

Ringling Museum of Art

<http://www.ringling.org/artmuseum.aspx>

The Museum of Art, built by John Ringling to house his personal collection of masterpieces, today features paintings and sculptures by the great Old Masters including Rubens, van Dyck, Velázquez, Titian, Tintoretto, Veronese, El Greco, Gainsborough and more. The European, American and Asian masterworks available here make the Museum of Art an awe-inspiring retreat. It is a palace for treasures emulating the footprint of Florence's Uffizi Gallery, echoing its grace and grandeur.

In 1925, Ringling engaged architect John H. Phillips to design the museum. Construction began in 1927, but was slowed almost immediately by the collapse of Florida's land boom and later, Wall Street's stock market crash. Financial misfortune and Mable's death in 1929 might have ended the dream, but John Ringling instead gained a new resolve to complete the museum, borrowing money as needed, knowing that it would perpetuate the memory of his beloved Mable.



In October 1931, "The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art" was officially opened to the public.

The Courtyard of the Museum of Art features casts of original antiquities and renaissance sculptures, including the towering *David* by Michelangelo. The Courtyard features two fountains - *Fountain of Turtles*, one of three replicas from the Piazza Mattei in Rome, and the *Oceanus Fountain*, copied from the 16th century original by Giovanni Bologna in Florence's Boboli Gardens.

Special exhibitions are featured in The Ulla R. and Arthur F. Searing Wing, which opened in February 2007. The galleries mirror the original Museum of Art's exterior, but makes available expansive exhibit space for major traveling shows.

The Museum and its collections continue to grow. In 2006, a combined endowment, building and collection gift from noted Asian art collector and

philanthropist Dr. Helga Wall-Apelt, substantially bolstered the Ringling Museum's Asian art initiative which aims to establish the Museum as an important venue in Florida for the study of Asian Art.

Historic Asolo Theater



“It has come across the sea to become one of the most important exhibits in a museum noted especially for its dramatic and spectacular collection of Baroque painting, and to serve as a brilliant setting for plays, concerts, lectures, and motion picture programs that are part of the cultural advantages the Ringling Museum offers to students of the fine arts, and to the public.”

An 18th-century treasure in a 21st-century venue, the Historic Asolo Theater is a work of art in its own right. The palace playhouse was created in Asolo, Italy in 1798 to honor the 15th-century exiled Queen Catherine Cornaro of Cyprus. In the late 1940s, the theater was dismantled and brought to the Ringling Estate in Sarasota. From this important stage sprang much of the theater, the opera, and the music that distinguishes this Gulf Coast city as one of the nation’s leading cultural centers. Today the theater features a diverse performance schedule including theatre, dance, film, music, and lectures.

In 2006, after years of painstaking restoration, America’s only 18th-century European theater was reset in the John M. McKay Visitors Pavilion just inside the historic *Cà d’Zan* Gatehouse on the Ringling Museum estate.

The Historic Asolo Theater now functions as a performing arts venue, presenting a diverse roster of theater, music, dance, film, and lectures. View the Performance Calendar to see what is playing today!