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Frieze Week

285 GALLERIES
Ancient artefacts to
emerging artists

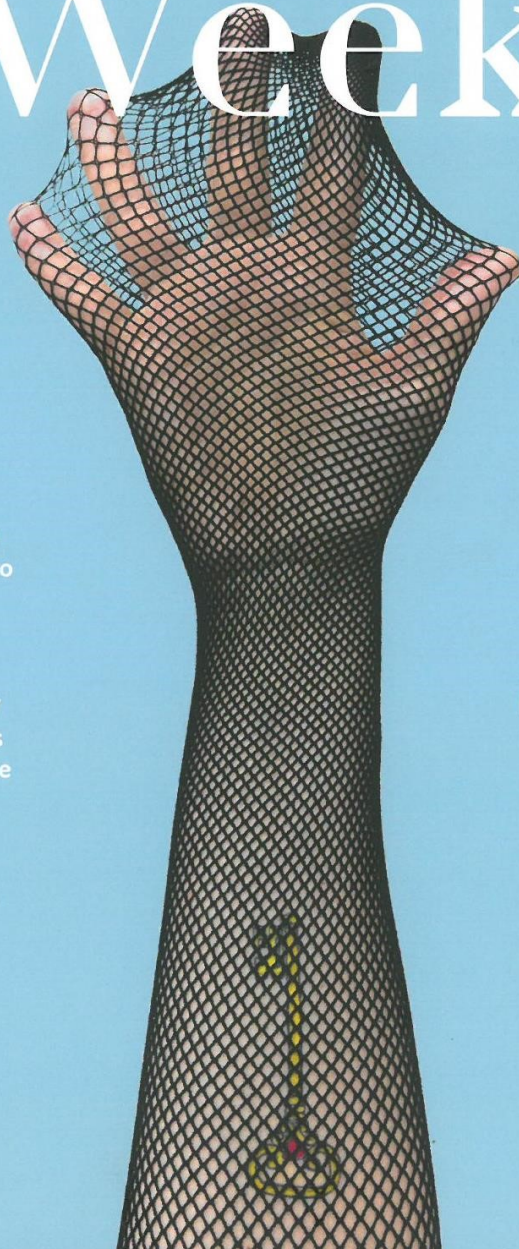
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All about arches



SKARSTEDT

Where the Art Is

Frieze's structures, artists' studios, landmark museums – where there's art, there's architecture. Edwin Heathcote explores a changing relationship

SKARSTEDT





Art was once inseparable from architecture. It was on the domes and in the niches of churches and on the ceilings and walls of palaces. Paintings were conceived for specific rooms, sculptures for courtyards and city squares. They were part of the architecture and part of the city.

But there were also, occasionally, frames. Gilded, exquisitely carved, beautiful, sculptural frames which were artworks in themselves. And there were plinths, grand and aggrandising platforms for sculpture. One version of the history of modern art is the escape from those frames and plinths. Conceptual art, minimalism, performance art and so on, all disdain the frame. That abandonment of the device which simultaneously frames and declares that what is within is art, meant that the responsibility now fell to the architecture: the entire building had to bear the responsibility of delineating and defining its content. And how did it do that? By doing almost nothing at all.

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Antony Gormley's studio, King's Cross,
London, designed by David Chipperfield
Architects. Photo: © David Bryant

Above
South Drawing Room, Sir John Soane's
Museum, Holborn, designed by Sir John
Soane. Courtesy: Sir John Soane Museum,
London. Photo: © Derry Moore

Contemporary architecture for art has come to be defined by what critic Brian O'Doherty in a 1976 essay christened 'The White Cube': the minimal, white-walled, timber-floored, top-lit room that submits itself to art by stripping itself of almost all architectural expression. It is a fascinating kind of self-immolation – especially considering that the art gallery has become the holy grail of architecture, the building-type architects desire to build more than any other and the one that confers the greatest status.

The confluence between minimal art and architecture is not accidental. The agenda of modern architects – the obsessions with a minimal simplicity, light and material (concrete, steel, timber, stone and white plaster) coincides perfectly with the demands of the gallery. Even inside the billowing titanium curves of Frank Gehry's Guggenheim Bilbao the stripped box reappears, a genuflection to the value and awe ascribed to the contemporary art object.

