

PRESS RELEASE

Future perspectives for city & country: Sou Fujimoto honoured at the ICONIC AWARDS 2023: Innovative Architecture

Frankfurt, 25 September 2023

≡ **The ICONIC AWARDS 2023: Innovative Architecture - awarded by the German Design Council - honour the best achievements in architecture, pioneering interior and product design, outstanding brand communication and a particularly innovative use of materials in the architecture sector. This year's award winners have been announced on 22 September. They impressed with design excellence and inspiring solutions for current challenges. The international jury of experts emphasises the importance of visionary design that is not only aesthetically inspiring but also ecologically and socially influential.**

From 620 submissions from over 30 countries, the jury selected 62 pioneering projects for the “Best of Best” award. In addition, the special prizes “Architects of the Year”, “Interior Designer of the Year” as well as the honorary award “Architects’ Client of the Year” were presented. The award winners will be honoured at the BMW World in Munich on 4 October, 2023.

A comprehensive overview of all winning projects is available in the [online gallery](#).

Special price winner of the ICONIC AWARDS 2023: Innovative Architecture

The special prizes worth 10.000 euros are awarded to personalities and companies who have distinguished themselves through exceptional achievements and innovative approaches. The prize money is donated by the company dormakaba Holding GmbH + Co.KG and AXOR, a brand of the Hansgrohe Group.

The [“Architects of the Year”](#) award goes to the internationally renowned architectural practice Sou Fujimoto Architects from Japan. With this award, the jury honours the outstanding work of the internationally successful architecture firm from Japan.

Houses without walls, roofs that flutter over a landscape like ribbons, and facades that are surrounded by countless terraces, both small and large. Sou Fujimoto breaks with conventions – and in doing so creates something that contemporary architecture often lacks. Distinctiveness, exciting relationships of closeness and distance, contrasts of smallness and uniformity, architectural forms that could just as easily be read as sculptures. “Breathtakingly beautiful!” the jury wrote about Sou Fujimoto Architect’s projects such as “L’Arbre Blanc” and “Flowing Cloud Pavilion”. “If there is one thing that Sou Fujimoto Architects prove impressively again and again, is that architecture, in the best sense, cannot be seen as an opponent to nature, but as its ally. Architecture is nature. Nature is living space,” said the jury.

The German Design Council gives [“Interior Designer of the Year”](#) to the interior design studio Holzrausch from Munich. With an impressive range of design projects that combine excellence in craftsmanship with innovative planning solutions, Holzrausch has proven, that they have mastered the art of interior design at its best. Whether it’s a single piece of furniture, kitchen planning or a holistic interior design concept, Holzrausch takes on all the development steps, covering everything from design planning to production and even the entire installation. The work results, which are characterised by functionality, aesthetics and market knowledge, are created in the company’s own joinery in Forstern, Bavaria, and a workshop in Nižná, Slovakia. The jury was particularly enthusiastic about the design expertise and perfect craftsmanship: “Their enthusiasm for the craft is catching, their artistry in design as well as in production makes natural materials appear alive and from the rigour inherent in Holzrausch’s projects unfolds a harmony for which this company is unique.”

The [“Architects’ Client of the Year”](#) honorary award goes to the Norwegian furniture manufacturer Vestre, who makes a strong statement with its new factory “The Plus”, designed by the renowned Bjarke Ingels Group: The building embodies sustainability and innovation in an exemplary way and impressively combines Vestre’s clear commitment to the environment, its employees and its brand identity. The heart of The Plus is the open courtyard with a maple tree in the centre of the circular area. It not only connects facilities with the offices and the visitor centre, but also gives visitors and employees a glimpse into the production process. “With The Plus, Vestre paves the way for what is possible: economic growth - not in spite of, but thanks to a commitment to a green, climate-friendly future,” said the jury. “What has emerged is a unique typology resulting from logistical requirements, which is always in contact with the forest thanks to circumferential window strips. A real plus for nature, employees and the brand, which has earned the honorary award Architects’ Client of the Year.”

