

AUSTRIAN FREDERICK KIESLER PRIZE FOR ARCHITECTURE AND THE ARTS 2018

goes to the French architect

YONA FRIEDMAN



Courtesy Yona Friedman

The award, with a substantial prize-money of 55,000 euros, is presented alternately by the Republic of Austria and the City of Vienna every two years “for outstanding achievements in the field of architecture and the arts that conform to Frederick Kiesler’s experimental, innovative conceptions and his theory of correlated arts.” *(Statutes of the Frederick Kiesler Prize)*

The international jury of the Frederick Kiesler Prize 2018 pays tribute to Yona Friedman as a “titan amongst architects, who is hugely respected by the established figures of the profession as well as those practitioners who are at the beginning of their careers. Throughout his working life of over six decades he has been uncompromising in rigor and visionary in his thinking. He has been enormously influential as a ‘feasible utopian’ architect, urban theorist, designer and teacher.

Friedman’s concepts for architecture are closely linked to the dynamics of social structures and to the changing necessities of the users therein. These topics which he emphasized from the beginning of his work gained even more importance in the present days with its actual developments of migration and a kind of new nomadism. It is also due to his own biography as a migrant that his ideas and his engagement for a deeply human architecture and society are based on existential experience and thus qualifies his work a political one too.” *(Decision of the Jury, extract)*

Jury 2018 (from left to right:) **Pedro Gadanho**, Director MAAT, Lisbon

Rainer Fuchs, Chief Curator, Deputy Director
mumok, Vienna

Dame Julia Peyton-Jones, Global Senior Director,
Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, London

Germano Celant, Director Prada Foundation, Milan,
Curator Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York
(Hani Rashid, President Kiesler Foundation)

Angelika Fitz, Director Architekturzentrum Wien
(Peter Bogner, Director Kiesler Foundation)



Photo by Sabine Hauswirth

The Austrian Frederick Kiesler Prize for Architecture and the Arts 2018 will be presented by Gernot Blümel, Federal Minister within the Federal Chancellery for the EU, Arts, Culture and Media. The exact date will be announced soon.

Yona Friedman:

Yona Friedman was born in 1923 in Budapest, Hungary. He studied at the Technical University in Budapest, before he had to flee to Israel, where he continued his education and worked as an architect until 1957. He then moved to Paris, where he still lives and works.

In 1958 he published the manifesto “L’Architecture Mobile” and founded the “Groupe d’étude d’architecture mobile” (GEAM). His ideas and concepts like “La Villa Spatiale” (The Spatial City) were visionary and ahead of the curve, but have continued to influence new generations of architects. Today they are as relevant as ever.

Friedman has taught at prestigious universities like the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Harvard University and Princeton University. His works include urban planning models, theoretical texts and (animated) films and have been exhibited at several art biennials as well as documenta 11 (2002) in Kassel.

Previous Laureates:

Frank O. Gehry (1998) – Judith Barry (2000) – Cedric Price (2002) – Asymptote Architecture / Hani Rashid + Lise Anne Couture (2004) – Olafur Eliasson (2006) – Toyo Ito (2008) – Heimo Zobernig (2010) – Andrea Zittel (2012) – Bruce Nauman (2014) – Andrés Jaque (2016)

“I feel particularly happy receiving the Kiesler Award, and I am very grateful to the Jury for selecting my work which reflects the understanding of my ideas. But beyond gratitude, I am really happy that it was this particular Foundation that recognized my work. I knew some of Kiesler's work, from publications and from exhibitions at the Centre Pompidou in Paris and I admired him and his ideas greatly.

The first time I discovered his work was his presentation at the Surrealists exhibition, the catalogue of which I had read before even coming to Paris. I then saw his models of the Endless House, and understood the intention behind it, which I thought very close to the ideas which I was working on. There were so few artists and architects who were courageous enough to take a stand opposite mainstream architecture. Kiesler was one of these few, and perhaps the most determined.

I feel that ideas can be more important than the objects themselves. A perception that goes back 2500 years, but often forgotten ...”

– **Yona Friedman**, *Frederick Kiesler Prize laureate 2018*

“I am pleased that this year’s Kiesler Prize laureate almost ideally corresponds to the visionary oeuvre of its name giver. Yona Friedman is not only an innovative architect with his Spatial City concepts, he was also far ahead of his time. His work is an enormously important starting point not only for urban planners and architects, contemporary art has recently discovered him and his artistic-poetic quality as well. His relevance for the present is impressive and due to his biographical background as a displaced person he developed a sensorium for existential experiences in a society, which qualifies his work also as a political one.”

– **Gernot Blümel**, *Federal Minister within the Federal Chancellery for the EU, Arts, Culture and Media*

“I am delighted that Yona Friedman is honored for his visionary work with the Kiesler Prize. His concept for a city consists of modular systems which are designed and developed by its residents. Architecture is not treated as something static, but as an open, dynamic phenomenon. Yona Friedman looks at the city not from a formalistic perspective, but in terms of its usage – the main focus is on the human being. An approach that impresses with its modernity and democratic radicality and that today is more relevant than ever.”

– **Andreas Mailath-Pokorny**, *Vienna City Councillor for Cultural Affairs, Science and Sports*

“It is at once a surprise and no surprise that the Kiesler Prize this cycle goes to the immensely influential, yet in some corners obscure genius of Yona Friedman. Friedman’s oeuvre spans magnificently and seamlessly art, urbanism, architecture, poetry and science – and for that reason alone there is no better prize the world offers than the Kiesler Prize to receive as recognition of a body of work like no other, and whose influence is now beginning to truly take hold.”

– **Hani Rashid**, *President of the Frederick Kiesler Foundation, Vienna/New York*

“Throughout his life Yona Friedman has been an agent in the search of new solutions to human cohabitation in urban space. He untiringly conceives new utopian ideas that enable a society with more leisure and less space to contribute to an improvement of their living conditions – this finds its manifestation in his ‘Architecture Mobile’ of 1958.

In the fields of architecture, contemporary art, sociology, ecology and new media Friedman carries on in a most incredible way what Frederick Kiesler was concerned with throughout his life. In his thinking the 11th Kiesler Prize laureate turns out to be a global citizen, who carries on and refines the immanently prevailing topic of mankind, namely the peaceful coexistence in an overpopulated world, whereby Yona Friedman also proves to have great respect for the history of existing urban structure.”

– **Peter Bogner**, *Director of the Frederick Kiesler Foundation, Vienna*

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