

Living with Buildings

Wellcome Collection | 4 October 2018 – 3 March 2019

In October 2018, a major exhibition at Wellcome Collection will explore the pivotal role of design and urban planning in human health. *Living with Buildings* will take over both of the museum's temporary exhibition spaces to examine how the structures that surround us shape our mental and physical health, in both positive and negative ways.

From Dickensian slums to high-rise towers, and infirmary tents to modernist sanatoriums, this will be the first exhibition to chart how shifts in thinking and approaches to design have impacted on health and wellbeing. Featuring over 100 objects including the work of artists such as Andreas Gursky, Rachel Whiteread and Giles Round, it will consider the perspectives of those who use buildings to live in and heal, as well as those who design them.

At a time when more and more people live in metropolitan areas, *Living with Buildings* will look back at the impact of urbanisation on sanitation in Victorian London and the creation of suburbs and garden cities for the wealthy. Purpose built towns, such as Bournville in Birmingham and Saltaire near Bradford, reveal the motives of philanthropic factory owners.

Concepts of home, from the high-rise Pepys estate in Deptford to the model village of Poundbury in Dorset, will be explored alongside post-war efforts to find a new modern way of living. Archive photographs and footage of experimental health clinics in Peckham and Finsbury will reflect on attempts to improve the health and living conditions of the poor, with a focus on community and prevention.

The exhibition will also look at healing spaces such as smallpox tents and small cottage infirmaries, as well as schemes for twentieth century and contemporary hospitals. Plans and photographs of Aalvar Aalto's sanatorium in Paimio, Finland, will show how he was guided by the requirements of tuberculosis patients and considered the building a medical instrument in and of itself. In the UK, Maggie's Centres also emphasise the importance of environment, with each unique building designed to create a supportive space for those living with cancer.

The first floor gallery will be devoted to a major commission developed by architectural practice Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners (RSHP), chosen from an open call to create an full scale project for the exhibition. The commission will comprise a mobile clinic, developed for and with Doctors of the World, in response to the urgent need for effective, adaptable healthcare in emergency situations and remote locations.

A new book by Iain Sinclair, inspired by the exhibition, will be published by Wellcome Collection and Profile Books in September 2018. In *Living with Buildings* Sinclair embarks on a series of journeys – through London, Mexico, Marseilles and the Outer Hebrides – to explore the conflicted relationships between sickness and structure. Iain Sinclair is the bestselling author of *London Orbital*, *The Last London* and *Hackney, That Rose-Red Empire*.

Living with Buildings opens at Wellcome Collection on 04 October 2018 until 03 March 2019 and is curated by Emily Sargent.

For press information please contact:

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Notes to Editors

Commission submissions were assessed by a panel comprising: Sadie Morgan, founding director of de Rijke Marsh Morgan Architects (dRMM); Jeremy Myerson holder of the Helen Hamlyn Chair of Design at the Royal College of Art; Vanessa Norwood, architecture curator and former Head of Exhibitions at the Architectural Association; Emily Sargent, Senior Curator of temporary exhibitions at Wellcome Collection and Paul Wilkinson, clinical epidemiologist at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

Wellcome Collection is a free museum and library for the incurably curious. Inspired by the medical objects and curiosities collected by Henry Wellcome, it connects science, medicine, life and art. Through its exhibitions, live programming, and digital and publishing activity, it makes thought provoking content which aims to challenge how we think and feel about health.

wellcomecollection.org

Wellcome Collection is part of Wellcome, a global charitable foundation that exists to improve health for everyone by helping great ideas to thrive. Both politically and financially independent, we support scientists and researchers, take on big problems, fuel imaginations and spark debate.

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