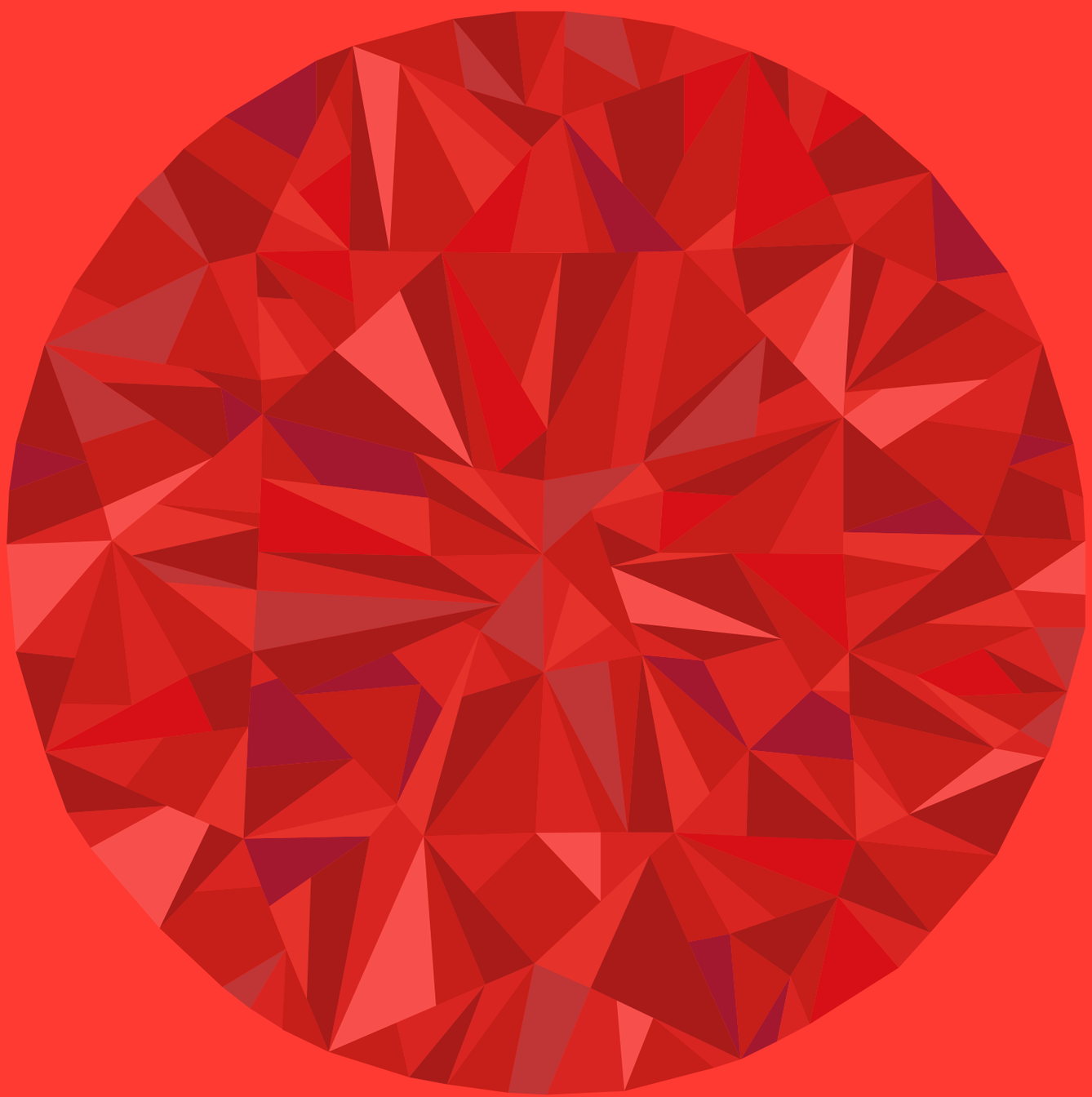
Review



David Roper-Curzon
Sculpting personality

Sonia Fazlali-Zadeh
Jewel thinking

Anna Keay
The beauty of restoration

ECCLESIASTICAL ART&CULTURE REVIEW

If there's one thing we've learnt at Ecclesiastical Insurance it's to expect the unexpected. Every day, among the wonderful heritage buildings, collections and amazing art that we encounter, we come across extraordinary surprises and hidden treasures. And as insurers of these treasures, we're acutely aware of our responsibilities, which is why we're constantly enriching and refining our knowledge, building on our already considerable expertise.

In this issue of Review, you can gain valuable insights into the world of fine and rare jewels from Sonia Fazlali-Zadeh, Jewellery Specialist & Valuer at Gurr Johns. And you can discover what the best-dressed dogs have been wearing over the centuries at the delightfully quirky Dog Collar Museum at Leeds Castle from the Castle's Curator, Annie Kemkaran-Smith.

Hear what historian Dr Simon Thurley dug up in his garden and about the time capsule he's hidden for future generations to unearth. Find out about the restoration of an old dairy from The Landmark Trust's Dr Anna Keay, and how a disused church is set to become a community hub from Amanda Gerry, Regeneration Officer at The Churches Conservation Trust.

Sculptor David Roper-Curzon reveals what first sparked his love of sculpting, while we uncover the thinking behind the remarkable Glass Villa. And to keep you in the picture, our Art & Private Client Underwriting Director and in-house art specialist, Dr James Lindow, takes the temperature on the global art market.

Treasures aplenty, we hope you agree. So we are sure you'll find something to spark your interest.

Sarah Willoughby
Business Director, Art & Private Client

Faith Kitchen
Heritage Director

Articles showing this icon feature property protected by Ecclesiastical Insurance

FORM MASTER

‘EVERYBODY’S FACE IS INTERESTING TO ME. I QUITE OFTEN FORGET PEOPLE’S NAMES, BUT I NEVER FORGET THEIR FACES. I THINK IT’S AN OCCUPATIONAL HAZARD,’ LAUGHS DAVID ROPER-CURZON. ELDEST SON OF LORD TEYNHAM, DAVID HAS BEEN WORKING AS A SCULPTOR FOR THE LAST 20 YEARS.

AN INTERVIEW WITH DAVID ROPER-CURZON, SCULPTOR

It was while he was at school at Radley College, where he was a music scholar, that his passion for sculpting was first sparked. 'It had a very good sculpture department and a very good sculpture tutor, who very much inspired me,' he explains. 'It also helped that I had an aunt at the time who was a sculptor and who was another source of inspiration.'

