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The sphere that dominates the Pharos wing's tapas bar is actually the shell of an installation by light artist James Turrell.

The Pharos wing at Australia's Mona museum is a bewildering series of luminous installations designed to keep visitors in the dark.

Tasmania's privately owned [Mona](#) museum (aka the Museum of Old and New Art) is designed to disconcert visitors – and its new AU\$32-million addition is no exception.

Simply reaching the wing – named Pharos, for the ancient Egyptian lighthouse – is an expedition akin to that of Theseus setting out to slay the Minotaur. There is no signage or clear path from the main entrance, where visitors descend a spiral staircase that winds deep into the museum's belly. At the back of one of the lower-level exhibit halls, a glass panel conceals a light tunnel, dubbed *Beside Myself*, created by American light artist James Turrell. At the culmination of this tunnel is Faro, the new wing's tapas bar. But don't expect the confusion to subside there.



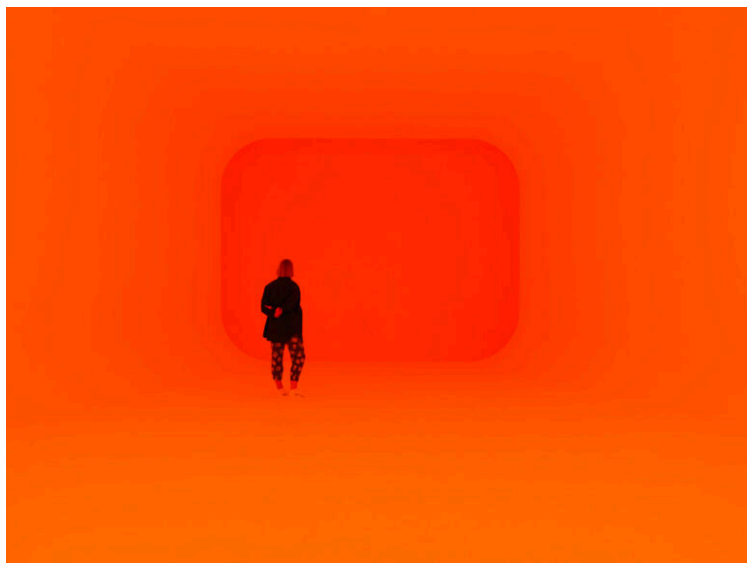
Obscuring the restaurant's floor-to-ceiling windows is a white, six-metre-wide sphere. Easily mistaken for a simple sculpture, the orb harbours a door that leads to an immersive kaleidoscopic experience courtesy of Turrell.

"You can have lunch there a million times and never understand what's going on inside the sphere," says curator Jarrod Rawlins, explaining that the goal of the museum's founder, David Walsh, "is to make sure you don't know what's happening or where you are." Walsh worked closely with Melbourne architect Nonda Katsalidis on the project.

"A lot of museums are big spaces where you move from one white room to the other," says Katsalidis. "With Mona, you go through little apertures and break out into huge spaces, like popping out of a rabbit hole. It's a journey of compression and expansion."



James Turrell's *Beside Myself* is a tunnel of light that connects Mona's two wings.



Event Horizon, in which patrons must don white socks, is a seemingly endless field of undulating colour.

Unlike the original structure, which is largely underground, Pharos allows Mona to show a little leg as it cantilevers out over the River Derwent. Like rest of the museum, however, each space is custom designed for specific artists. For example, Faro's 14-metre inverted parabola was inspired by Turrell's affinity for 18th-century French architect Étienne-Louis Boullée. In a steampunk atrium, meanwhile, the concrete walls are reflected in the surface of Richard Wilson's *20:50*, a work that fills the room to waist level with oil. Another hallway leads to Turrell's *Event Horizon*, a cube-

shaped room washed in colour-shifting ultraviolet light.



Unseen Seen is an intimate experience of light and sound hidden inside a giant orb.

