

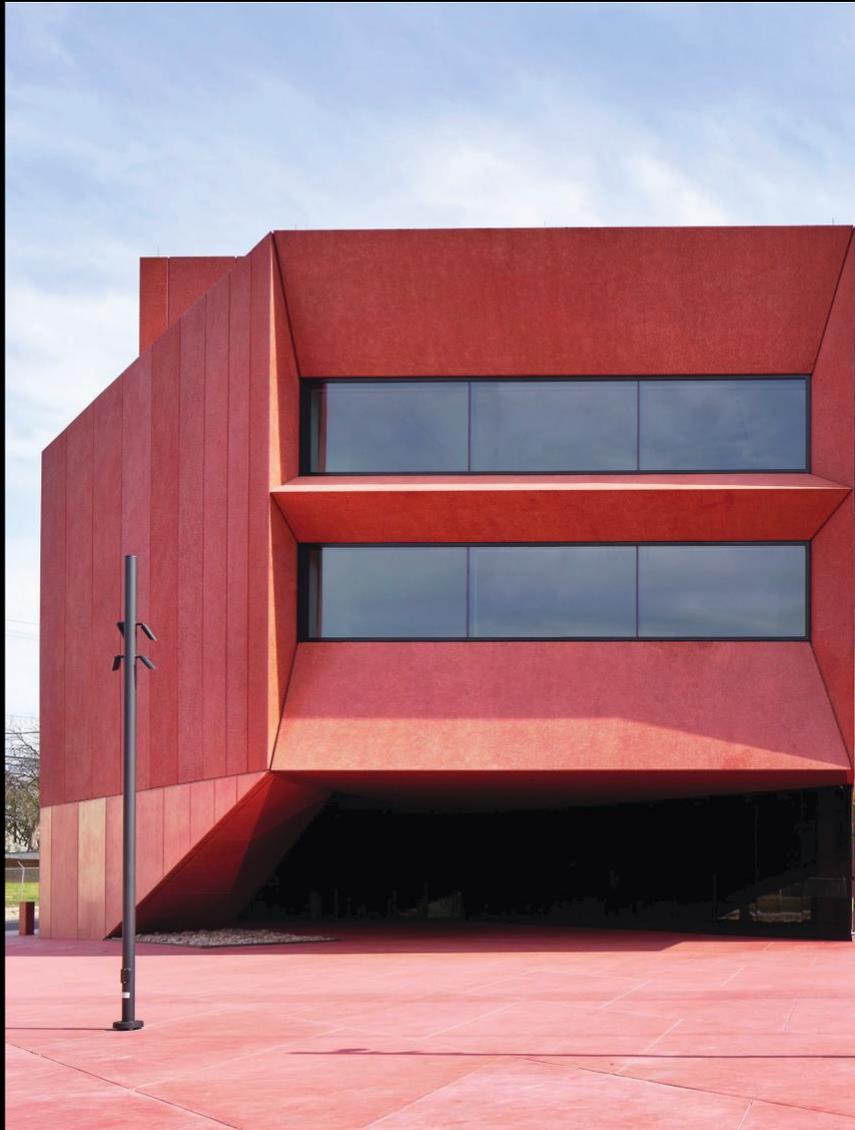
REALIZED

Twelve years after the death of artist, collector and philanthropist Linda Pace, the museum she envisioned in a dream opens to the public. Designed by renowned architect David Adjaye, Ruby City debuts with an exhibition dedicated to Pace's vision

DREAM

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BY
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PETTY

THOUGH THE BULK OF CONSTRUCTION AT RUBY CITY WAS FINISHED EARLIER THIS YEAR AND ARTWORK FOR ITS INAUGURAL EXHIBITIONS INSTALLED OVER THE SUMMER, THE NEW CONTEMPORARY ART CENTER ISN'T COMPLETE JUST YET.

“The final component is seeing people interact with it,” says Kelly O’Connor, head of collections and communications at Ruby City, which officially opens Oct. 13. “That’s the final piece of the puzzle.”

Having a place where San Antonians could enjoy the hundreds of contemporary art pieces she’d collected over the years was what Linda Pace, the late artist and philanthropist whose foundation is behind Ruby City, envisioned as early as 2004. “She was a very proud San Antonian and she wanted to build it for San Antonio,” says Kathryn Kanjo, a board trustee with the foundation and a former director of Artpace who worked with Pace.

Pace knew she wanted the architecture of her gallery to be as much a work of art as the pieces it housed but it wasn’t until April of 2007, when she was battling breast cancer, that her vision for the structure took shape. She woke up from a dream that month and, like she’d become accustomed to doing in her later years, jotted down notes that would soon become a colorful dream drawing, says O’Connor, then Pace’s studio assistant.

Architect David Adjaye, known now for designing the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, was up-and-coming in his field at the time and had agreed to take on Pace’s project a year earlier. Pace shared her drawing with him, describing the building as an emerald city, but red, O’Connor says, and in the ensuing years he crafted a museum that he describes as “an abstraction” of Pace’s dream. Along with taking cues from Linda’s colorful sketch and time spent with her in San Antonio, Adjaye also studied the history of the Alamo City, its historic missions and its connection to the river, infusing elements of lighting and design based on what he learned. Ruby City, he says, is “Linda’s little temple” of art.

