

2016 World Monuments Fund/Knoll Modernism Prize Awarded

Molenaar & Co. Architecten, Hebly Theunissen Architecten & Michael van Gessel Honored for the Restoration of the Justus van Effen Complex in Rotterdam

New York, NY—Today it was announced that Molenaar & Co. architecten (Rotterdam), Hebly Theunissen architecten (Delft), and landscape architect Michael van Gessel (Amsterdam) are the recipients of the 2016 World Monuments Fund/Knoll Modernism Prize for the preservation and rehabilitation of the Justus van Effen complex in Rotterdam, the Netherlands. The announcement was made Joshua David, President and CEO of World Monuments Fund (WMF), and Andrew B. Cogan, CEO of Knoll, Inc.

Originally designed by Michiel Brinkman in 1919-1921, and completed in 1922, the Justus van Effen complex is a remarkable example of early modernism and is emblematic of the ideals embodied in the modern movement. The use of an elevated “street” as a means of facilitating social cohesion was extremely influential on the subsequent generation of designers. The completed project aligns with the revitalization of Rotterdam’s Spangen neighborhood, an area that had become rundown and dangerous in the 1980s and 1990s and is now enjoying a resurgence, while still conveying the values of affordable housing. The project, which addresses all levels, from the building fabric to the public and urban domain, also reflects the commitment of the owner, Woonstad Rotterdam, to ensuring the future of the complex for future generations.

The biennial award will be presented at The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, on December 5, 2016, by Mr. David; Barry Bergdoll, Meyer Schapiro Professor of Art History and Archaeology at Columbia University, Curator of Architecture & Design at MoMA, and chairman of the prize jury; and Mr. Cogan. The award presentation, a free and public event, will be followed by a presentation by the members of the prize-winning team.

Mr. Bergdoll stated, “The Justus van Effen complex reminds us that in fact housing can be a significant architectural and civic monument and not simply a matter of providing living space for occupants. It recognizes that ascribing architectural qualities to housing is a civic act, creating urban values for residents and citizens of the city as a whole. This combination of a noble original intent, a sensitive rehabilitation, and now -- we hope -- international recognition of the vital role of housing in making the modern city, makes this project triply commendable.”

Mr. David added, “World Monuments Fund is committed to building awareness of the preservation challenges facing modern architecture. We are pleased to recognize the Justus van Effen complex for its architectural significance, the quality of the conservation work performed by the winning team of architects, and the commitment to recognizing the value of social housing.”

Mr. Cogan said, “Knoll’s leadership role in the World Monuments Fund Modernism at Risk initiative reflects our unwavering 75-year commitment to modern design. We are especially pleased that the brilliantly executed restoration of the Justus van Effen complex embodies the spirit of the World Monuments Fund/Knoll Modernism Prize, which was established as the first award to acknowledge threats facing modern buildings and to recognize the heroic efforts of architects and designers who help ensure their rejuvenation and long-term survival.”

In addition to Mr. Bergdoll, the jury included Jean-Louis Cohen, Sheldon H. Solow Professor in the History of Architecture at New York University; Kenneth Frampton, Ware Professor of Architecture at Columbia University; Dietrich Neumann, Professor of the History of Modern Architecture and the Director of Urban Studies, Department of the History of Art and Architecture at Brown University; Susan Macdonald, Head of Buildings and Sites at the Getty Conservation Institute; Theo Prudon, president of DOCOMOMO/US; and Karen Stein, architectural critic, advisor, and Executive Director of the George Nelson Foundation.

World Monuments Fund/Knoll Modernism Prize

Despite a growing appreciation for twentieth-century architecture in recent years, great works continue to be lost to neglect, deterioration, and demolition only decades after their design and construction. In 2006,

responding to growing threats to modern architecture, WMF launched its Modernism at Risk initiative with Knoll as founding sponsor. The initiative provides a framework for addressing the issues that endanger modern landmarks and supports architectural advocacy, conservation, and public education.

The World Monuments Fund/Knoll Modernism Prize was established in 2008 as a component of the Modernism at Risk initiative. Past winners are: Brenne Gesellschaft von Architekten mbH, headed by Winfried Brenne and Franz Jaschke, for the restoration of the Bauhaus-designed ADGB Trade Union School in Bernau, Germany (2008); Bierman Henket Architecten and Wessel de Jonge Architecten for the restoration of the Zonnestraal Sanatorium in Hilversum, the Netherlands (2010); the Architectural Consortium for Hizuchi Elementary School in Yawatahama City, Japan (2012); and the Finnish Committee for the Restoration of Viipuri Library, with the Central City Alvar Aalto Library in Vyborg, for the restoration of Viipuri Library in Vyborg, Russia (2014).

World Monuments Fund

World Monuments Fund's mission is to protect against the loss of the world's architectural heritage, including the built environment, the artistic elements that enhance it, and the cultural traditions that it sustains. WMF builds global partnerships to conserve key cultural sites in response to urgent threats, and broadens public understanding about the central importance of heritage in our lives. Our work makes historic places accessible and sustainable, builds and replenishes skills needed to care for our common heritage, and communicates the benefits of this work to the global public. wmf.org, twitter.com/worldmonuments, and facebook.com/worldmonuments.

About Knoll

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