



# King and Queen of the Castle

How Andy and Christine Hall turned Georg Baselitz' castle into an enormous art gallery

TEXT | HOLLY HOWE





**Above:**  
Hall Foundation Schloss Derneburg Museum  
Derneburg, Germany  
Photo: Stefan Neuhäuser

**Opposite:**  
Andy and Christine Hall 2017  
Schloss Derneburg Museum  
Photo: Helen During

## WE'VE ALL BEEN THERE.

You fall in love with a piece of art, buy it, and usually stick it on your wall. If you're lucky, you might buy some more, and those can go up too. And then you buy a couple of extra works, and realise you have nowhere to put them. It's a challenge most of us can deal with, but for British-born collectors **Andrew and Christine Hall**, it really is a challenge when the number of works in your collection is in the thousands.

Thankfully, they came up with a solution to avoid having to hide everything away in storage. In 2007, they created the **Hall Art Foundation** to loan works to museums and galleries, opened a space in Reading, Vermont, in 2012 to exhibit some of it themselves, and this summer, opened their new gallery space at **Schloss Derneburg**, located near Hanover in Germany, to share even more of their collection with the public.

STATE visited the *schloss* (German for castle) this summer, ahead of its official opening, to get a private tour from Christine and have a chat with Andy (as he is better known), as to how this project came together after purchasing the space almost 10 years ago.

Set in grounds spanning five acres, Schloss Derneburg is not your average castle. For 30 years, it was both the home and studio of the artist **Georg Baselitz**, before the Halls purchased it and conducted extensive renovations to transform it

into an enormous art space, which occupies 70,000 sq feet. It opened on 1 July 2017, with not one, not two, but seven immense shows. Five are solo shows featuring the work of **Antony Gormley**, **Barry Le Va**, **Malcolm Morley**, **Hermann Nitsch**, and **Julian Schnabel**, while the remaining two are group shows – *The Truth of Uncertainty: Moving Image Works from the Hall Collection*, a group show curated by **Chrissie Iles** from the **Whitney Museum**; and *Für Barbara*, an exhibition of works by female artists curated by dealer **Leo Koenig** in honour of recently deceased gallerist **Barbara Weiss**, a lifelong advocate for women in the arts.

So how did it all come about? Hall (66), an oil trader who is chairman of **Astenbeck Capital Management**, studied art for his O Levels in the suburbs of London. He moved into the sciences, studying chemistry at Oxford, while his wife Christine studied microbiology at Bristol. But when they were courting (they have known each other since school), they regularly went on dates to the **Tate** and to **Charles Saatchi's** space on Boundary Row in North West London, which would turn out to be an inspiration for them when they decided to exhibit their collection to the public. 'Back in the '80s he did these stunning shows. I remember when Christine and I went to see them, we were like "woah this is amazing – how cool to do that"'

Hall didn't start collecting until he moved to Paris in his late 20s to do an MBA at INSEAD. While brushing up on his French at Berlitz, he discovered



**Georg Baselitz** *Sing Sang Zero* 2012  
Photo: Wayne Chisnall





Hall Art Foundation, Reading, Vermont

that his French teacher was a fan of contemporary art, and together they would go around the city's galleries. 'It was eye-opening to me that you could actually buy that stuff. I thought art belonged to museums but no, you could buy it for yourself, so I did buy a few things, not that at the time I had any clue what I was doing!'

They continued buying little bits and pieces here and there, but in 1988, after receiving 'what seemed like a huge bonus, I thought let's buy a serious piece of art.' They requested catalogues from **Sotheby's** and **Christie's**, spotted an artist whose name Hall recognised from all those years back in Paris, and 'we ended up buying this rather beautiful **Joan Mitchell** painting which we still have'. They continued to buy work sporadically, 'depending on how rich I was feeling' laughs Hall, but it was still with a view to hanging the works in their home.

