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## BODY BUILDING

Its location on the Champs-Élysées is not the only flex at RH Paris's new headquarters. The gallery's interiors are pretty strong too – thanks in part to muscular intervention from resident artist Thomas Junghans, who has sprinkled it with his angular anatomies

By Layla Quaadvlieg

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Thomas Junghans sketches the human figure on a paper canvas. Photograph: Inge van Mill

‘Two things can be totally different yet exist in total harmony,’ says Thomas Junghans – like a jagged anthropoid sculpture beside a smooth oak table, perhaps. RH Paris opened its gold-tipped gates on 5 September 2025, and the German-born artist is one creative to join the home furnishings empire on its fanciful escapade in the City of Light. A varied lineup of permanent installations unfold across the gallery’s seven-floor celebration of architecture and design, from the three-dimensional collages of former NFL player Chad Kilgore, to the cast bronze *Caryatid* sculpted by Louis-Félix Chabaud in 1870. On the ground floor, the Biblioteca hosts a collection of rare books, including a 1521 printing of *De Architectura* by Roman architect Marcus Vitruvius. The canonical text lies enclosed within a glass box in the centre of the room, thrillingly left open on the pages that inspired Leonardo da Vinci’s *Vitruvian Man* a millennium and a half later.

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On the second floor of RH Paris, an exhibition room designed by Thomas Junghans is set with his bronze-cast wooden sculptures, their colour perfectly matching the gallery's palette. His painted works on paper line the walls

Junghans, equally, is no stranger to works exploring the human body. His sculptures and paintings often radically reconfigure live models into abstract forms, and the RH Paris gave him a new opportunity to expand on the theme. 'For this project, I used models more as a starting point, simply for initial inspiration,' he recounts. The deconstructed limbs floating on his walls reflect this 'freedom for spontaneity' he sees as an essential part of his process. As well as paintings, his exhibition room also displays a handful of sculptures, depicting bodily silhouettes through a mixture of wooden and bronze materials. 'Abstract' and 'expressive' are two terms that come up habitually with Junghans, and even in this solid medium he remains true to the evocative slipperiness of his craft.

Assembling all his various artistic snapshots of the body in a single RH Paris room is fitting for the atmosphere Junghans hopes to create, too. 'I don't want to represent people only as isolated beings – which they are in part – but also as interconnected individuals,' Junghans explains. 'The sculptures and paintings are intended to evoke that shared human experience: standing on the earth, questioning our existence and seeking to understand our place in the world.' His philosophy reveals a neat synergy with the gallery itself, as RH forges a space where installations of different origins unite in one harmonious whole.



Neo-expressionist Vladimir Prodanovich has also created an exhibition room at RH Paris. *Dancers*, pictured here, is one of several richly textured paintings of swaying figures that preside over the space

As with all collaborations, there are moments of compromise. Junghans adapts his particular style at times to complement the gallery's own character, adding more colour variation in one work, and experimenting with new materials in the next. Yet the creative direction of the RH design team is far from restrictive, as anecdotes of unexpected challenges end on a positive note: 'When we decided to create the paintings on paper, it opened up new technical possibilities.' Although they appear subtle to the untrained eye, Junghans recognises each stylistic shift as an opportunity for reflection. 'As with every new sculpture or painting, wherever it may be, it leaves traces behind that you might not recognise in the moment but that *will* influence you in the future,' he says. The self-assurance in his final remark encourages us even now.

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*RH Paris, 23 Avenue des Champs-Élysées, Paris 75008, is now open to visitors. For opening times, visit [rh.com](http://rh.com)*

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