

DESIGN DIRECTORY

- Architects' Directory 2019
 The world's brightest young talents line up to build your dream home.
- 085 | The W* House Room by room, the most inspiring new furniture of the year

ARCHITECTURE

- O56 Ring leader 3XN's new Olympic House in Lausanne
- O65 | Act of faith A soulful private chapel in Portugal

American beauty
BassamFellows on reviving a
Philip Johnson gem as their new HQ

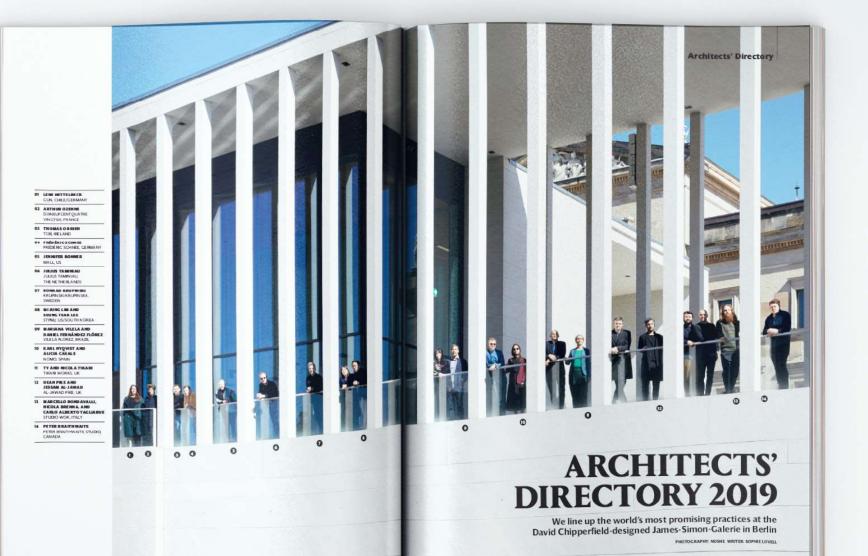
ART

188 | Panel show Thomas Demand's BMW teaser

DESIGN

070 | Flight of fancy Mushroom magic at Atelier MVM in LA

OUR YOUNG ARCHITECTS-ON-THE-UP GATHER FOR A PHOTOCALL AT DAVID CHIPPERFIELD'S NEW JAMES-SIMON-GALERIE IN BERLIN, SEE PAGE 074



074 | Wallpaper



rlin's world-renowned ensemble of neoclassical buildings, clustered on the little Museum Island on the River Spree, is preparing to welcome a new addition. Designed by David Chipperfield Architects, the James-Simon-Galerie will serve as a visitors' centre for all five museums on the island, providing direct access to the Pergamon Museum (home to such treasures as the Ishtar Gate and the Pergamon Alrar) and the Neues Museum (home to the Egyptian collection, including that iconic bust of Queen Nesertici). The latter was renovated by Chipperfield in 2009 and served as the venue for our 2009 Architects' Directory shoot (W*125). The visitors centre is part of an extensive master plan that will eventually see the rest of the museums connected through a basement-level 'archaeological promenade due for completion in 2025/26.

The primary function of the James-Simon-Galerie, explains Urs Vogt, Chipperfield's project architect, 'is to take the load of mass tourism' and accommodate a projected peak rate of 10,000 visitors per day. Its other function is as a 24/7 public space. Hence, the architects pushed the technical functions of the building down into the basement, leaving the top as a 'landscape, which connects views from the city to the island and back the other way'.

A long colonnade of slender pillars on top of the building is a stripped-down echo of the extensive 19th-century colonnades designed by Friedrich August Stüler on the rest of the island. Its visual dominance underscores the structure's role as a simultaneously functional, connective and public space.



without opening a door'

'You can walk through the whole building

The monolithic exterior of the building, in precast, sandblasted concrete with an aggregate of local marble and sand, is both luxurious and deceptively simple. As you move into the lobby from the main entrance, you enter an equally spare interior of warm grey cast-in-place concrete and shellbearing limestone floors softened by heavy, monotone, floor-to-ceiling wool curtains. The glazed café area, recessed within the raised colonnade, has a sound-absorbing copper mesh ceiling and bronze window frames. Further back is the main desk area, featuring an impressive translucent opaque 'window' made from Greek marble. From here, a broad flight of stairs leads down into the building's ground floor, with its shop and cloakrooms, and then into the basement, which contains a 300-seat auditorium, a 650 sq m shared exhibition space, and the underground entrances to the future 'promenade'.

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The most impressive thing about the James-Simon-Galerie is the way the architects have managed to combine such an incredible number of needs in such a highly sensitive location, and still make a rather lovely building. It may appear simple, but the complexity is impressive, not least its structural solutions: the island is basically a swamp and the entire building is sitting on 1,200 micropiles up to 50m long. There are visual axes everywhere, connecting outside/inside, old/new, one museum to the next, the city and the interior. You can walk through the whole building without actually opening a door, except for the auditorium - everything is open,' says Vogt, with not a little pride. And proud he can be because with this building, he and the Chipperfield team have walked that architectural tightrope between the demands of client and user, aesthetics and function without pomp but with a lot of aplomb. The James-Simon-Galerie will open on 12 July 2019; davidchipperfield.com; museumsinsel-berlin.de. Turn the

ABOVE A BROAD SET OF STEPS FROM STREET LEVEL INVITES YOU NOT JUST TO WALK UP TO THE MAIN ENTRANCE, BUT ALSO TO SIT AND TAKE IN THE

VIEW OF THE CITY BEYOND

LEFT, INSIDE, THE FUNCTIONAL

AREAS ARE CLAD IN FRENCH WALNUT VENEER

page for profiles of 14 of our next-level architecture practices. See Wallpaper.com for the full Architects' Directory *



