

The Pritzker Architecture Prize

Press Release

Pritzker Architecture Prize Ceremony Will Be Held in China Next Year

For Immediate Release

The 2012 Pritzker Architecture Prize Ceremony will be held in Beijing, China on May 25, 2012. This location was disclosed today in a joint announcement by Guo Jinlong, Mayor of Beijing, China and Thomas J. Pritzker, chairman of The Hyatt Foundation.

Pritzker elaborated, "During the three decades of prize-giving, we have held ceremonies in 14 different countries, in venues ranging from the White House in Washington, DC to Todai-ji Temple in Nara, Japan. The tradition of moving the event to sites of global architectural significance was established to emphasize that the prize is international, the laureates having been chosen from 16 different nations to date. This will be our 34th event and the first time we have gone to China."

"It is particularly appropriate that we should go to China because so many of the laureates have projects there, either in progress or completed, including one of our earliest laureates, I.M. Pei, who won the prize in 1983," Pritzker continued. "Some of the others include the 2002 Pritzker Laureate Zaha Hadid of London who designed the new opera house in Guangzhou; the 2001 laureates Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron of Switzerland who designed Beijing's National Stadium; Rem Koolhaas of the Netherlands whose projects in China include the headquarters of Central Chinese Television in Beijing and the Shenzhen Stock Exchange; and the 1999 Pritzker Laureate Norman Foster who has completed the Hong Kong International Airport as well as the headquarters for the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank."

Mayor Guo Jinlong said, "The Pritzker Architecture Prize is the most recognized award in the architectural field throughout the world. We believe holding this event in Beijing will further raise the awareness of the Pritzker Prize in China, and promote the development of the architectural industry in Beijing and China as a whole. Hosting the ceremony in Beijing will also attract many globally reputable architecture firms and architects to participate in building Beijing as the most liveable city and famous cultural capital."

Pritzker pointed out that the juries for the prize have always been international as well, and currently has members from China, the U.K., Chile, Australia, Finland, and the U.S., and in past years had members from Japan, India, Mexico, and Switzerland. The current Pritzker jury now consists of eight people, including its chairman, Lord Palumbo of the U.K., and (alphabetically) Alejandro Aravena from Chile, an architect and executive director of Elemental; Stephen Breyer, a Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court; Yung Ho Chang, an architect and educator from Beijing, China; Zaha Hadid, an architect based in London and the 2004 Pritzker Laureate; Glenn Murcutt, an Australian architect and the 2002 Pritzker Laureate; Juhani Pallasmaa of Finland, an architect, professor, and author; and Karen Stein, a writer, editor, and architectural consultant in the U.S. Martha Thorne, the associate dean for external affairs at the IE School of Architecture in Madrid, Spain, and the executive director of the Pritzker Architecture Prize is also on the jury.

The specific building to be used for the ceremony in Beijing is still under consideration, but the category of the site to be chosen is likely to be of historic significance. In addition to the White House and Todai-ji Temple, past sites have included Palace of Versailles and Grand Trianon in France; Prague Castle in The Czech Republic. Some of the most beautiful museums in the U.S. have hosted the event including Chicago's Art Institute, New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, and Fort Worth's Kimball Art Museum. This year, one of Washington's finest classical building, the Andrew W. Mellon Auditorium was the ceremony location. The ceremony has been held at the U.S. capital five times: once at the Library of Congress, twice at Dumbarton Oaks, once at the National Gallery of Art's East Building designed by Pritzker Laureate I.M. Pei, and the Mellon Auditorium. Other sites designed by laureates of the Pritzker Prize were Frank Gehry's Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain and Richard Meier's Getty Center in Los Angeles.

Plans for guests attending the ceremony in Beijing are being formulated, and may include seminars and building tours of the city's old and new architecture.

The Pritzker Architecture Prize was established by The Hyatt Foundation in 1979 to honor annually a living architect whose built work demonstrates a combination of those qualities of talent, vision, and commitment, which has produced consistent and significant contributions to humanity and the built environment through the art of architecture.

The field of architecture was chosen by the Pritzker family because of their keen interest in buildings due to their involvement with developing the Hyatt Hotels around the world; and because architecture was a creative endeavor not included in the Nobel Prizes. The procedures were modeled after the Nobel Prizes, with the final selection being made by the international jury with all deliberations and voting in secret. Nominations are continuous from year to year with hundreds of nominees from countries all around the world being considered each year. It has often been described by the media as "architecture's most prestigious award" or as "the Nobel of architecture."

The prize takes its name from the Pritzker family, whose international business interests are headquartered in Chicago. The Pritzkers have long been known for their support of educational, social welfare, scientific, medical, and cultural activities. When Jay A. Pritzker, who founded the prize with his wife, Cindy, died on January 23, 1999, his eldest son, Thomas J. Pritzker, became chairman of The Hyatt Foundation.

The late Philip Johnson was the first Pritzker Laureate in 1979. The late Luis Barragán of Mexico was named in 1980. The late James Stirling of the U.K. was elected in 1981. Laureates since then by year are as follows: (if no country is noted, the laureate is from the U.S.) Kevin Roche in 1982, I.M. Pei in 1983, Richard Meier in 1984, Hans Hollein of Austria in 1985, Gottfried Böhm of Germany in 1986, Kenzo Tange of Japan in 1987, in 1988 there were two laureates named: Oscar Niemeyer of Brazil and Gordon Bunshaft, Frank Gehry in 1989, the late Aldo Rossi of Italy in 1990, Robert Venturi in 1991, Alvaro Siza of Portugal in 1992, Christian de Portzamparc of France in 1994, Tadao Ando of Japan in 1995, Rafael Moneo of Spain in 1996, the late Sverre Fehn of Norway in 1997, Renzo Piano of Italy in 1998, Norman Foster of the U.K. in 1999, Rem Koolhaas of the Netherlands in 2000, Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron of Switzerland in 2001, Glenn Murcutt of Australia in 2002, the late Jørn Utzon of Denmark in 2003, Zaha Hadid of the U.K. in 2004, Thom Mayne in 2005, Paulo Mendes da Rocha of Brazil in 2006, Richard Rogers of the U.K. in 2007, Jean Nouvel of France in 2008, Peter Zumthor of Switzerland in 2009, partners Kazuyo Sejima and Ryue Nishizawa of SANAA, Inc. of Japan in 2010, and Eduardo Souto de Moura of Portugal in 2011.

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