

# Herzog and de Meuron in Water Mill, New York

---

2012-12-04



[Herzog & de Meuron](#) designed the new Parrish Art Museum, in Water Mill, New York. Photo: © Matthu Placek  
The Parrish Art Museum recently opened on a rural site in Water Mill, New York, a community in the East End area of Long Island. The 34,400-square-foot (3,200-square-meter) barn-like building was designed by Swiss firm [Herzog & de Meuron](#), and is said to take some of its design inspiration from local vernacular architecture.

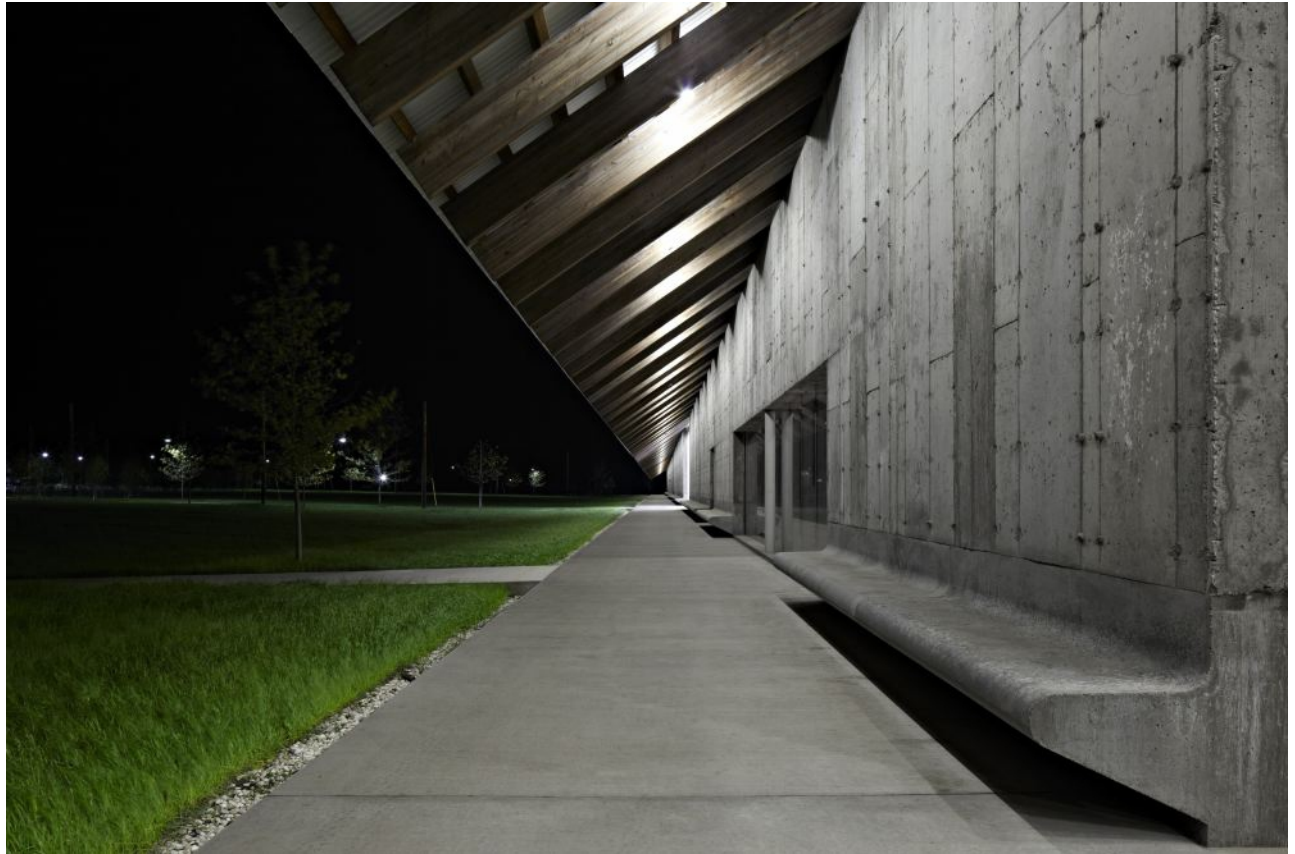
And indeed, its form is simple and clean, its profile a pair of adjoined gables running along the building's 615-foot (187-meter) length. Narrowly spaced wood rafters support the roof, which rests on cast-in-place exterior concrete walls in most places, and on steel columns and beams everywhere else.



