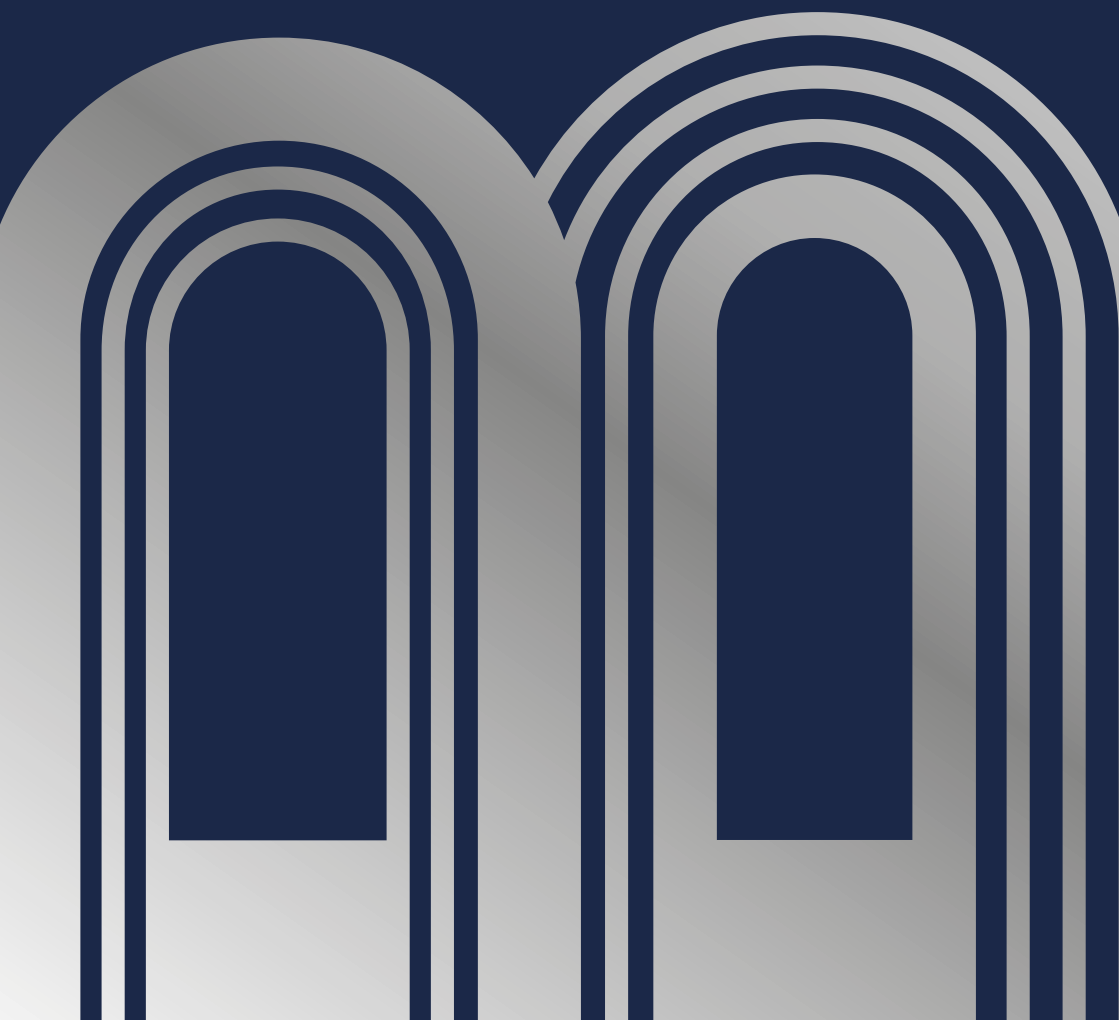


THE ROYAL FINE ART COMMISSION TRUST

BUILDING BEAUTY

AWARDS 2023 | SPONSORED BY **ballymore.**



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WHY THESE AWARDS?

There are plenty of architecture awards, so why these ones?

We've started them because architecture is the only art that none of us can avoid. Whether we spend much time thinking about architecture or not, we all consume it on some level, whether we live or work in a building, visit it, pass it by or just glimpse it on the morning commute. In a fractured world, it's one of the last great shared experiences.

And what we see affects our mood. Buildings have the power, at their best, to lift us up – at their worst, to depress us. Between one extreme and the other, the impact on our wellbeing can be considerable. So every one of us has skin in this game, and we all have a right to say what works for us.

Of course we know that successful architecture is about more than surface appearance. There are lots of things a building ought to be, functional and sustainable among them. But the outside of a building is all most of us see of it; so how it presents itself externally is important. When buildings delight those who have to look at them, they add real social value.

The 2023 Awards were open to new UK projects visible to the public. The award categories were Buildings, Engineering structures, Public Space and Little Gems, the last covering small interventions, possibly quirky ones, that add to the gaiety of a place and punch above their weight in doing so.

WHY NOW?