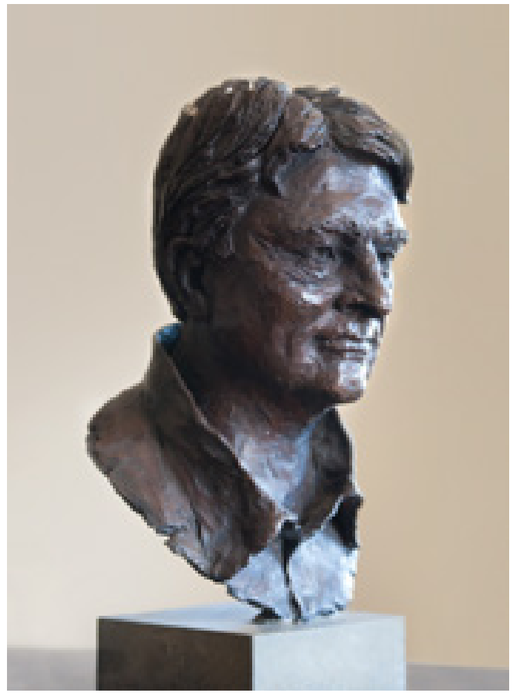
MODEL STUDENT

Asked if he could recall his first sculpture, he smiles. 'The first sculpture I ever did was a bust of Tsar Nicholas II of Russia, which I did at school. I was studying Russian history at the time, so that sort of inspired me to do one of him. In fact, I think my house master liked it so much he took possession of it,' he laughs.

What started as a hobby has grown into a flourishing career. David's studio is at his home at Pylewell Park, a magnificent 17th century country house overlooking the Solent in Hampshire's New Forest. Although as he explains, since everything he does is on commission, he often works in the houses of the people he's sculpting. And since many of his commissions come from abroad, he often works overseas. Almost all come from word of mouth, with most clients enjoying the exclusivity that brings. As David neatly puts it: 'I work wherever the word takes me.'

TAKING SHAPE

Explaining, in suitably simplified terms, the sculpting process, David says: 'There are two types of sculptor. You're either a carver or a modeller. I'm a modeller. So, I start by making an armature, which is sort of a framework onto which you attach the clay, and then you build up the clay and model it. Next, you make a rubber mould around the clay into which wax is poured to make a positive impression – and that's then dipped into ceramic. This is then kiln dried, ready to be poured with molten bronze. That's it, more or less.'



To get a real feel for his subjects, David works from life models, although as he explains: 'I start with photographs, so you get the character – the person – just a subconscious thing which you try to capture. I'm like a glorified hairdresser really in that respect.' And judging from the end results, he doesn't seem to have a bad hair day.

Asked how long the whole process takes to do, say, a bust, David pauses to reflect. 'It depends what I'm doing. After I've taken photographs and measurements, I work alone initially for up to 10 hours – something like that. Then I have sittings – usually two or three, lasting for about an hour to an hour and a half each time. Once the sculpture's finished, it goes to the foundry and that can take up to a couple of months.'

MODELLED ON THE MAESTROS

Looking at David's sculptures, there's a clear classical influence, so it's not surprising to hear that Rodin and Michelangelo are among his favourite sculptors. Besides his private commissions he's also created several public pieces. These include a sculpture of Frankie Dettori leaping off his horse at Ascot Racecourse, a posthumous sculpture of footballing legend, John Charles, at Elland Road and a large statue of James McGill, founder of the McGill University, in Montreal.

Given the sheer variety of his clients, it's intriguing to know if there are any people who David found especially interesting to work with. 'I did a bust of Mel Smith, the comedian, and he was a fascinating person to sculpt,' he muses. 'As was Peter Snow, the newscaster,' he recalls. When asked if he has an ideal subject, or if there's someone he would particularly like to sculpt, David is at pains to make clear that it could be anyone. 'When I meet people, I'm not literally looking up their nostrils – but I'm sort of envisaging how I would model them.'

AN INSPIRING SETTING

Back at his light-filled studio, once an old carpenters' shop, just off from the house, it's easy to see what an inspiring place it must be to work. Sculpting aside, David explains how he and his wife, Melanie, are also kept busy with the wide range of events now being held at Pylewell Park. 'We're very much into the wedding business at the moment. I think we've got 22 weddings this year and a number already booked for next year.' Weddings aside, Pylewell is also a spectacular setting for private parties, corporate and outdoor events as well as filming and photography.

The core of the house dates back to the 17th century but has been added to over the years. 'The centre part was built by Sir James Worsley and I think there were three generations of Worsleys living here,' says David. 'It was the last Worsley, Sir Richard, who was the subject of the BBC programme, The Scandalous Lady Worsley. That was a bit of a racy story.' He chuckles to himself.

WORK IN PROGRESS

The estate has been owned by David's family since 1879 and has been a family home to the Roper-Curzon family since 2010. Set in 1500 acres, with 27 acres of rambling house gardens, a 15-acre lake and private beach, the house has sweeping views of the rolling countryside and a stunning sea aspect. As with any heritage property, upkeep is an ongoing issue and when asked about current or future renovations David says: 'Thinking about couples who want to get married here, we're doing some work on the bridal suite and guest bedrooms. They're already quite lovely but we want them to be really special.' Certainly, for anyone staying at Pylewell – be it wedding guests or those coming to sit for sculptures – the sense of history and exclusivity make for a wholly memorable experience.

Returning to the subject of sculpture and to David's most recent commission, he is, he says, working on a life-sized figure of the wife of a regular client. As if that wasn't challenging enough, he's also got 'three or four heads on the go'. Clearly a man with his hands full.

I start with photographs, so you get the character – the person – just a subconscious thing which you try to capture.

ART MARKET REVIEW

IN THE FACE OF ONGOING GLOBAL ECONOMIC UNCERTAINTY, THE ART MARKET SEEMS IN REMARKABLY GOOD HEALTH. THE ART BASEL AND UBS ART MARKET REPORT 2019 SHOWED THAT PUBLIC AUCTION SALES OF FINE AND DECORATIVE ART AND ANTIQUES IN 2018 REACHED $29.1 BILLION – AN INCREASE OF 2.1% ON THE 2017 TOTAL OF $28.5 BILLION.

DR JAMES LINDOW, UNDERWRITING DIRECTOR, ART & PRIVATE CLIENT

The three largest auction markets – the US, China and the UK – continued to dominate sales during 2018, increasing their collective share of worldwide sales to 87%, up 3% from the previous year. The US market remained by far the largest with 40% of sales (up from 35%), followed by China at 29% (down from 33%) and the UK at 18% (up from 16%). Despite the political turmoil surrounding Brexit, the UK performed strongly with sales of just under $14 billion against a mixed performance in the rest of Europe with many of the larger markets contracting.

Although less extreme than in 2017, which saw multiple record-breaking multimillion-dollar lots distort overall results, growth in 2018 continued to be driven by art at the high end of the auction market, particularly works priced over $10 million. Post-War and Contemporary sales (generally artists born after 1910) reached $7.2 billion in 2018, an increase of 16% despite a 5% reduction in the number of lots sold. Sales in Modern art (generally artists born between 1875 and 1910) also recorded strong results of $4.3 billion in 2018, up 19% on the previous year despite a decline of 10% in the volume of transactions.

TOP LOTS

The Post-War and Contemporary sector covers a wide range of artists, including both those deceased and living at various stages of their careers. 2018 was a notable year for sales in this segment, with David Hockney's 'Portrait of an Artist (Pool with Two Figures)' (1972) achieving the top overall price in this sector of $90.3 million at Christie's New York in November.