But things started to change in 2000 when Hall turned 50. 'It was some sort of midlife crisis or whatever, and Christine said "What is the point of

adding to your bank account? You should be doing *something*", so I upped the game a little bit. But it was really after 9/11 that I thought this could all end tomorrow, so one should maybe be living for the present a bit more. I also had lunch with an art dealer friend in New York, who told me that some people view art as a legitimate asset – it's not like just spending money on a yacht, or buying an expensive car, and once I started, there was no going back.'

The Halls then expanded their interest in German artists, adding works by Baselitz, **A R Penck**, and **Jörg Immendorff** to their collection, and met gallerist Leo Koenig along the way. It turned out that Koenig was the godson of Baselitz, and he arranged for the couple to meet the artist at his studio and home in Derneberg, Germany. This led to them buying Baselitz's art collection (120 pieces of his and his contemporaries' work) and eventually led to them buying Schloss Derneberg from him a year later. Hall explains: 'I was exploring the possibility of building a space in Connecticut near

## FOCUS ON ART

With an estimated 5,000+ works in your collection, it can be tricky to know what to choose for your opening exhibition. Here's what the Halls went for at Schloss Derneberg (after having a bit of a rethink following the implementation of the German art export laws.)

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### Antony Gormley

Probably the most 'mainstream' of all the artists on show, the Gormley exhibition is incredibly impressive. *European Field* from 1993 is on show, featuring 35,000 tiny terracotta figures, as well as *Sleeping Field*, which was exhibited at the **White Cube** in Bermondsey in 2016 and features 700 figures. There are around 40 more figures on show, as well as a selection of works on paper and other sculptures.



Installation View **Hermann Nitsch**  
Photo: Wayne Chisnall

### Barry Le Va

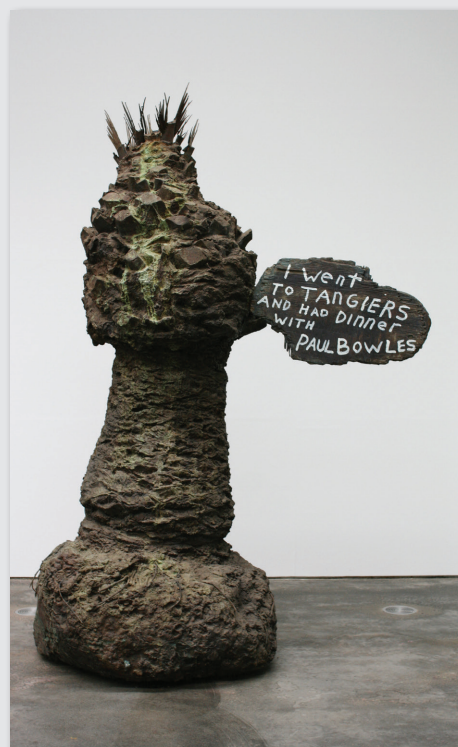
American sculptor and installation artist, Le Va started making "process art" (where the emphasis of the work is on the creative process rather than the finished result) in California in the 1960s. This exhibition features over fifty works including installations, sculptures, collages, and works on paper. Included is *Cleaved Wall: Short Wall Grouping*, where eight cleavers are individually driven into the wall with blunt force.

### Malcolm Morley

Being the first ever winner of the **Turner Prize** competition in 1984, Morley should be better known but he's not. The photorealist painter moved to the States in the 1960s, and has been working there ever since, which may explain why his name is not instantly recognisable in the UK. The exhibition features around 30 of his paintings, including those of ships. The white border around the painting is a witty touch by Morley; it is not actually a painting of a ship, but of a postcard with the picture of a ship on it. Hall commented: 'Compared with other collectors we tend to have a bit of a bias to established artists who are a little off the radar screens, like Malcolm Morley. He's been around forever but he's not the first artist that springs to mind, so doing a show like the one we have here is great. It's like a mini retrospective.'

### Hermann Nitsch

An Austrian avant-garde artist, born in 1938, who is a founder of *The Viennese Actionism* movement. His work combines painting and sculpture with



Installation View  
**Julian Schnabel**  
Photo: Wayne Chisnall

the Halls are fans, and Schnabel has produced portraits of both of them. As Andy Hall said: 'We show the work because we like it. Do I have a mission to reposition an artist? If that happens, I guess so much the better, so yeah maybe.' The exhibition showcases seven large bronze sculptures installed both indoors and on the grounds, together with a series of paintings on found tarpaulin.