Beauty in buildings is topical, and rightly so.

The National Planning Policy Framework has been rewritten to give councils more power to reject applications on aesthetic grounds. Whether a building is beautiful really does affect whether it gets built.

And so to get planning permission, people will need to think about what makes a building beautiful. In practical terms, whether they are deemed to have succeeded will be a matter for local planning committees. But as we know, local authority resources are limited and their judgements aren't always consistent. They are going to need guidance. The Government will give them some, in the form of design codes.

But it will still be useful, we think, for planning committees and developers to have a body of live examples to draw on. By holding up exemplars and advertising excellence, we hope these awards will help.

Not everyone, of course, will agree with the conclusions of our award judges. We don't expect them to or even necessarily want them to. What we want to do is get people thinking – and then, we hope, get them demanding buildings that look good and make our daily lives richer and better.

“Ballymore is proud to sponsor these prestigious awards, since the appreciation of beauty in design has always been at the heart of our developments. Through these awards, we are excited to see the importance of beauty in design being brought into sharp focus.”



ballymore.

SEAN MULRYAN
FOUNDER AND CHAIRMAN,
BALLYMORE GROUP

BEAUTY IS ADDICTIVE

BY STEPHEN BAYLEY



Stephen Bayley is Chairman of the Royal Fine Art Commission Trust and chairs the Building Beauty Awards judging panel (see page 24).

PHOTO: PHILIP SINDEN

The Building Beauty Awards are unique. Of all architectural prizes, they are the only one to insist on the primacy of aesthetics. Nor are they an arena for partisan lobbying or for fighting old battles about style. Instead, they are concerned with visual excellence.

At a time when politicians of all factions are beginning – ever so slowly – to recognise the social, cultural and even the economic arguments for better looking buildings in healthier cities, the Building Beauty Awards ask the question: “why is so much new building so bad and so ugly?”

Ugliness is caused by carelessness and mean spirit, by accident rather than design. It is difficult deliberately to design an ugly building, since the engagement of the intellect and senses required by such a peculiar mission leaves no room for carelessness.

But definitions of beauty are fugitive. If it were easy to define, it would be less valuable. Albert Camus understood its exquisite mystery: “Beauty is unbearable, drives us to despair, offering for a minute the glimpse of an eternity that we should like to stretch out over time”.

The Building Beauty Awards are not intended to drive us to despair, rather to encourage a critical reckoning with mediocrity. Award winners are not presented as models for slavish imitation, but as inspiration for trying harder, for putting unusual care into building design. We can dare to want better.

In turbulent, unsettled times, it is important to remember the role of beautiful buildings in the civilising process. The great cultures are remembered by what they built, not by their profit and loss accounts. It is easy to argue that architecture is more important than politics because buildings cannot lie or change their minds. And the good ones have an enduring effect on our well-being.

This is a moment of radical reappraisal for architects and architecture. Old assumptions are being tested. New technologies undermine old expertise. Waste, everyone agrees, is intolerable. But so too is bad design. Ugliness, everyone agrees, is depressing. Le Corbusier believed that good design is “intelligence made visible”. And bad design reveals stupidity.

Beauty is not stupid. Whatever form it takes, beauty enhances expectations and possibilities. And it has a pro-social effect as well: riots have never occurred in Pienza, the beautiful Ideal City of the Renaissance.

The Building Beauty Awards have been created by The Royal Fine Art Commission Trust, a body which can trace its origins to Prince Albert and his belief in the usefulness – indeed, the necessity – of art in everyday life. And sponsorship from the developer Ballymore makes these Awards the richest among British architecture prizes. Again, this echoes and reflects Albert’s beliefs that art and industry – or commerce and culture – should not be isolated from each other.

These Awards do not offer easy answers to the perplexing question of defining beauty, a task that made Plato and Kant stumble. Instead, they aim to reward significant achievement, to promote enquiry, to stimulate competition and to publicise the exemplary, whatever form it takes.

No-one has ever said “I want less beauty”. Beauty is contagious, or, rather, addictive: once experienced, you always want more. If we are to have more new buildings, we want them to be better.

Albert Camus again: “Finding an answer is not as important as living the question”. And that question must always be “Why is so much new building so bad and so ugly?”

BEAUTY CAN'T BE PLANNED

BY PAUL FINCH

The strange death of rational planning is best illustrated by the introduction of the word 'beauty' into government aspiration and faux-technical guidance. The giveaway is the fact that none of this policy or guidance ever defines 'beauty'.

Roger Scruton, the philosopher, promoted the notion that if designs were beautiful, they would immediately win planning permission and thus 'solve' the shortage of housing in the UK. He was too sophisticated to believe that he (or anyone else) could provide a definition of beauty that would be susceptible to, say, cross-examination at public inquiry.

His acolytes, and panel members of the clumsily named 'Building Better Building Beautiful Commission', have confidently endorsed the idea that anything requiring planning permission should indeed be beautiful, without troubling themselves with a definition.

