



2023, November the 7<sup>th</sup>

## IN/ARCH CELEBRATES AN HISTORIC MOMENT: EMILIO AMBASZ RECEIVES THE LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

In a groundbreaking moment for IN/ARCH – the Italian National Institute of Architecture, the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award is conferred for the first time to a non-Italian architect. Emilio Ambasz, deeply touched by the generosity of this recognition, is an Argentinian by birth and a cosmopolitan by vocation, profoundly intertwined with Italy. He stands out as one of the most extraordinary designers in the global history of architecture.

Venice/New York, 7 November 2023 – The jury of the IN/ARCH Lifetime Achievement Award, bestowed by the National Institute of Architecture (IT) has chosen Emilio Ambasz, the first non- Italian prominent figure to receive this award. The jury has acclaimed Ambasz as: “the greatest ambassador of Made in Italy for his iconic exhibition, at the MoMA in 1972, titled Italy: The New Domestic Landscape. This groundbreaking exhibition non only marked the first real introduction of the Italian identity to the United States but also transcended borders, impacting everything from the urban landscapes to objects, homes and even the automotive industry, offering an extraordinary stage to our country's young talents.” An



architect of global influence, and an extraordinary contributor to the history of contemporary architecture.

Recognized as a precursor, a father, a poet and a prophet of green architecture (James Wines called him “the Messiah” of this vision), Ambasz has crafted a legacy with works spanning from Japan to the USA, passing through Italy and other countries. These creations stand resolutely at the heart of the discipline's ongoing poetic and design discourse. Inspired by his personal motto “Green over grey”, Ambasz's oeuvre has influenced some of the most famous designers of contemporary architecture.

“He has always showed a tangible vision of nature, devoid ideologies and grandiose leaps, instead focusing on the practical art of ‘making architecture’ – reads the jury’s motivation – in fact, he had already introduced ‘architecture and plants’ in the seventies, without fanfare but with a rational combination of ‘nature and artifice’. Noteworthy examples of this design ethos are Ospedale dell’Angelo, Fondazione Banca degli Occhi in Mestre (2007-2008), and the Acros Fukuoka project in Japan.”

Thanks to his works and his persevering search for a reconciliation between man and nature, Ambasz has received countless awards and recognitions all over the world.

In recent months, Ambasz has won the President's Award of the Consortium for Sustainable Urbanization Prize (CSU) in New York, and he is one of the protagonists of MoMA’s current exhibition “Emerging Ecologies”.



MoMA, like the Metropolitan Museum (NY), includes in its permanent collection a consistent number of Ambasz's pieces, including a Vertebra chair (1975) - the first automatically ergonomic chair, developed in collaboration with G. Piretti. This iconic chair not only sparked a new industry within the sector but also earned the Compasso d'Oro in 1981.

Serving as the MoMa's Curator of Design for the Department of Architecture and Design from 1969 to 1976, Ambasz organized a series of revolutionary exhibitions, including the aforementioned and legendary Italy: The New Domestic Landscape (1972), which catapulted Italian design objects into global prominence, leaving an indelible mark on the world stage.

Ambasz's influence extends globally, with exhibitions paying homage to him worldwide. From the MoMA in New York (featuring twice) to the Triennale in Milan (also twice), to the Reina Sofia in Madrid, and spanning to Tokyo, Geneva, Bordeaux, Zurich, Chicago, Philadelphia, Mexico City, San Diego, and Saint Louis. Ambasz is an honorary member of the American Institute of Architects and the Royal Institute of British Architects; he is an all-round intellectual, an architect, a designer, a prolific inventor — awarded with three Compasso d'Oro and an impressive number of tributes from all over the world — an artist, a narrator and a curator, with a deep connection to Italy, where he stays part of the year. Ambasz's presence at multiple Venice Architecture Biennales highlights the continued recognition of his impact. In 2014, he



received the title of Commander of the “Stella al Merito della Repubblica italiana” for “his contributions to Italian culture”. Throughout his career, Ambasz has also received an honorary degree in 2021 at the University of Bologna, the Sigillo delle Arti in 2021 at University of Urbino, the IV Compasso d'Oro for Lifetime Achievement in 2021, the ADI Award (Italian Design Association), the IN/ARCH Veneto Lifetime Achievement Award in 2023. His body of work is complemented by recognized publications and significant collaborations with various Italian industries. In the upcoming weeks, Ambasz is poised to receive yet another HC Degree, this time from a prestigious Italian university.

When asked to comment on the IN/ARCH’s Lifetime Achievement Award, Ambasz commented: “I’m deeply touched to receive this generous award. It is a great honour to be the first foreigner to receive it [...] We need an architecture that serves as a pact of reconciliation between nature and buildings. As architects and designers, our responsibility is to create an alternative future for a better quality of life, provide a roadmap to guide away from perpetuating the present conditions: I believe that all architectural projects failing to propose a new or a better existence are unethical.”

He concluded his remarks with: “While the enormity of this task may waver the imagination and paralyse hope for a moment, we cannot afford to shy away from its pursuit.”

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Award Ceremony of the IN/ARCH - National Architecture Awards  
2023:

Venice, 7 November 2023, Ca' Giustinian, 2:00

### **Press**

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