The Trend Report: “Best of Best” projects reflect impulses of the industry

In addition to the special awards, the jury honoured outstanding works in the categories “Architecture”, “Interior”, “Product”, “Communication”, “Concept” and the superordinate category “Innovative Material”. From the numerous entries, the best projects were awarded the “Best of Best” label. These award winners show an exceptional spectrum of creative building solutions and innovative product designs and highlight trends that are driving the architecture and design world in their work.

The new urban spaces: Identifying undiscovered potential and new uses!

Many of the projects address the current challenges of urban life and produces impressive responses. They deal with social spaces in big cities and make it possible to rediscover cities through a change of perspective. Exemplary for this is the “Rooftop Walk” by the Dutch architecture firm MVRDV in Rotterdam: a 600-metre-long and almost 30-metre-high bridge stages a spectacular, unexpected view of the city. The temporary installation draws attention to the unused potential of roofs and opens them up to the city’s inhabitants. According to the jury, the initiative created awareness and identification with the city in order to inspire long-term rethinking. In this way, green compensation

areas for sealed soil could be created high up in metropolises where land is rare and expensive – to protect against heat islands, as a habitat for birds and insects, and as meeting places for people. Several winners of the **ICONIC AWARDS 2023: Innovative Architecture** focus on flexible building structures in existing and new buildings as well as on dense living with lively open spaces. They enable new perspectives on the city through clever architectural solutions and focus on climate control in cities through multifunctional green spaces on creative, efficient use of space.

The best of both worlds: How new hotel architecture brings people into nature.

- ≡ Another trend can be seen outside the city in hotel architecture in rural areas. In order to counteract the growing stresses of city dwellers - traffic, noise, density and everyday stress - hotels and wellness oases are being built in nature in many places. The award-winning projects in this category are united by the endeavour to fulfil the guests' desire to experience nature and to create a real change of perspective. The buildings are convincing in their choice of materials and design vocabulary and set the scene for places that are characterised by the experience of nature, including tranquillity and the reduction of stimuli. One example is the new spa "ATMOSPHERE by Krallerhof" in Leogang, Austria, designed by Hadi Teherani Architects. The architect's office's goal was to create a purist and reduced building that blends harmoniously into the landscape. Its roof picks up on the shapes of the hills and mountains that characterise the Krallerhof's surroundings. The new spa world adjoins the hotel and presents itself with a spiralling atrium and an Alpine Zen garden. A large glass facade that offers a view of the natural lake is a special highlight. It can be completely sunk into the ground so that the interior of the house merges with nature to form a single unit.

Award ceremony:

- **4 October 2023**
Admission 5 p.m., event begins at 7 p.m.
- BMW World
Am Olympiapark 1
80809 Munich
- For more information and a ticket for the award ceremony, please contact:
iconicawards@gdc.de

Further information:

- Press information and images are available [here](#).
- An overview of all winning projects can be found in the [online gallery](#).

The jury ICONIC AWARDS 2023: Innovative Architecture

The selection of the winning projects and special prizes is made by a renowned international jury. It consists of:

- Ben van Berkel, Founder and Principal Architect UNStudio, Amsterdam
- Fabian Peters, Editor-in-Chief Baumeister
- Virginia Lung, Co-Founder One Plus Partnership, Hong Kong
- Wei Wu, Executive Partner gmp, Shanghai
- Lone Wiggers, Partner and Architect, C.F. Møller Architects, Copenhagen

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German Design Council

The German Design Council has been operating since 1953 as one of the world's leading centres of expertise in communication and knowledge transfer within design, branding and innovation. It is part of the world design community and has always contributed to the establishment of global exchange and networking, thanks to its international offering, promotion of new talent and memberships. With events, conventions awards, jury meetings and expert committees, the Council connects its members and numerous other international design and brand experts, fosters discourse and provides important stimulation for the global economy. More than 330 businesses currently count among its members.

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