

**Glenn Murcutt**

## **2017 Laureates Rafael Aranda, Carme Pigem and Ramon Vilalta Ceremony Speech**

Your majesties, the Emperor and Empress of Japan; Deputy Prime Minister Taro Aso; Tom and Margot Pritzker and members of the Pritzker family; ladies and gentlemen: Good evening. I would like to extend a special welcome to past Pritzker Prize laureates who are here with us: Tadao Ando, Shigeru Ban, Toyo Ito, Thom Mayne, Ryue Nishizawa, Kazuyo Sejima, and Wang Shu. Can each of you please stand. I'm also pleased to present my colleagues on the jury: Yung Ho Chang, Kristen Feireiss, Richard Rogers, Benedetta Tagliabue and Ratan Tata; if you could all please stand. Jurors Stephen Breyer and Peter Palumbo were not able to join us, though are here with us in spirit.

Can a work of architecture be both modest and bold at the same time?

Can a building abstain from any outward sign of excess even as it exudes a passion for architecture itself? Can it be thoroughly modern in its appearance yet illuminate the value of its historic context? These are the questions at the heart of the work of Rafael Aranda, Carme Pigem and Ramon Vilalta who we celebrate this evening as the 2017 laureates of the Pritzker Prize in Architecture. Tonight, here in Tokyo, where the traditions of architecture in Japan have touched the soul and guided the hand of generations of architects from around the world, we are in just the right place to ponder such issues.

In honoring an architecture that is embedded in the historic towns of Catalonia, Spain yet one that extends beyond any boundaries of time and place, I am reminded of the words of Japan's first Pritzker laureate, Kenzo Tange, from his beautiful book, "Katsura: Tradition and Creation in Japanese Architecture." Tange wrote of that masterpiece of Japanese architecture, and I quote, that Katsura Palace, "reveals a simple, straightforward spirit of freedom, never blatantly insistent but nonetheless tenacious and compelling. There is a marvelous balance between stillness and movement, between the aristocratic and the common, between perfection of form and sheer invention."

What Tange's eloquent words make clear is that creativity fuses a deep understanding of the culture and customs that came before with a deep empathy for the world around us, today. As the architects show us, creativity is a process of engagement—with place, with history, with ideas, and, ultimately, with one another. The poetry of their architecture is not a result of making a choice between tradition and creation, modesty and boldness, or simplicity and complexity, but rather it comes from recognizing that these pairs of seeming opposites are in fact two paths to the same destination. Like scientists trying to uncover the natural order, we architects use our eyes as our microscope in the pursuit of answers; we seek to uncover the truths that are all around us, if we only look closely enough. Rafael, Carme and Ramon have said that their extraordinary collaboration over the past 30 years represents six hands and one voice. I would add that it also represents three minds that are constantly searching to uncover that which is truly essential, authentic and—ultimately—eternal in architecture.

Being inside their buildings is to be reminded that the best architecture makes us feel just a split second before it makes us think. We sense the power and passion of a building and then we look to understand what makes it so. We see that architecture and landscape, outside and inside, and, even, new and old, are not in opposition but rather are intertwined to such effect that it's not clear where one stops and the other begins. Whatever the purpose or scale of their buildings, the spirit is generous and expansive while the architecture itself is reduced to its absolute essence. This is, indeed, the "marvelous balance" Tange spoke of: a sublime statement of human dignity that suspends time and, as a result, remains forever relevant. On behalf of the entire jury of the Pritzker Architecture Prize, I congratulate the 2017 laureates, Rafael Aranda, Carme Pigem and Ramon Vilalta.

**Aranda, Pigem and Vilalta, 2017 Laureates (continued)**

Now, I have the pleasure to introduce Tom Pritzker, who will present the Prize.

Thank you.

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