Resulting policies and guidance are therefore based on an abuse of language, because an absence of agreed meaning is just as bad as using language wrongly or deceptively. The National Planning Policy Framework, the cornerstone of government planning policy, now embraces the notion of beauty as a pre-requisite for planning permission, courtesy of the following sentence which appears in Chapter 12, 'Achieving well-designed places':

The creation of high-quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve.

It is no longer enough to design high-quality and sustainable buildings and places.

They need to be 'beautiful' as well. There is plenty of stuff about what constitutes quality and sustainability, but nothing in the document about how to achieve beauty. Save this:

Design guides and codes provide a local framework for creating beautiful and distinctive places with a consistent and high-quality standard of design.

To which one can only say: What guides? What codes? The *Essex Design Guide* of yesteryear? Where is the evidence that they result in beautiful places? This is assertion and presumption writ large – a fantasy utopia generated by Whitehall apparatchiks swaying in politicians' windy spouting of half-digested notions about aesthetics.

As with all government policies, especially those of an aspirational nature, there is small print which means it is not enough to review the primary document. The NPPF's fundamental aspirations say nothing at all about aesthetics or beauty. But its chapter 12 needs to be considered in light of at least one other document, the *National Design Guide*, whose motto or subheading reads: 'Planning practice guidance for beautiful, enduring and successful places'.

You will not be surprised to hear that this document does not define beauty either. It is an amalgam of statements of the obvious and photography which supposedly supports textual clichés along the lines of 'well-designed places can last for many years'. What about badly designed places? Can't they last a long time too?

Another assertion, as statement of fact rather than proposition, runs thus: 'This National Design Guide, and the

National Model Design Code and Guidance Notes for Design Codes, illustrate how well-designed places that are beautiful, healthy, greener, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice.'

How can a new government design guide guarantee any such outcome? The words 'enduring' and 'successful' suggest an insight into the future worthy of Nostradamus. You will notice that, once again, reading the core document is not enough: there is another one to which you must refer, that is to say the one covering the preparation of design codes, which have yet to become part and parcel of the planning process, despite the claims about their effect.

The National Design Guide does make a specific reference to how we might think about beauty in relation to places: 'Beauty in a place may range from a long view down to the detail of a building or landscape'. Can the detail of a building make a place beautiful? No wonder that the guidance rapidly moves on, declaring that 'specific, detailed and measurable criteria for good design are most appropriately set out at the local level'. This seems to mean that self-appointed worthies (sorry 'community') will be able to impose their notion of beauty in planning codes, which will bypass democratic scrutiny.

But according to the National Design Guide section on how to achieve 'identity', proposals must 'cater for a diverse range of residents and other users'. Suppose they can't agree? The same section of the guide asserts that 'all design approaches and architectural styles are visually attractive when designed well'. Visually attractive



Paul Finch is Deputy Chairman of the Royal Fine Art Commission Trust, Founder and Programme Director of the World Architecture Festival and a Building Beauty Awards judge (see page 24).

seems to mean beautiful, though alas this phrase is not defined either. Is this a defence of Brutalism?

It is a relief to be reminded of John Constable's wise words on these matters: 'There is nothing ugly; I never saw an ugly thing in my life: for let the form of an object be what it may – light, shade, and perspective will always make it beautiful.' Trying to plan beauty is about as helpful as trying to impose compulsory fun.

£12,000
PRIZE

UK ENTRY FOR
INTERNATIONAL
BUILDING
BEAUTY PRIZE

SEE PAGE 28

OVERALL WINNER + BUILDING WINNER

**BAYSIDE
APARTMENTS,
WORTHING,
SUSSEX [2022]**

ALLIES AND
MORRISON FOR
ROFFEY HOMES

Mixed-tenure housing development comprising a 170ft seafront tower alongside a six-storey garden square and a beachside café. The tower is a fully-glazed orthogonal block, set behind generous rippling balconies with slim white metal railings.

This is an impressive exercise in using local references to create an original and powerful landmark – a worthy replacement for the depressing 1960s swimming pool that previously occupied the site and which, ironically, turned its back on the sea. It sits literally beachside and forms an exclamation mark that balances the horizontal mass of the pier. At the same time, it bookends the seafront terraces of Regency Worthing, harmonising with their white stucco while steering clear of weak historicism. Its location at the point of transition between the Regency town and later development gives it a particular job to do: this is often the point at which close-grained townscape peters out into dispiriting ribbon development. Bayside mitigates that by holding out the promise of a place worth visiting. Seen from the distant pier, it announces itself as a destination – not aggressively, but as a complement to the historic town. At close quarters, the sinuous balconies offer visual variety and even a maritime reflection, but in a disciplined way. Sometimes seaside buildings can be over-literal in their references, with clodhopping detailing in the shape of waves and prows. Here it is done evocatively but subtly. Viewed obliquely, the sea-facing elevation is wonderfully playful, but seen full-frontal from the beach it is rigorous and devoid of frippery.

