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PRESSBOOK

KAWS

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The KAWS and Aranda/Lasch Collaboration in China Produces Alchemy

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KAWS: WHERE THE END STARTS, Yuz Museum, 2017.

Photo: JJYPHOTO

When [Yuz Museum](#) founder Budi Tek called upon design duo [Aranda/Lasch](#) to work on a major survey exhibition of the American artist KAWS, "KAWS: Where The End Starts," they responded enthusiastically. This was not only to be the largest KAWS exhibition in China, but his first survey show in Asia. The firm, based in New York and Tuscon, Arizona, had collaborated with Tek before and knew KAWS's work, "but didn't know the extent of his popularity—the collectibles and the large-scale sculptural work," says Benjamin Aranda. The brief was to install the works, some monumental, within a former airport hangar of 42,000 square feet, which had become the Yuz Museum in Shanghai.



Photo: JJYPHOTO

“At the artist's request, we built a 15-foot-long model in his studio in Brooklyn,” adds Aranda. “We could move the sculptures around and got to know the space through this model. The entire process spoke to KAWS and his ethic of precision.” Working closely with the artist was “a lesson in focus, as KAWS knows what he wants.” This entailed the placement of paintings, drawings, sculptures, advertisement interventions, and smaller toy figures. In the end, it all looked effortless.



Photo: JJYPHOTO

The designers' original concept was to "create a kind of temple" with spaces for the monumental works as well as the more intimate. Since the aim was to keep the design minimal, "we worked very hard to do very few things," says Aranda. "It was quite a wager in a way, to do just a couple of things and let those organize the show."

The exhibition, which runs through August 13, showcases the world of KAWS and his artistic vocabulary. Aranda notes that "something very interesting happens when you open a show: People line up to take selfies in front of the space housing *Companion Passing Through*, and they mimic the sculpture."



Photo: JJYPHOTO

What's next on the agenda for Aranda/Lasch? A landscape installation for the city of Columbus, Indiana. They won the competition for this large-scale work within a park and are now tackling how to organize a public space.