

MCA EXHIBIT SPOTLIGHTS LONDON ARCHITECT ADJAYE

By Kyle MacMillan – Denver Post Fine Arts Critic

Ten of architect David Adjaye's public buildings are the focus of an exhibit at the Museum of Contemporary Art/Denver. Few architects are on a hotter career trajectory than 41-year-old London architect David Adjaye, who recently opened a New York office and is quickly expanding the international scope of his practice. He got his start with small projects, mostly residences and art studios cut into the gritty urbanity of London, and these undertakings helped him hone a distinctive aesthetic that marks everything he has done since.



TEN OF ARCHITECT DAVID ADJAYE'S PUBLIC BUILDINGS ARE THE FOCUS OF AN EXHIBIT AT THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART/DENVER. PHOTO BY GRANT LEIGHTON.

Adjaye's structures are marked by unexpected contrasts between his often muscular exteriors and gentle interiors and between his bold use of simple, often unlikely industrial materials and a graceful interplay of natural and artificial light.

"David Adjaye: Making Public Buildings," a touring exhibition focusing on 10 of his buildings, ranging from his Idea Stores in London to the Nobel Peace Center in Oslo, remains on view through May 25 at the Museum of Contemporary Art/Denver.

The MCA is an ideal institution to present the show, because its much-praised new home, which opened last fall, is one of the featured projects. Adjaye's first major building to be completed in the United States, it ranks among his most important and successful undertakings so far.

Each of the 10 public projects is represented by a detailed model as well as renderings, samples of materials and other elements that give viewers a basic sense of the structure.

The exhibition is spread across three levels of the museum. Such a scattered arrangement works here because it forces viewers to experience different parts of the building, which inevitably becomes an added and welcome facet of the show.

"Making Public Buildings" provides a useful contextual backdrop for understanding and appreciating the MCA's building and helps explain Adjaye's spectacular rise in the highly competitive world of architecture.