

## ROLEX AND ARCHITECTURE

### **FOSTERING A COLLECTIVE IMAGINATION**

Over the decades, Rolex has made a unique and lasting contribution to culture through its support of exceptional artists and cultural institutions. As part of its ongoing commitment to strive for continuous innovation, technological advancements, precision and the best use of form and space, the company is supporting the International Architecture Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia.

Both visionary architects and watchmakers blend aesthetics and functionality in their creations. Like the movement of an Oyster timepiece, a building adheres to a precise set of codes and a clear message that is expressed through design and functionality.

### **BIENNALE ARCHITETTURA**

In keeping with its long-standing objective to contribute to both society and culture, of which great architecture plays a key role, Rolex has supported the International Architecture Exhibition, as Exclusive Partner and Official Timepiece since 2014. Marking the company's participation in the event, the Rolex Pavilion in the Giardini has, over the years, presented various exhibitions linked to Rolex's dedication to architecture and the transmission of knowledge. In the past, the work of Peter Zumthor and Gloria Cabral and Sir David Chipperfield and Simon Kretz – mentors and protégés in the Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative – has been featured, as well as Rolex buildings in Dallas and Milan designed respectively by architects Kengo Kuma and Studio Albin, and the SANAA-designed (Kazuyo Sejima and Ryue Nishizawa) Rolex Learning Center at the Ecole polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL).

The design of the Rolex Pavilion, which recalls the fluted bezel – a signature aesthetic style on some of the brand's iconic watches – further emphasizes the strong connection between architecture and watchmaking.

### **AIDING IN THE TRANSMISSION OF KNOWLEDGE**

Transmission of knowledge for the benefit of future generations is integral to Rolex – whether in watchmaking, or in its support of the arts and culture, as well as architecture. Rolex invests in the future of architecture and the sharing of knowledge and new ideas across generations through the Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative, a nearly two-decade old, biennial programme that fosters young artists by pairing up-and-coming talents in a variety of artistic disciplines with great masters for an extended period of mentoring and creative collaboration.

Architects who have been involved as mentors are: Álvaro Siza, Kazuyo Sejima, Peter Zumthor, Sir David Chipperfield and Sir David Adjaye. Architect advisors to the programme – those who help select the mentors – include Alejandro Aravena, Tatiana Bilbao, Vishaan Chakrabarti, Lord Norman Foster, Frank Gehry, Daniel Libeskind, Maya Lin, Ryue Nishizawa and Rafael Viñoly.

Of the five mentor and protégé pairs in architecture, to date, all exemplify Rolex's mission to create a better and more sustainable world:

In 2002–2003, one of the world's most revered architects, Álvaro Siza from Portugal, and young Jordanian architect, Sahel Al Hiyari, found common ground in their views on the theory and practice of architecture, which enhanced their many intense discussions and outings, especially to visit Siza's groundbreaking works.

In 2012–2013, Kazuyo Sejima invited young Chinese architect Yang Zhao to design a Home-for-All, a project to create new community buildings for the region of Japan devastated by the 2011 tsunami and provide basic human needs for the fishing community.

In 2014–2015, Paraguayan architect Gloria Cabral became project manager of her mentor Swiss architect Peter Zumthor's design of a tea chapel near Seoul, South Korea. The tea chapel reflected their common belief in the social responsibility of an architect and the reliance on indigenous craftsmanship for their projects.

In 2016–2017, British architect Sir David Chipperfield and his protégé young Swiss architect and urbanist Simon Kretz used an East London site as an example to focus on how to create cities that promote well-being through greater inclusiveness and innovative thinking – the same thinking that has driven Rolex for more than a century.

In 2018–2019, Sir David Adjaye and Mariam Kamara developed plans for a cultural centre in Niamey, capital of Kamara's homeland, Niger. The goal is that the centre meets local needs, that it both serves and dignifies the communities, while using simple, affordable, local materials that are ecologically, climatically and culturally appropriate. It will feature sustainable and traditional methods of building to forge a new kind of architecture that at the same time reflects an African identity.

### **STRIVING FOR SUSTAINABILITY WITH THE HELP OF WORLD-CLASS ARCHITECTS**

Whether in producing the finest watches, helping to protect the planet through its Perpetual Planet initiative or supporting the creation of buildings, Rolex is concerned with sustainability.

For more than 60 years, Rolex has commissioned the finest buildings, designed by renowned architects who have made their mark on history, for its worldwide operations. These architects include Michael Graves (Lititz Watch Technicum, Pennsylvania, US), Fumihiko Maki (Rolex Tokyo building) and SANAA principals Kazuyo Sejima and Ryue Nishizawa (the Rolex Learning Center for EPFL in Lausanne).

Two of Rolex's most recent architecture projects showcase the key values that drive Rolex and have underpinned the design and construction of Rolex buildings over the years. Both projects represent a sustainable, environmentally sound, approach.

In Dallas, Texas, Japanese architect Kengo Kuma designed the Rolex Building, a new, seven-storey office tower that houses Rolex's sales and service centre. Featuring a series of planted terraces on every floor, its form and environmental qualities have set new benchmarks in the city. The adventurous and environmentally sophisticated design typical of Kuma's work uses natural light, space and subtly modulated surfaces. In the construction of its own buildings, as in its watchmaking, Rolex has always embraced innovative ideas, and the Dallas tower is no exception.

In New York City, Sir David Chipperfield is redesigning the Rolex USA headquarters and is, he says, "creating an exemplary building befitting the heritage and culture of the Rolex brand". The proposed stacked, jagged, 25-storey tower was designed to qualify for LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Platinum certification, representing the highest level of environmental friendliness and sustainable energy consumption.

The 165,000-square foot (15,000-square-metre) building will be the company's latest symbol and American landmark, demonstrating another example of the quality, precision and excellence that are the hallmarks of the Rolex brand. Rolex is seen as aspirational by huge numbers of people around the world because of this excellence, as well as its consistency and concern for preservation of the planet.

## **SUMMARY**

Just as great buildings are created by visionary architects, visionary watchmakers craft timepieces that exceed the highest standards of precision and performance. Rolex has long acknowledged a connection between the two disciplines, which spring from the twin forces of innovative thinking and creativity at the highest level.

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