

The Pritzker Architecture Prize

2021 Laureates

Anne Lacaton and Jean-Philippe Vassal
France

Media Kit



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Contact

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

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Media Release Announcing the 2021 Laureates

Anne Lacaton and Jean-Philippe Vassal Receive the 2021 Pritzker Architecture Prize

Chicago, IL (March 16, 2021) – Anne Lacaton and Jean-Philippe Vassal, of France, have been selected as the 2021 Pritzker Architecture Prize Laureates, announced Tom Pritzker, Chairman of The Hyatt Foundation, which sponsors the award that is known internationally as architecture’s highest honor.

“Good architecture is open—open to life, open to enhance the freedom of anyone, where anyone can do what they need to do,” says Lacaton. “It should not be demonstrative or imposing, but it must be something familiar, useful and beautiful, with the ability to quietly support the life that will take place within it.”

Through their design of private and social housing, cultural and academic institutions, public spaces, and urban developments, Lacaton and Vassal reexamine sustainability in their reverence for pre-existing structures, conceiving projects by first taking inventory of what already exists. By prioritizing the enrichment of human life through a lens of generosity and freedom of use, they are able to benefit the individual socially, ecologically and economically, aiding the evolution of a city.

“Not only have they defined an architectural approach that renews the legacy of modernism, but they have also proposed an adjusted definition of the very profession of architecture. The modernist hopes and dreams to improve the lives of many are reinvigorated through their work that responds to the climatic and ecological emergencies of our time, as well as social urgencies, particularly in the realm of urban housing. They accomplish this through a powerful sense of space and materials that creates architecture as strong in its forms as in its convictions, as transparent in its aesthetic as in its ethics,” states the 2021 Jury Citation, in part.

The architects increase living space exponentially and inexpensively, through winter gardens and balconies that enable inhabitants to conserve energy and access nature during all seasons. Latapie House (Floirac, France 1993) was their initial application of greenhouse technologies to install a winter garden that allowed a larger residence for a modest budget. The east-facing retractable and transparent polycarbonate panels on the back side of the home allow natural light to illuminate the entire dwelling, enlarging its indoor communal spaces from the living room to the kitchen, and enabling ease of climate control.

“This year, more than ever, we have felt that we are part of humankind as a whole. Be it for health, political or social reasons, there is a need to build a sense of collectiveness. Like in any interconnected system, being fair to the environment, being fair to humanity, is being fair to the next generation,” comments Alejandro Aravena, Chair of the Pritzker Architecture Prize Jury. “Lacaton and Vassal are radical in their delicacy and bold through their subtleness, balancing a respectful yet straightforward approach to the built environment.”

On a grander scale, Lacaton and Vassal, alongside Frédéric Druot, transformed La Tour Bois le Prêtre (Paris, France 2011), a 17-story, 96-unit city housing project originally built in the early 1960s. The architects increased the interior square footage of every unit through the removal of the original concrete façade, and extended the footprint of the building to form bioclimatic balconies. Once-constrained living rooms now extend into new terraces as flexible space, featuring large windows for unrestricted views of the city, thus reimagining not only the aesthetic of social housing, but also the intention and possibilities of such communities within the urban geography. This framework was similarly applied to the transformation of three buildings (G, H and I), consisting of 530 apartments, at Grand Parc (Bordeaux, France 2017), with Druot and Christophe Hutin. The transformation resulted in a dramatic visual reinvention of the social housing complex, the modernization of elevators and plumbing, and the generous expansion of all units, some nearly doubling in size, without the displacement of any residents and for one third of the cost of demolishing and building new.

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Media Release (continued)

“Our work is about solving constraints and problems, and finding spaces that can create uses, emotions and feelings. At the end of this process and all of this effort, there must be lightness and simplicity, when all that has been before was so complex,” explains Vassal.

The architects rebalance dormant or inefficient rooms to yield open spaces that accommodate greater movement and changing needs, thus lengthening the longevity of the buildings. Their most recent transformation of Palais de Tokyo (Paris, France 2012), after a restoration of the space more than a decade earlier, increased the museum by 20,000 square meters, in part by creating new underground space, and assuring that every area of the building is reserved for the user experience. Retreating from white cube galleries and guided pathways that are characteristic of many contemporary art museums, the architects instead created voluminous, unfinished spaces. These spaces allow artists and curators to create boundless exhibitions for all mediums of art within a range of physical environments, from dark and cavernous to transparent and sunlit, that encourage visitors to linger.

Lacaton insists, “Transformation is the opportunity of doing more and better with what is already existing. The demolishing is a decision of easiness and short term. It is a waste of many things—a waste of energy, a waste of material, and a waste of history. Moreover, it has a very negative social impact. For us, it is an act of violence.”

Adhering to a precept of “never demolish”, Lacaton and Vassal undertake restrained interventions to upgrade dated infrastructure while allowing enduring properties of a building to remain. Rather than filling and losing the impressive void of the Atelier de Préfabrication no. 2 (AP2), a postwar shipbuilding facility at the shoreline of a waterfront redevelopment project, the architects chose to erect a second building, identical in shape and size to the first. They used transparent, prefabricated materials, resulting in unhindered views through the new to the old. The original landmark, designated for public programming, and the newer structure, FRAC Nord-Pas de Calais (Dunkerque, France 2013), housing galleries, offices and storage for the regional collections of contemporary art, can function independently or collaboratively. They are connected by an internal street located in the void between the two structures.