In the great domestic architectures of the past, from the Louvre to Sir John Soane's House, art was brought in to embellish the architecture. The walls of those interiors now seem impossibly crowded to us, piled high with frame upon frame jostling for attention, some too high up even to see. These days art is deemed to require a kind of purity and isolation that would have been unthinkable in the salons or academies. More interestingly still, whereas once the art was imported to decorate the dwelling, now the architecture is often built around the art – think of the Rothko Chapel

in Houston designed by Philip Johnson or the various structures James Turrell builds to frame a slice of sky.

The contemporary solution is a kind of hybrid: if historically art galleries were conceived as an extension of an essentially domestic architecture, now the aesthetic of the gallery is brought into the home. Annabelle Selldorf in New York, Seth Stein and Thomas Croft in London, Jim Olsen in Seattle and Isay Weinfield in São Paulo have made careers designing not only galleries but houses and apartments for gallerists and collectors which employ a similar architectural language to the commercial or civic spaces where art is shown.

Indeed, the scale of much contemporary art demands an architecture of almost civic proportions. Hauser & Wirth partner Ursula Wirth commissioned Luis Laplace to design a space in her Majorca house around a ten-foot-tall example of one of Louise Bourgeois' spidery 'Maman' sculptures; the same architect created a swimming pool for a couple in the South of France in which a psychedelic video installation by Pipilotti Rist is permanently played. Laplace was also responsible for Hauser & Wirth Somerset, a blend of historic reconstruction and domestic space as gallery that morphs into country lodging. Yet another new model for art was revealed recently in A House for Essex, in which artist Grayson Perry and architect Charles Holland designed the dwelling itself as artwork (part of Alain de Botton's Living Architecture programme, you can rent it out for a short stay). The house accommodates a series of tapestries about the ordinary life of a fictional character but it is the architecture that is the main attraction: a fairy-tale concoction, half candy-house, half primitive temple.

If that's Post-White Cube architecture, then another profound version of that condition has been what we might call the epic-industrial – exemplified by Tate Modern in London. Opened in 2000, it represented a seismic shift. What its architects, Herzog & De Meuron, understood so well was the potential for scale. In opening up the Turbine Hall they understood that the power station represented an opportunity for a room of an enormity that could never

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Each year the Frieze structure represents a remarkable feat of temporary architecture and some distinguished talents have taken part.

2003–2005 The first Frieze tent was designed by David Adjaye, who came with artworld credentials having designed London homes for Chris Ofili and Tim and Sue Webster, and an installation for Ofili's *The Upper Room* (1999–2002, now in the Tate collection). His most significant project to date, the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington DC (2016), opens on 24 September.

2006–2007 Jamie Fobert's design for the 2006 fair structure featured a dramatic elevated entrance, allowing visitors to enter the fair among the treetops. The designer of a series of award-winning houses, Fobert is currently working on the extension of Tate St Ives, due for completion in 2017.

2008–2010 Caruso St John made some subtle innovations such as removing the interior ceiling scrim, and added drama to the fair approach, collaborating with Matthew Darbyshire, Ryan Gander and Jeppe Hein on Frieze Projects for the entrance area. Their London projects include galleries for Gagosian, the remodelling of the Tate Britain interior (2013), and Damien Hirst's Newport Street Gallery (2015).

2011–2013 Carmody Groarke conceived the fair as a 'city center' with streets and squares, and added a series of pavilions arranged around existing trees in The Regent's Park. Subsequent projects have included the Glyndeborne White Cube, a seasonal exhibition pavilion in the grounds of the historic opera venue in the English countryside.

2014–ongoing Barber Osgerby's Universal Design Studio created an interior with wider avenues and dramatic vistas, added an entrance pavilion and brought planting indoors. Their portfolio includes stores for Stella McCartney and Mulberry, and London's Ace Hotel (2013), whose restaurant Hoi Polloi was described by Linda Yablonsky as 'the best art clubhouse since 1980s Odeon in New York, or '60s Max's'.

2012–ongoing When Frieze Masters was introduced in 2012, the New York-based architect Annabelle Selldorf was hired to give it a temporary home. Known for the elegance and subtlety of her designs, Selldorf aimed to give each gallery a self-contained space, complete with individual lighting. Selldorf has worked extensively with David Zwirner and Hauser & Wirth in London and New York, among others.

