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**Eli Broad**  
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## Eli Broad chooses Renzo Piano for Los Angeles County Museum of Art project

The Italian architect will design the institution's new \$50 million wing

**Jason Edward Kaufman**

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### Los Angeles

Eli Broad, the billionaire art collector and philanthropist who recently pledged \$60 million to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) to fund the construction of a new wing for art since 1945 and to set up an endowment for acquisitions of contemporary art, has chosen Renzo Piano as the designer for the new building.

Mr Broad met the Italian architect in Europe this summer and the benefactor says that he plans to “continue discussions” with Mr Piano. A museum spokesperson confirms that the architect has spent time in Los Angeles touring the museum, and is in “serious discussions” with LACMA president and director Andrea Rich. Though Mr Piano is not yet retained nor is he officially on the agenda of the next trustee meeting on 3 December, the Los Angeles Times is reporting his

commission as a done deal. Under the terms of Mr Broad's gift, LACMA trustees will have the final say on the design for the new wing (The Art Newspaper, July-August 2003, p.14).

Mr Broad's choice of Renzo Piano follows the abandonment of a far more radical plan by Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas whose design called for the razing of the cluster of buildings that currently make up LACMA to be replaced by an entirely new tented rectangle of galleries elevated above a plaza (The Art Newspaper, January 2003, p.1,6). Mr Broad had pledged \$50 million towards the \$300 million Koolhaas scheme but the project faltered earlier this year when LACMA failed to raise the remaining funds.

Speaking to The Art Newspaper, Ms Rich said that Piano will instead work to integrate the existing structures. The project will create a 70,000-square-foot building linking the main museum campus and the former department store across Ogden Street which currently houses Latin American art and temporary exhibition space. The design will also enable the redisplay of the permanent collection to reflect Ms Rich's recent reorganisation of works into broadly geographical and chronological sections with new "centers" for the arts of Europe, Asia, the Americas, and modern and contemporary art.

Speaking to The Art Newspaper Mr Broad said, "The reason we chose Renzo is because he is a weaver," referring to the architect's design which will bring together disparate elements of the museum campus.

Mr Broad has stated that in addition to his \$60 million pledge, he will lead a \$100-million campaign to refurbish the other buildings on campus and bolster the modest \$80-million endowment. Once the new wing, which will be named after Mr Broad, is built, the benefactor will deed it to Museum Associates, the private group that operates the museum, who will then transfer ownership to the County of Los Angeles, landlord of the rest of the museum complex.

Renzo Piano (66) is a Pritzker Prize winner based in Genoa and Paris. Since completing the Fondation Beyeler outside Basel in 1997, he has become the single most sought after museum builder in the world, particularly in the US. In 1986 Mr Piano completed a building for the Menil Collection in Houston and the institution's Twombly Gallery, designed by Piano, opened in 1995. His Nasher Sculpture Center in Dallas opened in October and he is currently working on expansions of the Art Institute of Chicago, the Morgan Library in New York, the High Museum in Atlanta and the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco. Renzo Piano (66) is a Pritzker Prize winner based in Genoa and Paris. Since completing the Fondation Beyeler outside Basel in

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