



The exterior of David Zwirner's new gallery on the Upper East Side. Photo: Jason Schmidt

the report

# Annabelle Selldorf Turns Her Talented Hands to David Zwirner's New Upper East Side Art Gallery

The architect proves that art is best showcased in restrained but sculptural spaces

By Brook Mason

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Art dealer David Zwirner, whose stable of more than 40 artists includes the likes of Richard Serra, [Donald Judd](#), and Dan Flavin, has long sought out [Annabelle Selldorf](#) to conceive the spaces where he displays their works. The AD 100 architect has designed all

of his galleries, from his Chelsea showrooms to an 18th-century Georgian townhouse in Mayfair.

Selldorf's latest project for Zwirner is a stately 1907 townhouse, which opened just last week right off of Madison Avenue and steps from the Dolce Gabbana boutique. In the new gallery, she has retained the highly detailed boiserie, an oculus, and a curving staircase.



A gallery space in the townhouse, which was renovated by Annabelle Selldorf. Photo: Scott Rudd

"I've respected its heritage while paring back and lightening up the space to infuse the gallery with a sense of elegance," says Selldorf from her Union Square studio. "Seeing contemporary art in a domestic setting like this makes for a more intimate experience."

"At a gallery, form follows function," says Zwirner. "The important thing is that the art must look as good as it possibly can, and that's what Annabelle excels at. Her understanding of light and space is unique, and that has always been the case," he adds. Even the normally reclusive artist Yayoi Kusama had lauded his new gallery and she will be the focus of its next show.

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Enabling galleries and museums to celebrate art but in a discreet, quiet manner has long been Selldorf's signature style. The Neue Galerie, the Clark Institute, and Acquavella Gallery are just a few of her achievements in the art world. On her drawing board now is the expansion and renovation of the Frick and the San Diego Museum of Contemporary Art expansion along with Zwirner's new space in Hong Kong.



The dramatic spiral staircase, which Selldorf preserved from the original design. Photo: Scott Rudd

Selldorf and Zwirner formed a special bond years ago, as they are both Cologne natives. His Chelsea 20th Street space, characterized by a cast-in-place concrete façade and stairwell, was the first LEED-certified commercial gallery in the country. The connection extends to the family, too: Selldorf has also designed the boutiques of MZ Wallace, which was founded by David's wife Monica Zwirner and Lucy Wallace Eustice.

In the newest gallery, Zwirner's [inaugural exhibition](#) is certain to delight both art and design fans. "Josef and Anni and Ruth and Ray" spotlights the iconic work of Josef Albers, Anni Albers, Ruth Asawa, and Ray Johnson. It looks right at home in Selldorf's building.