The most expensive painting sold at auction in 2018 was from the Modern sector of the market. Amedeo Modigliani's 1917 large painting of a reclining nude entitled 'Nu couché (sur le côté gauche)' sold at Sotheby's New York in May for $157.2 million.

Rabbit (1986), stainless steel, Jeff Koons

Love is in the Bin (2018) / Girl with balloon (2006), aerosol paint / acrylic paint / canvas / wood, Banksy

In the publicity leading to the sale Sotheby's had confirmed the $150 million estimate was the highest amount ever placed on a work at auction. A key driver in the unprecedented auction estimate was no doubt the presence of an irrevocable, or third-party, bid placed in advance on the painting. In the end, the work only narrowly exceeded its estimate, selling for $139 million plus $18.2 million fees to the single bid from the unnamed guarantor.

RECORD-BREAKING ROCKEFELLERS

After 2017 saw the Leonardo 'Salvator Mundi' (c.1500) smash the auction record for a singular artwork, last year signalled the highest total ever for a private collection sold at auction. The sale by Christie's New York in May of the paintings, antiques and decorative arts collection of Peggy and David Rockefeller realised $832.5 million. The record-breaking result achieved was particularly gratifying because of the auction's charitable purpose, with all proceeds from the sale going to 12 charities stipulated in the will of the late David Rockefeller. The highest individual artwork sold from the Rockefeller collection was Pablo Picasso's 'Fillette à la corbeille fleurie' (1905). The work divided experts who were unsure how the market would react to the large painting's subject matter of a naked teenage girl from the artist's lesser known early Rose Period, and therefore not easily recognisable as a Picasso. Nevertheless, the painting reached its guarantee and sold for $115 million, thereby surpassing the significant $100 million milestone.

As with the Leonardo sale in 2017, Christie's once again demonstrated their more populist approach to marketing the highest profile auction sales. Here, the charitable auction was presented through a shrewd marketing campaign as the opportunity to 'Live Like a Rockefeller'. As in 2017, marketing hype and hyperbole were seamlessly meshed together culminating, after a six-month promotional campaign, in 10 days of online sales and three days of live auctions at the Rockefeller Centre where over 1,500 objects were sold.

RECENT HIGHS

Earlier this year, Christie's New York applied an equally shrewd approach to the marketing of Jeff Koons' iconic and endlessly-debated 'Rabbit' (1986). Encouraging potential buyers to 'Own the Controversy', the stainless-steel, balloon-inspired rabbit sculpture neatly bunny hopped the sales record set in 2018 by Hockney's 'Portrait of an Artist (Pool with Two Figures)', selling in May for $91.1 million. The amount was a new record for a living artist.

In the same month at Sotheby's New York, Claude Monet's 'Meules' (1891) sold for $110.7 million. One of just four works from the artist's famous Haystack series to remain in private hands, the oil on canvas painting set a new auction record for a work by Monet and was the first Impressionist painting to exceed $100 million. Also in the May auction sales in the US – where the highest value art works sold this year – was the sale of Robert Rauschenberg's 'Buffalo II' (1964), which sold at Christie's New York for $88.8 million. One of the largest of Rauschenberg's iconic silkscreen paintings, featuring the uniquely American images of President John F Kennedy, a space capsule, bald eagle and the Coca-Cola logo, the sale marked a watershed in the artist's auction pedigree dwarfing his previous saleroom high of $18 million set in 2015.

ASSET STRIPPING

If 2017 had seen Leonardo's 'Salvator Mundi' tear up the records books with its unprecedented $450.3 million sale, 2018 marked the literal attempt by the street artist Banksy to 'cut through' the vagaries of the art market. In a brilliantly choreographed PR stunt at Sotheby's London in October, Banksy managed to stage the live shredding at auction of one of his best-known works 'Girl with balloon' (2006). Conveniently captured on camera and uploaded on Banksy's own Instagram account, the painting was cut in strips seconds after the gavel fell by a shredder concealed in the painting's frame.

This act of deliberate self-destruction made an additional, perhaps unintended, statement on our modern perception of artistic versus economic 'value'. The generally secretive Banksy publicly declared following the stunt, how the plan to completely shred his work was foiled by a technical glitch, leaving the torn strips hanging down outside the frame. Shortly after the sale Pest Control, the authentication body for the artist, verified the painting as a new 'original' artwork under a new title 'Love is in the Bin'. Where the intact Banksy had already equalled his record price at auction of £1.04 million, the now notorious partially shredded work is considered by specialists to have doubled in value to be worth in excess of £2 million.

At home in the tower

AN INTERVIEW WITH DR SIMON THURLEY, HISTORIAN

Not many people can say that their dining room is in an Elizabethan tower. Yet for Dr Simon Thurley, his wife Dr Anna Keay and twins Maud and Arthur, home is far from ordinary. Perhaps not surprising though, that with Simon being a leading historian, former Museum director and former Chief Executive of English Heritage, and Anna being Director of The Landmark Trust, they should choose to live somewhere with a huge sense of history.

Simon and Anna bought the Grade I listed, former merchant's home in King's Lynn, Norfolk in 2005. It was, in his own words, 'a wreck'. So, what would make someone buy an eight-bedroom house with no electricity or water, no bathrooms or kitchen, cracked walls and collapsed ceilings? Simon smiles, clearly familiar with the question. 'Both of us have spent our lives restoring buildings in various different jobs and historical palaces at English Heritage and The Landmark Trust, so we sort of practice what we preach.

I suppose we've got it in our blood. When we heard about this house, which had been saved originally by the King's Lynn Preservation Trust, who had rescued it from dereliction with a grant from English Heritage, we knew we had to buy it.'

The house, called Clifton House, hadn't been used as a private residence since the mid 19th century. 'For us,' says Simon, 'it was a great opportunity to get this great hulk of a place back into what it once was and hadn't been for a long time – to turn it back into a really fantastic family house.'

TOWERING AMBITIONS

Back in the 17th century, the house was home to a fabulously wealthy merchant. 'It's believed,' Simon explains, 'that he had the tower built so he could get a good view of the surrounding area. From the top, you'd have a wonderful view of all the amazing medieval roofscapes of King's Lynn as well as the ships coming and going. It also meant you could get up above the hustle and bustle of the streets and the slight, I suspect, stench and pong of them as well.' He laughs.

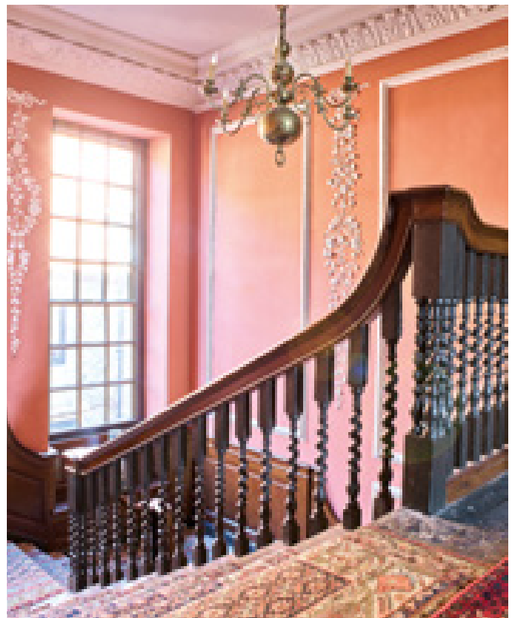
The restoration work of the tower is now virtually complete. 'It's like a little museum,' says Simon. 'Obviously we use it for ourselves and eat dinner in there and things.

