

Manuelle Gautrand Architecture News

Manuelle Gautrand named 2017 Laureate of The European Prize for Architecture

[Manuelle Gautrand](#) is presented with Europe's Highest Award for Architecture by The European Centre for Architecture Art Design and Urban Studies and The Chicago Athenaeum: Museum of Architecture and Design at a Gala Dinner Award Ceremony at the foot of the Acropolis in Athens, Greece on September 8.

Architect Manuelle Gautrand:



photograph : Joëlle Dole

One of Europe's leading women architects, Manuelle Gautrand, is named as this year's Laureate of The European Prize for Architecture for her body of works that celebrate boldness and non-conformity in a world torn by extreme modernity and a reactionary return to the past.

Her firm's poetic architecture embraces the endless variety of forms and colors, using the most contemporary methods of planning in a variety of areas, ranging from cultural facilities to residential, commercial, and office buildings—all with the sentiment of making special places and distinct spaces that celebrate ordinary life in our complex urban cities and our diverse cultural situations.

Throughout her career, Manuelle Gautrand has developed a public and civic architecture that opens up the realm of possibilities for unique space making by employing a multitude of design strategies that are divergent, instinctive, and innovative.

Her work demonstrates an unyielding commitment to place and its narrative, to create an architecture that is in discourse with their respective contexts.

Each year, The European Prize for Architecture is awarded jointly by The European Centre for Architecture Art Design and Urban Studies and The Chicago Athenaeum: Museum of Architecture and Design to architects who have made a commitment to forward the principles of European humanism and the art of architecture.

Extension to the Lille Métropole Museum of Modern, Contemporary and Outsider Art, Villeneuve d'Asoq, France (2010)

"We are delighted to present The European Prize for Architecture to this innovative and creative French office that has developed a thoughtful approach to architecture, just as exteriors and interiors are closely intertwined in their works, so are new and old," states Christian Narkiewicz-Laine, President/CEO of The Chicago Athenaeum.

"More so, Manuelle Gautrand has worked diligently to 're-enchant the city' by reinventing, renewing, and innovating a pluralistic design path full of unexpected answers, risk-taking, surprises, and architectonic expectations that are bold, refreshing, and equally provocative."

"Ms. Gautrand rightly compares her work to the poetry of the French Nobel Prize for Literature Laureate, Saint John Perse: 'the luxury of being unaccustomed'."

The European Prize for Architecture is not a "lifetime of achievement award," but rather serves as an impetus to support new ideas, to encourage and foster more challenge-making and forward-thinking about buildings and the environment, and to prompt the pushing of the envelope to obtain an even greater, more profound result.

The Prize also honors the commitment and achievements of the best European architects who have determined a more critical, intellectual, and artistic approach to the design of buildings and cities.

Previous Laureates include: Bjarke Ingels (Denmark), Graft Architects (Germany), TYIN Architects (Norway), Marco Casagrande (Finland), Alessandro Mendini (Italy), and Santiago Calatrava (Spain/Switzerland), LAVA Laboratory for Visionary Architecture (Germany).

Manuelle Gautrand was born in 1961 in Marseille, France and obtained her graduate diploma in Architecture from The École Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture de Montpellier in 1985.

She worked for six years in different architecture studios in Paris and founded her office in 1991—first in Lyons and then in Paris. Since 1994, she lives and works in Paris.

She is the principal architect and director of the agency Manuelle Gautrand Architecture, which she opened in 1991 with her partner, Marc Blaising, who is in charge of financial, contractual and management matters. Since 1991, more than 300 architects have worked at their practice in Paris.

Her firm mainly designs buildings in areas as diverse as cultural facilities (theaters, museums, and cultural centers), office buildings, housing, commercial and leisure facilities. Her clients are public contracting authorities as well as private firms, in France and abroad.

Hipark Hotel, Paris, France (2016):



In 2007, Manuelle Gautrand's "C42" Citroen Flagship Showroom on the Champs-Élysées Avenue in Paris, gained immediate public attention and widespread acclaim in the international arena. In 2011, she converted the Gaité-Lyrique Theatre into a centre for modern music and digital arts. Internationally, she has designed a car showroom in Cairo and has recently taken part in the competition for the new Munch Museum in Oslo and the office is currently working on the extension of the Brädstapeln office building in central Stockholm, Sweden, as well as on a civic and cultural center in Parramatta, Australia.