'Now the aesthetic of the gallery is brought into the home'



Above
Thomas Croft in Per Skarstedt's
apartment, The Albany, Piccadilly,
designed by Thomas Croft Architects

Opposite
Juergen Teller's studio, Ladbrooke Grove,
designed by 6a

have been justified in a new building (their newly opened extension to Tate Modern, the Switch House, comprises comparatively intimate spaces). That scale in turn promotes art as spectacle – a new way of making art popular – and one now appropriated by the Grand Palais in Paris and many other institutions.

The reuse of industrial space has its own history in art. It was instigated by artists themselves who found the stripped-out, huge spaces of the lofts of New York with their tall windows were perfectly suited to the scale and messiness of the process. These were tough urban spaces in which architectural intervention was unnecessary. It has become so much a part of the language of architecture for art that

now designers are emulating the stripped, industrial aesthetic of found space in new buildings. Renzo Piano's new Whitney Museum of American Art in New York is just that, a huge factory for culture inserted amidst the very lofts that inspired the pivot. The early modernists had fetishised the factory. The Bauhaus itself was conceived as a factory for the production of art – so in a way this was another return to roots.

And now architects have begun importing the language of abandoned industry back into existing buildings. Lacaton & Vassal's Palais de Tokyo was once an elegant Art Deco building, now torn apart and ripped back so that the

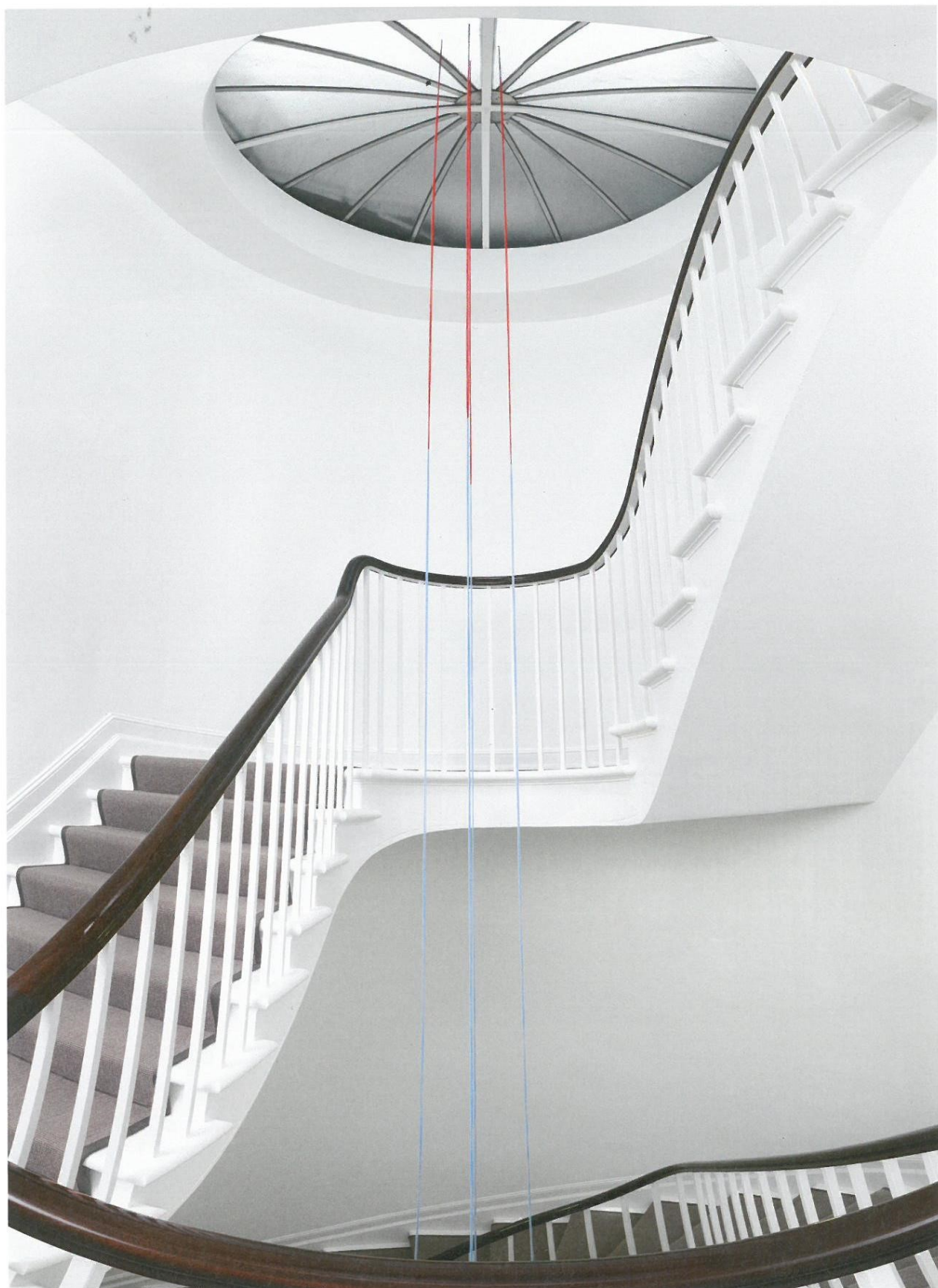
damage makes it appear like an abandoned industrial hulk, its architects using accelerated dilapidation as a means of introducing contemporary architectural expression – more post-apocalyptic than post-industrial. OMA too have used the stripping naked of existing structures in both their Prada Foundation in Milan (a former distillery) and the Garage in Moscow (a one-time park cafeteria). OMA founder Rem Koolhaas even suggests that the reuse of existing buildings represents a way out of the trap of starchitecture, in which architects are expected to produce ever more outlandish signature buildings to cope with an icon – a process of inflation which often ends in self-caricature.

