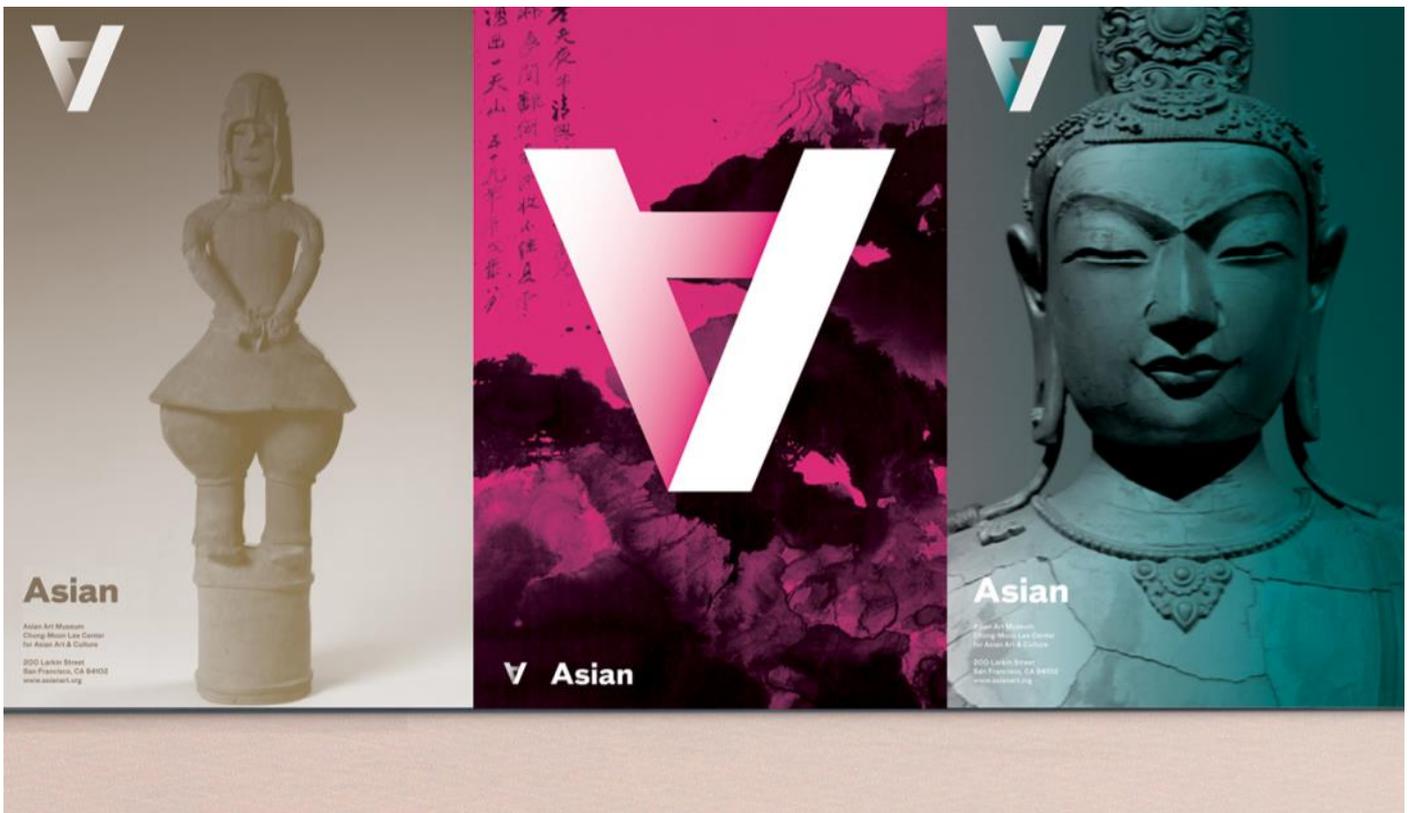


Developing brand identities for two art museums



Wolff Olins



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New Museum of Contemporary Art

Ambition

The New Museum of Contemporary Art is New York City's only museum dedicated exclusively to showcasing contemporary art. It's an adventurous, progressive institution with an internationally renowned program. In a city overly saturated with cultural institutions, we faced an exciting challenge: create a brand that would drive the museum's vision and ambition to become a world player in contemporary art and a first-choice, 21st century cultural destination.



Action

Based on the idea of “New Art and New Ideas,” our first step was to simplify the name to loosen up the museum's institutional feel. More importantly, this broadened their scope from the narrow definitions of an art museum to becoming recognized as a cultural hub. In an exciting collaboration with the museum, we created a visual expression that features a spectrum of colour and language, and a logo that literally moves and flexes to



welcome new artists and audiences and to announce new art and the new museum. The mantra “open, fearless and alive” quickly became an invaluable tool for internal decision-making.

Impact

The award-winning identity system captured the immediate attention, hearts and minds of onlookers and museum lovers. In the first four months after the launch, the museum attracted a 600% surge in visitors and 400% boom in new members. The New Museum – the place and the brand – continues to self-renew, opening the doors to future creative collaborations and inviting in new art and new ideas.

