

Inside out

Architect Jamie Fobert has put the inner workings of his tent on show

LONDON. After three years working with British architect David Adjaye, this year Frieze has chosen another architect to design its tent. Following a six-firm shootout that started more than a year ago, fair directors Amanda Sharp and Matthew Slotover chose



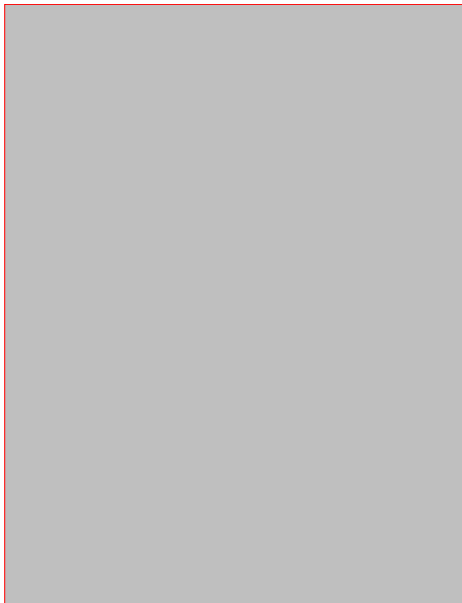
Jamie Fobert

Canadian-born, London-based architect Jamie Fobert. Rather than rethinking the entire space, Fobert has kept many of Adjaye's elements, like the muslin that hangs above the booths. But Fobert's fundamental thinking about the tent is opposite to

Adjaye's. "David's approach was to disguise the fact that the fair was being held in a tent, by making it slick and beautiful, like a real building," says fair co-founder Matthew Slotover.

The first innovation this year is the upwards sloping entrance ramp that winds through the branches of the surrounding trees. Fobert explains: "I wanted to emphasise the relationship to the park and also the tent's temporary nature." As for the choice to make the ramp out of rough plywood, "unaesthetic, like a building site," he says it was driven by the idea of avoiding slickness or creating anything that looked too much like an art installation.

The anti-slickness continues as you walk into the tent at a maximum height of 3.5 metres above ground level, a vantage point from which one can absorb the tent's engineering in unprecedented detail. Spreading before you



is a vast maze of heating ducts, wires, trusses, and the topside of the muslin "ceiling" previously only seen from below. The effect is somewhat like the Centre Pompidou in Paris, revealing all the things that a building normally hides.

The tent's footprint this year has shifted to include three more trees, two of them in the main café, and five others that have been planted inside the tent for the fair's duration, each as the centrepiece of a large open space. (Ever-enterprising, Frieze dealers are rumoured to be competing over who can be the first to sell one of the trees.)

Not only do those spaces function like public squares, introducing light and air to the aisled maze of booths, they also create the opportunity for longer sightlines across the floor, which will privilege larger works by allowing them to be seen in less claustrophobic conditions.

Marc Spiegler