

VOL XIV

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MEMORY AND MATERIALITY . THE AESTHETICS OF TIME

A quiet yet powerful shift is taking place in contemporary architecture. Among a new generation of architects, there is a growing awareness that the future does not lie in erasure, but in remembrance. Increasingly, these practitioners are looking to the past, not out of nostalgia, but with deep respect for the histories embedded in buildings, the craft of local traditions and the layered narratives of place.

Signalling more than an aesthetic preference, this renewed attention to the past reveals a philosophical and ethical reorientation. By preserving historic detail, honouring the traces of earlier craft, and working with, rather than against, existing structures, these architects are helping to shape a more diverse and textured architectural language – one that values complexity over uniformity, continuity over rupture.

In this issue, we meet the young architects, Marion Pinet and Pierre Pollet, who have based their practice in rural France. Pollet Pinet Architectes embraces vernacular architecture, traditional craftsmanship and local resources to restore meaning and materiality to contemporary practice. Their work rethinks rural potential through careful renovation, hands-on collaboration with artisans and an ethos of preservation as innovation. Architecture, for them, is cultural continuity, anchored in place, memory and human connection.

At the heart of this shift is also a broader rethinking of what “home” means. No longer viewed solely as a private refuge, home is increasingly a site of convergence: personal and collective, material and metaphorical. It becomes a space where histories, identities, power structures and aspirations intersect. In weaving together the old and the new, these architects remind us that to shape home is also to shape belonging, an understanding integral to any contemplation of who we are and who we are becoming.

Nata Janberidze of Rooms Studio exemplifies this evolution. Her private home in Tbilisi is not a static shelter, but a layered, living narrative. Drawing on Georgia's past and its rich cultural heritage, the apartment blends historical resonance with contemporary design. By embracing imperfection, memory and materiality, she creates an interior that acts as a vessel of both personal expression and shared identity.

We also visit Jeffrey Graetsch, co-founder of Raisonné gallery and a devotee of midcentury design, in his New York home, a former metal-plating factory still marked by its industrial past: original concrete floors and oil-darkened timber beams. Like his collection, the space accepts time as an active presence. Patina is not damage, but evidence. It is where history lingers and identity finds form.

The home of gallerist Suzanne Demisch comprises three connected apartments in a red brick East Village building with a storied past. Once inhabited by painter-photographer Saul Leiter, the space is both materially grounded and metaphorically rich. While renovations were required to unify the apartments, Demisch preserved many original elements. Her home becomes, in this way, a quiet act of reverence, composed of memory, detail and care.

Each story in this issue speaks to an architecture attuned to time, one that values what is already there. These are homes and practices that do not seek to overwrite, but to listen, absorb and build upon.

Architecture is not only about space, but about presence. And perhaps the most meaningful gesture we can make today is not to begin anew, but to begin again, with care, with curiosity and with the courage to remember. Welcome to Volume XIV.

