



Minnetonka Center for the Arts Wayzata, Minnesota

JAMES DAYTON EMBRACES AN INDUSTRIAL AESTHETIC WITH A PLAYFUL COLLAGE OF FORMS FOR HIS FIRST CULTURAL PROJECT.

By John E. Czarnecki, Assoc. AIA

Architect: James Dayton Design—James Dayton, AIA, principal and project designer; Patrick Regan, Assoc. AIA, project manager; Jim Larson, AIA, Scott Elofson, Marcy Conrad Nutt, Tatsuo Tanaka, Nicole Triden, Sarah Hansen, Andrew Kluebs, Adam Back, design team

Client: Minnetonka Center for the Arts

Consultants: Meyer, Borgman, Johnson (structural engineers)—Mike Ramerth, project principal, and Gregg Curtis, project engineer; Oslund & Associates (landscape architects)—Tom Oslund, FASLA, project principal, and Joe Favor, project manager

General contractor: M.A. Mortenson Company

Size: 31,433 square feet

Cost: \$5.8 million

Completion date: June 2002

Sources

Structural steel: Mannstedt + Sons (fabrication); Western Steel Erection

Wood: Finland Color Plywood

Metal/glass curtain wall: CMI Architectural Products

Masonry and concrete: Stellar Concrete

Glass: PPG

www For more information about the people and products involved in this project, go to Building Types Study at architecturalrecord.com.

Part gallery, part studio, and part gathering place for the community, the Minnetonka Center for the Arts (MCA) is not a staid museum, but it has a clear focus: the process of art. An amalgam of playful forms in Wayzata, Minnesota, a western suburb of Minneapolis, the building calls attention to its creative intent.

"From the moment you drive by, we wanted it to be about art," says Minneapolis architect James Dayton. A Minnesota native, Dayton (see Dayton profile in *archrecord*2, page 57) started his firm in the late 1990s when he received this commission—his first on his own—after working for Frank Gehry for five years (see story on Gehry's Winton Guest House in Wayzata, page 30).

Program

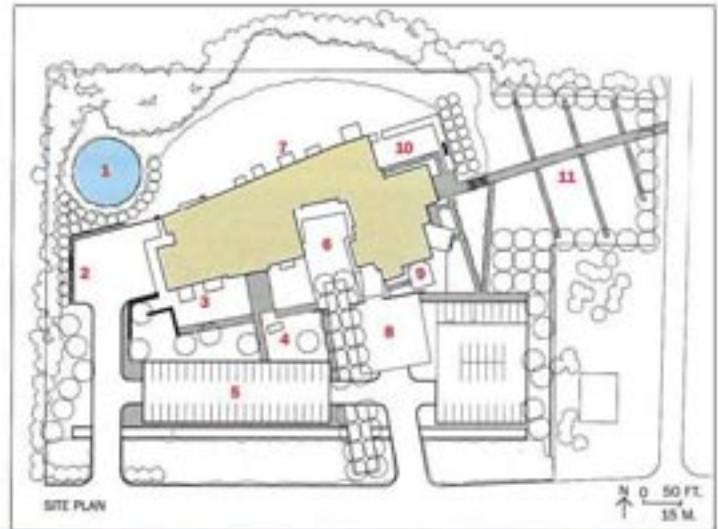
The MCA, which celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2002, is a nonprofit organization providing affordable courses in the visual arts and crafts, with an annual enrollment of more than 5,000 people ranging from children to senior citizens. For more than 30 years, the MCA was located in what had been an elementary school, and the former gymnasium was the art gallery. After initially considering a \$3.9 million renovation of the school, the MCA thought wiser and hired Dayton for a new building, 30 percent larger than the old one, at \$5.8 million.

Spaces in the new MCA are clearly differentiated between public



Facing a crushed-gravel parking lot (below), the arts center's many forms are sheathed in Cor-Ten steel, flat galvanized steel, flat galvanized steel, corrugated-galvanized siding, and Parklex. A concrete wall (bottom left) can receive art installations.

