



peter elliot
architecture+
urban design

tolarno galleries

location fitzroy street st kilda melbourne australia

status completed february 2007

client jan minchin

photography john gollings

Tolarno Galleries has been a Melbourne institution since the mid 1960's when George Mora opened a gallery in a small room at the rear of the Tolarno Hotel in Fitzroy Street St Kilda. Since then the gallery has moved around inner Melbourne always into interesting spaces within established buildings. The move to level 4 104 Exhibition Street is the fifth iteration of the gallery and very much in the tradition of occupying found spaces. In this case a fine 1920's building with lofty ceilings and windows on three sides.

The architectural approach was to strip the interior back to the core fabric of the building to reveal its essential spatial and material qualities. With the removal of the false ceilings, partitions and floor coverings, the interior was transformed into a series of simple open light filled spaces perfectly adaptable into a gallery. Each main space has plastered expressed ceiling beams and walls and bare concrete floors producing a sparse but calm interior. New services have been inserted sparingly along with specialised gallery lighting. The new gallery has a recognisable personality which owes much to the qualities of the building it now occupies.

"Being escorted around the new gallery space by Jan Minchin is like witnessing a 12 year-old on Easter morning discovering new eggs. The space designed by architect Peter Elliott, is elegantly Spartan. The new Tolarno opens with a vast space of dark, polished concrete, which hosts its artworks admirably." Ashley Crawford, The Age, 15 February 2008