METTE BARFOD
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

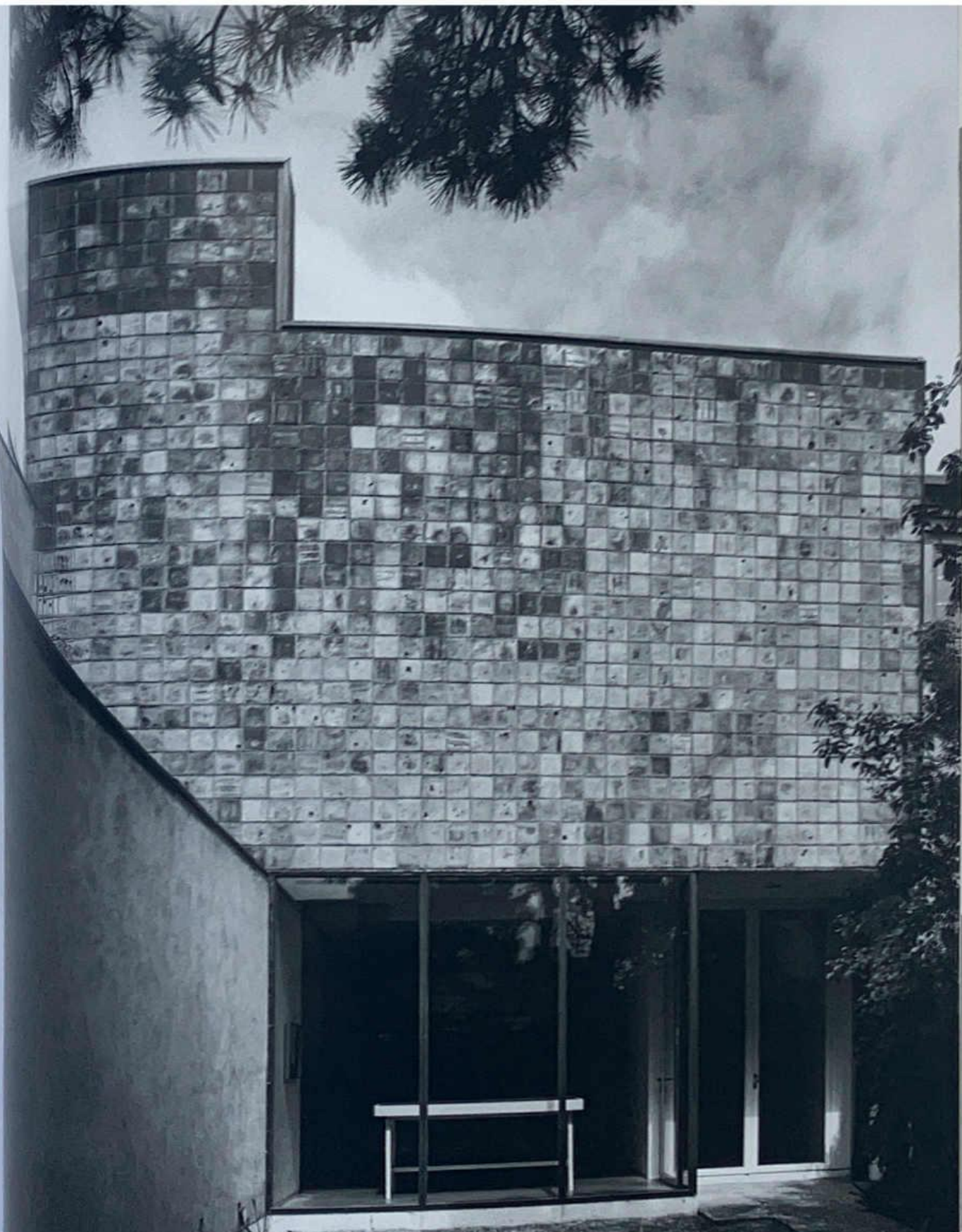
PEIREMUZEE IS A PLACE OF MEDITATION AND REFLECTION
FRAMING THE LIFE AND OEUVRE OF LUC PEIRE,
THE BELGIAN ARTIST OF ABSTRACT VERTICALISM.

THE BELGIAN ARTIST OF ABSTRACT VERTICALISM.

MAN
MAN
MAN



SPACE



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The quiet facade of both back and front of the Peiremuzee is made of local grey-blue clay tiles known as kerkodallen, in a simple square format. OPPOSITE: The quiet facade with one large window which illuminates the six-metre high entrance hall. The Luc & Jenny Peire Foundation changed its name to Peiremuzee in 2011. A name is borrowed from the Peiremuzee, the museum of modern and contemporary Belgian art.

The white walls of the exhibition space defer to Peter
Kjerholm's 1963 oil on canvas, *Gods Gæst*. Poul Kjerholm
1960 oil on canvas, with *Her*
1956, 80 on canvas on the right-hand wall.



AN UNOBTRUSIVE two-storey facade in Knokke, a Belgian coastal town, quietly commemorates the work of artist Luc Peire, who, with his wife Jenny, spent every summer on the property, working in a studio that is concealed from the street. While blending with its neighbours, the facade is undoubtedly a contemporary design and, to the careful observer, exhibits elements that the artist became known for: verticality, rhythm and proportion.

Luc Peire (1916-1994) was a distinguished Belgian artist renowned for abstract verticalism. Evolving from the figurative, he developed works characterised by their elongated forms and spatial depth: sober, reduced and profound, they homed in on man and space.

Judestraat 64 was initially the address of Jenny's family's summer residence. She inherited the house in 1945 and the couple moved there a year later. With the help of a few workers, Luc built an atelier in the back garden, a simple structure, six by eight metres, with white walls, wooden floor and a large north-facing window.

The couple settled into a pattern of working there in summer and travelling south in the winter for inspiration and artistic research. In 1963, after renting out the old villa facing the street, they added a small piece of land next to the atelier and had a small studio home built. Drawn by architect Fred Sandra, it was a compact, comfortable space typical of the 1960s with a few select pieces of design furniture and artworks.

"Luc and Jenny never had children, instead they lived a free life in movement," explains Marc Peire, Luc's nephew. "Thanks to Jenny's family heritage, art funding and residencies, the Peire couple travelled throughout their lives and always with Luc's art as the motivation and catalyst."

