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The Aspen Art Museum's new facility has a unique exterior made of crisscrossed woven strips of wood.

Modern Touch

Aspen's chic new home for cutting-edge art

BY BECCA HENSLEY

Aspen's majestic mountains just got some competition.

In celebration of its 35th birthday, the **Aspen Art Museum** opened its new 33,000-square-foot, \$45 million digs in August. Designed by innovative Japanese architect Shigeru Ban, the see-and-be-seen cultural hot spot engages the tony ski hamlet's appetite for contemporary art with four levels, six capacious galleries, and a rooftop sculpture garden.

Meant to evoke the experience of climbing a mountain and pausing at its peak to take in the view before descending, Ban's design showcases a grand staircase and a glass elevator as portals to galleries and the outdoor rooftop space's panoramic views. In a boxlike shape, the museum's most identifiable exterior characteristic is its exquisite outer screen, a crisscross layer made of woven, wooden strips - which also function to shade the building's glass walls.

Offering art buffs an ever-evolving array of global exhibits, the noncollecting museum also contains classrooms for art education workshops and a café for social events. aspenartmuseum.org

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