

ELECTRA PRESENTS  
27 SENSES  
AT  
CHISENHALE

18 July – 22 August 2010

**PRESS COVERAGE**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Publication</b>	<b>Reference</b>
17 July 2010	Studio International	<a href="http://www.studio-international.co.uk/architecture/architects-build-small-spaces-2010.asp">http://www.studio-international.co.uk/architecture/architects-build-small-spaces-2010.asp</a>
17 July 2010	Guardian	'Pick of the Week'
05 August	Time Out London	Rebecca Gelard, <a href="http://www.timeout.com/london/art/event/55681/electra-presents-27-senses">http://www.timeout.com/london/art/event/55681/electra-presents-27-senses</a>
August 2010	Glass Magazine	<a href="http://www.theglassmagazine.com/forum/article.asp?tid=1611#title">http://www.theglassmagazine.com/forum/article.asp?tid=1611#title</a>

**PRESS REACTION**

This is a superb exhibition, appropriately laid out throughout the galleries, and one which will also inspire students as well as the general public.

**Studio International, July 2010**

Three years since the pilgrimage to that little stone hut, these artists perform in an astounding final homage.

**Glass Magazine, July 2010**


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[V&A Museum](#)

Architecture Published 17/07/10

## “Is Small Beautiful?”

1:1 Architects Build Small Spaces

V&A Museum, London

15 June–30 August 2010

by MICHAEL SPENS

**The idea of the small habitable space has long fascinated architects. As long ago as 1972 Joseph Rykwert had written a scholarly, in-depth historical study of *The Idea of the Primitive Hut in Architectural History*.<sup>1</sup> Much later in 1972, Nold Egenter developed a research series on architectural anthropology<sup>2</sup> which drew new paths for architects from his own discipline, but not unaided by Rykwert’s work. Now running through Curator Abraham Thomas’s catalogue Introduction one also finds clear reference to the highly relevant work of Juhani Pallasmaa.<sup>3</sup>**

One is also minded of the famous Hutte of the artist and supreme collagist Kurt Schwitters isolated on its North Norwegian island of Hjertoya, on a hillside, where he famously took refuge from the Germany of the 1930s before being going on to Britain in 1940.



A small inhabited space, which he of course transformed without breaching its small-scale embedment in the landscape.

Fortuitously this month, [Chisenhale Gallery](#), London, is hosting an exhibition<sup>4</sup> inspired by Schwitters' Hutte, involving some seven artists, five of whom had taken part in a Norwegian-based research project; the

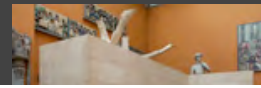
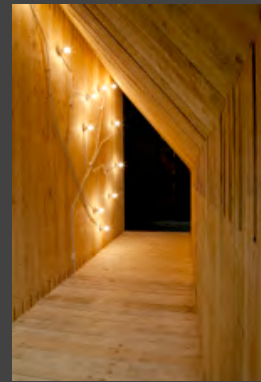
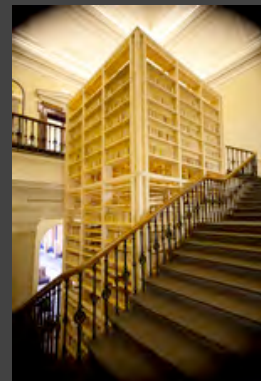
exhibition is now entitled: *27 Senses*, which was the opening line of Schwitters’ love poem to one Anna Blume.

Thomas does not dwell over-much on the depth of precedent (one can also include the house of the philosopher Heidegger which he built for himself in a German forest), given the constraints of space but the exhibition both of the 19 submitted models and related drawings, and the selected seven full-scale built examples resonates with what went before. The seven built examples are cunningly located in strategic corners of the ground floor galleries mostly. The best initial overview still involves viewing all the models on the 4th Floor Architecture Gallery. Here for example one can inspect Australian architect Sean Godsell’s pavilion, possibly over-long for setting up in the Museum. Yet, a more than equal volume, was vertically constructed by the Finnish/Norwegian combine of Rintala/Eggertson. Their Book Tower Ark fills a space at the bottom of the National Library stairs, free-standing with walls comprising hundreds of shelves holding literally six thousand or so books, accessed by their own spiral stairway, incorporating on each level a discrete

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reading cell. The spines of the books face on to the stair thus creating a blaze of colour and typography, in total contrast to the all-white exterior grid. The timber source material is drawn from the forests of Finland.