Her practice has worked for prestigious clients such as Adim, Air France, Altarea Cogedim, Areim Real Estate & Seb, BNP Paribas Immobilier, Carrefour Property, Central Pattana Public Company, Citroën, Communauté Urbaine de Lille, Crédit Agricole Immobilier, Espacil, Groupe Galeries Lafayette, Gaumont-Pathé, Gecina, ING Real Estate, Linkcity, Parramatta City Council, Port Autonome de Paris, Sanef, Ville de Lyon, Ville de Paris, and Ville de Saint-Louis.

Manuelle Gautrand has won three International Architecture Awards from The Chicago Athenaeum and The European Centre, as well as the German Design Award in 2017. She has been awarded by the French Government Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur in 2010, and Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres in 2007. In 2016, she was elected President of the French Academy of Architecture.

"At the core of the process of creativity lies the approach to each new project through the spirit of 'blank page,' with no *a priori*," continues Narkiewicz-Laine. "Yet all her projects express a specific relationship to the site: a desire to revive it and enchant; a deep commitment to working on the programs entrusted to the firm, make them even more efficient, more malleable and more unexpected. The project must each time become a unique and symbolic encounter between the site and the program."

"Her works admirably and poetically fulfill the traditional requirements of architecture for physical and spatial beauty along with function and craftsmanship, but what sets them apart is their approach that creates buildings and places that are both local and universal at the same time."

The firm's most iconic work is the Cité des Affaires in Saint-Etienne of 2011—a building for several governmental bodies. The building also includes leisure facilities, a corporate restaurant, café, and tourism bureau for the metropolitan area.

The building is developed along a built 'continuum' on the site that interacts with adjacent streets. The linear construction rears up and unfolds and also hugs the ground line to form a low accessible building, while opening to a spacious courtyard with bold overhangs. The cut-out portion of the building draws pedestrians into the project. These high ceilings magnify the entranceways. Depending on pedestrian movements, the yellow undersides are either a floating canopy or an interior vertical wall that provide internal pedestrian movements rich with a luminous presence. The yellow facades brighten up pavements and glazed elevations, casting golden washes over them like sunlight. The fenestration, set into facades colored in yellow, grey, silver, and gold, act as a bold cohesive decorative element.

Cité des Affaires in Saint-Etienne won an International Architecture Award from The Chicago Athenaeum in 2011.

Another award-winning project is the renovation of the Gaumont-Alésia, a Parisian cinema housed in a structure that is over 80 years old, now heroically revamped in 2016 as an inviting cultural hub for the surrounding city, showcasing cinema's influence on both the interior and exterior.

Uniquely, Gautrand, covered both street facades with a glass curtain wall shaded by pleated metal panels. These panels will be perforated by hundreds of LED "pixels" which will create an image across the pleats. Both entrances to the building become animated walls, broadcasting film stills, movie trailers, and advertisements, all meant to entice passersby. The LEDs are spaced fewer and farther apart toward the edges of the building, creating a stippling effect around the border of the images. At the entrances these animated panels will peel upwards, creating a canopy under which patrons can walk.

The building's main entrance is set at a busy intersection on Paris's General Leclerc Boulevard and has an additional façade facing the street of Alésia. The three-story atrium into which visitors enter also declares the building's programmatic purpose.

The stepped ceilings funnel visitors into the building's foyer that mimic the seating of the theaters on the floors above. In addition, small theater-like seating located at the entrances to these theaters provide impromptu meeting places, as well as seating to enjoy movie previews and clips projected on the opposing walls. These spaces are set amidst a number of side stairways and escalators, emphasizing the building's aesthetic as a kind of vertical sculpture.

Gaumont-Alésia won an International Architecture Award in 2017.

Another cultural facility, Lille Museum of Modern Art, completed in 2010, is a refurbishment and an extension of the museum in a magnificent park at Villeneuve d'Ascq. The original building, designed by Roland Simounet in 1983, is on France's Historic Monuments List.

The architecture of the extension wraps around the north and east sides of the existing arrangement in a fan-splay of long, fluid and organic volumes. On one side, the fan ribs stretch in close folds to shelter a café-restaurant that opens to the central patio; on the other, the ribs are more widely spaced to form the five galleries for the Art brut collection.

[Gaumont-Pathé Alésia Cinemas](#), Paris, France (2016):



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