

The Pritzker Architecture Prize

Frei Otto
2015 Laureate
Media Kit



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Media Release Announcing the 2015 Laureate

Frei Otto Receives the 2015 Pritzker Architecture Prize

Visionary architect, 89, dies in his native Germany on March 9, 2015

Otto was an architect, visionary, utopian, ecologist, pioneer of lightweight materials, protector of natural resources and a generous collaborator with architects, engineers, and biologists, among others.

Chicago, IL (March 23, 2015) — Frei Otto has received the 2015 Pritzker Architecture Prize, Tom Pritzker announced today. Mr. Pritzker is Chairman and President of The Hyatt Foundation, which sponsors the prize. Mr. Pritzker said: “Our jury was clear that, in their view, Frei Otto’s career is a model for generations of architects and his influence will continue to be felt. The news of his passing is very sad, unprecedented in the history of the prize. We are grateful that the jury awarded him the prize while he was alive. Fortunately, after the jury decision, representatives of the prize traveled to Mr. Otto’s home and were able to meet with Mr. Otto to share the news with him. At this year’s Pritzker Prize award ceremony in Miami on May 15 we will celebrate his life and timeless work.”

Mr. Otto becomes the 40th laureate of the Pritzker Prize and the second laureate from Germany.

The Jury of the Pritzker Architecture Prize selected Mr. Otto as the laureate earlier this year, and shortly thereafter the Executive Director of the prize traveled to Otto’s home and studio in Warmbronn, Germany, near Stuttgart, to deliver the news in person. Learning that he had received the Pritzker Prize, Mr. Otto said: “I am now so happy to receive this Pritzker Prize and I thank the jury and the Pritzker family very much. I have never done anything to gain this prize. My architectural drive was to design new types of buildings to help poor people especially following natural disasters and catastrophes. So what shall be better for me than to win this prize? I will use whatever time is left to me to keep doing what I have been doing, which is to help humanity. You have here a happy man.”

Mr. Otto practiced a holistic and collaborative approach to architecture, working with environmentalists, biologists, engineers, philosophers, historians, naturalists, artists, and other architects. A distinguished teacher and author, Otto pioneered the use of modern lightweight tent-like structures for many uses. He was attracted to them partly for their economical and ecological values. He believed in making efficient, responsible use of materials, and that architecture should make a minimal impact on the environment. Frei Otto was a utopian who never stopped believing that architecture can make a better world for all.

In contrast to the heavy, columned, stone and masonry architecture preferred by the National Socialists in the Germany in which he grew up — Otto’s work was lightweight, open to nature and natural light, non-hierarchical, democratic, low-cost, energy-efficient, and sometimes designed to be temporary.

He is best known for the roofing for the main sports facilities in the Munich Olympic Park for the 1972 Summer Olympics (with Behnisch + Partner and others), for the German pavilion at the 1967 International and Universal Exposition (Expo 67), the Japan Pavilion at Expo 2000 in Hannover, Germany (in 2000, with Shigeru Ban (2014 laureate of the Pritzker Architecture Prize)), a series of tent structures for German Federal Exhibitions in the 1950s, and for his work in the Middle East.

The Chair of the jury of the Pritzker Architecture Prize, Lord Peter Palumbo, said today: “Time waits for no man. If anyone doubts this aphorism, the death yesterday of Frei Otto, a titan of modern architecture, a few weeks short of his 90th birthday, and a few short weeks before his receipt of the Pritzker Architecture Prize in Miami in May, represents a sad and striking example of this truism. His loss will be felt wherever the art of architecture is practiced the world over, for he was a universal citizen; whilst his influence will continue to gather momentum by those who are aware of it, and equally, by those who are not.

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Media Release Announcing the 2015 Laureate (continued)

“Frei stands for Freedom, as free and as liberating as a bird in flight, swooping and soaring in elegant and joyful arcs, unrestrained by the dogma of the past, and as compelling in its economy of line and in the improbability of its engineering as it is possible to imagine, giving the marriage of form and function the invisibility of the air we breathe, and the beauty we see in Nature.”

The distinguished jury that selected the 2015 Pritzker Laureate consists of its chairman, Lord Palumbo, architectural patron, Chairman Emeritus of the Trustees, Serpentine Galleries, former Chairman of the Arts Council of Great Britain, and former Chairman of the Tate Gallery Foundation; Alejandro Aravena, architect and Executive Director of Elemental in Santiago, Chile; Stephen Breyer, U.S. Supreme Court Justice, Washington, D.C.; Yung Ho Chang, architect and educator, Beijing, The People’s Republic of China; Kristin Feireiss, architecture curator, writer, and editor, Berlin, Germany; Glenn Murcutt, architect and 2002 Pritzker Laureate, Sydney, Australia; Richard Rogers, architect and 2007 Pritzker Laureate, London, United Kingdom; Benedetta Tagliabue, architect and director of EMBT Miralles Tagliabue, Barcelona, Spain; and Ratan N. Tata, Chairman Emeritus of Tata Sons, the holding company of the Tata Group, Mumbai, India. Martha Thorne, Associate Dean for External Relations, IE School of Architecture & Design, Madrid, Spain, is the Executive Director of the Prize.

