

# The M.A.D House

opens its doors

MB&F





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**MB&F establishes its new headquarters in a century-old house in Geneva**

“How do you know I’m mad?” said Alice.  
“You must be,” said the Cat, “or you wouldn’t have come here.”

*Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland (1865), Lewis Carroll*

## The search for a new home

The universe of MB&F is growing! In the autumn of 2022, while opening the world’s first MB&F LAB in Singapore and preparing for a second LAB in Paris, the MB&F team was also busying itself with a matter slightly closer to home — the new M.A.D.House in Geneva.

For years, the MB&F offices had been split over two locations. There was the M.A.D.Gallery on Rue Verdaine in the heart of Geneva’s old town. Then, there was the main workshop address on Boulevard Helvétique, a few minutes away from the M.A.D.Gallery on foot. But both the M.A.D.Gallery and the Boulevard Helvétique offices were getting fuller and fuller. And it was time to bring everyone together under one roof.

At the end of 2019, the search began for a bigger office, one that could accommodate all the different departments of the company and allow them to interact seamlessly, fluidly, as one creative organisation. That was the logistical side of things. On a more philosophical note, this new location would also have to reflect what MB&F stood for, and what its people were working towards. The quest was on to find the MB&F team its new home.

The search went on hiatus for much of 2020 and picked up again towards the end of the year, but even after months of property visits, nothing felt exactly right. Some places were big and new, but overwhelmingly cold and corporate. And, because this is Geneva, some beautiful spaces were searingly expensive and therefore out of reach. Whilst visiting yet another office block, this one in Carouge village just beyond the southern limits of the city of Geneva, a large old house on an adjoining piece of land caught Maximilian Büsser’s eye.

The search for a new home

A jewel from Geneva’s historical architecture

A hive buzzing with creativity

Not a dull wall in sight

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Built between 1907 and 1908, the house's exterior exuded history and character, though at the time it was in dire need of repairs and was occupied by a local business that had divided its three-storey interior into strictly functional workspaces, crammed with filing cabinets, twisted telephone extension cords and paper-piled desks. But there was potential in those three storeys (four, if you included the basement), enough to justify a second visit. Together with MB&F's directors of production (Serge Krikhoff), marketing (Charris Yadigaroglou) and sales (Thibault Verdonck), Max started to imagine how the space could be transformed.

And the M.A.D.House began to take shape, moving out of dreams and into this world.

One and a half years of repairs and renovation followed, including a full restoration of the roof and extensive interior refurbishment. The property that became the M.A.D.House was originally a joint project by the well-known architect Edmond Fatio (1871-1959) of Geneva and Charles Meysson (1869-1947) of Lyon; it was conceived as the private home of a wealthy family of industrial entrepreneurs and won an architectural prize in the year of its completion. Its construction, in the style known as Heimatstil, is characterised by a romanticised interpretation of historical architecture, a prescient nod towards its future occupants, who rework and re-dream traditional horology for the modern age. Its half-timbered exterior with rusticated stone walls recalls the castles and buildings seen in illustrated books of folklore — a fitting abode for a company whose creations were first inspired by the mythologies of science fiction and fantasy. Currently gazetted as a protected building by the Swiss Heritage Society (Patrimoine Suisse), the house came under the full stewardship of MB&F in 2022 when they entered the premises and inaugurated the M.A.D.House as their new home.

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## A hive buzzing with creativity

It takes a certain kind of vision — some might say madness — to straddle past, present and future all at once. Like the watches of MB&F, the M.A.D.House contains elements of all three. Framed by historical architecture, filled with objects that tell the story of contemporary horological art, and inhabited by a team resolutely oriented towards the things yet to come.

Most days, the house can barely contain the flurry of activity generated within its walls. It's the kind of activity you'd expect from having over 40 people together focused on the singular task of building and growing a company like MB&F. Multiple exterior doors lead towards a central staircase and atrium, creating a convergence of motion, an arterial confluence that hums and buzzes with comings and goings. There's even a concealed passageway behind the stairs, a quaint artefact of the house's original design, built for those in a hurry with too much to do and not quite enough time to do it all in. (Plunging down this hidden path, you almost expect to encounter a white rabbit, gravely consulting his pocket watch.)

On the ground floor, watchmakers assemble movements at custom-built workbenches in rooms flooded by natural light, surrounded by wood panelling and hand-painted ceramic tiles from the time the house was first built. Also on the ground floor, a reception area echoes the aesthetic concept of the M.A.D.Gallery and leads onto the central stairwell, with wood newels that retain their original engravings from 1908. The upper floors are home to departmental offices, with the product creation team on the top floor, creating an organic flow of movement throughout the multi-storey space.

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## Not a dull wall in sight

Light and space are precious commodities in any office environment, and the M.A.D.House is replete with both, thanks to its unobstructed location in three hectares of parkland. Objects and artefacts from the MB&F universe are scattered around the house, from the Jean Kazès clock on the central stairway to the photography prints by Marc Ninghetto, Ulysse Fréchélin and other artists on the walls and shelves.

The central stairwell has become an installation of sorts, featuring a rotation of artists who will take it in turns to apply their vision to the white walls. The first artist to put his mark on the M.A.D.House in this way is Maxime Schertenleib, a Swiss illustrator and comic strip artist known for his highly detailed urban landscapes filled with human activity. Stepping out of the house, you're greeted by an outdoor wind sculpture, the work of American kinetic sculptor Anthony Howe. His creations play with geometry and fluid dynamics, moving and swirling in the wind to produce hypnotic metallic waves, providing visitors to the M.A.D. House with a little fore-taste of the mesmerising creations coming to life indoors.

MB&F moved into the M.A.D.House in late 2022, filling the century-old house with activity, creativity and just the right dose of insanity. Six months later in 2023, the brand officially opens its doors to welcome visitors, friends of MB&F and other mad pilgrims.

To visit the MB&F M.A.D.House, please go to <https://www.mbandf.com/en/mbandf/visit> or contact us at [visit@mbandf.com](mailto:visit@mbandf.com).

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Exterior view



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Exterior view



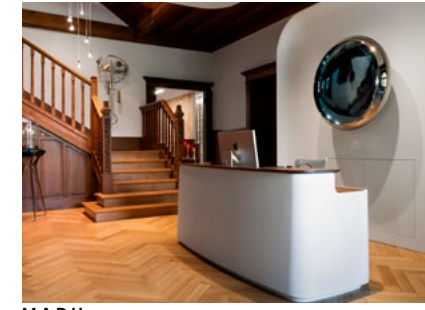
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Exterior view



M.A.D House  
Villa Copplier, 1907



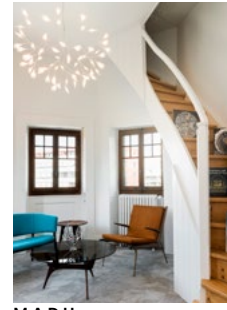
M.A.D House  
Villa Copplier, 1907



M.A.D House  
Interior view



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Interior view



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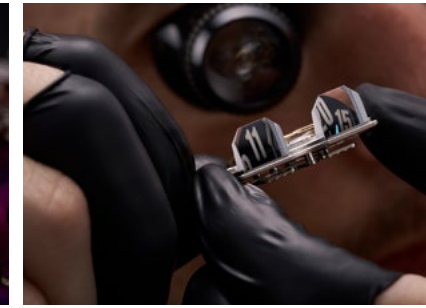
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