



Large  
Print

# Light Lines:

The Architectural  
Photographs of  
Hélène Binet

**In order to adhere to social distancing measures and to keep our staff and visitors safe, physical copies of the large print exhibition guides will no longer be available in the galleries. To help you make the most of your visit to the Royal Academy, our large print exhibition guides are available to download as PDFs. No app is required. They are freely available in each exhibition's section of our website. Simply download the file to your device, then read – or follow the below instructions to listen to the introductions and labels as you go round.**

### **iOS devices**

- On your iPhone, go to "Settings". Next, tap "Accessibility".
- Hit "Spoken Content", then tap the toggle switch for "Speak Selection" to switch it on.
- You can now customise the speech rate, default language and listen to an audio sample.
- After that, go to your iOS PDF reader, and open a PDF file.
- Highlight the text that you want to read and tap "Speak".

## **Android devices**

- To use Google Text-to-speech on your Android device, go to “Settings”. Next, tap “Language & Input”.
- Select “Text-to-speech output”, and then choose Google Text-to-speech Engine as your preferred engine.
- You can now customise the speech rate, default language and listen to an audio sample.
- To hear items read aloud, tap the Select to Speak icon, then click on a specific word, or drag your finger across the screen to select a longer passage of text, and tap the play button to begin the text-to-speech playback. Alternatively, you can tap the play button to hear everything on screen.

**Depending on your device, the following free apps may prove useful. But you won't need to download any app to read the PDF or listen to the introductory text and labels.**

## **iOS devices – PDF Voice Reader Aloud**

Another method to hear large print text read aloud on iOS devices is to use PDF Voice Reader Aloud – a text-to-speech app which you can download for free from the App Store. It offers 31 different languages and makes it easy to adjust the speed of speaking rate. Follow the steps below and start reading PDF files on your mobile.

- Get the application from the App Store.
- Open the PDF file inside the app.
- Tap the upper right corner to choose the languages, select the voice, hit the button left to the play button to adjust the speed of the speaking rate.
- Lastly, tap the play button to read the PDF out loud on iPhone or iPad.

## **Android devices – Voice Aloud**

- First, download the free Voice Aloud app in the Google Play Store.
- Download the PDF version of the large print guide.
- Select the folder icon and navigate to the downloaded file.
- You will be prompted with a set of text import options.
- Click “Open file” once you have selected your settings and Voice Aloud will begin reading your file.

