

## Thomas J. Pritzker 2015 Laureate Frei Otto Ceremony Speech

Good evening and welcome to the 37th presentation of the Pritzker Prize for Architecture. As many of you know, the Pritzker Prize ceremony has traveled the world, from Versailles to the White House, from Todai-ji temple in Japan to the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. So now we are here in beautiful Miami Beach - why the greater Miami area? As my friend Sue Kronick has written, "Miami has one of the most organically diverse populations on the planet; and this building—the New World Center—demonstrates that great architecture, with purpose, can change communities and lives." We are here to celebrate both of those things tonight.

This year's ceremony and presentation of the award are unusual. On January 17, the Pritzker jury selected Frei Otto to be the 2015 laureate. A week later Frei Otto was told that he had been selected as this year's Pritzker laureate. On March 9, Frei Otto passed away. We're here tonight to honor and recognize the life accomplishments of a great and influential architect. Frei Otto is represented tonight by his daughter, Christine Otto-Kanstinger and her husband. Before I continue with my remarks, we thought it fitting for you to hear from Frei Otto in his own words on the occasion of his hearing the news that he was to be this year's Pritzker laureate.

*Video: Frei Otto in his studio near Stuttgart, Germany, February, 2015*

*I am 'frei.' I am free. I am Frei Otto. All the same. And you see a happy man, with a happy family, which has had a very happy life, a life full of work, and that's the reason that I am now so happy about this Pritzker Prize, and I thank the family of Pritzker very much that I had the opportunity. I never have done anything to gain this prize; not the prize-winning was the driving point of my architectural life, but that I tried really to help.*

*I have only one dream. One dream is the oldest dream of humanity, of man, in time. It is the paradise. I would like to give paradise to everyone: to fallen people, to poor people, even to the rich, but especially for fallen people. This is my hope. And if I could do it, I would like to do it.*

*For me it's quite clear that I will use some of the power — I will not say money — I will use the power of the prize in such a way. But I know that my time, which I will have, is limited. I don't know how many years I will have — if it's one day or one year, or one decade, I don't know — but I have to do something. I am not looking forward to sleep.*

*I will work every day, and this is the beauty. I learned from my family what is beauty. I learned that you can not make beauty: sit down and make beauty, that's not possible. But you can live beauty.*

*So I was very happy when I have heard that I will gain the Pritzker Prize; what shall be better for me? I could not wish that it could be better! You have here a happy man!*

So, it's been my normal practice to speak of the laureate before presenting the prize. Tonight's a departure in many ways. You've heard the words of the Chairman of our jury, Lord Peter Palumbo, you've also heard the words of our laureate. Tonight, my words will not be words, but rather, can I ask for a moment of silence, while we contemplate the words of our laureate.

**Thomas J. Pritzker, 2015 Laureate Frei Otto (continued)**

It's deeply satisfying that we were able to share this news with Frei Otto just a short time before he passed away. May I now call upon his daughter, an architect in her own right, Christine Otto-Kanstinger, to come forward and receive the prize on behalf of your father.

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