The 2015 award ceremony will be held in Miami Beach at the New World Center, designed by 1989 Pritzker Prize Laureate Frank Gehry, on May 15, 2015. This marks the first time the ceremony will be in Miami, joining the culturally and historically significant venues around the world. The ceremony will be streamed live on PritzkerPrize.com, the website of the Pritzker Architecture Prize.

About the Pritzker Architecture Prize

The Pritzker Architecture Prize was founded in 1979 by the late Jay A. Pritzker and his wife, Cindy. Its purpose is to honor annually a living architect whose built work demonstrates a combination of those qualities of talent, vision and excellence, which has produced consistent and significant contributions to humanity and the built environment through the art of architecture. The laureates receive a \$100,000 grant and a bronze medallion.

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Tributes to Frei Otto

Lord Peter Palumbo, Chair of the Jury of the Pritzker Architecture Prize

Time waits for no man. If anyone doubts this aphorism, the death yesterday of Frei Otto, a titan of modern architecture, a few weeks short of his 90th birthday, and a few short weeks before his receipt of the Pritzker Architecture Prize in Miami in May, represents a sad and striking example of this truism. His loss will be felt wherever the art of architecture is practiced the world over, for he was a universal citizen; whilst his influence will continue to gather momentum by those who are aware of it, and equally, by those who are not.

Frei stands for Freedom, as free and as liberating as a bird in flight, swooping and soaring in elegant and joyful arcs, unrestrained by the dogma of the past, and as compelling in its economy of line and in the improbability of its engineering as it is possible to imagine, giving the marriage of form and function the invisibility of the air we breathe, and the beauty we see in Nature.

Pritzker Architecture Prize Laureates:

Shigeru Ban, 2014 Laureate of the Pritzker Architecture Prize

Louis Kahn asked the brick, "What do you want to become, brick?"

The brick answered, "I want to become an arch."

I think that Frei Otto was an architect who kept asking the "air" what it wanted to become.

He kept thinking about how to envelop "air" or "space" with the minimum of material and power.

He was still touching materials and drawing sketches until his last breath. His achievements, rather than just being his "works," have become the "grammar" of structural design, unnoticed, and we architects are only now realizing that we unconsciously base our designs on his grammar.

I am truly indebted to Frei Otto, for sharing his deep understanding and inventions in the field of architecture.

Zaha Hadid, 2004 Laureate of the Pritzker Architecture Prize

The fluidity of Frei Otto's work is as uplifting as it was profoundly inventive — a persuasive manifesto of nature's logic and unity, demonstrating how architectural design and engineering can emulate nature's morphogenesis. The more our own design research evolves, the more we learn to appreciate his pioneering works. He will continue to influence architects and engineers for generations to come.

We first met in Germany early in my career and he became a dear friend. His research and exploration of tensile structures was inspirational and enlightening, and his Pritzker Prize is very well deserved. Our joy of this news is some consolation for the loss of a great friend, architect, inventor, educator and gentleman. Our thoughts are with his family at this time.

Frank Gehry, 1989 Laureate of the Pritzker Architecture Prize

Frei Otto forever changed the way we think about structure and building. Through his experiments in form-finding, Otto simultaneously affirmed and questioned the conventions of engineering as we

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Tributes to Frei Otto (continued)

knew it, and in the process showed us unprecedented solutions to age old problems — where others saw mass as the solution, he offered lightness. Like the ancients and others that came before him, he questioned the origins of our assumptions by going back to nature and figuring it out for himself. There he found systems, networks, and surfaces that exceeded all our imaginations. He found logic in complexity, and proceeded to translate the lessons he learned into efficiently realized constructions.

Otto was far ahead of his time in anticipating the issues that would confront the built landscape today: population density, transience, impermanence, energy demands, the growing scale of structures, etc. It is everyone's loss that we will not have his visionary contributions to the conversations of the day.

Thom Mayne, 2005 Laureate of the Pritzker Architecture Prize

I was both very happy to hear yesterday of Frei Otto's Pritzker Prize recognition and profoundly saddened to learn of his passing.

For my generation of architects, Frei Otto was an altruistic revolutionary who produced works of immense intellect and beauty. His pioneering message of technology for the sake of society has become increasingly relevant as we move into this digital age.

His explorations into light, strong tensile systems were not merely technological pursuits; they were didactic of a larger social discourse of inclusion and egalitarianism.

Ultimately, under his visionary innovations, he initiated a new age of possibilities for architecture to offer intelligence, performance, hope, and optimism.

Renzo Piano, 1998 Laureate of the Pritzker Architecture Prize

Frei Otto has been one of the most seminal people on my route to architecture.

By the clear determination to work on basic shelters for human communities.

And exploring the movement of forces within the structure to make it visible.

Celebrating lightness.

And fighting against gravity.

He succeeded in this and he will always be in my thoughts.

Wang Shu, 2012 Laureate of the Pritzker Architecture Prize

As a pioneer of lightweight structures, Frei Otto was the architect that our generation researched when we were in college.

In fact, there are three kinds of architects today. The first kind are those who have been exploring in the areas of art and culture and trying to express this in architectural languages. The second and most common kind are those who have been focusing on urban problems and environment; architects in the past were rarely involved in urban planning, but now the number is steadily increasing. The third kind are like Frei Otto — they have been exploring and developing new technology. There are fewer and fewer architects of the third kind now.