Much of their work encompasses new buildings, and the École Nationale Supérieure d’Architecture de Nantes (Nantes, France 2009) exemplifies the significance of freedom of use. To accommodate the range of pedagogies necessary for its growing student body, the plot was maximized and the architects were able to almost double the space outlined in the brief and do so within budget. Located at the bank of the Loire River, this large-scale, double-height, three-story building features a concrete and steel frame encased in retractable polycarbonate walls and sliding doors. Areas of various sizes exist throughout, and all spaces are deliberately unprescribed and adaptable. An auditorium can open to extend into the street, and high ceilings create generous spaces necessary for construction workshops. Even the wide, sloping ramp that connects the ground to the 2,000 square meter functional rooftop is intended as a flexible learning and gathering space.

“Anne Lacaton and Jean-Philippe Vassal have always understood that architecture lends its capacity to build a community for all of society,” remarks Pritzker. “Their aim to serve human life through their work, demonstration of strength in modesty, and cultivation of a dialogue between old and new, broadens the field of architecture.”

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Media Release (continued)

Significant works also include Cap Ferret House (Cap Ferret, France 1998), 14 social houses for Cité Manifeste (Mulhouse, France 2005); Pôle Universitaire de Sciences de Gestion (Bordeaux, France 2008); low-rise apartments for 53 units (Saint-Nazaire, France 2011), a multipurpose theater (Lille, 2013), Ourcq-Jaurès student and social housing (Paris, France 2013); a 59-unit social housing development at Jardins Neppert (Mulhouse, France 2014–2015); and a residential and office building in Chêne-Bourg (Geneva, Switzerland 2020).

They established their practice, Lacaton & Vassal, in Paris in 1987, and have completed over 30 projects throughout Europe and West Africa. Lacaton and Vassal are the 49th and 50th Laureates of the Pritzker Architecture Prize.

About the Pritzker Architecture Prize

The Pritzker Architecture Prize was founded in 1979 by the late Jay A. Pritzker and his wife, Cindy. Its purpose is to honor annually a living architect or architects whose built work demonstrates a combination of those qualities of talent, vision and commitment, which has produced consistent and significant contributions to humanity and the built environment through the art of architecture.

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Media Contact:

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

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Jury Citation

The work of Anne Lacaton and Jean-Philippe Vassal reflects architecture's democratic spirit. Through their ideas, approach to the profession, and the resulting buildings, they have proven that a commitment to a restorative architecture that is at once technological, innovative, and ecologically responsive can be pursued without nostalgia. This is the mantra of the team of Anne Lacaton and Jean-Philippe Vassal since founding their Paris-based firm in 1987. Not only have they defined an architectural approach that renews the legacy of modernism, but they have also proposed an adjusted definition of the very profession of architecture. The modernist hopes and dreams to improve the lives of many are reinvigorated through their work that responds to the climatic and ecological emergencies of our time, as well as social urgencies, particularly in the realm of urban housing. They accomplish this through a powerful sense of space and materials that creates architecture as strong in its forms as in its convictions, as transparent in its aesthetic as in its ethics. At once beautiful and pragmatic, they refuse any opposition between architectural quality, environmental responsibility, and the quest for an ethical society.

For more than 30 years, their critical approach to architecture has embodied generosity of space, ideas, uses and economy of means, materials, and also of shape and form. This approach has resulted in innovative projects for residential, cultural, educational, and commercial buildings. Since their early projects, including Latapie House, the private house in Bordeaux, and civic works such as the proposal for the Human Science Center in Saint-Denis or the School of Architecture in Nantes, they have shown sensitivity and warmth of experience to their buildings' users. The architects have expressed that buildings are beautiful when people feel well in them, when the light inside is beautiful and the air is pleasant, and when there is an easy flow between the interior and exterior.

The notion of belonging and being accountable to a larger whole involves not only fellow humans but the planet in general. From very early on, Anne Lacaton and Jean-Philippe Vassal have consistently expanded the notion of sustainability to be understood as a real balance between its economic, environmental and social pillars. Their work has delivered through a variety of projects that actively address responsibility in these three dimensions.

The practice begins every project with a process of discovery which includes intensely observing and finding value in what already exists. In the case of the 1996 commission, Léon Aucoc Plaza, their approach was simply to undertake the minimal work of replacing the gravel, treating the lime trees, and slightly modifying the traffic, all to grant renewed potential to what already existed.

In their housing projects for the transformation of the Paris block, Tour Bois le Prêtre, and three blocks in the Grand Parc neighborhood in Bordeaux (both realized with Frédéric Druot), instead of demolition and reconstruction they carefully added space to the existing buildings in the form of generous extensions, winter gardens and balconies that allow for freedom of use and therefore are supportive of the real lives of the residents. There is a humility in the approach that respects the aims of the original designers and the aspirations of the current occupants.

For the cultural center, FRAC Nord-Pas de Calais in Dunkirk, they chose to keep the original hall and attach a second one of similar dimensions to the existing building. Absent is nostalgia for the past. Rather, they seek transparency, openness, and luminosity with a respect for the inherited and a quest to act responsibly in the present. Today, a building that previously went unnoticed becomes an iconic element in a renewed cultural and natural landscape.

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Jury Citation (continued)

Through their belief that architecture is more than just buildings, through the issues they address and the proposals they realize, through forging a responsible and sometimes solitary path illustrating that the best architecture can be humble and is always thoughtful, respectful, and responsible, they have shown that architecture can have a great impact on our communities and contribute to the awareness that we are not alone. For their body of work realized and that of the future, Anne Lacaton and Jean-Philippe Vassal are named the 2021 Pritzker Prize Laureates.

