The Rise of Awards in Architecture

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Series in Built Environment

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List of Acronyms

A4LE	Association for Learning Environments
AANB	Architects Association of New Brunswick
AIA	American Institute of Architects
AIA COTE	Committee on the Environment
AIBC	Architectural Institute of British Colombia
AJAP	Albums des Jeunes Architectes et Paysagistes
ALA	American Library Association
arq	Architecture Research Quarterly
ARVHA	Association for Research on the City and the Habitat
A+U	Architecture and Urbanism (originally *Kenchiku to Toshi)*
BC	British Columbia
BCJ	Bohlin Cywinski Jackson
BIM	Building Information Modelling
BMO	Bank of Montreal
BREEAM	Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method
CACB	Canadian Architectural Certification Board
CAE	Committee on Architecture for Education
CAGBC	Canada Green Building Council
CAHP	Canadian Association of Heritage Professionals
CASBEE	Comprehensive Assessment System for Built Environment Efficiency
CBLIA	Centre Belgo-Luxembourgeois d'Information de l'Acier (Belgo-Luxembourg Steel Information Center)
CEC	Campus Energy Centre
CEFPI	Council of Education Facility Planners International
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CIAM	Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne (International Congresses of Modern Architecture)
CISC	Canadian Institute of Steel Construction
CPRQ	Conseil du patrimoine religieux du Québec
CTBUH	Council of Tall Buildings and Urban Habitats

DAM	Deutsches Architekturmuseum
DQI	Design Quality Indicators
FAD	Foment de les Arts i del Disseny
FAQ	Frequently Asked Questions
HQE	Haute Qualité Environmentale
HTNS	Heritage Trust Nova Scotia
IRS	Internal Revenue Service
LEED	Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design
MIT	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
NAAB	National Architectural Accrediting Board
NCSC	National Council on Schoolhouse Construction
NGOs	Non-governmental organizations
NSAA	Nova Scotia Association of Architects
OAA	Ontario Association of Architects
OAQ	Ordre des Architectes du Québec
OUV	Outstanding Universal Value
PID	Agence Productions Interface Design
PR	Public relations or publicity
RAIA	Royal Australian Institute of Architects
RAIC	Royal Architectural Institute of Canada
RIBA	Royal Institute of British Architects
RVTR	Ripley Velikov Thün Raff
SABMag	Sustainable Architecture & Building Magazine
SANAA	Sejima and Nishizawa Associated Architects
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TAG	technique + architecture + graphics
UBC	University of British Columbia
UIA	Union Internationale des Architectes
UK	United Kingdom
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UN SDGs	United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
US	United States
USGBC	US Green Building Council
WAF	World Architecture Festival

WAN	World Architecture News
WorldGBC	World Green Building Council
YYZ	International Air Transport Association code for Toronto International Airport

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It would be inappropriate to list here all the online resources from award organizers in Canada and around the world, which we do in the appendix. However, we would like to thank the following organizations who were the first to open their archives and share their valuable data without which this research and book project could not take place: Royal Architectural Institute of Canada (RAIC), Canadian Architect Journal, Ontario Association of Architects (OAA), Ordre des Architectes du Québec (OAQ), Canadian Center for Architecture (CCA).

Introduction: What Can Explain the Exponential Growth of Awards in the Built Environment?

Jean-Pierre Chupin
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Awarding as Adjudicating

Many fields, once consolidated, have featured a sharp increase in related prizes. This book is the first study to focus on awards in architecture and the built environment investigating their exponential growth since the 1980s. The original data, compiled and summarized in Appendices 1 to 4, covers more than 150 award-granting organizations in some 30 countries. Our inventory includes upwards of 24,000 prizes awarded in more than 3,100 events, the earliest of which is the first instance of Western architecture's seminal Grand Prix de Rome in France in 1720. Even with its relatively wide ambit, this list cannot be considered exhaustive since it lacks data on China, India, and many other countries.

Given this book's narrow focus—the formidable rise of awards in architecture and related disciplines—it is important to clarify our terminology from the outset. We will distinguish between the different types of prizes, awards, and project competitions. We have already extensively dealt with project competitions in architecture in previous studies in this growing research field.[1] Here, we will only deal with the

[1] Jean-Pierre Chupin, Carmela Cucuzzella, and Bechara Helal (Eds), *Architecture Competitions and the Production of Culture, Quality and Knowledge (An International Inquiry),* (Montreal: PAB, 2015), introduction, 8-23. See also: Maria Theodorou, Antigoni, Katsakou, (Eds), *The Competition Grid. Experimenting with and Within Architecture Competitions* (London: RIBA Publishing, 2019), introduction. Jonas Andersson, Gerd Bloxham Zettersten, and Magnus Rönn, *Architectural competitions - histories and practice,* (Hamburgsund: Bommersvik, 2013), Chapter

subset of prizes attributed to individuals and building realizations even if some were granted after they had already won a project competition. However, this does not preclude the comparison of these competition-winning projects with those that receive an award once they have been built. If only to compare the qualities once anticipated by a jury for a winning project during the competition process, with the qualities once built, as appreciated by another jury this time for an award.