PHOTO: TIM CROCKER



BUILDING COMMENDED

BARKING RIVERSIDE STATION, LONDON [2022]

WW+P FOR
TRANSPORT
FOR LONDON/
BARKING
RIVERSIDE LTD

London Overground railway station serving the nascent Barking Riverside development, part of the Thames Gateway regeneration area. Transport facilities are at the upper level, linking to a new viaduct. The ground floor, opening onto a new town square, serves as a community hub.

This building serves variously as gateway, anchor and beacon, setting the tone for a huge development site on the Thames that will eventually contain ten thousand homes. Although around a third of these have already been built (and the station handled half a million journeys in its first year), the first impression is still one of relative emptiness. As a pioneer structure, the point of arrival and departure, the building has a heavy responsibility. This it discharges with the style we have a right to expect of a railway station. Architects should remember that station users are captive spectators, often with time on their hands and little to occupy it. They also deserve style who only stand and wait, and in this building they get it: this is a coolly elegant, disciplined piece of work, light and airy at platform level with a distinctive band of perforated Corten steel running the length of the building. The result is a building with personality, visual coherence and echoes of classical hierarchy in its raised *piano nobile* above a solid plinth.

PHOTO: MORLEY VON STERNBERG



BUILDING COMMENDED

ONE SILK STREET, ANCOATS, MANCHESTER [2022]

MECANOO FOR
NORTHERN
GROUP

300,000sq ft residential and office building faced in handmade red brick to complement the surviving industrial architecture of Ancoats, which has the highest concentration of listed mill buildings in Manchester.

A robust building that draws on the warehouse aesthetic common in Ancoats, with its legacy of Victorian mills, and adapts it intelligently. This is not pale imitation but a well-realised update, a confident and disciplined piece that reinforces the historic grid pattern, maintains the building line and has a strong street presence. The building is rooted in context; expressive elements, such as the stepped reveals that articulate the façade, are controlled within a restrained envelope. To some extent One Silk Street is a pioneer, in the vanguard of neighbourhood regeneration, and it sets an impressive tone for adjacent development sites. There is always a risk in our great northern cities that one misstep will lead to others by setting a poor precedent; very quickly, neighbourhoods can be filled with the bad and the ugly. By contrast, the urbanity and attention to detail in this building make it a worthy model: there's a reasonable chance it will encourage others to raise their game and in doing so will help mould a genuinely vibrant quarter.

PHOTO: GREG HOLMES



ENGINEERING WINNER

**WOOLBEDING
GLASSHOUSE,
MIDHURST,
SUSSEX [2022]**

HEATHERWICK
STUDIO FOR THE
WOOLBEDING
CHARITY

Ten-sided, 1500sq ft subtropical greenhouse inspired by Victorian ornamental terrariums. The roof opens using a hydraulic mechanism to give the plants direct sunlight and ventilation.

This is a muscular piece of equipment that performs a delicate task with delicacy. On one level it is an eyecatcher in a sublime designed landscape: from that perspective it bears comparison, though on a smaller scale, to I.M. Pei's celebrated summer house (also glass and aluminium) at Oare in Wiltshire. This version has the added attraction of movement, the sepals opening slowly and deliberately as the petals of a plant might in response to light. Fully open, they resemble the rays of a crown when seen from the ground, or a lotus flower when seen from above. The greenhouse was funded using the final funds of the Monument Trust, founded by Sir John Smith, who would we feel have seen in this small but perfectly-formed building an object of quiet delight.

PHOTO: RAQUEL DINIZ



ENGINEERING COMMENDED

**CODY DOCK
ROLLING BRIDGE,
BOW CREEK,
LONDON [2022]**

THOMAS
RANDALL-PAGE
(DESIGNER) /
PRICE AND MYERS
(STRUCTURAL
ENGINEERS) /
CAKE INDUSTRIES
(FABRICATOR)
FOR THE
GASWORKS DOCK
PARTNERSHIP

Footbridge made from weathered steel and untreated steam-bent oak, sitting at the entrance to a reflooded dock off a tidal estuary of the River Lea in East London. The bridge is powered manually, with levers used to rotate it and allow boats to pass.

A joyous way of helping to revivify a contaminated and derelict stretch of post-industrial riverside, this bridge is as much a piece of sculpture and a diverting spectacle as a functional crossing. The beauty is in the details. First in the slow rolling of the bridge as it opens and closes. Then in the elegantly serpentine gear-teeth tracking cut into the dock walls, a Hogarthian line of beauty whose path is determined by functional requirements rather than whimsy. The raw aesthetic pays clever homage to the site's industrial past, reminding us that the surest route to beauty may lie in letting materials speak for themselves, rather than covering them in ornament. As Saint-Exupéry said, perfection is achieved not when no more can be added, but when no more can be taken away.