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Tributes to Frei Otto (continued)

Lightweight structure doesn't need a thick foundation; it uses less material and has an obvious advantage in environmental protection. Therefore, in modern times, many architects are interested in the research, including me.

In the modern architecture context in which commercial buildings get an increasingly dominant position, awarding the Pritzker Prize to Frei Otto may imply that architecture should return to its origin

Jacques Herzog & Pierre de Meuron, 2001 Laureates of the Pritzker Architecture Prize

We thought Frei Otto had been given the Pritzker Prize long ago! His work was very new and different in his time, a kind of optimistic modernism which is so dearly missing in today's eclectic earnestness! Frei Otto's work looks still fresh and inspiring!

Kazuyo Sejima and Ryue Nishizawa, 2010 Laureates of the Pritzker Architecture Prize

We are deeply saddened by the news of Frei Otto's passing.

He was an outstanding architect and a great visionary whose influence will last for many generations to come.

We are grateful for his generosity in educating, inspiring, and encouraging the rest of us.

Norman Foster, 1999 Laureate of the Pritzker Architecture Prize

I was deeply saddened to hear that Frei Otto had passed away on Monday. On the occasion of his 80th birthday ten years ago I wrote the following tribute:

Frei Otto showed us that architecture need not be burdened by the weight of its own traditions, but could instead be free to express itself through simple but innovative sculptural forms — his was an architecture inspired by lightness. This sense of weightlessness, and of an architecture unbound by convention, was carried over into Frei's working relationships. Rather than working in isolation, he consistently advocated a freer role for the architect — whether this was as an educator, sharing his ideas with generations of students, or in practice, through valued joint projects with, or providing research support for, other architects and engineers. For me, he reinforced the point that architecture is a fundamentally collaborative exercise. His extraordinary structures altered the nature of architectural form in the twentieth century, and his environmentalism, intelligence and foresight have established the defining architectural mentality for the twenty-first. He was an inspiration.

Richard Meier, 1984 Laureate of the Pritzker Architecture Prize

Frei Otto was an architect of enormous talent and his creativity was all encompassing. In addition to his inventive work as an individual practitioner, he was an important associate to many in the field of architecture and engineering. His tremendous contributions will be appreciated and valued for a long, long time.

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Tributes to Frei Otto (continued)

The Pritzker Architecture Prize 2015 Jury:

Kristin Feireiss

Frei Otto was not only one of the most genius and influential architects and visionary spirits of the twentieth century, with his pioneering structural inventions, his society-related design based on deep humanism, his belief in fundamental research and the way he defines architecture as teamwork — an interplay of collective knowledge of cross-disciplinary experts — he had, has and will have an essential impact on generations of architects from all over the world.

With his holistic approach Frei Otto was always a step ahead his time. We will miss him.

Richard Rogers, 2007 Laureate of the Pritzker Architecture Prize

Frei Otto is a revolutionary architect and structural engineer. He is renowned for his development and use of ultra-modern and super-light tent-like structures, and for his innovative use of new materials.

He is a great teacher and set up his own Institute for Lightweight Structures at the University of Stuttgart in 1964, making early use of computer modeling to create sensational membrane structures, inspired by natural phenomena — from birds' skulls to soap bubbles and spiders' webs.

Frei Otto is one of the great architects and engineers of the 20th Century and his work has inspired and influenced modern architecture, as we all learn to do more with less, and to trade monumental structures for economy, light and air.

Glenn Murcutt, 2002 Laureate of the Pritzker Architecture Prize

In today's media driven culture, too often we are presented with the architecture of novelty and or the spectacular. Architecture is not a short-term proposition; it must remain relevant over time. This year's recipient has spent his lifetime researching, experimenting, and developing a most beautiful architecture that is timeless. It embodies the purity of lightweight shelter with structures that are economical, simple and are supremely beautiful. The lifelong work of Frei Otto has had and will continue to have a profound international influence on the thinking and work of architects.

Benedetta Tagliabue

When remembering the many projects of Frei Otto or looking at images of them, they bring forth emotions of joy, curiosity, admiration, a wish to imitate and further develop. These strong feelings that the work of 2015 Pritzker winner constantly evokes can be a beacon for us all.

Yung Ho Chang

Frei Otto is a pioneer for embracing new technologies, from new materials to new structural systems and bringing them into architecture. He has changed our discipline and practice in a revolutionary way. Today's architects are fascinated by the possibility of making lightweight buildings and curvilinear forms. For these interests, Frei Otto can be regarded as a father figure.

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Tributes to Frei Otto (continued)

Stephen Breyer

To speak to architects about Frei Otto is to learn of the great influence that he has had, as a teacher and model, upon modern architecture in Europe and beyond.

Alejandro Aravena

Throughout his life, Frei Otto has created imaginative, fresh, unprecedented spaces and constructions. He has also created knowledge. Here resides his deep influence: not as forms that were copied but as paths that were opened by his research and discoveries. His contribution to the field of architecture in that sense, has been not only skilled and talented, but also a generous one.

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Jury Citation

Frei Otto, born almost 90 years ago in Germany, has spent his long career researching, experimenting, and developing a most sensitive architecture that has influenced countless others throughout the world. The lessons of his pioneering work in the field of lightweight structures that are adaptable, changeable and carefully use limited resources are as relevant today as when they were first proposed over 60 years ago. He has embraced a definition of architect to include researcher, inventor, form-finder, engineer, builder, teacher, collaborator, environmentalist, humanist, and creator of memorable buildings and spaces.

