

Architecture Book of the Year Awards 2025

1. Biography

- Commended:

- ***Grounds, Romberg & Boyd: Melbourne's Mid-century Modernists*, by Marina Larkins, (Uro)**

An insightful and original portrait of a short-lived but influential Australian practice, Grounds, Romberg and Boyd combines correspondence, extensive quotation and authorial analysis to reveal the personalities, tensions and ambitions behind the architecture. Despite its exuberant design, this confident, engaging book offers rare depth on the realities of creative collaboration and the business of architecture.

- ***Horace Jones: Architect of Tower Bridge*, by David Lascelles (Profile Editions)**

A lucid, engaging and well-researched account of a largely unsung architect whose work - ranging from Tower Bridge to Leadenhall Market – has had a profound impact on London. Combining investigative rigour with accessible storytelling, it illuminates both a remarkable individual and the early evolution of the architectural profession, offering a model for architectural history that will appeal to a wide audience.

- Winner:

- ***The Master Builder: William Butterfield and His Times*, by Nicholas Olsberg (Lund Humphries)**

An exceptional work of scholarship and presentation, offering a richly detailed and beautifully produced study of one of Victorian England's most distinctive architects. Lavish in its use of archival illustrations and supported by James Morris' striking new

photography, the book reveals a deep passion for its subject and an impressive command of historic material. While substantial and densely detailed, it remains an accessible and engaging overview that will inspire greater interest in Butterfield's remarkable architectural legacy.

Judges: Chris Foges, Jo Bacon, Sarah Jackson

2. Building monograph

■ Winner:

■ ***Hans Hollein's Masterpiece, Art, Architecture and the City*, by Eva Branscome (Lund Humphries)**

We highly recommend Eva Branscome's book. It is a study of the Museum Abteiberg in Mönchengladbach, which opened in 1982. It draws on in-depth research, including interviews with the architect. It is well presented and illustrated. It explores the relationship between architecture and conceptual art in a convincing way. (It is hard now to recall the huge impact this piece of art-architecture had on museology and architecture as a whole – but it certainly did.)

Judges: Catherine Croft, Niall McLaughlin, Robert Wilson

3. Guide

■ Winner:

■ ***The Strand: A biography*, by Geoff Browell and Eileen Chan (Manchester University Press)**

The judges congratulate the authors on a fascinating historic guide of this route through London. By their research and dissection they reveal how the Strand has changed through different modes of transport, war, cultural unravelling and changing fashion; yet importantly retained its essence of familiarity.

We could draw lessons from the book on how we can make historic parts of our city change to accommodate new demands. The robust response of this single artery over a millennium is a lesson of the innate strength and durability of

historic parts of our cities when viewed from the perspective of time. It is the geological beauty of a strip well worn.

Judges: Samantha Hardingham, Victoria Thornton, Roger Zogolovitch

4. History

■ Winner:

■ ***Urban Planning in Nazi Germany*, by Harald Bodenschatz et al (DOM Publishers)**

Perhaps not an obvious topic for a prize-winning book, this huge and impressively edited volume describes in a clear straightforward manner the full gamut of urban planning under Hitler's regime. Part of a series of similar studies into mid-20th century totalitarianism, it is both exhaustive and terrifying in equal measure. It is commendable that these German scholars were willing to look at this dark historical period with such rigour and candour: other nations should likewise be scrutinising their own unsavoury built heritage.

Judges: Murray Frazer, Simon Henley, Cindy Walters

5. Practice monograph

Commended:

■ ***It's Nice Today: On Climate, Comfort, And Pleasure*, by Lacaton & Vassal (Ruby Press, Berlin)**

An excellent title for the work of a French practice that offers lessons, mainly in residential buildings, but offering ideas that could be applied to other building types. Several of the major social housing projects featured in particular, offer compelling, appealing, lightweight and sustainable solutions for upgrading tired buildings, avoiding demolition, with a detailed technical analysis of subsequent environmental performance. A meeting of the academic and

practical in a lightweight easy to handle format.

■ ***Assemble, Building Collective*, foreword by Aaron Betsky (Thames & Hudson)**

Despite there being some dissonance between the nature of Assemble's light touch, witty and temporary architectural interventions and the heft of the volume which conveys them, there is something intangibly hefty about this high-profile collective's critique of conventional procurement and built solutions. Assemble have become global players in a generational movement advocating for alternative architecture. Will the architecture be of lasting merit, or is that not the point? Absolutely worth a read, not least for Aaron Betsky's foreword, which traces Assemble's socially-sensitive roots.