# **Light Lines: The Architectural Photographs of H el ene Binet**

The Sackler Wing of Galleries

23 October 2021 - 23 January 2022

## **Contents**

### **Page 3**

North Gallery

### **Page 12**

West Gallery

### **Page 20**

South Gallery

### **Page 29**

North-East Gallery

Supported by

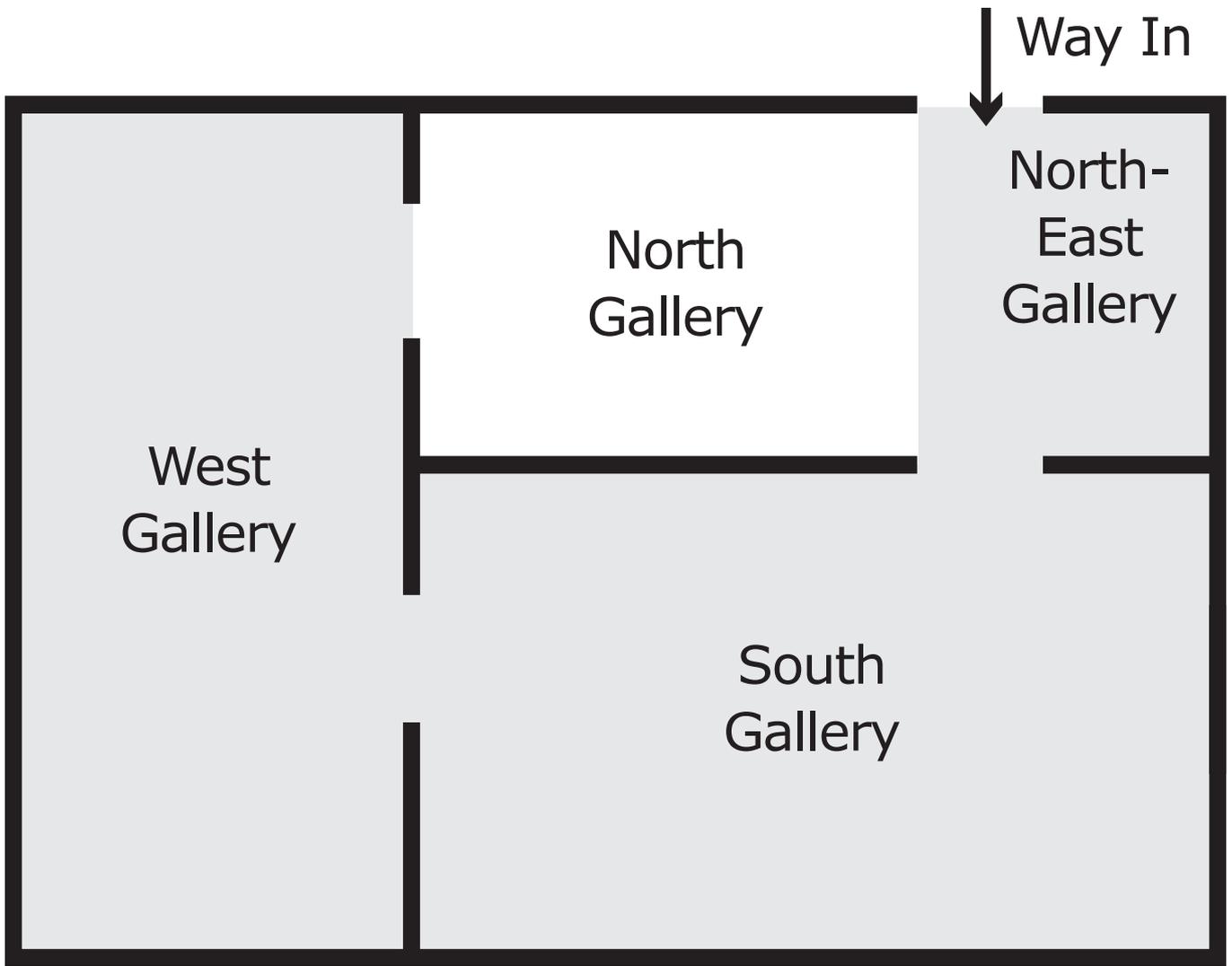


swiss arts council

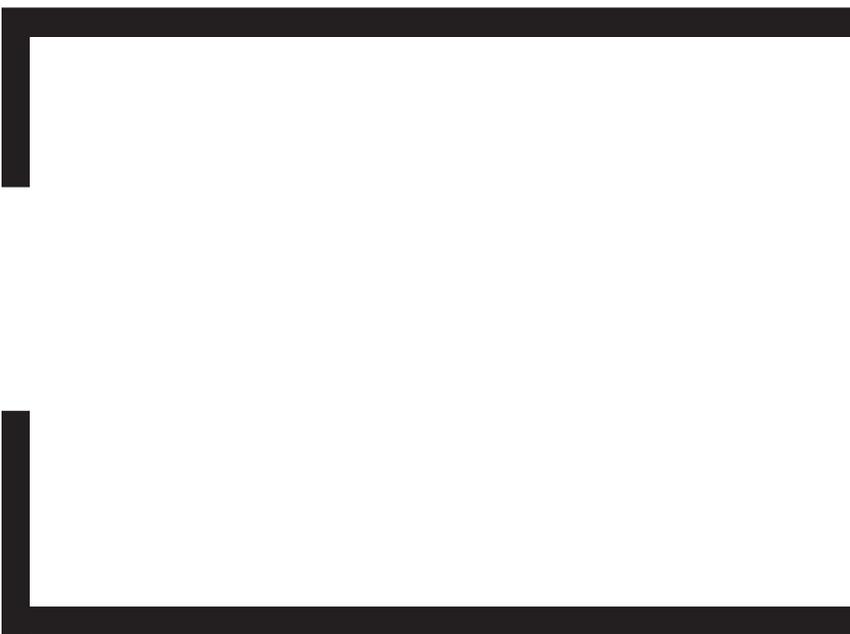
**prohelvetia**



Please feel free to take photos for personal, non-commercial use.



You are in the North Gallery



# **NORTH Gallery introduction**

“We find beauty not in the thing itself but in the patterns of shadows, the light and the darkness, that one thing against another creates.”

Jun'ichirō Tanizaki, 'In Praise of Shadows', 1933

How can architecture and photography help us to navigate the world and give meaning to our experiences?

These are questions Hélène Binet asks implicitly in her photographs, a line of enquiry that began in the mid-1980s when, having studied photography in Rome, she moved to London.

This was an explosive period in architecture, a time of passionate debate between modernists and post-modernists. Binet's early encounters with architects including Daniel Libeskind Hon RA and John Hejduk, who valued intellectual and poetic experiments as highly as completed buildings, challenged her view of what architecture could be.

Binet uses the camera as a tool with which to question the world.

Preferring analogue film, she uses colour sparingly, believing that black-and-white compositions convey more powerful feeling. Her relationship with architects can be compared to that of a musician interpreting a composer's score: her photographs are true to the architect's intention yet exist as artworks in their own right.

