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PRESS
RELEASE

BSI Swiss Architectural Award: the essential architecture of Diébédo Francis Kéré wins second edition of the prize

- Architect Diébédo Francis Kéré (Burkina Faso/Germany) has been named the winner of the second edition of the BSI Swiss Architectural Award
- The jury honoured “the essential, intelligent architecture that makes no concession to any superstructural components” of Kéré’s works
- The CHF 100,000 award will be presented to the winner at the Accademia di architettura in Mendrisio, Switzerland, on 18 November at a ceremony that will also mark the opening of the exhibition of works submitted by the candidates.

Lugano, 17 November 2010 - It was the “essential, intelligent architecture that makes no concession to any superstructural components” of Diébédo Francis Kéré (Burkina Faso/Germany) that won the second BSI Swiss Architectural Award, the international architecture prize sponsored by the BSI Architectural Foundation, under the aegis of the Swiss Federal Office for Culture in Bern and the Accademia di architettura in Mendrisio (Università della Svizzera italiana) in partnership with the Archivio del Moderno, Mendrisio.

The CHF 100,000-prize will be awarded to the winner, together with a piece created for the occasion by British artist Liam Gillick, on 18 November at the Accademia di architettura in Mendrisio, Switzerland. The ceremony will be followed by a press conference with the winner and the opening of the exhibition of works submitted by the candidates, accompanied by a catalogue in Italian and English.

Felix R. Ehrat, Chairman of the BSI Architectural Foundation, commented, “the BSI Swiss Architectural Award has reached its second year, proving the popularity of the formula conceived by the BSI Architectural Foundation, which seeks to select highly-qualified architects, aged under 50, who have made a significant contribution to contemporary architecture and who have shown particular sensitivity to the landscape and environmental context.

Diébédo Francis Kéré was selected from 28 candidates from 15 different countries. The three works submitted to the jury were: the teachers’ residences for the elementary school in Gando (2003), the secondary school in Dano (2007) and the extension of the elementary school in Gando (2008). Born in 1965 in Burkina Faso, but educated in Berlin where he lives and teaches at the Technische Universität, Kéré was selected for his “exceptional ability to create buildings that, while benefiting from the technical knowledge he gained while training in Europe, are deeply rooted in the cultural tradition and social fabric of his country of origin, Burkina Faso, and are the result of intense involvement with local communities”.

The chairman of the jury, Mario Botta, said, “in Diébédo Francis Kéré’s work, architecture finds its deepest meaning, linked to activity that can tackle significant problems in those places where

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pockets of poverty and underdevelopment stagnate, which architecture cannot ignore. This is architecture of great humility, which powerfully shows how the ethics of building sometimes lead to the glorious silences of the language of poetry.”

Thanks to its objectives, the highly-esteemed jury and the excellent quality of the candidates, selected by an advisory committee comprising internationally-renowned architects and architecture critics, the Award has taken on a leading international role.

Alfredo Gysi, Chief Executive Officer of BSI, confirmed, “This award has also created a series of partnerships between public bodies and private enterprises, which brings the issue of the ecological and social sustainability of architectural projects into the public spotlight. This is not purely an award but the expression of the composite work of many people who, over and above their individual specialisations, identify with a common project for the greater social good”.

The first award, won in 2008 by Paraguayan architect Solano Benitez, helped to introduce an exceptional talent to the public, and also provided a significant overview of international architecture.

The award ceremony, which will be held at 6.30pm on Thursday, 18 November 2010 at the Accademia di architettura in Mendrisio, Switzerland, aims to focus public attention on the social and environmental value of architectural works, and will provide an excellent opportunity to debate the most topical issues in contemporary architecture. The prize-giving ceremony will be attended by Valentin Bearth, Director of the Accademia di architettura in Mendrisio, Luigi Pedrazzini, President of the State Council of the canton of Ticino, Alfredo Gysi, Chief Executive Officer of BSI AG, Felix R. Ehrat, Chairman of the BSI Architectural Foundation, Jean-Frédéric Jauslin, Head of the Swiss Federal Office for Culture in Bern, and Mario Botta, Chairman of the Jury of the BSI Swiss Architectural Award and Vice-Chairman of the BSI Architectural Foundation.

At the same time, an exhibition of the works submitted by the candidates, curated by Nicola Navone, will also be launched at the Galleria dell'Accademia. Particular prominence will be given to the works submitted by Kéré, documented with photo reportage by Italian photographer Enrico Cano, specifically commissioned for the occasion. The exhibition will be accompanied by a catalogue in Italian and English.

Exhibition and catalogue

Exhibition: *BSI Swiss Architectural Award 2010*, curated by Nicola Navone. Galleria dell'Accademia, Accademia di architettura, Mendrisio.

Dates: 19 November 2010 – 30 January 2011

Opening times: Tuesday-Friday 4pm - 7.30pm, Saturday-Sunday 1pm - 6pm, closed on Mondays and 24 December 2010 - 5 January 2011. Admission free

Catalogue: *BSI Swiss Architectural Award 2010*, edited by Nicola Navone, Mendrisio Academy Press-Silvana Editoriale, Mendrisio-Milan 2010, 184 colour pages. Italian and English text

BSI Swiss Architectural Award 2010

The winner: Diébédo Francis Kéré (1965) – Burkina Faso/Germany

Diébédo Francis Kéré was born in Burkina Faso in 1965, the eldest son of the village chief in Gando. He completed an apprenticeship as a carpenter and then started work in the capital Ouagadougou, where he taught on professional training courses organised with the support of West Germany's *Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung* (Ministry for economic co-operation and development). In 1990, he obtained a scholarship and moved to Berlin, where he completed his secondary studies. In 1995, he enrolled at the Faculty of Architecture at the Technische Universität, graduating in 2004.

