

Today is a very special day, and it is with a great pride and joy that I accept this prize. However, in some way it is also difficult to receive this prize. In a way, I feel like a schoolboy who is about to take an exam. A moment to recollect—a moment of guilt—a moment of truth.

I also take this opportunity to meditate on my architecture. I will not bore you with a minute analysis; just a few words.

I have always felt that my architecture is timeless. I hope that this prize bears witness to that thought. I have always stayed away from the gossip that surrounds groups, school, magazines, newspapers, architects, and so on. But above all, I have always rejected styles and fashions.

I am not obsessed with architecture, but I have always tried to make architecture in an honest way, like all those that honestly practice their profession. Like the stonemasons or workmen who build the cathedrals, the factories, the big bridges, the big works of our time. Searching for truth in my profession, I have ended up loving architecture. Maybe it is a simple but strange satisfaction that makes one love his own profession. So let me call it "cara architettura," or in English, "dear architecture," or with your permission, "darling architecture."

I have never believed that any profession could be disjointed from culture, and, for this reason, during my youth I had the privilege of studying the relationship between theory and architecture, and I was happy to find significance in those studies.

But today I prefer to design and build, and I am fascinated by the possibility of building in different places and countries. It is as if all the cultures of these diverse countries make up my architecture and come together to form a whole. A unity that has the capacity to recompose the fragments of those things that were originally lost. Like many architects today, I am working in many places around the world—in Italy, Germany, England, America, and Japan. This is a sign of a new architecture that supersedes style and personal character, a universal architecture.

I'd like to speak about something like a contamination between different cultures. We live in a time similar to the period of Palladio, when the architecture of this city, of this country, made a special contamination in Russia, in England, and in America. Every building is the same, but at the same time, it is very different. For this reason, I believe in a great civic architecture that has the capacity to recompose our cities, making our

lives more free, more visible, more beautiful.

During the development of my work I have been helped by many friends. As friends, I would like to thank Mr. and Mrs. Pritzker who have honored me with their prize, and the members of the jury, who represent a part of our modern culture. And I'd like to say a special thank you to America—the first country to recognize my work—and all the young students who filled the American universities during my lectures, and the American press, like the New York Times and Time, which published a lot of beautiful articles.

Ringrazio particolarmente (special thanks) to Signore Agnelli for the opportunity to enjoy the ceremony here at the Palazzo Grassi, in this nice building with the beautiful restoration done by my friend Gae Aulenti, and in this city of Venezia, where I have worked as assistant professor, professor, director of the Biennale, and architect. The city where I built the happy and unhappy Teatro del Mondo. The city where I have lived a great part of my life.

In conclusion, I thank all of you and I hope to be able to continue in my work with the same dedication and persistence. And honor it, this prize, which I have received today.

Grazie, thank you.

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