The exhibition begins with Binet's exploration of the existential meaning of architecture.

Her photographs of one of the most significant buildings of the twentieth century, Le Corbusier's Couvent Sainte-Marie de la Tourette near Lyon, show how the effect of light and shadow creates a rhythm in her work akin to music.

For Binet, architecture can guide our understanding of the world in both a spiritual and practical sense, an idea that took her to the Jantar Mantar Observatory in Jaipur, where architectural form has a direct connection with astronomical and natural forces.

**List of works (clockwise in order of hang)**

Centre wall

Zaha Hadid Architects

## **Vitra Fire Station**

1993

Location: Weil am Rhein, Germany

Completion: 1993

Digital black-and-white silver-gelatin print

Courtesy ammann // projects

Jantar Mantar Observatory

## **Jantar Mantar Observatory**

2002

Location: Jaipur, India

Completion: 1734

Three hand-printed black-and-white silver-gelatin prints

1, 3: Courtesy ammann // projects

Le Corbusier

1

# **Couvent Sainte-Marie de la Tourette**

2002

Location: Eveux, France

Completion: 1961

Ten hand-printed black-and-white silver-gelatin prints

1, 6: Courtesy ammann // projects

3: Courtesy ammann // projects and Large Glass, London

2-11

# **'Canons de Lumière' Couvent Sainte-Marie de la Tourette**

2007

Location: Eveux, France

Completion: 1961

Digital C-type print

John Hejduk

1-2

## **Wall House II**

2001

Location: Groningen, Netherlands

Completion: 2001

3-8

## **Kreuzberg Tower and Wings**

1988

Location: Berlin, Germany

Completion: 1988

9-11

# **The House of the Suicide and The House of the Mother of the Suicide**

1990

Location: Atlanta, United States

Completion: 1990

12

# **The House of the Suicide and The House of the Mother of the Suicide**

1991

Location: Prague, Czech Republic

Completion: 1991

13

## **Security**

1989

Location: Oslo, Norway

Completion: 1989

14

## **The Riga Project: Object/Subject**

1987

Location: Philadelphia, United States

Completion: 1987

15

## **The Collapse of Time**

1986