**The Truth of Uncertainty: Moving Image Works from the Hall Collection** is a group show curated by **Chrissie Iles** from the **Whitney Museum**. The exhibition includes videos by artists such as **Omer Fast**, **Tony Oursler**, and **Hito Steyerl**, as well as light installations by **Anthony McCall**. A particularly relevant video in the current political climate is the 2005 work by **Javier Tellez**, titled

*One Flew Over the Void*, which features a human cannonball flying over the border between Mexico and the United States.

**Für Barbara** is a group show of female artists, dedicated to the late German gallerist Barbara Weiss. Her stepson – gallerist Leo Koenig – has curated the exhibition which features over a hundred works from the 1950s to the present day. Artists include **Lynda Benglis**, **Tracey Emin**, **Nan Goldin**, **Mona Hatoum**, **Carmen Herrera**, **Candida Höfer**, **Jenny Holzer**, **Barbara Kruger**, **Maria Lassnig**, **Lee Lozano**, **Aleksandra Mir**, **Catherine Opie**, and many many others.

performance and music. The exhibition includes around 50 works dating from the mid-1960s, including installations, paintings, sculpture, works on paper, photographs, film (beware if you're squeamish!) and sheet music. Included in the show is Nitsch's work *The Pharmacy*, which dates from 1965, and was clearly an inspiration for some of **Damien Hirst's** works.

### Julian Schnabel

The golden boy of the '80s and '90s, Schnabel dramatically fell from favour in the art world before resurrecting himself as an excellent filmmaker. But





Above: Installation View **Bethan Huws** Above Right: Installation View **Antony Gormley**  
Below: **Tony Oursler** *Shock-Rock* 2002 Photos: Wayne Chisnall







Above: David Shrigley *Hot Dog Repair* 2013

Below Left: Carmen Herrera Photo: Wayne Chishall

Below: Installation view Anselm Kiefer Hall Foundation at MASS MoCA Photo: Arthur Evans

where we lived at the time where we could start doing shows [...] but we ended up buying the castle because I rationalised it as given that we were thinking of building a space in Connecticut, why not have a space in Germany instead? It has a pretty amazing atmosphere and the castle didn't actually cost a lot of money, so it was an efficient way of acquiring a lot of real estate and what better place to show German art?

But little did Hall know at the time that the Germans were planning a change in the law regarding the export of art works. As of 2016, you now need to apply for a license if you wish to export a work valued over €300,000 and over 75 years old within the EU, or over €150,000 and over 50 years old outside the EU. Hence why Hall has decided to play it safe with the opening exhibitions, as despite receiving assurances from the local authorities, there's still no guarantee as to how things will pan out. 'I just don't want to be the guinea pig for this law. After talking to various lawyers who all gave a different answers, we



concluded that there wasn't enough clarity for us to bring all our Baselitz collection as it might not be able to leave. Now ordinarily I would might not care about that, but at this point in my life, I do care. [The law] has existed for a long time in Italy and has the same downside for Italy because it means that as things approach that 50-year limit, the Italian collectors move them out of the country and then sell them, which is why all the *Arte Povera* stuff is starting to come up at auction. Fairly stupid.'

Especially as Hall has no plans to sell his collection. 'Obviously art costs a lot of money, and you can't separate the price from the object so it's obviously something I have to think about. But if you wanted to put it in stock market terms, the stock market talks about value investing and momentum investing, and I'm definitely more of a value investor.' While he admits he has traded some works with gallerists like Koenig, he can't recall ever consigning something to auction. But

he does view the auction houses as a place to find a good deal: 'I think generally speaking, unless it's a completely new artist, I think the opportunities are in the auctions. The top "Triple A" pieces go for crazy prices but... I don't want to get specific, but we bought something the other day which was ridiculously undervalued relative to what the cheque would be to the gallery that represents the artist. We bought it for a quarter of what they would want for a similar piece.'