He first became known for his tent structures used as temporary exhibition pavilions. The constructions at the German Federal Garden exhibitions and other festivals of the 1950s were functional, beautiful, “floating” roofs that seemed to effortlessly provide shelter, and then were easily dissembled after the events.

The cable net structure employed for the German Pavilion at Expo 67 in Montreal, prefabricated in Germany and assembled on site in a short period of time, was a highlight of the exhibition for its grace and originality. The impressive large-scale roofs designed for the Munich Olympics of 1972, combining lightness and strength, were a building challenge that many said could not be achieved. The architectural landscape for stadium, pool and public spaces, a result of the efforts of a large team, is still impressive today.

Taking inspiration from nature and the processes found there, he sought ways to use the least amount of materials and energy to enclose spaces. He practiced and advanced ideas of sustainability, even before the word was coined. He was inspired by natural phenomena – from birds’ skulls to soap bubbles and spiders’ webs. He spoke of the need to understand the “physical, biological and technical processes which give rise to objects.” Branching concepts from the 1960s optimized structures to support large flat roofs. A grid shell, such as seen in the Mannheim Multihalle of 1974, shows how a simple structural solution, easy to assemble, can create a most striking, flexible space. The Mechtenberg footbridges, with the use of humble slender rods and connecting nodes, but with advanced knowledge, produce an attractive filigree pattern and span distances up to 30 meters. Otto’s constructions are in harmony with nature and always seek to do more with less.

Virtually all the works that are associated with Frei Otto have been designed in collaboration with other professionals. He was often approached to form part of a team to tackle complex architectural and structural challenges. The inventive results attest to outstanding collective efforts of multidisciplinary teams.

Throughout his life, Frei Otto has produced imaginative, fresh, unprecedented spaces and constructions. He has also created knowledge. Herein resides his deep influence: not in forms to be copied, but through the paths that have been opened by his research and discoveries. His contributions to the field of architecture are not only skilled and talented, but also generous.

For his visionary ideas, inquiring mind, belief in freely sharing knowledge and inventions, his collaborative spirit and concern for the careful use of resources, the 2015 Pritzker Architecture Prize is awarded to Frei Otto.

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Jury Members

The Lord Palumbo (Chairman)

*Architectural patron, Chairman Emeritus of the Trustees, Serpentine Galleries
Former Chairman of the Arts Council of Great Britain
Former Chairman of the Tate Gallery Foundation
London, England*

Alejandro Aravena

*Architect and Executive Director of Elemental
Santiago, Chile*

Stephen Breyer

*U.S. Supreme Court Justice
Washington, D.C.*

Yung Ho Chang

*Architect and Educator
Beijing, The People's Republic of China*

Kristin Feireiss

*Architecture Curator, Writer, and Editor
Berlin, Germany*

Glenn Murcutt

*Architect and Pritzker Laureate 2002
Sydney, Australia*

Richard Rogers

*Architect and Pritzker Laureate 2007
London, England*

Benedetta Tagliabue

*Architect and Educator
Barcelona, Spain*

Ratan N. Tata

*Chairman Emeritus of Tata Sons, the holding company of the Tata Group
Mumbai, India*

Martha Thorne (Executive Director)

*Associate Dean for External Relations
IE School of Architecture & Design
Madrid, Spain*

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Biography

Frei Otto was born in Siegmarsdorf, Germany, on May 31, 1925, and grew up in Berlin. “Frei” in German means “free”; his mother thought of the name after attending a lecture on freedom. Otto’s father and grandfather were both sculptors, and as a young student, he worked as an apprentice in stonemasonry during school holidays. For a hobby he flew and designed glider planes — this activity piqued his interest in how thin membranes stretched over light frames could respond to aerodynamic and structural forces.

When he had his university-entrance diploma in 1943, Otto signed up at once to study architecture, but he was not allowed to. Instead, he was drafted into the labor force. In September 1943, Otto was called for military service and he trained as a pilot. The pilot training was stopped at the end of 1944 and Otto became a foot soldier. In April 1945, he was captured near Nürnberg and became a prisoner of war. He stayed for two years in a prisoner of war camp near Chartres in France. There he worked as a camp architect; and he learned to build many types of structures with as little material as possible.

After the war, in 1948, Frei Otto returned to study architecture at the Technical University of Berlin. His architecture would always be a reaction to the heavy, columned buildings constructed for a supposed eternity under the Third Reich in Germany. Otto’s work, in contrast, was lightweight, open to nature, democratic, low-cost, and sometimes even temporary.

In 1950, with scholarship funds, he embarked on a study trip through the United States, where he visited the work of Frank Lloyd Wright, Erich Mendelsohn, Eero Saarinen, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Richard Neutra, Charles and Ray Eames, among others. During this time he also studied sociology and urban development at the University of Virginia.

