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\$1.3 MILLION GRANT FROM THE MOODY FOUNDATION TO SUPPORT MAJOR RENOVATION AND EXPANSION OF THE CONTEMPORARY AUSTIN – JONES CENTER



The project, to be completed in summer 2016, will be led by architect Paul Lewis.

SEPTEMBER 5, 2015, Austin, Texas – The Contemporary Austin announces the launch of a major renovation and expansion of its downtown museum location, The Contemporary Austin – Jones Center. Made possible by a transformative \$1.3 million grant from The Moody Foundation of Galveston, Texas, along with pledges from several members of the museum’s Board of Trustees, the project will increase gallery space to more than 7,000 square feet through a reconfiguration of the interior areas and greatly expand the potential of the museum’s rooftop deck—which will be renamed the Moody Rooftop in recognition of the grant—through the addition of a permanent, open-air canopy.

“I am deeply grateful to The Moody Foundation,” said Louis Grachos, Ernest and Sarah Butler Executive Director of The Contemporary Austin. “The Foundation has a deep history of supporting significant cultural endeavors throughout the state, and we are honored to be among them. Their great foresight—along with the continued

dedication of our Board of Trustees—will allow us to fully maximize the potential of the Jones Center, resulting in measurably increased and enriched opportunities for all of our audiences to experience and learn from contemporary art—from K–12 students and adults from across Central Texas to visitors from around the world.”

Grachos continued, “The Contemporary Austin launched in 2013 with the mission to represent the spectrum of contemporary art through all that we do—exhibitions, education, and our permanent collection. The expansion and improvement of the Jones Center takes us a long way toward that mission, allowing us to mount exhibitions that we wouldn’t otherwise be able to bring to Austin and giving us increased capacity to organize illuminating films, concert, lectures, and other public programs on the rooftop.”

The Contemporary Austin – Jones Center is expected to be closed for renovations beginning in May 2016, with a grand reopening of the Jones Center expected in mid-fall of 2016. During this time, the museum will continue to offer exhibitions, events, and educational programs at its Laguna Gloria site, home to the Driscoll Villa, Betty and Edward Marcus Sculpture Park, Gatehouse Gallery, and the Art School.

The Contemporary Austin – Jones Center Renovations are being designed by the Jones Center’s original architect, Paul Lewis of LTL Architects. The project contractor is Zapalac Reed of Austin and Project Manager is Bob Newell of Austin’s Nelsen Partners. The total cost of the project is expected to be approximately \$3 million.

“I was thrilled when approached by Louis about rethinking the building,” said Paul Lewis. “A change in mission necessitates revisions to the space. Our approach to the building, which has evolved over the past century from a theater to a department store to a space for contemporary art, is to embrace that evolution as an essential attribute of the architecture. I am pleased to be a part of The Contemporary Austin as it grows in its ability to bring significant contemporary art to Austin.”

INTERIOR RENOVATION AND EXPANSION

Currently housing exhibitions in 5,100 square feet of space, The Contemporary Austin has greatly bolstered its standing within the Austin community and the broader art world through recent exhibitions of works by artists such as Marianne Vitale, Do Ho Suh, Tom Sachs, and Robert Therrien. With an increase to more than 7,000 square feet of exhibition space, the museum will have the capacity to organize larger-scale original shows conceived by the museum’s curators, as well as to host touring exhibitions of greater size and breadth organized by other institutions. Achieved through the reallocation of staff offices—made possible in part due to the relocation of some staff to the museum’s 14-acre Laguna Gloria site—the change will vastly expand the museum’s capabilities while leaving the building’s footprint unchanged.

Behind the visible expansion of exhibition space, the renovations also include a number of critical infrastructure improvements that will facilitate the exhibition of larger works and greatly increase the scope of loans of exhibitions and individual works of art that the museum may accept. First, upcoming renovations address the museum’s need to move large works of art into and out of the building, as well as between the building’s two floors. As stage one of the project, larger exterior access panels have already been installed, allowing art crates to be easily moved in and out. In addition, the museum will be adding a large, electric lift to enable movement of works of art from the lower to the upper floor of the museum. Similar to the lifts one might see moving cars in a parking garage, the lift will disappear into the building’s infrastructure when not in use.

