

# THE ART OF LIVING

MARIANKA SWAIN SHARES HER CAPITAL CULTURAL HIGHLIGHTS

## PICK OF THE MONTH

BY GEORGE

Artist Pablo Bronstein has produced 50 drawings of contemporary London buildings for a major new RIBA exhibition exploring Britain's abiding love of Georgian architecture.

His work is supported by archive material from the RIBA Drawings Collection, which Pablo visited several times. However, curator Shumi Bose notes that he was keen to avoid "a reductive statement like 'All original Georgian building is good and any revision is bad'".

"His focus is more that everyone loves this style, for 300 years. So he was interested in what we respond to, what it says about us, and why it's had certain peaks of popularity."

The original Georgian period started off "almost trying to tame the ornate classical style," says Shumi. "It's quite a British response – finding something more restrained and cleaner, very pleasing to the eye."

"There are classical elements we value, like symmetry and harmony, but the expanses of brick and stone in Georgian architecture make it more suited to Britain. It became associated, on a national level, with good taste."

"It also reflected an empire growing in confidence, expanding through technology and industry. What Pablo noticed is that Neo-Georgian returns in moments when we're seeking authority or identity – like in the 1930s, when the empire is in decline."

"Then in the Seventies, after a period of prefab mass production, we're returning to something nostalgic – it's the era of heritage conservation groups and a desire to own your own home. But with new materials, the Georgian aesthetic becomes easily accessible to the mass homebuilder or individual buyer."

"Pablo calls this Pseudo-Georgian, rather than Neo-, as it's a whole different contemporary version. For example, you'll find a street in Camberwell with a new terrace opposite Georgian tenement buildings reclaimed by artists. They look identical, but the former has modern elements like double glazing."

Georgian architecture certainly has an aspirational element, from the original country houses striving for more monumentality to the Government building town halls or police stations in that idiom, through to supermarkets and new developments.

But Shumi says Pablo is also keen to stress that it's democratic. "Whether it's a Barratt Home with a fibre-glass portico and window detailing, a Waitrose or a country seat, we all embrace the aesthetic."

"The sheer delight of this exhibition is an artist's perspective pointing out something about the architecture we all walk past or live in. His drawings make me see London in a new way – it awakens you to asking 'Is that real? What is it saying?'."

"There's also something in the current climate that adds edge to questions about national identity, which we didn't intend as such. But it shows how entwined architecture is with our culture, and how important it is to open up these ideas to everyone."

**PABLO BRONSTEIN**  
UNTIL FEBRUARY 11, 2018

*The Architecture Gallery, RIBA,*  
Marylebone W1B  
Free entry  
[www.architecture.com](http://www.architecture.com)



Preliminary design for the City Police Station, Wood Street, City of London: elevation by McMorrin & Whitby, 1966



Installation view of 'Pablo Bronstein: Conservatism, or The Long Reign of Pseudo-Georgian Architecture' at The Architecture Gallery, RIBA

## DON'T MISS

GOOD IMPRESSIONION

During the Franco-Prussian war, many French artists sought refuge in Britain. Now, Tate Britain brings together over 100 works from major names like Monet, Tissot and Pissarro for *Impressionists in London*, examining the networks they built in the city, including key local patrons, and the impact our capital had on their work.

It's a wonderful chance to explore London viewed through the eyes of leading French Impressionists, from Pissarro enjoying Kew Green and Charing Cross Bridge to Sisley and Tissot visiting regattas and Hampton Court. Finishing, of course, with Monet's majestic series capturing the Houses of Parliament, transformed by the spellbinding effect of light.

**IMPRESSIONISTS IN LONDON**  
UNTIL APRIL 22, 2018

*Tate Britain, Millbank SW1P*  
Adults £17.70, under-12s free  
[www.tate.org.uk](http://www.tate.org.uk)

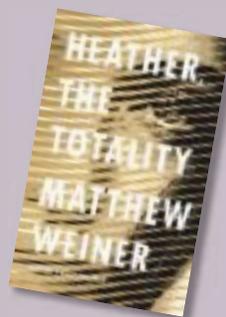


'Charing Cross Bridge', Camille Pissarro, 1890



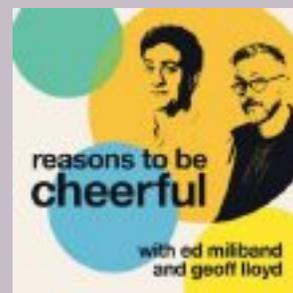
'Houses of Parliament, Sunlight Effect', Claude Monet, 1903

## COMMUTER CORNER



The explosive debut novel from Matthew Weiner, creator of landmark TV series *Mad Men*, examines family, power and privilege. *Heather, The Totality* (hardback £14.99, Kindle £5.03) centres on the daughter of a wealthy Manhattan couple, whose seemingly perfect life begins to fracture when she becomes the target of a dark obsession.

Or try the new "podcast about ideas" from MP-turned-surprising national treasure



Ed Miliband, who joins forces with Geoff Lloyd for *Reasons To Be Cheerful*. In between affable chat, the duo offer practical solutions to major conundrums, from the gender pay gap to universal basic income, affordable housing and curbing tech giants.

*How are you living up your commute?*  
Let us know via Twitter @Move\_To