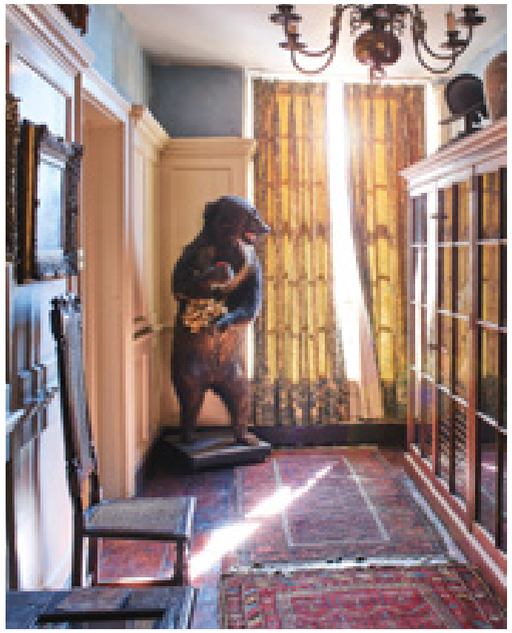
And it's Anna's favourite part of the house.' As she herself says, 'It's the most lovely, romantic thing to eat there with candles and the ancient wall surfaces around you. And if you go out into the garden in the evening and look back at the tower and see the candlelight shining through the leaded window, it's just beautiful.'

Simon continues, 'We've tried to furnish the tower as it would have been in the 1620s and while the structure of the building is now restored, I suspect the process of finding suitable things to put in it will carry on going forever. We quite like that though because it's fun – creating this imaginary 17th century merchant's world.' The tower is open to the public a number of times a year. 'I think the public enjoy it as much as us,' beams Simon. 'There aren't many places you can go and get this rather amazing feeling of a lost world – of these incredibly wealthy merchants whose trading tentacles went all over Europe.'

OPERATION RESTORATION

So, are there any modern features that Simon and Anna have added to the tower to bring it up to date? 'Well, of course, we've introduced a very discreet fire protection system,' laughs Simon. 'Even if our insurers, Ecclesiastical, hadn't required it, we'd have put it in anyway. But we decided no heating and no visible electricity, although we have put in a couple of electrical plug points incredibly





cunningly concealed where nobody could possibly see them.' He continues, 'Other than that there are no modern interventions. Obviously, in the rest of the house, we've had to put in bathrooms and kitchens and loos and electricity and wi-fi, but the tower we've tried to keep as pure as possible. I think it would spoil the effect if you were to spot a 13 amp plug socket high up on the wall. "Oh, hold on," you'd think.'

One thing Simon says that visitors to the tower find extraordinary is seeing the plan drawn up by the Borough Council in 1962, which involved demolishing Clifton House and all the surrounding historic houses, and replacing them with a massive multi-storey carpark. 'It was stopped at the last moment,' says Simon, 'so the house had an incredibly lucky escape.'

> There aren't many places you can go and get this rather amazing feeling of a lost world.

Talking about the most challenging part of the restoration project, Simon laughs. 'I think the hardest part has been finding people with the skills to do the things that we want. Most of the ceilings in the house for example are reed plaster, so the plaster is stuck onto reeds plucked from the River Ouse. Finding someone who is willing to do a lime plaster ceiling on reeds like that isn't easy.'

HIDDEN TREASURES

Not surprisingly, the restoration project has revealed some extraordinary finds, like the Civil War cannonball that Simon found in the flowerbed. 'King's Lynn was under siege in 1642 by Oliver Cromwell,' he explains, 'and we know they put a cannon on top of our tower and were blasting cannonballs back at Cromwell. Clearly a lot dropped into our garden, including one that I dug up.' Who knows what other treasures are waiting to be unearthed.

Keen for future inhabitants to make their own discoveries, Simon and his family have hidden a time capsule containing letters and photographs behind a repaired section of dining room panelling in the house – panelling dating back to Henry VIII's reign. 'Maybe in 500 years, someone will find it and learn about this family,' laughs Simon.

'What's rather wonderful about living in a house that's 800 years old is that you become part of the history of the house – and the history of the house becomes part of you,' Simon enthuses. 'You see yourself in this amazing, historical perspective. So, when you sit down with your cup of tea or your glass of wine, you can imagine people who did that in the very same room, hundreds and hundreds of years before, and we really like that.' Simon smiles contentedly. A man of the moment happily engulfed in the past.

BY ROYAL APPOINTMENT

Clifton House isn't the only restoration project close to Simon's heart. He's also working with Andrew Lloyd Webber helping to restore the Theatre Royal Drury Lane. As Simon explains, 'What's fascinating is that the same principles apply as they do at home. It's about having clarity of what you want to achieve, having the skills to achieve it and then making sure everything is done to the absolutely highest and best standards. We're right in the middle of it right now.' He laughs: 'the place is swarming. I mean we've got a couple of hundred workers on site and they're working really hard to get it finished.' One thing's for sure. Simon's infectious enthusiasm will have a galvanizing effect.

The unsung craft of

dog collars

ECCENTRIC THOUGH IT MAY SOUND, WHEN YOU WANDER THE HISTORIC GROUNDS OF LEEDS CASTLE IN KENT, ONE OF THE HIGHLIGHTS OF YOUR DAY WILL LIKELY BE PERUSING THE MANY STORY-RICH EXHIBITS IN THEIR DELIGHTFUL DOG COLLAR MUSEUM – HOME TO THE WORLD'S LARGEST PUBLIC COLLECTION OF CANINE ACCOUTREMENTS.

AN INTERVIEW WITH ANNIE KEMKARAN-SMITH, CURATOR, LEEDS CASTLE

In the beautiful grounds of Leeds Castle (perversely located in Kent) sits the Dog Collar Museum: over 130 pieces of animal neckwear that date back as far as Tudor times. This carefully curated collection is as varied and characterful as the creatures they once adorned – from fearsome spiked collars to more intricate pieces that proudly present the owner's coat of arms. But all with a unique tale to tell.

A GENEROUS DONATION

The Museum started in 1977 when 62 historic dog collars were generously donated to the Leeds Castle Foundation by Gertrude Hunt. Gertrude was the widow of John Hunt, the celebrated Irish art collector and medievalist, who had amassed the collection of collars over his lifetime. Gertrude donated the collars in his memory, acknowledging that Leeds Castle was a fitting repository due to the last private owner, Lady Baillie, and her lifelong love of dogs.