Second, the museum's humidity controls will be vastly improved. This will continue to ensure a safe environment for works of art and will allow The Contemporary Austin to maintain the building specifications needed to receive and care for loans from prestigious art museums and private collections from across the country and around the world.

THE MOODY ROOFTOP

The Jones Center renovation will include the addition of a permanent, open-air canopy over the rooftop, designed by LTL Architects. In recognition of The Moody Foundation's landmark gift, the roof deck will be named The Moody Rooftop.

Rising 21 feet above the floor of the rooftop, the canopy will provide shelter and shade in inclement weather, add versatility to the space, and enhance the experience of being part of historic Congress Avenue in downtown Austin. Integrated systems will be included, allowing the museum to install fans and heaters as needed. Altogether, the proposed enhancements will transform the rooftop into a primary destination for cultural events in the community, allowing the museum to offer increased public programs rain or shine—including films, concerts, lectures, tours, and events for families and teens.



“The Contemporary Austin – Jones Center’s rooftop has always been a favorite location for Austinites to enjoy the arts through programs such as our Rooftop Architecture & Design Film Series and Good Taste events,” said Andrea Mellard, the museum’s Director of Public Programs & Community Engagement. “I am so excited that these changes to the roof will enable expanded programming for adults, families, tours, teens, and more in this beloved and inspiring space.”

In addition to upgrades that will increase the lifespan of the roof, improvements to The Moody Rooftop will also include increased weatherproofing that will allow access to the rooftop year-round and new structural supports and enhancements to accommodate the canopy.

“On behalf of the Foundation, I couldn’t be more pleased to offer this grant to The Contemporary Austin for the creation of The Moody Rooftop,” said Ross Moody, Trustee of The Moody Foundation. “The Contemporary Austin is evolving into a dynamic presence in the cultural life of Austin, and The Moody Foundation is committed to supporting the museum’s ambitious vision. I look forward to generations of Texans engaging with contemporary art in this stunning space.”

THE MOODY FOUNDATION

The Moody Foundation is a charitable organization that makes grants primarily in Austin, Galveston, and Dallas, with an emphasis on education, social services, children’s needs, and community development. The Moody Foundation was established in 1942 by Mr. and Mrs. W. L. Moody, Jr., to benefit in perpetuity present and future generations of Texans.

THE CONTEMPORARY AUSTIN

The Contemporary Austin reflects the spectrum of contemporary art through exhibitions, commissions, education, and the collection. The museum has two distinct yet complementary locations, the Jones Center in downtown Austin at 700 Congress Avenue, and Laguna Gloria, a 14-acre site on Lake Austin at 3809 W. 35th Street, which is home to the Driscoll Villa, the Art School, the Gatehouse Gallery, and the Betty and Edward Marcus Sculpture Park at Laguna Gloria.

In 2013 the museum received a generous \$9 million grant from the Edward and Betty Marcus Foundation to help create an unparalleled arts destination at Laguna Gloria—now named the Betty and Edward Marcus Sculpture Park—with the majority of the funds committed to commissioning and acquiring sculpture and permanent outdoor installations by some of today’s leading artists. In April 2014, the museum announced the selection of Reed Hilderbrand Landscape Architecture to design the master plan for the historic site. Reed Hilderbrand is now charged with reconceiving the entire 14-acre estate—including the woods, meadow, waterfront, and Italianate 1916 Driscoll Villa—to create an unparalleled art-in-nature experience. Initial plans for the complex project are under way, and the museum looks forward to sharing the progress of the master plan soon.

More information about the museum, its exhibitions and programs, and its plans for growth can be found at thecontemporaryaustin.org.

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