

10.10.2019

Christoph Ingenhoven received the 2019 Semper Prize from the Sächsische Akademie der Künste



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The prestigious Gottfried Semper Architecture Prize honors a German architect for their life's work and for special merits. The assessment for the prize focuses particularly on architectural quality, the urban design context, on resource-efficient, climate-friendly construction and designs that make careful use of available building land. The Sächsische Akademie der Künste [SAdK] (Saxon Academy of the Arts) awards the prize every two years. Christoph Ingenhoven received the reward at the Academy of Fine Arts in Dresden, with Professor Werner Sobek giving the address. The jury advised that "Since the formation of his practice as a 25-year-old architect in 1985, Ingenhoven has consistently endeavored to create beautiful buildings that are environmentally friendly in terms of their climate impact and their use of resources and building land."

The jury justified its decision by highlighting Ingenhoven's thirty-year long passion for ecological, resource-efficient architecture. Resources are specifically selected and employed. The jury lauded his continuous search for ever more effective methods to safeguard ecological aspects in combination with the structures' demonstrative nature. The designs are underscored with principles that clearly illustrate the drive towards simplicity, logic and conclusiveness without neglecting high aesthetic standards. The jury also emphasized that Ingenhoven's projects are noteworthy for their global scope.

The First Secretary of the Federal Ministry for the Interior, Construction and Heimat, Anne Kathrin Bohle sent a video message, elaborating on the Semper Prize and its winner: "We need good examples and initiatives like this. We need them to just raise and strengthen public awareness regarding

responsible planning and building and to support people like Christoph Ingenhoven, who think out of the box, who always look forward in any innovative project they take on.”

Holk Freytag, the Academy’s president, summarized the event’s significance concisely: “The Semper Prize shows the way in lauding architects, whose work is characterized by the highest of aesthetic appeal, by sustainable building in terms of resource-friendly environmental design and by a high degree of innovation. Christoph Ingenhoven is an award-winner who perfectly matches the profile.”

In his laudatory speech, Professor Sobek primarily spoke of the considerate and, especially, amicable cooperation between himself and Christoph Ingenhoven and did not shy away from several anecdotes. Sobek emphasized Ingenhoven’s people-oriented architectural approach. His courage to submit ambitious projects to contests was equally highlighted and the integration of structural playfulness and transparency was explicitly lauded. “Christoph Ingenhoven managed like no one else to consistently develop his architectural stance and to realize that stance spatially, also in terms of city planning. He managed to realize this stance materially in such a fashion that a constructed Heimat in an unmistakable style emerges. A constructed Heimat that envelops people and that is architecturally responsible”, Sobek declared. After the conclusion of the laudatory speech, a communicative reception followed in the Oktogon.

The Gottfried Semper Architecture Prize was named after the eponymous architect who died in 1879. Semper became known through his buildings in Neo-Renaissance style and is considered as the theorist behind enclosure theory (‘Bekleidungstheorie’) and the co-founder of modern theater architecture. He contributed to the design of the Schwerin Palace, which is currently the seat of the State Parliament of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. In addition, Semper designed the Semper Opera House in Dresden and the Burgtheater in Vienna, amongst others. He spent long periods of his life abroad, which made him an architect of international importance. The prize was previously awarded to Matthias Sauerbruch, Louisa Hutton, Undine Giseke and Günter Pfeifer, amongst others.