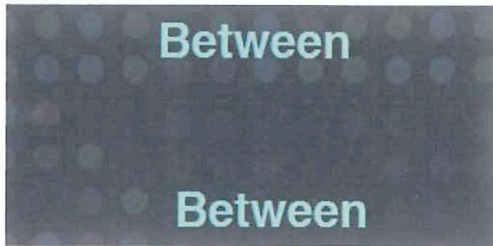


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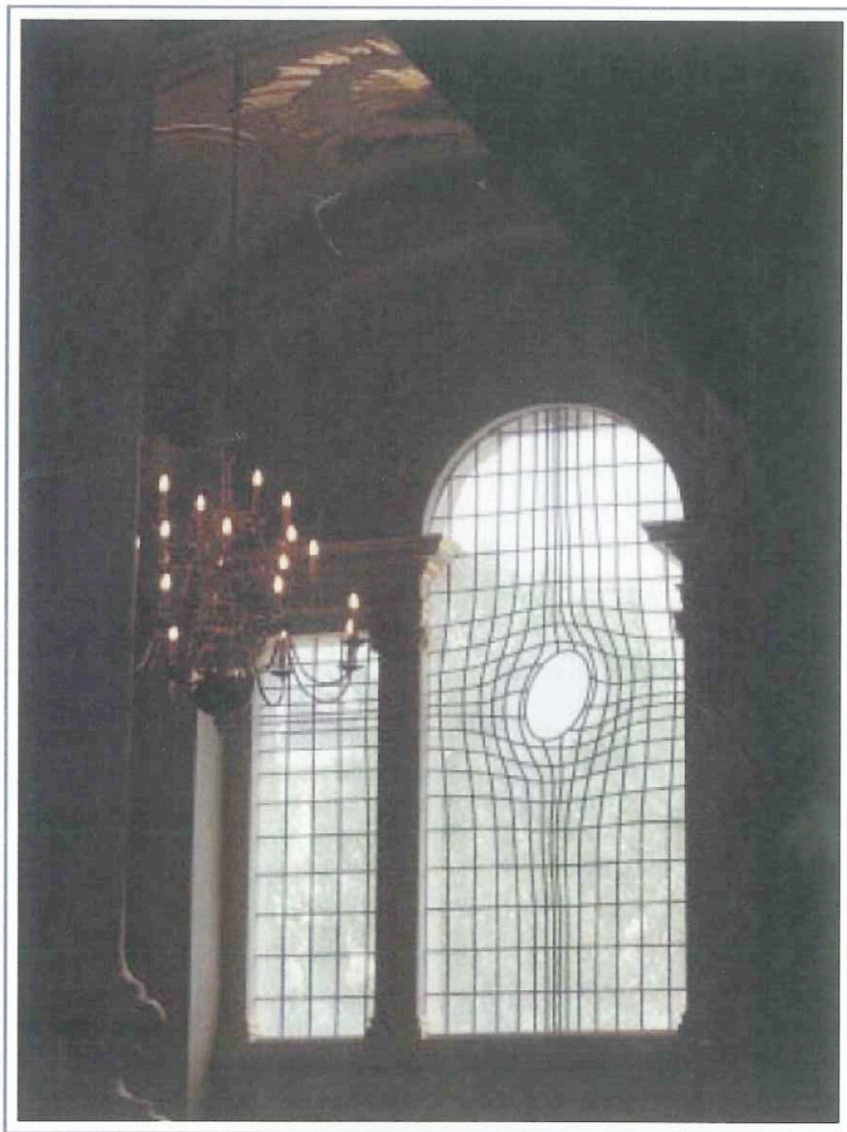
LISSON GALLERY

Between Between
5th September 2008



friday, 5 september 2008

Church renewal



East Window at St Martin-in-the-Fields

Incorporated in England
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(designed by Shirazeh Houshiary, in collaboration with architect Pip Horne)

The latest edition of RA, the Royal Academy of Arts magazine, features two Church renewal projects that have been overseen by its members.

The first is the well-known and highly successful renewal of St Martin-in-the-Fields by Eric Parry RA. It was in January 2006 that St Martin's embarked on the £36 million building project to restore and transform the church and surrounding buildings, and create a new sequence of beautiful, practical and inspirational spaces to serve the community, visitors and those in need. Due for completion at the end of 2008 the project is progressing well, with the restoration of the church almost complete and the new underground spaces open to the public.

Natural light now floods into the church bringing it closer to James Gibbs's original, much-imitated Baroque design. The glorious decorative plasterwork of the ceiling has been restored; the pulpit relocated close to its original place, to improve the sightlines for congregation and audiences; and the chancel reordered to allow greater flexibility for worship and concerts. The finishing touch for the church itself is the installation of a new East Window, designed by artist Shirazeh Houshiary and architect Pip Horne, to replace the window installed following World War II bomb damage. Other significant new features are a glass-walled entrance pavilion and a remodelling of the crypt to include a new parish hall, rehearsal and office space, shop, and an enlarged cafe.

The second is the sculptor Anthony Caro who, over a period of several years, has been working on a major series of sculptures and architectural features to form part of the restoration of a chapel at Bourbourg in

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Northern France, about 12 miles east of Calais.

The Chapel of Light is situated in the choir of the Church of St Jean Baptiste. During World War II, a damaged English aircraft crash-landed on the roof of the church in order to avoid the houses in the town, and set it on fire. The church itself was restored, but the choir was separated by a wall from the body of the church and left in ruins until ten years ago. Caro was commissioned by the French Ministry for Culture and Communication to make a sculptural installation that would bring new life to the redundant choir.

Specifically for the project he has designed and built two huge internal oak towers each about 18 feet high. These towers are to be used for musical performances and allow vertical exploration of the church space. Caro has also made a concrete baptismal pool and a spectacular series of steel, wood and terracotta sculptures to fill a series of niches in the walls of the apex to the choir. Various other sculptures complete the east and west naves, linked through a doorway to a large exterior sculpture in corten steel. The sculptures follow the themes of The Creation (relating to the baptismal font) culminating in Adam and Eve.

Caro recognises that this monumental project is an exceptional opportunity for an artist. He stated, 'The light in the church is wonderful and it is such a privilege as an artist to be given a whole space to work with'. Not since Matisse's Chapel in Vence has another artist been given this opportunity."

The Church will be inaugurated on Saturday 11 October 2008 during a weekend of events to include the openings of the **three exhibitions in Calais, Dunkerque and Gravelines**.