

arcVision Prize **Women and Architecture** by Italcementi Group

Introduction

Italcementi Group has always paid careful attention to Architecture, as a tool for sustainable transformation of the territory, and to Innovation, as a form of workshop encouraging dialogue among all players in the building community.

With its know-how and materials, the Group has always been at the side of architects working on innovative projects with an advanced technological content. From experimental work on materials with Gio Ponti and Pier Luigi Nervi for the Pirelli skyscraper and the Vatican Audience Hall, to cooperation with Richard Meier on the new Italcementi **i.lab** Research Center in Bergamo, the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao with Frank O. Gehry, the Bibliothèque Nationale de France with Dominique Perrault, and the MAXXI National Museum of XXI Century Arts in Rome, with Zaha Hadid.

Italcementi laboratory research and experimental field work have provided a foundation for the complex design ideas of today's leading architects: development of sophisticated products and advanced structural and technological solutions; optimization of construction techniques and green methodologies and materials for sustainable buildings. Intelligent construction is the challenge, establishing the right balance between science and aesthetics, between statics and creative inspiration: where architecture is the synthesis of design and engineering and attains its formal value through its structural characteristics.

Why an architecture award for women by Italcementi Group? Women have been important players for some time now in the area of contemporary architecture, creators of compositions which are particularly sensitive to the needs of citizens, human relations and the creation of an environment fit for those who live in it. Italcementi Group wants to back this trend and make it become an essential feature of the world of design. In recent years, the sensitivity of the Group has been increasing towards valorization of the female figure in the social and corporate reality, together with the commitment and attention always dedicated to the world of building and in particular to architecture for the social, cultural and education arenas. Italcementi Group wants to support "affirmative action" and endorses affirmative action policies for a greater representation of women in the architectural profession.

Italcementi Group strives to proactively interpret and foster this new positive "discrimination", with the creation of initiatives aimed at highlighting the figure of female designers who bring to the economic, social and culture context of architecture authentic new qualities in theoretical and practical design solutions.

In this context, Italcementi is pleased to launch the **arcVision Prize – Women and Architecture**, an international award aimed at selecting the designer who has best



interpreted the role of the architect with significant works (civil, residential, services), in the field of social, cultural and education infrastructures.

The Prize is part of a wider cultural project fostered by Italcementi Group, which has been concretized into **arcVision**. **arcVision** focuses on a multidisciplinary approach to show architecture not only as design, but also as materials and engineering solutions, as an economic driver, as a creative medium and a realized entity, as clients and final users, as social growth and cultural reflection, as urban development and territory and environment management.

For more than ten years, **arcVision** has been promoting a wide range of initiatives, focusing on architecture and economy, from exhibitions, seminars and meetings to the editorial production of the homonymous magazine, books and a dedicated web site.

Program

arcVision Prize aims to award every year a female architect who has been showing, in her research and design work, particular qualitative excellence and special attention to the key issues in building construction: technology, sustainability, social and cultural implications.

The Prize will favor female architect candidates working under particularly sensitive conditions, both in terms of project type and scope and in relation to the context in which they live and work.

The selection is made from a group of female professionals who are indicated by a pool of *Advisors*. *Advisors'* indications are assessed by an internal technical-cultural Commission to define the final nominations and submit them to the judgment of an international Jury, which will meet in Bergamo at the beginning of March 2013.

Prize results will be announced by the Jury during a press conference at **i.lab**, the new Research and Innovation Center of Italcementi Group on March 7, late afternoon, to be released on March 8, International Women's Day.

Profile of the women designers

Ideally, the designer who may be recommended to compete for the final Award should:

- have designed at least one significant building (either built or under construction) in the sector of social infrastructures (education, health, culture, information, services in general) entailing essentially innovative solutions and values from the functional and technical point of view, with particular attention to sustainability topics;
- have possibly gained research experience—in the field or in a teaching/academic sphere—in the development of innovative solutions in building systems.



Advisors, technical/cultural Commission and Jury

The Advisors—identified among critics, institutions, already well-known project designers, sector-specific media and executives from Italcementi Group's international management—are in charge of recommending and suggesting potential nominees of special interest. They are asked to recommend female designers on the basis of the profile as indicated above.

The technical/cultural Commission for assessing the recommendations and defining the nominations includes the Scientific Director of the Prize and Italcementi Group representatives, and provides the members of the jury with the final recommendations, in a synthetic form.

The Jury will be deliberately composed of female professionals, experts of other disciplines in the area of architecture and cultural operators, with a broad background of knowledge and expertise in promoting a new cultural geography in which the innovative experience of the candidate designers is expected to converge.

Prize

- A two-week workshop or research stay—between March and April 2013—at **i.lab**, the new Research and Innovation Center of Italcementi Group in Bergamo, designed by Richard Meier and recently completed, which is also intended to be a place of meeting and exchange of innovative technologies and practices for an eco-friendly world.
- A monetary award of €50,000, part of which the winner may graciously decide to donate to social architecture programs of her choice.

Communication

For the occasion, a series of communications will be issued to highlight the progress of the competition, followed by a final publication with the profiles of the selected designers and a special report on the winner's work.

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At the end of the two-week workshop, the Winner will talk about her Prize experience during a press conference at **i.lab**, in early April 2013, in the days prior to the *Milan Design Week* (8-14 April).

This event will be accompanied by a lecture by the Winner, held at **i.lab** during the *Milan*



Design Week, as part of the new "Millennium" series of architectural events organized by Italcementi Group.

Competition Guidelines

Candidates must submit the following documentation:

- Formal acceptance of the nomination
- Professional CV (500 words)
- Ten photos and description of current building projects (either built or under construction) and/or future projects, including at least one significant work built in the sector of social infrastructures (education, health, culture, information, services in general).
- A formal photography and/or drawing release authorizing publication of said materials in any form of communication regarding the Prize.

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