

Europe's Best Buildings

European Union Prize for Contemporary Architecture Mies van der Rohe Award 2022

06.10.2022–23.01.2023 | Exhibition Hall 2

Opening: Wed 05.10.2022, 19:00

Press conference: Wed 05.10.2022, 11:00

Following a delay caused by the pandemic, this year's jury was eventually able to tour the submissions and to award the prizes for Europe's Best Buildings. And as in previous years, the prize and the accompanying exhibition are seismographs of current social processes. The selected projects respond to the major issues of our time – from the climate crisis to social polarisation – with solidarity-based forms of living and good neighbourhoods, with very special spaces for schools and education, and with the careful use of resources, whether in timber construction or in the further development of existing buildings.

This year, for the first time, the main prize has been awarded to an educational building: Town House – Kingston University in London, designed by the Pritzker Prize winners Grafton Architects from Dublin. A campus building with a permeable structure and interlocking spaces that is open to the entire neighbourhood. The winner of the Emerging Architecture Award 2022 is the La Borda cooperative housing complex by the Lacol collective in Barcelona, currently the tallest wooden building in Spain.

"If we plan and build better, it will have an enormous impact on good coexistence, ecology and distributive justice. The seven finalists show that architects and clients appreciate how much leverage they have in society. More of this, please, is the message of the exhibition," says Angelika Fitz, director of the Az W. The 85 Social Housing Units in Cornellà de Llobregat, Spain, by Peris+Toral Arquitectes provide new spatial experiences for new lifestyles. At Frizz23 in Berlin by Deadline, a building group initiated by the architects, creates very special constellations of spaces for the creative industries. The Railway Farm in Paris by Grand Huit and Mélanie Drevet Paysagiste combines social housing, student accommodation and urban agriculture. The Z33 House for Contemporary Art, Design and Architecture in Hasselt, Belgium, by Francesca Torzo, expands on the existing stock with impressive architectural and artistic subtlety. The Enrico Fermi School in Turin by BDR bureau, is a 1960s school that has been redesigned for current educational needs.

What distinguishes these and many other projects in the exhibition, apart from their high architectural quality, is that they break new ground in management, rely on collective action, and engage with circular value chains and thoughtful building processes. The particularly high proportion of female architects among the final projects also represents a change. Jury chair Tatiana Bilbao describes the task of architecture professionals as follows: "The current urgent paradigm shift in architecture means achieving justice and democracy through the inclusion and acceptance of diversity."

On the shortlist and so in the exhibition of Europe's Best Buildings are a total of nine collective housing developments, six mixed-use projects and four urban development projects with active citizen participation. Among these are five projects from Austria: the Neustift school campus in the Stubaital by fasch&fuchs, the Neue Galerie and Kasematten by Bevk Perović Arhitekti, the conversion and extension of the Stadthaus in Linz by mia2 Architektur, the Gleis 21 building group project by einszueins architektur, and the Atelierhaus C21 by Werner Neuwirth.

The exhibition vividly conveys the high quality of the projects with models, videos, photos and plans. In addition to the 40 shortlisted projects, the 14 Austrian nominations are also being showcased at the Az W.

The Mies van der Rohe Award

The main purpose of the Mies van der Rohe Award is to recognise and pay tribute to outstanding merit in the field of architecture within Europe. Awards are given to projects whose innovative character serves as an orientation, if not a manifesto, for the development of contemporary architecture. The prize, worth a total of €80,000 (main prize: €60,000, prize for emerging architecture: €20,000), is awarded for exceptional achievements in conceptual, technical and structural terms. The Emerging Architecture Award is also intended to promote the profession itself and to encourage architects at the outset of their careers.

From 532 nominated projects from 41 European countries, a total of 40 projects were selected for the exhibition by the high-calibre international jury chaired by the Mexican architect Tatiana Bilbao and with the participation of the Austrian architect Georg Pendl. The Architekturzentrum Wien has been involved in shaping the Mies van der Rohe Award for many years, in its capacity as a member of the Advisory Board.

A catalogue to accompany the exhibition showcases all of the nominated projects, and is available for the duration of the exhibition.

An exhibition by the Fundació Mies van der Rohe Barcelona and Creative Europe at the Architekturzentrum Wien.