PHOTO: JIM STEPHENSON



PUBLIC SPACE WINNER

ELEPHANT PARK, ELEPHANT & CASTLE, LONDON [2022]

GILLESPIES FOR LENDLEASE

A sequence of landscaped spaces conceived as part of the regeneration of the old Heygate Estate in south London and operating on a range of scales, from a new set-piece park (at two acres one of the largest post-war parks in central London) to a transformation of the streetscape along a major traffic artery.

A project that brings genuine, lasting improvements to the public realm in a neighbourhood that has come close in the recent past to being an urban dystopia, blighted by gargantuan post-war developments that became more and more oppressive as they fell into decay. This subtle network of green spaces has a redemptive, softening quality that knits together a renewed townscape and holds out the promise of a more civilised future. It operates across an impressive range: the repertoire spans not just set-piece parks but transformed pavements, notably along the New Kent Road where a flyblown streetscape is refashioned into an elegant, urbane stretch. At times there is almost an improbable aspect of cosmopolitan chic. Elephant Park itself is the centrepiece, but from that flow tendrils of greenery that beautifully unite the whole.

PHOTO: JOHN STURROCK



PUBLIC SPACE COMMENDED

BATTERSEA POWER STATION PUBLIC REALM, LONDON [2022]

LDA DESIGN FOR BATTERSEA POWER STATION DEVELOPMENT COMPANY

Gardens and public space taking up nearly half the 42-acre power station estate and comprising a variety of sites including a public square, a six-acre riverside park and a plaza outside the new underground station.

The long-awaited renewal of Battersea Power Station has been a triumph, propelling Giles Gilbert Scott's leviathan from the throes of dereliction to a pulsating new life as a leisure and retail destination. Part of the success comes from the generosity and quality of the surrounding public realm, a beautifully-judged mix of intimate spaces and grand vistas that includes, uniquely in west London, a piazza running down to the river: a place from which to contemplate the brick cliff of Scott's north front in all its cathedral-like magnificence, almost as you might the Torre del Mangia from the Campo in Siena. It makes a welcome change from narrow, linear riverside walkways. Cleverly, this new urban landscape embraces the power station. On a micro level, artefacts of industrial archaeology are embedded in the planting: relics of pumping machinery, fluted fragments of the old chimneys that call to mind fallen classical columns at Paestum. On a macro level, the park extends into the Thames, incorporating the old coaling jetty and thus reconnecting the power station with the river that was its *raison d'être*.

PHOTO: JOHN STURROCK



LITTLE GEM WINNER

**PLAS GLYN-Y-WEDDW CAFÉ,
LLANBEDROG,
GWYNEDD [2023]**

SANDERSON
SCULPTURE /
MARK WRAY
ARCHITECTS /
FOLD FOR PLAS
GLYN-Y-WEDDW

Sculptural addition to Wales's oldest art gallery, comprising marine-grade structural glazing wrapped in an envelope textured with nearly 90,000 handcrafted stainless steel barnacles. These create a permeable layer that filters natural light to the interior.

This café, a playful addition to a small Victorian country house that now serves an arts centre, picks up on a local tradition of playfulness (witness Clough Williams-Ellis at Portmeirion) and also stands in a more recent tradition of zoomorphic and parametric extensions to historic buildings: Zaha Hadid's café addition to Decimus Burton's Powder Magazine in Hyde Park is an exemplar. Inspired by the globular form of sea urchins, covered in welded encrustations and with a touch of Oriental exoticism to the interior, it has enoughchutzpah and romantic appeal to become a destination in its own right. Certainly it is more likely to raise a smile than the politely conventional conservatory it replaced. On a practical note, the highly-textured carapace and determinedly non-orthogonal form are likely to preserve the integrity of the design, providing a kind of in-built protection against the rash of random signs and notices that so easily creeps over small buildings of this sort.

PHOTO: GARETH JENKINS



LITTLE GEM COMMENDED

**ANGEL YARD,
EDMONTON,
LONDON [2023]**

JAN KATTEIN
ARCHITECTS FOR
ENFIELD COUNCIL

A meanwhile development on the Joyce and Snell's Estate, providing 6500 sq ft of affordable workspace and community facilities on the site of lock-up garages. Each workspace occupies the footprint of an old garage, reusing its foundations, and has a 'shop window' overlooking an internal street sheltered by translucent canopies.

This temporary ensemble, creating small affordable workspaces on a microscopic budget, might easily have been banal. But instead it manages to muster beauty in a down-at-heel neighbourhood on the cusp of comprehensive redevelopment. The architects have replaced a rundown row of garages with a low-key but surprisingly delicate piece of work that understands the dramatic value of small spaces and makes effective use of basic materials such as plywood, notably in the miniature but uplifting two-storey work units with their charming barrel-vaulted ceilings. Amid the decay, this stands as an exemplar of what can be achieved through attention to detail. More generally, it serves as a statement of faith in a neighbourhood where hopelessness could all too easily take root. The warmth of the reception from local people suggests that this far-sighted investment by the local authority is likely to have a catalytic effect.





