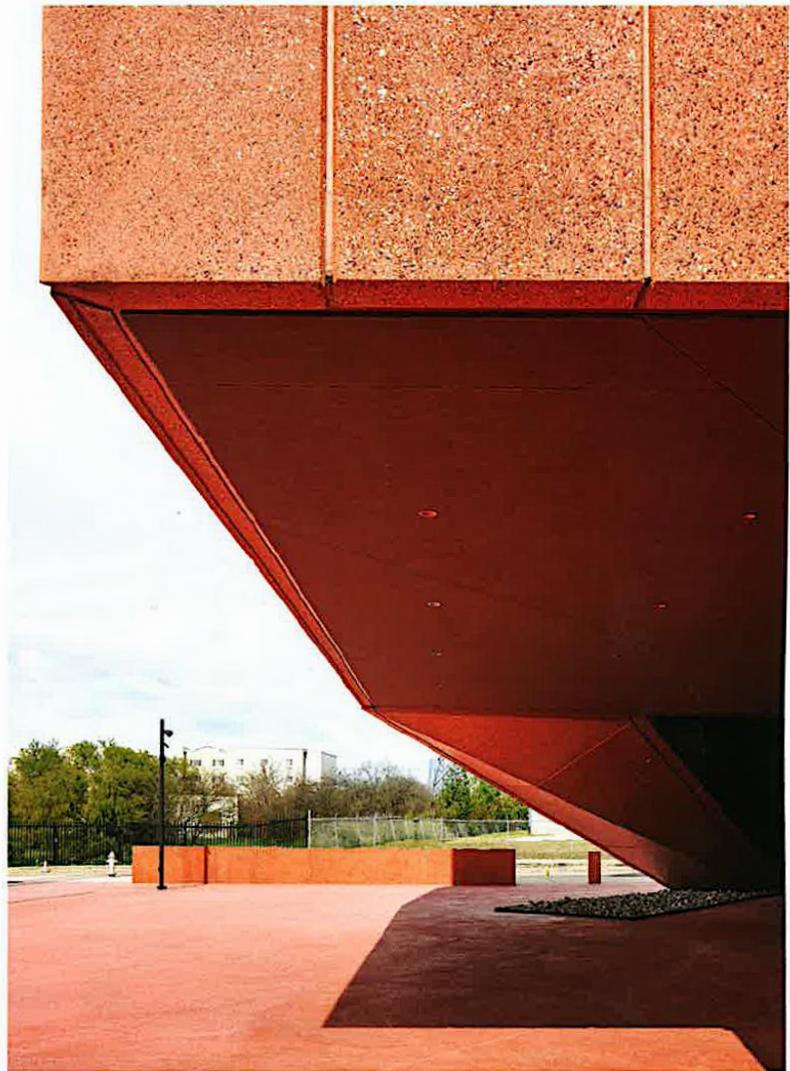
Ruby City sits just down the block from Chris Park, an intimate, one-acre public park named for Pace's son, with an auxiliary exhibition space, Studio, which until the construction of Ruby City has been the only space dedicated to

PHOTOS BY DIOR BALDINGER/FAIA



Above Two-faceted roof apertures animate the roofline while drawing daylight into the gallery spaces.

Right A deep cantilever near the entrance creates a zone for retinal adjustment.

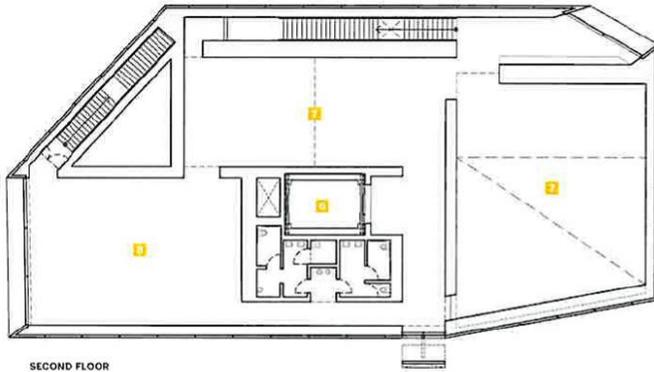


the display of works from the foundation's collection. The permanent collection includes over 900 works by postmodern and contemporary artists from around the world, including some of the finest visual artists of the 20th and 21st centuries.

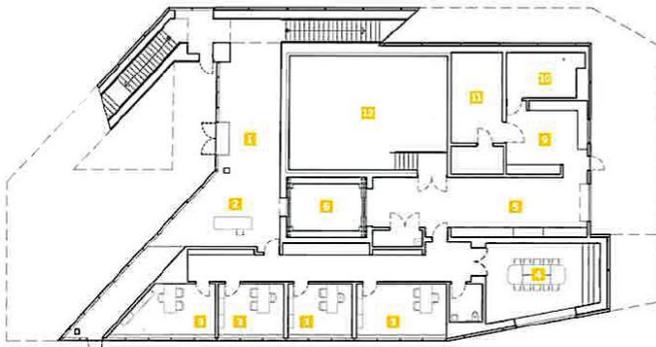
Although more than 200 works have been loaned to preeminent museums around the world, most of the permanent collection has never been publicly exhibited, because of space limitations. The art center, Chris Park, and Studio will form a new urban park and cultural campus, collectively known as Ruby City.