THE BUILDING SHOULD STAND AS A RESTING PLACE FOR PEIRE,
WE CHANGED EVERYTHING TO NOT CHANGE ANYTHING.

Jenny devoted her life to assisting her husband, organising their trips, archiving his works and filing drawings, letters and documents. She passed away in 1993 and Luc the year after, aged 77. As per his bequest, the property and archive were incorporated in the Atelier Luc Peire - Jenny & Luc Peire Foundation. Their friend Roland De Brock, became its first president. The foundation bought back the front villa and began deliberations about how to create the right environment to preserve works and keep alive Peire's legacy.

De Brock enlisted his son-in-law, architect Peter De Bruycker for advice about a new building. "I thought the building should stand as a resting place for Peire, his oeuvre and life," says De Bruycker. He proposed a quiet facade using local grey-blue clay tiles in a simple and peaceful square format. De Bruycker drew a floorplan with the same outlines as the original house. "We changed everything to not change anything," as he says.

The villa was demolished and the new foundation building was inaugurated in 2003. De Bruycker's facade not only resonated with the proportional precision in Peire's work but also kept his spirit present. "The new garage door was placed exactly where the original one was. As Luc Peire lived and worked at the back, this was his entrance door. Imagine, how many times he has walked in and out of there and brought his works in and out. I wanted to keep as much of his soul present as possible."

The interior of what is now called Peiremuzee is white and subtle, giving space to the artworks hanging on the walls. Much attention was paid to materials, details and finishing, an indication of the ar-

chitect's meticulous approach. It shows in the marble plinths, the window frames and the wenge wood built-in furniture, materials that intentionally refer to the Peires' personal objects and lifestyle. The verticality of Peire's work is present in the entrance hall, a small yet six-metre-high space, lit by the large single window in the facade. The rough and washed-out concrete floor on the ground level continues into the garden, guiding visitors to the studio home. Luc and Jenny had spent summer months there working and enjoying the coastal environment, and the rest of the year they made their base in Paris or travelled around the world.

Peire was inspired by places, cultures, art history and encounters with other artistic figures, which brought about "the birth of my art", as he put it himself. The couple travelled to Morocco and the Belgian Congo several times, an experience that made a big impact, as Jenny notes in diary entries. "The Congolese woman is walking before his eyes... and on the canvas." Luc Peire started depicting walking and standing women, vertical abstract portrayals. With time, the representations became increasingly abstract and linear.

"Luc felt inspired to represent man as something spiritual over an individual," says his nephew Marc. "The details were left out, a formalism that stayed with him his entire life. He stylised and abstracted man and always in a spatial context."

To understand the work, one must look at his evolution, from the figurative to the abstract and vertical, Marc argues. The many travels and encounters matured his work, yet he kept developing his own style, never feeling comfortable in artist collectives or movements. "Luc was an *einzelgänger*. He worked with abstraction but not like his peers; he worked with minimalism but not entirely like the Americans.

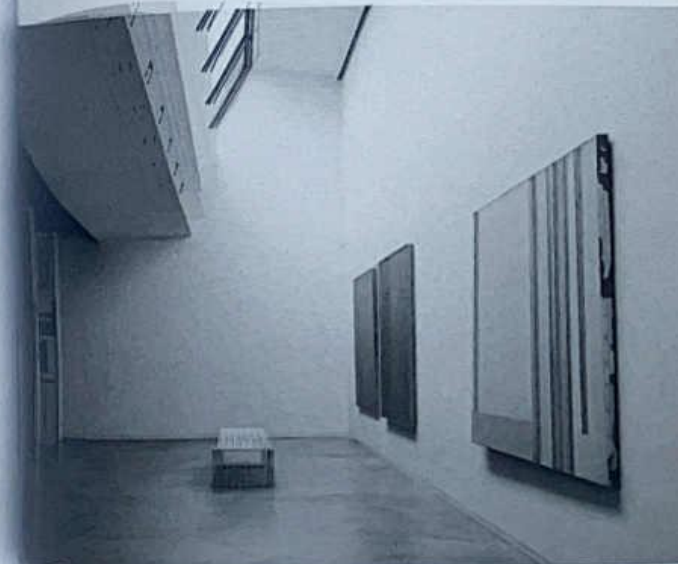
He didn't like rules, he had his own ideas and concepts. When we look at his evolution, it's in fact very logical and harmonious."

Peire not only painted on canvas but worked with multiple media and materials, unwaveringly exploring his principles and ideas of the vertical, proportional and metaphysical. Music was a great source of inspiration, indeed, recalls Marc, "Luc always said, my work should be read like you listen to music. My art comes out with time."

Throughout his career, he sought a symbiosis between art forms and collaborated with numerous artists from other fields and architects to create interdisciplinary art projects and installations.

