

# Inside the Rarely Seen Worlds of Luxury Architect Annabelle Selldorf

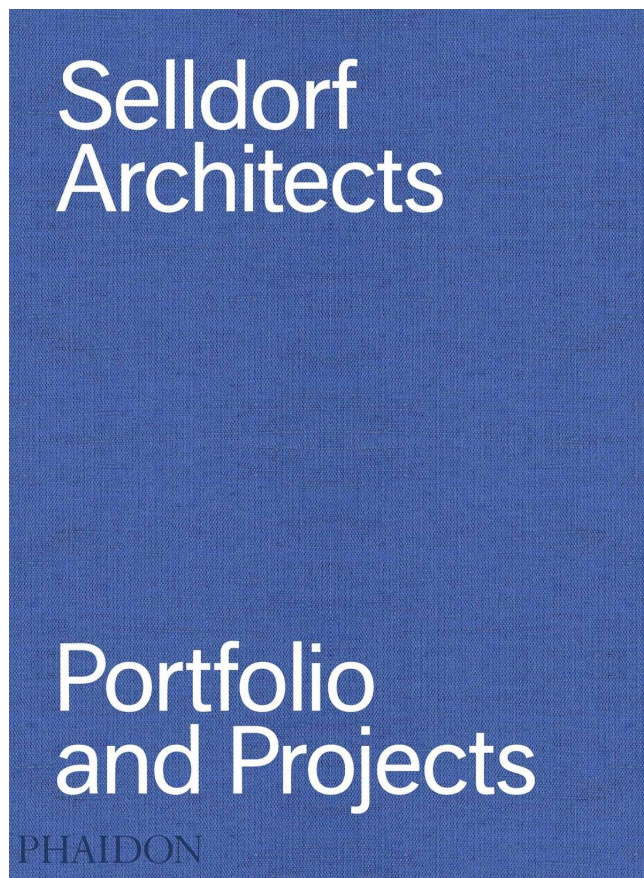
Subdued good taste on a grand scale.

James Tarmy

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The architect [Annabelle Selldorf](#) is known for her blockbuster projects like the [Neue Galerie](#) in New York, [Le Stanze del Vetro](#) museum in Venice, and L.A.'s [Hauser Wirth & Schimmel](#), the largest art gallery in America. Her residences—sprawling apartments, airy townhouses, glassy beach houses—are less well-known, for the obvious reason that giving yourself a tour would entail breaking and entering.



Photographer: Todd Eberle

Now, though, most of Selldorf's projects have been compiled in a [portfolio published by Phaidon](#), and readers can finally see the extent of her prolific residential work. One of Selldorf's main strengths is that, unlike other "[starchitects](#)," she doesn't have an instantly recognizable style; she's known for shaping design

around her clients' needs, rather than the other way around. As a result most people wouldn't know they were in a Selldorf-designed house unless they were told.

Still, there are some distinct aesthetic and material threads that run through her projects. Her designs tend toward clean lines—there are no crazy rooflines or unnecessary cladding—and most of her interiors employ judicious use of high-end, natural materials. This is manifested in [an unvarnished stair bannister](#) in a white hall, a vibrant butcher-block counter in an otherwise austere kitchen, and, most notably, in Selldorf's continuous and lavish installation of [giant marble slabs](#) in various homes' bathrooms.

Her projects are also, in their own ways, subdued: All of the homes pictured below are for the very wealthy, but take away the designer furniture and none of them are identifiably expensive. Instead, they practically glisten with discreet, impeccable taste.

## Chelsea Townhouse



A renovated townhouse in Chelsea.

Photographer: Todd Eberle

Selldorf gut-renovated this four-story townhouse in Chelsea's historic district, rebuilding and extending the building's rear facade. She added balconies to every floor and centered the interior on a sweeping central staircase.

## Walden House



Walden House, located on a mountain near Vail, Colo.

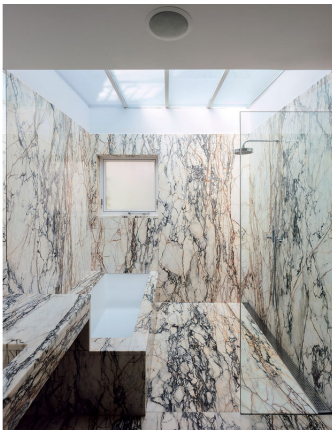
Photographer: Todd Eberle

The dining area of Walden House.

Photographer: Todd Eberle

Selldorf designed this 12,000-square-foot house near Vail, Colo., around a central courtyard. The building's glassy facade takes advantage of the surrounding (and striking) mountain views.

## VeneKlasen Carriage House



A bathroom in the VeneKlasen Carriage House in New York's Greenwich Village.

Photographer: Todd Eberle

This historic Greenwich Village mews house, originally used as a 19th century carriage house, is just under 2,000 square feet. During Selldorf's gut-renovation of the building, she added a glass vestibule to the main floor, a roof deck, and refinished the double-height living room—and made sure there was plenty of richly

veined marble in the bathroom.

## Van de Weghe Townhouse



The Van de Weghe Townhouse, a completely renovated historic building on New York's Upper East Side. Inside, a sweeping five-story staircase and skylight with hexagonal details.

Photographer: Todd Eberle

After Selldorf's renovation, the only thing left of the original 1887 Upper East Side townhouse was its facade. She gutted the 8,400-square-foot interior, dropped the floors 3 feet into the garden level in order to raise ceiling heights, and completely rebuilt the building's rear facade. That unvarnished stair bannister, a signature detail, extends five stories.

## House in the Springs



A beach house on the South Fork of Long Island.

Photographer: Todd Eberle

Selldorf designed this 10,500-square-foot family compound on Long Island's South Fork as two separate residences connected by a breezeway. Entertaining spaces, both indoor and outdoor, make up each home's ground floor, while a master suite and guest bedrooms are located on the second floor.

## Skarstedt Residence



Skarstedt Residence, an art dealer's beach house.

Photographer: Todd Eberle

This art dealer's beach house, a short walk from the Atlantic Ocean, is clad in mahogany. The entertaining rooms comprise the entire south facade, which opens onto the pool, while the upper level is comprised of a master suite, den, and four bedrooms.

Before it's here, it's on the Bloomberg Terminal.

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