THE TROPHY

The Building Beauty Awards trophy, awarded to the overall winner, has been specially commissioned from acclaimed jewellery and silverware designer Theo Fennell, who has fashioned the awards logo from Portland stone, English oak and rhodium-plated metal and mounted it on a bespoke brick plinth with a Sterling Silver inscription plate. For category winners, he has created rhodium-plated Sterling Silver lapel pins in the shape of the awards logo.

OUR PRESENTER

SIR BEN OKRI
O.B.E., F.R.S.L.

Sir Ben is a poet, novelist, essayist, aphorist, playwright, film scriptwriter – and winner of numerous national and international prizes, including the Booker Prize for Fiction in 1991 for *The Famished Road*, the first Booker winner to go straight to number one in the paperback bestseller lists. The novel, a meditation on the power and magic of storytelling that challenges perceptions of reality and draws on his experiences as a child during the Biafran War, has been highly influential: President Clinton, on visiting Africa for the first time, referenced it extensively.

Despite his success as a novelist– *Astonishing the Gods* was selected as one of the BBC’s ‘hundred novels that shaped our world’ – he thinks of himself as primarily a poet. His newest collection, *A Fire in my Head* (2021), contains some of his most highly charged poems, one of which, *Grenfell Tower, June 2017*, was listened to over six million times on the Channel Four Facebook page. His essays and film scripts have met with equal acclaim. Peter Kruger’s film *N: The Madness of Reason*, for which he wrote the script, won the 2015 Ensor Award for Best Film and his essay *A Time for new Dreams* (2011) inspired Grace Wells Bonner to adopt the title for her exhibition at the Serpentine in 2018.

Sir Ben has been a Fellow Commoner in Creative Arts at Trinity College, Cambridge and Visiting Professor of Literature at Leicester University. He is an honorary Fellow at Mansfield College, Oxford.

PHOTO: MAT BRAY



OUR JUDGES



STEPHEN BAYLEY

Stephen Bayley, Chairman of the Royal Fine Art Commission Trust, is the person for whom the term 'design guru' was coined. This he accepted with self-deprecating irony. He was plucked by Terence Conran from the tedium of provincial academe to create The Boilerhouse Project in the V&A, an exhibition space devoted to design which became London's most successful gallery of the eighties. The two of them then created London's influential Design Museum. He was – briefly and hilariously – Creative Director of The Millennium Dome before a spectacular falling out with the Government which he wrote about in his book *Labour Camp* (1998).

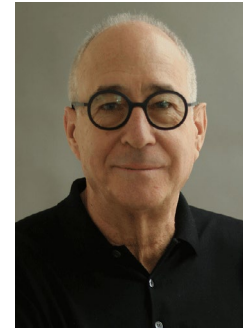
Over the past forty years his writing has changed the popular perception of 'design'. His more recent books include *Ugly – the Aesthetics of Everything* (2012), *Value – what Money can't Buy* (2021) and *The Art of Living* (2021). He has been art critic of *The Listener*, architecture critic of *The Observer* and design critic of *The Spectator*.

He is a Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres, a Fellow of The University of Wales and Honorary Visiting Professor at Liverpool University School of Architecture.



PAUL FINCH

Paul Finch is programme director of the World Architecture Festival, deputy chairman of the Royal Fine Art Commission Trust and former editor of the *Architectural Review* and *Architects' Journal*. He chaired the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment 2009-2011, having been a commissioner and deputy chairman 1999-2005, and also chaired Cabe's Olympic Design Review panel from 2006-2012. He was awarded an OBE for services to architecture in 2002.



ALEX LIFSCHUTZ

Alex Lifschutz is founding Principal of Lifschutz Davidson Sandilands Architects. Following a degree in psychology and research in cognitive psychology, he studied at the Architectural Association in London, where he later served as President. He joined Foster Associates in 1977, worked on the Hong Kong & Shanghai Bank from 1981 to 1985 and in 1986 formed Lifschutz Davidson with the late Ian Davidson. Lifschutz has had a longstanding relationship with communities and businesses on London's South Bank, working with the Coin Street Community Builders to regenerate a down-at-heel area through development of co-operative housing and new urban realm initiatives. His Broadwall social housing scheme at Coin Street won the Royal Fine Art Commission Building of the Year Award in 1995. More recent projects include the Golden Jubilee footbridges connecting Charing Cross with the South Bank, a new Indoor Sports Centre for the University of Birmingham, the remodelling of the St Martin School of Art building in Charing Cross Road for Foyles bookshop and the Fitzroy Place housing development of the site of the old Middlesex Hospital. His lighting project for Thames bridges in central London, completed in 2021, won the Public Space category in the inaugural Building Beauty Awards.



