

The Modern House meets ... Sally Mackereth

This week we met acclaimed architect Sally Mackereth - the driving force behind London-based architecture and design collective Studio Mackereth.

Previously one half of the award-winning firm Wells Mackereth, Sally founded her own studio in 2013, going on to lead on a diverse portfolio of projects from residential architecture to bespoke jewellery and furniture design.

Her most recent project - the design of a new art gallery and apartment building in the heart of London's Mayfair - synthesises visual art and architecture, as well as public and private spaces, to create a truly innovative, fluid environment.

This marrying of art and architecture marks a continuation from another project, completed in Chelsea earlier in 2016 - the restoration and extension of a spectacular Grade II-listed building containing artist studios formerly occupied by renowned Victorian painters including James Whistler, Augustus John and John Singer Sargent. Transforming the studios into a unique living space, Sally drew inspiration from the building's heritage, creating a series of distinctive carefully-crafted spaces, interspersed with sculptural interventions.

We caught up with Sally to find out more about her personal design preferences and to hear about some of the architects who have inspired her own work ...

What inspired your interest in architecture?

As a student I was lucky enough to meet my hero - the late John Lautner - in California, where he gave me a tour of some of the so-called 'Martini Modernism' houses he designed. His is an architecture of playful exuberance and detail, and of the seamless interplay between inside and out. He has certainly had a big influence on my own work.

Is there a particular building that has influenced your career as an architect?

It has to be the modest but masterly house E-1027 in the south of France, by the unsung hero of Modernism Eileen Gray. At 49, Gray's first building was a sublime debut. It would fundamentally question the intellectual ideas of the time in the search for an everyday poetry and elegance that would give expression to a new way of living. Fundamentally at odds with her peer group, Gray rejected an architecture made up of fashionable formulas arguing that the mathematical was being celebrated at



the expense of the emotional. In E-1027 she explored her ideas of a home that could be a genuine place to rest, to dream, to share and to be at peace with oneself. This resonates with my own approach to architecture.

Tell us about the house you grew up in.

It was a rambling Georgian house in the Yorkshire Dales with a walled garden. My strongest memories of it are growing up surrounded by my mother's prized antiques, offset against '70s shag pile carpet and mirrored wallpaper.

If we could arrange a house swap for you now, is there a house or apartment block in the UK that you'd go for?

It'd have to be 26 St James Place by Denys Lasdun. Built in 1960, the lobby and apartments are fabulous inside – pure jet-set Brutalism overlooking St James Park ... perfect for me of an evening!

When you're buying a house, what's the one thing you won't compromise on?

It's got to have some outside space – it's essential to be able to step outside even if it's just onto a balcony or into a small urban courtyard to connect with nature.

Is there a British architect or designer whose work you're particularly excited by at the moment?

John Pawson's new home for the Design Museum in the former Commonwealth Institute launching in late November has his usual hallmark of clean brilliance - I'm excited to see it completed.

Who are you following on Instagram?

Jewellers-cum-gallery space @belmaczmayfair, SHOWstudio founder @nick_knight, British fashion studio @t o o g o o d (founded by designers Erica and Faye Toogood), the personal account of designer @paul_smith, and Turner Prize-nominated artist @davidshrigley



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