



Large
Print

John Hejduk

London Masque

Ronald and
Rita McAulay Gallery

Do not remove from gallery

John Hejduk: London Masque

Ronald and Rita McAulay Gallery

22 March 2022 — 21 May 2023

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Introduction to the exhibition

This display is part of the RA Architecture Programme, made possible through the Drue Heinz Endowment for Architecture.

It follows on from 'Light Lines: The Architectural Photographs of Hélène Binet', the RA's recent exhibition of photographs by Hélène Binet, a life-long collaborator with Hejduk. For further information go to roy.ac/architecture

Supported by CDUK



We encourage photography for personal use.

The RA would like to thank the following individuals for their advice and support: Hélène Binet, Renata Hejduk, Steven Hillyer, Kim Shkapich and Jim Williamson.

Introduction to the exhibition

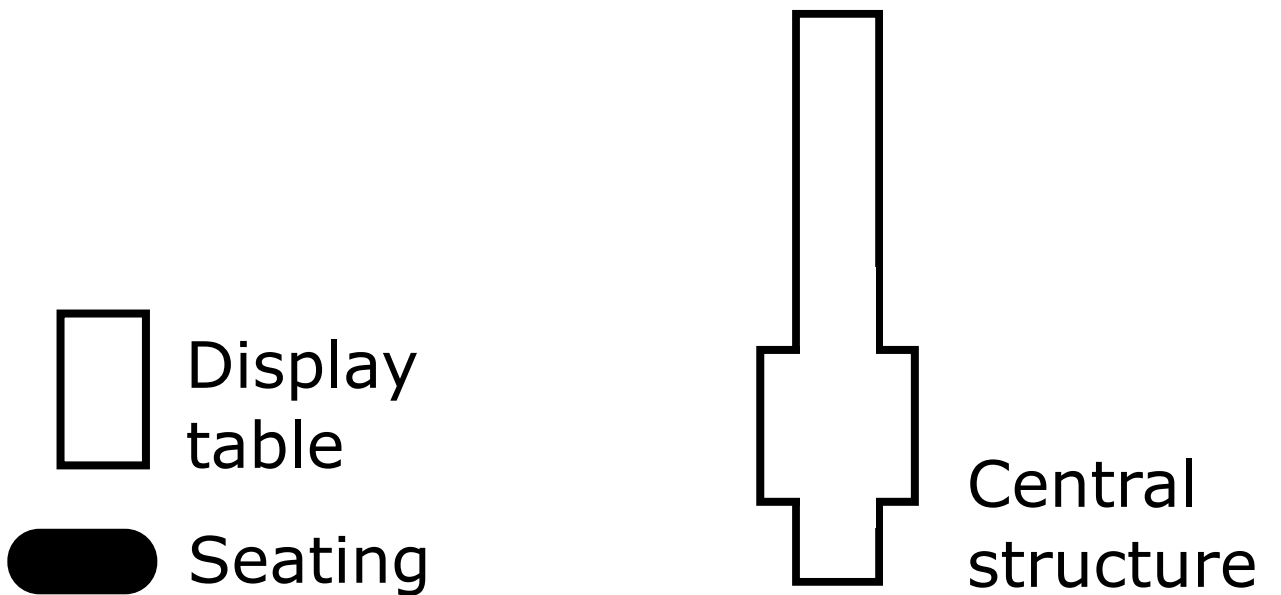
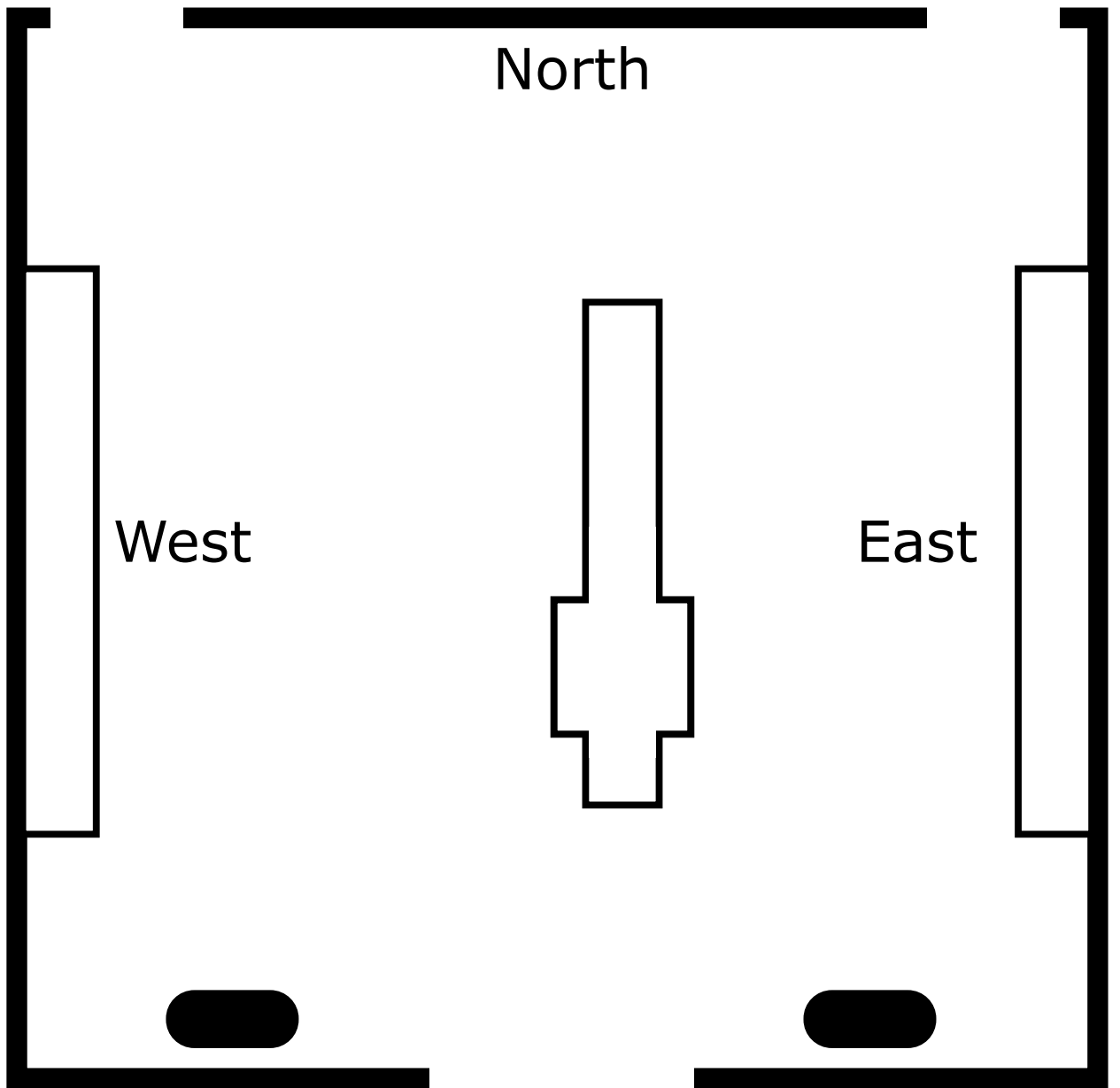
Royal court entertainments of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, with fantastical costumes and moving sets, inspired the American architect John Hejduk (1929–2000) to transform the way architecture is taught and imagined. Hejduk understood that in life tragedy often sits alongside comedy, and that art and architecture give us a way of reconciling these mixed emotions and conflicting ideas.