Another Norwegian-based firm of architects, Helen and Hard, from Stavanger, grace a sunlit corner diametrically opposite the usually crowded outdoor cafeteria in the John Madejski Garden. The so-called "raw space" created reminds one of the arboreal preference, expressed in Italo Calvino's tale, "Baron in the Trees".<sup>5</sup> Several ash trees were cut along their extent into two pieces and then erected by planting them face-to-face. There is an otherworldly, stripped out quality about the structure, which is curiously inviting to the visitor, still a "handwoven" compilation of some fascination.

Conversely, the Japanese architect Terunobu Fujimori, has created a house embedded inside a tree, an emblematic tree-house on a landing up steps from the Medieval and Renaissance Gallery, overlooked by stone carvings – a kind of Grimm's Fairy Tales' construct, (yet somewhat harassed by Health and Safety considerations inevitably). There would have been a smouldering fire on the level above, finally accessed by (mandatorily bare-footed) visitors up a ladder. It is, nonetheless, as "Beetle's House," conspicuous for fire-tarred timbers with a pitch-black exterior, and internally combines elements of the Art Nouveau "Ingle Nook" with the Japanese Tea House. It was partly assembled by Royal College of Art students. In realistic social contrast again in the neighbouring Cast Court, Indian architect Bijoy Jain's Studio Mumbai has established a series of constricted spaces, home to a family of eight, as a paradigm for the crowded dwellings that exist immediately behind their architectural studio. A variety of usable spaces, not excluding one for reflecting on one's lot, these multi-functional spaces are both places of refuge and multi-disciplinary for the whole family. The structure is ambiguous, the spaces are intimately proportioned, cast between abstraction and nature; accidental reality becomes open to personal interpretation. It remains above all a refuge, free of consumer pressures, yet about spatial deprivation.

Also within a "paracentric" frame, Anna Heringer from Linz, Austria expressed in her project (not constructed) an, "infinite" vision of summer. (With Elke Roswag she had created a handmade school in Vienna, of straw roofs and jute rope.) Also not selected was the project of Edinburgh architects Sutherland Hussey. This was an extremely elegant representation of the essence of a forest floor, interpreting the dappled light of sun through foliage by means of an overhead, tectonic canopy. Through this there filtered flickering light through the layering of well-articulated structure.

The final surprise is created by Rural Studio from Newbern, Alabama. Entitled "Woodshed", it is set up in the Porter Gallery accessible close to the main museum entrance on the Cromwell Road. This simple mono-pitched timber structure is constructed entirely from hardwood forest thinnings. Here is a structure so simple and singular that it offers the power and humility of an elemental form. Moreover the thinnings are highly economic in terms of sustainability, costing only £2 per metric tonne.

All of the schemes constructed or unconstructed referred to above can be seen to be representative of the whole 19 invited to submit. The logistics of "paracentric" global design and exhibition played their part in to some extent predicating what went up. One wonders which project Kurt Schwitters would himself have chosen if



he had had the chance. This reviewer's hunch is that Studio Mumbai's spaces would have most satisfied the 20th century's best collagist, providing that he could have had direct access to Rintala and Eggertsson's nearby book shelves in their "Ark", and did not suffer from Vertigo. Inspirational but secure refuges characterise both. This is a superb exhibition, appropriately laid out throughout the galleries, and one which will also inspire students as well as the general public.

