

Architizer The World's  
Best Architecture



PHAIDON



# The Power of Great Architecture

"We're not here to build for other architects, we're here to build for all of humankind."

These are the words of Danish architect Bjarke Ingels, and they speak to a vital truth about our built environment: the spaces we inhabit every day have a profound effect on all of us. The question "What makes for good architecture?" has traditionally been asked and answered by the same small group of intellectuals and critics, creating an echo chamber in which the views of the wider public are rarely heard. Yet, the feelings of those who occupy, experience, and live with buildings every day are those that should be most prized by architects—they are, after all, the ones who will remain long after the designers and builders have departed the construction site.

The mission of Architizer's A+Awards is to upend this status quo and bring great design to the widest possible audience. Launched in 2013, the world's largest awards program for architecture and building products attracts thousands of entries from around the globe. Design firms from more than a hundred countries participate each year, with both an esteemed jury and a democratic public vote helping to decide the year's best architecture. As a consequence, the selection of winning projects forms a genuine picture of what great contemporary design looks like, as chosen by you.

The program's aim is to break the design world's collective habit of focusing solely on the work of a few, famous architects, most of whom have already gained recognition in the form of Pritzker Prizes or AIA Gold Medals. Instead, it gives the spotlight to small, medium, and large firms working on highly collaborative projects in diverse contexts. Whether designed by an established figure or an emerging talent, if a project is good enough it earns a place on these pages. The emphasis therefore shifts away from the status or reputation of a project's author and instead is placed on attention to

detail, innovation, and creative ingenuity. These are the key ingredients for truly inspiring architecture.

To ensure comprehensive recognition, the A+Awards are broken down into two main types. Winners of the Popular Choice Awards are chosen by the global public using an online voting system. The Jurors' Awards are selected by a group of more than 400 luminaries from fields as diverse as design, technology, fashion, business, and more. With so many building types playing a part in society, having voters from a wide cross section of disciplines ensures that winners are drawn from a varied and unbiased range of viewpoints. Both the jurors and public are able to appreciate the potential for great architecture to bring communities together—whether it be for living, working, or playing.

To highlight the diverse nature of innovation within today's buildings, a wide range of A+Awards architecture categories is offered across two broad groups. First, the Typology categories celebrate the "best in class" for different building typologies, ranging from residential, commercial, and cultural to educational, civic, and landscape. Second, the Plus categories celebrate the creative connections architects make between architecture and light, art, communication, technology, community, sustainability, and more.

With more than 150 projects represented, this award-winning collection of buildings can tell us much about the state of modern design. When viewed as a whole, they reveal the shifting priorities and new challenges facing designers, and the progressive construction techniques emerging as a result. Ultimately, the projects featured on these pages tell us not just about the nature of great architecture today but also what it could look like tomorrow.

Innovations in the use of traditional construction materials highlight a trend toward convention-breaking structures that do not fit within a neat architectural genre. Examples include KnitCandela

(pages 258–9), a curvaceous concrete installation created using an ultra-lightweight fabric formwork, and Boolean Operator (pages 36–9), an otherworldly pavilion by MARC FORNES/THEVERYMANY in Suzhou, China, that reads as an undulating accumulation of aluminum bubbles. Then, there are innovations that are set to revolutionize the construction process itself—for evidence, look no further than XWG Arch-Studio's 3D Printed Pedestrian Bridge in Shanghai (page 242), fully fabricated in 450 hours by concrete-printing robots.

Technology, particularly parametric software, is giving rise to more and more sinuous structures like these, but low-tech innovation is also prevalent among winning projects too. A case in point is the CHYBIK+KRISTOF-designed Gallery of Furniture in Brno, Czech Republic (page 47), its facades adorned with hundreds of gleaming black chairs. By reimagining a simple, iconic element of interior furnishing as an exterior component, the architects transformed a humble warehouse into an achingly cool product showroom. It is projects like this that prove it matters less which material architects choose to use, and more the ingenious ways in which that material is applied.

Architects are also showing increasing resourcefulness when faced with existing structures, illustrating the fact that old buildings need not be razed to the ground and replaced. The practices of renovation and restoration have been taken to new heights with a number of recent projects, breathing new life into dated, damaged, and even reviled buildings. Boston City Hall (page 232), once named the "world's ugliest building," was restored by local firm Utile, Inc. to its Brutalist best with a series of subtle interventions. In Portugal, Plano Humano Arquitectos turned an old office block into a striking apartment building (pages 236–7) by applying a new facade of elegant, ever-moving wooden shutters. Finally, Expensify's office by ZGF Architects in Portland, Oregon (pages 244–5) forms a new



# Frame House

BNS Studio

**TYPE**  
RESIDENTIAL:  
UNBUILT — PRIVATE HOUSE  
(S <3000 SQ. FT.)

**WINNER**  
POPULAR CHOICE

**PROJECT STATUS**  
CONCEPT

**YEAR**  
2019

**FIRM LOCATION**  
TEHRAN  
IRAN

Frame House is a single-story villa located in the North of Iran. This project is designed as a weekend retreat for a family of three seeking respite in the countryside from the stress and pollution of city life.

The whole site is surrounded by large trees with a magnificent view. The main design strategy is based on a direct relationship with nature and working with pure geometry to make a unique

and minimal building. In this sustainable practice, the design aimed to minimize the number of trees that needed to be removed for construction.

This contemporary house with a pitched roof and broad windows is integrated into the natural landscape and responds to the specific conditions of the site. The window walls, along with large openings, connect the indoor space to the dramatic outdoors.

The house has been divided into three main parts: public (living/dining room), semi-public (kitchen/restroom), and private (bedrooms), which are connected to one another through transparent corridors. The two bedrooms are positioned at the end of the house to ensure privacy. All interior spaces benefit from natural light and ventilation