Location: London, United Kingdom

Completion: 1986

Fifteen hand-printed black-and-white silver-gelatin prints

5: Courtesy Large Glass, London

Daniel Libeskind/  
Studio Libeskind

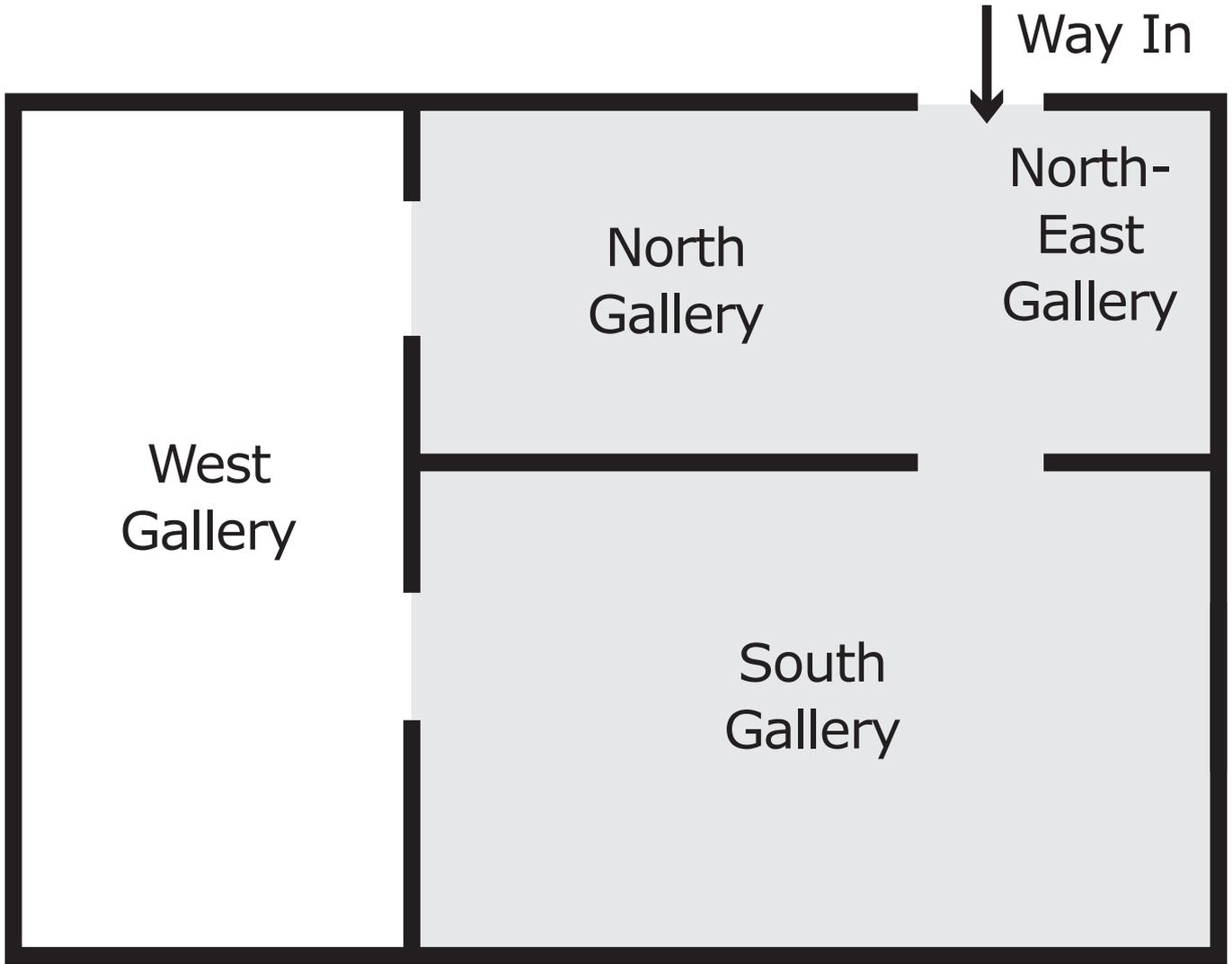
# **House without Walls**

1986

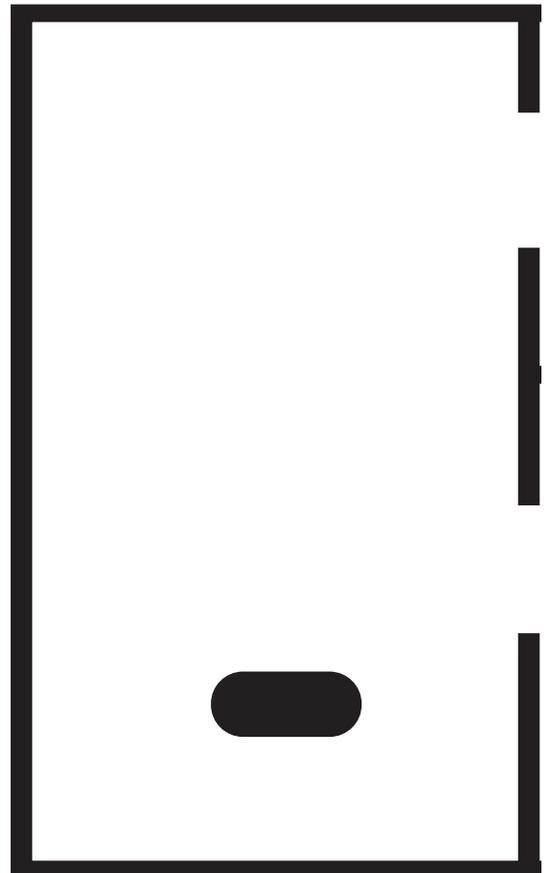
Location: Milan, Italy

Completion: 1986

Hand-printed black-and-white silver-gelatin print



You are in the  
West Gallery



 Seating

# Introduction to WEST Gallery

“Architecture is essentially an extension of nature into the man-made realm, providing the ground for perception and the horizon of experiencing and understanding the world.”

Juhani Pallasmaa, ‘The Eyes of the Skin’, 1996

Binet’s career has developed in parallel to those of many leading contemporary architects, including Zaha Hadid RA, whose work she has photographed since the 1990s, both under construction and when completed.

The images in this gallery capture the energy and power of Hadid’s architectural creations: buildings appear as rugged landscapes, where in-situ concrete could be molten lava and a roofscape of curved panels evokes a glacial valley.

Hadid said that Binet’s photography allowed her to see beauty in unexpected places, observations that fed back into the design process.

After the jagged forms and pin-sharp lines of an early built work, the Vitra Fire Station at Weil am Rhein, Hadid began to explore new forms and materials, influenced in part by Binet's images.

In testing an innovative self-compressing concrete at the Phæno Science Center in Wolfsburg, she created dramatic curves that share affinities with the concrete structure of Sergio Musmeci's 1976 bridge at Potenza.

Concrete offered new creative possibilities to architects in the period of urban renewal following World War II.

In 2020, to celebrate the architect's one-hundredth birthday, Binet was invited to photograph churches designed and built in concrete in the 1960s and 1970s by Gottfried Böhm. The result was a set of photographs that communicate powerfully the complexity and mystery of these spiritual buildings.

