

East Los Angeles College Performing and Visual Arts Center

Los Angeles, California



Located on the community college campus of East Los Angeles College, this 120,000 square foot project is comprised of three buildings that house the Fine Arts, Drama, Dance and Music departments and the Vincent Price Art Gallery.

The existing campus, built in 1950's, lacks a cohesive urban plan or architectural style. Therefore, the design intent was to create a unique "arts enclave" of buildings with a common character, much like a traditional "quad" seen on many college and university campuses. The site for the project is at the southern gateway to the campus, visible from two major thoroughfares. There is a substantial grade change from the entry corner of the site to the other, which needs to be traversed in order to create a usable and accessible pedestrian connection to within the campus. The result was to divide the project into three separate buildings that form a central courtyard through which a pedestrian path leads into the campus.

The most public of the three buildings, the Vincent Price Art Gallery, is placed at the corner entry of the site in order to be visible and accessible to both the campus and the public. The building for the drama department is an L-shaped building to the northeast of the gallery and contains a 350-seat multi-purpose theater, a black box theater and classrooms, offices, shops and storage. The art, music and dance departments are all housed in a large L-shaped building across the courtyard. It contains a 300-seat recital hall, music practice rooms, dance studios, art studios, offices, classrooms and support spaces.

The unusual programmatic mix in each building of large-scale spaces (such as performance halls) and small spaces (such as offices) required a unique approach to the massing for the buildings. The roof line of each building follows the distribution of these large and small spaces, creating dramatically sloping and bending forms and giving each building its own identity but with a common architectural image. Designed under the direction of Christopher Coe while Managing Director and Director of Design of Arquitectonica Los Angeles.