These two modes – the minimal and the industrial – have melded into a kind of default architecture for art. From Chelsea and Shoreditch, Beijing and Berlin, to Mayfair and the Upper East Side, contemporary art is set against white walls and bare concrete. For increasingly globalized dealers this works well – buyers can see work against the same contexts wherever they are and the background is never a distraction. Curators too demand a neutrality which mitigates against any departures from the norm. It is, after all, the white wall that declares *this is art*.

SKARSTEDT



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The gallery, however, is a shrinking small part of the world of architecture for art. Fairs have become extravaganzas not only for collectors but for the broader public – and sometimes their architecture is a temporary one. Frieze has always built its own spaces in which to show – its collaborations with architects from David Adjaye to Annabelle Selldorf have become part of the brand [see sidebar]. As biennales proliferate, with them comes an increasing willingness to appropriate other kinds of space, with artists being given the opportunity to move back into the kinds of historic spaces once devoted to art – the palazzi and grand houses, the urban squares and public walkways.

Even beyond these there are new contexts emerging. The Rijksmuseum's inspirational decision to display pictures at Schiphol Airport has provided one of the most surprising environments for Old Masters whilst Heathrow Airport's vast

sculptures (including Richard Wilson's 2014 *Slipstream*) have made art an inevitable part of the everyday background. There are sculpture parks, rural retreats and Land art experiences. And there are the artists' studios themselves – David Chipperfield's studio for Antony Gormley, Anish Kapoor's wonderful studio by Casey Fierro and 6a's stunning concrete infill building for Juergen Teller.

Each art-world generation imports a new architecture and, eventually, it is subsumed into an aesthetic culture which it somehow makes its own again. First it was the language of modernist minimalism, then the loft, then the blockbuster – the urban icon, followed by the factory and the power station more recently the ubiquitous architecture of the pop-up, the tent and the pavilion. But art makes them all its own.

It is a good time for art. In the public, the private and the commercial worlds it is becoming an indispensable aspect of urban culture. Any ambitious city needs a programme of art to assert itself on the global scene and it is the architecture, often more than the art itself, that declares its presence. Once there was an art of architecture, within which paintings and sculptures were displayed. Now there is, instead, an architecture for art.

Edwin Heathcote is architecture and design critic, *Financial Times*, and editor-in-chief, *Reading Design*; based in London

Opposite
Installation view of 'Fred Sandback', 2013,
at David Zwirner, Mayfair, designed by
Selldorf Architects © 2016 Fred Sandback
Archive. Courtesy: David Zwirner, New York
and London

Above
A House for Essex, 2015, designed by
Grayson Perry and FAT Architecture
Courtesy: the artists and Living
Architecture. Photo: Jack Hobhouse

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