## List of works (clockwise in order of hang)

Zaha Hadid Architects

1

# Riverside Museum

2010

Location: Glasgow, United Kingdom

Completion: 2011

2

# Heydar Aliyev Center

2011

Location: Baku, Azerbaijan

Completion: 2012

Two digital black-and-white silver-gelatin prints

Courtesy ammann // projects

Gottfried Böhm

1

## **Church of St Gertrude**

2020

Location: Cologne, Germany

Completion: 1965

Nine hand-printed black-and-white silver-gelatin prints

2,4

## **Church of St Matthew**

2020

Location: Düsseldorf, Germany

Completion: 1972

Two digital C-type prints

3

# **Church of the Resurrection of Christ**

2020

Location: Cologne, Germany

Completion: 1970

Digital black-and-white silver-gelatin print

2-4: Courtesy ammann // projects

## **Sergio Musmeci**

# **Ponte sul Basento**

2015

Location: Potenza, Italy

Completion: 1976

Three digital black-and-white silver-gelatin prints

Courtesy Christian Bourdais

Zaha Hadid Architects

1

# **Rosenthal Center for Contemporary Art**

2003

Location: Cincinnati, United States

Completion: 2003

2

# **MAXXI – Museo nazionale delle arti del XXI secolo**

2009

Location: Rome, Italy

Completion: 2010

3

# Landesgartenschau / Landscape Formation One

1999

Location: Weil am Rhein, Germany

Completion: 1999

4

# Phæno Science Center

2003