Hejduk used the courtly masque as the basis for designing communities of buildings and the characters that populate them. The Widow's House, which we have created as a large-scale model, features in one of his greatest works, the Lancaster / Hanover Masque (1980–82). Described in nine large drawings and numerous sketches, the masque features 68 Objects (buildings) and 68 corresponding Subjects (characters).

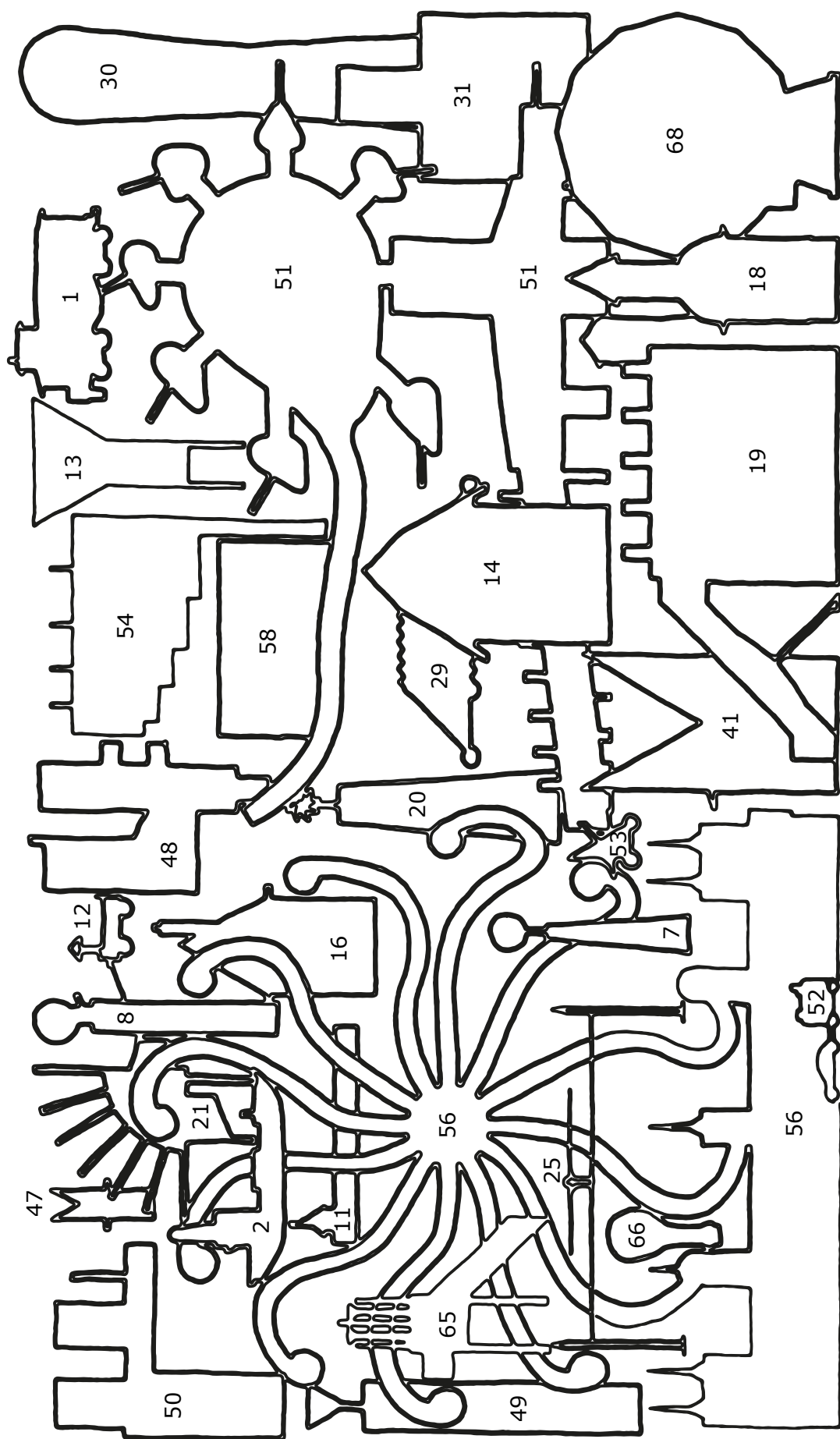
Just as masques referred to allegorical or classical stories, Hejduk tackles themes of life, death, love and virtue. His references include Thomas Hardy novels, Surrealist painting, English fairground attractions and American rural vernacular buildings.

Hejduk described the Widow's House as a 'wailing room', with funnels on the roof made by 'the Trombone-Maker, a craftsman of refined detail'. The cabin is based on the Widow's Walk, a feature of traditional New England houses thought to be built for the wives of whaling ships' captains who would go up and watch the ships come in from sea. Often they would not come back. The Widow's Walk was a form of surveillance and waiting, a place of reflection and anticipation.

The Widow's House leaves us with more questions than answers, but perhaps that was what Hejduk intended. Through accompanying displays of students' work, Hejduk's masque continues to provoke, inspire and create debate forty years after it was drawn.

