

Milan Uhde 1993 Laureate Fumihiko Maki Ceremony Speech

President, Chamber of Deputies
Parliament of the Czech Republic

Mr. President Mrs. Havlova, ladies and gentlemen, it is my blessed task to salute today's great event, the presentation of this year's Pritzker Architecture Prize.

First of all, let me pay homage to Mr. Pritzker's idea to select Prague Castle as the venue for awarding this splendid prize which bears his name, it is a gem of historical architecture which integrates different styles into an organic whole, as if history itself were the main architect of this monument.

Of all forms of art, architecture is most closely tied to life. Like a poet who dreams, an architect is at the same time a servant devoted to an aim. I will never forget a short text in which, at the beginning of this century, Adolf Loos of Vienna expressed his tribute to the shape of the roofs on rural abodes in the Alps—explaining at the same time that this shape had been born from the farmers' efforts to deal with the high layer of snow that falls in the Alps every year.

The spirit of beauty and the spirit of purpose form in architecture a holy trinity with the spirit which causes us to feel at home in an architect's work. It is increasingly more difficult to keep this trinity together and in balance. The world is growing more and more international; new building materials appear and offer new opportunities but also a temptation of unification.

This year's Pritzker Prize, the world's most prestigious award, was ascribed by the distinguished jury to a Japanese architect, Mr. Fumihiko Maki. I am happy to greet in him a distinctly Japanese and simultaneously a distinctly global creative artist. I am aware that he described the European Bauhaus, that wonderful cradle of many an idea and many a materialization, as one of his starting points. I am aware that after training in the U.S.A., he worked intensively and diligently in his own country, but that through his artistic empathy he could, and can, create homes for people in other countries as well.

I am impressed by architecture also due to the fact that in its order it synthesizes creative individuality with the principle of teamwork. Mr. Fumihiko Maki is not only the leader of a team but also a teacher, which is a higher level of team work and lays the foundations for the artist's immortality in a natural way.

In his latest novel the author Milan Kundera declared longing for immortality to be a special obsession of creative people. Allegedly, immortality for them is complicated by expounders who distort their work and foist their dubious interpretation on it.

Like every great architect, Mr. Fumihiko Maki touches immortality much more immediately than artists of other forms. In his works, people live and will live — and in fact, expounders will not have any opportunity to interlope between the author and the audience.

You have certainly noticed that what I say is an attempt at praise of architecture.

Our poems, novels, plays, pictures, symphonic compositions, songs and films may escape our mind as soon as our eyes or ears cease to perceive them. But an architect's creation becomes a wonderful and permanent part of our life, its expression and its monument.

Milan Uhde, 1993 Laureate Fumihiko Maki (continued)

Praise be on the work that has been done by Mr. Fumihiko Maki and which ranks him among the leading architects of today's world. This is continued by the bronze medallion which commemorates architecture's features by Vitruvius: *firmitas, utilitas, venustas*—firmness, utility and beauty.

Esteemed Maestro, let me congratulate you cordially to the Pritzker Prize award, let me congratulate all architects to their today's informal global holiday.

Sincere thanks to all those who have merit for this evening, the joy and elation that mark it.

Good evening to all of you.

© 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