

Jay A. Pritzker 1984 Laureate Richard Meier Ceremony Speech

Thank you Carlton. In the short period that this prize has been in existence it seems that we are establishing some instant traditions. Last year, the award was presented to I.M. Pei in the Temple of Dendur at the Metropolitan Museum in New York, which was designed by Kevin Roche, the previous year's laureate. This year we're in I.M. Pei's beautiful East Building to bestow this year's honor. In some ways being in Washington points out one of the primary purposes of this prize, which was among other things to overcome the relative anonymity of architecture. In a city that is a showcase to the world filled with beautiful buildings, I think few of us would know the names of any of the architects responsible. This building and Mr. Pei are probably the single exception, or certainly one of the few exceptions, and I think most of us would be hard pressed to name John Russell Pope as the designer of the original National Gallery. By focusing attention on these talented individuals working in our period to surround our activities, we hope to foster recognition, and stimulate greater creativity and an improved environment. It's not easy to select one living architect from so many talented people around the world. We have a panel of jurors, that Carlton [Smith] has mentioned, who really have put in an enormous amount of effort in the past to choose the former laureates and this year to choose Richard. I understand that Aristotle some twenty-three centuries ago said that, "The aim of art is to represent not the outward appearance of things but their inward significance. For this, and not the external mannerism and detail, is true reality." That expresses as well as I could our view. On behalf of my family and the Hyatt Foundation, I want to present to Richard Meier the symbol of the prize. May you bring us much more true reality with your art of architecture.

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