

Tadao Ando 1995 Laureate Ceremony Acceptance Speech

Thank you very much. Thank you. For the past thirty years, I've been engaged in architectural work, and I'm not at all a good speaker. And I feel very sorry that it's so inconvenient for you to put on your headphones because of my linguistic incapability. In 1965, I came to France to see the architecture of Le Corbusier utilizing the Siberian train, and the first place I visited in France was Versailles. And at that time, I never thought that I would be awarded, here in this chateau.

Today I am overwhelmed by receiving the Pritzker Prize. From deep in my heart, I would like to thank every member of the jury as well as the people of the Hyatt Foundation who established and administer the prize.

I believe that there are two separate dimensions coexisting in architecture. One is substantive and concerns function, security and economy, inasmuch as architecture accommodates human living, it cannot ignore these elements of the real. However, can architecture be architecture with this alone? Since architecture is a form of human expression, when it steps out of the exigencies of sheer construction toward the realm of aesthetics, the question of architecture as art arises. It is at this point that the other dimension, imagination, comes into play.

When the Hanshin Earthquake struck recently, causing such extreme disaster, too many buildings and houses collapsed, and more than 5000 people lost their lives. Although more than thirty of my building projects throughout that region were spared, this disaster is emphatically not someone else's problem. For me, a person born, raised, and now practicing in the Hanshin area, it is my sincere desire that after this earthquake, and in acknowledgment of Japan's precarious geographical situation in general, people will consider the security of architecture, specifically earthquake engineering and contingency planning, much more seriously than before. Originally architecture offered the most fundamental shelter from the elements. Then, that architectural theoretician of ancient Rome, Vitruvius, proposed three indispensable principles of architecture—*utilitas*, *venustas*, *firmitas*: *utilitas* is function (commodity) and *firmitas* is strength (firmness), both are measures of architectonic potential, while *venustas* (delight or beauty) resides in the dimension of imagination. (It is significant that these three principles are inscribed on the Pritzker Architecture Prize medallion.)

The modern architecture that I have been weaned on also espouses (clear) function, (exposed) structure, and (raw) material as principles—characteristics that tend to be accessed only from realistic or substantive dimensions. Fictionality or imagination, the other dimension, is omitted entirely. However, Vitruvius emphasized *venustas*, in other words attraction or beauty as a necessity along with strength and function. That is to say that he too, posed the fictional dimension of imagination combined with the realistic dimension as that synthesis which deeply effects human spirituality. Since the genesis of architecture, its fate has been that it cannot be constituted by functionality alone.

For me, making architecture is the same as thinking. For more than thirty years, I have been making architecture by going back and forth between ideals and reality, between the fictive and the substantive. My hope has been and continues to be, not only to solve realistic problems, but also to pursue the ideal by overlaying speculative imaginings. Furthermore, instead of allowing the ideal to remain simply as the ideal, my goal is to go beyond every obstacle and challenge, and realize a substantive architecture. That is to say that I have been trying to achieve a fictionality on the premise of constructing a space that humans actually use. Therefore, when I say fictionality of architecture, it does not mean simply a story or superficial decoration. It means the quality of a spatial experience composed of architectonic elements aimed at aesthetic perfection.

Tadao Ando, 1995 Laureate (continued)

What I have sought to achieve is a spatiality that stimulates the human spirit, awakens the sensitivity and communicates with the deeper soul. In order to construct the fictionality of architecture, one has to mobilize both reason and intuition together, seeking a space that is a new discover for oneself. This space must contain the notion of time as production of the new epoch, and simultaneously introduce specific regionality, historicity, geography and tradition. It is my pleasure as an architect to continue to think, to build, by engaging my full body to combine fiction and the actual into a space of a higher dimension.

Architecture is deemed complete only upon the intervention of the human that experiences it. In other words, architectural space becomes alive only in correspondence with the human presence that perceives it in our contemporary culture, where all of us are subjected to intense exterior stimulation, especially by the electronic environment, the role of architectural space as a spiritual shelter is crucial. Here again, what is of primary importance are the imagination and fictionality that architecture contains beyond the substantive. Without stepping into the ambiguous realm of the human spirit—happiness, affection, tranquility, tension—architecture cannot achieve its fictionality. This is truly architecture's proper realm, but it is also one that is impossible to formulate. Only after speculating the worlds of both the actual and the fictional together can architecture come into existence as an expression, and rise into the realm of art.

More than 500 children under the age of 18 lost a parent in the Hanshin Earthquake; 88 of them lost both parents and became orphans. I have proposed the establishment of a foundation in order to support the education of these children so that they can sustain their hopes for the future. To that end, I would like to contribute the hundred thousand dollar prize awarded to me today by The Hyatt Foundation towards this new foundation for these young earthquake victims. I hope that for the next ten years at least, with the help of five thousand colleagues and sympathizers to whom I will appeal, we can continue to support these children economically so that they can pursue their dreams. And I would like to continue to pursue my dreams as well, instilling these three elements: function, beauty, and strength in my architecture. Thank you very much.

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