On the top floor of the new building, De Bruycker proposed a vault to store paintings by Peire. "The foundation imagined the archive as something private, closed and dark but I thought that a pity. I rather wanted it to simulate an atelier," says De Bruycker. With its skylights, the vault room indeed resembles ancient ateliers where Peire had worked on his travels.

The building is modest in its purist expression, yet the presence of Luc Peire, his work and ideas, is felt throughout. Subtlety and grandeur, compactness and verticality, introspection and movement, quietly but surely co-exist. It is a place of meditation and reflection. Although Knokke is a bustling town during the summer, the museum is in a placid residential street where the West Flemish spirit and pace prevail. Peire intended his work to be an exact reflection of his inner life, each canvas embodying a demanding dialogue with himself, a dialogue as open and in-depth as possible to reveal all its aspects. The museum transmits that same intent.



The skylights in the vault room simulate the light and airiness of an atelier.

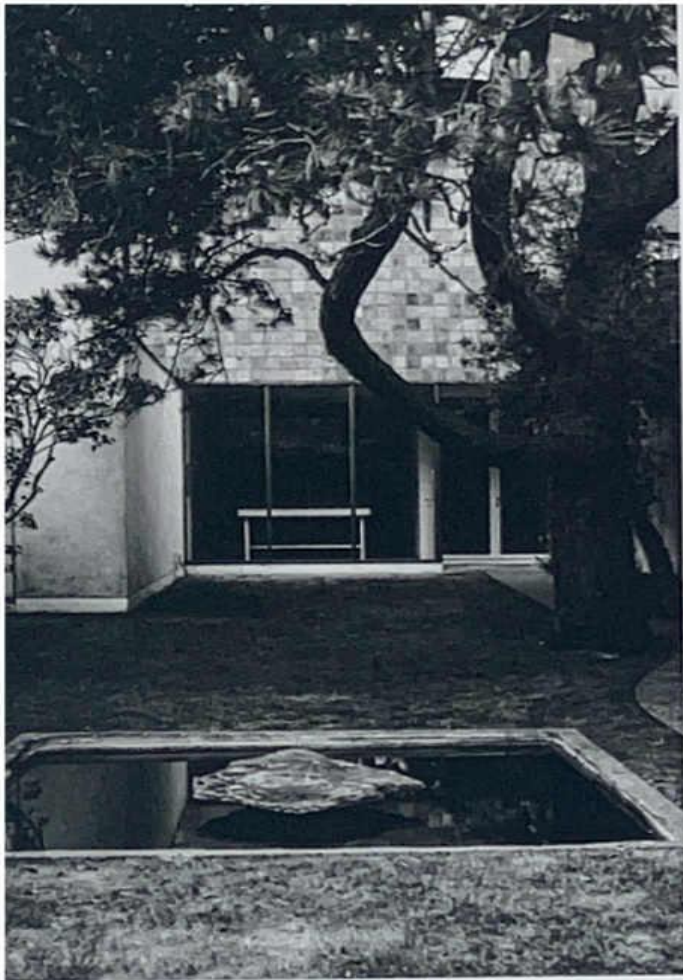


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HE STYLISED AND ABSTRACTED MAN AND ALWAYS IN A SPATIAL CONTEXT.



The long passage leads to the garden and the 1960s studio home where Luc and Jenny Peire spent their summers.





The calm centre of Peiremuzee, between the new building that fronts the street and the studio home at the rear, is a courtyard garden with a giant pine and a pool with a rock in the centre. On the lawn is *La Mujer de Putifar*, a 1954 reinforced concrete sculpture by Josep Maria Subirachs.



In the atelier from the 1940s, *L'atelier*, 1972, oil on canvas, hangs above a simple couch and a 1950s Haidoy Butterfly Chair. On the table is Josep Maria Subirachs's *Horizontal*, 1957, terracotta, and in the corner an untitled polychromed wood sculpture by Maria Colvin, a Chilean-born artist long-resident in France, next to a lithograph by Peire, *La figura blanca*, 1953.





Luc Peire's *Estremadura*, 1957, oil on canvas, hangs above 1950s Swan Chairs by Arne Jacobsen. OPPOSITE: *Graphie XXII*, 1958, viewed through *Lumino-Tours*, 1970, a sculpture combining painting on acrylic glass, mirrors and lighting. The rattan Chill lounge chairs are by Nanna Ditzel, 1961.



With his painting on walls, and mirrors on the floor and ceiling, Luc Peire sought to create the idea of infinite space in the piece *Environnement I*, 1967.



A gallery annex was built as a museum installation of the immersive *Environnement I*, 1967.