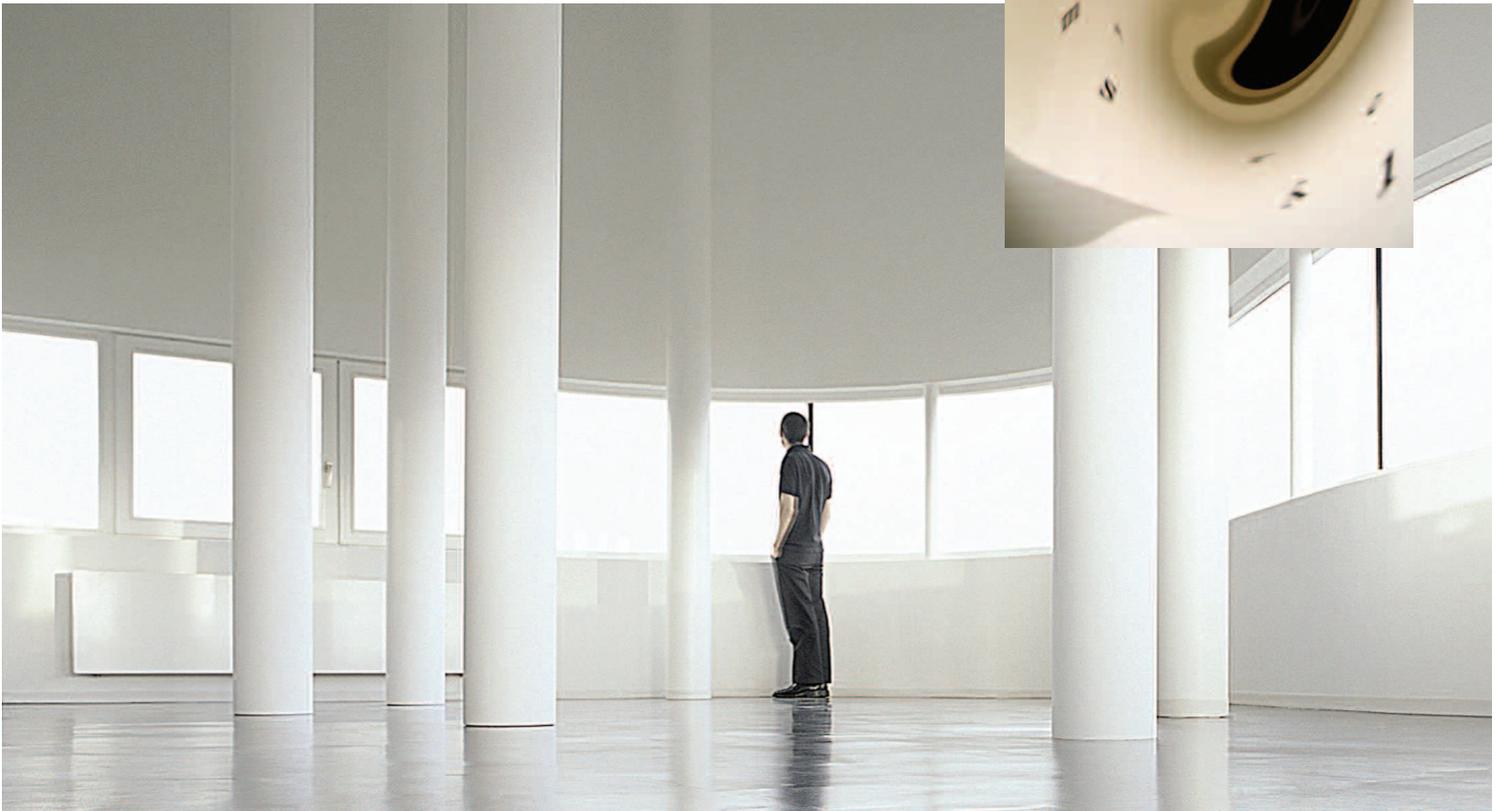


AR Past and Present



Inside the Wall (House 2)



From the pages of ARCHITECTURAL RECORD 2001

John Hejduk's legendary Wall House 2, designed in 1973, and built in Groningen, Holland, in 2001, now accommodates an artist-in-residence program where artists explore its interior spatial qualities.

Historically, the wall marks the threshold between interior and exterior. John Hejduk, however, confounded this model. In Wall House 2, the late architect envisioned the wall not as a means of dividing space, but rather as the space itself.

In diagram, the house is composed of two walls, with a long wall doubling as a corridor intersecting with an exaggerated concrete "front" wall. The three-story curvilinear living spaces project outward from this flat plane, while an elevated study is extruded from the corridor wall on its opposite end. In moving around the interior, the resident (or visitor) must repeatedly pass through the front wall, while staying within the corridor wall.

This constant negotiation of the boundary calls into question the concept of the interior, for it is the interior that lies on either side of the house's front wall. Passage through the front wall no longer indicates entry or exit, but rather provides the nebulous architectural experience of being in a wall.

Originally designed for Hejduk's fellow Cooper Union faculty member, landscape architect Ed Bye, the Wall House remained purely conceptual for almost 28 years, until it was built speculatively in 2001 by the Dutch firm BAM. The house lingered on the market until 2004, and then was sold to an art foundation, which established an artist-in-residence program there. When the house was published in 2001 [RECORD, November 2001, pages 150–55], the interior had been left incomplete, with rough concrete floors, a lack of wall finishes, and no utilities. Now Otonomo Architects of Groningen, in collaboration with the late architect's daughter, Renata Hejduk, has completed the interiors, adhering to Hejduk's original plan for white walls and gray floors (in contrast to his polychromatic exterior).

Artists stay in the house for three months and exhibit their work there. The program's inaugural exhibition, held in winter 2006, by Javier Marchán (inset, top), explores Hejduk's spatial proposition. The artist gives the surface of the wall a three-dimensionality that underscores its deployment as an architectural experience, not as an inert tectonic element. *John Gendall*

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