The whole experience ends abruptly in a dead-end passageway referred to for now as the “tunnel to nowhere.” Come 2019, when Alfredo Jaar’s *The Divine Comedy* (three chambers based on Dante’s poem) is unveiled, it will be a tunnel to hell. Ai Weiwei’s *White House* is also set to be installed in this next extension. Although these plans are clearly laid-out, the experience is guaranteed to be just as disorienting. “People respond to the building as much as to what it contains,” says Katsalidis. “You never know what’s going to happen next.”

This story was taken from the November/December 2018 issue of Azure. Buy a copy of the issue [here](#), or subscribe [here](#).

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WORDS Sophie Sobol

PHOTOS Cyrille Weiner

POSTED Apr 10, 2024

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peddling music and poetry, the [MuMo x Centre Pompidou Truck Museum](#) is bringing exhibitions to far-reaching villages in rural France and far beyond, making contemporary art more accessible to those in remote communities.



Founded by French author [Ingrid Brochard](#), the mobile museum organization [MuMo](#) began its journey in 2011. The first iteration of the traveling exhibition was spearheaded by architect Adam Kalkin — and built from a humble shipping container. In 2017, French industrial designer Matali Crasset reimaged the experience, showcasing collections from CNAP (The National Centre of Plastic Arts) and FRAC (Regional Contemporary Art Fund).

In 2022, the current art-mobile was constructed in collaboration with Art Explora, with collections sourced from the Centre Pompidou in Paris. Last year, the program included two 2023 exhibitions: “Musique! Musique!” featuring the likes of Sonia Delaunay and Gino Severini, and “La Caravane du bizarre,” which showcased artists such as Bruce Nauman and Sandy Skoglund. This year, the ongoing 2024 exhibition “Êtres Vivants” — which translates to “Living Beings” — runs until

May 18, unveiling works from Leiko Ikemura, Ana Mendieta and more.



The Truck Museum — or Musée Mobile — engages the senses with an inviting colour block facade and vibrant interiors. Designed by Herault Arnod Architectes in collaboration with Dutch artist Krijn de Koning, the 43-square-metre truck was inspired by the ritual of fairground architecture, where the setup process is a spectacle in itself. Upon arriving at its destination, the truck's side drawers come loose and horizontal panels form a sort of front porch. After the stairs are added and the illuminated sign is mounted to the mast, the green and purple cargo truck blooms into a series of open and welcoming rooms within minutes.



Easily adaptable to different exhibitions, the truck features three spaces; the loggia, the exhibition room, and the alcove. The 15-square-metre loggia is a sheltered area for visitors to check their coats, sit and discuss the collection, or wait for entry. It can also be used as an outdoor stage for performances, from music to theatre, or adapted into an open-air cinema with a rear projector. Next, the 35-square-metre exhibition room is the heart of the installation. With minimal visual disruptions from the lighting and ventilation, all excess is tucked away and a smooth ceiling optimizes this sense of white cube openness. Here, you can find artworks mounted to the walls or presented on pedestals. Finally, the lime-green alcove is a raised platform that serves as a screening room or houses large-scale sculptures or other standalone works.



Colour is a major element of the design. Artist Krijn de Koning conceptualized the vivid green and red interiors as spaces of fluidity and movement. By contrast, the white of the exhibition room suggests calm contemplation, a chance to pause and reflect on the artworks. The checkerboard of coloured blocks in the alcove can be rearranged, curating new configurations and new atmospheres. Imagined as a multifunctional tool, the design of the Truck Museum evokes playful exploration.



Over the years, iterations of the museum have travelled across much of Europe and Africa. Last year alone, the Truck Museum has reached 150,000 visitors across France. Stationed in village squares, community centres, parks, school parking lots, retirement homes and more, the mobile museum has brought art into communities across two continents. Since the museum's inception in 2011, 50 per cent of children who visited the truck had never been to a museum before. Thanks to the MuMo x Centre Pompidou Truck Museum, it's a statistic that's getting left behind in the rearview mirror.

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