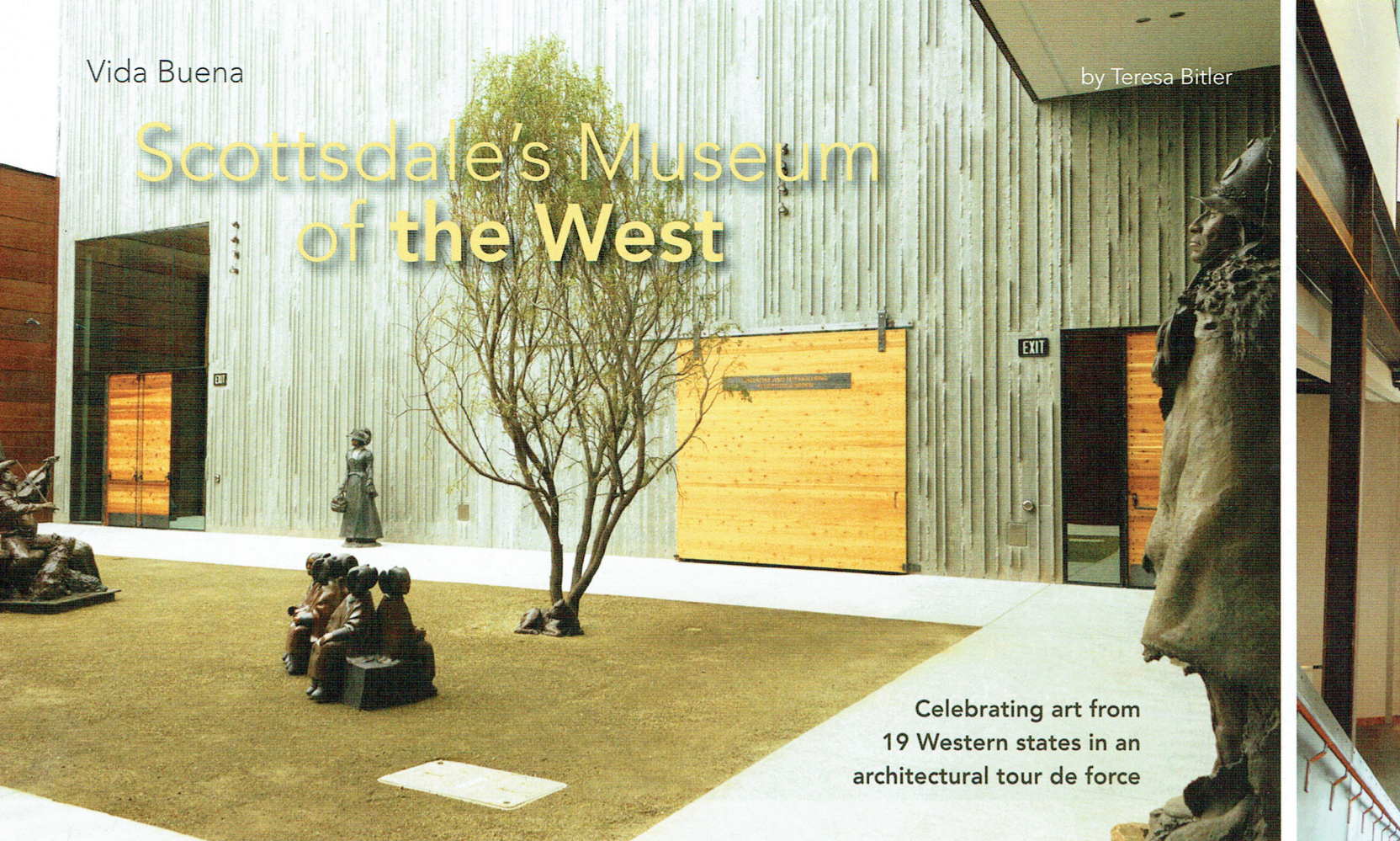


Scottsdale's Museum of the West



Celebrating art from
19 Western states in an
architectural tour de force

Western Spirit: Scottsdale's Museum of the West, which opened in January, strikes a visual chord on the corner of First Street and Marshall Way in Old Town. Inside, the museum is filled with art and artifacts from the nation's 19 westernmost states, stretching from Texas to Hawaii. A mix of contemporary and traditional, the museum blends what Museum Director Mike Fox describes as the Old West with the New West—and visitors may find that one of its most engaging masterpieces is the building itself.

