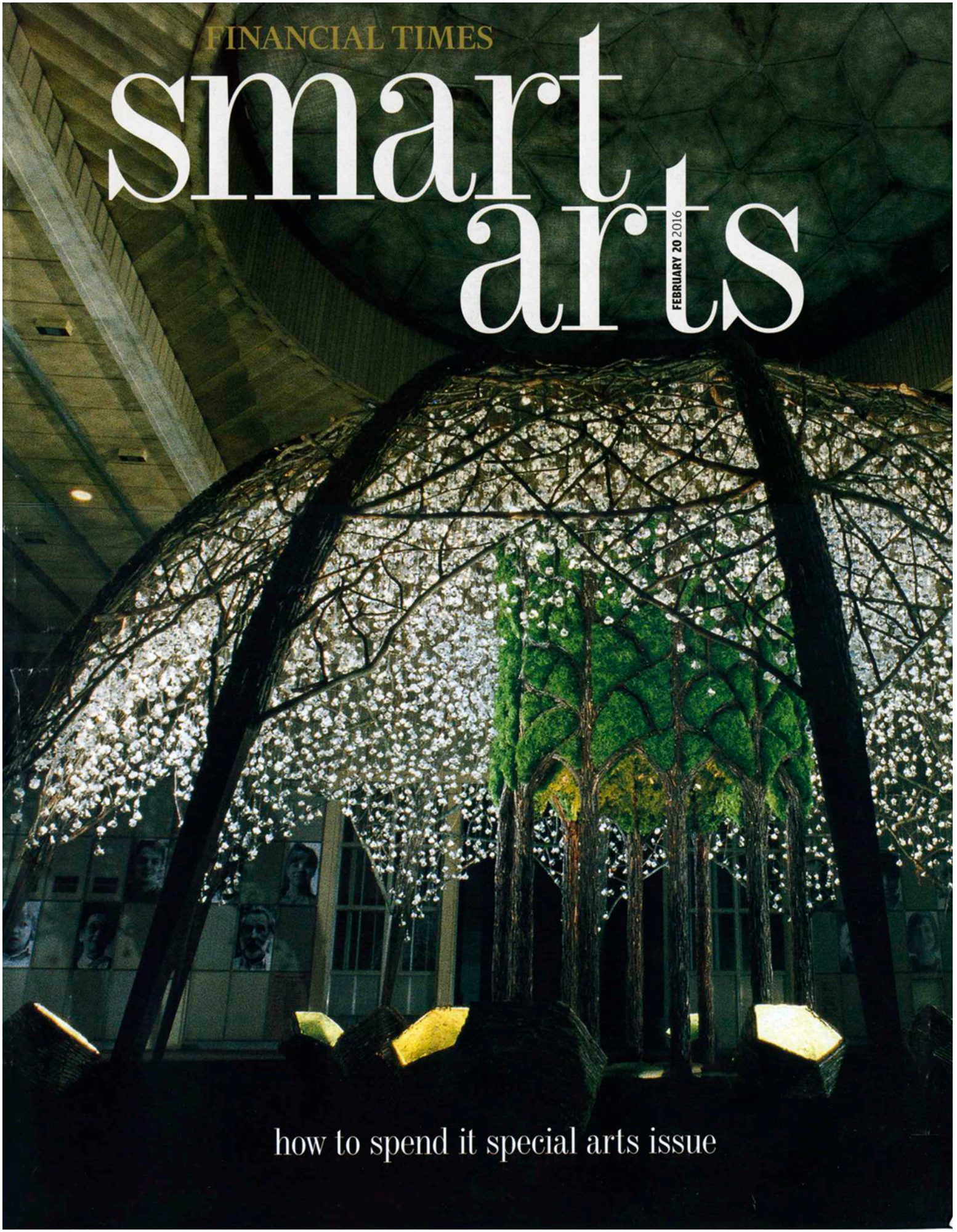
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It was June 2014 when a white, semi-translucent, pebble-shaped structure – half-shell, half-spaceship – settled on rocks outside London's Serpentine Gallery, like a fleeting visitor from another planet. Chilean architect Smiljan Radić's pavilion was the 14th such exotic architectural creation to take up position on the lawn in Kensington Gardens, beside the charming 1930s Grade II-listed former tea pavilion. All summer, it played host to late-night conversations, early-evening rendezvous and mid-morning congregations of pre-school children with their mothers. And then, in March last year, it turned up in a field in Somerset.

