



ANNABELLE SELLDORF TO DESIGN INTERPRETATION CENTER AT FORBIDDEN CITY'S QIANLONG GARDEN

Center will provide first-ever public access to the site.

New York, NY— World Monuments Fund (WMF) today announced celebrated architect Annabelle Selldorf will design an Interpretation Center at the Qianlong Garden within the iconic Forbidden City in Beijing, China, making her one of only a few American architects to lead architectural projects at the site. For the first time ever, the public will have access to the Qianlong Garden through the new Visitor's Center, which is part of a comprehensive restoration in partnership with the Palace Museum that will be completed in 2020.

The interpretation center will be located in an existing, restored structure within the second courtyard of the Qianlong Garden. Selldorf and her NYC-based firm, Selldorf Architects, designed the center in three distinct halls surrounding an open pavilion, each of which will provide visitors with a unique perspective on the past and present of the remarkable complex. The west hall will serve as an exhibition space to present the eighteenth-century design and creation of the Qianlong Garden; the east hall will present the conservation of the complex; and the main hall will be an open space with an unobstructed view of the third courtyard rockeries for visitors to peacefully contemplate the garden. As visitor center architect, Selldorf will collaborate with exhibition curator Nancy Berliner on the content of each hall, which will engage all the senses through artifacts, videos, and other didactic material. Construction on the interior of the interpretation center is set to begin in late 2019.

Occupying almost two acres in the northeast quadrant of the Forbidden City, the Qianlong Garden was built by the fourth emperor of the Qing Dynasty between 1771 and 1776 to serve as part of his planned retirement complex for use following his 60 year reign. He designed the garden as a private retreat, with four courtyards, elaborate rockeries, and some 27 pavilions and structures. The buildings contain decoration and furnishings from a time widely considered to be one of the boldest and most extravagant periods of interior design in China's history. The structures possess some of the most significant, exquisitely designed interiors to survive relatively unchanged from imperial China.

The Garden was largely left dormant after PuYi, China's last emperor, left the Forbidden City in 1924. Its buildings have never been opened to the public, and it is one of the most significant historical sites in the Forbidden City to remain unrestored since imperial times. In 2004, World Monuments Fund and the Palace Museum partnered on a comprehensive review of the entire Qianlong Garden site and developed a master plan for its conservation. Today, the project is being carried out in four distinct phases. The first major structure to be conserved was Juanqinzhai (Studio of Exhaustion from Diligent Service), completed in 2008. Three other structures in the fourth courtyard, including Fuwangge (Belvedere of Viewing Achievements), Zhuxiangguan (Lodge of Bamboo Fragrance), and Yucuixuan (Bower of Purest Jade), were conserved and completed in 2016. Restoration of the interior and exterior of buildings in the first, second, and third courtyards is currently underway and set to be completed in tandem with the 600th anniversary of the Forbidden City in 2020.

“We are honored to partner with Annabelle Selldorf on this incredibly significant project—one that will give the general public unprecedented access to one of China’s most important historic sites,” said Lisa Ackerman, Interim Chief Executive Officer, World Monuments Fund. “Annabelle’s talent and vision paired with her passion for architecture and history are sure to produce an unforgettable experience for visitors to the Qianlong Garden.”

“Projects like the new Interpretation Center at the Qianlong Garden, that bring people together in a spirit of inquiry and inclusiveness, are at the core of our practice,” said Annabelle Selldorf, Principal, Selldorf Architects. “It has been a great pleasure and honor to work with World Monuments Fund to create an opportunity for visitors to learn more about the Gardens and experience their beauty and wonder first-hand.”

World Monuments Fund will celebrate Selldorf’s collaboration at its annual spring fundraiser, this year benefitting the Qianlong Garden restoration project, on April 24, 2019, in New York City. The site’s ongoing conservation is generously supported by The Brown Foundation, Inc. of Houston/Mrs. Nancy Brown Negley, the Freeman Foundation, British American Tobacco, The Starr Foundation, and The Tiffany & Co. Foundation. Additional support is provided by Mrs. Catherine Curran, Mr. and Mrs. Peter Kimmelman, and Wilson and Eliot Nolen.

To learn more, visit wmf.org.

To download hi-resolution imagery courtesy WMF, [CLICK HERE](#).

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World Monuments Fund is the leading independent organization devoted to saving the world’s treasured places. For more than 50 years, working in over 100 countries, its highly skilled experts have applied proven and effective techniques to the preservation of important architectural and cultural heritage sites around the globe. Through partnerships with local communities, funders, and governments, WMF seeks to inspire an enduring commitment to stewardship for future generations. Headquartered in New York City, the organization has offices and affiliates worldwide. Visit www.wmf.org for more information, or connect with us on www.facebook.com/worldmonuments, www.twitter.com/worldmonuments, and instagram.com/worldmonumentsfund.

The Palace Musuem (PM), PRC, China’s most comprehensive art and history museum, opened its doors in October 1925. The Palace Museum was established on the foundation of the Forbidden City—a palace dating to 1420 that housed the Ming and Qing dynasties and their collection of treasures. The Forbidden City was designated by the State Council as a key cultural heritage site deserving protection in 1961, and it was named as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1987. The Forbidden City is the largest and most intact ancient palatial complex in the world. The Palace Museum is dedicated to the conservation of its ancient architecture, as well as the conservation, archiving, research and display of its collections, so they may be enjoyed by people from all walks of life.

Annabelle Selldorf is the Principal of Selldorf Architects, a 70-person architectural design practice that she founded in New York City in 1988. The firm creates public and private spaces that manifest a clear and modern sensibility to enduring impact. Since its inception, the firm’s guiding principles have been

deeply rooted in humanism. At every scale and for every condition, Selldorf Architects designs for the individual experience. As a result, its work is brought to life, and made complete, by those who use it.

Clients include cultural institutions and universities such as Brown University, New York University, The Clark Art Institute, Neue Galerie New York, and LUMA Arles, a new contemporary art center in Arles, France. Selldorf Architects is currently designing a major new expansion and enhancement of the Frick Collection in New York City and has broken ground on an expansion project for the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego. In addition, the firm has created numerous galleries for David Zwirner, Hauser & Wirth, and Gladstone Gallery among others, and designed exhibitions for the Whitney, Frieze Masters, Gagosian Gallery, and the Venice Art Biennale. The firm has designed the largest recycling facility and education center in the United States; the Sunset Park Material Recovery Facility, which is located on the Brooklyn waterfront.

Born and raised in Germany, Ms. Selldorf received a Bachelor of Architecture degree from Pratt Institute and a Master of Architecture degree from Syracuse University in Florence, Italy. She is a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects and serves on the Board of the Architectural League of New York, the World Monuments Fund, the Chinati Foundation, the Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College, and has taught at the Harvard School of Design. Additionally, Ms. Selldorf is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and in 2014 was the recipient of their prestigious Award in Architecture, and in 2016 received the AIA New York Medal of Honor.

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