



PRESS RELEASE

KAZUYO SEJIMA NAMED AS FIRST ROLEX ARCHITECTURE MENTOR

Rolex mentoring programme extended to architecture

Venice, 28 August, 2012

Japanese architect Kazuyo Sejima has been named as the first architecture mentor in the Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative, it was announced today at the 13th International Architecture Exhibition – la Biennale di Venezia.

Architecture will now be added as a seventh category in Rolex's global philanthropy programme, which includes literature, music, visual arts, dance, film and theatre.

Sejima, a partner in the architecture practice SANAA, joins a distinguished line-up of Rolex mentors for the current cycle of the programme, which pairs major artists with rising young talents. They are: Margaret Atwood (literature), Patrice Chéreau (theatre), Gilberto Gil (music), William Kentridge (visual arts), Lin Hwai-min (dance) and Walter Murch (film).

Sejima's protégé will be named in autumn 2012. The young architect will be invited to spend time over a period of a year working on *Home For All*. The project was created by Sejima and other leading Japanese architects – Toyo Ito, Riken Yamamoto, Hiroshi Naito and Kengo Kuma – to respond to the housing crisis following the devastation caused by the 2011 tsunami in Japan.

Sejima and her partner Ryue Nishizawa won the Golden Lion at the 2004 Venice Architecture Biennale for the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art in Kanazawa, Japan. In 2010, they won architecture's highest accolade, the Pritzker Prize, and that year Sejima became the first woman appointed as director of the architecture sector of the Venice Biennale. Among her major works is the 2010 Rolex Learning Center for the Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL), an architectural landmark in Switzerland, of which Rolex was the lead private funding partner.

The Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative was founded in 2002 to encourage and develop talented individuals through a unique programme of one-to-one mentoring with a major figure in each field of the arts. For the first cycle of the programme in 2002, the visual arts mentor was Álvaro Siza, who selected the young Jordanian architect, Sahel Al-Hiyari, as his protégé.

Over the past 10 years, the creative community has expanded, ranging across continents and cultures, and now includes more than 80 major creative artists of different generations and backgrounds.

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For the first time, Rolex is a sponsor of the Architecture Biennale – and is providing special support for a project commissioned by Sir David Chipperfield between Álvaro Siza and his long-standing collaborator, Eduardo Souto de Moura. Siza will receive the Golden Lion Award for Life Achievement at Venice this year.

Rebecca Irvin, head of Philanthropy at Rolex, said today: “We are delighted to announce Kazuyo Sejima as the new architecture mentor in Venice, and to be able to support the 13th International Architecture Exhibition as the leading focus of international architectural debate and ideas. We are also delighted to be associated with Álvaro Siza who was the first mentor in the visual arts for Rolex.”

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ROLEX MENTOR & PROTÉGÉ ARTS INITIATIVE



ARCHITECTURE

Kazuyo Sejima, mentor



Recognized as one of today's most visionary and innovative architects, Kazuyo Sejima combines aesthetic simplicity with technical complexity in the critically acclaimed buildings she designs with Ryue Nishizawa, with whom she won the 2010 Pritzker Prize – architecture's greatest honour.

Following her architectural studies at the Japan Women's University and early work with architect Toyo Ito, Sejima formed her own firm, Kazuyo Sejima & Associates in 1987. In 1995, three years after being named Japan's 1992 Young Architect of the Year, she joined with Nishizawa to establish the Tokyo-based firm SANAA (Sejima and Nishizawa and Associates).

Nearly a decade later, the practice came to world attention with the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art in Kanazawa, Japan, for which the partners won the Golden Lion at the 2004 Venice Architecture Biennale. SANAA's other groundbreaking works include New York's New Museum of Contemporary Art and the Serpentine Gallery Pavilion in London.

In 2010, a landmark year, Sejima was appointed as the first woman director of the architecture sector of the Venice Biennale, with specific responsibility for curating the exhibition. "Sejima comes back to an idea of architecture where functions, relations and the division of space are what matters," says Venice Biennale President Paolo Baratta. "Her pared-down architecture is so functional, it's lyrical." The SANAA-designed Rolex Learning Center, a library and student complex at Lausanne's Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, was opened to great acclaim also in 2010.

Among SANAA's many current projects are Louvre-Lens, an extension of the Louvre museum in the Nord-Pas-de-Calais region of France; the HyundaiCard Concert Hall in Seoul, Korea; the Neruda Tower in Guadalajara, Mexico; Grace Farms in Connecticut, U.S.; and the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design in Jerusalem, Israel.

In addition to designing her own buildings such as the recently completed Shibaura House in Tokyo, Sejima lectures at leading universities in Japan and abroad.



FACT SHEET

The Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative is an international philanthropic programme devised by Rolex that is run from the company's headquarters in Geneva. It seeks out gifted young artists from around the world and brings them together with great masters for a year of creative collaboration in a one-to-one mentoring relationship.

History and objectives

The Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative was launched in June 2002. It runs biennially and is in its sixth cycle (2012-2013). Its objective is to help perpetuate the world's artistic heritage. In keeping with its tradition of supporting individual excellence, Rolex is giving emerging artists unique access to masters in their fields.

How the programme works

Rolex invites great artists (the mentors) in dance, film, literature, music, theatre, visual arts, and, as of 2012 – architecture – to foster and counsel young, professional artists (the protégés). The mentoring period takes place over one year.

Selection of mentors

Every two years, a new Advisory Board of distinguished artists and practitioners suggests and endorses potential mentors. Once the mentors have agreed to take part, Rolex works with them to establish a profile of a suitable protégé.

Selection of protégés

Seven nominating panels – one panel per discipline – are assembled. These panels are made up of experts qualified to identify potential protégés. To ensure that the process is impartial, panel members remain anonymous during the selection period. Young artists cannot apply directly to the programme. Each nominating panel recommends potential protégés, who are invited by Rolex to submit applications. The nominating panel studies the applications and recommends three finalists. Rolex then arranges for the mentor to meet the finalists and choose a protégé.

Year of mentoring

Mentors and protégés are asked to spend at least six weeks together, though many spend considerably more time. They also agree on where, how and when they would like to interact. The programme encourages plans that foster significant bonds and creative collaboration through sustained periods of interaction over the mentoring year. To assist them, each pair is assigned a Rolex staff member to help with logistics. At the end of the year, Rolex invites participants and guests to celebrate the programme's achievements at a gala event.

What they receive

Each protégé receives a grant of 25,000 Swiss francs during the mentoring year, in addition to funds to cover travel and other major expenses. A further 25,000 Swiss francs is available to each protégé after the year is over towards the creation of a new piece of work, a publication, a performance or a public event. Each mentor receives an honorarium of 50,000 Swiss francs.

Documentation

Rolex documents the year of mentoring to give exposure to the protégés. A film crew, a photographer and a writer record the collaboration between mentor and protégé. A website – rolexmentorprotege.com – also describes the programme.

Outcome

After the mentoring year finishes, Rolex keeps in touch with the protégés, following their careers with interest. The outcome for protégés varies: a new novel, a new stage production, a dancing career with the mentor's company and a collaborative artwork with the mentor are all examples of achievements through the programme. Rolex believes that, for many of the young artists, the full benefits of the Initiative will continue far into the future.

Global creative community

Since the launch of the Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative in 2002, 309 artists, art world leaders and other cultural luminaries have participated, including 86 advisors who have helped select mentors and 178 nominators who have helped select protégés. Programme participants contribute from across the globe, building a Rolex community of artists spanning more than 40 countries that grows in depth and scope with each mentoring year.