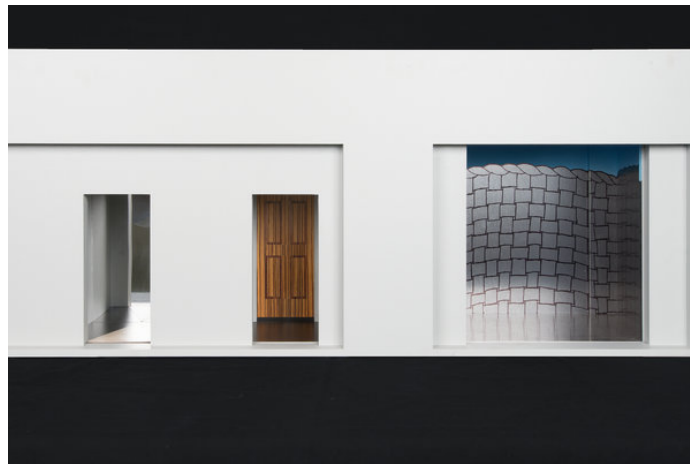


## GAGOSIAN GALLERY

### The New York Times

#### The Museum Elevator as Immersive Art

Carol Vogel



*Models for elevators designed by Richard Artschwager for the Whitney Museum's new home.*

For now passers-by can see only the shell of the Whitney Museum of American Art's new home as it takes shape at the intersection of Gansevoort and Washington Streets in the meatpacking district of Manhattan. But once the building is completed in 2015, the only permanent artwork commissioned for the site — its four main elevators — will be visible from both inside the museum and out.

Adam D. Weinberg, the Whitney's director, enlisted the artist Richard Artschwager to design the elevators about two years ago. Mr. Artschwager, who died in February, had been involved with the Whitney for more than a half-century, Mr. Weinberg noted in an interview, and the museum owns prime examples of work from every phase of that artist's career, from his furniturelike sculptures covered with wood-grain Formica to paintings that look as though he applied smudged soot. The Whitney has held two Artschwager retrospectives, one in 1988 and another that ended just a few days before his death.

The elevators, titled "Six in Four," are his last major artwork. They are based on six motifs — door, window, table, basket, mirror and rug — that have recurred in the artist's drawings and sculptures since the mid-1970s. Each elevator will provide an immersive experience involving one or more of these motifs. When visitors enter they will find themselves standing under a table, on a rug or in front of a mirror; they will also be opposite a door, next to a window or floating in a giant woven basket.

"The idea was to have something that immediately gives you a sense of place, an identity, so that this isn't just another generic museum," Mr. Weinberg said.

The elevators, nearly 15 feet wide, will be in constant use when the museum is open. When it is closed, they will be left open on the ground floor and illuminated from within so the entire installation will be visible from outside through the building's all-glass lobby.

While they will be Mr. Artschwager's only functioning elevators, they are not his first. In 1981 he made "Janus III (Elevator)," a sculptural elevator cab fashioned from chrome and Formica that has its own interior lighting. It is in the collection of the Ludwig Museum in Cologne, Germany; visitors can walk inside and press a button, activating a sound, and then experience the sense of going up and down in a real elevator. ("Janus III" was included in the Whitney's 1988 Artschwager retrospective.)

Having the elevators function as a work of art guarantees that "there will always be something on view," whatever the hour, Mr. Weinberg said.