

Bill Lacy 2002 Laureate Glenn Murcutt Ceremony Speech

Thank you very much, Mr. Mayor. Welcome again, architects, friends of architecture, and friends and admirers of Glenn Murcutt. The part of Carter Brown, our illustrious long-time chairman who normally presides over these occasions, will be played by Bill Lacy this evening. A serious illness has prevented Carter from being with us.

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the twenty-fourth ceremony awarding the Pritzker Architecture Prize in the most perfect city for such an event; a city that still, after 2000 years remains the pinnacle of architectural achievement and architectural heritage.

In the United States, any city that possessed one square block of Rome would declare itself a tourist destination. But Rome displays its centuries old riches casually, the way a great poet can be generous with words because the supply is seemingly inexhaustible. Every street in Rome, every façade, every stone, every vista down a street or across the Tiber is a special visual treat. In my correspondence with your great Italian critic, the late Bruno Zevi, I remember one line, "ah, Bill, it is April and Rome is beautiful, it is cruel." I knew exactly what he meant. Rome is the world's greatest outdoor museum of architecture, without boundaries and without preciousness. *I love Rome*. But before I get carried away figuratively or actually, I should get on with the program.

The selection of a prize winner can only, in the end, be as good as those doing the selecting, and this year's jury, whom I will now introduce, represent the wisdom and experience that is reflected in their choices each year.

The jury members are, beginning with our incredible chairman, J. Carter Brown, who is regrettably missing the first ceremony since the prize's inception in 1979. Mr. Brown is the renowned director emeritus of the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.; chairman of the Fine Arts Commission, advisor to presidents and first ladies on aesthetic and artistic matters involving art and architecture during numerous administrations. If we had a minister of the arts in the United States, the choice would be obvious. We miss you, Carter, as much as you miss being here on this auspicious occasion.

Ms. Ada Louise Huxtable, distinguished architecture critic and author, winner of the Pulitzer Prize, winner of the McArthur Award and many other richly deserved honors. You can read her criticisms currently in the *Wall Street Journal* and the *New York Review of Books*.

You have already heard about Avvocato Giovanni Agnelli's role in, in obtaining the permission to be here this evening in this great space. He is the Chairman and CEO Emeritus of the esteemed Fiat Corporation and an avid patron of architecture. He has been indispensable to the jury over the years and we are especially indebted to him for this evening.

Jorge Silvetti, architect partner in the widely acclaimed firm of Machado and Silvetti. He has been chairman of the School of Architecture at Harvard for the past seven years.

Carlos Jimenez, architect originally from Costa Rica, now a member of the faculty at Rice University in Houston where he practices. He has an impressive and growing list of exceptional buildings to his credit. Lord Jacob Rothschild, whose long-standing interest in art, architecture, historic preservation and archaeology make him an essential member of this formidable jury.

Bill Lacy, 2002 Laureate Glenn Murcutt (continued)

There are other distinguished guests whose presence I am pleased to note. I would like to quickly introduce them as well. They are architects who have received the Pritzker Architecture Prize in the past. Lord Norman Foster, Frank Gehry, Gottfried Boehm, Renzo Piano, Sverre Fehn, and Christian de Portzamparc. If I've left out anyone, God help me. And I would like to introduce a very special and honored guest, the honorable Murray Cobban, Australian Ambassador to Italy; and Adele Chatfield-Taylor, President of the American Academy in Rome. Thank you. The Pritzker Architecture Prize was created to honor architecture as an important field, one which was omitted in the largely scientific endeavors acknowledged by the Nobel Prizes. It was also intended to raise the general public's awareness of the importance that architecture plays in all our lives.

Occasionally the prize jury feels the obligation to serve as a compass in today's media driven culture and to remind us that architecture is a long-term proposition, that building great buildings is more important than getting great publicity. Tonight's honoree, Glenn Marcus Murcutt exemplifies that attitude as do his buildings. He has toiled many years in his native Australia to produce an exquisite and singular collection of works that hew to the principles that have always produced great buildings, large and small. His is an architecture of a quintessential purities, simplicity and beauty, an architecture of modesty, an architecture of greatness. And to present the prize to Glenn Murcutt, it is my further honor now to introduce Thomas Pritzker who continues the legacy of his late father, Jay, and who, with his mother, Cindy, plays a hands-on role in the administration of the prize each year including staging this magnificent venue in Rome. Thomas Pritzker is a man of many interests—Indian scholar, art collector, architecture groupie, author, successful businessman and entrepreneur; he will present this year's 2002 Pritzker Architecture Prize at this time.

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For more information, please contact:

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