

A s h e s a n d S n o w
T h e N o m a d i c M u s e u m

Design Fact Sheet
Zócalo, Mexico City

Project

The Nomadic Museum
Zócalo, Mexico City

The Nomadic Museum was a 5,130-square-meter (55,219-square-foot) temporary structure that housed *Ashes and Snow*, an exhibition of large-scale photographic works and films by artist Gregory Colbert, that was on view from January 19 to April 27, 2008.

The 45 meter-wide by 114-meter-long (148-foot-wide by 374-foot-long) museum was situated in the Zócalo, the public square in Mexico City's historic center.

The Mexico City structure was the fourth iteration of the Nomadic Museum, which was originally sited at Pier 54 in New York City from March 5 to June 6, 2005. The museum was reassembled in Santa Monica in 2006, and in Tokyo in 2007.

Location

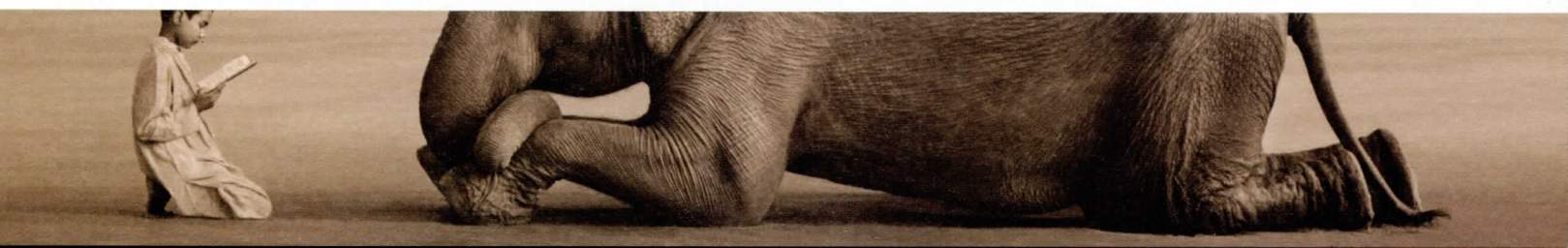
Zócalo, Mexico City
Accessible by all forms of public transportation.

**Architects
Schedule**

Simón Vélez, lead architect
Construction Began: October 2007
Structure Completed: January 2008

Site Highlights

The Zócalo, meaning base or plinth, is the third largest square in the world. Since the beginning of the Aztec rule in the 14th century, it has been the center of public life in Mexico City. Today, it is surrounded by historic monuments, including the ruins of the Great Temple of Tenochtitlan, and is home to the National Cathedral and Palace. It remains the political and cultural hub of the city.



Design Highlights

Sustainable design utilizing bamboo and shipping containers were primary components, along with recycled and/or reusable materials. For the first time, the Nomadic Museum incorporated water as a design element to recall the unique history of the Zócalo, which was once surrounded by canals. This architectural choice honored the symbolic significance of the Zócalo as the center of Mexico-Tenochtitlan, a city founded by the Aztecs on a small island in the middle of Lake Texcoco in 1325.

Interior Design

The museum consisted of two photographic galleries and three distinct theaters. Two short films were shown at small theaters at the end of each gallery. A one-hour 35mm feature film by Colbert, narrated in Spanish by actor Enrique Rocha and edited by two-time Academy-Award winner Pietro Scalia, was continuously projected on a large-format screen in the central theater. The soundtrack for the film featured Michael Brook, Lisa Gerrard, and Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, among other musicians. Varying sizes of stackable paper tubes served as seating for visitors watching the film.

The two galleries were bordered on either side by bays filled with water, over which the unframed artworks were suspended between the bamboo columns.

Diaphanous handmade curtains made of one million pressed paper tea bags from Sri Lanka were an additional component of the installation.