*A skylit gallery inside the Parrish Art Museum. Photo: © Matthu Placek*

Inside, regular skylight placement near the roof peak admit diffuse daylight between the rafters. Outside, the roof's deep eaves shelter a patio area intended for use by museum patrons. Seating under the eaves takes the form of a concrete bench that is integral with the building's walls.

At one end of the building, the roof extends beyond the weather envelope, covering a larger outdoor event space.



*Looking along the side wall of the museum, with built-in concrete benches. Photo: © Matthu Placek*

With its regular structural system, honest use of materials, and simple vernacular forms, the quietly expressive Parrish Art Museum seems more likely to be the work of Australian architect [Glenn Murcutt](#) than of the radical Swiss duo who brought us the 2008 [Beijing National Stadium](#) (with Chinese artist Ai Weiwei), and a host of other [avant-garde buildings](#).



*Looking into the entry of the Parrish Art Museum. Photo: © Matthu Placek*

The firm said this about the design of the museum:



*"The starting point for the new Parrish Art Museum is the artist's studio in the East End of Long Island. We set the basic parameters for a single gallery space by distilling the studio's proportions and adopting its simple house section with north-facing skylights. Two of these model galleries form wings around a central circulation spine that is then bracketed by two porches to form the basis of a straightforward building extrusion.*



*The metal-roofed museum is 615 feet (187 meters) long. Photo: © Matthu Placek*

*"The floor plan of this extrusion is a direct translation of the ideal functional layout. A cluster of ten galleries defines the heart of the museum. The size and proportion of these galleries can be easily adapted by re-arranging partition walls within the given structural grid. To the east of the gallery core are located the back of house functions of administration, storage, workshops and loading dock. To the west of the galleries are housed the public program areas of the lobby, shop, and café with a flexible multi-purpose and educational space at the far western end.*



*Art in one of the well-proportioned gallery spaces. Photo: Christopher French*

*"An ordered sequence of post, beam and truss defines the unifying backbone of the building. Its materialisation is a direct expression of readily accessible building materials and local construction methods. The exterior walls of in situ concrete act as long bookends to the overall building form, while the grand scale of these elemental walls is tempered with a continuous bench formed at its base for sitting and viewing the surrounding landscape. Large overhangs running the full length of the building provide shelter for outdoor porches and terraces.*



*Looking across an office space of the museum. Photo: © Matthu Placek*

*"The placement of the building is a direct result of the skylights facing towards the north. This east-west orientation, and its incidental diagonal relationship within the site, generates dramatically changing perspective views of the building and further emphasises the building's extreme yet simple proportions. It lays in an extensive meadow of indigenous grasses that refers to the natural landscape of Long Island."*

The museum opened to the public on November 10, 2012.



*A small side patio. Photo: © Matthu Placek*

#### **Project Team**

- **Design Partners:** Herzog & de Meuron
  - Jacques Herzog, Pierre de Meuron, Ascan Mergenthaler (Partner in Charge)
- **Executive Architect:** Douglas Moyer Architect PC, Sag Harbor, NY, USA
- **Landscape Architect:** Reed Hilderbrand Landscape Architecture, Watertown, MA, USA

#### **Building Facts**

- **Address:** 279 Montauk Highway, Water Mill, NY
- **Ground-breaking:** July 19, 2010



