



CITATION

for Sensitive Upgrade of an Iconic Building

The Met Breuer

New York, NY

SBLD Studio

Attila Uysal, Amy Ruffles, and Jorge Ruiz

Fifty years after opening as the Whitney Museum, Marcel Breuer's mid-century masterpiece welcomed a new tenant, The Metropolitan Museum of Art. The restoration commissioned by The Met focused on the building's signature attributes, including iconic lighting created by Breuer and his close friend Edison Price.

The famous array of glowing discs in the lobby had fallen into disrepair with an unsightly mix of silver-bowl lamps with different light sources. The discs were relamped with a custom LED, its properties modeled on the original 60W incandescent. Iterations of the lamp were mocked up, and the final result is a beautifully uniform array delivering 87 percent energy savings.

Original sconces, downlights, and steplights were also lovingly restored and relamped with LED. Photographs of the original façade lighting were studied and the vision carefully re-created with 3000K LED floodlights to enhance the resplendent granite and compliment the warm interior tone. This holistic approach extended to new, historically sensitive lighting interventions at the lower lobby level.

SBLD approached the project with a great sense of responsibility to preserve the original lighting design while updating it for the 21st century. Breuer's masterpiece can now shine bright for another 50 years.

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PHOTOGRAPHY
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Before



After

"As it was originally designed with incandescent filament, the iconic brutalist lobby's bush-hammered concrete walls still gently glow with the new LED source."
—Attila Uysal