

**AUSTRIAN FREDERICK KIESLER PRIZE  
FOR ARCHITECTURE AND THE ARTS LAUREATE 2018:  
YONA FRIEDMAN**



Photo by Rolf Bock

**The presentation of the internationally renowned award to the French architect Yona Friedman by Gernot Blümel, the Austrian Federal Minister for the EU, Arts, Culture and Media, took place at the Architekturzentrum Wien on June 5, 2018 at 1 p.m.**

Endowed with 55,000 euros the award is presented every two years by the Republic of Austria and the City of Vienna for “extraordinary achievements in architecture and the arts that relate to Frederick Kiesler’s experimental and innovative attitudes and his theory of ‘correlated arts’ by transcending the boundaries between the traditional disciplines” (*Statutes of the Frederick Kiesler Prize*).

“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 for the EU, Arts, Culture and Media*)

**Further information and print-quality photo download: [www.kiesler.org/en/press](http://www.kiesler.org/en/press)**

**See also the information by the Federal Chancellery: [OTS](#) and [Photographs](#)**

**Jury 2018** (from left to right:)



Foto: Sabine Hauswirth

**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)

## Decision of the Jury:

“The jury is pleased to award this year’s Frederick Kiesler Prize to Yona Friedman, 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.

Friedman's work has been making an impact in the context of the architectural avant-garde, being both radical and future-oriented. This impact now starts to move beyond connoisseurs and instills a following amongst younger generations of artists and architects, who recognize the extreme pertinence and actuality of notions such as his ‘utopies réalisables’. The Kiesler Prize arrives timely, acknowledging his legacy for generations to come.”

**Yona Friedman (Frederick Kiesler Prize Laureate 2018):**

“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 ...”

**Hani Rashid (President of the Frederick Kiesler Foundation, Vienna/New York):**

“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.”

**Peter Bogner (Director of the Frederick Kiesler Foundation):**

“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.”

## **About 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)

## Further events in the course of the Kiesler Prize ceremony 2018:

### 1. Advanced Structural Design B (ASDb): Final Review with Yona Friedman

Wednesday, June 6, 2018, 11 a.m.

Angewandte, Institute of Architecture, Stubenring 3, Seminarraum 2, Attic

**IOA** INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTURE

**di:angewandte**  
Universität für angewandte Kunst Wien  
University of Applied Arts Vienna

**YONA FRIEDMAN**

FINAL REVIEW

WEDNESDAY  
JUNE 6TH, 11:00

UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED ARTS VIENNA

STUBENRING 3,  
SEMINARRAUM 2  
(ATTIC)

**L** **WITTE** **S** **spatiale**

ASD - B  
Advanced Structural Design  
KLAUS BOLLINGER,  
ANDREI GHEORGHE AND  
FLORIAN MEDICUS

GUESTS

YONA FRIEDMAN  
Architect,  
Urban Planner  
and Designer, Paris

GERALD BAST  
President,  
University of  
Applied Arts Vienna

KRISTINA SCHMEGGER  
Architect and  
Professor at the  
Leopold Franzens  
University,  
Innsbruck

GERD ZILLNER,  
PETER BOGNER AND  
JILL MEISSNER  
Austrian Frederick  
and Lillian Kiesler  
Foundation, Vienna

## **2. mumok cinema: Michael Klein and Sasha Pirker**

### **60 Elephants. Episodes of a Theory. Improvisation #1**

Premiere

Wednesday, June 6, 2018, 7 p.m.

museum moderner kunst stiftung ludwig wien (mumok), Museumsplatz 1 (MQ), 1070 Vienna

[www.mumok.at/en/events/michael-klein-and-sasha-pirker](http://www.mumok.at/en/events/michael-klein-and-sasha-pirker)

Michael Klein and Sasha Pirker have been working on the theories of the architect and visionary Yona Friedman, and they have developed a cinematic language for their presentation. In place of master narratives, Yona Friedman puts small and seemingly innocuous stories at the center of his thinking on real utopias, themes like the size of a group in which it is still possible to communicate directly, a simple fountain that can still provide water in case of emergency, or the city as a place of arrival. Friedman counters prescribed planning with the potential of spontaneous and ephemeral action: "We improvise all the time. We are used to it. All I am telling is you don't need to be afraid of it" (Yona Friedman).

Programm

Michael Klein, Sasha Pirker, *60 Elephants. Episodes of a Theory. Improvisation #1*, 2018, 20 min

Presented by Michael Klein and Sasha Pirker, followed by a conversation with Hedwig Saxenhuber and Naoko Kaltschmidt (mumok). In the presence of Yona Friedman.

Michael Klein and Sasha Pirker live in Vienna. In their work they address various interfaces between culture, politics, and our built environment, using film, installations, images, and texts.

Hedwig Saxenhuber is an independent curator, co-editor of *springerin – Hefte zur Gegenwartskunst*, and lives in Vienna. She has curated numerous international exhibitions, recently the 2nd Kyiv Biennial *The School of Kyiv*. Currently she is preparing the exhibition *WHO WAS 1968?* for Lentos and Nordico.