



THE EUROPEAN CENTRE  
Architecture Art Design and Urban Studies



THE CHICAGO ATHENAEUM  
Museum of Architecture and Design

## Press Release

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### ***The 2014 European Prize for Architecture*** **awarded to the visionary Italian architect** **Alessandro Mendini**

On February 9, 2015, the architect **Alessandro Mendini** received the 2014 *European Prize for Architecture* in the prestigious and futuristic setting of the UniCredit skyscraper complex at Piazza Gae Aulenti, Milan.

For the first time, the Prize conceived and promoted by **The Chicago Athenaeum: Museum of Architecture and Design (USA)**, and **The European Centre for Architecture Art Design and Urban Studies (Dublin and Athens)** has been given to an Italian architect.

The conferral of the Prize was accompanied by a ceremony and gala dinner, both under the patronage of the Ordine degli Architetti, Pianificatori, Paesaggisti e Conservatori of the province of Milan, and in collaboration with the Hyundai Motor Company and UniCredit.

The attendance was extraordinary. The most famous Italian architects and designers, journalists, artists, collectors, gallery owners, entrepreneurs and exponents from the world of culture and institutions were present.

Ceremonial speeches were held by the president of The Chicago Athenaeum, Christian K. Narkiewicz-Laine, the director of the European Centre, Kieran Conlon, the president and vice-president of the Ordine degli Architetti of the province of Milan, Valeria Bottelli and Franco Raggi, and the journalist and design critic Claudia Donà. The deputy mayor of Milan, Ada Lucia De Cesaris, and the US Consul General in Milan, Ambassador Philip Thomas Reeker, were also present. Ambassador Reeker expressed his recognition of Italian culture as an expression of beauty, taste and the quality of life. The ceremony was concluded with a reading by Alessandro Mendini.

Since 2010, *The European Prize for Architecture* has been given every year to individual architects who have demonstrated the highest standard of design and contributed significantly to humanity and the built environment through the art of architecture.

Mendini's nomination and award confirm *The European Prize for Architecture's* aim to recognize those European architects who have changed and challenged the direction of contemporary architecture by privileging its more humane, cultured and intellectual aspects.

As an architect, philosopher, architectural theorist, visionary and design practitioner, the influence of Alessandro Mendini spans close to half a century. His work ranges from the creation of iconic objects furnishings, interiors, paintings and installations to architecture and urban planning, and the creation and direction of extraordinary design magazines. He worked with the legendary Studio Alchimia, and founded Atelier Mendini together with his brother Francesco in 1989. His architecture and design projects are found all over the world.

"This Prize acknowledges Alessandro Mendini's pursuits and achievements before a European and worldwide audience," says Christian K. Narkiewicz-Laine, museum president of the Chicago Athenaeum.

"Mendini is one of the rare, most iconic minds in the history of art and architecture. In an era where architectural ideas are copied and duplicated worldwide faster than 'viral', Mendini and his works remain singular, prophetic and original."

"Mendini not only imagines utopia, but he also describes it and makes it," says Claudia Donà, journalist and design critic. "He is a magical manufacturer of dreams. For everyone who has worked with him on neo-modern and radical avant-garde themes, it was a thrilling experience. These approaches revolutionized the meaning and ethics of design, and made Milan the world's epicenter of a new design language by means of a cultural tremor of change. Mendini's exhibitions, writings, drawings, magazines and epoch-making projects saw the most revolutionary minds in architecture and design gathered around his innovative ideas."

An exhibition on Mendini's work will open at The European Centre's Contemporary Space Athens (74 Mitropoleos Street, Athens, Greece) in April 2015. After Athens, the exhibition will tour Europe and the United States, opening at the Third Chicago Architecture Biennial in September 2015.

A catalogue on Alessandro Mendini and *The European Prize for Architecture*, edited by Claudia Donà, with an introduction by Christian K. Narkiewicz-Laine, and published by Metropolitan Arts Press, will be available through The European Centre.

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