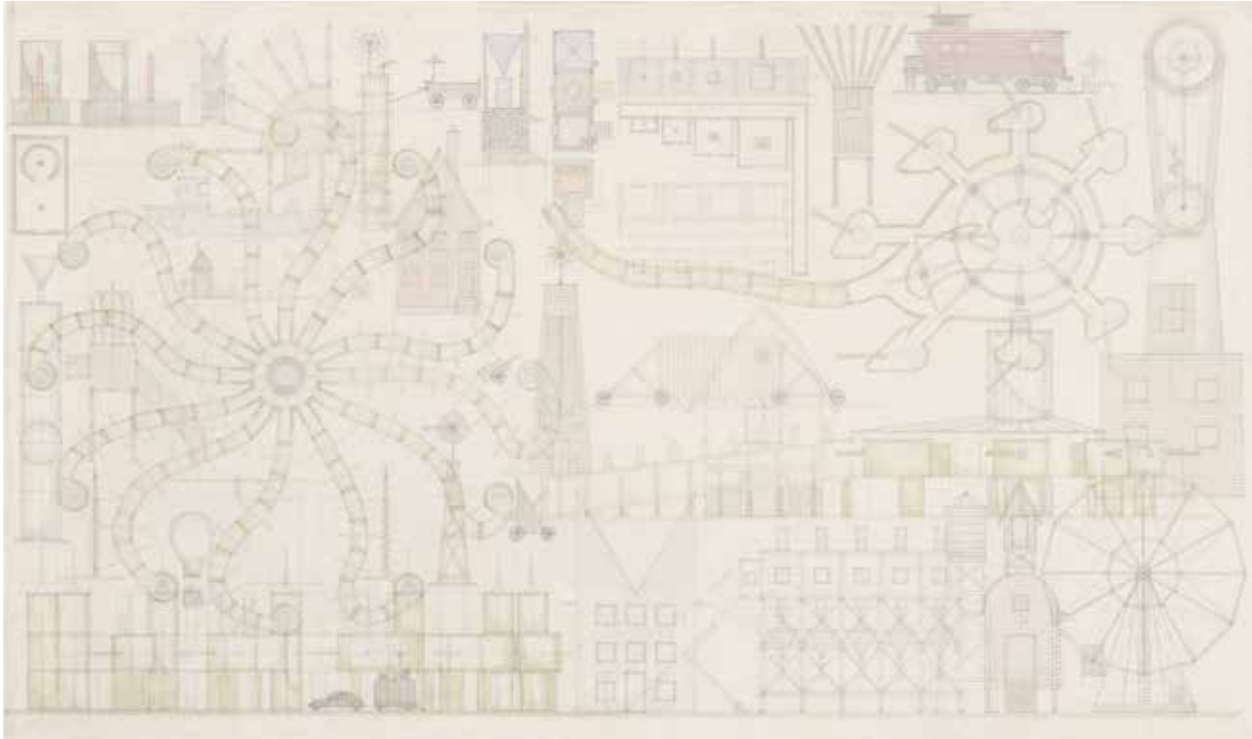


North wall



Key to plan

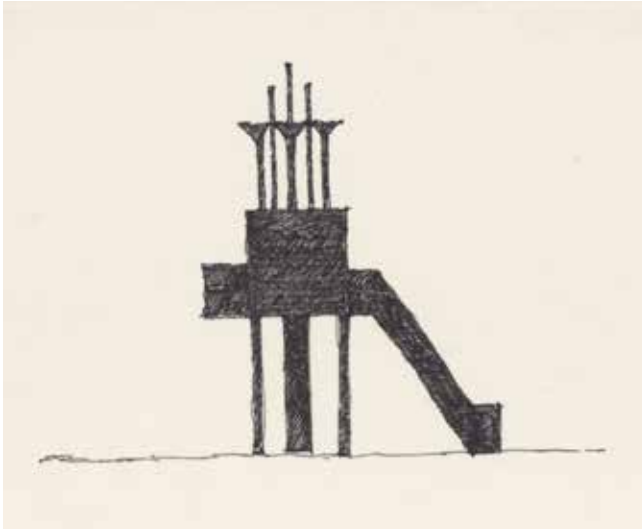
1	Summer Visitor's Place	21	Old Farmer's House	53	Observer Units
2	Bargeman's Place	25	Travelling Performers	54	Inspector's House
7	Weather Station	29	School House	56	Solicitor's Office
8	Plot Division	30	Farm Library	58	Useless House
11	Garden Plots	31	Music House	65	Widow's House
12	Clothes Wagon	41	Farm Hall	66	Balloonist Unit
13	Scare-Crow House	47	Transfer Place	68	Time-Keeper's Place
14	Farm Barns	48	Master Builder's House		
16	Reddleman's Place	49	Druggist's Place		
18	Store House	50	Vaults		
19	Sower's House	51	Proprietor's Place		
20	Reaper's House	52	Farm Manager's Office		



