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a continuing conversation
architecture . culture . arts . practice

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andrew mikhael architect

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hi!

Welcome to the first edition of our newsletter. Think of this as an anti-newsletter. This is written by us - and YOU, for you. We want to use this space to answer questions and to share expertise and ideas with our colleagues, clients, and friends. We all have something of value to share, being in the design, development, construction, and creative industries.

I will be writing about influential architecture I have visited. In this first issue, I share with you my experience at the Mexico City home of famed architect Luis Barragán. It was a dream come true to visit his iconic home and I urge anyone to see it when they are visiting Mexico City.

Each issue will also feature one guest writer from our circle of colleagues. This issue features Rory McCreesh from Duce Construction. Rory shares with us some practical tips on how to hang and protect artwork. Future guest writers will include an art gallery owner, a structural engineer, and a NYC expeditor. If you want to share your expertise with our audience or submit a request on what you would like to read, please let me know!



by rory mcreesh
duce construction corp.
president and founder

Art is an investment on many levels. It has emotional, sentimental and fiscal value that can last for years or lifetimes. It is thus important to consider the installation of the art as carefully as the art itself.

The physical constraints when hanging an artwork depend on a few factors. There are two quick questions that you can ask yourself before you make any holes in a wall - How heavy is my piece of art?, and What is the makeup of the wall that I am attaching this to? If your art is clearly on the lighter side, under 20 lbs, then it can be screwed straight into the wall. More often than not though, the piece is on the heavier side, 25 lbs or heavier and must have extra support.

Walls are usually composed of drywall covering a sturdy framework. This framework is the ideal place to attach the art and can be found using a stud finder. If there are not any studs in the location where you want to hang your art, you will have to add additional plywood pieces (called blocking) to bridge between the studs. If you are redesigning a home and know in advance that you will have heavy art it is beneficial to think forward and design the blocking into the wall. If your walls are made of brick you

can drill straight into the wall using a drill and a masonry bit. Be sure to drill into the mortar and not the brick itself. Another important factor to consider when hanging art is its environment. An appropriate temperature, humidity and light within the space all contribute to the longevity of the art. The ideal temperature recommended by museums and insurance companies is between 65-75 °F, and the ideal humidity between 55% to 65%. These numbers should be maintained even while you are absent from the home; a digital thermo-hygrometer monitors both temperature and humidity and can help to keep the environment consistent.

Both interior and exterior light can have a profound effect on your artwork. The UV rays found in sunlight can fade and damage your art. Placing the art on a non-sunny wall or framing it in UV-blocking glass can lessen the effects of the UV rays. The interior lights should be low lumen lighting. LED bulbs and incandescent lights have the appropriate lumen level (55 lux or below).

If you follow these guidelines you will have long lasting art peices. Enjoy the view!



c a s a b a r r a g á n

b u i l d i n g o f t h e m o n t h

architect: luis barragan
where: mexico city, mexico
year: 1947



*"Lets build a white wall where the shade of
this tree can rest."*

-luis barragán

by andrew mikhael

As an architecture student, Luis Barragán was my inspiration when it came to understanding the power of color as an essential design tool. Color affects feeling and directly impacts our physical well being.

Casa Barragán, the architect's own home and studio, is special not just for Barragán's masterful use of color, but also for how he balanced the complex relationships of space into a cohesive home. Privacy and view, social settings for large dinners are steps away from monastic corners to reflect.



I visited Casa Barragán in March 2016. One thing that immediately struck me was how the house is situated in a busy section of Mexico City. It appears in photos as if it is situated in a serene and secluded rural locale. As one walks through the house today the lush views appear just as they did in 1947. From the street, it appears as a blank wall with a muted yellow entry gate. Behind the yellow gate is a gem of a home. This is the genius of Barragán.

Inside unfolds a symphony of space, view, light, and form. The home flows like a song. A massive double height reading room with a giant picture window facing tall trees and vegetation turn to a cantilevered wood stair that stands as a sculptural element in the room, leading towards a private space where he listened to records.

Architects experience our work through the representation of drawings, models, and photographs. Once it is built and ready to be inhabited, we leave. I thought of this when I saw a mirror globe perched in the corner of many rooms. I hypothesize that it was Barragán's way of experiencing his design once removed through an abstracted filter of the mirror globe. Inspired, I visited the gift shop and purchased a globe of my own.



steel staircase

u p d a t e

We are watching with excitement as artist Jordan Griska builds the steel staircase we designed for our midtown duplex project. The stairs balance their strong presence with delicate detailing of the risers and railings. Next step - laying out white oak flooring to compliment the natural colored steel.



To follow the progress and see more images, visit us on instagram at @andrewmikhael!



a s k a n d r e w

“The apartment across the hall went up for sale. Can we combine it with our apartment?”

-daniel, ny

Combining apartments can be a great way to upgrade your home and stay in the neighborhood you love.

Each situation is unique and the best thing to do is call an architect to give you an assessment of your possibilities. Analyzing the current layout, building structure, and

plumbing locations are just a few things to take into consideration. If you are at the end of the hall, your co-op or condo may also sell you the hallway to make it one big space!

See our online article “What to Expect when Combining Apartments” for more details!

Questions? Ask Andrew! am@andrewmikhael.com

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Andrew Mikhael Architect
85 Delancey Street, New York, NY
www.andrewmikhael.com
+ 1 (212) 729-7554



f /andrewmikhaelarchitect

@andrewmikhael

in /andrewmikhael