#### References

1. Rykwert, Joseph, *On Adam's House in Paradise*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1972.
2. Egenter, Nold, *Architctural Anthropology Vol 1*, Structura Mundi, Lausanne, 1992.
3. Pallasmaa, Juhani, *The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses*, London, 2005.
4. Chisenhale Gallery, London: *Electra: 27 Senses*, 18 July–22 August, 2010.
5. Calvino, Italo, *Our Ancestors: The Baron in the Trees*, Collins, London, 1959.

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# exhibitions

● **Susurrus**

See Preview.  
Holland Park Gardens,  
Holland Park, W8 (020-7361  
3003) From 19 Jul, Mon-Fri  
10am-6pm, to 1 Aug, £8.

● **Through A Glass Darkly**

Jenny Worthon's adaptation.  
Almeida Theatre, Almeida  
Street, N1 (020-7359  
4404) Sat 3pm, Sat, Mon-  
Fri 7.30pm, to 31 Jul, £8-  
£32, concs available. [DA]

● **The Trip To Bountiful**

Forties-set drama.  
The Courtyard, Pitfield St,  
N1 (020-7729 2202) Sat,  
Sun, Tue-Fri 7.30pm, to 1  
Aug, £15, concs £12. [DA]

● **What Every Woman Knows**

JM Barrie's comedy.  
Finborough Theatre,  
Finborough Road, SW10  
(0844-847 1652) From 18  
Jul, Sun & Mon 7.30pm, to  
2 Aug, £13, concs £9.

● **Where The Solitary Eagle Flies**

Romance-gone-wrong play.  
Rosemary Branch Theatre,  
Shepperton Road, N1 (020-  
7704 6665) From 20 Jul,  
Tue-Thu 7pm, £12, concs av.

● **White Riot**

A student becomes  
estranged from his family.  
The Space, Westferry Road,  
E14 (020-7515 7799) Sat,  
Sun, Tue-Fri 8pm, to 25 Jul,  
£8, concs £5. [DA]

● **The Yalta Game**

Brian Friel's one-act play.  
The New Diorama Theatre,  
Triton Street, NW1 (0844-  
209 0344) From 20 Jul,  
Tue-Fri 7.30pm, to 24 Jul,  
£10, concs £8.

● **The Yellow Wallpaper**

Promenade performance.  
Spirit Level, Royal Festival  
Hall, Southbank Centre, SE1  
(0844-847 9910) Sun 1pm,  
5pm, £7. [DA]

● **You Me Bum Bum Train**

Participatory train ride.  
LEB Building, Cambridge Hth  
Rd, E2 (0845-120 7750)  
Sat-Mon, Wed-Fri 5.45pm,  
6pm, 6.15pm, 6.30pm,  
6.45pm, 7pm, 7.45pm,  
8.45pm, 9pm, 9.15pm,  
9.30pm, 9.45pm, 10pm, to  
24 Jul, £12.

● **You Don't Kiss**

Comedy about three gay  
men's quest for love.  
Brockley Jack Theatre,  
Brockley Road, SE4 (0844-  
847 2454) From 21 Jul,  
Wed-Fri 8pm, to 31 Jul,  
£12, concs £10. [DA]

## \* Pick of the week

### Italian Renaissance Drawings

**British Museum, WC1** Final week for this  
outstanding show of studio sketches and  
graphite masterpieces.

**Clunie Reid/Edward Kay Studio Voltaire, SW4** Dual shows skewering sex and banality  
in popular magazines.

**Glenn Sorensen Pump House Gallery, SW11**  
Delicate meditation on fleeting existence in  
paintings of wilting flowers.

**27 Senses Chisenhale Gallery, E3** Nordic  
artists investigate the nomadic life of  
modernist icon Kurt Schwitters.

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● **242 Cambridge Heath Road, E2 (07866 063 663)**  
**Stardust Boogie Woogie**  
Mixed works by artists  
including Tania Antoshina.  
Sat & Sun 2pm-7pm, Wed-  
Fri 12noon-6pm, to 1 Aug,  
free.

● **401contemporary/LONDON Projects**  
Masons Yard, SW1  
(401contemporary.com)  
**Jakob Mattner: Percussion**  
Works exploring ephemeral  
phenomena and moments of  
transition. Sat 11am-3pm,  
Wed-Fri 11am-6pm, or by  
appointment, to 7 Aug, free.