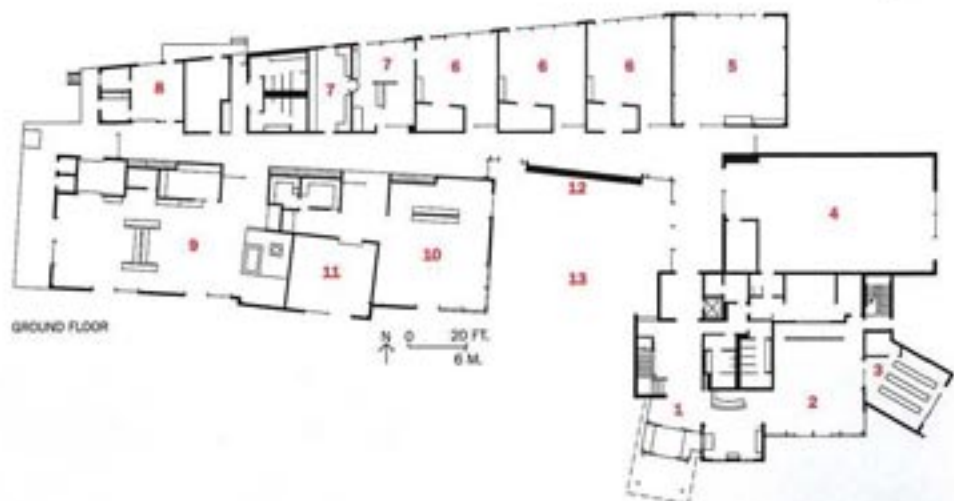
1. Pond
2. Art wall
3. Ceramics and sculpture courtyards
4. Wood kiln
5. Parking
6. Main courtyard with art wall
7. Painting and drawing courtyards
8. Entry courtyard
9. Dining terrace
10. Outdoor classroom
11. Sculpture garden



The gallery (pictured below) has movable partitions that are hung from steel beams. The skylight has a shading device

for painting and drawing shows. Cor-Ten steel siding sheaths the gallery cube, both in the corridor (bottom) and outdoors.

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| 1. Main entry | 7. Photography |
| 2. Café | 8. Wood shop |
| 3. Lecture | 9. Sculpture |
| 4. Exhibition | 10. Ceramics |
| 5. Painting/drawing | 11. Kiln room |
| 6. Multimedia | 12. Art wall |
| | 13. Main courtyard |



uses, studios, and administration. The public component includes a 3,000-square-foot exhibition gallery, a café, and a lecture room, all near the main entrance. The studios, comprising the bulk of the ground floor, are organized along a corridor that is intended as a street through the length of the building. Administrative offices are on the second floor.

Solution

Dayton initially proposed a courtyard scheme, but that plan was inefficient and was discarded. Instead, the architect organized the studios so that each has access to daylight and exterior courtyards. Painting and drawing as well as multimedia studios have large amounts of northern exposure, and ceramics and sculpture studios face south, with adjacent space for outdoor work. A concrete art wall in front of the building (previous page, bottom left) is intended for outdoor art installations, and the courtyard in front of the wall is lined with rows of Little Leaf lindens. Minneapolis landscape architect Tom Oslund designed the outdoor spaces.

The gallery (left), which opened with an exhibition that Dayton curated of Minnesota artists' work, is topped by a square skylight that can be shaded when necessary.

Dayton smartly embraced a more industrial aesthetic of materials to complete the building for \$157 a square foot. On the inside, floors are poured concrete throughout the ground level, and the steel structure is exposed on the ceiling of most spaces. Cor-Ten steel siding sheaths the gallery cube, both in the corridor (bottom left) and outdoors. Dayton designed most of the tables in the building, as well as the reception desk, using birch veneer plywood.

Commentary

The building is a stark contrast for the suburb, and Gehry's influence is apparent. Although the collection of exterior masses makes it appear a bit jumbled, it is an appropriate, fun resolution. The collage of forms nicely reflects the art-in-progress nature of the work within. ■

