

## Seattle Art Museum South Building Overview

The Seattle Art Museum moved to downtown Seattle in 1991, inaugurating a new facility that is now known as SAM's South Building. Designed by Robert Venturi of Venturi, Scott Brown & Associates (Philadelphia, PA), the existing museum seamlessly connects to the new North Building, designed by Brad Cloepfil of Allied Works Architecture. The 153,000-square-foot, \$62 million project was designed to allow for future expansion to its exhibition and program spaces.

SAM visitors are greeted outside the South Building on First Avenue by Jonathan Borofsky's *Hammering Man* (1992), a 48-foot high kinetic steel sculpture. Entrances to the South Building are located on First and Second Avenues, linked outside by a hillside terrace and inside by a monumental staircase. Climbing the hill along University Street, the stepped terrace attracts museum visitors and passersby. The interior staircase mirrors the rise of the terrace and features Ming and Qing dynasty Chinese sculptures displayed along the landings.

The South Building is set back 30 feet from University Street to preserve vistas of the surrounding natural landscape, including views of Elliott Bay. The limestone façade, scored with vertical fluting, is incised with large letters announcing the museum's name.

In contrast to the pale limestone exterior, the ground level interior is a lively juxtaposition of granites, marbles and colored terra cotta. Large windows between columns reflect the rhythmic progression of the stairways and enhance connections between interior and exterior spaces. Pediments and arches of light pink granite also link the interior spaces.

The lobby leads to the auditorium, children's art studio and classrooms. A broad landing at the mezzanine level opens to a studio space and the hillside terrace. The mezzanine features *Puget Sound Mud Circle* (2002), a commissioned work by sculptor and conceptual artist Richard Long.

The third floor features the permanent collection galleries and the fourth floor houses rotating special exhibitions and a special exhibition store. The fifth floor provides space for administrative offices, a library and a conservation laboratory.