

Wende Museum

Museums

Case Study



CLIENT

Wende Museum

CHALLENGE

Renovate Culver City's dark, unused 1949 Armory Building with an eco-friendly approach that would not undermine the building's integrity or aesthetic.

RESULTS

Solatube Daylighting Systems incorporated throughout the facility for a modernist contemporary design; minimal electric lighting needed during the day, Solatube UV filtration system protects fragile and sensitive collections from UV damage.

PRODUCT

12 Solatube SkyVault M74DS Units

SOLATUBE INSTALLER

Sold direct (installed by a GC- Gem Contractors Group)

ARCHITECT

Paravant Architects

Housed for more than a decade at an office park, Culver City's Wende Museum—a repository of Cold War-era artifacts from the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe—decided it was time to grow into a new location that would provide more effective community access to their collections and programs.

Culver City's unused 1949 National Guard Armory Building would be the new home, challenging the design team to imagine how the building could be adapted without doing something that would undermine the integrity of the building, while also servicing the needs of the museum.

“Having the inclusion of natural light also makes the museum experience feel more organic...”

-Justin Jampol, Ph.D, executive director at the Wende Museum

The team decided to make the architecture and aesthetic of the old building come alive with an eco-friendly approach: Natural lighting distribution through tubular daylighting devices manufactured by Solatube International, Inc.



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We wanted to make sure we had the best of the best and Solatube was a product that looks good not only in terms of the light it provides, but beyond that, the product itself has a particular aesthetic to it that works so well with modernist contemporary design,” said Justin Jampol, Ph.D, executive director at the Wende Museum. “Having the inclusion of natural light also makes the museum experience feel more organic, accessible and transparent than it would, and since that’s the ethos of the museum (transparency), natural light is really at the center of the museum experience.”

“In a museum setting that is about expansiveness and openness, and shedding light on what were previously obscure corners of history, there’s a sort of perfect metaphor and it’s perfect in terms of the actual aesthetic to have this natural lighting shining down into the space,” said Jessica Hoffman, director of strategy and operations at the Wende Museum.

With one of the main functions of a museum being to protect the artwork and artifacts in its care from damage, the design team also had to address preservation concerns.

“Most museums have a very hard time trying to find the correct lighting for material and artwork. To have a product that uses a UV filtration system that prevents harmful UV rays from damaging fragile and sensitive collections was probably the most important feature for us. That brought us to Solatube and was why we chose to use their products,” added Jampol.

The project used 12 Solatube SkyVault M74DS units.

“It looks incredible! You can’t walk into the space without noticing how beautiful the light is at all different times of day. You can’t beat natural light,” added Hoffman.

The Wende Museum now offers a fresh perspective on the cold war in their new one-acre campus featuring 13,000 square feet of naturally lit storage and exhibition space.

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