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Jury Members

Alejandro Aravena (Chair)

Architect, Educator and 2016 Pritzker Laureate
Santiago, Chile

Barry Bergdoll

Architecture Historian, Educator, Curator and Author
New York, New York

Deborah Berke

Architect and Dean, Yale School of Architecture
New York, New York

Stephen Breyer

U.S. Supreme Court Justice
Washington, DC

André Aranha Corrêa do Lago

Architectural Critic, Curator and Brazilian Ambassador to India
Delhi, India

Kazuyo Sejima

Architect and 2010 Pritzker Laureate
Tokyo, Japan

Wang Shu

Architect, Educator and 2012 Pritzker Laureate
Hangzhou, China

Benedetta Tagliabue

Architect and Educator
Barcelona, Spain

Martha Thorne (Executive Director)

Dean, IE School of Architecture & Design
Madrid, Spain

Manuela Lucá-Dazio (Advisor)

Paris, France

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Biography

Anne Lacaton (1955, Saint-Pardoux, France) and Jean-Philippe Vassal (1954, Casablanca, Morocco) met in the late 1970s during their formal architecture training at École Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture et de Paysage de Bordeaux. Lacaton went on to pursue a Masters in Urban Planning from Bordeaux Montaigne University (1984), while Vassal relocated to Niger, West Africa to practice urban planning. Lacaton often visited Vassal, and it was there that the genesis of their architectural doctrine began, as they were profoundly influenced by the beauty and humility of sparing resources within the country's desert landscapes.

"Niger is one of the poorest countries in the world, and the people are so incredible, so generous, doing nearly everything with nothing, finding resources all the time, but with optimism, full of poetry and inventiveness. It was really a second school of architecture," recalls Vassal.

In Niamey, Niger, Lacaton and Vassal built their first joint project, a straw hut, constructed with locally sourced bush branches, which yielded surprising impermanence, relenting to the wind within two years of completion. They vowed to never demolish what could be redeemed and instead, make sustainable what already exists, thereby extending through addition, respecting the luxury of simplicity, and proposing new possibilities.

They established Lacaton & Vassal in Paris (1987), and have since demonstrated boldness through their design of new buildings and transformative projects. For over three decades, they have designed private and social housing, cultural and academic institutions, public space, and urban strategies. The duo's architecture reflects their advocacy of social justice and sustainability, by prioritizing a generosity of space and freedom of use through economical and ecological materials.

Providing physical and emotional wellbeing has also been intentional in their work. Their application of greenhouse technologies to create bioclimatic conditions began with Latapie House in Floirac, France (1993). Using the sun, in harmony with natural ventilation, solar shading and insulation, they created adjustable and desirable microclimates. "From very early on, we studied the greenhouses of botanic gardens with their impressive fragile plants, the beautiful light and transparency, and ability to simply transform the outdoor climate. It's an atmosphere and a feeling, and we were interested in bringing that delicacy to architecture," shares Lacaton.

Through both new construction and the transformation of buildings, honoring the pre-existing is authentic to their work. A private residence in Cap Ferret, France (1998) was built on an undeveloped plot along Arcachon Bay, with the goal of minimal disruption to the natural environment. Rather than fell the 46 trees on the site, the architects nurtured the native vegetation, elevating the home and constructing around the trunks that intersected it, allowing occupants to live among the plant life.

Lacaton explains, "the pre-existing has value if you take the time and effort to look at it carefully. In fact, it's a question of observation, of approaching a place with fresh eyes, attention and precision... to understand the values and the lacks, and to see how we can change the situation while keeping all the values of what is already there."

Their skillful selection of modest materials enables the architects to build larger living spaces affordably, as demonstrated by the construction of 14 single-family residences for a social housing development (2005), and 59 units within low-rise apartment buildings at Neppert Gardens (2015), both in Mulhouse, France; and in adjoining mid-rise buildings consisting of 96 units in Chalon-sur-Saône, France (2016); among others.

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Biography (continued)

Throughout their careers, the architects have rejected city plans calling for the demolition of social housing, focusing instead on designing from the inside out to prioritize the welfare of a building's inhabitants and their unanimous desires for larger spaces. Alongside Frédéric Druot and Christophe Hutin, they transformed 530 units within three buildings at Grand Parc in Bordeaux, France (2017) to upgrade technical functions but more notably, to add generous flexible spaces to each unit without displacing its residents during construction, and while maintaining rent stability for the occupants. "We never see the existing as a problem. We look with positive eyes because there is an opportunity of doing more with what we already have," states Lacaton. "We went to places where buildings would have been demolished and we met people, families who were attached to their housing, even if the situation was not the best. They were most often opposed to the demolition because they wished to stay in their neighborhood. It's a question of kindness," continues Vassal.

Current works in progress include the housing transformations of a former hospital into a 138-unit, mid-rise apartment building in Paris, France, and an 80-unit, mid-rise building in Anderlecht, Belgium; the transformation of an office building in Paris, France; mixed-use buildings offering hotel and commercial space in Toulouse, France; and a 40-unit, private housing, mid-rise building in Hamburg, Germany.

"Good architecture is a space where something special happens, where you want to smile, just because you are there," shares Vassal. "It is also a relationship with the city, a relationship with what you see, and a place where you are happy, where people feel well and comfortable—a space that gives emotions and pleasures."

Lacaton is an associate professor of Architecture and Design at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology ETH Zurich (Zurich, Switzerland, since 2017), and a visiting professor at Polytechnic University of Madrid, Master in Housing (Madrid, Spain, since 2007). She has been a visiting professor at Delft University of Technology (Delft, Netherlands, 2016–2017) and Technische Hochschule Nürnberg Georg Simon Ohm (Nürnberg, Germany, 2014); was the Design Critic in Architecture (2015) and the Kenzo Tange Visiting Chair in Architecture and Urban Planning (2011) at Harvard Graduate School of Design (Cambridge, MA); and the Clarkson Chair at the University of Buffalo (Buffalo, NY, 2013). She served on the LafargeHolcim Awards jury for Europe (2017) and will be a member of the 2021 jury later this year.

