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S26



S42



S10



S18

22nd annual

S4 2006 PLANNING COMMITTEE

S7 HALL OF FAME MEMBERS

S10 RAND ELLIOTT
by Edie Cohen

S18 GAETANO PESCE
by Edie Cohen

S26 ANNABELLE SELLDORF
by Raul Barreneche

S34 SERGIO PALLERONI
by Laura Fisher Kaiser

S42 PAUL SISKIN
by Julie V. Iovine

ON THE COVER

Gaetano Pesce's own residence in Bahia, Brazil, is clad in inexpensive, weather-resistant resin tile. Photography: Ruy Teixeira.



S34



text: raul barreche

Annabelle Selldorf

spaces by Selldorf, who was clearly being cast as the heir to Johnson's legacy of spare but sumptuous modernism. "I think they are trying to say that this is a project about architecture—not decoration, not style," Selldorf told the *New York Times*.

The interiors Selldorf Architects has designed in the past 15 years indeed take cues from architecture's fundamentals: scale, volume, light. After an early stint at Gluckman Mayner Architects, Selldorf honed her skill for creating the harmoniously proportioned, expertly illuminated spaces that earned her a devoted art-world following. She has designed studios for Jeff Koons and

“I'm happiest when I get to think across different scales and disciplines, from urban context to interior details”



You know you've reached new heights as an architect when your face is plastered across a 77-foot billboard, alongside that of Philip Johnson. Annabelle Selldorf knows the feeling. Last year, images of Johnson and the German-born Selldorf graced an ad for New York's Urban Glass House condominiums, marketed as the citified successor to the black-spectacled icon's Connecticut house. The new building is by Philip Johnson Alan Ritchie Architects, the apartments and public

David Salle and galleries for Robert Miller, David Zwirner, and Barbara Gladstone. The projects are built around the familiar white walls, concrete floors, and spare lighting, but Selldorf manages to make them new, crafting simple but forceful spaces that are sympathetic to art objects.

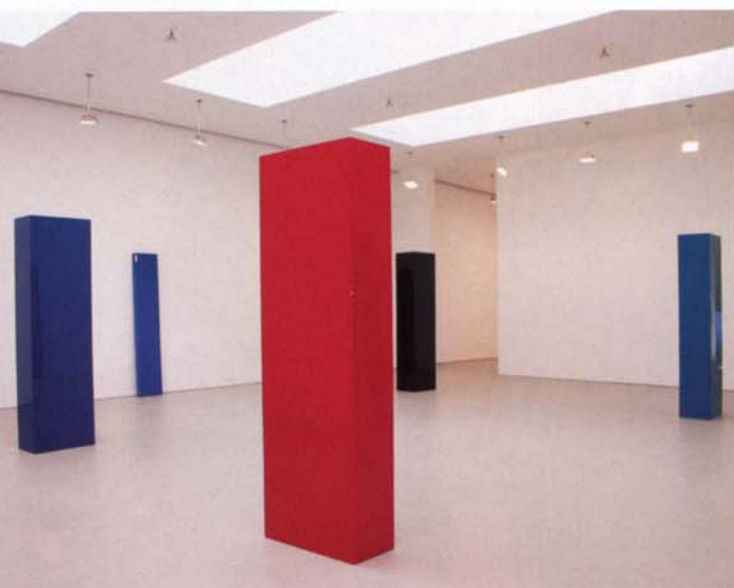
That aesthetic has translated seamlessly to the fashion world. Selldorf's women's-wear department for the Barneys New York flagship and her Rubin Chapelle boutique downtown are as →



Top: The senior partner of Selldorf Architects at her office in New York, 2005. Photography: Nikolas Koenig. **Center:** A town house on New York's Upper East Side, 2004. Photography: Billy Cunningham. **Bottom:** The living area of a town house in New York's East Village, 2005. Photography: Francois Halard.

Opposite: The central stair at Abercrombie & Fitch in New York, 2006. Photography: Eric Laignel.





Left, from top: The David Zwirner gallery in New York, 2006; photography: Russell Williams. A 15th-century mansion in Majorca, Spain, 2004; photography: courtesy of Selldorf Architects. Right, from top: The staircase of the East Village house; photography: François Halard. An apartment in New York, 1996; photography: Durston Saylor.

understated and well tailored as a Jil Sander suit she might wear. At Abercrombie & Fitch on Fifth Avenue, Selldorf turned up the volume. Oak louvers, steel-framed vitrines, glass-tiled stairs, and leather-upholstered furniture offset theatrical lighting and aggressive "sex sells" merchandising.

The project that raised her profile most dramatically was the elegant transformation of a 1914 beaux arts mansion by Carrère & Hastings into the acclaimed Neue Galerie New York. Here, she skillfully balanced historic restoration with modernist interventions, an accomplishment perhaps due in

part to her European upbringing. The daughter of Cologne architect Herbert Selldorf, she moved to the U.S. to earn an undergraduate architecture degree at Pratt Institute, then completed a master's at Syracuse University's program in Italy.

Turning a 13th-century palazzo in Venice into a spare but sumptuous residence for the Fondazione Ortamila's visiting artists and writers, she meticulously restored carved wood beams and marble floors while adding painted-steel banisters and bare-bulb pendant fixtures. On the Spanish island of Majorca, she updated a 15th-



century mansion for a Swiss art collector's family.

Last year, Selldorf channeled her passion for craftsmanship into Vica, a collection of furniture and lighting. The line includes reeditions of her father's furniture from the 1960's; objects developed as custom components in building commissions, including light fixtures for the Neue Galerie; and new pieces that evoke her modernist sense of luxury. "I'm happi-

est," she says, "when I get to think across disciplines, from urban context to interior details."

Prestige commissions keep rolling in. Selldorf recently completed one of the Houses at Sagaponac, the starchitect development in Sagaponack, New York. Now she's at work on apartment buildings in New York, a house in Colorado, and an Abercrombie flagship in London. Billboards or not, this is Selldorf's moment to shine. ➤



Top: The Neue Galerie New York, 2001. Photography: Todd Eberle. **Center top:** A loft in New York, 1997. Photography: François Halard. **Center bottom, from left:** NG light, 2004. Vica sofa, 2005. **Bottom, from left:** Vica conference table, 2005; photography: Tim Knox. The billboard for the Urban Glass House in New York, 2005; image: Kevin Cooley/courtesy of the New York Times.

