
News release

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Herzog & de Meuron receive the Royal Gold Medal for architecture

The Swiss architects Jacques Herzog & Pierre de Meuron, famed for projects including Tate Modern and the Laban dance centre in the UK, are the recipients of one of architecture's most prestigious prizes, the Royal Gold Medal. They will be presented with the award by Jack Pringle, President of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) at a glittering ceremony tomorrow night at the RIBA in London.

Given in recognition of a lifetime's work, the Royal Gold Medal is approved personally by Her Majesty the Queen and is given annually to a person or group of people whose influence on architecture has had a truly international effect.

The honour recognises the impact Herzog & de Meuron have made both on cities and on architects throughout the world, from their early inspirational work in Switzerland, via the London projects for Tate Modern (2000) and the RIBA Stirling Prize - winning Laban dance centre (2003), to their recent and current work in Barcelona, Tokyo, Beijing and the United States.

Jack Pringle, RIBA President said:

"I look forward to presenting Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron with the Royal Gold Medal tomorrow night. Their career has seen them move painlessly from being an experimental studio to a big practice without the work being diluted in any way. They reinvent everything with each new project and do it with such vigour. As teachers their influence on the current and future generations of architects is huge."

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This year's Royal Gold Medal jury was chaired by RIBA President Jack Pringle and made up of: Chris Wilkinson, Wilkinson Eyre Architects; Deborah Saunt, DSDHA; Christophe Egret, Studio Egret; Kenneth Powell, journalist and writer and client Lady Susie Sainsbury of Turville.

At the ceremony, the RIBA will also be awarding its 2007 International and Honorary Fellowships to recipients including Odile Decq, Ken Livingstone, Paul Smith and Kevin McCloud. The 2007 Royal Gold Medal programme is supported by Ebel and Hobs Reprographics.

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Notes to editors:

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Herzog & de Meuron will be presented with the Royal Gold Medal at the RIBA on Wednesday 21 February 2007. They will be discussing their work at the Royal Gold Medal Lecture on Thursday 22 February, 6.30pm at the RIBA, hosted by RIBA President Jack Pringle. NB: This event is now sold out.

The RIBA Royal Gold Medal, International and Honorary Fellows are managed by the RIBA Trust. The RIBA Trust manages the cultural assets of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), including the internationally recognised collections of the British Architectural Library. It is the UK's national architecture centre, delivering the RIBA Awards and RIBA Stirling Prize (live on Channel 4); the Royal Gold Medal; International and Honorary Fellowships; Architecture Week (with Arts Council England and the Architecture Centre Network); a full programme of lectures, exhibitions, tours and other events; and an education programme.

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The Royal Gold Medal for the promotion of architecture was inaugurated by Queen Victoria in 1848 and is conferred by the Sovereign annually on a distinguished architect or person “whose work has promoted, either directly or indirectly, the advancement of architecture.” Previous winners include: Le Corbusier (1953), Sir Giles Gilbert Scott (1925), Frank Gehry (2000), Archigram (2002), Frei Otto (2005) and Toyo Ito (2006).

The full citation follows:

Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron were both born in Basel in 1950. After studying architecture at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, Zurich between 1970 and 1975, they formed their own office in 1978, becoming ‘Herzog & de Meuron’ in 1997. Harry Guggler and Christine Binswanger joined the practice as Partners in 1991 and 1994 respectively, followed by Robert Hösl and Ascan Mergenthaler in 2004, and Stefan Marbach in 2006. Currently the practice employs 12 associates and nearly 220 architects working on more than 40 projects worldwide. Branch offices are in London, Munich, San Francisco, Barcelona and Beijing.

Perhaps their highest profile project is the widely acclaimed conversion of the Bankside power plant on the Thames to the Tate Modern gallery. In 2005 Herzog & de Meuron, have been commissioned again by Tate to develop a scheme for the completion of the gallery and its surrounding areas. The new development for Transforming Tate Modern in London is projected for completion in 2012.

Herzog & de Meuron received international attention very early in their career with the Blue House (1980) in Oberwil, Switzerland; the Stone House in Tavole, Italy (1988); and the Apartment Building along a Party Wall in Basel (1988). The firm’s breakthrough project was the Ricola Storage Building in Laufen, Switzerland (1987). Renown in the United States came with the Dominus Winery in Yountville, Napa Valley, California (1998). The Goetz Collection, a Gallery for a Private Collection of Modern Art in Munich (1992), stands at the beginning of a series of internationally acclaimed museum buildings such as the

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Küppersmühle Museum for the Grothe Collection in Duisburg, Germany (1999) and Tate Modern in London (2000). Schaulager Basel, Laurenz Foundation (2003), creates a new type of space for art, a warehouse for open storage of contemporary art. After completion of the Walker Art Center Expansion in Minneapolis and the de Young Museum in San Francisco (both 2005) the series continues with the Caixa Forum-Madrid (project completion 2006), a new exhibition space for Fundação La Caixa in Madrid, the Centro Cultural in Santa Cruz de Tenerife (projected completion 2008), the Espacio Goya y Museo de Zaragoza in Zaragoza, Spain (projected completion 2011), the Parrish Art Museum in Southampton, NY, USA (projected completion 2009), the Miami Art Museum in Miami (projected completion 2010) and the new development for Transforming Tate Modern in London (projected completion 2012).

In many projects the architects have worked together with artists, examples include their collaboration with Rémy Zaugg (Fünf Höfe, Five Courtyards for the Munich City Centre, 2003) and with Thomas Ruff (Eberswalde Technical School Library in Germany, 1999).

More recent projects include Prada Aoyama Epicenter, Prada's new flagship store in Tokyo (2003); the Forum 2004 in Barcelona (2004); and Allianz Arena, the new Soccer Stadium for Munich (2005). Current projects include, among others, the New Link Quay and Plaza de España in Santa Cruz de Tenerife (projected completion 2007 – 2010), comprising a new way to link the city of Santa Cruz with the Marina; Roche Building 1, a new office high-rise building in Basel (projected completion 2011), "VitraHaus", a new building to present Vitra's Home Collection in Weil am Rhein, Germany (projected completion 2009), and finally the Elbphilharmonie, a new philharmonic hall for Hamburg (projected completion 2010). Their most prestigious project currently under construction is the National Stadium Beijing, the main stadium for the 2008 Olympic Games (projected completion December 2007).

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Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron are both teaching at Harvard University (since 1994) and at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich, ETH Studio Basel (since 1999). In 2002 they co-founded the ETH Studio Basel - Contemporary City Institute. Herzog and de Meuron have received international acclaim and awards for their innovative work, including the Pritzker Architecture Prize in 2001. Their work has appeared in numerous exhibitions and publications.