



PRESS RELEASE

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**GERMANY'S GRAFT ARCHITECTS WIN 2011
EUROPEAN PRIZE FOR ARCHITECTURE**

When Hurricane Katrina hit America's Gulf Coast in 2005 and left thousands of people homeless in its wake, GRAFT Architects sprung to action with an outdoor art installation that drew world attention to the environmental crisis and to the tremendous need to find affordable housing alternatives in the process of rebuilding New Orleans.


The 150 flamingo-colored, solar-powered, and water-resistant houses, designed and erected by GRAFT Architects in New Orleans's Lower 9th Ward, were the 2006 kickoff for the fundraising effort, launched by American movie star Brad Pitt and philanthropist Steve Bing, a real-estate developer and film producer, to match up to \$5 million dollars and the start of the Make It Right Foundation.

By the exhibition's end in January 2006, the "Pink Houses" helped to raise over \$10 million dollars from more than 17,000 donors in more than 80 countries and the funds continue to be raised to help build environmentally friendly, affordable housing for Katrina victims by Make It Right.

For GRAFT Architects' deep commitment to humanitarian concerns in today's architecture and for their cutting-edge efforts to strive toward a unique design beyond the constraints of the envelope, The European Centre for Architecture Art Design and Urban Studies, together with The Chicago Athenaeum: Museum of Architecture and Design, have named GRAFT Architects as the recipient of The European Prize for Architecture 2011.

This year's European Prize for Architecture, established as a collaborative effort between The European Center

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for Architecture Art Design and Urban Studies and The Chicago Athenaeum, is to be formally presented to the partners of GRAFT Architects at the XIII BA11- International Biennial of Architecture in Buenos Aires, October 11-15, 2011.

On Wednesday, October 12 at a formal Award's Ceremony, Buenos Aires's Mayor Mauricio Macri, Chief of Government, will officially present the partners of GRAFT Architects with the *lauris nobilis*—symbolic of the European Prize.

GRAFT Architects are also featured in a special exhibition at Buenos Aires' Centro Cultural Recoleta (Junin 1930 C.P. 1113) opening to the world press on October 8 and continuing through October 30. GRAFT Architects will also present a lecture at the Biennial on Wednesday, October 12.

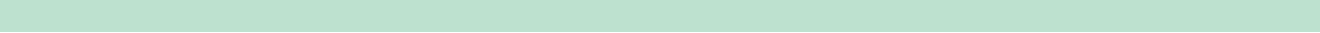
After Buenos Aires, a similar event is being planned in Berlin—the home city of GRAFT Architects with a traveling exhibition to open at The European Center's Contemporary Space Athens in Greece and scheduled to travel in Europe and the United States.

Last year, The European Prize for Architecture was bestowed to the Danish Architect Bjarke Ingels.

"We are elated to bring to Europe and to the world's attention these remarkable young German architects," states Christian K. Narkiewicz-Laine, Museum President, The Chicago Athenaeum. "GRAFT Architects have emblazoned a bold, fresh, and progressive atmosphere in today's Europe and inspired a social concern in today's practice of architecture; and as young emerging European architects, they will certainly set the stage for new design ideas, and new philosophical points-of-views, and inspire a renewed humanitarian agenda in architecture today."

"The nominating committee agreed," adds Kieran Conlon, Director/CEO, The European Centre, "and awarded GRAFT Architects with this distinction for the firm's ongoing commitment to humanitarian objectives in architecture and for the firm's expanding achievements in contemporary design and architecture, thereby reflecting the highest standards of Europe's important architecture history and tradition."

For this year's Prize, The European Centre received nominations from professional organizations and societies,



museums of architecture, organizations and institutions throughout Europe. Members of The European Centre's International Advisory Committee served as the Nominating Jury for the Prize. (Nominations for 2012 are due by June 1, 2012. See The European Center's website at www.europeanarch.eu for more details.)

"The purpose of The European Prize for Architecture," states Ioannis Karalias, Museum Vice President, The Chicago Athenaeum, "is to honor annually a living architect or architects whose built works demonstrate vision and talent and a body of work that has demonstrated significant contributions to art and humanity."

Founded in Los Angeles, California in 1998 by Lars Krückeberg, Wolfram Putz, and Thomas Willemeit, GRAFT is a design studio conceived as a "label" for architecture, urban planning, exhibition design, music and the "pursuit of happiness." A second GRAFT office was opened 2001 in Berlin, followed by a third office in Beijing in 2004, which is headed by founding partner Gregor Hoheisel.


The firm espouses the belief that we live in an age where the displacement of an individual's identity from their original physical context forces the continual formation of new identities by dynamically engaging with local and global environments.

GRAFT takes the position that the traditional boundaries of architecture must be increasingly questioned, through investigating, for instance, notions of identity and mutability. As a matter of practice, interdisciplinary methods and techniques expand the quest for meaning and enrichment; therefore, GRAFT's research typically spans a wide variety of different sources, including high and low culture, the banal, architecture, cinema, literature, sports.