■ Winner:

■ ***Frei Otto 1925-2015, Building with Nature*, edited by Anna-Maria Meister, Joaquin Medina Warmburg (Prestel)**

A handsome production and an important historic book that describes Frei's trajectory through key projects, with a few surprises, marking the centenary of an pioneering architect/engineer who was also a great educator. A former pilot in the Luftwaffe, Frei championed biotechnics in architecture and Modernism, and then his influence faded. A timely re-appraisal.

Judges: Gillian Darley, Lee Mallett, Eric Parry

6. Technical

■ Commendations:

■ ***Architectural Epidemiology*, by Adele Houghton and Carlos Castillo-Salgado (Hopkins Press)**

The judges feel that this book is a very important study connecting issues of health, welfare, urban design and architecture. With those worthy targets in mind, it could be said, for the average reader, it probably covers too much ground and scientific detail.

However, the last third of the book is devoted to many different case studies in various cities and climates around the world. These are all very relevant and understandable for the target reader whether city planner, developer, politician or architect.

■ ***Fabricate 2024 : Creating resourceful futures*, by Ayres, Sheil, Ramsgaard-Thomsen and Skavara (UCL Press)**

A very useful and important book for architects and students about physical research and prototype experimentation into new building and material techniques. This is the latest in a series promoted by UCL/Bartlett School. Well-written by a variety of international engineers, architects, technologists and students.

The book is beautifully designed and illustrated and it is good at informing readers and especially architectural students about the possible building futures.

■ Winner

■ ***Architecture Follows Climate*, by Alexandros Ioannou-Naoum (Birkhäuser)**

This book was chosen for the award because the judges feel it is not only importantly topical and wide-ranging, but it is also beautifully presented.

It is very clear, easy to read and navigate for architects, students and lay readers. The technical and academic

narrative is accompanied by the author's brilliant sketch drawings which make the issues and climate principles easy to understand and appreciate.

The "Epilog" at the end puts it all in the current global warming context for the architect. It reminds us that a symbiotic relationship between buildings and climate was culturally pervasive in the past, and how this exploitation of basic building physics offers us valuable lessons for human comfort and low energy design across our diverse planet. This book helps us learn from the past relevant lessons for the future.

Judges: John Lyall, John Robertson, Lynne Sullivan

7. Typology

■ Commended:

■ ***Set Pieces: Architecture for the Performing Arts in Fifteen Fragments*, Diamond Schmidt Architects (Birkhäuser)**

A tightly defined and focused study of 15 spaces for different types of performance designed by one practice very experienced and best known for their work in this field. This book shows how the practice has developed, documenting some of the challenges inherent in designing performances spaces of varying specifications, both new build and refurbishment. Despite its narrow source material, it is a useful addition to the literature on this subject.

■ Winner:

■ ***Mass Housing in Ukraine: Building typologies and catalogue of series 1922-2022*, by Kataryna Malaia and Philipp Meuser (DOM Publishers)**

This remarkable and substantial book achieves exactly what the title describes but this bald statement hardly captures its significance. Covering 100 years of housing, it offers a fascinating if very focused insight into the political turbulence of its place and time. Initially split between capitalist Poland and the nascent USSR, what is now Ukraine showed the effects of two political systems on mass housing, which was reflected in architecture with

the west looking to Vienna and the east drawing on the cultural firmament of the immediate post revolutionary period as well as the Neue Sachlichkeit of Frankfurt and the Bauhaus. After gaining ascendancy over the Nazi invasion, attention quickly turned to mass housing, with examples from as early as 1943. Charting the various 'series' of housing types that sprang from Soviet principles allows reader to gain an insight into the strengths and weaknesses of the policies, as well as design and construction, again documenting the effects of political change, from the highpoint of Stalinism, to Glasnost and the post-Soviet chaos of the 1990s. It also records, hauntingly but unsentimentally, the damage and destruction of the ongoing war. The deadpan, documentary tone of the text and images intensifies its value as research and analysis with broader ramifications than its immediate subject.

Judges: Jeremy Melvin, Spencer de Grey, Peter Stewart

8. Special prize: urbanism and planning

■ Winner:

■ ***Kings Cross: the making of a masterplan***, by Bob Allies et al (Lund Humphries)

This is an exemplary account of the creation of London's most significant new quarter since the 19th century, by the people who made it happen. The client/architect/planning collaboration which created New King's Cross is reflected in the collaboration that produced a book which has lessons for all interested in urban regeneration.

Judge: Paul Finch