When they do make a purchase, it is always with consideration. Hall explains: 'Funnily enough, it never really interested me buying one of this and one of that and one of the other, to build up a collection of trophies, which I think is what most collectors do. I always had at the back of my mind being able to show groups of works which told a story, whether it was about the artist and their career or if it was a theme of works which would fit into some sort of category of ideas. It was very hubristic.'

As for art fairs, they now avoid them like the plague. Hall recalls: 'When we first started going to fairs, we would go to booths of these famous dealers and ask how much a piece cost, and they would say it's sold. Well okay, maybe you could still tell me, but no, it's sold, get lost. But now you have people who know who we are and you can't keep them off you. They're calling "Andy" and I'm thinking who is this person? You walk past a booth and you can see that there is nothing there that is remotely of interest but then you get one of these gallerists pouncing on you and they want to show you every work and explain it all. So we just don't really go to art fairs now!'

And as for his day job, despite passing retirement age, Hall is still hard at it. Asked if he had any retirement plans, he simply says 'We'll see how the wind blows'. He sighs. 'It allows me to buy art so we shall see.'

hallartfoundation.org





## Interview with

# ANTONY GORMLEY

**STATE caught up with Antony Gormley to learn more about his practice and how he worked with the Halls to create his immense exhibition at Schloss Derneburg. Gormley has known Andy and Christine Hall for over 15 years, and they first started discussing the exhibition back in October 2016.**

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### What was your vision for the installation?

To give as good a sense of my practice as the spaces allowed, associating works the Halls already owned with older and newer pieces, and allowing the different spaces and atmospheres of the castle to resonate with the works chosen.

### How does that installation at Schloss Derneburg differ from an exhibition in a typical museum or gallery space?

There are a great variety of rooms and spaces and the varied and colourful history of the castle, starting as a monastic foundation and becoming both an aristocratic home and an artist's studio, allows for a lively dialogue and changes of scale – cloister to cow barns, chapel to grand reception room, library to kitchen, cell to cellar, all distinct and all offering a different atmosphere.

### What was the process for the installation of *European Field*?

All of the Field works have been installed with a group of volunteers. At Derneburg I worked with a group of great students from the nearby Braunschweig University of Art. It took a week of energetic work.

### Now that you work with a larger team, what skills have you learned during your career that have helped you manage your team and guide the direction they take?

I used to think that I made my work, now I think it's the other way around. The work informs what my assistants and I need to do. We have to listen to what it [the work] is telling us. Every work suggests a path to follow in order to clarify, extend, and make more apparent aspects of the work that are still latent.

### What is the process for making a cast of your body? I heard you sometimes meditate during the process?

I adopt the position which I have selected for a sculpture and am wrapped in scrim, which is an open-weave jute cloth, and plaster. Because the plaster dries quickly, within ten minutes, the work is divided into different sections. Usually I stand on a piece of scrim which wraps around my feet. Then my torso is covered. There are two sections for my legs, front and back. Finally my assistant wraps my head. The whole process takes about an hour, perhaps an hour and a half. Then I am cut out of my mould and it is reassembled. It would have been impossible for me to make my work without having learnt Vipassana meditation. This allows one to use the body as a tool for stealing the mind.



Antony Gormley's Installations at Schloss Derneburg  
*Being*, July 2017 - December 2018  
Photo: Wayne Chisnall

The work all comes out of this technique. I work on the body from the other side of appearance. My reason is the advantage of working with feeling rather than trying to describe accurately the effects of light hitting the skin of another body.

### Do you still use your body as a cast for your sculptures or do you see yourself moving towards computer modelling?

If Leonardo had been alive today, he would be using *Rhino* software. We have to use all the tools available. I have switched from making the plaster moulds that characterised all of the work for the first 30 years to now making digital scans. It has liberated the work to a certain degree. Digital technology is only a tool and allows us to model virtually but the work depends on a continual testing of fall balance and structure in making.

### What is your favourite part of the installation at Schloss Derneburg?

*European Field*.

### And what is your favourite piece at Schloss Derneburg that isn't from your exhibition?

Anthony McCall, *Between You and I*, 2006.