Since then, the collection has swelled to over 130 collars through other generous donations and also purchases made by the Leeds Castle Foundation. But as much as each piece has an individual story to tell, it is their collective narrative that really fascinates: how dog's relationship with man has changed over five centuries.

FROM BRUTAL BEGINNINGS

The oldest collars in the Museum's collection come from the Tudor period. At this time, dogs were primarily used for herding livestock, hunting and for brutal sports such as wolf and bear baiting, which pitted a tethered wild animal against a pack of dogs. Indeed, King Henry VIII sent out hundreds of hunting dogs as gifts all 'garnished with a good iron collar', while Henry's own dogs wore sumptuous collars of velvet and leather, embellished with silver and gold spikes, pearls or the royal crest. Annie Kemkaran-Smith, Leeds Castle Curator, explains the weaponised look of the Museum's oldest piece: 'The oldest collar dates from around 1485, is German in origin, and has very large spikes for a very large hunting dog. The early collars tend to be brutal like this in appearance; the spikes were to protect the dog's throat from the animals they were hunting.'

THE RISE OF THE DOMESTIC ANIMAL

With the onset of the Renaissance period, dog collars became less brutal and far more elaborate in appearance as smaller breeds of dog from overseas became increasingly popular as domestic pets. In fact, a handsome, purely decorative dog collar became an important way of demonstrating personal wealth, with some breeds, such as the Italian Greyhound, viewed as luxury objects and dressed as lavishly as their owners.

Annie elaborates: 'In the Renaissance period, the collars show that dogs had become prized possessions. Hunting was now primarily a sport for the rich and noble, and their best hunting dogs added to the prestige of the owner and therefore wore highly decorative and elaborate collars.'

A NEW PURPOSE

From the 18th century onwards, the ownership of dogs, cats and birds spilled into wider society. The dog collar of choice at this time was a plain brass circle, with either a rolled or serrated edge, that was stamped with the owner's name and location to assist in the safe return of a lost dog.

Some owners, however, used this rather functional circle to pursue more creative endeavours. The Museum's collection showcases several examples of collars engraved with a verse or rhyming couplet, identifying dog and owner with a humorous flourish, including this charming 1793 example:

'I am lost return me to my master, I am to go without a log, I am Mr Millard's dog, my brother was christened Prickly Dick and my name is Nimble Come Quick.'

WALKING ONWARDS, LOOKING BACKWARDS

The 20th century saw a greater variety of canine collar fashions emerge than ever before, with new and different materials coming into use, including plastic, wool, felt, beads, and modern textiles such as polyester. Yet despite the arrival of a wider and more versatile range, more and more people are beginning to recognise the beauty and craftsmanship that exists in the unique and surprising world of antique dog collars. Something a trip to Leeds Castle can only attest.

> The early collars were utility items and not prestige items. The fact they have survived all this time is really quite something.

CULTURAL

RESURRECTION

TO LOOK AT THE SOLIDLY HANDSOME HOLY TRINITY CHURCH IN SUNDERLAND'S EAST END, YOU'D BE FORGIVEN FOR THINKING THAT IT WAS JUST A TRADITIONAL CITY CHURCH. A PLACE OF WORSHIP AND QUIET CONTEMPLATION. YET ALL IS NOT WHAT IT SEEMS.

AMANDA GERRY, REGENERATION OFFICER,
THE CHURCHES CONSERVATION TRUST

This Grade I listed church was once a focal point of the community but gradually, as the city centre shifted, the church fell out of use and into disrepair – its roof letting in rain, its timbers rotting, its plasterwork crumbling.

Now, thanks to a £4.3 million restoration project, the church has an exciting future, one that will see it once again become a thriving hub of the community for people of all ages. A £2.8 million National Lottery Heritage Fund grant has been awarded following partnership funding of over £1.5 million raised via trusts and charities, The Churches Conservation Trust, donations from the local community and a £300,000 boost from Sunderland City Council.

A national charity that saves historic churches at risk, The Churches Conservation Trust has owned Holy Trinity since it closed its doors in 1988. It is now leading the massive restoration and transformation project to turn the church into a vibrant cultural, heritage and learning hub. A place where local people can meet, collaborate, create and develop life-changing skills, it will also be used for community events, music, performance, crafts and storytelling. The church will remain consecrated, holding a small number of services each year.

STEERED BY A STAR

Dave Stewart, the Sunderland-born award-winning musician and producer of Eurythmics fame, will be the creative director of the space, encouraging young people to use it for arts and music production and performance. Talking about the project he said: 'It's so important for cities to have places where people can get together to learn, to collaborate and to create. It's places like this that can really make good things happen.' He continued: 'Working with The Churches Conservation Trust is fantastic; their work to care for this historic building means a whole new generation gets to experience the church's beauty through heritage, music and collaboration.' Dave recently recorded some tracks for a forthcoming album at the church and believes this building could be a real asset to the local community and young people of Sunderland.

Several years of consultation have led to this plan, which has been drawn up in conjunction with local people, many of whom have deep family bonds with the church and fond personal memories of attending in the past. Besides engaging local people, it's hoped that the new cultural and community space will become a popular heritage attraction, enticing visitors to see and hear stories of Sunderland's past through engaging and immersive experiences. In so doing, it will help breathe new life into this part of the region.

TRANSFORMING LIVES

Peter Aiers, Chief Executive of The Churches Conservation Trust, said: 'We are absolutely delighted to have received National Lottery support for this transformative project. It will make a real difference to people's lives in the East End of Sunderland. And it will play a significant role in the city's cultural resurgence and rightfully celebrate the fascinating stories of Sunderland's past and present.'

The project will also be providing valuable employment opportunities for the area. Assisted by a £129,000 grant from Allchurches Trust, one of the UK's largest grant-making charities and a supporter of The Churches Conservation Trust, two local people will be funded to work for 12 months as apprentices on the restoration project. In that time, they will gain some of the traditional craft skills used in the restoration of historic buildings, helping to address a national skill shortage. There will also be conservation workshops for up to 1,120 people; a student programme with City of Sunderland College; paid staff posts; university internships plus training for up to 90 volunteers, giving them transferable social and work skills.

A whole new generation gets to experience the church's beauty through heritage music and collaboration.

Dave Stewart, Eurythmics

To kick-start the Holy Trinity restoration project, and to mark the start of their Craft Skills programme, Allchurches Trust funded an exciting Craft and Conserve weekend of events at the church and nearby spaces. More than 600 people including 300 local schoolchildren took part, watching traditional building and craft skills demonstrations as well as trying out some of the crafts for themselves.

BACKWARDS AND FORWARDS

When Holy Trinity was built back in 1719, near the city's busy docks, the building housed the city's first public library, civic rooms, Magistrates' Court and even the local fire engine, as well as serving as the parish church. So it's fitting that a church that started out serving multiple important functions should revert to the same – serving the community in different and valuable ways. As National Lottery Heritage Fund's chief executive Ros Kerslake sums it up: 'Heritage makes a place distinctive and with the right investment and a good business plan, it has the power to transform an area physically and economically. Holy Trinity has always been more than a place of worship, it was the beating civic heart of Sunderland's East End and will be again.'

