



PRESS RELEASE

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ICONIC SCANDINAVIAN ARCHITECTURE FIRM— HENNING LARSEN ARCHITECTS—NAMED FOR THE 2019 EUROPEAN PRIZE FOR ARCHITECTURE

The Danish architecture office, Henning Larsen Architects is presented this year with what is known internationally as Europe's Highest Award for Architecture by The European Centre for Architecture Art Design and Urban Studies and The Chicago Athenaeum: Museum of Architecture and Design at a Gala Dinner Award Ceremony at the foot of the Acropolis in Athens, Greece on September 13.


One of the world's leading 21st-Century architecture offices, the Copenhagen-based Henning Larsen Architects has been selected as this year's Laureate of The European Prize for Architecture for the firm's unique design approach that is based on human scale, paying strong attention to sustainability, livability, and ultimately social responsibility, while producing exemplarily strong and forceful buildings that ultimately shape the life of tomorrow with fortitude and great erudition.

"We are delighted to present The European Prize for Architecture," states Christian Narkiewicz-Laine, President and CEO, The Chicago Athenaeum, "to this great Danish firm whose powerful designs and a unique design vision celebrate the best of modernist buildings, which are instantaneously complex, iconic, provocative, and profoundly artistic."

"The firm's exceptional design philosophy is best grounded in that Scandinavian Modernist tradition and best exemplified in such buildings as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia (1984), the Malmö (Sweden) City Library (1999), the Würth Art Gallery in Schwäbisch Hall, Germany (2000), Copenhagen Opera (2004), and the Harpa Reykjavík Concert Hall and Conference Centre in Iceland (2011)."

"Those projects, in particular, have captured the imagination of people across the globe and have become instantly recognizable as symbols of the nations they represent. In this sense, they are icons that have become eternal," adds Narkiewicz-Laine.

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Each year, The European Prize for Architecture is awarded jointly by The European Centre for Architecture Art Design and Urban Studies and The Chicago Athenaeum: Museum of Architecture and Design to architects who have made a commitment to forward the principles of European humanism and the art of architecture.

The European Prize for Architecture is not a “lifetime of achievement award,” but rather serves as an impetus to support new ideas, to encourage and foster more challenge-making and forward-thinking about buildings and the environment, and to prompt the pushing of the envelope to obtain an even greater, more profound result. The Prize also honors the commitment and achievements of the best European architects who have determined a more critical, intellectual, and artistic approach to the design of buildings and cities.

Previous Laureates include: Bjarke Ingels (Denmark), Graft Architects (Germany), TYIN Architects (Norway), Marco Casagrande (Finland), Alessandro Mendini (Italy), Santiago Calatrava (Spain/Switzerland), LAVA Laboratory for Visionary Architecture (Germany), and Manuelle Gautrand (France).

Last year, The European Prize for Architecture was given to the Russian/German architect, Sergei Tchoban.

Founded in 1959 by Danish architect Henning Larsen, whose name the practice proudly carries today, Henning Larsen is an international studio composed of highly specialized architects, designers, engineers, thinkers and doers.

Since its founding, Henning Larsen has sought to create conditions for better living.

The studio seeks to challenge, change and create physical environments—from cities, urban spaces and buildings to interiors—with design concepts that meet the challenges of tomorrow.


From the very beginning, Henning Larsen’s work has been defined by people, daylight, and space.

The ideal is a “living architecture;” a “design for people.”

Henning Larsen always designed from a fundamental belief that daylight creates light and joy, and the studio still strives to bring ample daylight into every design, employing light as a tool for creating community, defining aesthetics and supporting sustainability.

As architects, well-defined spaces are the foundation of Henning Larsen’s work; designing spatial programs that continuously push the boundaries of what is possible.

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"Since the firm's inception," continues Narkiewicz-Laine, "the office has explored, and many cases, invented the boundaries of design in its approach to create more sustainable, livable buildings, as well as thriving cities for the general public."

"Henning Larsen approached design as a generous gesture, reaching out to meet local users within their context, which, ultimately, allowed them to experience the unexpected."

"After Henning Larsen's death in 2013, the firm is now run today by an astute management team of architects headed by Louis Becker and Mette Kynne Frandsen, who have both taken the office to even greater heights of status, international celebrity, and global notoriety."

As Design Principal and Partner, Louis Becker comprises half of the executive management at Henning Larsen.


Over the years, Becker has played an integral role in the internationalization of Henning Larsen, and he remains a driving force behind expanding the practice's global impact. Becker is spearheading Henning Larsen's entry and positioning in the North American market: Having opened a New York City studio in the fall of 2018, Henning Larsen's expanding portfolio now includes the Carl H. Lindner College of Business at the University of Cincinnati in Ohio, the Consolidated Office Building in Minneapolis, Minnesota and the Etobicoke Civic Centre in Toronto, Canada.

Over three decades at Henning Larsen, Becker has cultivated a wide spectrum of international experience, including expertise in cultural and commercial architecture, universities and masterplan development.

Becker oversees and has ultimate responsibility for Henning Larsen's design profile, ensuring the quality of competition proposals and maintaining architectural standards and integrity in subsequent planning.

Since 2003, Mette Kynne Frandsen has been CEO of the Henning Larsen Group. She also serves as chair of the board of Henning Larsen's subsidiaries in Hong Kong, New York, Germany, Norway, Saudi Arabia, and the Faroe Islands.

