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Paul McCarthy to inaugurate L&M Arts in Los Angeles

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Most directors of Los Angeles art galleries are gearing up for this fall's season, installing shows to open in a week or so. Sarah Watson, head of the L.A. branch of [L&M Arts](#), a high-end New York gallery, is making plans for September 2010.



L&M's two-building complex, at 660 Venice Blvd., is a work in progress. But Watson has lined up an L.A.-based artist with a hefty international resume to launch the exhibition program. It's Paul McCarthy (pictured), known for roasting fairy tales and family values on a fire of grotesque humor in performances, installations and sculptures.

"I'm pretty excited about this because I haven't had a show in L.A. for a long time," says McCarthy, whose local presence has faded since his 1998 and 2000 exhibitions at [Patrick Painter's gallery](#) and 2000-01 retrospective at the [Museum of Contemporary Art](#). His big project this past summer was a park-full of inflatable sculptures in Utrecht, the Netherlands.

"It's not like I made a decision to show in Europe over America. It's just that I ended up with a Swiss gallery," McCarthy says of [Hauser & Wirth](#), a Zurich establishment with a New York branch, where he will have a show of drawings this fall. "I like being part of a dialogue in L.A. and I've been out of that. I have been talking about doing a show here for the past four or five years, but I've been pretty busy in Europe."

Plans for the L&M event have renewed his connection with Watson, who organized an exhibition for him at Patrick Painter and subsequently worked for [Gagosian](#)

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[Gallery](#) in Beverly Hills. But it's too soon to say what McCarthy will do at the new gallery. One possibility, he suggests, is "a show in a can," consisting of large sculptures and installations already in process. "But I'm also working on other pieces," he says. "If they go in a direction that would suit the space, I could switch. A lot of this is in the air. I'm just letting it float around."



Whatever falls into place will inaugurate "a garden with two pavilions," as Kulapat Yantrasast of [WHY](#)

[architecture](#) in Culver City describes the gallery he has designed for L&M's triangular site. "I think of it as a dance between the old

and the new," he says, adding that one pavilion is a recently refurbished brick power plant, built in 1930; the other, to be constructed soon, will be a more modern brick structure. Each building will have about 1,200 square feet of exhibition space. The 4,000-square-foot garden will display sculpture and other outdoor artworks.

L&M's expansion plans began before the recession, says Dominique Levy, a veteran of Christie's New York who joined dealer Robert Mnuchin in 2005. Mnuchin founded his previous gallery, C&M Arts, in 1993 after retiring as a managing partner of Goldman Sachs. Levy's and Mnuchin's partnership represents the estates of Yves Klein and Joseph Cornell and exhibits works by leading modern and contemporary artists in a brownstone on the Upper East Side of Manhattan.

The team considered opening a space in Berlin but settled on Los Angeles because of "a creative energy comparable to what happened in the '50s in New York," Levy says. The combination of meeting European artists who had moved to L.A., getting to know the established art community and falling in love with the old power station led to a marriage between L&M and Los Angeles, she says.

The project was delayed by an unexpectedly complicated permitting process, and new economic realities led the architect to substitute a one-story building for the two-story structure originally planned. But the result will be a more beautiful building with a higher ceiling and better proportions, Levy says.

As for the L.A. exhibition program, "it's going to have more contemporary artists than in New York," she says, "but we feel it's important that the artists we choose to work with are placed in the context of the historical shows that we are known for."

-- Suzanne Muchnic

Photos: Paul McCarthy. Credit: Robert Durrell/Los Angeles Times. Rendering of L&M Arts in Los Angeles. Credit: WHY Architecture.

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