Getting to opening day, though, has required patience and persistence. “The process to get here was a long one,” says O’Connor. “We had a major setback when the housing market crashed in 2008—that delayed us—but the timing of this is great. With all of the amazing things happening in San Antonio, everything came together at the right time.”

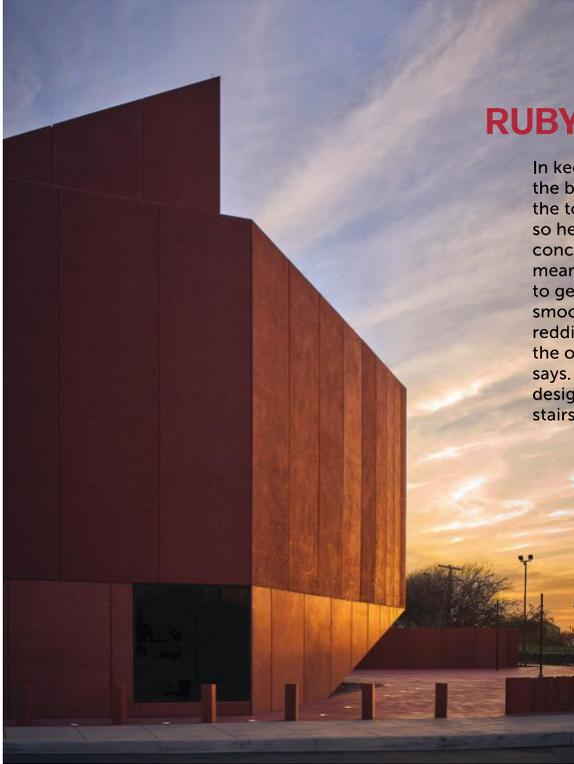
She and the small team at the Linda Pace Foundation worked closely with its board to keep the project going over the years. Pace died in 2007 before work to bring Adjaye’s design to life ever began.

Kanjo says while most construction projects morph and change by the time they’re complete, she believes Ruby City came out exactly as Pace envisioned. She served as curator for the *Waking Dream* exhibition that will open along with the building, selecting works from Pace’s 900-piece collection that show off the building’s design while celebrating the collection and dreams of the woman who conceived the project.

“It’s what she wanted,” Kanjo says. “It kind of breaks our heart every time we do think about that but it’s incredibly satisfying because it is what David and Linda discussed so many years ago. She would recognize it if she saw it.”



DROR BALDINGER/COURTESY RUBY CITY AND ADJAYE ASSOCIATES



RUBY RED

In keeping with Pace's dream, Adjaye knew the exterior of the building needed to be red. The color, however, is one of the toughest to maintain when faced with daily sun exposure so he turned to a company in Mexico to fabricate pre-cast concrete red panels using a variety of rich minerals that are meant to withstand weathering. It took months of testing to get the hue just right. The first 10 feet of the facade are smooth to the touch while the rest is rougher due to pieces of reddish glass that sparkle when the sun catches them. "From the outside it's this jewel and it kind of calls to you," Kanjo says. The same company produced the benches and chairs designed by Adjaye as well as the concrete floors and stairs inside.

INTENTIONAL FLOW

Gray cast concrete stairs to the left of the entrance lead visitors to three second-floor galleries. Stop to view a piece by San Antonio's Ana Fernandez installed at the top of the stairs as part of the opening exhibit. Adjaye designed the second floor to allow for guests to visit each space before descending on a different set of stairs. For *Waking Dream*, the second stairway features five virgin wool felt circles created by local artist Jesse Amado. "(Adjaye) wanted to create not just a space but an experience," Kanjo says.



SETTING THE TONE

Ruby City's entrance faces a soon-to-be-constructed extension of the San Pedro Creek development. The angles of the cantilevered building are such that the entry plaza and front door are shaded, helping to transition guests from the outdoors in. Look up before walking through the doors to see a sliver of light peeking through an opening between the walls. Inside, the first floor boasts red concrete floors that mimic the exterior color as well as dark red walls.

EXTERIOR: DROR BALDINGER/COURTESY RUBY CITY AND ADJAYE ASSOCIATES; INTERIOR: MARK MENJIMAR/COURTESY RUBY CITY

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7 PIECES TO LOOK FOR IN *WAKING DREAM*

"Red Project"

The first thing guests will see upon entering Ruby City is Linda Pace's collage of red, miscellaneous objects like stuffed animals, shoes and patches from her family's Pace Foods company.

"El Jesse Amado"

This oil portrait by Cruz Ortiz depicts another local artist and one of Artpace's first residents. The piece hangs in a hallway leading to the third gallery that features multiple artist portraits.

PROPERTY VIEWS

A concrete bench at the top of the first staircase provides a place to pause and enjoy a window view of the foundation's Chris Park across the street (both Chris Park and the foundation's smaller gallery, Studio, will continue to display artwork). Adjaye wanted to allow for some natural light so the windows here are not shaded and Maya Lin's "Phases of the Moon" was installed opposite the window because its beeswax material isn't impacted by sun exposure like other mediums.



