

## Pace Gallery, Hanover Square, London

### PROJECT TEAM

Architect: **Jamie Fobert Architects**

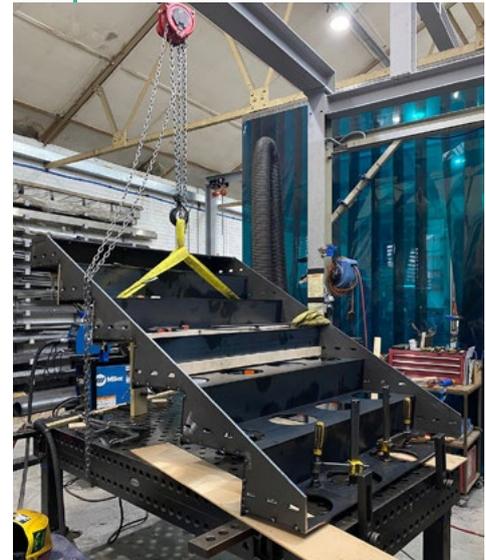
Structural engineer: **Price & Myers**

Main contractor: **QOB Interiors**

Client: **Pace Gallery**



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The project involved creating a new London home for Pace by reconfiguring an existing gallery space on Hanover Square. Whilst the existing infrastructure was retained, the internal volumes saw a complete transformation. Two elegant galleries were created on the first floor and the basement level was opened up to form an additional 100m<sup>2</sup> of public gallery.

A key feature of the brief was to create the impression of a fully integrated space, which was expertly achieved by the creation of a feature staircase. Exquisitely rendered in black steel, it not only connects the basement and entry level, but its form allows for sunlight to pour into the lower ground offices making them feel more open and connected to the main space. The stair is fabricated from waxed raw mild steel, showing the colours of all the heat marks and manufacturing processes that have gone into the material.

The stair is configured with three flights between two intermediate landings. The bottom landing is supported on the basement slab, whilst the middle landing is both hung from the ground floor and supported on a slender wall panel. Flights were designed as prefabricated treads, risers and stringers that could be assembled along with the balustrade panels on site.

The stair balustrade was designed as a sandwich with three layers of 6mm steel plate, with the middle panel offset to create a continuous rebate detail across the top of the panels. The balustrade panels were integral to stiffening the stair to mitigate vibration and conceal fixings between elements. Steel hollow sections were integrated into the shallow middle landing to resist the high torsional stresses generated at the intersection of the upper and lower flights.

The architectural intention was to express a perfect mill finish across the entire steel stair, presenting an unusual challenge from a fabrication perspective. This meant adapting and implementing new processes in the workshop and on site to ensure each panel could be handled and welded with the utmost care.

Once on site, non-marking plate clamps were used on an overhead gantry to lift each panel carefully into position for site welding. During installation, the stair remained largely covered due to potential damage on a busy site with numerous other trades. Just before the gallery opened the stair could be uncovered; it was then finally sealed and polished with a clear matte wax to enhance the colours and tones of the steel.

### Judges' comment

The gallery's feature staircase connects the basement and entry level, blending seamlessly into and contributing to the gallery spaces. The attention to detail in both design and manufacture have resulted in an exemplary and beautiful structure which embraces the steel manufacturing process from rolling mill to final welding.