Figure 0.1: Exponential Rise in the Number of National and International Architecture Award Organizations per Year since 1900 (see Appendices 2 and 3 for list, figures and data.)

Awards in architecture have experienced several phases. Figure 0.1, a historical curve spanning two centuries (from the end of the nineteenth century to the second decade of the twenty-first century), shows three distinct periods. Before 1960, there were at most twenty organizations granting prizes and awards in architecture. The following Table 0.1 cannot be considered historically exhaustive, but it already reveals a clear trend: for almost two centuries, there were hardly ever more than two architecture prizes per country.

Table 0.1: Historical Prizes between 1720 and 1954.

- Since 1720 (France): **Grand Prix de Rome d'Architecture** granted by Académie Royale and later Institut de France
- Since 1836 (United Kingdom): **Royal Institute of British Architects President's Medals**

9. Magnus Rönn, Jonas Andersson and Reza Kazemian, *The Architectural Competition: Research Inquiries and Experiences*, (Stockholm: Axl Books, 2010), 351-371.

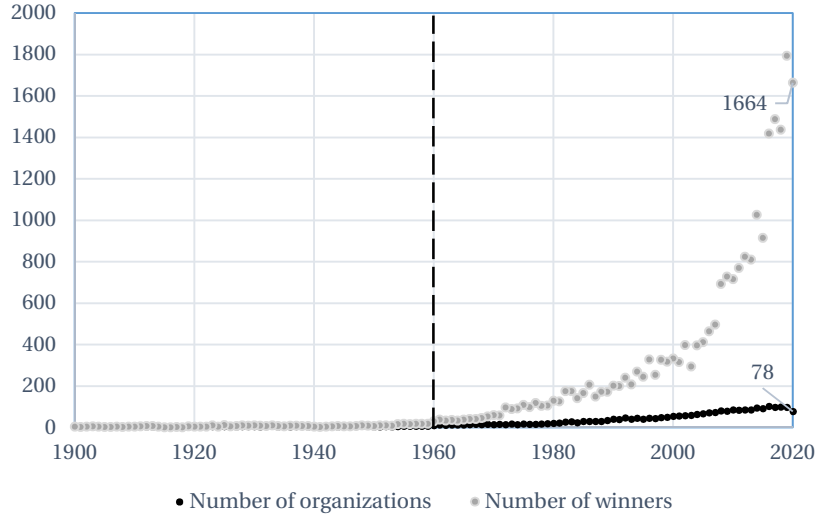
- Since 1848 (United Kingdom): **Royal Gold Medal** granted by Royal Institute of British Architects
- Since 1884 (Belgium): **Lauréat du Concours Godecharle** (catégorie Architecture) granted by Fondation Godecharle
- Since 1897 (USA), **Rome Prize** granted by American Academy in Rome
- Since 1904 (Norway), **Houen Foundation Award** granted by Royal Norwegian Ministry of Culture
- Since 1907 (USA): **American Institute of Architects Gold Medal**
- Since 1930 (Canada): **Royal Architectural Institute of Canada Gold Medal**
- Since 1932 (Spain): **National Architecture Award of Spain**
- Since 1934 (Ireland): **Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland Triennial Gold Medal**
- Since 1954 (USA): **Progressive Architecture Magazine Awards**

From the 1960s onwards, the number of award organizers rose slowly but steadily until it reached about 20 in 1980. After this period, there was a literal exponential growth between 1980 and our target date of 2020. We have gone from fewer than 20 organizations in the early 1980s to more than 100 large organizations celebrating architecture annually; this, we can safely call a veritable rise of awards in architecture. However, this initial number, deriving from a focus on major awards, masks a proliferative phenomenon that makes any contemporary inventory precarious. In the Canadian context alone—one in which some of our study's researchers operate—there are more than 70 organizations delivering awards in all fields of the built environment (i.e., architecture, design, landscape architecture, urban design) in 2020.