The beauty OF RESTORATION

DESIGNED BY THE GEORGIAN ARCHITECT, JAMES WYATT, COBHAM DAIRY HAS ADORNED THE GROUNDS OF COBHAM HALL SINCE THE 1790s. AND THIS DELIGHTFULLY DIFFERENT DAIRY, COMMISSIONED BY THE 4TH EARL OF DARNLEY, HAS BROUGHT JOY TO MANY OVER THE CENTURIES.

AN INTERVIEW WITH DR ANNA KEAY,

SADLY, TIME HAS NOT BEEN KIND TO THE STRUCTURE AND UNIQUELY ORNATE PLASTERWORK. TO REMEDY THIS, A BOLD RESTORATION PROJECT LED BY THE LANDMARK TRUST IS UNDERWAY. A CHALLENGE THAT DEMANDS THE TALENTS OF TODAY'S MOST SKILLED CRAFTSPEOPLE.

DIRECTOR, THE LANDMARK TRUST

To compare Cobham Dairy as it appeared in the early 19th century to how it stood in 2018 is to witness the destructive power of time and the elements. Its Gothick-arched windows were boarded up, its exterior was stripped bare of slate, and its remarkable plaster vaulting hung in collapsed canopies. Thankfully, The Landmark Trust's restoration campaign reached full funding before the structure crumbled away entirely. And the hard work of bringing Grade II* listed Cobham Dairy back to life began in mid-October 2018.

BEAUTY INSIDE

Inspired by Italianate chapels, the great architect James Wyatt designed the Dairy as a sanctuary. Inside, a double-height central chamber, lit by upper clerestory windows, provided the core of the Gothick structure, while surrounding cloisters were roofed by exquisite rib vaulted ceilings made of lathe and plaster. Indeed, it is restoring this remarkable plasterwork throughout Cobham Dairy that has required the expertise of some true specialists, maintaining an art that dates back over 200 years.

> It's the subtlety of the tradesperson's hand and the slight human imperfection of handmade plasterwork that we love.

RECREATING A MASTERWORK

The heritage of the Dairy's plasterworks is as rich as the structure they inhabit. The Italian plasterer, Francisco Bernasconi, was working for James Wyatt at Cobham Hall in the early 19th century, making it plausible that Bernasconi created the lauded ceilings. This would help to explain their rare beauty and the technical ability needed to achieve such vaulting.

Rather than being pre-cast, the ribs would originally have been run in situ – a tricky skill at the best of times, let alone when the ribs are curved. Recreating this missing plasterwork required craftsmanship of the highest order. The project team drew up a shortlist of potential contractors with the requisite skills, before picking Philip Gaches and his team.

A FAMILY BUSINESS

A respected master in the world of plastering, Philip trained under his father before taking over the business. Now working with his own two sons, Will and Jude, as well as ex-Prince's Foundation apprentice Anna Castilla Villa, Philip is helping to keep alive a skillset that had been in danger of dying out.

Philip explains: 'Understanding how to technically create this form of plasterwork isn't taught in a college, it's learnt through many years of exposure and working alongside masters of the art. Keeping these skills alive is something I'm committed to. Now I've been joined by both my sons, I am personally passing on all of the skills learnt in my 40 years in the trade.'

He continues: 'A project like Cobham is hugely valuable – it's a rare opportunity for my sons and Anna to learn this skillset in exactly the same way as Bernasconi's team, 200 years ago.'

FAITHFUL FOLLOWERS

Aiding Philip in his work are a number of original Wyatt drawings for the Dairy, dated 1794/5, and preserved at the Yale Centre for British Art, New Haven, Connecticut. Working with a newly made timber framework, Philip and team have used the designs to faithfully recreate the glory of the plaster vaults, corbels and oak leaf clusters, working painstakingly by hand to ensure they are true to the originals.

'It would be easy and cheaper to use a 19th century casting technique to recreate the ceilings,' explains Philip. 'However, they would look like cheap copies and be philosophically incorrect. It's the subtlety of the tradesperson's hand and the slight human imperfection of handmade plasterwork that we love.'

ARTISTIC LICENCE

While Wyatt's drawings provided a useful steer in most areas, they were not as comprehensive on the detailing of the Dairy's bosses – the often decorative feature found at the junction of intersecting ribs. This gave Philip and his team, Anna in particular, the rare opportunity to weave some of their own creativity into the fabric of the Dairy. Using some of the bosses in Cobham Hall as inspiration,

the team modelled the new designs by hand in situ, with a scallop shell or two tastefully integrated into the works – Philip's own personal signature.

PRICELESS OPPORTUNITY

Working on Cobham Dairy has provided Philip's team with an incredibly enlightening experience, but it is Anna's journey to becoming a true artisan that is particularly worthy of mention. As a Prince's Foundation apprentice, Anna completed her course under Philip's guidance and, in his own words, 'never left'.

The Prince's Foundation craft apprenticeship – an initiative proudly supported by Ecclesiastical Insurance – was created to prevent specialist trade skills from being lost and preserve them for future generations. A noble cause that has given Philip the chance to pass on his life's work and passion.

'We've been supporting The Prince's Foundation Building Craft Apprenticeship for over ten years and have had six students, all of whom now work in the heritage plastering sector. Since completing her apprenticeship two years ago, we've seen Anna go from strength to strength. At Cobham Dairy, she brought her own artistic flair to the project, leading the formation of the bosses.'

A BRIGHT FUTURE

As Cobham Dairy continues to be restored to its full former glory, the main chamber, which for over 35 years stood in a terrible state of disrepair, now has its exquisite plaster ceilings back, using the same skill, care and craftsmanship that James Wyatt oversaw in the 18th century. A fitting tribute indeed.

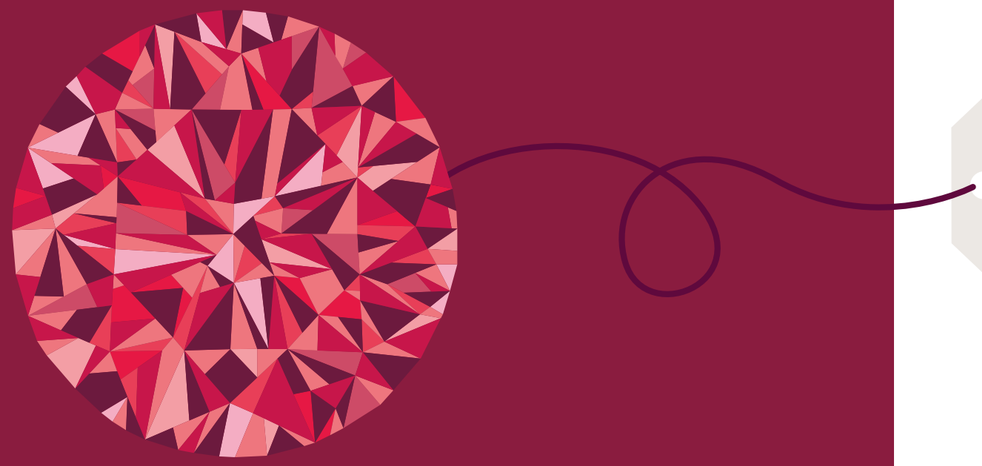
The restoration of Cobham Dairy is proving to be a masterclass in conservation craftsmanship. Dr Anna Keay, Director of The Landmark Trust, proudly explains: 'Using James Wyatt's original drawings and the fragments of surviving 18th-century plaster, our team of expert craftspeople have managed to recreate the extraordinary Gothick detailing of the 1790s. We at The Landmark Trust are thrilled that this remarkable project is acting as a catalyst for such rare skills to be passed on to a whole new generation of craftsmen and women.'