Location: Wolfsburg, Germany

Completion: 2005

5

# Phæno Science Center

2004

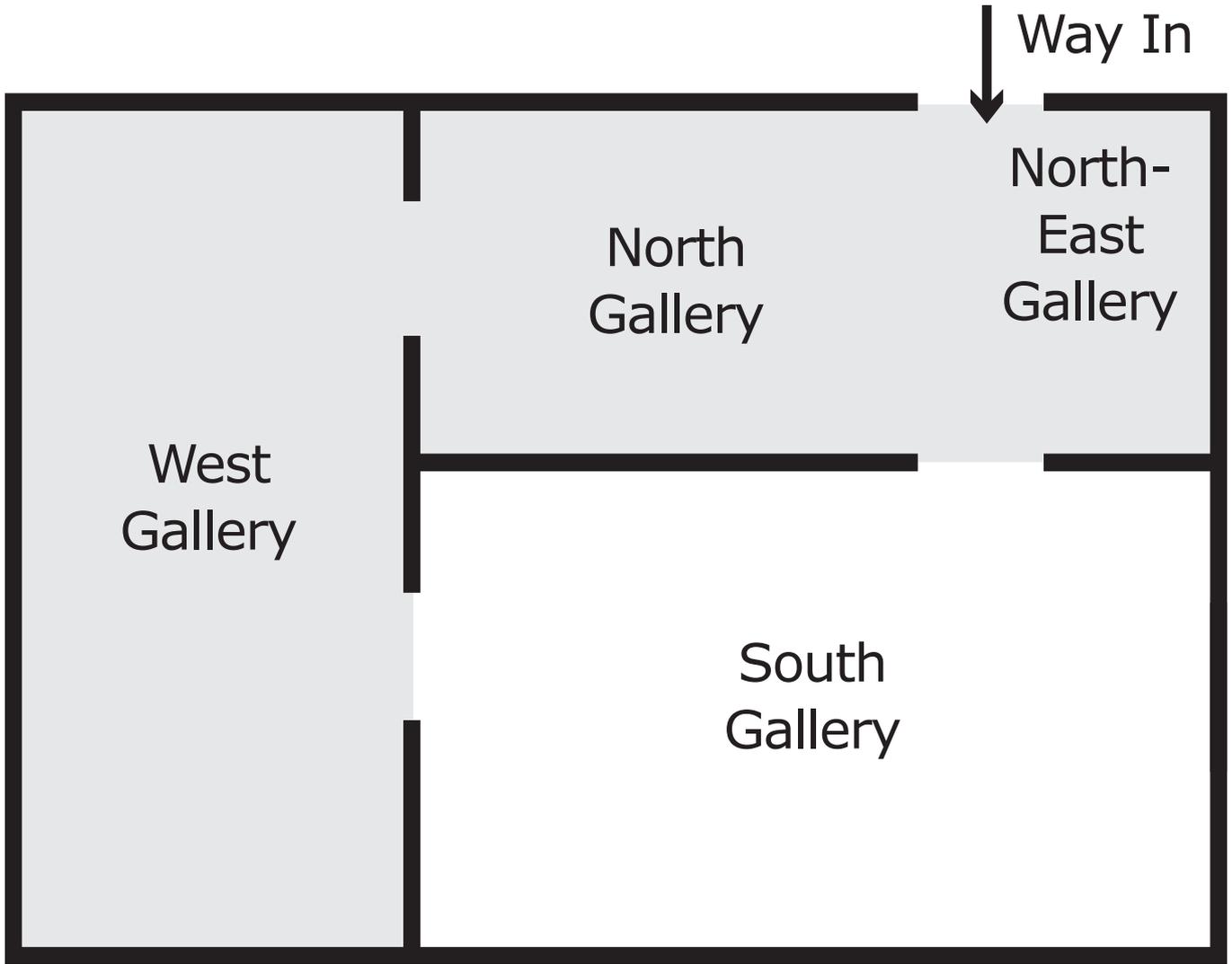
Location: Wolfsburg, Germany

Completion: 2005

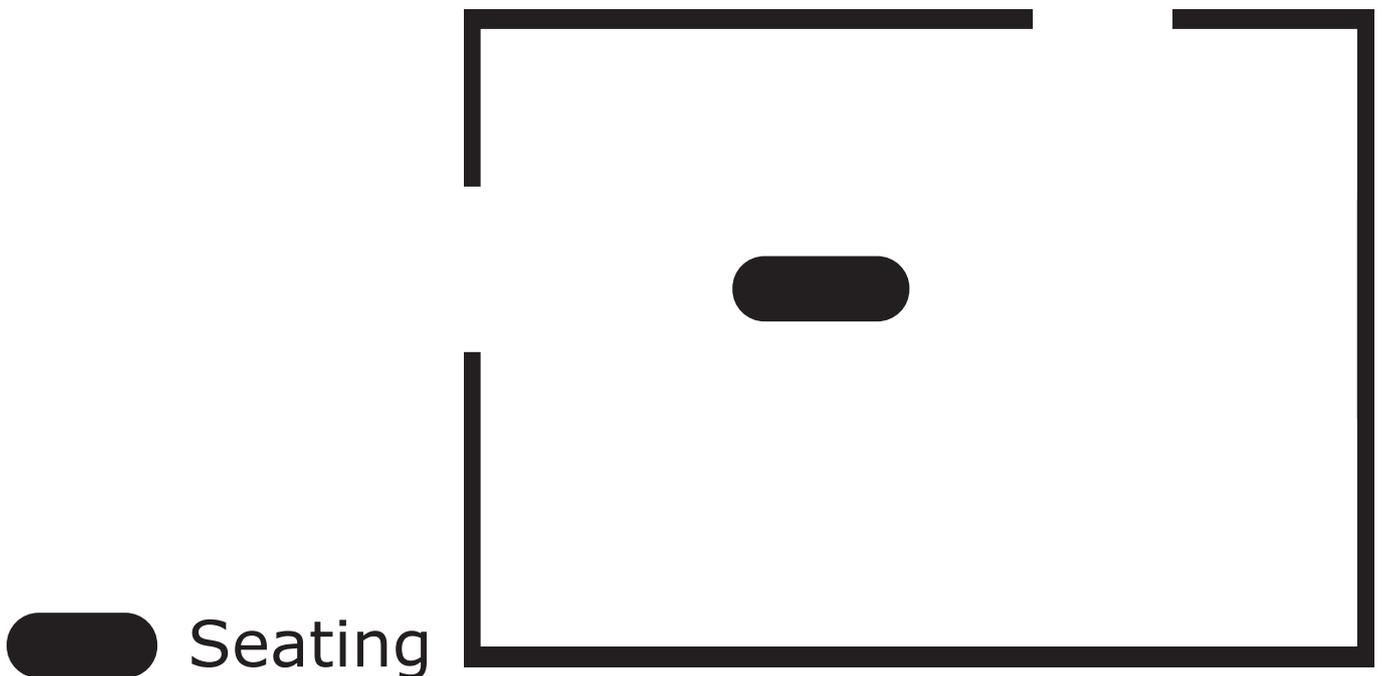
1–4: Four digital black-and-white silver-gelatin prints

5: Digital C-type print

Courtesy ammann // projects



You are in the South Gallery



# Introduction to SOUTH Gallery

“Memories are motionless, and the more securely they are fixed in space, the sounder they are.”

Gaston Bachelard, ‘The Poetics of Space’, 1958

“The hands want to see, the eyes want to caress.” Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, c. 1790

Binet grew up in Rome surrounded by classical ruins and baroque churches, and perhaps not surprisingly geometric form has always played a strong role in her compositions.

Increasingly though, she focuses on fundamental elements of architecture such as walls, apertures and the ground plane, which act as a foil to light and nature.

In her photographs of the Classical Gardens of Suzhou, a World Heritage site in the Chinese province of Jiangsu, she studies texture, tone and subtle colour variations. She shows that the wall, perhaps the most universal element of architecture, is a frame that allows the mind to wander beyond, to imagine a scene that is absent from the image.

