

ICON

115

AWARDS
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SPECIAL EDITION

We celebrate the best of 2012 with the inaugural Icon Awards. Our panel of six expert judges met to select the highlights of the past year's design, architecture, technology and culture from around the world. In this special issue we present the 60 international nominees and interview the winners of the ten categories

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Zaha Hadid Architects

Since the completion of her first building, the Vitra fire station, in 1992, Zaha Hadid has won the Pritzker Prize and her practice has won the Stirling Prize two years in a row. In the past year, the architect has completed more of her signature curvy buildings, most notably the aquatics centre for the London 2012 Olympics and the Galaxy Soho mixed-use complex in Beijing (left). Hadid has also designed sculptural furniture and created playful installations, including a temporary hair salon for London Design Festival and London Fashion Week. And at PAD London, the architect unveiled her Liquid Glacial Table, which resembles a vortex of water and shows off her organic influences on the domestic scale.



Alejandro Aravena / Elemental

The Chilean architect has made a name for himself by designing social housing in some of the poorest cities in Latin America. Aravena set up his practice, Elemental, in 2001 and describes it as a "do tank", as opposed to a think tank. Elemental works on very high-density housing projects that can accommodate up to 900 people per hectare (200 is usually considered high density) and will increase in value over time as the residents adapt them to their changing needs. Aravena presented two projects at the 2012 Venice Architecture Biennale: the Magnet and the Bomb. The Bomb showed temporary reconstruction efforts after the earthquake and tidal wave that devastated central Chile in 2010; the Magnet was a series of civic structures intended to diffuse unrest in a northern mining town in 2011.

SHORTLIST

Architecture practice *of the year*



Lacaton & Vassal

Paris-based Anne Lacaton and Jean-Philippe Vassal, who worked as urban planners in Niger in the 1980s, are known for an unusual approach to luxury, which they have consistently defined as the ability to provide the maximum amount of space for the available budget. Their most famous project is the 2001 renovation of Paris's Palais de Tokyo (left), where they left much of the structure exposed. In 2012, they made a further intervention in the space, creating new entrances and excavating the basement so the entire building is now in use. The duo have applied the same methodology – leaving architectural elements exposed, using simple materials and, crucially, allowing users to determine how spaces are to be used – to projects including semi-collective houses in Trignac, in France, the Nantes School of Architecture and social housing in Mulhouse and Paris.

Barkow Leibinger

Frank Barkow and Regine Leibinger founded their Berlin-based practice in 1993 and since then the husband and wife duo have produced a string of research projects. They also specialise in digitally fabricated industrial and office architecture, influenced by German modernism, including several award-winning buildings for the laser-technology company Trumpf, the Trutec Building in Seoul and, most recently, the Tour Total in Berlin (right). Their work can also be found in the permanent collection at MoMA. At the 2012 Marrakech Biennale, Barkow Leibinger showed Loom-Hyperbolic, an installation combining traditional craft techniques and local materials with digital algorithms to produce a complex three-dimensional web.