In 1952, Frei Otto became a freelance architect and founded his own architectural office in Berlin. He earned a doctorate of civil engineering at the Technical University of Berlin in 1954. His dissertation *Das Hangende Dach, Gestalt und Struktur* (“*The Suspended Roof, Form and Structure*”) was published in German, Polish, Spanish and Russian. Also in 1954 he began work with “the tentmaker” Peter Stromeyer at L. Stromeyer & Co. In 1955, he designed and built (with Peter Stromeyer) three lightweight minimal temporary structures made of cotton fabric for the Bundesgartenschau (Federal Garden Exhibition) in Kassel, Germany. These were his first works to gain national recognition, in part for how they harmonized with nature.

Frei Otto pioneered the use of modern, lightweight, tent-like structures for many uses. He was attracted to them partly for their economical and ecological values. As early as the 1950s, he built complex models to test and perfect tensile shapes. Throughout his career, Otto always built physical models to determine the optimum shape of a form and to test its behavior. Engineers in his studio were early adopters of computers for structural analysis of Frei Otto’s projects, but the basic input data for these calculations came from the physical form-finding models.

In 1958, Otto founded the first of several institutions he would establish that were dedicated to lightweight structures — the Institute for Development of Lightweight Construction, a small private institute — and opened a new studio in the Zehlendorf district of Berlin. Over the next five years he taught periodically in the United States, taking on visiting professorships at Washington University, St. Louis; Yale University; University of California at Berkeley; the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; and Harvard University.

The establishment of the Biology and Building research group at the Technical University of Berlin in 1961 marked the beginning of his cooperative work between architects, engineers, and biologists. They applied their knowledge of tents, grid shells, and other lightweight structures to better understand the designs of biological structures and forms.

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Biography (continued)

In 1962, Otto published the first volume of his major opus *Tensile Structures: Design, Structure and Calculation of Buildings of Cables, Nets and Membranes* (the second volume was published in 1966). In 1964, he became director of the newly founded Institute for Lightweight Structures (Institut für Leichte Flächentragwerke or IL) at the University of Stuttgart. IL was commissioned by the German government to conduct research in connection with the planning of the German pavilion for the 1967 International and Universal Exposition in Montreal, Canada, better known as Expo 67. The leaders of Germany chose Otto's architecture to demonstrate the nation's post-World War II industrial and engineering expertise and innovative technologies. The resulting German pavilion at Expo 67, created in collaboration with Rolf Gutbrod and Fritz Leonhardt, gave Frei Otto his international breakthrough as an architect and a design engineer. It's an early example of a large scale, passive solar building.

The following year, in 1968, Otto was named an Honorary Fellow of the American Institute of Architects, and IL was commissioned by Olympia Baugesellschaft in Munich to develop construction measurement models for the projected roof of the main sports stadium in the Munich Olympic Park. The project, realized in May 1972, by Günter Behnisch, Frei Otto, and Fritz Leonhardt, for that year's Olympics, comprised a large membrane to cover the stands of the Olympic stadium, a tensile structure arena, a fabric roof over the Olympic swimming pool, and hyperbolic membrane canopies to connect the buildings and protect visitors from rain and sun.

In 1969, Otto established the Atelier (Frei Otto) Warmbronn architectural studio near Stuttgart. There Otto and his teams researched construction methods that could be highly effective with very little material. It happened that the forms of Otto's buildings often found similar solutions to those in nature and thus resembled natural forms such as bird skulls and spider webs.

Otto wrote extensively throughout his career. His book *Biology and Building* was published in 1972 with a second volume the next year. Later research led Otto to write about the structural and building properties of bamboo, crustaceans, and soap bubbles. In 1994, he published *Ancient Architects* on structural inventions from the earliest days of building.

From 1964 to 1991, Otto was a full professor at the University of Stuttgart, and in 1991, he was named emeritus professor.

Over the years, Otto's research teams would include philosophers, historians, naturalists and environmentalists. He is a world-renowned innovator in architecture and engineering who pioneered modern fabric roofs over tensile structures and also worked with other materials and building systems such as grid shells, bamboo, and wooden lattices. He made important advances in the use of air as a structural material and to pneumatic theory, and the development of convertible roofs. Otto made the results of the research available to other architects. He always favored collaboration in architecture.

To cite just two examples: from 1975 to 1980 Otto worked with Rolf Gutbrod and Ted Happold to build a tent-like gymnasium for the King Abdulaziz University in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, and Otto co-designed the Japanese pavilion at the 2000 Hannover Expo with architect Shigeru Ban (who received the Pritzker Architecture Prize in 2014).

Frei Otto was recognized with his first major monographic exhibition in 1971 at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York. (A redesign of the exhibition later traveled in 1975 and 1977 to venues in North America, Europe, Asia, and Australia). The exhibition "Natural Constructions," which featured his work, was organized by the Institute for International Relations in Stuttgart in 1982 and shown in Goethe Institutes in approximately 80 countries.

In 1984, he became a founding member of the Special Research Project 230 "Natural constructions — lightweight construction in architecture and nature" of the German Research Foundation, which

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Biography (continued)

included the participation of four major universities in Germany. As the largest interdisciplinary German research project, it involved architects, engineers, biologists, behavioral scientists, paleontologists, morphologists, physicists, chaos theorists, physicians, historians, and philosophers. This project was completed in 1995.