Binet depicts architectural space travelling across time as well as geography, so that a Nicholas Hawksmoor church from eighteenth-century London appears to be cut from the same stone as a house from the 1970s.

The warmth and light of Mallorca illuminates her photographs of Can Lis, a villa built by Jørn Utzon as a refuge from the controversy surrounding the Sydney Opera House, his best-known project from which he was forced to resign in 1966.

Binet believes that architectural space anchors memories and acts as a frame for life, while the material presence of architecture can trace time.

Her photographs of a series of smooth stones in Dimitris Pikionis's 1950s Landscaping of the Acropolis in Athens seem to map the passage of footsteps over thousands of years.

## List of works (clockwise in order of hang)

# Classical Gardens of Suzhou

1

## Lingering Garden

2018

Location: Suzhou, China

Late sixteenth century (Ming Dynasty) to twentieth century

2-3

## Humble Administrator's Garden

2018

Location: Suzhou, China

Twelfth century (Southern Song Dynasty) to twentieth century

Three digital C-type prints

1: Private collection, courtesy Large Glass, London

2: Courtesy ammann // projects

3: The McGuinness Hooi Collection, courtesy Large Glass, London

Sigurd Lewerentz

1-8

## **St Mark's Church**

1989

Location: Björkhagen, Stockholm, Sweden

Completion: 1960

Eight hand-printed black-and-white silver-gelatin prints

8: Courtesy Large Glass, London

Sverre Fehn

## **Hedmark Museum**

2009

Location: Hamar, Norway

Completion: 1973

Four hand-printed black-and-white silver-gelatin prints

Courtesy Christian Bourdais

Dimitris Pikionis

# Landscaping of the Acropolis

1989

Location: Athens, Greece

Completion: 1957

Three digital black-and-white silver-gelatin prints

Atelier Peter Zumthor

1-4

# Therme Vals

2006

Location: Graubünden, Switzerland

Completion: 1996

1: Digital C-type print

2-3: Two digital black-and-white silver-gelatin prints

4: Digital C-type print

Courtesy ammann // projects

Nicholas Hawksmoor

1

## **St Mary Woolnoth**

2012

Location: London, United Kingdom

Completion: 1724

2-3

## **Christ Church Spitalfields**

2012

Location: London, United Kingdom

Completion: 1729

Three digital black-and-white silver-gelatin prints

1, 3: Courtesy Large Glass, London

2: Courtesy ammann // projects and Large Glass, London

Jørn Utzon

1-2

# Can Lis

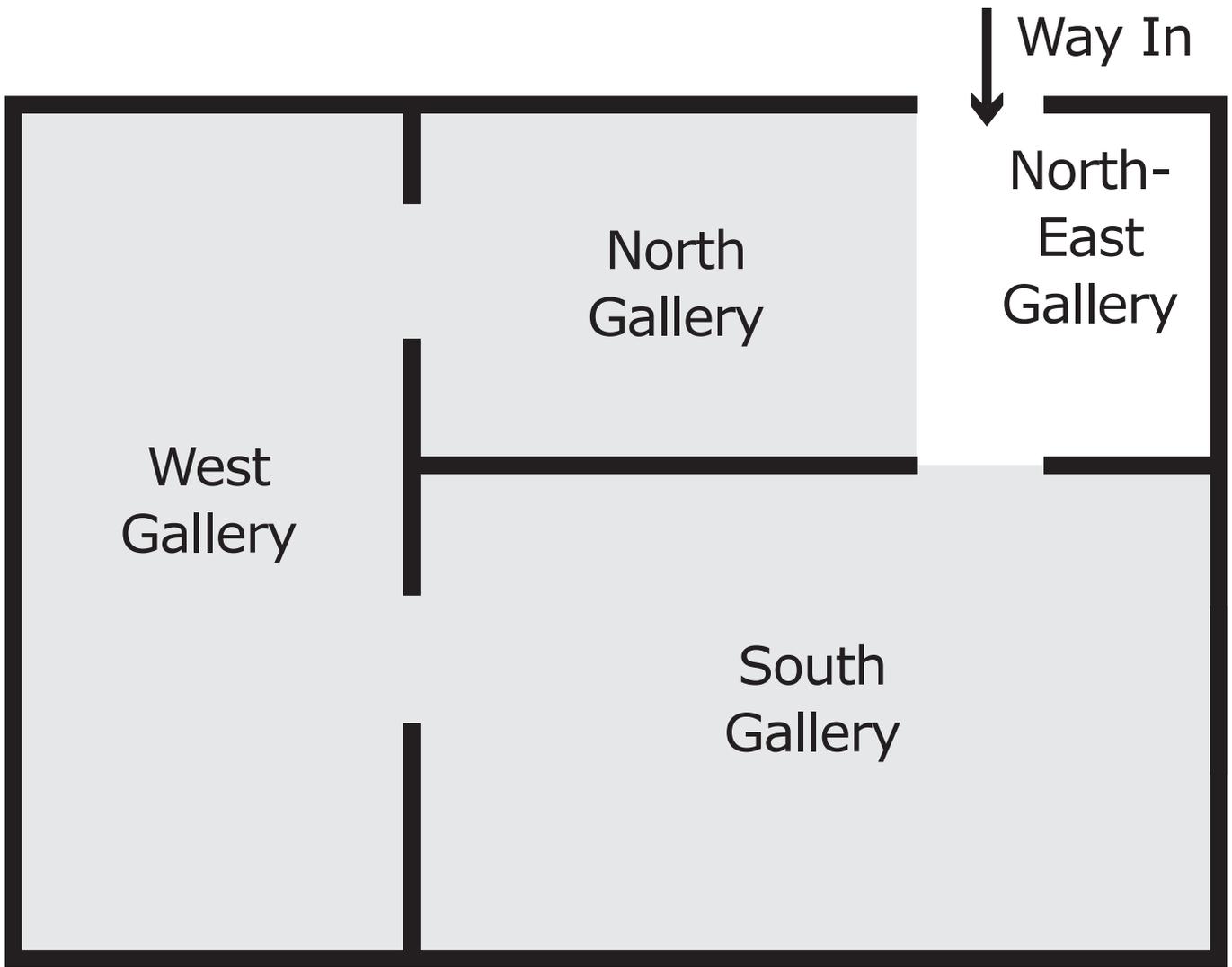
2019

Location: Mallorca, Spain

Completion: 1974

Two digital black-and-white silver-gelatin prints

Courtesy ammann // projects



You are in the North-East Gallery



# Introduction to NORTH-EAST Gallery

“There is no such thing as an empty space or an empty time. There is always something to see, something to hear. In fact, try as we may to make a silence, we cannot.”