The implication of this is if the number of organizations is growing exponentially, then the number of prizes awarded each year is experiencing an increase that is even more dramatic and difficult to quantify. A second graph (Figure 0.2) elucidates this increase by revealing that, until the early 1960s, the number of organizations corresponded to the number of prizes awarded. In 2020, however, a striking dissociation materialized due to the doubling in the number of organizations. As a matter of fact, if we consider those organizations that have turned the awarding of architectural prizes into a real commercial enterprise, then it increased a hundredfold. There are quite a few of these "award machines": the Farmani Group, the European Center for Architecture, the Chicago Athenaeum, the International Awards Associate, and the Union of Architects of Russia. Each of these issues more than a hundred awards per year, but they are far from the only ones. Case in point, two Canadian organizations, Azure magazine and the PiD Agency, offer more combined annual prizes than the total number of *Governor General's Medals in Architecture* recorded since its foundation in 1982 (i.e., 240). Under the aegis of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada and the Canada Council for the Arts, the Governor General's Medals certainly constitute the most prestigious recognition for a

great majority of Canadian architects; but how can we measure the intrinsic value of architectural awards in the face of such an imbalance?

Figure 0.2: Comparison Between Two Exponential Curves: The Rise in the Number of Award Organizations and the Explosion in the Number of Winners.



(See Appendices 2 and 3 for list, figures and data)

From these first two graphs, questions can flow in disorderly and some do not seem limited to practices in the built environments. For example, two questions like what are professional organizations or cultural institutions looking for by granting more and more prizes? Or do some organizations have more legitimacy than others when it comes to awarding excellence? It could be raised in many fields. Although this book does not claim to resolve all questions specifically to architecture awards only, it ambitions to properly establish a field of research that only a scarcity of researchers has ventured into. Given the unchartered territory we are attempting to traverse, questions provide us with the most favorable starting points. Thus, our chapters are outlined by ten of these:

1. *What Can the Nobel Prize Reveal about the Pritzker Prize?*
2. *Is There Still a Place for the Prix de Rome?*
3. *Can Awards and Prizes Define Quality in Architecture?*
4. *How Do Green Awards Assess Sustainability?*
5. *How Did Canada Come to Host More than 100 Categories of Sustainable Awards?*
6. *Are Heritage Awards a New Type of Conservation Status?*

7. *Do Architecture Book Awards Have Literary Ambitions?*
8. *Should School Architecture be Recognized in Specific Award Categories?*
9. *How Does Award Mediation Produce "Architecture Worlds"?*
10. *What Can Students Learn from Architecture Awards?*

A wide range of reflective approaches

The first chapters examine historical prizes like the Pritzker Prize and a contemporary version of the Prix de Rome (one of its many incarnations). From these first milestones, the delicate question of quality arises: What can awards reveal about our definitions of quality? Perhaps "excellence" is not the only contributor. Our exploration then shifts to environmental awards (i.e., "green awards") before broadening to include a variety of other award categories: heritage conservation, architecture books, and school architecture. The last studies change the analytical lens by first considering the question of architectural mediation, when awards become means and not ends, and then the pedagogical dimension of awards as a communicational wave. This latter topic should be of particular interest to architecture students and all those aspiring to learn in the disciplines of the built environment.

Outside of architecture, research on awards is gaining momentum. For example, in literature, as in the visual arts, a series of studies in the French context were initiated by the sociology of literary prizes in the late 1950s.[2] Essentially sociological, most contemporary works owe credit to Pierre Bourdieu and his famous theses on the "rules of art."[3] As for science, most studies adopt a social framework for the analysis of scientific excellence. For example, studies on the Nobel Prize are often included in a "sociology of recognition."[4]

Although the social value of prizes was naturally inscribed at the crossroads of economic and cultural capital, James English's *The Economy of Prestige*, published in 2005, was the first to explicit the main paradoxes of the circulation of cultural value,

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[2] Sylvie Ducas, *La littérature, à quel(s) prix? Histoire des prix littéraires,* (Paris: La Découverte, 2013).
Nathalie Heinich, *L'épreuve de la grandeur. Prix littéraires et reconnaissance*, (Paris: La Découverte, 1999).

[3] Pierre Bourdieu, and Alain Dardel. *L'amour de l'art: Les musées et leur public,* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit), coll. "Le sens commun," 1966, Pierre Bourdieu, *Les règles de l'art: genèse et structure du champ littéraire,* (Paris: Seuil, 1992.)

[4] Harriet Zuckerman, *Scientific Elite: Nobel Laureates in the United States.* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 1996.) Verdrager, Pierre. "La sociologie de la reconnaissance scientifique: généalogie et perspectives," *Revue d'Histoire des Sciences Humaines*, n° 2, septembre 2005, 51-68.

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