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Wonderwall's rooftop
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The low-rise concrete building is on a small plot but its interior feels airy thanks to large windows
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Shelves holding Masamichi Katayama's 6,500 books and 10,000 albums



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SENSE OF WONDER TOKYO

Preface: Design and branding firm Wonderwall is responsible for some of your favourite shop interiors. The company's Tokyo HQ, designed by founder Masamichi Katayama, reflects the inspiring environments he is famous for creating worldwide.

Company: Wonderwall
Location: Tokyo
Founded: 2000
Number of employees when founded: 5
Number of employees now: 22
Number of premises: 1

On a quiet side street in the Tokyo neighbourhood of Sendagaya a cool, concrete structure has become an unlikely shrine for frustrated retailers, visionary entrepreneurs, students of fashion merchandising and architecture groupies. Branding specialist Masamichi Katayama's design firm Wonderwall took up residence in its handsome HQ in 2009.

Having come up with the design language for the A Bathing Ape clothing empire, the elegant shop interiors for Mackintosh, global flagship stores for Uniqlo and a host of hidden speciality boutiques all over Japan, Katayama knows how to excite clients, shoppers and the media alike.

"I'm always looking to create impact and generate a reaction," says Katayama, sitting at an impossibly long meeting table. "The analogue store has to excite and work harder than ever before."

His team of around 20 designers, project managers and miniature-model builders work long hours here and so the space – three levels above ground, two below, with an abundance of skylights and windows – is meant to be an inspirational haven from the bustle outside.

The rotating collection of art by Ryan Gander, Rieko Otake and others, along with knick-knacks from novelty and antique shops and thousands of books, give visitors the sense that, with such wide-ranging interests and a growing list of global clients, Katayama can easily attract top creative talent to build on the buzz surrounding Wonderwall's own brand. — (M)

Why it works: The airy workspace offers would-be clients a fine example of the firm's design principles. Thanks to Katayama's obsession over every material used and each item on display, the office is an ideal environment for staff to spend long hours working on the unforgettable shop interiors for which global brands come to Wonderwall.



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