John Cage, ‘Silence: Lectures and Writings’, 1961

Realising that photography can never represent the complexity of a building in a single image, Binet has embraced the medium’s limitations by reducing architecture to its essence. She found a natural collaborator in architect Peter Zumthor Hon RA, with whom she has worked for more than 25 years.

Light and shadow play a particularly strong part in her photographs of Zumthor’s Kolumba Museum in Cologne and Bruder Klaus Field Chapel in Wachendorf, a simple concrete structure sitting alone in the landscape created through an unusual process of casting and burning.

Despite the dynamic portrayal of materials, form and structure in much of her work, Binet's photographs of architecture are often about what is not seen: she captures the absence of material and light as much as the opposite.

Photographing space itself is an idea she first tested at Daniel Libeskind's Jewish Museum in Berlin, a project she describes as one of her most challenging to date, which she visited while it was still under construction.

Here the void expresses the unimaginable loss of the Holocaust while shafts of light strike specks of dust in the atmosphere that appear to be dancing, suggesting the possibility of life beyond.

## List of works (anticlockwise in order of hang)

Atelier Peter Zumthor

# Bruder Klaus Field Chapel

2009

Location: Wachendorf, Germany

Completion: 2007

Digital black-and-white silver-gelatin print

Courtesy ammann // projects

Daniel Libeskind/  
Studio Libeskind

1-3

# Jewish Museum

1996

Location: Berlin, Germany

Completion: 1999

1: Nine hand-printed black-and-white silver-gelatin prints

2-3: Two digital black-and-white silver-gelatin prints

3: Courtesy ammann // projects

Atelier Peter Zumthor

1

## **Kolumba Museum**

2007

Location: Cologne, Germany

Completion: 2007

2

## **Kolumba Museum**

2008

Location: Cologne, Germany

Completion: 2007

Two digital black-and-white silver-gelatin prints

1: Courtesy ammann // projects

# Your feedback, please

As we are committed to access for all, we would like your feedback on our large-print provision. Feedback forms are available from the Information Desk on the ground floor.

We also offer one-to-one audio descriptive tours of the exhibitions with trained volunteer audio describers.

Wheelchair users can also benefit from our volunteers, who can assist with taking you around the galleries so you can enjoy our exhibitions at your leisure. With prior notice we can arrange these at a time that fits with your schedule. Please contact us for more information.

E: [access@royalacademy.org.uk](mailto:access@royalacademy.org.uk)

T: 020 7300 5732



**InTouch**  **at the RA**

Design & typography by WfS Create: [mail@wfscreate.com](mailto:mail@wfscreate.com)

© Copyright Royal Academy of Arts, London, 2021.