ALISON JACKSON

Alison Jackson is a BAFTA and multi award-winning artist, photographer and filmmaker who explores the cult of celebrity, creating highly convincing portrayals of the imagined private lives of public figures. Her work has been acquired by the Parliamentary Art Collection, The National Portrait Gallery, MOMA in San Francisco, the Musée de la Photographie in Brussels and numerous other public collections. In 2019 she founded and launched the Photography Initiative to cultivate and nurture creative talent in young people who would otherwise lack opportunities. Jackson herself mentors young people and is a Member of the Alumni Council for The Royal College of Art and a Trustee of Chelsea Art Theatre.

OUR JUDGES



HANIF KARA

Professor Hanif Kara OBE is co-founder and design director of the interdisciplinary engineering practice AKT II and Professor in Practice of Architectural Technology at Harvard University's Graduate School of Design. He was the first structural engineer to be appointed to the Design Council's Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment as well as to the Royal Institute of British Architects Stirling Prize Jury, President's Medal Jury and Honours Committee (which awards the Royal Gold Medal). Kara is currently an appointed Design Advocate for the Mayor of London. His insights into design – and particularly into interdisciplinarity – have been widely published, including in technical journals worldwide. In 2022, he was awarded the Council for Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat's Fazlur R Khan Lifetime Achievement Medal for his contributions to the global built environment.



PIERS GOUGH

Piers Gough CBE RA is an acclaimed postmodern architect and leader in the profession. Co-founder of CZWG Architects in 1975, his principal buildings include Islington Square, the Canada Water Library and Maggie's Centre in Nottingham, as well as four buildings listed in 2018: China Wharf and The Circle in Bermondsey, the CDT Building at Bryanston School and Janet Street-Porter House in Clerkenwell – although probably his most famous building is the smallest: the Westbourne Grove Public Lavatory and Flower Kiosk (Royal Fine Art Commission Trust Jeu d'Esprit Award 1994). Gough has been an English Heritage Commissioner and a Review Panel Chair and Commissioner of CABE. For the past ten years he has been Professor of Architecture at the Royal Academy Schools.

INTERNATIONAL BUILDING BEAUTY PRIZE FINALISTS

THE ROYAL FINE ART COMMISSION TRUST

ballymore.



World Architecture Festival 2023

29 November - 1 December
Singapore

The Royal Fine Art Commission Trust International Building Beauty Prize will be awarded at the World Architecture Festival in Singapore on 1 December 2023. The judges, including the architectural historian Jeremy Melvin and the architect Yael Reisner, will decide the winner from these eight finalists, following live presentations by the architects. The prize is sponsored by Ballymore. You can find out who won by visiting www.worldarchitecturefestival.com after 1 December.

**BAYSIDE APARTMENTS,
WORTHING, UNITED KINGDOM [2022]**

ALLIES AND MORRISON
FOR ROFFEY HOMES



PHOTO : TIM CROCKER

As overall winner of the UK Building Beauty Awards, Bayside (see p12-13) automatically joins the shortlist for the International Building Beauty Prize.

**TURRELL PAVILION,
FARI ISLAND, MALDIVES [2022]**

STUDIO MK27 FOR
PONTIAL LAND



PHOTO : JONAS POULSEN

The latest in a series of 'Skyspaces' by the American artist James Turrell, this pavilion – a square within a square - provides contemplative spaces in the form of an outer ambulatory and an inner sanctum. The mood of the interior is governed by the play of light and shade, natural light being filtered through the delicately-slatted wooden façade and also from above, through an open roof that tapers to razor-thin edges. Structurally, the roof is supported entirely on the outer walls, allowing a column-free interior.

**MOSQUE OF LIGHT,
DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES [2022]**

DABBAGH ARCHITECTS
FOR PRIVATE CLIENT

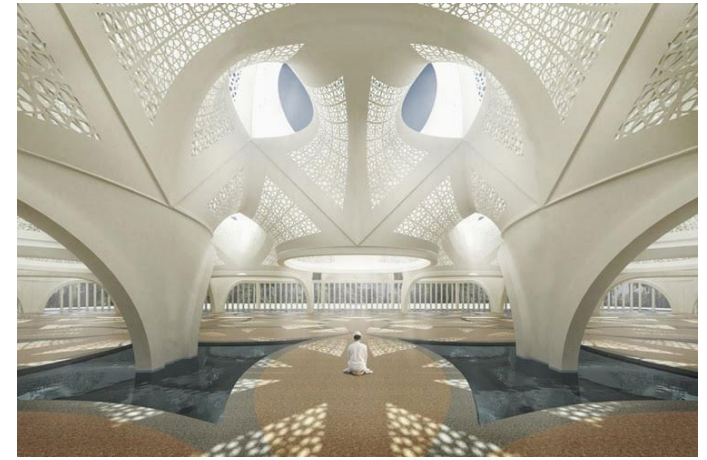


PHOTO : GERRY O'LEARY

The division of this building into two volumes, one housing the prayer hall and the other the Imam's residence and ablution facilities, enables the creation of a striking median courtyard whose plain walls are decorated by soft light filtered through a latticed metal canopy. The prayer hall is lit from above through a double-skin dome and via triangular perforations in the walls, creating a spectacular light show of shifting patterns. Externally, the walls are decorated with quantities of recessed triangles set either side of a horizontal band inscribed with a verse from the Koran.

