U.S. architect Steven Holl wins the BBVA Foundation Frontiers of Knowledge Award in the Arts category

- Holl is the author of flagship buildings like the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas and is currently working on the 'Linked Hybrid' project, occupying a 220,000 m^2 site in the center of Beijing

- The jury singled out the balance achieved in his work between a vanguard vocation and concern for social and environmental fundamentals

- This international award comes with prize money of 400,000 euros

January 28, 2009.- The Arts award in this inaugural edition of the BBVA Foundation Frontiers of Knowledge Awards has gone to the U.S. architect Steven Holl. Born in Bremerton, Washington (WA) in 1947, he is known as "the most European of American architects" for his humanistic approach to architectural design.

The BBVA Foundation Frontiers of Knowledge Awards seek to recognize and encourage world-class research at international level, and can be considered second only to the Nobel Prize in their monetary amount, an annual 3.2 million euros, and the breadth of the scientific and artistic areas covered.

The awards, organized in partnership with Spain's National Research Council (CSIC), take in eight categories carrying a cash prize of 400,000 euros each. The Arts award, the fourth to be decided, is to honor creative work of excellence in areas that help forge the culture and identity of a given era: architecture, contemporary classical music, painting and sculpture.

Architecture, the union of all the arts

On receiving the news, Steven Holl confessed himself "overwhelmed, because I had no idea I had been nominated. But as a professor of architecture I consider myself highly honored to receive an award that lays such importance on the interrelation of the arts".

Holl gave the following insight into his work: "I believe the relationship of all the arts becomes especially patent in architecture, and it is in architecture that it finds its fullest expression. I move in the same circles as painters and video artists and feel I am well acquainted with other arts".

Steven Holl is a professor in Columbia University's Graduate School of Architecture, where he teaches a course on the Architectonics of Music. He graduated in

architecture from the University of Washington in Seattle before completing his studies in Rome and at the Architectural Association in London. He then settled in New York, and began making a name for himself with his work on family housing and his small- and large-scale experimental designs.

Holl has worked in the United States, Europe and in the Far East, especially Japan. Among his most celebrated projects, which stand out for their respect for the building's historical and cultural context, are the Simmons Hall students' residence at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas, the Chapel of St. Ignatius in Seattle University and his addition to the Cranbrook Institute of Science in Michigan (all in the United States), the Kiasma Contemporary Art Museum in Helsinki (Finland) and the Makuhari residential complex (Japan).

He currently runs two studios, in New York and Beijing, where he is working on the 'Linked Hybrid' project occupying a site of 220,000 m^2 in the vicinity of the Forbidden City.

Vanguard presence and social mission

The jury cited "the progressive position of the work of Steven Holl in more than 30 years of professional practice, in its rigorous discipline and consistency", along with "the international impact of his work, his visibility in distinct cultural forums and his presence in prestigious academic circles".

In the award certificate, Hall's work is praised for its "personal language and recognizable identity", a language that "has consistently remained apart from external, formal and stylistic compromise". His projects stand out for their variety, with commissions built or under way in everything from "private houses to major urban projects round the world".

Finally, the jury singled out "the formal, spatial and functional processes of his personal artistic vision" and the "inspired creativity" that informs the U.S. architect's current work. It also reserved special mention for Holl's efforts "to promote social and cultural fundamentals without sacrificing his continual presence in the architectural vanguard".

The jury in this inaugural edition of the Frontiers of Knowledge Awards, Arts category, was chaired by classical music critic **Reinhard Brembeck**, and formed by composers **Helmut Lachenmann** and **Luis de Pablo**; architects **Antón García-Abril** and **Ramón Sanabria**; **Armin Köhler,** director of the Donaueschingen Music Festival; art critic **Richard Whitehouse**; and **Wulf Weinmann**, managing director of German music label NEOS, acting as secretary.

The Arts award is the fourth to be decided in this first edition of the BBVA Foundation Frontiers of Knowledge Awards. The Climate Change award was granted to U.S. scientist Wallace S. Broecker, who predicted climate warming due to human activity more than three decades ago. The award in the Development Cooperation category went to the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). The Biomedicine award, finally,

was conferred on cancer researcher Joan Massagué, Spain's most internationally cited working scientist whose research has elucidated fundamental processes that control cell division and identified genes playing a key role in tumor generation and metastasis.

The BBVA Foundation supports knowledge generation, scientific research and the promotion of culture, relaying the results of its work to society at large. This effort materializes in research projects, human capital investment, specialization courses, grants and awards. Among the Foundation's preferred areas of activity are basic sciences, biomedicine, ecology and conservation biology, the social sciences and literary and musical creation.

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