

Honors and Awards

Glass Temple in Japan Garners Top 2001 DuPont Benedictus Award

The AIA and DuPont announced the winners of the 2001 DuPont Benedictus Awards at the AIA national convention in Denver May 18. The jury awarded first prize to a glass temple placed underground to preserve the design integrity of the adjacent imperial temple, Reigenko-ji, built by Emperor Gorniquono-o in 1638 in Kyoto, Japan. The only part of the new building architects Takahashi Yamaguchi and Masahiro Kato of Osaka's Takahashi Yamaguchi & Associates placed above ground is a glass box to bring top light into the white underground space.

Henry N. Cobb, FAIA, Pei Cobb Freed & Partners Architects LLP; Odile Decq, Odile Decq Benoît Cornette Architectes Urbanistes; and UIA President Vassilis Sgoutas, Vassilis Sgoutas Architects, served as jurists for the 2001 competition. They concluded their one-day selection process with comments on why laminated glass contributed to the design solutions of the projects they judged to be outstanding.

Glass allows a simplicity of form that enhances the light, Sgoutas said of the award win-

ning temple. The transparency allows the building to be sympathetic to surrounding buildings, even in color, and still have a strong presence of its own. "The huge, essentially flat glass allows it to be both humble and strong," he said.

The transparent form creates harmony between the tradition of an earlier period and the contemporary voice of the new building, Cobb rejoined. "It's possible to be sympathetic to two earlier cultures and still speak in your own voice," he said.

The glass also allows the design to achieve a spatial rhythm, Decq added. The building appears to float a little above the ground, delicate and sensitive to its surroundings. "The design is not emphatic, it is spiritual, Zen even. It's not saying 'Here I am,'" she said. ■



Takahashi Yamaguchi Associates placed a glass box above ground to bring light to the new temple addition below while preserving the integrity of the existing temple.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE AUTHOR

THE OTHER WINNERS

Exceptional Merit Awards:

- **Massimo d'Alessandro e Associati**, for glass telephone booths that provide a practical and unobtrusive solution to maintain the integrity of historical surroundings. The concept that structural glass allows a building to express form and not overwhelm its surroundings sounded again as the jury spoke of the other projects they recognized. "It's a great challenge to do something contemporary in Rome until now, especially in front of such strong historical buildings and yet not be in competition," Decq said of the phone booths. "It uses the transparency of glass and high-tech materials to not hide the buildings around; to be invisible, but present."

The phone booth design makes "a rather witty statement" that the present is here, without turning its back on history or making a theme park of it, Cobb agreed. "It speaks well of its surround of architecture," Sgoutas concluded.

Special Recognition:

- **Architekten Petry + Wittfoht**, for a multilevel car stack, Sindelfingen, Germany
- **Foster and Partners**, for Queen Elizabeth II Great Court, British Museum, London
- **Enrique Norten/Bernardo Gomez-Pimienta**, for Hotel Habita, Mexico City.

The DuPont Benedictus Awards, a worldwide competition, is a collaborative effort between DuPont and The American Institute of Architects, with worldwide support of the Union International des Architectes (UIA). The competition recognizes innovative and enterprising architectural uses of laminated glass by both professional architects and students. It is named for Édouard Benedictus, a French chemist who discovered the process for laminating glass. The program's 2002 call for entries will be announced this fall and will be posted at www.dupontbenedictus.org