Among numerous accolades, Frei Otto was awarded the Thomas Jefferson Prize and Medal in Architecture by the University of Virginia in 1974; the Medaille de la recherche et de la technique by the Academie d'Architecture, Paris, in 1982; the Grand Prize and gold medal by the Association of German Architects, also in 1982. He received the 1980 Aga Khan Award for Architecture (together with Rolf Gutbrod) for the conference centre in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, and the 1998 Aga Khan Award for Architecture (together with Omrania and Happold) for the Diplomatic Club in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. He was named Honorary Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects, London, in 1982 and Honorary Fellow of the Institution of Structural Engineers, London, in 1986. In 1996, he received the Grand Prize of the German Association of Architects and Engineers, Berlin. In 2005, he was awarded the Royal Gold Medal of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA). In 2006, the Japan Art Association awarded him the Praemium Imperiale in Architecture.

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Past Laureates

Philip Johnson, 1979 Laureate

United States of America
Presented at Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, D.C.

Luis Barragán, 1980 Laureate

Mexico
Presented at Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, D.C.

James Stirling, 1981 Laureate

United Kingdom
Presented at the National Building Museum, Washington, D.C.

Kevin Roche, 1982 Laureate

United States of America
Presented at the Art Institute of Chicago, Illinois

Ieoh Ming Pei, 1983 Laureate

United States of America
Presented at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York

Richard Meier, 1984 Laureate

United States of America
Presented at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Hans Hollein, 1985 Laureate

Austria
Presented at the Huntington Library, Art Collections and Botanical Gardens, San Marino, California

Gottfried Böhm, 1986 Laureate

Germany
Presented at Goldsmiths' Hall, London, United Kingdom

Kenzo Tange, 1987 Laureate

Japan
Presented at the Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, Texas

Gordon Bunshaft, 1988 Laureate

United States of America

Oscar Niemeyer, 1988 Laureate

Brazil
Presented at the Art Institute of Chicago, Illinois

Frank O. Gehry, 1989 Laureate

United States of America
Presented at Todai-ji Buddhist Temple, Nara, Japan

Aldo Rossi, 1990 Laureate

Italy
Presented at Palazzo Grassi, Venice, Italy

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Past Laureates (continued)

Robert Venturi, 1991 Laureate

United States of America
Presented at Palacio de Iturbide, Mexico City, Mexico

Alvaro Siza, 1992 Laureate

Portugal
Presented at the Harold Washington Library Center, Chicago, Illinois

Fumihiko Maki, 1993 Laureate

Japan
Presented at Prague Castle, Czech Republic

Christian de Portzamparc, 1994 Laureate

France
Presented at The Commons, Columbus, Indiana

Tadao Ando, 1995 Laureate

Japan
Presented at the Grand Trianon and the Palace of Versailles, France

Rafael Moneo, 1996 Laureate

Spain
Presented at the construction site of the Getty Center, Los Angeles, California

Sverre Fehn, 1997 Laureate

Norway
Presented at the construction site of the Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao, Spain

Renzo Piano, 1998 Laureate

Italy
Presented at the White House, Washington, D.C.

Norman Foster, 1999 Laureate

United Kingdom
Presented at the Altes Museum, Berlin, Germany

Rem Koolhaas, 2000 Laureate

Netherlands
Presented at the Jerusalem Archaeological Park, Israel

Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron, 2001 Laureates

Switzerland
Presented at Thomas Jefferson's Monticello in Charlottesville, Virginia

Glenn Murcutt, 2002 Laureate

Australia
Presented at Michelangelo's Campidoglio in Rome, Italy

Jørn Utzon, 2003 Laureate

Denmark
Presented at Royal Academy of Fine Arts of San Fernando, Madrid, Spain

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Past Laureates (continued)

Zaha Hadid, 2004 Laureate

United Kingdom

Presented at the State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia

Thom Mayne, 2005 Laureate

United States of America

Presented at the Jay Pritzker Pavilion, Millennium Park, Chicago, Illinois

Paulo Mendes da Rocha, 2006 Laureate

Brazil

Presented at the Dolmabahçe Palace, Istanbul, Turkey

Richard Rogers, 2007 Laureate

United Kingdom

Presented at the Banqueting House, Whitehall Palace, London, United Kingdom

Jean Nouvel, 2008 Laureate

France

Presented at the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Peter Zumthor, 2009 Laureate

Switzerland

Presented at the Legislature Palace of the Buenos Aires City Council in Buenos Aires, Argentina

Kazuyo Sejima and Ryue Nishizawa, 2010 Laureates

Japan

Presented at the Immigration Museum, Ellis Island, New York Bay

Eduardo Souto de Moura, 2011 Laureate

Portugal

Presented at the Andrew W. Mellon Auditorium, Washington, D.C.

Wang Shu, 2012 Laureate

The People's Republic of China

Presented at the Great Hall of the People, Beijing, The People's Republic of China

Toyo Ito, 2013 Laureate

Japan

Presented at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum Boston, Massachusetts

Shigeru Ban, 2014 Laureate

Japan

Presented at the The Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

About the Medal



The bronze medallion awarded to each Laureate of the Pritzker Architecture Prize is based on designs of Louis Sullivan, famed Chicago architect generally acknowledged as the father of the skyscraper. On one side is the name of the prize. On the reverse, three words are inscribed, "firmness, commodity and delight." These are the three conditions referred to by Henry Wotton in his 1624 treatise, *The Elements of Architecture*, which was a translation of thoughts originally set down nearly 2000 years ago by Marcus Vitruvius in his Ten Books on Architecture, dedicated to the Roman Emperor Augustus. Wotton, who did the translation when he was England's first ambassador to Venice, used the complete quote as: "The end is to build well. Well-building hath three conditions: commodity, firmness and delight."

