

ICONIC AWARDS 2020: Innovative Architecture: Kengo Kuma and Associates honoured as Architects of the Year

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The ICONIC AWARDS 2020: Innovative Architecture, organised by the German Design Council, honour the best architecture and design solutions internationally. This year's winners have now been announced and can set themselves clearly apart from their competitors thanks to their title. The special awards, which each come with EUR 10,000 in prize money, were presented to Kengo Kuma and Associates (“Architects of the Year”) and Alberto Caiola Studio (“Interior Designers of the Year”). The “Architects’ Client of the Year” honour went to Adidas AG.

The award winners will be honoured on 5 October 2020 in Munich. Alongside the special awards, the jury also honours the best work in the categories of “Architecture”, “Interior”, “Product”, “Communication” and “Concept” as well as the general category of “Innovative Material”. A comprehensive summary of all winners can be found at: <https://www.iconic-world.com/directory/filtered/award-iaia/year-2020>.

“Architects of the Year” special award

The jury awarded the “Architects of the Year” distinction to the extraordinary firm of Japanese architect Kengo Kuma, who is currently one of the most influential creators of contemporary buildings internationally with his iconic designs. Recent projects such as V&A Dundee, The Exchange and Ochanomizu are the preliminary highlights of an impressive gallery of work that amazes through the consistently high quality of its design. The skilled incorporation of light in combination with airy facade structures is remarkable, giving buildings such as V&A Dundee and The Exchange an almost immaterial feeling. The nature and quality of the designs not only cause the beholder to pause for reflection, but also, through their power, stir the beholder emotionally.

“Interior Designers of the Year” special award

This year’s “Interior Designers of the Year” award was given to Alberto Caiola Studio. Alberto Caiola’s work removes the boundaries between classic interior design and art installation in an extremely individual way. When people visit these projects, they do more than enter a room. Rather, Caiola has the visitor discover new, frequently surreal worlds and experience and explore them with all the senses. This creates exciting installations with high show value, such as the extravagant Crash Baggage @ La Fayette retail space, as well as visually fascinating locations such as the ancient Greece-inspired rooftop club “NYZ”, where visitors are immersed in immaterial-appearing scenery and leave the real world behind them for the time of their stay.

“Architects’ Client of the Year” honour

The “Architects’ Client of the Year” honour, which the jury presents to a project client that supports a holistic understanding of architecture, was given to Adidas AG this year. Adidas hired BEHNISCH ARCHITEKTEN and COBE Copenhagen, two renowned architecture firms with iconic designs attracting admiration globally, for two buildings for its head office employees. They were built shortly after each other on the “World of Sports” campus in Herzogenaurach, Bavaria. Even though both structures have aesthetics that are strikingly different from each other, they still clearly and consistently represent the brand values of the world-famous sports product manufacturer – integrity, passion, performance and diversity – externally, internally and down to the fine details. Two remarkable projects with iconic architecture that fulfil the company’s ambitions of modernity and contemporary functionality in an exceptional way. What’s more, they offer formidable proof of the visionary power and openness to the extraordinary that Adidas has as an architecture client.

Jury members

- Michel Casertano, Atelier Brückner GmbH, Stuttgart
- Asif Khan, Asif Khan Ltd., London
- Silvia Olp, aed e.V., Verein zur Förderung von Architektur, Engineering and Design, Stuttgart
- Prof. Dr. Werner Sobek, Werner Sobek AG
- Linda Stannieder, CXO, Huawei Research&Development, Berlin
- Song Zhaoqing, Lacime Architects, Shanghai
- Lutz Dietzold, German Design Council, Frankfurt am Main



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The German Design Council is one of the world's leading centres of expertise in communication and knowledge transfer within design, branding and innovation. More than 340 businesses are currently members of its Foundation. The German Design Council was founded in 1953 as an initiative of Germany's federal parliament to strengthen the German economy's competence in design. Its many and varied activities all have one aim: to communicate a lasting improvement of brand value through the strategic use of design.

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