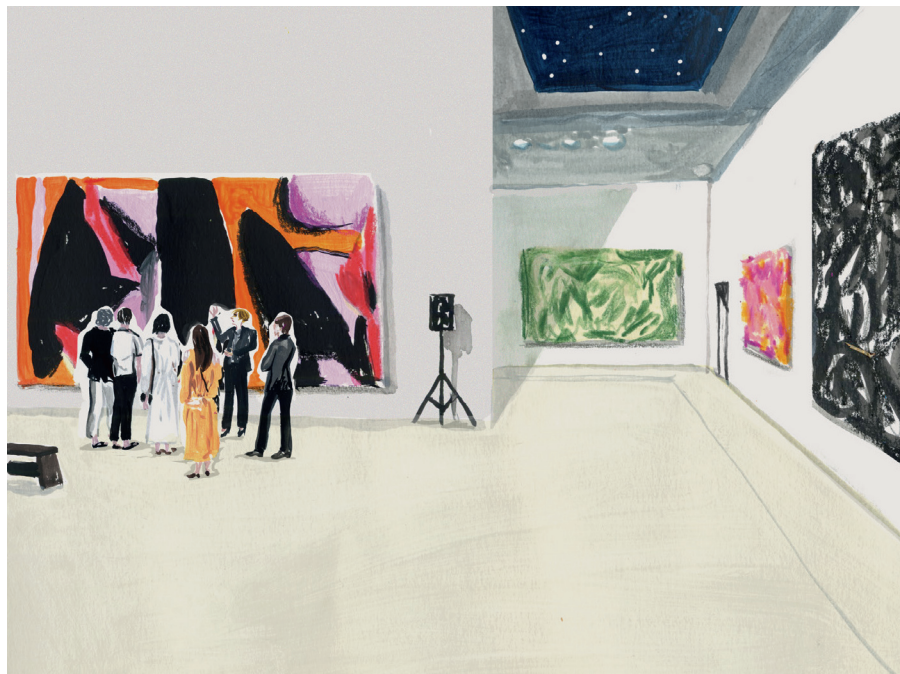


THE VINSON VIEW

Quality maniac Nick Vinson on the who, what, when, where and why



THE BEST ACCESS

The Cultivist

The Cultivist's Museum Membership (£420 per year) lets you and three guests skip the line at more than 100 of the world's top museums, while its Individual Membership (£2,200 per year) offers private views and studio visits. thecultivist.com

National Art Pass

This pass (£70 per year) includes free entry to 240 museums, across the UK, and half-price entry to major exhibitions, including those at the Tate and the V&A. artfund.org

Design Museum

Patrons of the museum's Design Circle (£1,000 per year) enjoy a bespoke programme of events, including behind-the-scenes tours and exclusive previews. designmuseum.org

Barbican Centre

The gallery offers at least one curator-led tour per exhibition. A private guide can also be booked for ad hoc paid tours. barbican.org.uk

Gagosian

It holds tours, led by curators or artists, for each of its shows at its various locations, for both clients and the public. gagosian.com

01 Solo show

Picky Nicky has private gallery tours down to a fine art

In July, we were given a private tour of the 'Lee Krasner: Living Colour' show at the Barbican by its curator Eleanor Nairne. The nine of us – guests of the fashion designer Roksanda Ilinčić – had the whole show to ourselves. I learnt so much about Krasner and her work; it was the ideal way to visit an exhibition. Last January, it was Molteni & C's turn: the Italian brand invited a small group of us on a guided tour of 'Tutto Ponti' at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs Paris (W*235), with its director, Olivier Gabet, and the show's curator, Sophie Bouilhet-Dumas. This was especially insightful as Bouilhet-Dumas' grandfather knew Gio Ponti and commissioned him to build a villa outside Paris in 1926. In September, I turned up 50 minutes early for the opening of the Fondazione Prada's 'Spitzmaus Mummy in a Coffin and Other Treasures', conceived by Wes Anderson and Juman Malouf. I had all 538 items on display and a guide to myself, and left feeling so jammy after I saw the long queue outside.

And although I spent a full year working on our exclusive story on the Charlotte Perriand exhibition at the Fondation Louis Vuitton (W*247), meeting the curators, Perriand's biographer Jacques Barsac, and daughter and former collaborator Pernette Perriand, as well as visiting Cassina to see the replicas being made, I hungered for

more. So, treat of all treats, I arranged a tour of the show with curator Sébastien Cherruet one morning before the foundation opened its doors and brought along a few friends.

I treasure these precious experiences above acquiring more stuff, which I certainly don't need. Other highlights have included being taken around 'Breathing Colour' at the Design Museum by Hella Jongerius; a private visit to the Museo Chillida Leku near San Sebastián in Spain with Mikel Chillida; and a private tour of the Vasari Corridor, the long passageway that connects the Uffizi Gallery to the Pitti Palace in Florence, as a guest of Gucci before its Cruise 2018 show.

I have obviously been spoiled rotten, my preference for guided tours revealing an inability to properly take in an exhibition on my own, and a dislike of reading notes and captions. It is also a reaction to being overwhelmed with information and imagery all day long – on one of these tours, you are mindfully and blissfully focused.

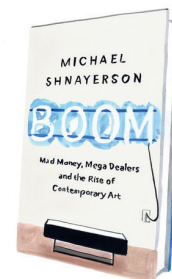
Tours like these are not just a swanky perk of the job and can actually be booked and paid for (see box above). Many institutions will offer tours with their curators or artists, and not just to patrons or journalists like me. It's just a matter of being organised, booking in advance and planning your travels around upcoming shows (my group made a special overnight trip to Paris to see the Perriand). ★



02

Collection view

Duveen, by S N Behrman, is a fabulous read about the ballsy British art dealer behind the Mellon, Frick, Hearst and Rockefeller collections. dauntbooks.co.uk



03

Market volume

Boom, by Michael Shnayerson, is a bang up-to-date overview of the contemporary art market and all the big players. publicaffairsbooks.com