**CASA WARD,
SARNANO, ITALY [2022]**

CARL FREDRIK SVENSTEDT
ARCHITECT FOR
MR AND MRS WARD



PHOTO : DAN GLASSER

This private house recycles the ruins of a farmhouse destroyed in the catastrophic Appenine earthquakes of 2016. A concrete frame, required by strict seismic regulations, is largely wrapped in reused stones, with some sections of frame left exposed as a storytelling device. Ceramic Roman tiles clad the roof and interior fittings are fashioned from wood reclaimed from the former barn. The building volume is broken up to reduce its apparent mass and to evoke the random, heterogeneous form of a farmstead, the gaps between sections being filled with a sequence of courtyards. The overall effect is that of a telescope extended towards the mountains.

**OMAN ACROSS AGES
MUSEUM, NIZWA,
OMAN [2023]**

COX ARCHITECTURE
FOR THE OMANI
ROYAL COURT

PHOTO : LOUIS POULSEN AND
LDPI LIGHTING INTERNATIONAL



A cultural landmark expressed as a linear sequence of angular, inclined planes. These swoop down at one end to a pool where the building is reflected in the water, rising at the other end to a dramatic spike echoing the jagged ridges of the Al-Hajar Mountains that form a backcloth across the desert landscape. The use of a structural steel diagrid enables the creation of long-span, soaring galleries and impressive cantilevers that open onto expansive landscaping.

**OYSTER SCAFFOLDING
PAVILION, ANGSILA,
THAILAND [2022]**

CHAT ARCHITECTS
FOR ANGSILA
FISHERMEN
COMMUNITY

PHOTO : W WORKSPACEALL



This pavilion seeks to revitalize traditional fisheries that have declined in the face of river runoff pollution and the lure of nearby Bangkok, which competes for labour. The lower section is an oyster farm, while the upper section, a demountable platform, is used for demonstrations of oyster cultivation and tasting. The bamboo scaffolding is built by local fishermen, who manually drive each column into the ocean floor. Car seatbelts rejected by local auto plants (because of discoloration) are used as ties. Bright red agricultural tarpaulin shades visitors while allowing the passage of ocean breezes.

**ENTEGRÁ OFFICES,
BARCELONA, SPAIN
[2022]**

BATLLEIROIG
ARQUITECTURA FOR
PATRIZIA AG/URBAN
INPUT

PHOTO : ORIOL GÓMEZ



The striking aesthetics of this naturally-ventilated office building have their roots in a practical wish to maximise energy efficiency. The projecting floor slabs, the white roofs and the charred timber on the façade are all designed to reduce solar gain, while the marine plywood used for the extensive soffits (an especially powerful visual device when seen from pavement level) reduces the carbon footprint and maintenance costs. The generous terraces on each floor give all occupants outside space and are intended to promote planting, particularly on the prow-like elevation facing the pavement.

**CAPITASPRING,
SINGAPORE [2022]**

BIG-BJARKE INGELS
GROUP/CRA-CARLO
RATTI ASSOCIATES
FOR CAPITALAND

PHOTO : FINBARR FALLON



The 920ft mixed-use CapitaSpring tower, located on the site of a demolished multistorey car park, continues Singapore's 'vertical biophilic urbanism', or greenery in city towers. It is evident here both externally, in the skygarden and surface landscaping, and internally, in a four-storey vertical park starting nineteen storeys up that is marked by sculptural contortions in the façade. This buckling of the vertical members, as if curtains were being pulled aside for a better view, is repeated in the podium block and serves as a dramatic framing device as well as a window through to the lush planting within.

The Building Beauty Awards were conceived and founded by the Royal Fine Art Commission Trust (registered charity 298201). The Trust was set up in 1987 as a complement to the Royal Fine Art Commission, the Government's independent adviser on matters affecting public amenity and aesthetics in England and Wales. Over the past thirty-five years, it has sought to promote visual awareness and public appreciation of high-quality design, for example through educational initiatives and its Building of the Year Award, which ran until 2005. Today it promotes design excellence in architecture and the built environment through commentary on design matters, by undertaking or commissioning relevant research and by partnering projects where its involvement can add value.

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Ballymore, sponsor of the Building Beauty Awards, is a leading property developer with a multi award-winning portfolio of some of Europe's largest and most transformative urban development projects. Their projects are defined by their originality and a commitment to quality, driven by an intent to set new standards in design, creativity, and architecture. Ballymore takes 'placemaking' seriously and puts quality of life and connection to arts and culture at the core of its developments, creating places that have soul. They have provided a home for the English National Ballet at London City Island, delivered the world's first 'Sky Pool' at Embassy Gardens and worked with the US Embassy in London on their move from Mayfair to Nine Elms. Ballymore was founded by Chairman Sean Mulryan in 1982.

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