

Oscar Niemeyer 1988 Laureate Ceremony Acceptance Speech

First were the thick stone walls, the arches, then the domes and vaults - of the architect, searching out for wider spaces.

Now it is concrete-reinforced that gives our imagination flight with its soaring spans and uncommon cantilevers. Concrete, to which architecture is integrated, through which it is able to discard the foregone conclusions of rationalism, with its monotony and repetitious solutions.

A concern for beauty, a zest for fantasy, and an ever-present element of surprise bear witness that today's architecture is not a minor craft bound to straight-edge rules, but an architecture imbued with technology: light, creative and unfettered, seeking out its architectural scene.

As Charles Baudelaire once said, "The unexpected, the irregular, the surprise, the amazing are an essential part and characteristic of beauty."

And this, my friends, is what I have to say about architecture, a practice that has held me fast over the years, to my drawing board, at the beck and call of governments in compliance with the ruling classes, indignant at the misery that weighs upon a world socially unjust, a misery ignored, which our profession is powerless to better.

It is with regret that I am unable to attend the ceremony, and with great pleasure that I receive the prize with which I have been honored.

© The Hyatt Foundation / The Pritzker Architecture Prize

For more information, please contact:

Eunice Kim
Director of Communications
The Pritzker Architecture Prize
Tel: +1 240 401 5649
Email: eunicekim@pritzkerprize.com