"Untitled, 1974-2013"

Artist Kim Jones is known best for his performance work but used graphite to draw on and inside of a dollhouse based on his experiences in Vietnam. This is the first time the work has been on view for the public.

WEATHER MATTERS

The ideal relative humidity for the preservation of most artwork is 50 percent with an air temperature of 70 degrees F, O'Connor says. To achieve that inside Ruby City, a robust HVAC and humidity control system with artificial intelligence capabilities was installed, allowing for the building to always be within a degree or two of those optimum levels. Because most of the building was completed at the end of 2018, O'Connor says the system has had time to learn how to adapt through a few seasons of exterior temperature changes. It is constantly monitored, and an alert is sent to staff if the temperature or humidity gets out of range. As an extra precaution, a second monitoring system is in place that also will send alerts if issues arise. At the entrance, a fan blows outside air back toward the veranda whenever the door opens.



SUBTLE SPACES

The gray concrete floors in the second story exhibition space are pulled $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch away from the wall, creating a scarcely noticeable 3-inch deep crevice that can hide any cords or wires that might be needed for art installations. "It's very functional," O'Connor says.



NEW PERSPECTIVE

Knowing guests might not take note of the stairwell's design on their way up, Adjaye added an alcove to the side of the second gallery that allows guests to look out and down at the staircase. When visitors turn to walk back to the gallery, they'll see a small dream drawing by Pace hanging on the wall.



PRECISE LIGHTING

Pace's collection is diverse in both subject and material, making the installation of precisely the right lighting all that much more crucial. Adjaye relied on Erco—an architectural lighting company based in Germany that has a long history working in museums and galleries—to create a digitally controlled LED system that allows for different lighting levels on each piece. O'Connor says paper works, for example, are illuminated from above with dim, 3-foot candles while items like bronze sculptures can be more brightly lit. Lights that hang from the white ceiling can be adjusted at their base but are most often controlled by a computer system that allows staff to set levels remotely. Skylights in the first gallery are shaded to allow in some natural light without harming the art.

MARK MENJIVAR/COURTESY RUBY CITY

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7 PIECES TO LOOK FOR IN WAKING DREAM

"Heart of Darkness"

A hanging piece by former Artpace resident Cornelia Parker, the work was made with charcoal from a controlled burn-turned-wildfire plus blue steel florist wire.

"Chair for Man and His Spirit"

Kanjo selected this piece, in part, because its height helps to showcase the angles and beauty of the first gallery's high ceilings. The iron sculpture by Marina Abramovic invites visitors to sit and stare ahead.



THE JEWEL BOX

Though not open to the public, Ruby City's conference room, known as "The Jewel Box," is perhaps the space that evokes Pace's spirit the most. Thick wooden doors designed by artist Jorge Pardo that once hung in Pace's bedroom lead into the room. Inside, Adjaye designed the heaviest piece of furniture he's conceived to date—a 2,000-plus pound concrete table fabricated by the same company that worked on the exterior of the art center. The walls are covered in reclaimed longleaf pine, similar to what San Antonians might see in nearby historic homes, while a large window frames the Nancy Rubins sculpture in the garden outside. "Dreaming Red," a lightbox designed by Isaac Julien to honor Pace hangs on the opposite wall. Lining the hallway outside, Adjaye designed built-in shelves to house Pace's extensive book collection, which he'd noticed when working with her in her Camp Street loft.

FILM GALLERY

Pace is the largest collector of Isaac Julien films in the world so the third gallery was built out to Julien's specifications and features matching blue carpet, walls and specially designed felt curtains ordered from Sweden. Three HD projectors will play Julien's works, including *Playtime* (on view Oct. 13 through August 2020), onto three large screens.

LINGER OUTSIDE

Even before opening, Ruby City had been named "One of the World's Greatest Places" by *Time* magazine. Free admission inside and out is meant to encourage locals to return again and again. In the sculpture garden, free Wi-Fi means visitors can bring a laptop and work from one of the Adjaye-designed benches or chairs. There's also a small walking path and enough open space for Ruby City to host community programs, including live jazz nights and its annual family-friendly Bubble Fest. A sound piece by Susan Phillips will provide a daily soundtrack in the garden. ★



EXTERIOR: DICKOR BALDINGER/COURTESY RUBY CITY AND ADJAYE ASSOCIATES; INTERIOR: MARK MEUNJAP/COURTESY RUBY CITY

"Hub"

A new acquisition in the Pace Foundation collection, artist Do-Ho-Suh used purple polyester fabric and stainless steel to recreate part of his London apartment, even including details like a lightbox and switch.

"Be Amazing"

Sylvie Fleury's neon sculpture situated to the right of the entrance on the first floor is one of only a few pieces that won't rotate out even as the exhibitions change. O'Connor says it's already become a favorite selfie spot and invites the kind of admiration and interaction with art that Pace loved to see.

OPENING DAY
OCT. 13
150 CAMP STREET
RUBYCITY.ORG