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History of the Prize

The Pritzker Architecture Prize was established by The Hyatt Foundation in 1979 to annually honor 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. It has often been described 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, which include the Hyatt Hotels, are headquartered in Chicago. They have long been known for their support of educational, social welfare, scientific, medical and cultural activities. Jay A. Pritzker, who founded the prize with his wife, Cindy, died on January 23, 1999. His eldest son, Thomas J. Pritzker, has become chairman of The Hyatt Foundation. In 2004, Chicago celebrated the opening of Millennium Park, in which a music pavilion designed by Pritzker Laureate Frank Gehry was dedicated and named for the founder of the prize. It was in the Jay Pritzker Pavilion that the 2005 awarding ceremony took place.

Tom Pritzker explains, “As native Chicagoans, it’s not surprising that we are keenly aware of architecture, living in the birthplace of the skyscraper, a city filled with buildings designed by architectural legends such as Louis Sullivan, Frank Lloyd Wright, Mies van der Rohe, and many others.”

He continues, “In 1967, our company acquired an unfinished building which was to become the Hyatt Regency Atlanta. Its soaring atrium was wildly successful and became the signature piece of our hotels around the world. It was immediately apparent that this design had a pronounced effect on the mood of our guests and attitude of our employees. While the architecture of Chicago made us cognizant of the art of architecture, our work with designing and building hotels made us aware of the impact architecture could have on human behavior.”

And he elaborates further, “So in 1978, when the family was approached with the idea of honoring living architects, we were responsive. Mom and Dad (Cindy and the late Jay A. Pritzker) believed that a meaningful prize would encourage and stimulate not only a greater public awareness of buildings, but also would inspire greater creativity within the architectural profession.” He went on to add that he is extremely proud to carry on that effort on behalf of his family.

Many of the procedures and rewards of the Pritzker Prize are modeled after the Nobel Prize. Laureates of the Pritzker Architecture Prize receive a \$100,000 grant, a formal citation certificate, and since 1987, a bronze medal. Prior to that year, a limited edition Henry Moore sculpture was presented to each Laureate.

Nominations are accepted from all nations; from government officials, writers, critics, academicians, fellow architects, architectural societies, or industrialists, virtually anyone who might have an interest in advancing great architecture. The prize is awarded irrespective of nationality, race, creed, gender or ideology.

The nominating procedure is continuous from year to year, closing in November each year. Nominations received after the closing are automatically considered in the following calendar year. The final selection is made by an international jury with all deliberation and voting performed in secret.

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The Evolution of the Jury

The first jury assembled in 1979 consisted of the late J. Carter Brown, then director of the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.; the late J. Irwin Miller, then chairman of the executive and finance committee of Cummins Engine Company; Cesar Pelli, architect and at the time, dean of the Yale University School of Architecture; Arata Isozaki, architect from Japan; and the late Kenneth Clark (Lord Clark of Saltwood), noted English author and art historian.

The jury that selected the 2010 laureate comprised the Chairman from England, Lord Palumbo, well-known architectural patron and former chairman of the Arts Council of Great Britain, former chairman of the Tate Gallery Foundation, former trustee of the Mies van der Rohe Archives of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, and chairman of the trustees, Serpentine Galleries; Alejandro Aravena, architect and executive director of Elemental, Santiago, Chile; Carlos Jimenez, a principal of Carlos Jimenez Studio and professor at the Rice University School of Architecture in Houston, Texas; Glenn Murcutt, architect and 2002 Pritzker Laureate; Juhani Pallasmaa, architect, professor and author, Helsinki, Finland; Renzo Piano architect and 1998 Pritzker Laureate, of Paris, France and Genoa, Italy; and Karen Stein, writer, editor and architectural consultant in New York, and former editorial director of Phaidon Press.

As the year 2011 began, Renzo Piano and Carlos Jimenez retired from the jury. Another Pritzker Laureate from 2004, Zaha Hadid, and U.S. Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer, and Yung Ho Chang, architect and educator of Beijing, The People's Republic of China, were all announced as new jurors.

Others who have served include the late Thomas J. Watson, Jr., former chairman of IBM; the late Giovanni Agnelli, former chairman of Fiat; Toshio Nakamura, former editor of A+U in Japan; and American architects including the late Philip Johnson, Frank Gehry and Kevin Roche; as well as architects Ricardo Legorreta of Mexico, Fumihiko Maki of Japan, and Charles Correa of India, the Lord Rothschild of the UK; Ada Louise Huxtable, author and architecture critic of the Wall Street Journal; Jorge Silvetti, architect and professor of architecture at Harvard University; Balkrishna Vithaldas Doshi, architect, planner and professor of architecture from Ahmedabad, India; Shigeru Ban, architect and professor at Keio University, Tokyo, Japan; and Victoria Newhouse, architectural historian and author, founder and director of the Architectural History Foundation, New York, New York; and Rolf Fehlbaum, chairman of the board of Vitra, Basel, Switzerland.

