

Five to watch in 2018

Laura Mark picks five blossoming talents who look likely to break through to greater things in the coming year

The rising stars IF_DO



It has been an epic year for emerging London firm IF_DO. The practice hit the headlines after winning the sought-after competition to design a pavilion in the grounds of Dulwich Picture Gallery for the 2017 London Festival of Architecture. The pavilion, with its timber frame and floating mirrors, became an instant Instagram hit and went on to pick up a host of awards.

The practice was only founded three years ago by Sarah Castle, Al Scott, and Thomas Bryan. But the past 12 months have seen the south London-based firm grow threefold to nine, having picked up commissions following the success of the breakthrough pavilion.

These include a series of studios and workshops for a furniture designer in Ireland, a sixth form centre for an independent girls' school in Surrey, a number of private houses and an exhibition of the drawings of Gustav Klimt and Egon Schiele at the Royal Academy of Arts. There are also rumours they are quietly working on a high-profile cultural project in central London.



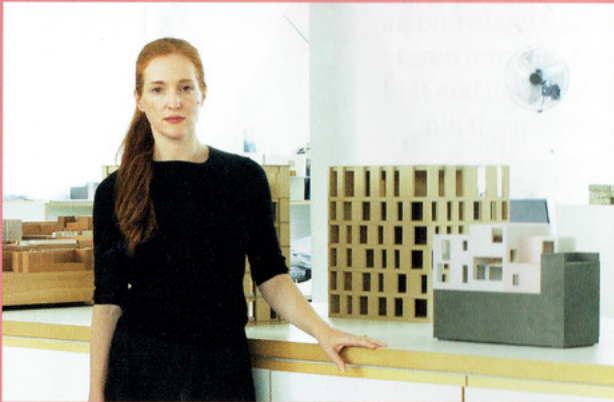
After Image, IF_DO's pavilion at Dulwich Picture Gallery

The fresh start Mary Duggan Architects

After co-founding Duggan Morris, one of the star practices of the past decade, with partner Joe Morris, it shocked many in the industry when the firm announced an 'amicable demerger' earlier this year. While Morris kept the firm's name, carrying on with the commercial work they had built up, Duggan set out on her own. Taking nine staff with her from Duggan Morris, she relaunched her new firm Mary Duggan Architects, with a focus on crafted, smaller-scale, thoughtful architecture.

Within just a few months of opening the new practice, she launched artists' residencies within the studio. Beginning with ceramicist Cara Guthrie, the programme produced collaborative work both based on, and for, the architectural projects of Mary Duggan Architects. There are plans afoot for more residencies next year – a direction which sets the practice apart.

With many schemes currently in planning, there is also a host of high-profile projects and competition wins set to come to fruition next year, from a pink concrete performing arts block at Alfriston School, where Duggan Morris had earlier completed a swimming pool, to a number of private homes. Next year will also see the practice's first project – the events space at the Science Museum – go on site and later complete.



KATY HYAMS



MARY DUGGAN ARCHITECTS

Mary Duggan and Science Museum circulation model

A developer focused on design quality Arrant Land



After completing its first two projects earlier this year, Arrant Land is quickly emerging as the developer that smaller-sized practices aiming to do well-designed, crafted houses want to work for.

Hailing from an earlier career in the art world, followed by some self-building, co-founder Duncan Blackmore is one to watch. He believes that finding the best solutions for sites involves engaging good architects.

That is what the developer has done at both of its completed sites so far. At the Red House in south London, 31/44 Architects created a contemporary take on a red-brick Victorian House, while for Haddo Yard in Whitstable Arrant Land chose Stephen Lawrence Prize-winner Denizen Works for the speculative scheme.

Haddo Yard is the first of more schemes to come in Whitstable – the town Blackmore moved to a decade ago. Its aim was to take the subtle features and characteristics of the town and create contemporary domestic architecture which contributes to its seaside context.

Arrant Land says the right things – looking for light, well-proportioned spaces and honest materials, often making choices that are more involved or expensive than a typical development might go for. Be warned though – they make their architects work hard. Judging by the quality of its first two projects, Arrant Land looks set to shake up small-scale residential development.



THE MODERN HOUSE

Red House, by 31/44 Architects

The mould-breakers Space Popular



Space Popular is one of the most colourful practices in architecture – breaking from the norm of wearing black, co-founders Lara Lesmes and Fredrik Hellberg can often be seen in pink trousers or multi-coloured shirts. And their work is equally colourful.

They began teaching at the Architectural Association two years ago and, although eyes are currently on the school for other reasons, the work of Space Popular's Tools for Architecture unit should not be missed.

Space Popular's stand-out project of 2017 saw them complete an installation exploring future uses of glass in architecture at Sto Werkstatt in London which mixed ideas drawn from German Expressionism with intricate graphics, a kaleidoscope of colours, and VR technology.

Although the practice has built in Asia, they have little finished work to show here in the UK. But, as their work gains traction and a more colourful movement begins to take hold in architecture with flamboyant projects by the likes of Sam Jacob Studio, Bompas & Parr, and Adam Nathaniel Furman also gaining acclaim, it looks like 2018 will be a good year for the up-and-coming firm.



Space Popular's Glass Chain installation for Sto Werkstatt

Emerging Scottish Braveheart Ann Nisbet

In some ways it is unfair to pick out just one star from the thriving, young architectural scene in Scotland – an exciting new wave of architects which includes McGinlay Bell, Inch Architecture, Dress for the Weather, Baxendale, and BARD. But Ann Nisbet, once of Dualchas Building Design and a principal of Edo Architecture before setting up Glasgow-based Ann Nisbet Studio in 2013, has already produced some top-quality work in the past couple of years.

The studio hit the headlines following the completion of its widely praised Newhouse of Auchengree in North Ayrshire. The zinc-clad farmhouse went on to win an RIBA National Award; a RIAS Architecture Award; and a Scottish Design Award for the Best Residential Building. It also appeared on Channel 4 last month after being shortlisted for RIBA House of the Year and the Doolan Award.

Inspired by Glenn Murcutt, Rick Joy and Olson Kundig, Nisbet has a number of rural projects on her books from single dwellings to small housing developments and even proposals for a micro-home on a Scottish island. Her future looks rosy.



Newhouse of Auchengree

Laura Mark is architecture projects manager at the Royal Academy and a former AJ architecture editor