● **Advanced Graphics**  
London Long Lane, SE1  
(020-7407 2055)  
**Neil Canning: The Catalan**  
Suite Monoprints and  
paintings. Sat, Tue-Fri  
10am-6pm, to 31 Jul, free.

● **The Agency Evelyn Street, SE8 (020-8692 0734)**  
**Binary Code View**  
Installation featuring the  
work of Rob Smith, Anthony  
Gross and Rafael Rozendaal.  
Sat, Wed-Fri 10.30am-6pm,  
to 30 Jul, free.

● **Alison Jacques Berners St, W1 (020-7631 4720)**  
**Ryan Mosley Theatrical**  
paintings. To 24 Jul, free.

**Hannah Wilke: Elective**  
Affinities Paintings,  
drawings, photographs and  
sculptures. Sat, Tue-Fri  
10am-6pm, or by appt, to  
14 Aug, free.

● **Ambika P3 Marylebone Rd, NW1 (020-7911 5876)**

**Land Architecture People**  
Architectural designs and  
plans. Sat, Sun, Wed-Fri  
10am-6pm, to 26 Jul, free.

● **Anrroy Gallery Grafton Rd, NW5 (020-7284 7320)**  
**Rankin: Portraits** A new  
exhibition and book. Sat  
12noon-6pm, free.

● **Anthony Reynolds Gallery**  
Great Marlborough Street,  
W1 (020-7439 2201)  
**Mark Wallinger** Paintings  
and prints by the 2007  
Turner Prize winner. Sat  
10am-6pm, free.

● **APT Gallery Creekside, SE8 (07887 780274)**  
**Bedizzened** Mixed works  
by artists including Rebecca  
Fortnum, Robin Hutt and  
Lindi Tristram. Sat & Sun  
12noon-5pm, and by  
appointment, free.

● **Aram Gallery Drury Lane, WC2 (020-7557 7577)**  
**Prototypes And**  
**Experiments:**  
Architectural Elements  
Architectural designs and  
models. Sat, Mon-Wed, Fri  
10am-6pm, Thu 10am-  
7pm, to 28 Aug, free.

● **Architecture Foundation**  
Tooley Street, SE1 (020-  
7084 6767)

**Moss Your City: An**  
**Installation By PUSHAK**  
Designs by emerging  
Norwegian architects. Sat,  
Tue-Fri 12noon-6pm, to  
1 Aug, free.

● **Artisan80 Harlesden Road NW10 (020-8451 5235)**  
**Liz Edmond: Blooming**  
Marvellous Photographs  
of gardens. Sat, Wed-Fri  
11am-5pm, free.

● **Art Space Gallery St**  
Peter's Street, N1 (020-  
7359 7002)

**Terry Setch: Lavernock**  
Paintings based on  
environmental changes. Sat,  
Tue-Fri 11am-6pm, to 24  
Jul, free.

● **Atlas Dorset Street, W1 (020-7224 4192)**

**Dominique Tarte: Exile**  
Photographs of the Rolling  
Stones. Sat 11am-5pm,  
Mon-Fri 10am-6pm, to 31  
Aug, free.

● **Austin/Desmond Fine Art**  
Pied Bull Yard, WC1 (020-  
7242 4443)

**Summer Exhibition Mixed**  
works by artists including  
Prunella Clough. To 30 Jul,  
free.

**Keith Vaughan: Drawings**  
1945-1960 Special display  
Sat 11am-2.30pm, Mon-Fri  
10.30am-5.30pm, to 30  
Jul, free.

● **Bankside Gallery Hopton**  
St, SE1 (020-7928 7521)  
**Off The Wall** Works by  
members of the Royal  
Watercolour Society and the  
Royal Society Of Painter-  
Printmakers. Sat-Fri 11am-  
6pm, to 22 Aug, free. [DA]

