Tate Modern, London
Extension

Client
Tate Gallery of Modern Art, London

Architecture
Herzog & de Meuron, Basel

Work stages
All work stages

Period
2007-2016

Surface
10'000 m²

The new landscape of the Tate Modern Gallery works with nature and is about nature, with the river and about the river: Its tides, its colours and its sedimentation. As a whole, this informal landscape unites the varied existing and new elements across the site and is comprised of generous public spaces, a large planted embankment and lawn areas.

The Oil Tank Wall is a key spatial element of this design and is an above-grade extrusion of the existing below ground Oil Tanks. The organic appearance and materiality of the wall evokes the natural geology of the Thames River Valley, with the exposed aggregate concrete morphing from light to heavy, gradually revealing the matrix of locally sourced flint stones cast within. The Oil Tank Wall encloses two large, circular terraces to the south and east of the building, which are the principal public gathering places directly adjacent to the new gallery entry and café. The strong presence of the Oil Tank Wall is countered by the soft landscape elements: The mass of the Spine Planting, feature tree clusters and the soft, undulating expanse of the Southern Lawn. The dense spacing of multi-stem Betula species in the Spine Planting reflects the alluvial character of the landscape and creates a green backdrop to the Southern Lawn. Collectively, the strong topography of these two elements gives an increased sense of depth to the narrow site. A mixture of bulbs and perennial plants are planted beneath the birch trees, creating a densely vegetated understorey. Feature tree species more typical of urban public spaces are planted in clusters intermittently around the site, their selection informed by species already existing. In comparison with the Southern Landscape, the character of the Western Landscape is much less influenced by the presence of the new gallery. The Western Goods Handling Zone and bicycle shelter are screened from view by dense hedge planting and a gently moulded circular lawn – a temporary intervention - occupies the majority of the western aspect of the site.
Spine and building

Spine planting

Planting at Oil Tank Wall