

THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS NEWS

VENTURI, RAUCH AND SCOTT BROWN

WINS THE 1985 AIA FIRM AWARD

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WASHINGTON, D.C., February 1, 1985--One of the nation's most influential architecture firms, Venturi, Rauch and Scott Brown of Philadelphia, which pioneered the Post-Modern Movement 20 years ago and created a diversity of innovative projects, has been selected to receive The American Institute of Architects' 1985 Architectural Firm Award.

The coveted award, one of the Institute's highest honors, recognizes a firm that has continuously produced "distinguished architecture" for at least 10 years. It will be presented at the 1985 AIA National Convention in San Francisco, June 9-12.

Venturi, Rauch and Scott Brown was chosen because of its "collaborative practice, which has so profoundly influenced the direction of modern architecture," said the AIA Jury on Institute Honors. "In its design of buildings, rooms and furniture, parks and urban districts, the firm has probed deeply into the theoretical and practical issues of our times."

"The firm has challenged the profession's views of design. Its constructions are demonstrations of its thoughts--built examples that teach us all about architecture," continued the jury, which was chaired by Princeton (N.J.) architect/educator Robert Geddes, FAIA.

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The jury described the firm as "an artful balance of different people, interests and work. . . . The breadth of its work is impressive and, at the same time, consistently exploratory."

Founded in 1964 by Robert Venturi, FAIA, and John Rauch, FAIA, and later joined by Denise Scott Brown, the 40-person firm has "an outstanding record of design excellence," having won three AIA Honor Awards and more than 50 local and national design awards, noted the jury.

The firm received AIA Honor Awards in 1977 for Franklin Court, a Philadelphia urban park on the site of Benjamin Franklin's home and garden; in 1983 for the Coxe/Hayden Studio on Block Island, R.I., and in 1984 for Gordon Wu Hall at Princeton University. The latter project was cited for "brilliance of design" and for its "responsiveness to site and the institution."

Venturi, Rauch and Scott Brown's current projects show the range, versatility and eclecticism for which the firm is known: university buildings; city planning projects; a primate center and a children's tree house exhibit at the Philadelphia Zoo; a \$55 million mixed-use building in Baghdad and a new line of furniture, tea services and china.

Other notable projects include the Guild House, a home for the elderly in Philadelphia; the Allen Art Museum addition at Oberlin College, Ohio, and extensive work on four residential colleges at Princeton University.

The firm's influence has shifted the spectrum of architecture "from a pre-occupation with abstract values to a genuine concern with humanistic values," according to the nomination for the firm award.

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Although Robert Venturi, FAIA, the firm's artistic and design leader, has been called the "spiritual father of Post-Modernism," there is no one "Venturi style"; the firm's projects are "not easily labeled--Post-Modern or otherwise," continued the nomination. Many projects are "friendly and playful in feeling, mixing elements and proportions," reflecting Venturi's statement, "I am for messy vitality over obvious unity."

After forming the partnership with Venturi 21 years ago, Rauch has remained the managing partner responsible for running the firm and supervising production.

Scott Brown an architect and urban planner, joined the firm as partner in 1967, bringing with her a broad interest in combining disciplines from architecture and planning, and integrating the esthetic, social, economic and political concerns of each project.

Venturi and Scott Brown have written books that have "shaped the profession's view of architecture," according to the nomination. Venturi's Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture (1966), which won an Institute Honor in 1978, did more than any other single work "to create the current move away from the simple austerity of modern architecture," according to one critic. This book, along with Learning from Las Vegas (1977) by Venturi, Scott Brown and Steven Izenour, formed the philosophical basis for Post-Modernism. (Izenour is a senior associate with the firm.)

Venturi has taught architecture at the University of Pennsylvania and Yale University.

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Rauch also taught at Pennsylvania and has served as president of the Philadelphia Chapter/AIA. He helped develop guidelines for the selection of architects for public projects.

Scott Brown, a member of the Royal Institute of British Architects, has written and lectured widely on the relationship between architecture, urban planning and social conditions. She has taught at Pennsylvania, Yale and the University of California.

The firm will receive the award at the 1985 AIA National Convention, "Value Architecture," which will offer over 100 programs on 71 different subjects that respond to the interests of the design profession. A public lecture series, featuring such speakers as author Tom Wolfe and architects Michael Graves, FAIA, and Robert A.M. Stern, FAIA, also will be a part of convention activities.

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NOTE: Photographs of the firm's three Honor Award-winning projects--Franklin Court, Coxe/Hayden Studio and Gordon Wu Hall--are available from the AIA public relations department 1735 New York Ave., N.W., Washington, DC., 20006, (202) 626-7465.