Ruby City's crimson concrete pavers and a new bridge will eventually connect the campus to San Pedro Creek, creating a new civic anchor for a celebration of the arts.

Ruby City is the physical manifestation of a dream Pace had in 2007. "Linda dreamt of this ruby-colored crown. She drew it, and it translated as a dense poem or hieroglyphic, an image loaded with information. ... The red comes from this form that would rise from the earth, which possesses an ethereal magic, an almost crystal-line quality," Adjaye says.

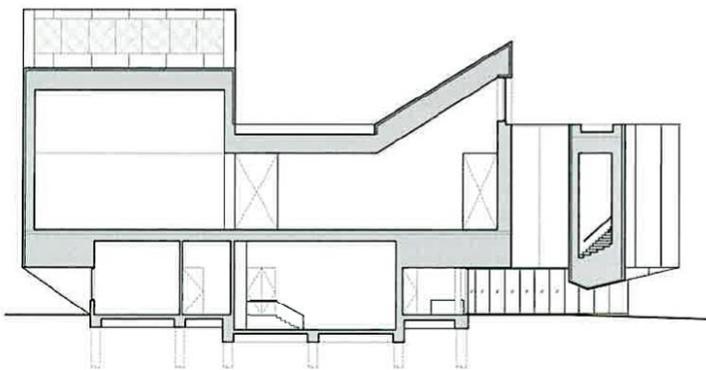


SECOND FLOOR

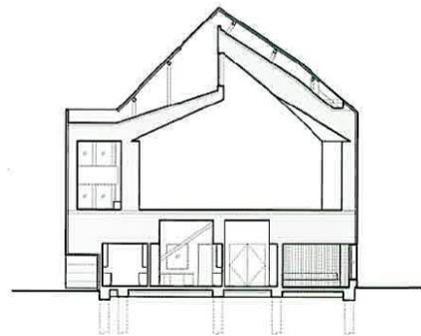


FIRST FLOOR

- FLOOR PLANS**
- 1 ENTRY
 - 2 RECEPTION
 - 3 OFFICE
 - 4 CONFERENCE ROOM
 - 5 LOADING
 - 6 ELEVATOR
 - 7 GALLERY
 - 8 MULTIMEDIA GALLERY
 - 9 BREAKROOM
 - 10 FILE STORAGE
 - 11 ELECTRICAL
 - 12 MECHANICAL



EAST-WEST SECTION



NORTH-SOUTH SECTION



One of the main apertures looks toward Chris Park, a one-acre public space dedicated to Linda Pace's son.



Left A pyramidal pitched ceiling form bounces light into the gallery.

Below Conceived as an ambulatory loop, the building will house major works by internationally acclaimed artists.

Facing The sculpture garden features Washington Skeleton chairs designed by Adjaye and artwork by Nancy Rubins.





The 14,000-sf building features over 10,000 sf of exhibition space comprising three daylight galleries, each having its own distinct character inspired by various artists' spaces through time. "For me, they allow this moment to see a sort of magic. If you're lucky enough to visit artists in their studios, you see the most incredible things. They feel like enchanted places — full of objects — and they give a sense that somehow there's a wondrous alchemy happening."

Adjaye continues: "There have been numerous iterations of these spaces. The three interpretations start with the first chamber — this pyramidal pitched form, which deforms to bring in light and reflect it into the main chamber. This illustrates the predilection, which began in the 19th century with barn conversions into working studios. The second chamber is about

functionalism and the specially designed artist studios of the early 20th century, highlighting the typological invention of how to reflect light into the chamber. The third and last chamber, with a large panoramic window to the river, looks at postwar factory buildings — simple, pared-back spaces that were appropriated for their ability to flood vast spaces with light."

The center is appropriately human-scaled, creating spaces that are both approachable and comfortable, a rarity in a building typology that often comes across as austere. The sculpture garden features a large-scale installation by Texas artist Nancy Rubins as well as Washington Skeleton chairs designed by Adjaye.

While not overtly didactic, much of Adjaye's work has an underlying social agenda founded in the geography and cultural memory of place.

Similarly, Ruby City draws upon San Antonio's Mexican roots. Its faceted, ruby-hued exterior — a combination of rough and polished precast concrete panels embedded with glass and mica aggregate — leverages an esteemed tradition of Mexican concrete construction while echoing the San Antonio Central Library (colloquially, "enchilada red"), designed by Mexican architect Ricardo Legoretta in the early 1990s.

"[Linda's] reach, her philanthropic work, her place in the city, her overall contribution continually led back to the importance of place and making landscapes for citizens and communities," Adjaye says.

Ruby City is scheduled to open in October 2019.

Anastasia Calhoun, Assoc. AIA, works at Overland Partners in San Antonio.