The Winners of the Mies van der Rohe Award 2022

Town House – Kingston University in London, Great Britain

Architecture: Grafton Architects

The campus building is outstanding in terms of the programme, construction and urban realisation, and for the jury represents an example of carefully developed and humble humanism. The open structure and the juxtaposition of the contemplative and proactive, performative activities model education as a process of discovery. Colonnades form inviting meeting spaces at the edges. Interlocking volumes are stacked vertically, revealing the activities taking place within to passers-by. There are no barriers of any kind. A townhouse for all that is spacious, open and inclusive, creating a stunning environment to become a place where people from different backgrounds can meet in a real space. It houses dance, library and study spaces, with levels of silence as well as levels of sound working harmonically together.

Emerging Architecture Award

La Borda – Cooperative Housing, Barcelona, Spain

Architecture: Lacol

The cooperative housing development was created as a self-organised project offering access to adequate, non-speculative housing, and where new forms of communal living can be tested. Built on a site for social housing and with a ground lease of 75 years, La Borda provides 28 residential units as well as several communal spaces: kitchen and dining room, laundry room, multi-purpose room, guest rooms, storage rooms, and outdoor and semi-outdoor spaces including a courtyard, bicycle parking and terraces. With its six storeys, La Borda is currently the highest wood-structured building in Spain.

The Finalists of the Mies van der Rohe Award 2022

85 Social Housing Units, Cornellà de Llobregat, Spain

Architects: Peris+Toral Arquitectes

The bases of this new residential building are an intelligent floor plan structure that eliminates the need for corridors, and the use of timber for prefabricated elements to enable an improved construction quality and a significant reduction in the CO2 emissions. On each of the five floors there are 114 rooms of 13sqm along the facades, while the service rooms (kitchen, bathroom etc.) are arranged in an inner ring. For the jury, this residential building exemplifies innovation and experimentation in social housing, offering ways of living outside the socially accepted conventions. The quality and atmosphere achieved in each of the units is astonishingly high: the height of the ceilings, the concept of continuous spaces, the diagonal views etc. offer a degree of comfort and richness that is unusual in social housing.

Frizz23, Berlin, Germany**Architektur: Deadline (Britta Jürgens + Matthew Griffin)**

This pioneering, model project was the product of participatory processes. Deadline adapted the building group format to create working spaces for art, education and creative industries. The jury emphasises the importance of the new role of architects as curators and process facilitators. In a reversal of typical developer projects, Frizz23 consists of three separate buildings joined together by shimmering black spandrels of charred larch wood. With their irregular openings, the façades reflect the complex mixed use and the very different ownership structures. The result is a city within the city.

The Railway Farm, Paris, France**Architecture: Grand Huit and Mélanie Drevet Paysagiste**

The Railway Farm is a neighbourhood "solidarity facility" for which the architects acted as project promoters and as administrators. The project consists of 15 social housing units, five student apartments, a restaurant, a greenhouse, a mushroom farm and a permaculture garden. The urban agricultural production on a what had been a vacant lot is run by the residents and used as a meeting place by the people in the neighbourhood. The jury emphasises the pioneering work of the project in terms of the reintegration of people threatened by exclusion, and the recycling of materials. This was already evident in the construction process, when the residents were actively involved, resulting in a bricolage architecture.

Z33 House for Contemporary Art, Design and Architecture, Hasselt, Belgium**Architecte: Francesca Torzo**

This new museum complex is an outstanding example of successful intervention in a historical context by reinterpreting it from a contemporary perspective. The extension to the existing building from 1958 closes the gap in the heterogeneous development around a garden with an almost windowless brick façade facing the street and openings on the garden side. Inside, variable exhibition spaces unfold a kind of spatial labyrinth that immerses visitors in a unique architectural and artistic experience. The jury would like to emphasise the quality of the work, the special details and the high proportion of craftsmanship in relation to the limited budget.

Finalists for the Emerging Architecture Award 2022

Enrico Fermi School, Turin, Italy

Architecture: BDR bureau

An existing school has been redesigned to meet current educational needs. The original building was a type developed in the 1960s that is widespread in Italy. While it had an interesting articulation of volumes, there was a poor relationship with outdoor spaces and a number of unused indoor spaces. Part of the strategy for the redesign was to reorganise the accesses, to create multiple new outdoor spaces and to open up the school to the city. The jury highlighted the sensitivity in the implementation of all areas and the special atmosphere of the interior spaces.

The press release as well as high definition and rights free press photographs are available at www.azw.at/presse zum Download bereit.

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