From the firm's start to the present, GRAFT has garnered numerous design awards and prizes, including The Chicago Athenaeum's GOOD DESIGN Award (2009); The American Architecture Award (2009); and The International Architecture Awards (2008-2009). In 2008, the firm was designated as one of the Europe's 40 Under 40 Laureates by The European Centre.

The firm has also won the Design Award of the Federal Republic of Germany (2008) and was selected for the German Pavilion at the XI Venice Biennale of Architecture also in 2008.

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The firm's board works from a house to a skyscraper, which span over several continents and one decade, wow and continue to wow.

In Living Hill Skyscraper (2009), the architects present a high-rise concept complete with a giant green roof that drapes over the top and down the sides of the building. The large condo adds a fresh expanse of green space to an existing urban landscape. GRAFT Architects, who are well known for their organic architecture, give form to the exterior shell defined by restrictions and infused it with life. Balconies cut into the sloping living roof, providing residents a view out into the city over a sea of vegetation.

For the Dental Clinic KU64 (2009) in Berlin, GRAFT forwards a radical new understanding of hospitals in general and specifically dental clinics – away from negative prejudices of “hygienic, sterile, and all white” toward a new design atmosphere of art, well-being, and relaxation.

Ao-Di Next Gene 20 Villa (2009) is sited in the Northeast Coast National Scenic Area, approximately 50 minutes from Taipei city, Taiwan. Situated in the Snow Mountain range, with a great view of the Pacific Ocean, the villa is designed to be embedded in the landscape with panoramic views under an elevated protective shell, as modern interpretation of Chinese courtyard living. The building entrance joins the spiral move at mid point, delivers the beholder into the panoramic living room, or continuing along a ramp-like stair to the bedrooms above. The stair terminates into a gallery space and balcony with views to the ocean, from here the path continues along a central east-facing terrace accessible from all bedrooms, like in a traditional Chinese courtyard setting.

Like the “Pink Project” in New Orleans, Art Cloud (2009) is an art-inspired proposal for the German Bundestag (German Parliament) for the reconstruction of the Royal Palace at Scholssplatz, which was destroyed by the GDR in 1962 and rebuilt as the Palace of the Republic and demolished again in 2005. GRAFT proposes an art heaven in the form of a *kunsthall* for the young and vital international art scene that is flourishing in Berlin. The design envisioned as an “art cloud” is a temporary light structure of exhibition space, seemingly floating and resting for a moment above the topography of soft mounds.



Concerns for the environment and a major acknowledgement to the Green Architecture movement, Bird Island (2008) is a stunning urban renewal project that is currently being developed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Designed by GRAFT for the YTL Green Home Competition, the project comprises a zero energy home made of sustainably-sourced silicone glass fabric. Its lightness and flexibility will allow it to sway organically with the breeze just like a treetop, and slots in the fabric will give visitors a unique peek into the sky as the wind ebbs and flows.

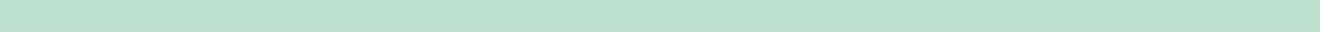
Likewise, green, affordable cutting-edge architecture is demonstrated in the two homes designed by GRAFT for Make It Right. The Shotgun House (2009) and the Camelback House (2008) have a strong connection between the private interior zone and the shared public space on the street. Both MIR houses demonstrate a sustainable “cradle to cradle” approach, which seeks to maximize economic, ecological, and social value by following principles inspired by nature.

The Russian Jewish Museum (2009) in Moscow is meant to bring new life into one of the city’s landmark buildings, the Bakhmetevsky Bus Garage by Konstantin Melnikov. The new Museum will be housed in the 154 x 54 meter space that is contained by the garage's shell with the exterior of the structure untouched, to make it visible that the building is a monument of Russian Heritage.

“GRAFT Architects,” states Mr. Narkewicz-Laine, “have demonstrated a profound combination of those qualities of talent, vision, and commitment, which has produced consistent and significant contributions to humanity and to the built environment in harmony with Europe’s rich tradition of art and architecture.”

“We are proud to bestow this important award and recognition to this young German firm,” he continued.

For information about GRAFT Architects can be found on The European Centre’s website at www.europeanarch.eu.



For press photographs and more information, contact Mr. Kieran Conlon in Ireland at +353/ (0) 1 670-8781 (info@europeanarch.eu) or Ms. Ira Livadoti in Greece at +30/210-342 8512 (ira@europeanarch.eu).

2012 Nominations for The European Prize for Architecture visit The European Centre's website at www.europeanarch.eu.

Note to editors: Additional information on the work of GRAFT Architects, the complete jury citation, the history of the European Prize for Architecture, as well as a more detailed story on the venue for the ceremony are provided separately in this media kit.

THE EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR ARCHITECTURE ART DESIGN AND URBAN STUDIES

28 Butlers Court, Sir John Rogersons Quay
Dublin 2
IRELAND
TEL/FAX +353/(0) 1 6708781

CONTEMPORARY SPACE ATHENS

46-48 Vassiliou Megalou
GR-118-54 Rouf Athens
GREECE

TEL: +30/210 342 8511
FAX: +30/210 342 8512

info@europeanarch.eu