

Thomas J. Pritzker 2001 Laureates Jacques Herzog & Pierre de Meuron Ceremony Speech

Thank you, Carter. Carter is too fantastic. He can give an eloquent speech at the drop of a hat and we appreciate everything you've done. When the prize was established twenty-two years ago, it was determined that it would be for living architects. At the same time, understanding our debt to the past, we decided to hold ceremonies in various places of historic or architectural significance. Last year, we were presenting the prize in the shadow of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, a two thousand year old street. Another year, we were in Japan at a thousand year old Buddhist temple called Todai-ji. I think those two places certainly filled the bill for historical places. As for architecturally significant places, two years ago, I think it was, we presented the prize at Carl Friedrich Schinkel's Altes Museum and had the reception at the New National Gallery by Mies van der Rohe in Berlin.

Schinkel has been called the father of the modern movement and Mies van der Rohe, of course, has made significant contributions to our skyline in Chicago. We used both of their buildings in ninety-nine when we presented the prize to Lord Foster of the United Kingdom, and somewhere, Norman is here and we're delighted that you could be with us here tonight. Lord Foster designed a beautiful cultural center in Nîmes, France adjacent to the Maison Carrée, a Roman Corinthian temple that was an important influence on Thomas Jefferson when he was Ambassador to France. Jefferson wrote to his friend: "Sitting here, I'm gazing whole hours at the Maison Carrée like a lover at his mistress." There's no question that being here in Thomas Jefferson's Monticello is a special treat. It's both historically and architecturally significant. We're most grateful to the Thomas Jefferson Foundation and to Dan Jordan and his associates for welcoming us in this beautiful example of Jefferson's work. I also want to thank the University of Virginia for the opportunity to visit some of the wonderful buildings done by Jefferson. Had there been a Pritzker prize two hundred years ago, Jefferson certainly would've been selected as one of its Laureates.

Carter Brown is chairman of the jury and our family owes Carter our undying gratitude for being the guiding light for our juries for the past twenty-two years. He took his task on when he still had the enormous responsibility for directing the National Gallery of Art and yet he did it with a seriousness of purpose that really has resulted in the Prize as we know it today. There's no question that the jury is the most important aspect of this prize. Although the various members of the panel have changed over the years, the quality of their selections has never wavered, nor have they ever been predictable. They never go for the obvious and this year is no exception. In fact, the history of the prize, we've only awarded it to two architects in the same year once before.

That occasion was the tenth anniversary of the prize when the jury was deadlocked on two totally different architects, one from Brazil, Oscar Niemeyer and the other from this country, Gordon Bunshaft, so they decided to give the prize to both of them. This year, two architects work so closely together that each one compliments the abilities and talents of the other. Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron have a long-term, true collaboration making it impossible to honor one without the other. Their story is well known by now.

Thomas J. Pritzker, 2001 Laureates Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron (continued)

In the middle of our country, they'll be working on an addition to the Walker Art Center Complex in Minneapolis and those are just the tip of the iceberg. They have numerous other projects here and abroad that will keep us watching with interest for many years to come. As one of our jurors put it, they have the capacity to astonish. If you'll please join me here, on behalf on our family and the Hyatt Foundation, I'd like to present the Pritzker Architectural Prize of 2001 to Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron.

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