John Hejduk, Presentation drawing for the Lancaster / Hanover Masque, 1980-1982

Coloured pencil and graphite on translucent paper,
92.4 x 153.5 cm

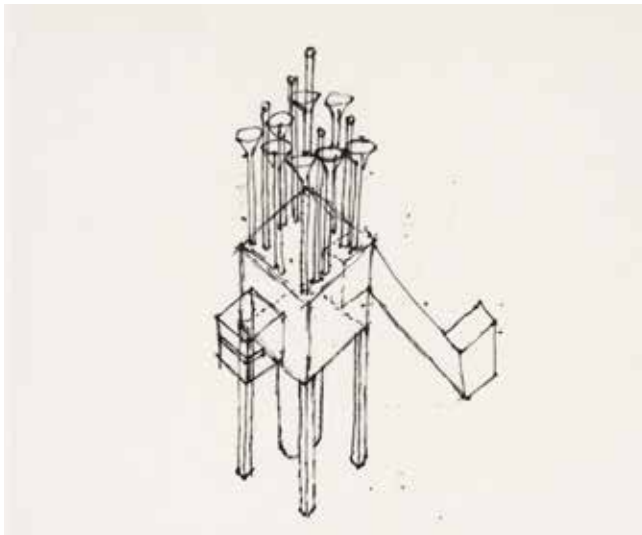
John Hejduk fonds, Canadian Centre for Architecture
Permission granted by The Estate of John Hejduk



John Hejduk, Widow's House from Lancaster /
Hanover Masque, 1980-1982

Black felt-tip pen on laid paper, 26.7 x 31.6 cm

John Hejduk fonds, Canadian Centre for Architecture
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John Hejduk, Widow's House from Lancaster /
Hanover Masque, 1980-1982

Black felt-tip pen on laid paper, 26.5 x 31.3 cm

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Getting to know Professor Hejduk

John Hejduk dedicated his life to teaching which he saw as a 'social contract'. As Professor and Dean of the Cooper Union's Irwin S. Chanin School of Architecture in New York from 1975 until his death in 2000, he created extraordinary drawings and propositions to inspire, provoke and instruct his students. Hejduk said of his pedagogy: 'I believe that the University is one of the last places that protects and preserves freedom, therefore teaching is also a socio/political act, among other things.'

Sometimes described as a Paper Architect or Builder of Worlds, he believed ideas and books were as important as building and that architecture could present alternative worlds.

Mystery, poetry and paradox were intrinsic to his work and teaching: he wanted students to work hard to understand and interpret ideas in order to develop their own point of view.

In the 1980s and 90s Hejduk encouraged students around the world to interpret the meaning in his drawings and to build his structures as a way of learning practical skills and working collaboratively. 'London Masque' was developed in collaboration with students from the Royal College of Art MA Interior Design programme. During the exhibition, a series of displays by students and young people will explore Hejduk's Lancaster / Hanover Masque and the resulting models will be shown alongside the Widow's House.

RA Family Programme: Friendship and Alchemy

This display features work by participants from the RA's Family programme for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) who have built landscapes and imaginary cities inspired by John Hejduk's Lancaster/Hanover Masque (1980–82).

In May and June 2022 a group of families who met at the RA and have formed a close-knit community, were invited to attend four short workshops led by artist-educator Cash Aspeek.

Each week they used a distinct colour or material to reflect a theme in Hejduk's masque.

A silver city presents buildings with human as well as animal characteristics; black materials were used to create a world of slotted structures; the colour red represents the fireworks and fairground attractions that inspired the architect, while natural materials express imaginary farming communities and animal enclosures.

The RA's Family programme for children with SEND is supported by The Lord Leonard and Lady Estelle Wolfson Foundation. For further information about our range of family activities go to roy.ac/family-events

Contributors

Alex

Kumi

Anton

Louiza

Blythe

Marko

Cy

Mike

Dimitri

Nick

Edie

Nadine

Finn

Niamh

Florence

Oona

Greta

Otto

Honor

Sarah

Jeanette

Steve

Jonny

Toby

Juno

Yann

Mistress Anxiety **Building Worlds**

12 July – 9 October 2022

Families taking part in the RA's programme for children with special educational needs and disabilities

11 October 2022 – 5 February 2023

Students aged 15–21 who take part in the RA's Young People's programme

7 February – 21 May 2023

Students from Diploma Unit 11 of the Architectural Association

Your feedback, please

As we are committed to access for all, we would like your feedback on our large-print provision. Feedback forms are available from the Information Desk on the ground floor.

We also offer one-to-one audio descriptive tours of the exhibitions with trained volunteer audio describers.

Wheelchair users can also benefit from our volunteers, who can assist with taking you around the galleries so you can enjoy our exhibitions at your leisure. With prior notice we can arrange these at a time that fits with your schedule. Please contact us for more information.

E: access@royalacademy.org.uk

T: 020 7300 5732



InTouch at the RA

Design & typography by WfS Create: mail@wfscreate.com

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