Vassal is an associate professor at Universität der Künste Berlin (Berlin, Germany since 2012) and has previously taught at Technische Universität Berlin (Berlin, Germany, 2007–10); Peter Behrens School of Arts at the University of Applied Sciences (Dusseldorf, Germany, 2005); École Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture de Versailles (Versailles, France, 2002–2006); and École Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture et de Paysage de Bordeaux (1992–99). He was head of the jury for LafargeHolcim Awards, Europe (2014) and a juror (2008 & 2011).

Together, they have held visiting professorships at Sassari University in Alghero (Alghero, Italy, 2014–2015); the Pavilion Neuize OBC-Palais de Tokyo (Paris, France, 2013–14); and the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (Lausanne, Switzerland, 2010–11). Lacaton and Vassal are the recipients of the BDA Grand Prize, 2020; Global Award for Sustainable Architecture, Cité de l'Architecture & du Patrimoine, 2018, with Druot; Académie d'Architecture, Gold Medal, 2016; the Heinrich Tessenow Medal, 2016; the Rolf Schock Prize, Visual Arts, 2014; Daylight & Building Components Award, Villum Foundation and Velux Foundation, 2011; the International Fellowship from the Royal Institute of British Architects, 2009; the Grand Prix National d'Architecture, France, 2008; and the Schelling Architecture Award, 2006.

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Biography (continued)

Their practice, Lacaton & Vassal, has been awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award, Trienal de Lisboa (2016); and the Fundació Mies van der Rohe, European Union Prize for Contemporary Architecture (2019) along with Frédéric Druot Architecture and Christophe Hutin Architecture for the transformation of 530 Dwellings at Grand Parc, Bordeaux.

Joint publications include *freespace* (Anne Lacaton & Jean-Philippe Vassal, on the occasion of the 16th International Architecture Exhibition, La Biennale di Venezia, 2018), *The Incidents. Freedom of Use* (Harvard University Graduate School of Design, Sternberg Press, 2015), *PLUS: Large Scale Housing Development. An Exceptional Case* with Druot (Editorial Gustavo Gili, SL, 2007), and *Il fera beau demain* (Anne Lacaton & Jean Philippe Vassal, Institut Français d'Architecture, 1995).

They work and reside in Paris, France.

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Fact Summary

BUILT WORKS

- 2021** 18 Units, Low-Rise Apartments, Social Housing, Rixheim, France
- 2020** Residential and Office Building, Chêne-Bourg, Geneva, Switzerland
- 2019** Hotel Lacoste Dakar (opening pending completion of interiors), Dakar, Senegal
- 2017** Transformation of G, H, I Buildings, Grand Parc, 530 Units, Social Housing (with Frédéric Druot and Christophe Hutin), Bordeaux, France
- 2016** 96 Units, Mid-Rise Apartments, Social Housing, Chalon-sur-Saône, France
Transformation of 40 Units, Mid-Rise Apartments, Phase 2, Social Housing, Saint-Nazaire, France
- 2014–
2015** 59 Units, Low-Rise Apartments, Jardins Neppert, Social Housing, Mulhouse, France
- 2014** Addition of 40 Units, Mid-Rise Apartments, Phase 1, Social Housing, Saint-Nazaire, France
- 2013** 129 Units, Ourcq-Jaurès Student and Social Housing, Paris, France
FRAC Nord-Pas de Calais, Dunkerque, France
Multipurpose Theater, Lille, France
- 2012** 50,000 Units, Urban Planning, Bordeaux, France
Site for Contemporary Creation, Phase 2, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France
- 2011** 53 Units, Low-Rise Apartments, Social Housing, Saint-Nazaire, France
Transformation of 100 Units, Tour Bois le Prêtre (with Frédéric Druot), Social Housing, Paris, France
- 2010** 23 Units, Low-Rise Apartments, Social Housing, Trignac, Saint-Nazaire, France
- 2009** École Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture de Nantes, Nantes, France
- 2008** Pôle Universitaire de Sciences de Gestion, Bordeaux, France
- 2007** Aue Pavilion, Documenta 12, Kassel, Germany
Exhibition Hall, Paris Nord Villepinte, France
Wine Cellars, Embres-et-Castelmaure, France

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Fact Summary (continued)

BUILT WORKS

- 2005** 14 Residences, Social Housing, Mulhouse, France
Keremma House, Tréfléz, France
- 2002** Office Building, Nantes, France
Site for Contemporary Creation, Phase 1, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France
- 2001** Arts and Human Sciences Building, Pierre Mendès-France University, Grenoble, France
Café Restaurant Corbaci, Architekturzentrum Wein, Vienna, Austria
- 2000** House in Coutras, Coutras, France
- 1999** House in Bordeaux, Bordeaux, France
- 1998** House in Cap Ferret, Cap Ferret, France
- 1997** House in Dordogne, Dordogne, France
- 1996** Place Léon Aucoc, Bordeaux, France
- 1994** Therapy Center for Adolescents, Bègles, France
- 1993** Latapie House, Floirac, France
- 1984** Straw Hut, Niamey, Niger

WORKS IN PROGRESS

138 Units, Mid-Rise Apartments, Transformation and Addition of Hospital Saint-Vincent-De-Paul to Housing, Paris, France

40 Units, Housing, Hamburg, Germany

Mixed-Use, Mid-Rise Buildings: Hotels, Offices, Commercial, Toulouse, France

Transformation of a Mid-Rise Office Building, Paris, France

Transformation of Tour Peterbos, 80 Units, Mid-Rise Apartments, Social Housing (with 51N4E), Anderlecht, Belgium