His work as an architect started while he was still a student. In 1998, he founded the association *Schulbausteine für Gando* (Building blocks for Gando schools), thanks to which he was able to raise funds to build a new primary school in the village of his birth. The building was designed to provide efficient natural ventilation in all areas, achieved by the combination of a large roof built of unfired earth bricks (with concrete beams) and wide windows and arches with air vents, and a second, very broad metal cover, which provides shade and protects the building during the rainy season. The building techniques were appropriate to local resources and aimed to take advantage of the skills of the local workforce, involving the entire population of the village in the process. The exceptional quality of the new building attracts an increasing number of pupils to the school, with calls, after just a few years, for new classrooms and accommodation for teachers to be built.

The Gando primary school rapidly attracted attention and international recognition for its quality. In 2004, the architect was honoured with the Aga Khan Award for Architecture, followed in 2007 by the Zumtobel Award for Sustainable Architecture, and in 2009 by the Global Award for Sustainable Architecture.

His major projects and works include: in Burkina Faso, the Gando primary school (2001), and its subsequent extension (2008) and teachers' accommodation (2003), the Dano secondary school (2007) and the Opera village "Remdoogo" in Laongo (currently under construction); in Mali, the Community and Exhibition Centre in Mopti (under construction) and the *Parc National du Mali* in Bamako (2009-2010); in Togo, the Training Centre in Dapaong (construction to start in autumn 2010); and in Yemen, a schools prototype based on bioclimatic criteria (2006). For the first Architecture, Art and Landscape Biennial of the Canary Islands, he designed a Meeting Point in Fuerteventura, and was one of the three prizewinners for the permanent exhibition of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Museum in Geneva (currently under construction). He was also invited by Chinese architect Wang Shu and the Locus Foundation to become involved in the conversion of a fishing port in the city of Zoushan into an arts centre (2010).

His work has been exhibited at Expo Zaragoza 2008 in the section "Zaragoza-Kyoto – Architecture for a Sustainable Planet", at the DAM (*Deutsches Architekturmuseum*, the German Architecture Museum) in Frankfurt and, recently, at the MoMA in New York.

The jury

The jury has changed slightly since the first awards, and now comprises Mario Botta (Chairman), Valentin Bearth, director of the Accademia di architettura of Università della Svizzera italiana, Solano Benitez, winner of the first prize, Barry Bergdoll, Chief Curator of Architecture and Design at the MoMA in New York, and Luis Fernandez-Galiano, editor of *AV-Arquitectura Viva* magazine.

The advisory committee

The advisory committee comprises Emilio Ambasz, New York, Laurent Beaudouin, Nancy, Gonçalo Byrne, Lisbon, Alberto Campo Baeza, Madrid, Massimo Carmassi, Florence, Kenneth Frampton, New York, Dan S. Hanganu, Montreal, Kengo Kuma, Tokyo, Boris Podrecca, Vienna, Bruno Reichlin, Paris and Mendrisio, and Zhi Wenjun, Shanghai.

The candidates

The candidates were: Iñiqui Carnicero, Ignacio Vila, Alejandro Vírseda (Spain), Adam Caruso, Peter St John (UK), Davide Cristofani, Gabriele Lelli (Italy), João Pedro Falcão de Campos (Portugal), Dietmar Feichtinger (France/Austria), Arturo Franco Diaz (Spain), Sou Fujimoto (Japan), José Fernando Gonçalves (Portugal), Erich Hubmann, Andreas Vass (Austria), Bjarke Ingels (Denmark), Junya Ishigami (Japan), Diébédo Francis Kéré (Germany/Burkina Faso), Christian Kerez (Switzerland), Andrea Liverani, Enrico Molteni, Fabio Mariani (Italy), João Mendes Ribeiro (Portugal), MGM Morales Giles Mariscal (Spain), Hiroshi Nakamura (Japan), nARCHITECTS – Eric Bunge, Mimi Hoang (USA), Willem Jan Neutelings, Michiel Riedijk (Netherlands), Mauricio Pezo, Sofia von Ellrichshausen (Chile), Joshua Prince-Ramus (USA), Bernard Quirot (France), Jurij Sadar, Boštjan Vuga (Slovenia), Markus Scherer (Italy), José Selgas, Lucia Cano (Spain), URBANUS – Liu Xiaodu, Meng Yan, Wang Hui (China), Xu Tiantian (China).

ABOUT BSI ARCHITECTURAL FOUNDATION

The BSI Architectural Foundation promotes knowledge, training and research in the field of architecture. It presents a biennial architecture award (BSI Swiss Architectural Award) and sponsors activities and projects as part of that event, including exhibitions, publications and presentations. The BSI Architectural Foundation is one of the BSI AG Foundations. Felix R. Ehrat (President), Mario Botta (Vice-President), Alfredo Gysi, Marco Solari and Chantal Stampanoni Sganzi are members of the Foundation Board.

ABOUT BSI AG

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