Designed by Phoenix-based architectural firm Studio Ma, the 43,000-square-foot space incorporates Western themes inside and out, according to Christiana Moss, one of the firm's principals and a coarchitect on the project. The exterior base is inspired by what one might find on the ground in the West, she says, such as plants and rocks. The second story has a softer feel, like the plains.

Though the upper level looks like copper, it's a more contemporary material: "Steel with a patina on it," Moss explains.

Inside, glass walls and large windows near the ceiling look out at the courtyard, creating an open feeling reminiscent of the expanse that was once the West. Wagon wheels hang overhead in the lobby, with organically harvested cedar lining the walls. The scent is quite strong. Every sensory detail is meant to evoke the West, says Moss.

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"There are a lot of museums where you get lost," she says. "We didn't want this to be one of them."

The Christine and Ted Mollring Sculpture Courtyard became the stake around which everything else revolved. Though each gallery connects to it, the museum is laid out in a free-form manner, so you don't feel like you're on a linear path. It encourages the sense of being free to explore.

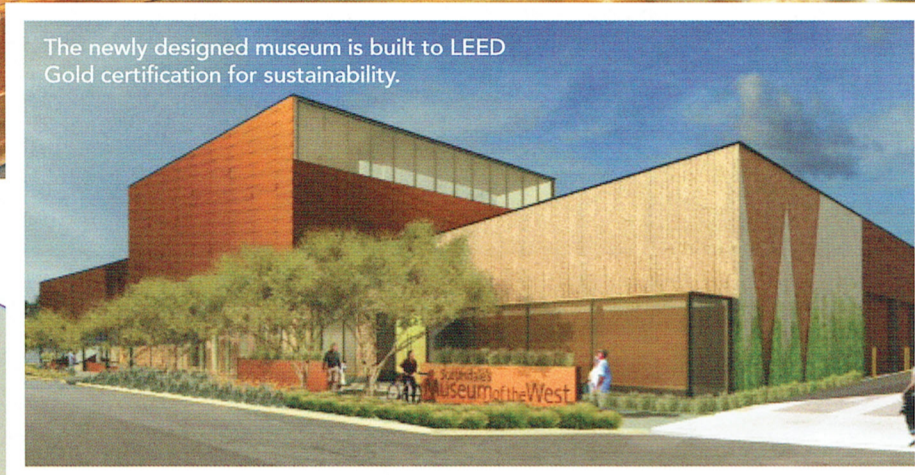
Sustainability played a key role in the \$11.4 million, city-owned museum's design. Built to meet the LEED Gold Standard for sustainability, Scottsdale's Museum of the West conserves precious resources like water and was constructed with recycled materials wherever possible. Steel, the most commonly recycled metal in the world, is found throughout the museum, including on the counters and windows.



Floor-to-ceiling windows and an open stairway allow natural light to bathe the entryway. Opposite: Visitors can relax amid desert plants and sculptures in the courtyard.



Fragrant cedar planks line the lobby walls, and wagon wheels decorate the lofty ceiling.



The newly designed museum is built to LEED Gold certification for sustainability.

Moss points to the Weeping Wall as one of the most obvious examples of how Studio Ma incorporated sustainable concepts. When rain or condensation from the air conditioner drips down the wall, water collects in a trough and is channeled to the property's landscaping.

"You see where the water goes," she says. "Eventually, there will be signage explaining how we reclaim condensation with the Weeping Wall."

Curator Tricia Loscher hopes that the museum will prompt visitors to reexamine their definition of the American West, including its geographical location, its people, and its future.

"I want this to be a transformative place," she says. **SC**

Scottsdale's Museum of the West

3830 N Marshall

scottsdalemuseumwest.org

Tickets \$8-\$13

Open 9:30 AM-5 PM Tuesday through Saturday

(9:30 AM-9 PM on Thursdays during Scottsdale

ArtWalk) and 11 AM-5 PM on Sunday



The museum's extensive gallery space features rotating exhibits of Western art, cultural artifacts, and interactive displays. The works seen here in the Zaplin Lampert Gallery are part of the *Confluence of Cultures in the American West* exhibit.