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Fact Summary (continued)

EXHIBITIONS

- 2020** *Living the City*, Airport Berlin Tempelhof, Berlin, Germany
- urbainable – stadthaltig. Positions on the European City in the 21st Century*, Akademie der Künste, Berlin, Germany
- 2019–
2020** *Constructing the escape*, FRAC Centre, Orléans, France
- 2019** *What's old, What's new* (Exhibition EU Mies Award 2019), Mies van der Rohe Pavilion, Barcelona, Spain
- 2018** *Freedom of use*, La Biennale di Venezia, Venice, Italy
- inhabiting: pleasure and luxury for everyone*, aut. architektur und tirol, Innsbruck, Austria
- 2015–
2016** *The Imaginaries of Transformation* (film with Frédéric Druot), Chicago Architectural Biennial, Chicago, IL, USA
- 2010–
2011** *Small Scale, Big Change: New Architectures of Social Engagement*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY

AWARDS

- 2020** BDA Grand Prize, Bund Deutscher Architektinnen, Germany
- 2019** Fundació Mies Van der Rohe Award, European Union Prize for Contemporary Architecture (with Frédéric Druot Architecture and Christophe Hutin Architecture for the transformation of 530 dwellings at Grand Parc, Bordeaux), Spain
- 2018** Global Award for Sustainable Architecture, Cité de l'Architecture & du Patrimoine (with Frédéric Druot), France
- 2016** Académie d'Architecture Gold Medal, France
- Heinrich Tessenow Gold Medal, Foundation Heinrich Tessenow, Germany
- Lifetime Achievement Award, Trienal de Lisboa (awarded to Lacaton & Vassal), Portugal
- 2014** Rolf Schock Prize, Visual Arts, Sweden
- 2011** Daylight & Building Components Award, Villum Foundation and Velux Foundation, Denmark
- 2008** Grand Prix National d'Architecture, France
- 2006** Schelling Architecture Award, Schelling Architecture Foundation, Germany

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Fact Summary (continued)

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- 2018** *freespace*. Anne Lacaton and Jean-Philippe Vassal, on the occasion of the 16th International Architecture Exhibition, La Biennale di Venezia, 2018.
- 2015** Lacaton, Anne, and Jean-Philippe Vassal. *The Incidents. Freedom of Use*. Harvard University Graduate School of Design, Sternberg Press, 2015.
- 2007** Druot, Frédéric, Anne Lacaton and Jean-Philippe Vassal. *PLUS, Large Scale Housing Development. An Exceptional Case*. Editorial Gustavo Gili, SL, 2007.
- 1995** *Il fera beau demain*. Anne Lacaton and Jean-Philippe Vassal, Institut Français d'Architecture, 1995.

Monographs

- 2017** "Lacaton & Vassal 1993–2015." *El Croquis*, no. 177/178, 2017.
- 2012** "Lacaton & Vassal." *2G*, no. 60, Editorial Gustavo Gili, SL, 2012.
- "Lacaton & Vassal." *a+u*, no. 498, 2012.
- 2009** "Lacaton & Vassal." *Cité de l'Architecture et du Patrimoine*, Edition HYX, 2009. Exhibition catalogue.
- 2007** "Lacaton & Vassal." *2G Libros*, Editorial Gustavo Gili, SL, 2007.
- 2003** "Lacaton & Vassal." *2G*, no. 21, Editorial Gustavo Gili, SL, 2003.

For a list of publications and articles about Anne Lacaton and Jean-Philippe Vassal, please visit the website: lacatonvassal.com/publications.php

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Previous Laureates

Yvonne Farrell and Shelley McNamara, 2020 Laureates

Ireland
Presented virtually

Arata Isozaki, 2019 Laureate

Japan
Presented at the Château de Versailles, Versailles, France

Balkrishna Doshi, 2018 Laureate

India
Presented at the Aga Khan Museum, Toronto, Canada

Rafael Aranda, Carme Pigem and Ramon Vilalta, 2017 Laureates

Spain
Presented at the State Guest House, Akasaka Palace, Tokyo, Japan

Alejandro Aravena, 2016 Laureate

Chile
Presented at the United Nations Headquarters, New York, New York

Frei Otto, 2015 Laureate

Germany
Presented at the New World Center, Miami Beach, Florida

Shigeru Ban, 2014 Laureate

Japan
Presented at the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Toyo Ito, 2013 Laureate

Japan
Presented at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, Boston, Massachusetts

Wang Shu, 2012 Laureate

The People's Republic of China
Presented at the Great Hall of the People, Beijing, The People's Republic of China

Eduardo Souto de Moura, 2011 Laureate

Portugal
Presented at the Andrew W. Mellon Auditorium, Washington, DC

Kazuyo Sejima and Ryue Nishizawa, 2010 Laureates

Japan
Presented at the Immigration Museum, Ellis Island, New York Bay

Peter Zumthor, 2009 Laureate

Switzerland
Presented at the Palace of the Buenos Aires City Legislature, Buenos Aires, Argentina

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Previous Laureates (continued)