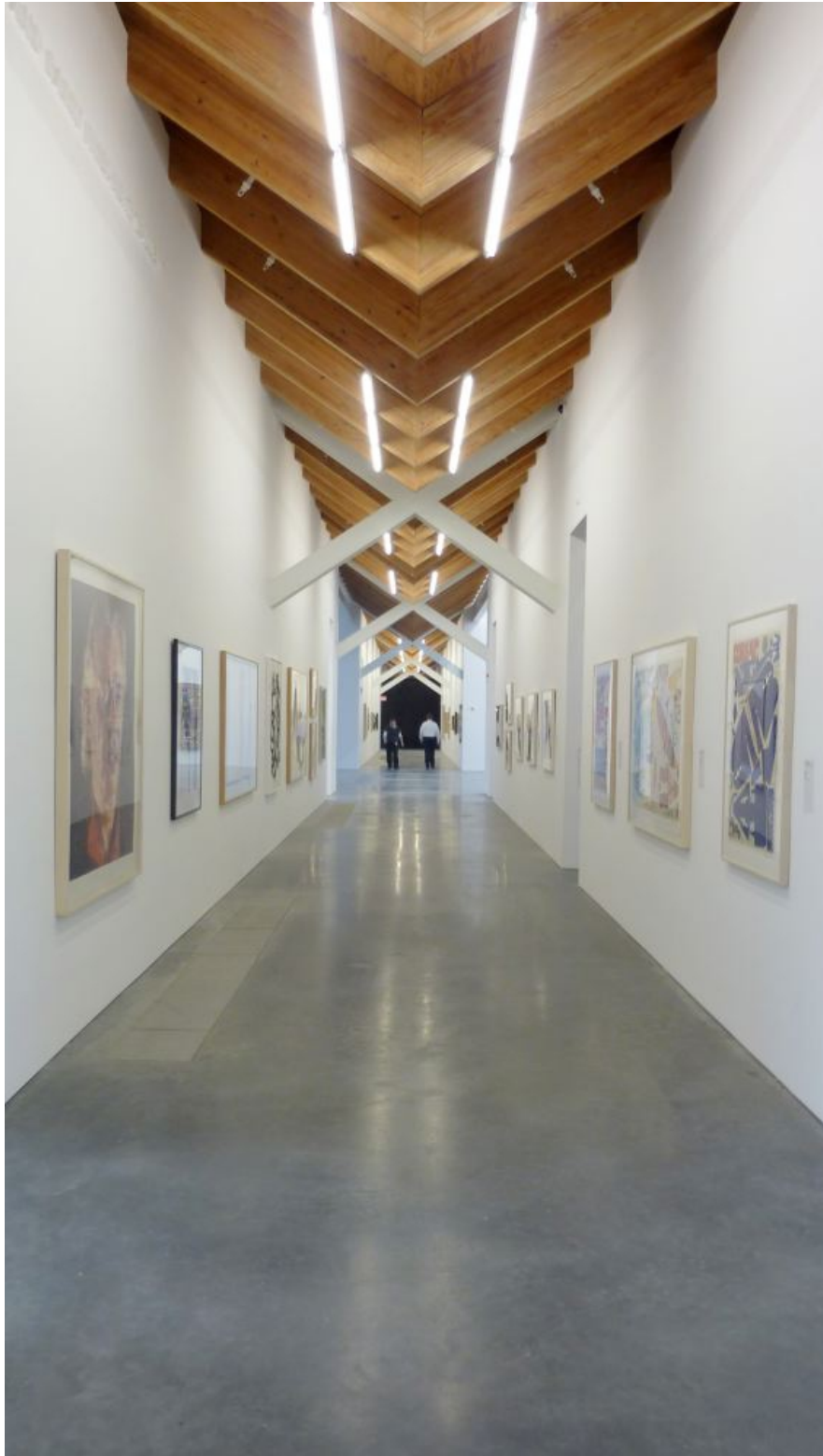
- **Opening:** November 10, 2012
- **Building Footprint:** 34,400 square feet (3,200 square meters), nearly double the size of the building on Jobs Lane
- **Site Area:** 601,000 square feet (56,000 square meters)
- **Length:** 615 feet (187 meters)
- **Width:** 95 feet (30 meters)
- **Height:** 32 feet (10 meters)
- **Number of Levels:** One (Service basement and crawl space below)

#### Program

- **Galleries:** 12,200 square feet (1,130 square meters)
- **Collection Galleries:** 7,600 square feet (706 square meters)
- **Exhibition Galleries:** 4,600 square feet (430 square meters)
- **The Lichtenstein Theater:** 2,400 square feet (220 square meters), seating capacity for 200
- **Rachel and Jean-Pierre Lehmann Covered Terraces:** 13,500 square feet (1,250 square meters), along each side of the building
- **Mildred C. Brinn Terrace:** 6,000 square feet (560 square meters) covered terrace for special events, performances, outdoor workshops for adults and children



*The side patio is part of the linear terrace. Photo: © Matthu Placek*



*The "spine gallery" of the Parrish museum, located under the seam between the two gables. Photo: Christopher French*



*Steel braces punctuate the "spine gallery". Photo: Christopher French*