

J. Carter Brown 1996 Laureate Sverre Fehn Ceremony Speech

Your Excellency, distinguished guests, and ladies and gentlemen. The man who starts the program can't introduce himself, but Bill Lacy is the Executive Director of the Pritzker Prize and has been so helpful to our Jury. I have a wonderful Jury, and the Pritzker Prize is very fortunate to have such a distinguished and international group, and I would like simply to introduce them to you here tonight. Only one of our number could not be here tonight, but he was here yesterday, Giovanni Agnelli, Chairman of Fiat, who is from Italy. Many people think he is Italy, and he had to go back. But we do have from Tokyo, Toshio Nakamura. Toshio, do you want to stand? The Chairman of the Graduate School of Design at Harvard, who started life in Argentina, of Italian ancestry, Jorge Silvetti. Ada Louise Huxtable is a byword in the architectural firmament for critical excellence, having been the architecture critic of the New York Times, Ada Louise. Charles Correa of Bombay, India, is in his own right a winner of the gold medals of the International Union of Architects and the Royal Institute of British Architects, as well as the Aga Khan Prize, and is a great intellectual and connoisseur.

I would be remiss if I didn't point out one other juror who is not currently on the Jury but used to be. His name is Frank Gehry.

As you know, this fabulous building is not only a work of art. One, at least, of its functions is to be a setting for great works of art. And when you go down to dinner tonight, you will see one of them. It weighs only a hundred and seventy-four tons, and the man who brought it here and created it is also here, Richard Serra.

But we are here tonight, as has been said, because of the current winner, who will be introduced by someone who really symbolizes the other aspect of architecture that often is not given its proper due. And that is patronage. We are in a setting which is the result of the enlightened patronage of the Basque Country. We are about to see also works of art which will have been provided by them. And the idea of being the patron of buildings has been extended by Jay and Cindy Pritzker to being patrons of the idea of architecture itself.

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