Martha Thorne became the executive director of the prize in 2005. She was associate curator of architecture at the Art Institute of Chicago for ten years. While there, she curated such exhibitions as *The Pritzker Architecture Prize: The First Twenty Years*, as well as *Modern Trains and Splendid Stations and Bilbao: The Transformation of a City*. The author of numerous books and articles on contemporary architecture, she also served as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Graham Foundation and is currently on the board of the International Archive of Women in Architecture. This past year she was named Associate Dean for External Relations, IE School of Architecture, Madrid, Spain.

Bill Lacy, architect and advisor to the J. Paul Getty Trust and many other foundations, as well as a professor at State University of New York at Purchase, served as executive director of the prize from 1988 through 2005. Previous secretaries to the jury were the late Brendan Gill, who was architecture critic of *The New Yorker* magazine; and the late Carleton Smith. From the prize's founding until his death in 1986. The late Arthur Drexler, who was the director of the department of architecture and design at The Museum of Modern Art in New York City, was a consultant to the jury for many years.

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Pritzker Ceremonies Through the Years

Soon after establishing the Pritzker Architecture Prize in 1979, the Pritzker family began a tradition of moving the award ceremonies to architecturally and historically significant venues throughout the world. Befitting a truly international prize, the ceremony has been held in fourteen countries on four continents spanning from North and South America to Europe to the Middle East to Far East Asia.

For the first two years of the Prize, the ceremony was held at historic Dumbarton Oaks in the Georgetown neighborhood of Washington, D.C. where the first Laureate Philip Johnson designed a major addition to the estate. Indeed, for six of its first seven years, the prize was awarded in the District of Columbia. Its fourth year, the ceremony traveled for the first time – to the Art Institute of Chicago — but it wasn't until 1986 that the Pritzker was awarded internationally. That year, the ceremony was held in London.

Since then, the Pritzker Prize ceremony has been held at international venues more often than in the United States. Europe has hosted the ceremony ten times in seven countries, twice each in the United Kingdom, Spain and Italy. The Pritzker ceremony has visited some of the Old World's most beautiful and historic locales, old and new, from the 9th century Prague Castle in the Czech Republic to Bilbao's Guggenheim Museum, opened in 1997.

Beyond Europe and the U.S., the prize has traveled twice each to the Middle East, East Asia and Latin America. Last year the Prize ceremony was held for the first time in China. Coincidentally, Chinese architect Wang Shu was the Laureate and received the award in Beijing's Great Hall of the People. Shu was not the first architect to be so honored in his home country but as ceremony locations are usually chosen each year long before the laureate is selected, there is no direct relationship between the honoree and the ceremony venue.

As architecture is as much art as design, the Pritzker Prize ceremony has been held in numerous museums especially in the United States. New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fort Worth's Kimball Museum and Washington D.C.'s National Gallery of Art have hosted the Pritzker. Libraries too, have been a popular venue choice, including 2013's site: the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum. Other examples include the Harold Washington Library in Chicago, the Library of Congress and the Huntington Library, Arts Collections and Botanical Gardens near Los Angeles. The other ceremony held in Los Angeles took place at the Getty Center in 1996, which was designed by Pritzker Laureate Richard Meier. At the time, the museum was only partially completed.

The Prize ceremony often visits newly opened or unfinished buildings. In 2005, the ceremony was held at the new Jay Pritzker Pavilion at Chicago's Millennium Park, which was designed by Laureate Frank Gehry. It was the second Gehry-designed building that hosted the ceremony, the first being the Guggenheim Museum in Spain. Frank Gehry himself was awarded the Prize in 1989 at Todai-ji in Nara, Japan. Along with Monticello in Virginia and the Palace of Versailles in France, this 8th century Buddhist temple is one of three UNESCO World Heritage sites to host the ceremony. Other historically-important venues for the Pritzker include the Jerusalem Archaeological Park. With the ceremony at the foot of the Temple Mount, it was the Pritzker's oldest venue. The Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg, comprised of palaces of the Russian czars, hosted the 2004 ceremony that honored the first female winner of the Award, Zaha Hadid. For the Pritzker Prize's first visit to Latin America in 1991, the ceremony was held at the Palace of Iturbide in Mexico City where the first Emperor of Mexico was crowned.

Modern-day heads of state have been among the many dignitaries to attend Pritzker ceremonies. U.S. Presidents Clinton and Obama attended ceremonies in Washington in 1998 and 2011 respectively. The former ceremony was held at the White House. The King of Spain attended the 2003 ceremony at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts of San Fernando in Madrid. The Prime Minister of Turkey and the President of Czech Republic also each attended ceremonies when held in their respective countries.

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Pritzker Ceremonies Through the Years (continued)

Like the architects it honors, the Pritzker Prize has often bucked convention, holding its ceremonies in unique spaces. In 1994, when French architect Christian de Portzamparc received the prize, the community of Columbus, Indiana was honored. Because of the support of then-Pritzker juror J. Irwin Miller, numerous notable architects designed buildings in the small Midwest city. In 2010 the ceremony was held in the middle of New York Harbor at Ellis Island's Immigration Museum. Eight years before, the ceremony took place on one of the seven traditional hills of Rome in Michaelangelo's monumental Piazza di Campidoglio.

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