

Design Awards 2016: Best New Gallery – Sprüth Magers, LA

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The Sprüth Magers Gallery in Los Angeles is the recipient of this year's Wallpaper* Design Award for Best New Gallery

INFORMATION

Sprüth Magers Los Angeles opens 23 February. For more information, visit the gallery's website (<http://www.spruethmagers.com/>)

Photography: Spencer Lowell

ADDRESS

Sprüth Magers
5900 Wilshire Boulevard
Los Angeles

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Nicknamed the Miracle Mile in the 1960s for its now long-gone glamorous department stores, Los Angeles' Wilshire Boulevard is undergoing a cultural revival. Not only has the [Los Angeles County Museum of Art \(LACMA\)](http://www.wallpaper.com/architecture/kpf-transform-petersen-automotive-museum-in-la) been transformed with [Renzo Piano](http://www.wallpaper.com/tags/Renzo-Piano) additions and new permanent installations, but leading European gallery [Sprüth Magers](http://www.wallpaper.com/design/andrea-zittel-spruth-magers-berlin-parallel-planar-panels) is now opening its first US outpost (and our [Design Awards 2016](http://www.wallpaper.com/design-awards/2016) pick for Best New Gallery) right across the street from the museum. German dealers [Monika Sprüth](http://www.wallpaper.com/art/john-baldessar+is+excited+by+Sprueth+Magers%27+arrival.+I%27ve+always+thought+of+it+as+the+best+gallery+in+Germany,+if+not+in+Europe,+%27+he+says.+%27+I+think+this+will+give+courage+to+other+European+galleries+to+come.%27+Some+are+already+on+their+way.+Hauser+Wirth+%26amp%3B+Schimmel,+helmed+by+former+MOCA+curator+Paul+Schimmel,+opens+its+100%2C000+sq+ft+gallery+in+the+downtown+Los+Angeles) and [Philomene Magers](http://www.wallpaper.com/art/john-baldessar+is+excited+by+Sprueth+Magers%27+arrival.+I%27ve+always+thought+of+it+as+the+best+gallery+in+Germany,+if+not+in+Europe,+%27+he+says.+%27+I+think+this+will+give+courage+to+other+European+galleries+to+come.%27+Some+are+already+on+their+way.+Hauser+Wirth+%26amp%3B+Schimmel,+helmed+by+former+MOCA+curator+Paul+Schimmel,+opens+its+100%2C000+sq+ft+gallery+in+the+downtown+Los+Angeles) wanted a space to showcase their LA artists, especially [John Baldessari](http://www.wallpaper.com/art/john-baldessar+is+excited+by+Sprueth+Magers%27+arrival.+I%27ve+always+thought+of+it+as+the+best+gallery+in+Germany,+if+not+in+Europe,+%27+he+says.+%27+I+think+this+will+give+courage+to+other+European+galleries+to+come.%27+Some+are+already+on+their+way.+Hauser+Wirth+%26amp%3B+Schimmel,+helmed+by+former+MOCA+curator+Paul+Schimmel,+opens+its+100%2C000+sq+ft+gallery+in+the+downtown+Los+Angeles), with whom they have been working since 1988, and [Sterling Ruby](http://www.wallpaper.com/art/john-baldessar+is+excited+by+Sprueth+Magers%27+arrival.+I%27ve+always+thought+of+it+as+the+best+gallery+in+Germany,+if+not+in+Europe,+%27+he+says.+%27+I+think+this+will+give+courage+to+other+European+galleries+to+come.%27+Some+are+already+on+their+way.+Hauser+Wirth+%26amp%3B+Schimmel,+helmed+by+former+MOCA+curator+Paul+Schimmel,+opens+its+100%2C000+sq+ft+gallery+in+the+downtown+Los+Angeles), shown since 2007.

Both gallerists have a passion for architecture; Sprüth practised as an architect until 1983, when she opened her first gallery in Cologne. Magers studied art history and found inspiration in the 1920s Wittgenstein House for her master's thesis before opening her gallery in 1991, also in Cologne. Having combined forces in 1998, the pair concentrated on opening galleries in buildings with original architecture, seeing the spaces' cultural history as an element in their exhibition programme. After a stint in Munich, they opened a gallery in London's Mayfair, in a 19th-century townhouse, and another in Berlin, in the dance hall of a former social club. 'In our experience, it is more interesting for artists to deal with defined architecture,' says Sprüth. 'We like to find a space that is very specific to that city.'

So it is in LA, where they chose a space flanking an International Style high-rise – the kind of building painted by [Ed Ruscha](http://www.wallpaper.com/gallery/art/art-patriarchs-john-baldessari-and-ed-ruscha-pick-out-los-angeles-brightest-creative-talent), an artist they have shown since 2000. The space was transformed by London-based architect [Andreas Lechthaler](http://www.wallpaper.com/gallery/art/art-patriarchs-john-baldessari-and-ed-ruscha-pick-out-los-angeles-brightest-creative-talent) and Berlin's [Botho von Senger and Etterlin](http://www.wallpaper.com/gallery/art/art-patriarchs-john-baldessari-and-ed-ruscha-pick-out-los-angeles-brightest-creative-talent). Sprüth and Magers asked the architects to acknowledge the building's columned exterior, which they did by devising freestanding walls that can be arranged in front of the windows without hiding too much of the architecture. And since the gallery's owners and two directors, [Sarah Watson](http://www.wallpaper.com/gallery/art/art-patriarchs-john-baldessari-and-ed-ruscha-pick-out-los-angeles-brightest-creative-talent) and [Anna Helwing](http://www.wallpaper.com/gallery/art/art-patriarchs-john-baldessari-and-ed-ruscha-pick-out-los-angeles-brightest-creative-talent), are women, the team, with interior designer [Ingrid von Werz](http://www.wallpaper.com/gallery/art/art-patriarchs-john-baldessari-and-ed-ruscha-pick-out-los-angeles-brightest-creative-talent), furnished the space with vintage pieces by California-based female designers.

[Baldessari](http://www.wallpaper.com/gallery/art/art-patriarchs-john-baldessari-and-ed-ruscha-pick-out-los-angeles-brightest-creative-talent) – the subject of the opening show (courtesy of [Marian Goodman Gallery](http://www.wallpaper.com/gallery/art/art-patriarchs-john-baldessari-and-ed-ruscha-pick-out-los-angeles-brightest-creative-talent)) – is excited by Sprüth Magers' arrival. 'I've always thought of it as the best gallery in Germany, if not in Europe,' he says. 'I think this will give courage to other European galleries to come.' Some are already on their way. [Hauser Wirth & Schimmel](http://www.wallpaper.com/gallery/art/art-patriarchs-john-baldessari-and-ed-ruscha-pick-out-los-angeles-brightest-creative-talent), helmed by former MOCA curator [Paul Schimmel](http://www.wallpaper.com/gallery/art/art-patriarchs-john-baldessari-and-ed-ruscha-pick-out-los-angeles-brightest-creative-talent), opens its 100,000 sq ft gallery in the downtown

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arts district in spring. Sprüth and Magers both maintain that the addition of more established galleries, with quality exhibitions, will only benefit the community. ‘We are not taking any artist away from another gallery,’ says Magers. ‘There are so many of our artists who have not been seen here,’ adds Sprüth.

As originally featured in the Febuary 2016 issue of Wallpaper (W*203)*

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