

**Art World**

## As Angry Neighbors Sue Tate Modern Over Peeping Visitors, an Artist Installs Binoculars on Its Terrace to Better View the ‘Art’

Max Siedentopf says his work is an homage to museumgoers’ favorite contemporary artwork: the view into the neighboring apartment complex.

Naomi Rea, November 14, 2018



Max Siedentopf, *Please respect our neighbours' privacy* (2018). Courtesy the artist.

An artist has installed a dozen binoculars on Tate Modern’s viewing terrace, which could antagonize some already upset neighbors. Max Siedentopf says his unofficial work is a response to the ongoing legal dispute between the Tate and residents of the luxury apartment complex that the terrace overlooks.

The young artist made the work as a celebration of what he sees as Tate’s most famous contemporary work: The glimpse into the private lives of the occupants of the neighboring complex called Neo Bankside, designed by the architect Richard Rogers.

This “view” from the Herzog & de Meuron-designed tower has been a source of contention since the ten-story-high building opened in 2016. Five residents irked by the “relentless” invasion of privacy are [suing the museum](#), demanding that it blocks off the parts of the popular viewing

platform that allow visitors panoramic views of south London, including a peek into their apartments.

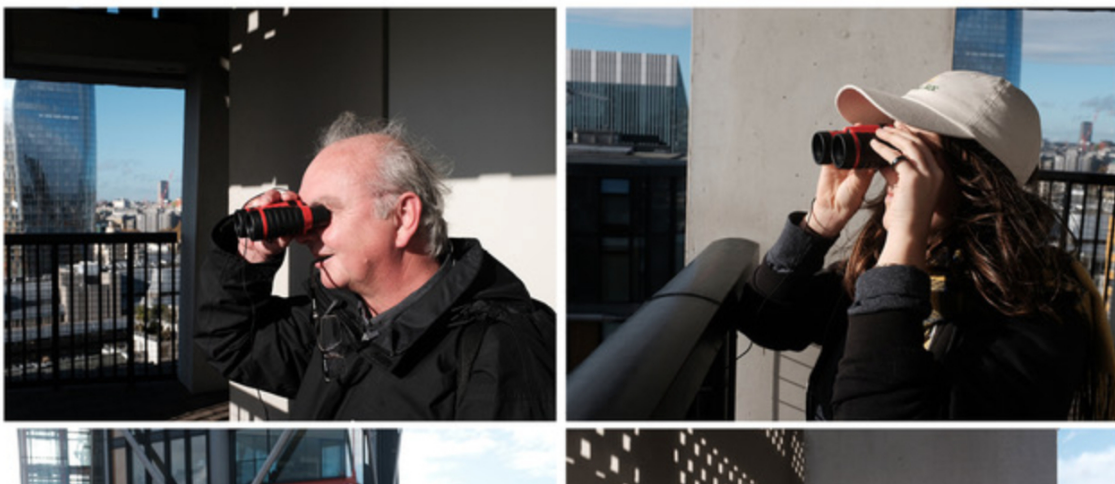


Max Siedentopf, *Please respect our neighbours' privacy* (2018). Courtesy the artist.

Shortly after the terrace was inaugurated, the museum installed signs that politely ask visitors to “Please respect our neighbours’ privacy,” which Siedentopf appropriated as the wall text for his work. He tells arnet News that he installed the binoculars to help the thousands of museum visitors enjoy the view.

Asked if he felt his work was a violation of the neighbors’ privacy, Siedentopf said: “Maybe. I think visitors are able to look inside either way, the binoculars just help visitors to enjoy Tate Modern’s most popular sight a little bit more and up close.”

In an [email](#) to *Fast Company*, the artist elaborated his concept further: “It turns out that one of the most popular sights around the museum is not an exhibited artwork but rather, the neighbouring apartments which can be [seen](#) from Tate’s viewing platform. Thousands of visitors gather in awe to take a peek inside the apartments. No other artwork on display attracts as much fascination as these open plan apartments.”







Max Siedentopf, *Please respect our neighbours' privacy* (2018). Courtesy the artist.

As to his views on the ongoing lawsuit, Siedentopf says he loves the irony. “You have massive windows to show your fancy apartment but then no one is allowed to look inside,” he says. “Nick Serota, former director of the Tate, had a brilliant idea how to solve this debacle: Just buy some curtains.”

Asked whether the installation was authorized by the gallery, Siedentopf said it was more of a “don’t ask for permission, ask for forgiveness” kind of situation. artnet News reached out to Tate Modern for comment on Siedentopf’s installation but did not immediately hear back.



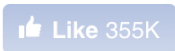
Max Siedentopf, *Please respect our neighbours' privacy* (2018). Courtesy the artist.

Although tinged with humor, Siedentopf’s intervention at Tate participates in a long tradition of voyeurism in art, explored by artists from Brassaï, who captured images of lovers’ intimate moments in public places in 1930s Paris, to Sophie Calle, whose *Suite Vénitienne* (1979) saw her stalk a man from the streets of Paris all the way to Venice. Tate Modern even staged an exhibition around the theme back in 2010.

Siedentopf, who was born in 1991, is a multidisciplinary visual artist who works with photography, film design, and sculpture. He is currently based out of London but he grew up in Namibia, and is represented by Galerie Kernweine in Stuttgart. His works include Instructions for World Peace, a series of rife taking on the prosody tone of online DIY tutorials to deliver self-improvement tips

series of gifs taking on the preachy tone of online DIY tutorials to deliver self-improvement tips, overlaid onto funny snippets of his dad acting out the advice.

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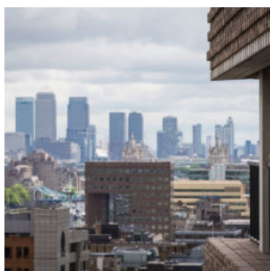
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