

Tangled in Angles

I.M. Pei's gift to Indiana University

Story by Eric Carroll and Photographs by Jacob Kriese



Amanda Smock hastily sketches in the last bits of her drawing before the museum closes. Ofent Fine Arts students would spend hours trying to replicate the masterpieces on display at the art museum.
Photograph by Jacob Kriese

It was more than most students knew it as. It was more than the incredible angular building with the twisting red sculpture in the heart of campus. The IU Art Museum was an often overlooked gem of Indiana's campus, but as far as university art museums, it was one of the foremost in the country.

The museum contained nearly thirty thousand objects, representing almost every art producing culture in history. The museum boasted paintings by celebrated artists such as Claude Monet and Pablo Picasso. The fourth floor was home to the tribal arts of the pacific and African nations, and the aura it heldf was nothing less than spiritual.

Masks that were once used in battle and for religious and celebration practices hung throughout the gallery. The masks, having once held the soulful eyes of

warriors and priests, allowed onlookers to peer into cultures that were known only by legend and artifact.

Some of the galleries contained benches, doubling as both a place of rest for weary museum patrons and a unique display of artists' creativity. One of the benches displayed:

In a dream
You saw a way
To survive
And you were
Full of joy

It left imprints on readers' psyche.

A senior Environmental Science student said, "It poses an interesting problem to have benches in an art gallery. Some were inspiring enough to simply look at, and when that happened, you found yourself in a

continued

Statues stand silently on the third floor of the IU Art Museum. The museum had over 30,000 objects and represented nearly every art-producing culture throughout history
Photograph by Jacob Kriese



Art Museum 269

whole world of problem.”

The real beauty, however, came from I.M. Pei, when he drew up the blueprints to the magnificently modern architecture of the museum. The angles of the building were unable to be looked over and drew the viewer’s gaze around the atrium and galleries. Certain walls in the galleries had gaping holes that allowed museum-goers a window into adjacent rooms.

“The art museum is a great place to expand intellectual and more so, cultural knowledge. I exceptionally enjoy viewing Picasso. His work allows me to view reality in a manner that does not approach the day to day standard of function versus form. Picasso was reliant on form, and while there is a beauty in operation, forms that are not restricted by function possess an attraction that is unknowable to physics,” said Junior Joe Hebda.

The museum had normal business hours, which

often prevented many students from being able to enjoy the exhibits. The museum was open Tuesday through Saturday until 5 p.m., during which most students were in class, with the exception of Saturdays. Saturday afternoons, however, were often used by students to catch up on sleep or spend time with friends.

“I would be nice to have broader hours of operation,” said Sophomore John Melko, “I would like to be able to spend more of my free time in the museum as opposed to having to squeeze a visit between my classes.” Melko enjoyed art but due to an intense academic schedule and an active Friday night schedule, he was rarely able to make it to the museum.

If an individual happened to stumble across a patch of heavenly free-time during the week and spent it at the museum, it was unlikely they would leave disappointed. ❄️



A continuing-education student compares her class notes to the actual statue in front of her. Many art classes could be seen weaving through the statues of the museum’s collection.
Photograph by Jacob Kriese

Junior Steve Pry rides his bike past the IU Art Museum on his way to class. The museum’s location in the middle of campus made it easily accessible for students to visit, despite hectic schedules.
Photograph by Jacob Kriese

1pt line around each photo

1pt frame on photo
1pt line around each photo