THE PRITZKER ARCHITECTURE PRIZE 2006

PRESENTED TO

PAULO MENDES DA ROCHA

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Completed in 1964, this apartment building is structurally designed as a long narrow plate with a 23-foot span supported by reinforced concrete walls on two sides. The surface receiving the most intense solar radiation is protected by a sunscreen designed exclusively for this project. The openings on the west facade, with their parallel concrete slats, unify the space and the rhythm of the interior.
The Paulistano Athletic Club
São Paulo, Brazil, 1958
The Paulistano Athletic Club, completed in 1958 in São Paulo, Brazil is designed for a capacity of 2000 spectators. The structure is reinforced concrete with steel cables suspending the metal roof. The actual arena is in the center of a long rectangular platform that serves as an esplanade and which can accommodate complementary activities in banqueting rooms and an inner garden.

Paulistano Athletic Club
Photos by José Moscardi
Paulo Mendes da Rocha designed his own home in Sao Paulo, completed in 1960. It was designed together with a second that is identical except for minor variations in the floor plan. The single story design, resting on pillars, is embedded in a small hill where it generates a dialogue with the gardens. One of his objectives was to maximize the use of prefabricated and mass-produced reinforced concrete components. Above: a view of the entrance staircase. Below: a view of the entrance foyer. Opposite page: (top) a hall; (below) living room.
Paulo Mendes da Rocha Residence
São Paulo, Brazil, 1960

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Brazilian Pavilion for Expo ‘70
Osaka, Japan, 1969
The Brazilian Pavilion, designed for the 1970 Expo in Osaka, Japan, was an architectural study of the relationship between nature and construction. It consisted of a concrete and glass deck, resting lightly on the ground beneath. Mendes da Rocha chose to modify the site’s topography to create three points on which the platform would rest. The movement is in the site, not the structure. The fourth support is provided by two intersecting arches, and provides the only element that appears vertical, in contrast to the broad horizontal extension of the deck. This support is calculated to resist great degrees of horizontal stress given the high incidence of earthquakes in Japan.

Photos by Fujita Gumi
The Serra Dourada Stadium
Goiânia, Goiás State, Brazil, 1973
Photos by Paulo Mendes da Rocha
The design for the Serra Dourada Stadium, built in 1973, in Goiânia is radically different from most sports arenas, which are generally conceived as closed entities. On the contrary, this stadium is open to the city. The structure is balanced. The roof overhangs 65 feet on each side, partially covering the cement bleachers and the general access area, bars, locker rooms, ticket office and public support services. Symmetrically placed at either end of the stadium are the enclosed galleries providing offices for the Soccer Federation as well as restaurants and lodgings for visiting athletes.
Chapel of Saint Peter
Campos de Jordão, SP, Brazil, 1987

Photos by Cristiano Mascaro
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The chapel is located on a site near the Boa Vista Palace in the town of Campos de Jordão, built as a winter residence of the Governor of São Paulo and now a fine art museum. It was initially decided that the chapel should be situated close to the existing palace, establishing a dialogue with it. The chapel rests on one massive column and the religious spaces flow around it. The limited use of different materials - concrete, glass and steel - add to the building’s message of strength and simplicity. The two-story glass façade looks out over the reflecting pool to the Mantiquera mountain peaks in the distance. Because of a change in the topography of the site, the chapel appears as a simple one-story building on the esplanade as it faces the existing palace.
Chapel of Saint Peter
Campos de Jordão, SP, Brazil, 1987
Forma Store
São Paulo, Brazil, 1987

Photos by Nelson Kon
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Forma Store
São Paulo, Brazil, 1987

The architecture of this store allows for maximum visibility by displaying products in an elevated showcase window that spans the entire length of the building, becoming in effect, a billboard facing an avenue of heavy traffic. Inside the store, views are unobstructed as if in a museum. The two opposing concrete walls forming the ends of the building house equipment and support services. By elevating the actual store, 900 square yards of parking is made available. A retractable staircase provides access to the main entrance.
(above) A view of the amphitheatre under the portico.

(left) Sculpture in the garden plaza.