Jean Nouvel, 2008 Laureate

France

Presented at the Library of Congress, Washington, DC

Richard Rogers, 2007 Laureate

United Kingdom

Presented at the Banqueting House, Whitehall Palace, London, United Kingdom

Paulo Mendes da Rocha, 2006 Laureate

Brazil

Presented at the Dolmabahçe Palace, Istanbul, Turkey

Thom Mayne, 2005 Laureate

United States of America

Presented at the Jay Pritzker Pavilion, Millennium Park, Chicago, Illinois

Zaha Hadid, 2004 Laureate

United Kingdom

Presented at the State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia

Jørn Utzon, 2003 Laureate

Denmark

Presented at Royal Academy of Fine Arts of San Fernando, Madrid, Spain

Glenn Murcutt, 2002 Laureate

Australia

Presented at Michelangelo's Campidoglio in Rome, Italy

Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron, 2001 Laureates

Switzerland

Presented at Thomas Jefferson's Monticello in Charlottesville, Virginia

Rem Koolhaas, 2000 Laureate

Netherlands

Presented at the Jerusalem Archaeological Park, Israel

Norman Foster, 1999 Laureate

United Kingdom

Presented at the Altes Museum, Berlin, Germany

Renzo Piano, 1998 Laureate

Italy

Presented at the White House, Washington, DC

Sverre Fehn, 1997 Laureate

Norway

Presented at the construction site of the Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao, Spain

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Previous Laureates (continued)

Rafael Moneo, 1996 Laureate

Spain

Presented at the construction site of the Getty Center, Los Angeles, California

Tadao Ando, 1995 Laureate

Japan

Presented at the Grand Trianon and the Palace of Versailles, France

Christian de Portzamparc, 1994 Laureate

France

Presented at The Commons, Columbus, Indiana

Fumihiko Maki, 1993 Laureate

Japan

Presented at Prague Castle, Czech Republic

Alvaro Siza, 1992 Laureate

Portugal

Presented at the Harold Washington Library Center, Chicago, Illinois

Robert Venturi, 1991 Laureate

United States of America

Presented at Palacio de Iturbide, Mexico City, Mexico

Aldo Rossi, 1990 Laureate

Italy

Presented at Palazzo Grassi, Venice, Italy

Frank O. Gehry, 1989 Laureate

United States of America

Presented at Todai-ji Buddhist Temple, Nara, Japan

Oscar Niemeyer, 1988 Laureate

Brazil

Presented at the Art Institute of Chicago, Illinois

Gordon Bunshaft, 1988 Laureate

United States of America

Presented at the Art Institute of Chicago, Illinois

Kenzo Tange, 1987 Laureate

Japan

Presented at the Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, Texas

Gottfried Böhm, 1986 Laureate

Germany

Presented at Goldsmiths' Hall, London, United Kingdom

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Previous Laureates (continued)

Hans Hollein, 1985 Laureate

Austria

Presented at the Huntington Library, Art Collections and Botanical Gardens, San Marino, California

Richard Meier, 1984 Laureate

United States of America

Presented at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC

leoh Ming Pei, 1983 Laureate

United States of America

Presented at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York

Kevin Roche, 1982 Laureate

United States of America

Presented at the Art Institute of Chicago, Illinois

James Stirling, 1981 Laureate

United Kingdom

Presented at the National Building Museum, Washington, DC

Luis Barragán, 1980 Laureate

Mexico

Presented at Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, DC

Philip Johnson, 1979 Laureate

United States of America

Presented at Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, DC

About the Medal



The bronze medallion awarded to each Laureate of the Pritzker Architecture Prize is based on designs of Louis Sullivan, famed Chicago architect generally acknowledged as the father of the skyscraper. On one side is the name of the prize. On the reverse, three words are inscribed, “firmness, commodity and delight.” These are the three conditions referred to by Henry Wotton in his 1624 treatise, *The Elements of Architecture*, which was a translation of thoughts originally set down nearly 2,000 years ago by Marcus Vitruvius in his *Ten Books on Architecture*, dedicated to the Roman Emperor Augustus. Wotton, who did the translation when he was England’s first ambassador to Venice, used the complete quote as: “The end is to build well. Well-building hath three conditions: commodity, firmness and delight.”

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History of the Prize

The Pritzker Architecture Prize was established by The Hyatt Foundation in 1979 to annually honor a living architect whose built work demonstrates a combination of those qualities of talent, vision and commitment, which has produced consistent and significant contributions to humanity and the built environment through the art of architecture. It has often been described as “architecture’s most prestigious award” or as “the Nobel of architecture.”

The prize takes its name from the Pritzker family, whose international business interests, which include the Hyatt Hotels, are headquartered in Chicago. They have long been known for their support of educational, social welfare, scientific, medical and cultural activities. Jay A. Pritzker, who founded the prize with his wife, Cindy, died on January 23, 1999. His eldest son, Thomas J. Pritzker, has become chairman of The Hyatt Foundation. In 2004, Chicago celebrated the opening of Millennium Park, in which a music pavilion designed by Pritzker Laureate Frank Gehry was dedicated and named for the founder of the prize. It was in the Jay Pritzker Pavilion that the 2005 awarding ceremony took place.

Tom Pritzker explains, “As native Chicagoans, it’s not surprising that we are keenly aware of architecture, living in the birthplace of the skyscraper, a city filled with buildings designed by architectural legends such as Louis Sullivan, Frank Lloyd Wright, Mies van der Rohe and many others.”

He continues, “In 1967, our company acquired an unfinished building which was to become the Hyatt Regency Atlanta. Its soaring atrium was wildly successful and became the signature piece of our hotels around the world. It was immediately apparent that this design had a pronounced effect on the mood of our guests and attitude of our employees. While the architecture of Chicago made us cognizant of the art of architecture, our work with designing and building hotels made us aware of the impact architecture could have on human behavior.”

