

AS OF RITE

wHY converts old masonic temple into 110,000-square-foot art gallery

By ANTONIO PACHECO • June 22, 2017

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The much-anticipated Marciano Art Foundation by Los Angeles- and New York-based architecture firm wHY debuted May 25.

The 110,000-square-foot gallery, created by Paul and Maurice Marciano of Guess Jeans fame, has taken over the abandoned Scottish Rite Masonic Temple on Los Angeles's Wilshire Boulevard, bringing life to an old neighborhood eyesore. The midcentury-modern structure was built in 1961 by architect and artist Millard Sheets, and has been renovated to display works from the Marciano Art Foundation collection, which has a deep focus on [Los Angeles](#)-based contemporary artists.

In remarks made at a preview of the building, [wHY](#) principal Kulapat Yantrasast explained that rather than craft a traditional museum, the firm sought to create something “more like an artists’ playground—a place

where people can make mistakes, do something new, and experiment.” The architect added, “It’s an interesting challenge to turn something that is very closed-in and secretive and make it something public, open, and welcoming.”



(Courtesy of wHY / Yoshihiro Makino)

The three-story steel-framed structure is organized loosely and flexibly in order to accommodate a diverse collection. A wide balcony level provides vantages of the ground floor galleries, which have been curated to highlight the thematic tastes of the collectors. The building’s second gallery is located on the top floor in a former ballroom. An old meeting room on that same floor now houses sculptures by artists Mike Kelley and Sterling Ruby.

The building, as generative as it is showcasing, also features a collection of site-specific murals installed throughout, including a naturalistic site installation by sculptor Oscar Tuazon in an exterior courtyard.

[Marciano Art Foundation](#)

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