● **Barbican Centre Silk St, EC2 (0845-120 7500)**

**John Bock** Installations and  
multimedia. Aug 11am-  
8pm, to 12 Sep, free. [DA]  
**The Surreal House** The  
private dwelling place as a  
place of desire and wonder.  
Sat-Mon, Fri 11am-8pm,  
Tue & Wed 11am-6pm, Thu  
11am-10pm, to 12 Sep, £8  
£10, concs available. [DA]

**Beryl Touchard: Light,**  
**Surface And Texture**  
Painting, prints and  
installation. Sat 9.30am-  
4pm, Mon & Wed 9.30am-  
5pm, Tue & Thu 9.30am-  
7.30pm, Fri 9.30am-2pm,  
to 28 Jul, free. [DA]

● **Barbara Stanley Gallery**  
Upper Richmond Road,  
SW15 (020-8789 8088)

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**Electra Presents: 27 Senses**

This event has now finished **Until Aug 22 2010** [Chisenhale Gallery](#), 64 Chisenhale Rd, London, E3 5QZ [Full details & map](#)

**Art:Galleries: Bethnal Green to Hackney** **FREE**  Last chance

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'27 Senses', 2010, installation view at Chisenhale Gallery - courtesy Electra and Chisenhale Gallery

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**Time Out says**

**By Rebecca Geldard**

Posted: Thu Aug 5 2010

Restricted access is the first sense garnered from this group show - part two of a research project based on German artist Kurt Schwitters's period of political exile in Norway during the 1930s. Eline McGeorge's architectural structures, partially obscuring the entrance, set the stage. These spare wooden forms, in some cases literally supporting other artists' works, certainly tune one in to the itinerant, experimental sensibility of the late installation-art pioneer, but it's the obstacles rather than the shared territories between the invited artists and Schwitters himself that stick in the mind.

The curator's desire to relocate the second incarnation of this project some metaphorical distance from the first is admirable, to make a claim for the wider relevance of the artists' findings brought back from the site of Schwitters's stone hut, the fourth in his series of 'merzbau' (rooms modified to communicate combinations of art, architectural and performance), on the remote island of Hjerfya. However, the basic lack of contextual information (without buying a catalogue) leaves one unclear as to what defines and separates the two.

Certain works here openly articulate the migration of ideas beyond historical or geographical specificity, such as Carl Michael von Hausswolff's reframing of an acutely observed 1971 documentary film portrait of Norwegian spy Selmer Nielsen and Kenneth Goldsmith's staggering presentation of street notes from New York's bereaved, indoctrinated and dispossessed. In most cases, however, the artists have got stuck at points of homage to Schwitter's influential, but now highly romanticised, investigation of the landscape and the domicile.

It could be argued that the self- or contemporary art-aware qualities of Jutta Koether's resinous paintings or Karl Holmqvist's amusing multimedia exploration of merzbau living accurately convey the legacy effect of this modernist behemoth today. Trouble is, it's nothing we don't know already. [Less](#)

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**Chisenhale Gallery details**

[Chisenhale Gallery](#) ,  
64 Chisenhale Rd, London E3 5QZ

**Transport** Mile End

1-6pm Wed-Sun

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**Telephone**

020 8981 4518

<http://www.chisenhale.org.uk>

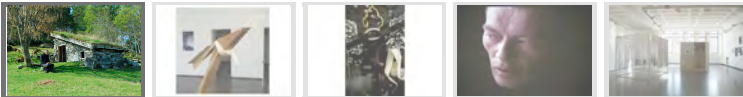
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## a sense of place

27 Senses at the Chisenhale Gallery celebrates Kurt Schwitters, modern art's exiled hero



Karl Holmqvist, 'Kurt Schwitters + All the Single Ladies, 2009'. Performance on Hjertøya. Credit: Simon Wagsholm



The UK was the third stop – after his German homeland and the fjords of Norway – for seminal artist Kurt Schwitters (1887-1948), who travelled through artistic disciplines as he did Europe. A godfather of installation art, he was a fellow of the Dada and Surrealist movements, famed for his paintings and collages (his constructivist Merz pictures), renowned for his early graphic design skills and continually celebrated for his poetry and sound work. 27 Senses, a new international group show at London's Chisenhale Gallery, eclectically celebrates the artist as a kind of hero.