Kynne Frandsen joined Henning Larsen's executive management staff in 1998, having previously worked as an architect and project manager at the Copenhagen studio since 1993. Her sound competence in managing a creative and innovative company on a global scale has positioned Henning Larsen as a leading international architecture firm, recognized for balancing design excellence, sustainable objectives, and professionalism. Under Kynne Frandsen's leadership, Henning Larsen has expanded its network of global studios and explored new initiatives for sustainability research and knowledge-based design.



"As the studio grows to serve global demand, it remains grounded in a commitment to local practice" states Narkiewicz-Laine.

"The firm believes that architecture is a tool of democracy, building the framework in which we lead better lives."

"Sensibility and livability are key to the success of this Danish firm's portfolio of global work."

In Shenzhen Bay Headquarters City Masterplan Plan for Shenzhen, China (2019), the firm designed an attractive waterfront that brought commercial and cultural facilities meters away from the seashore, so citizens will finally be able to enjoy the atmosphere of Shenzhen Bay in an activated urban environment, like in Sydney, Singapore or Copenhagen. The project is a collaborative effort with Shenzhen Cube Architecture and Swooding Architects, plus the Urban Planning & Design Institute of Shenzhen and Why Art Projects SL.

In the Faroe Islands, the architects designed a stunning, deeply emblematic new Eysturkommuna Town Hall (2018) that bridges across a river to physically and symbolically connect two formerly separate municipalities on the Faroe Islands. The project meshes with the quixotic landscape where meeting spaces and the reception are aligned along the building's seaward-facing side, with large glass windows giving views out across the water. The hall containing the town's council chamber is situated in a large room, which has a circular glass-cover opening in the floor, directly above the river.


Eysturkommuna Town Hall received The Chicago Athenaeum's International Architecture Award in 2019.

In the Vejle Fjord in Denmark, the firm designed another immediate iconic building called "The Wave" (2006-2018).

Designed as one of the last projects by Henning Larsen, the roller-coaster roof heroically reflects the typology of the location and harmoniously embodies the surrounding area becoming an instant landmark for this town in Jutland.

For the Icone Tower proposed for Bonifacio Global City, Manila, Philippines (2019), the architects designed a 308m tall elliptic cone—a shape that frees up the ground floor and ensures urban ventilation, which helps to cool and clean the air. It also ensures minimal obstruction of the views and daylight from the surrounding buildings.

The cone is further the optimum form to resist earthquakes and typhoons, which are often experienced in the Philippines. With arches distributing loads making up the exoskeleton around the transparent tower, the facade becomes one of the most expressive parts of the design, intensifying the celestial effect of the skyscraper.



In the concrete jungle of Hong Kong, the new campus of the new French International School (2018) stands as a vibrant green oasis in the dense city.

The architects designed an environment for 1,100 pupils in a colorful, collaborative multicultural learning space, setting the scene for the working environment of tomorrow.

The French International School also won The Chicago Athenaeum's International Architecture Award for 2019.

In a more recent project, the Esbjerg Bypark, Esbjerg, Denmark (2019) proposes restoring and enhancing the park's existing features, including a grassy amphitheater and concrete bunkers, to create event and meeting spaces. The project aims to create a cultural and social hub between Esbjerg's city centre and port, providing locals with a "respite from the industrial surroundings."

Today, Henning Larsen employs approximately 300 people from over 30 different nations in seven offices globally: Copenhagen, New York City, Hong Kong, Munich, Oslo, and the Faroe Islands.

Over 60 years, Henning Larsen has worked in over 20 countries, developing an international reputation as one of Denmark's most recognized architecture and design practices.

"Henning Larsen Architect's commitment to design excellence, knowledge-based design, and professionalism is embodied in a catalog of award-winning projects, bright client evaluations and successful professional partnerships," states Kieran Conlon, Director, The European Centre for Architecture Art Design and Urban Studies.

"In recent years, the firm has won over 35 design competitions world-wide, as well as a number of prestigious design awards."

Those honors include the honor of the Præmium Imperiale Award to Henning Larsen in 2012 and The The European Centre and The Chicago Athenaeum's International Architecture Awards for Moesgaard Museum, Aarhus, Denmark in 2015; Frederiksbjerg School, Aarhus, Denmark in 2017.

The formal ceremony and gala dinner for what has come to be known throughout the world as Europe's highest honor for architecture will be held at a Gala Dinner at the foot of the Acropolis in Athens, Greece—the birthplace of Western Architecture—on September 13, 2019.

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Ticket information is available through The European Centre's Museum in Athens at +30/210 342 8511 or in the U.S. at +1/815-777-4444 or by email at konstadina@europeanarch.eu.

An exhibition "Henning Larsen Architects" opens at Contemporary Space (74 Mitropoleos Street) in Athens that same evening and continues through October.

For more information and press photographs contact: Ms. Konstadina Geladaki, Director of Communications, Contemporary Space Athens at konstadina@europeanarch.eu

About The European Centre for Architecture Art Design and Urban Studies (www.europeanarch.eu) is dedicated to public education concerning all aspects of the built environment - from entire cities to individual buildings - including the philosophical issues of arts and culture that ultimately give the final shape to design. A high emphasis exists on contemporary values and aesthetics, conservation and sustainability, and the theoretical exploration and advancement of art and design as the highest expression of culture and urbanism.

About The Chicago Athenaeum (www.chi-athenaeum.org) is a global nonprofit education and research institute supported by its members. Its mission is to provide public education about the significance of architecture and design and how those disciplines can have a positive effect on the human environment.

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