> The same skill, care and craftsmanship that James Wyatt oversaw in the 18th century.

For what it's worth

I CONSIDER MYSELF TO BE INCREDIBLY FORTUNATE. AS AN INDEPENDENT VALUER OF JEWELLERY AND WATCHES, IT IS MY PRIVILEGE TO COME ACROSS VARIOUS BEAUTIFUL AND ONE-OFF PIECES, SHARING IN THE WONDERFUL STORIES AND HISTORY EACH PIECE HAS.

SONIA FAZLALI-ZADEH
JEWELLERY SPECIALIST & VALUER AT GURR JOHNS



Jewellery is often more highly sentimentally charged and personally prized than other forms of art or luxury items. Should a piece be lost or damaged, the sentimental value is often irreplaceable. It is of some comfort then that a client will at least receive the right amount in compensation if they are insured with an up-to-date valuation in a changing market. That's where I come in. It's my job to know this market inside out and how it will impact the value of any piece that may come under my eye.

THE DIAMOND MARKET

There's no denying that diamonds have a timeless beauty that transcends all fashion and trends. But this ageless quality does not render them immune to market fluctuations. Indeed, if you've a piece valued between 2015 and 2018, it's very likely to be undervalued as the market has picked up again since then. If your valuation is even older, your piece may now be worth much more than you are aware: one of the biggest hikes was seen between 2005 and 2010.

RED IS THE RAREST COLOUR

Then, of course, there's the type of diamond being valued. Remarkably, coloured diamonds are still relatively underappreciated by many clients and the wider population, but their unique beauty is undeniable.

The exquisite red diamond is the rarest and most valuable. Broadly speaking, they are valued at approximately $1 million per carat.

Colour in a diamond usually results from a chemical impurity such as nitrogen causing yellow or boron causing blue. Red diamonds, however, have no such impurity in their chemical composition. Instead, the colour is due to a very rare deformation in the pure carbon atomic structure – essentially atoms have slipped or been misplaced. This defect causes light to bend in a way that our eyes see the colour red.

THE SAPPHIRE SURGE

Blue sapphires remain by far the best seller in the coloured gemstone market, with the finer grade sapphires such as Burmese and Ceylon continuing to increase in value. In fact, last year the hammer price for natural unheated sapphires kept overtaking their auction estimates by three to five times. Kashmir sapphires are still the most valuable and have become incredibly rare – so knowing the origin of your sapphire can make a vast difference in its value.

Looking wider to the branded market, pieces by luxury jewellers such as Cartier, Bulgari and Chopard increase on a yearly basis. A client's current insurance replacement figure can quite quickly become woefully insufficient, especially for vintage pieces and newer branded pieces that have become discontinued.

REGULAR APPRAISALS RECOMMENDED

In my experience, I often value items that have not been appraised for many years, with some even still insured under the original purchase receipt of more than a decade ago. The danger being that you could be seriously under-insured and face the double disappointment of financial loss as well as the sentimental cost.

Not only does an up-to-date valuation help avoid having to make up any cost difference or accept a lesser quality item as a replacement, it also gives a chance for the jewellery to be checked over for potential loose settings or necessary repair work. This can avoid that sinking feeling when you look at your beautiful diamond ring only to see an empty space where your precious stone once sat.

AUTHENTICITY ASSURED

A valuer will also confirm the authenticity of a gemstone and its certificate. It's a part of the industry I wish did not exist, but fakes are out there. The industry as a whole has seen a marked increase in the number of fake certificates or certificates from disreputable sources that claim a gemstone is something it is not – whether that is in relation to treatments, enhancements, quality grades or actual composition.

SHOW IT OFF

Jewellery is a passion of mine, as it is for any collector or gifter. But as with any real treasure, we can have a tendency to lock it away for safekeeping, be it in a safe or a dusty shoe box. My advice for you is to get it out – let it be seen and appreciated. And if it is great-grandmother's tiara that you think you will never wear, have it remodelled so it can be enjoyed by yourself and others. These beautiful items deserve the attention. But please, whatever the piece, don't forget to have it valued first.

Immersed in nature

CLOUD-SCRIBBLED SKIES, TREES IN EVER-SHIFTING SHADES OF GREEN, GOLD AND BROWN, AND SUNLIGHT BOUNCING OFF THE SILVERED WATER. THE GLASS VILLA DOESN'T JUST REFLECT NATURE, IT'S ALMOST A PART OF IT. THIS EXTRAORDINARILY STRIKING HOUSE APPEARS TO FLOAT ON THE WATER – A FUTURISTIC DRAGONFLY HOVERING ABOVE THE SHIMMERING SURFACE.

ECCLESIASTICAL ART&CULTURE REVIEW

Designed by Dutch architecture firm Mecanoo, also behind Denmark's futuristic train cars and the New York Public Library's pending renovation, the Glass House is located on the exclusive Lakes by Yoo estate in Lechlade, on the southern edge of the Cotswolds.

CLEARLY CONNECTED

The architects' guiding design principle was to create a house that combined transparency with sustainability, forging a powerful relationship between the villa and the landscape. And this harmony between landscape and interior, architecture and nature, was a key design factor, particularly with regard to sight lines, materials, colours and lighting.

Designed from the inside out, the house has uninterrupted 360° views of its rural surroundings, giving you the sense that you're living at one with nature and intimately involved with the changing seasons.

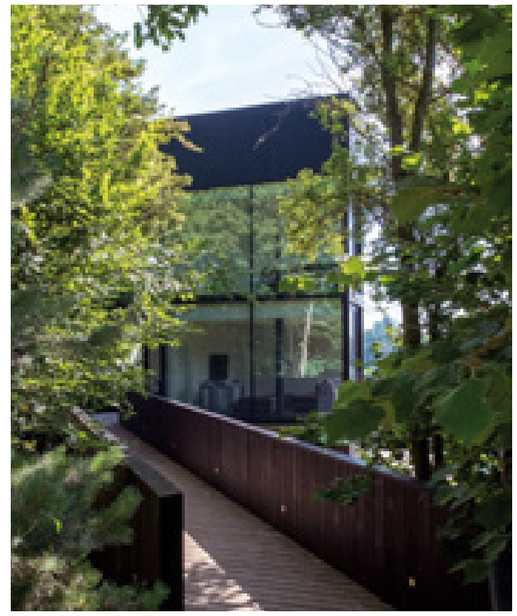
AT HOME ON THE WATER

To create the feeling of 'living outside on water' that the architects were trying to achieve, the house sits on a platform which hovers over water at the edge of the lake. To enter the house you cross a bridge, which has been positioned diagonally to the access road, to ensure the house is effectively hidden from view and to avoid cutting down mature plants and trees. Besides providing a physical barrier, the trees and plants have a muffling effect, absorbing any lights or sounds from the road and increasing the sensation of being cocooned in nature. It's a place of luxurious refuge and sublime relaxation.