[Watch video 1](#)

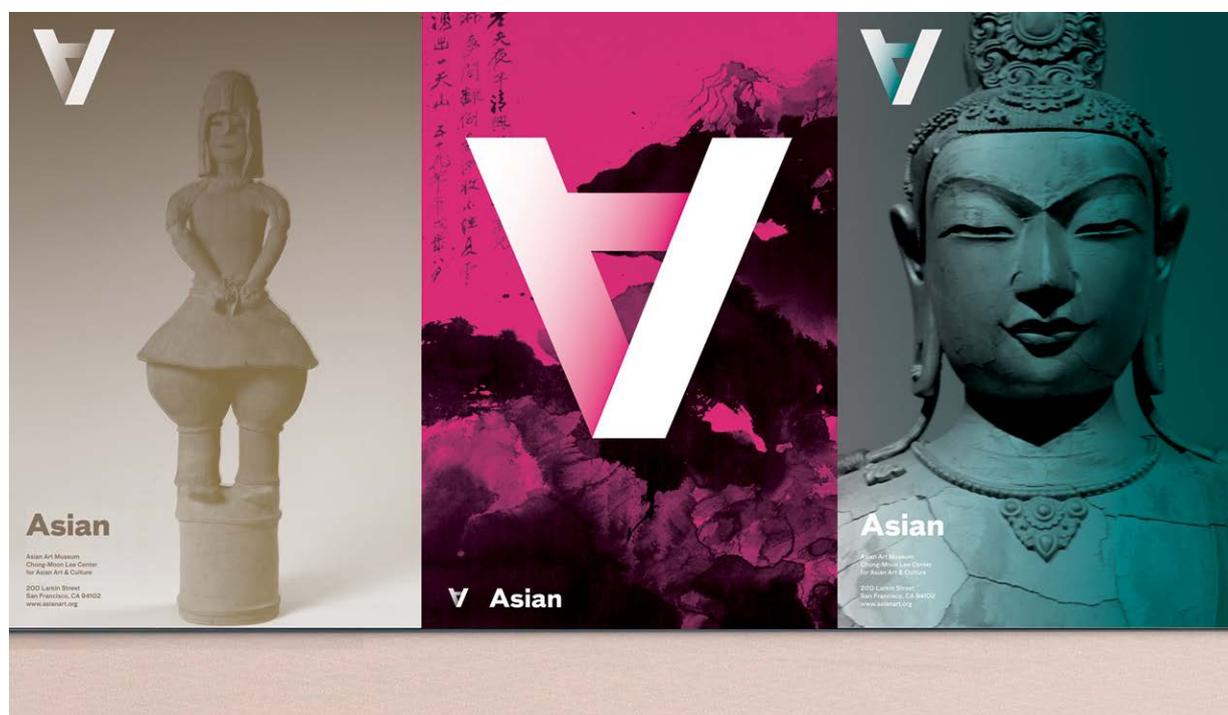
[Watch video 2](#)



Designing the Asian Art Museum brand identity

Ambition

The Asian Art Museum of San Francisco is one of the largest and most respected museums in the Western world devoted exclusively to Asian art – but for years it has remained one of San Francisco’s best kept secrets. Despite being positioned as a geographic and cultural authority on Asian art and culture in the US, the museum still struggled to capture awareness and fully connect with visitors beyond their niche audience. In 2009, however, they appointed a new director with a ground-breaking vision and revitalized ambition to become the world's most dynamic Asian art and cultural museum.



Action

In early 2010, Wolff Olins partnered with the Asian Art Museum to create a new brand strategy and identity. Together, we helped translate their vision into an actionable tool, focus decision-making and drive meaningful change. Through extensive interviews and research, we uncovered what visitors needed and how the museum was best placed to deliver. We challenged staff and board members to fundamentally shift their perspective – from thinking of the museum as a home for ancient objects in lucite boxes to a thought-provoking experience that awakens audiences to the beauty and depth of Asian art and culture. By drawing connections between Asia and the West, past and present, local cultures and global communities, the museum "inspires the next" – encouraging dialogue and debate and paving the way for new art, new thinking and new ideas. Using the brand strategy as a foundation, we created a bold and

provocative new brand identity for the museum. The new logo, an upside down "A," signifies their commitment to offer a fresh and creative perspective on a collection spanning 6,000 years. As the mathematical symbol "for all," the logo also tells the world that the museum has something to say and something to show.

‘Our new brand promises to awaken the past and inspire the next. It means we’ll unlock the past for visitors and bring it to life by sparking connections.’ Jay Xu, Director of the Asian Art Museum

Impact

While the Asian Art Museum has spent the last year implementing their brand strategy internally, they will officially debut the brand identity with the launch of a new exhibition, Maharaja, in October 2011. Already, the strategy has helped to reinvigorate staff and board members with a renewed sense of purpose. It has also helped them begin to transform their visitor experience and rethink the content and design of their exhibitions, programs and communications.