Its move was the result of a change in ownership – the pavilion (pictured on final page) had been bought by Iwan Wirth, one half of the international art dealership Hauser & Wirth. "Our relationship with Smiljan's pavilion was pure kismet," explains Wirth. "At the time it was exhibited at the Serpentine, Piet Oudolf, the renowned Dutch landscape designer, was building a garden for us at Hauser & Wirth Somerset, and when [my wife] Manuela and I first saw this sublime, otherworldly structure, we began to imagine the possibility of it being installed there."

It has since been placed at the end of Oudolf's densely flowered field, overlooking woods and farmland beyond, the huge quarry stones that carry the structure's supports scattered on the slope. It is an urban curiosity transformed into a rural folly, representing an entirely contemporary expression of the 18th century's obsession with marking the landscape with hunting towers, obelisks and Grecian temples. Not made for physical use, these structures were the result of an interest among a wealthy and cultivated elite "in creating experiences through architecture and in creating collections of architecture," says architectural historian and curator Jeremy Melvin, although this interest died out in the 19th century, he suggests.

But as contemporary art grows exponentially more expensive, and the walls and warehouses of super-collectors fill to the brim, the appeal of standout examples of contemporary architecture is increasing. Today, Wirth's impulse, however personal (his father was an architect), is by no means unique; it is indicative of a new wave of excitement about such patronage evident among a top tier of wealthy collectors. They are drawn by structures that

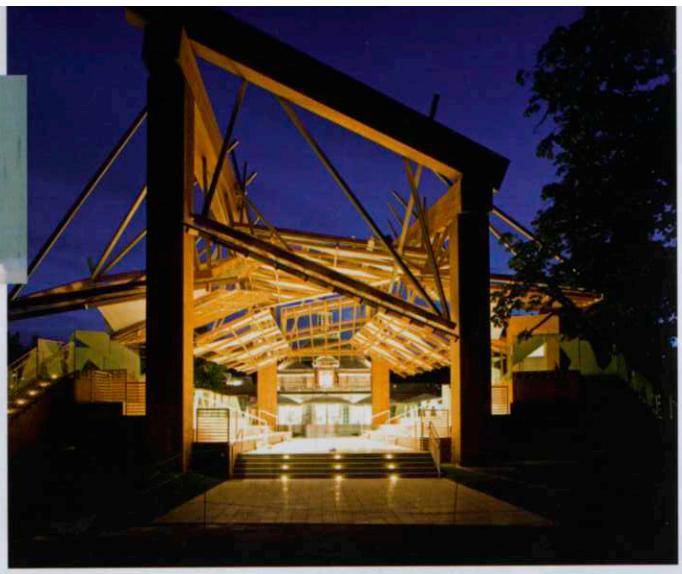
Francesca von Habsburg with The Morning Line pavilion she commissioned from Matthew Ritchie, Aranda\Lasch and Arup Advanced Geometry Unit

A FOLLY NO MORE

Architects, artists and designers are criss-crossing borders between disciplines to create huge structures that visually and conceptually pack a punch. The excitement among collectors is palpable. Emma Crichton-Miller **reports**

pack a punch, both visually and conceptually, far above their value.