And he elaborates further, “So in 1978, when the family was approached with the idea of honoring living architects, we were responsive. Mom and Dad (Cindy and the late Jay A. Pritzker) believed that a meaningful prize would encourage and stimulate not only a greater public awareness of buildings, but also would inspire greater creativity within the architectural profession.” He went on to add that he is extremely proud to carry on that effort on behalf of his family.

Many of the procedures and rewards of the Pritzker Prize are modeled after the Nobel Prize. Laureates of the Pritzker Architecture Prize receive a \$100,000 grant, a formal citation certificate, and since 1987, a bronze medal. Prior to that year, a limited edition Henry Moore sculpture was presented to each Laureate.

Nominations are accepted from all nations; from government officials, writers, critics, academicians, fellow architects, architectural societies or industrialists, virtually anyone who might have an interest in advancing great architecture. The prize is awarded irrespective of nationality, race, creed, gender or ideology.

The nominating procedure is continuous from year to year, closing each November. Nominations received after the closing are automatically considered in the following calendar year. The final selection is made by an international jury through undisclosed deliberations and voting.

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The Evolution of the Jury

The first jury, assembled in 1979, consisted of the late J. Carter Brown, then director of the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC; the late J. Irwin Miller, then chairman of the executive and finance committees of Cummins Engine Company; the late César Pelli, architect and at the time, dean of the Yale University School of Architecture; Arata Isozaki, architect from Japan and 2019 Pritzker Prize Laureate; and the late Kenneth Clark (Lord Clark of Saltwood), noted English author and art historian.

Jury members are invited to serve for a minimum three-year tenure. The gradual changes over time in the jury composition allow for a balance between stability and new perspectives on the committee. Lord Rothschild of the UK was Chair of the Pritzker Prize Jury from 2002–2004. Lord Peter Palumbo, well-known architectural patron and former chairman of the Arts Council of Great Britain, former trustee of the Mies van der Rohe Archives of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, and former chairman of the trustees, Serpentine Galleries, served as Chair from 2005–2016 and continued as a member through 2018. 2002 Pritzker Prize Laureate Glenn Murcutt joined the jury in 2011 and held the Chair position from 2017–2018. U.S. Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer joined the jury in 2012, was appointed Chair from 2019–2020, and presently remains a member of the jury.

Jury members are assembled from around the world and reflect a variety of professions and points of view. The current Jury Chair is Alejandro Aravena of Santiago, Chile, 2016 Pritzker Prize Laureate, Founder and Executive Director of ELEMENTAL, and former juror.

Other current members include André Aranha Corrêa do Lago, architectural critic, curator and Brazilian Ambassador to India (Delhi, India); Barry Bergdoll, Meyer Schapiro Professor of Art History and Archaeology at Columbia University (New York, NY); Deborah Berke, architect, educator and dean of the Yale School of Architecture (New York, NY); Sejima Kazuyo, 2010 Pritzker Prize Laureate and Japanese architect (Tokyo, Japan); Benedetta Tagliabue, architect and educator from Italy who runs her practice, EMBT (Barcelona, Spain); and Wang Shu, 2012 Pritzker Prize Laureate, Chinese architect and educator (Hangzhou, China).

Others who have served include people from the world of business such as the late Thomas J. Watson, Jr., former chairman of IBM; the late Giovanni Agnelli, former chairman of Fiat; Rolf Fehlbaum, then chairman of Vitra, Basel, Switzerland; and Ratan N. Tata, chairman of Tata Trusts, Mumbai, India.

Critics, journalists and curators include the late Toshio Nakamura, former editor of *a+u* in Japan; the late Ada Louise Huxtable, author and architecture critic and the longest serving juror to date; Victoria Newhouse, architectural historian and author; Karen Stein, writer, editor and architectural consultant in New York; and Kristin Feireiss, architecture curator, writer and editor based in Berlin, Germany.

Numerous architects from around the world have served including Americans Frank Gehry, the late Philip Johnson and the late Kevin Roche; as well as the late Ricardo Legorreta of Mexico, Fumihiko Maki of Japan and the late Charles Correa of India; Jorge Silvetti, architect and professor of architecture at Harvard University, Boston, Massachusetts; and Balkrishna Vithaldas Doshi, 2018 Pritzker Prize Laureate, architect and professor of architecture from Ahmedabad, India. Since 2000, there have been many outstanding architects associated with the Pritzker Prize jury including Juhani Pallasmaa, architect, professor and author, Helsinki, Finland; Shigeru Ban, 2014 Pritzker Prize Laureate, architect and professor at Keio University, Tokyo, Japan; Carlos Jimenez, a principal of Carlos Jimenez and professor at Rice University, Houston, Texas; the late Zaha Hadid, 2004 Pritzker Prize Laureate and architect; Renzo Piano, 1998 Pritzker Prize Laureate and architect, of Paris, France and Genoa, Italy; Richard Rogers, 2007 Pritzker Prize Laureate and architect, London, United Kingdom; and Yung Ho Chang, architect and educator of Beijing, The People's Republic of China.

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The Evolution of the Jury (continued)

Bill Lacy was Executive Director from 1998 to 2005. He was an architect and advisor to the J. Paul Getty Trust and many other foundations, as well as president of the State University of New York at Purchase. Previous secretaries to the jury were the late Brendan Gill, who was architecture critic of *The New Yorker* magazine, and the late Carleton Smith. The late Arthur Drexler, who was the director of the department of architecture and design at The Museum of Modern Art in New York City, was a consultant to the jury for many years.

Martha Thorne became the Executive Director of the Pritzker Prize in 2005, and will step down from this position following the 2021 announcement, while remaining an advisor to the Prize. She will continue her expansive role as Dean of IE School of Architecture and Design, Madrid/Segovia, Spain, and will work with international clients facilitating competitions and architect-selection processes. She is the former associate curator of architecture at the Art Institute of Chicago, author of numerous books and articles on contemporary architecture, and has served as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Graham Foundation and the Board of the International Archive of Women in Architecture.