Schwitters considered the near-mythical living spaces he would build himself (his Merzbaus) as his life's work. His first in Hanover took 13 years. He would manipulate his space into an artistic landscape; a sculptural environment with the construction of pillars and shapes that created surrealistic dimensions and grotto-like enclosures within; covering the walls with friends' artwork, collage – of which he is seen as a master – and found objects. From the outside, they can be missed. As he fled Germany for Norway, and then subsequently to the UK, 'home' for Schwitters seems to have been a distinctly temporal and conceptual idea, as well as a surreal one.

His influential practice was opposed by the burgeoning Nazi party in 1930s Hanover, who denounced him as a 'degenerate artist'. This is when Schwitters sought safety in this most remote and austere location: a small stone hut on the Norwegian island of Hjertøya. It has since been renamed Schwitters Hütte; the last intact Merzbau in existence. His isolated practice took on the nomadic existence of which his life became when bombing forced him to flee again, this time to Scotland, then the Isle of Man, where he staged recitals and poetry readings. His work subsequently became more organic and muted as nationalism spread through Europe and the



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ties with the modernist avant-garde had been cut.

In 2007 Kenneth Goldsmith, Carl Michael Von Hausswolff, Eline McGeorge, Jutta Koether and Karl Holmqvist paid a visit to Schwitters Hütte. *27 Senses*, produced by Electra, is the culmination of their attempts to understand what happened on this Norwegian island, and to explore what life was like for Schwitters in this small stone building. The five artists react to a powerful, affecting idea: that of the artist in exile.

The journey from the offset appears as a pilgrimage of sorts; the hut itself a sacred space. Following a show at the Kunstmuseet KUBE, Norway, last year, this new mixed-media offering is melancholic in many ways; the exhibition celebrates the legacy, as well as the tragedy, of a man sheltering away from a former life, forced to leave his work behind, and at times his family.

Karl Homqvist's Schwitters Hütte in Merz Box beams documentary footage of the Norwegian stone hut into a large wooden crate filled with posters and text, mirroring Schwitters' legacy with new media and new artistic disciplines. It is a confident piece of work, proud and unforgiving, eating up the gallery space. Carl Michael Von Hausswolff's *The Fire*, a film work made in a sort of collaboration with the infamous (and now deceased) Norwegian fisherman-cum-cold war spy Selmer Nilsen, questions the audience about ideas of responsibility in war and examines further the powerful landscapes of the fjords. Von Hausswolff creates a parallel between Schwitters and Nilsen, both outcasts in a harshly beautiful environment.

The landscape of Jutta Koether's paintings is more psychic in surrounding the viewer, blurring the differences between painting and installation, collage and sculpture. Similarly, Kenneth Goldsmith and Eline McGeorge cover walls with a Schwitters-esque collection of found imagery, posters, letters and poetry, turning the gallery in a Merzbau of their own. Goldsmith's *Street Poets and Visionaires*, an ongoing collection of found material – advertisements for sex, flyers or lost animals and sidewalk poetry – is totally engrossing in its detail and its general voyeuristic pleasure. Goldsmith, founder of UbuWeb, is also curating a film-screening programme at the gallery that draws on the avant-garde treasure trove his website's archive provides.

Kurt Schwitters spent some of the last few years of his life in London. This show, in its fitting location, is a direct and contemporary response to the work of a hero that acts as a simple thank you note, or perhaps a heart-felt bereavement card. Three years since the pilgrimage to that little stone hut, these artists perform in an astounding final homage.

*Tom Ryling*

*27 Senses* is on at the Chisenhale Gallery, 64 Chisenhale Rd, London, until 22 August  
[chisenhale.org.uk](http://chisenhale.org.uk)

Electra  
[electra-productions.com](http://electra-productions.com)

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