There is Patrick McKillen, for instance, the Belfast-born property developer who supported the creation of Frank Gehry's explosive, spiky Pavilion de Musique (pictured right) for the Serpentine Gallery in 2008, which was destined for his French estate, Château la Coste. There, among other sculptures and monumental works, he has an art centre designed by Pritzker Prize-winner Tadao Ando, as well as two original Jean Prouvé prefab houses designed in 1945 in response to the French postwar refugee crisis. The three prototypes of Prouvé's modernist aluminium prefab for west African French colonies, La Maison Tropicale, have become cult objects – one fetched $5m at Christie's New York in 2007. Other Prouvé prefabs have been exhibited at Design Miami and Design Miami/Basel by gallerist Patrick Seguin and at Larry Gagosian's Chelsea gallery in New York,



Clockwise from top left: **Property developer Patrick McKillen. Pavilion de Musique by Frank Gehry, which McKillen supported. Jupiter Artland owners Robert and Nicky Wilson next to Marc Quinn's *Love Bomb*. Investment banker and philanthropist Jacob Rothschild. The Flint House by Skene Catling de la Peña, which Rothschild commissioned**

Prototypes of Jean Prouvé's prefabricated houses have become cult objects, with one fetching $5m at Christie's

reinforcing the idea that these once functional objects are now collectable artworks.

In 2012, the Serpentine pavilion designed by Swiss architects Herzog & de Meuron and Chinese artist Ai Weiwei was bought as a lakeside retreat for the Surrey estate of Indian steel magnate Lakshmi Mittal and his wife Usha. Then, in 2013, Sotheby's *Beyond Limits* private selling exhibition in the grounds of Chatsworth House included the wonderful pavilion, with its dazzling geometry, that designer Thomas Heatherwick had created for his 1993 degree show. Pavilions are also popular with art impresario and collector Francesca von Habsburg, from the Thyssen-Bornemisza dynasty. Among others, she has commissioned Your Black Horizon, designed by the architect David Adjaye and artist Olafur Eliasson and now standing on the Croatian island of Lopud, and The Morning Line (pictured on previous pages) by artist Matthew Ritchie, architects Aranda\Lasch and Arup Advanced Geometry Unit.

It is little surprise, then, that Iwan and Manuela Wirth, recently voted number one in *ArtReview*'s Power 100 index, should be taking an interest in collectable architecture. Not only did they install the Radić piece in Somerset, but they celebrated its opening with an entire architectural season, which included a competition for young designers entitled The Shed Project. It was won by a team comprising Alex Bank, Sam Casswell and Tom Graham, whose concept will replace an existing structure in Bruton town centre in Somerset. "Small buildings can have a big impact and contain a lot of meaning for something so modest," Bank said when awarded the prize.

Collector interest in exceptional showpieces of contemporary (or vintage) architecture has undoubtedly been fostered by the Serpentine's example. Julia Peyton-Jones, who conceived the pavilions initiative in 2000, and who leaves the gallery this year, explains that her motive was primarily to find a way of exhibiting the art of architecture in its built form. The initiative meant the gallery collaborated with world-renowned architects, some of whom had previously never created structures in Britain, including revered Brazilian modernist Oscar Niemeyer, Portugal's Alvaro Siza and Eduardo Souto de Moura and Switzerland's Peter Zumthor. Displayed outdoors, the pavilions alerted the public to the power and beauty of great architecture. Where the architectural community can be inward looking, these pavilions were extroverted, open, celebratory.

The pavilions have not, however, been the only game in town. Not-for-profit social enterprise Living Architecture, run by founder Alain de Botton and director Mark Robinson, has been running since 2007. The organisation has commissioned outstanding examples of contemporary domestic architecture that people can then rent for a short holiday, experiencing the architecture intimately and allowing visitors to act as patrons for a weekend. The buildings include The Balancing Barn (pictured overleaf), a stainless-steel, mirror-clad building that hangs off a steep hill in Suffolk, and A Room for London, a temporary boat perched on top of London's Queen Elizabeth Hall, although undoubtedly the wildest is Grayson Perry and Fat Architecture's outrageously decorative House for Essex, a biography (albeit fictional) in brick. The houses (from £735 for two nights) are very popular and, Robinson assures me, not just with architects. Although the buildings have to function, there is no pressure, he explains, "to do a standard three-bedroom house." Many of Living Architecture's clients, when asked whether they would like to do something similar, have responded, "Yes, we would!"

It is not just architects who are moved by the creative challenge of their craft. Contemporary fine artists and designers, too, cross and recross the borders between