Photos by Nelson Kon
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Martha Thorne, executive director of the Pritzker Prize, describes the building: “As a result of receiving first prize in a 1986 competition, architect Mendes da Rocha designed the Brazilian Museum of Sculpture. The 75,000-square foot triangular site is located on a main thoroughfare that links the Jardin Europea residential district to the center of the city. Instead of creating a free-standing building resting on the site, the museum and landscape are treated as a whole. Large slabs create partly underground internal spaces and also form the exterior plaza with its pools of water and esplanade. The complexity of the design is realized in simple straightforward forms and the use of plain concrete. The great 197-foot long, 39-foot wide beam frames the museum forming a loggia or porch. It is visible indication of a museum building in dialogue with the city.”

(right) A detail of the plaza. (below) The main entrance and café access.
Brazilian Museum of Sculpture
São Paulo, Brazil, 1988

(above) A view of the auditorium.
(right) Entrance to the administrative sector.
(below) A view of the entrance plaza.
In the center of São Paulo, Mendes da Rocha undertook the renovation and restructuring of the public space. Vehicular traffic was reorganized, and bus stops moved from a small nearby area to the 800-foot long overpass, Viaduct do Cha. The square’s original paving was restored, and the most striking element, a suspended roof canopy, was added. The canopy successfully forms a dialogue with the cityscape, and, at the same time, it is sympathetic to pedestrians who use the plaza. It serves as a portal for the square while it frames views in the opposite direction. The canopy does not rest on the ground, but is suspended from an architrave.
Patriarch Plaza and Viaduct do Cha
São Paulo, Brazil, 1992
Originally the late nineteenth century structure designed by architect Ramos de Azevedo housed the School of Arts and Crafts. In 1993, Mendes da Rocha began the design for a major renovation of this classical, symmetrical building. He did not alter the exterior. On the inside, his interventions are clear and in juxtaposition with the original building. He tackled major functional problems including humidity, the confusing organization of the galleries, and the need for structural reinforcements and new spaces for museum activities. The central and side courtyards were given new metal framed glass roofs. The internal window openings were maintained, but stripped of their frames to provide views of the courtyards. At ground level, the central courtyard became a slightly sunken auditorium to accommodate 140 people. Metal catwalks traverse the side courtyards and connect the galleries at the upper levels.

(left) View of the metal walkways installed to connect old internal patio windows.
(above) View of the new main entrance facing Luz railway station.
The State Museum of São Paulo
São Paulo, Brazil, 1993

(above) Aerial view with Luz railway station at left. (below left) A view of the main lobby.

(above right) Detail of skylight. (below right) A view of the continuous axis created by walkways.

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The modest house that the architect designed in Cabreuva, a small town northwest of São Paulo, has a feel of discovery as one passes through its simple forms. Mendes da Rocha has said, “...this house is not a model, but a multifaceted event in the landscape. It is a suite of little surprises.” The regular geometry of the house is in contrast to the more free-form of the pool. On the interior, the curved stone wall is in juxtaposition with the linear concrete walls.
Residence for Mario Masetti
Cava Estate, Cabreuva, SP, Brazil, 1995
Mendes da Rocha is developing a master plan for the Technological City, part of the University of Vigo. His task is to integrate new buildings — library, engineering departments, student residences, administration offices — designed by several different Spanish architects into an overall landscape scheme that also fosters connections between buildings.
Furniture Designs by Paulo Mendes da Rocha

“Paulistano” Chaise Lounge (above)
“Paulistano” chair (left)
“Paulistano” office chair version (below)
Government Services Center
Itaquera, São Paulo, Brazil, 1998
Known as “poupatempo” or “time saver,” the Center brings together, under one roof, many government services, such as post office, motor vehicle center, utility bill payments booths, police station, etc. Located in the Itaquera district on the periphery of São Paulo along side a subway station, it is a single building 1,000 feet long. In some ways it is more like a suspension bridge. It is raised off the ground by pairs of central pillars that support the cantilevered concrete cross beams, which in turn support a secondary structure. The large scale trusses of the roof play a structural role and also form the inclined façade. It is wider at the roofline than the base, which is not only a geometrically striking form, but also protects the building from the sun without the need for an additional canopy.
Studies for Installations for the Olympic Games in 2008

Paris, France, 2000