



The Richard Rogers' Drawing Gallery

Provence, France

The gallery is a beautifully hand-crafted piece of architecture that soars out dramatically into the canopy of the trees to capture the view of the mountains of the Luberon

Stephen Spence, Associate Partner and Project Lead



Place
Provence, France

Client
SCEA Château La Coste

Area
120m²

Date
2012-2020

Co-Architect
Demaria Architecture

External envelope
Bysteel FS

Structural engineers
LANG Engineering Consultancy, ATES

Specialist engineer
Hasson Engineering Solutions

Steelwork fabrication and erection
Bysteel

Building enclosure
Setanta Construction

External envelope
Bysteel FS

Internal fit-out
SCEA Château La Coste, IDME France, ACM France

Project manager
Rainey+Best



The Richard Rogers Drawing Gallery is a 120m² simple orthogonal rectangle of 4m high by 5m wide. Opaque, except for floor-to-ceiling glazing at both ends, the gallery serves to concentrate the visitor's gaze, directing them to unique and unexpected views.

The gallery is located within Château La Coste, a 200-hectare site (of which 130 hectares are devoted to vineyards) housing a unique mixture of contemporary art, architecture and the production of wine, each connected by a series of meandering pathways.

Having discussed a potential project over a number of years, Richard Rogers visited the site with the owner in 2017 and handpicked a location for the gallery. The site chosen was a remote, sloping, heavily-wooded area located off an isolated dirt track. However, located at a high point within the development, it offered unique and dramatic views both across Château La Coste and the surrounding Provence area.

With a desire to minimize disturbance to the natural landscape and the sloping nature of the site, the decision was made that the building should touch the ground lightly. The design concept quickly developed into that of a simple structure which cantilevers out dramatically into the crown of the trees.

The gallery is accessed via a lightweight bridge lightly tethered to the ground and responsive to movement, the intention being that the visitor is stepping off the solid ground into a more dynamic structure. At the far end is an external terrace where the visitor is face to face with nature.

The gallery space is lined with white walls and ceiling, and the open plan layout is designed for flexibility to accommodate a series of future temporary exhibitions. Air conditioning is via a floor plenum and introduced at low level. It is extracted at high level, but both primary air ducts run externally below the gallery back to a plant room discretely located in a separate building.

Located remotely, the design dictated that each of the building's elements would be limited in size in order to facilitate transport to the site. The exposed primary structural frame was therefore designed with emphasis put into both the connection and articulation of the structural frame. Highlighted in a dramatic orange colour, it contrasts with the simplicity of the stainless steel-clad gallery box contained within.