

SUPREME

Le Marais, Paris

Design: Brinkworth; Wilson Brothers
Opening date: March 2016
Store size: 130 sq m

In April 1994, Supreme opened its doors on Lafayette Street in downtown Manhattan and became the home of New York City skate culture. More than two decades later, the streetwear label is still going strong, with stores across North America, Asia and Europe, including a new unit in Paris.

Supreme owner James Jebbia worked with Brinkworth and Wilson Brothers to design the space, which has an unusual layout, with a small room at the front and a corridor leading to a larger area at the rear of the building. 'Unravelling these challenges gave the opportunity to create a suitably unorthodox store,' says a spokesperson for Brinkworth.

Visible from the street, in the heart of the Marais district, the small entrance space is dominated by a looming two metre sculpture depicting a priest by renowned skateboarder and artist Mark Gonzales. Behind the priest, a wall installation by artist Weirdo Dave creates a contrasting backdrop, while a large monitor



Photography: Louise Melchior

shows skate films. 'The juxtaposition of these various art forms and the absence of merchandise present an unexpected threshold to a retail environment,' says Brinkworth.

Since its launch, Supreme has been commissioning decks by established artists such as Jeff Koons, Damien Hurst, George Condo, The Chapman Brothers and Richard Prince. In the Paris store, a curated selection of decks is displayed vertically along one wall, charting a chronological timeline of the commissions. This wall runs all the way along the passage that bridges the entrance room and the main area to the rear of the store.

The angled passage obscures the view from the street through to the back, so only when passing through it, does the daylight become stronger and the building opens out to reveal the bright and pristine space beyond.

The original five metre-high glass roof floods the space with light and frames the entire back room. This stunning architectural feature has been faithfully restored to reveal the curved ironwork and Georgian wire mottled glass construction, typical of Parisian architecture. Views out give an indication of being inside the courtyard hidden within the surrounding buildings. The room is adorned with a single mural painted directly onto a wall, also by Gonzales.

The display fixtures are made primarily with European oak and galvanised steel tubing. As with all Supreme stores, the garments are only displayed on the perimeter of the space, with clear and light merchandising for impeccable presentation of the product.

'At the moment most retailers want to do more and more to make a store stand out, but I admire James's confidence to only utilise the perimeter of a space to display the product,' says Adam Brinkworth. 'This has proven to be a unique and commercially successful approach for Supreme.'

The attention that Supreme and the design teams give to every aspect of the stores ensures that each one is the very best it can possibly be. **Rf**

