

PRITZKER PRIZE

Citation from the Jury

José Rafael Moneo is above all an architect of tremendous range. As an eclectic, defined here as selecting and using what is best from all sources, which includes his own creativity, his flexibility in varying the appearance of his works based on their differing contexts is reflected in the way he takes on each new commission as a fresh exercise. He draws on an incredible reservoir of concepts and ideas which he filters through the specifics of the site, the purpose, the form, the climate and other circumstances of the project. As a result, each of his buildings is unique, but at the same time, uniquely recognizable as being from his palette.

That palette has encompassed the ancient, the Museum of Roman Art at Merida, which is one of his finest accomplishments, to the minimalist monument planned for San Sebastián — two translucent cubes that will house the Kursall Auditorium and Congress Center. There are infinite variations between these two examples, embodied in everything from residences and apartments, to art museums, a railway station, an airport, a factory, a hotel, banks, a city hall and other office buildings. Each of his designs has a confident and timeless quality indicative of a master architect whose talent is obvious from the first concept to the last detail of the completed building.

And the completed building is of utmost importance to Moneo, even to the point of being self-effacing, he believes in the built work, and that once built, the work must stand on its own, a reality that is far more than a translation of the architect's drawings. He regards the materials and techniques of construction to be just as important as the architect's vision and concept, and therefore an integral part of making architecture lasting — another the key attribute that he strives for in his work.

As a writer and critic, devoting almost as much time to education as he does to design, he further shapes the future of architecture with his words. His words as a teacher are most important, influencing faculties and students alike with his steady commitment to the modernist tradition, both in the United States and Spain. In the former, he served as Chairman of the Department of Architecture Harvard Graduate School of Design for five years, and in his native country, on the faculties of both the Madrid and Barcelona Universities.

Moneo's career is the ideal example of knowledge and experience enhancing the mutual interaction of theory, practice and teaching. The Pritzker Architecture Prize honors Moneo for these parallel efforts of the past, present and future.

More information on www.pritzkerprize.com

RIBA Royal Gold Medal (2003)

Citation

Putting aside for the moment the various arguments concerning the role of technology in architecture, it is undeniable that Rafael Moneo has been one of the most perceptive and articulate executors of architectural intentions in recent times. Even though most of his work directly demonstrates his reflective mood and his personal passion for architectural thought, it defies simple stylistic classification. Whilst thoroughly cognizant of the past, his architecture is deeply embedded in and engaged with the present, constantly negotiating the precarious boundary between its specific temporary autonomy and its role as a catalyst for advancing the discourse of architecture. The atypicality and innovations of his projects are invariably held in tension with their typicality, as part of a continuing tradition of architecture. It is in this sense also that for him architecture endures.

Born in Tudela in the Spanish province of Navarra in 1937, Rafael Moneo completed his architectural studies in Madrid (1956-61) and then with Jørn Utzon in Hellebaeck, Denmark (1961-62). In 1963 Rafael Moneo was awarded a two-year fellowship in the Spanish Academy in Rome. Some years later he added to his European experiences in architectural practice and theory by taking up a visiting fellowship at the Institute of Architecture and Urban Studies in New York in 1976-77, during one of the city's most fertile periods for architectural debate and criticism.

Writing and teaching have always formed an important and complementary part of Rafael Moneo's architectural practice. Upon his return to Spain from Rome in 1966, he began teaching in Madrid. In 1970 he became Professor of Architectural Theory at the School of Architecture in Barcelona, but returned to Madrid as Professor of Composition in 1980. He was appointed Chairman of the Department of Architecture at Harvard University in 1985, a position he held until 1990. Rafael Moneo continues to teach at Harvard, where he is currently the Josep Lluís Sert Professor of Architecture.

Rafael Moneo's constant re-evaluation of architecture has evolved through a range of significant public buildings in both Europe and the United States. Some early projects such as the Bankinter Bank in Madrid's Castellana (in collaboration with Ramón Bescós, 1973-77) or the Town Hall of Logroño (1973-81) are, among other things, important studies in the insertion of architecture in a pre-existing context. The Town Hall for example, constructs its public identity through a fragment of a square, rotated in relation to the urban grid. Its place within the

tradition of the square as a representation of public space is re-stated in an implicit rather than an explicit manner.

These projects were followed by a number of major museums such as the National Museum of Roman Art, Mérida (1980-86); the Pilar and Joan Miró Foundation, Palma de Mallorca (1987-92), the Museums of Modern Art and Architecture, Stockholm (1991-98), and the Audrey Jones Beck Building for the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (1992-2000). With its geometric spatial and material explorations, the smallest of these museums, the Miró Foundation, has played a particularly crucial role in his later works. Its masterly use and handling of alabaster as a filter for controlling and modulating the strong sunlight is, for example, a device that has been utilised in other locations.

Other recent projects include the Kursaal Auditorium and Congress Center in San Sebastián (1991-99), probably one of his most important and beautiful projects, a juxtaposition of elements that seem at once permanent yet ephemeral. Another is the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels (1997-2002), Moneo's largest and most significant building to date in the United States. The project takes on board a number of complex issues such as its relation to the highway, the challenge of making a new public space, the iconography of a religious building at the beginning of the twenty-first century, the choice and materials of construction — and brings them all together in a convincing and compassionate manner.

Rafael Moneo has been the recipient of numerous international awards and honorary degrees, including the Pritzker Prize and the Gold Medal of the International Union of Architects. He is the closest embodiment we have of the idea of the renaissance architect — practitioner, teacher, theorist, critic, deeply knowledgeable in the art. His work does not just delight the eye, but always provokes thinking.

Citation by Moshen Mostafavi, Chairman of the Architectural Association, on behalf of the Royal Gold Medal Committee