Manuela Lucá-Dazio, based in Paris, France and former Executive Director of the Department of Visual Arts and Architecture of La Biennale di Venezia, is an advisor to the Prize and will succeed Ms. Thorne as Executive Director.

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Pritzker Ceremonies Through the Years

Soon after establishing the Pritzker Architecture Prize in 1979, the Pritzker family began a tradition of moving the award ceremonies to architecturally and historically significant venues throughout the world. Befitting a truly international prize, the ceremony has been held in 15 countries on four continents from North and South America to Europe to the Middle East to Far East Asia.

For the first two years of the Prize, the ceremony was held at historic Dumbarton Oaks in the Georgetown neighborhood of Washington, DC where the first Laureate, Philip Johnson, designed a major addition to the estate. For six of its first seven years, the Prize was awarded in the District of Columbia. Its fourth year, the ceremony traveled for the first time—to the Art Institute of Chicago—but it wasn't until 1986 that the Pritzker Prize was awarded at an international location.

Since then, Europe has hosted the ceremony 12 times in eight countries, twice each in the United Kingdom, Spain, Italy and France. The Prize ceremony has visited some of the continent's most beautiful and historic locales from the ninth-century Prague Castle in the Czech Republic; to Bilbao's Guggenheim Museum, opened in 1997; and the 2013 reopened Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam.

Beyond Europe and the U.S., the Prize has traveled twice to the Middle East and Latin America, and thrice to East Asia. In 2012, the Prize ceremony was held for the first time in China. Coincidentally, Chinese architect Wang Shu was the Laureate and received the award in Beijing's Great Hall of the People. Shu was not the first architect to be honored in his home country, but as ceremony locations are usually chosen each year long before the Laureate is selected, there is no direct relationship between the honoree and the ceremony venue. In 1989, Frank Gehry was awarded the Prize at Todai-ji in Nara, Japan. This eighth-century Buddhist temple is one of three UNESCO World Heritage sites to host the ceremony, along with Monticello in Virginia and the Palace of Versailles in France.

As architecture is as much art as design, the Pritzker Prize ceremony has been held in numerous museums. New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fort Worth's Kimball Museum and Washington DC's National Gallery of Art have hosted the Pritzker. Libraries too, have been a popular venue choice, including 2013's site, the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum. Other examples include the Harold Washington Library in Chicago, the Library of Congress and the Huntington Library, Arts Collections and Botanical Gardens near Los Angeles. The other ceremony held in Los Angeles took place at the Getty Center in 1996, which was designed by 1984 Pritzker Laureate Richard Meier. At the time, the museum was only partially completed.

The Prize ceremony often visits newly opened or unfinished buildings. In 2005, the ceremony was held at the new Jay Pritzker Pavilion at Chicago's Millennium Park, which was designed by 1989 Laureate Frank Gehry. It was the second Gehry-designed building that hosted the ceremony, the first being the Guggenheim Museum in Spain. Other historically important venues for the Pritzker include the Jerusalem Archaeological Park. With the ceremony at the foot of the Temple Mount, it was the Pritzker's oldest venue. The Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg, comprised of palaces of the Russian czars, hosted the 2004 ceremony that honored the first female winner of the award, Zaha Hadid. For the Pritzker Prize's first visit to Latin America in 1991, the ceremony was held at the Palace of Iturbide in Mexico City where the first Emperor of Mexico was crowned. In 2018, the ceremony was held in Toronto at the recently opened Aga Kahn Museum, designed by 1993 Laureate Fumihiko Maki.

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Pritzker Ceremonies Through the Years (continued)

Heads of state have been among the many dignitaries to attend Pritzker ceremonies. U.S. Presidents Clinton and Obama attended ceremonies in Washington in 1998 and 2011 respectively, the former being held at the White House. The King of Spain attended the 2003 ceremony at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts of San Fernando in Madrid. The Prime Minister of Turkey and the President of the Czech Republic also attended ceremonies when held in their respective countries. Their Majesties, the Emperor and Empress of Japan, attended the 2017 ceremony at the Akasaka Palace, Tokyo, which was originally built as the residence for the Crown Prince in 1909.

Like the architects it honors, the Pritzker Prize has often bucked convention, holding its ceremonies in unique spaces. In 1994, when French architect Christian de Portzamparc received the Prize, the community of Columbus, Indiana was honored. Numerous notable architects designed buildings in the small Midwest city. In 2010, the ceremony was held in the middle of New York Harbor at Ellis Island's Immigration Museum. Eight years before, the ceremony took place on one of the seven traditional hills of Rome in Michelangelo's monumental Piazza di Campidoglio.

Last year, a special video was produced and shared virtually to honor 2020 Laureates, Yvonne Farrell and Shelley McNamara, due to limitations associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Created in lieu of an in-person ceremony for the first time in the 42-year history of the award, the video featured participants delivering their remarks remotely. Viewers were invited into public and private locations around the world including the Long Room, the main chamber of the Old Library at Trinity College Dublin, which was established in 1592; the State Reception Room in Dublin, founded in 1802 at Áras an Uachtaráin, the official residence of the President of Ireland since 1938; and Palacio de Liria in Madrid, built in the 18th century with 20th-century reforms by Edwin Lutyens.

Details pertaining to the 43rd Pritzker Prize ceremony honoring 2021 Laureates, Anne Lacaton and Jean-Philippe Vassal, will be announced this summer.

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