A wooden deck encircles the home, providing generous outdoor living space – a perfect place to laze on a lounger and watch the swans glide by. And to increase the connection with the surrounding environment, the basement floor is submerged beneath the surface of the water. Aquatic plants along the shoreline alternate with stepping stones, which lead you among the trees to different parts of the garden. On the water side, the villa has far-reaching views, while from the vast roof terrace you can soak up the scenery floating lilypad-like over the lake.

Spread over three floors, the structure is the essence of contemporary design, from the ultra-modern, fully glazed façade to the sleek and elegant dark wood detailing. Terraces on two different levels connect the villa to both the land and the water, anchoring the house in nature. And since floor-to-ceiling windows flank all four sides of the home, there are panoramic views of the landscape from nearly every room in the house.

The exterior wood used in the Glass Villa was treated using the ancient Japanese art of Sugi Ban, which involves subtly charring timber to provide a beautiful, long-lasting finish. As well as providing effective fire resistance, this natural technique is free from chemical preservatives, paints and retardants. An elegant, practical and environmentally friendly solution.



SEEING THE LIGHT

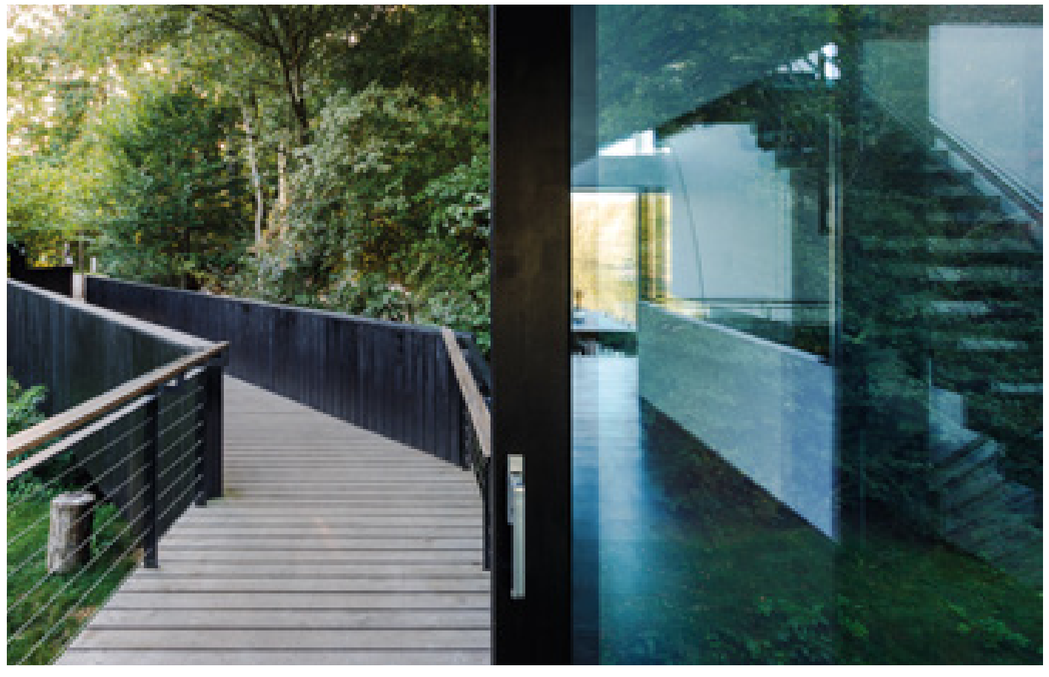
The home is designed to orbit around an open staircase and glass-roofed central atrium, which drenches the living space with natural light. As the architects explained: 'The staircase sews all the rooms together into one interior space. The central atrium brings abundant daylight into the sunken basement and connects the interior to the roof terrace.'

This full-height void in the heart of the house not only connects all levels but creates another series of diagonal and vertical sight lines. And despite the villa's size, 600 square metres, the rooms flow into each other naturally, mirroring their fluid surroundings.

Every room in the house has been designed to connect the interior with nature through high ceilings – between 2.8 and 3.5 metres high – and glass walls, while the open-plan living areas with minimal walls are also intended to bring that scenery indoors. Where partitions were required, they were designed to double as useful features, such as the large fireplace and storage cupboards on the ground floor.

They also divide the house into different places, creating more intimate and private areas within the large transparent volume. In order not to detract from the surroundings, the interior design makes use of earthy, light and transparent materials; glass, dark wood, dark metal and bright white walls, ceilings and doors. The colour of the flooring extends outside the house, cladding the edges of the deck that surrounds the building, as well as the bridge that connects it with the land.

Blurring the boundaries between architecture and nature, the Glass Villa dissolves into its surroundings – a hidden treasure waiting to be discovered.



THINKING INSIDE THE BOX

While the views of the outside take some beating, inside the Glass Villa is quietly impressive. There's a Varenna kitchen complete with tandoori oven, pizza oven and wine fridge. Sofas are by Poliform, dining chairs by Cassina and lighting courtesy of Bocci, Tom Dixon, Davide Groppi and Philippe Starck.

In the basement there's a sauna, hot tub, full-size snooker table, bar and nine-seater cinema. Despite being 3.5 metres underwater, light streams in from high above during the day, while at night it becomes a stylish space for entertainment and entertaining.

Head up the stairs – carved from a single 500-year-old tree from Slovenia – and you'll find four en-suite bedrooms with marble en-suite bathrooms. Head on a little higher and you emerge onto the roof terrace. At 186 square metres it occupies a third of the house's inside space – and provides a bird's eye view across the garden and three different lakes. Besides seating areas for relaxing and dining, there's a large wood-fired pizza oven.

Despite the enormous expanses of glass in place of walls – a remarkable 7 centimetres thick and weighing thousands of kilograms – energy consumption of the house is very low. The Glass Villa uses a variety of green technologies including an air thermal heat pump, solar panels, heat recovery systems and triple-glazed glass.

LOOK AND YOU WILL FIND

'The beauty of the Glass Villa,' says softly spoken architect Leo de Winter from Boheme Development, 'is its surroundings – the seasons, and the weather.' On any analysis, it's an extraordinary building. And by blurring the boundaries between architecture and nature, the Glass Villa dissolves into its surroundings like a deer in the bracken – or a truffle in the undergrowth. A hidden treasure waiting to be discovered.

Parties involved in the project
Development: Boheme Development S.L.
Concept design: Mecanoo architecten
Developed architectural design: Arquitectura y Ordenación Urbana S.L. AOU SL
Structural engineer: Fernando Sarria
Engineering: INARQ S.L.

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