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FRAME

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HONORARY

Lifetime Achievement Award

PHILIPPE STARCK

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‘I AM NOT INTERESTED in interior design.’ So said Philippe Starck in an interview that appeared in *Frame* 93. He’s spoken those words before, just as he’s declared he’s ‘not good at interior design’. Well, we beg to differ. To some he may be better known for products – he’s designed everything from a toothbrush and a chair to a lemon juicer and a motorbike – but it’s Starck’s interiors that landed him the Lifetime Achievement Award.

The turning point was in 1984, when the launch of Café Costes in Paris set the stage for what’s become a 35-year-long (and counting) career. ‘You did away with a typical French neighbourhood café,’ said Frame founder and director Robert Thiemann, after presenting Starck with his award on stage, ‘instead introducing a somewhat bewildering mix of fluid minimalism and grandiose theatricality, always referencing the past and introducing what later turned out to be the future.’

Thiemann went on to credit Starck with initiating other interior typologies:

the boutique hotel, for one, as well as the democratic design hostel. ‘But you didn’t limit yourself to hospitality interiors,’ he continued. ‘With your retail designs for Alain Mikli eyewear and Taschen books in the ‘90s, you were far ahead of the current craze of so-called experiential stores. And the Yoo brand you launched in 1999 with John Hitchcox changed the real-estate industry by offering arguably the first apartments fully furnished with contemporary design.’ More recently, he created a habitation module for Axiom Space, the world’s first commercial space station.

Earlier that day, jury members sat down to assess some 150 spaces: the Frame Awards nominees. They were asked to look for examples that, among other things, pushed the industry forward. Is the project reflective of socioeconomic shifts in the industry or society? Does it respond to changing consumer needs?

Here’s a man who’s spent half his lifetime doing just that. But pushing the industry forward isn’t Starck’s goal; it’s collateral.

Thiemann summed up the designer’s real objectives by referencing one of Starck’s past proclamations: ‘My priorities are to revolutionize usage architecture and to clean and revolutionize symbolism; to move toward greater simplicity, discretion and harmony with nature; and to use human standards rather than technical or sexual standards.’ The same sentiment was reinforced by Thiemann’s closing words: ‘You aim to improve the lives of the final users of your designs. You also design to feed your family. And finally, you design to serve society.’

Starck is known for making bold statements. In *Frame* 93, he claimed that he’d quit making interiors at the end of that year, 2013. But this declaration prefaced another: ‘I guess I [make interiors] because public space can be used as a means to convey a message through experience, to reach people. As long as I have things to say, I will continue.’ We know we’re not the only ones who are glad he’s pressing ahead. – Tl
starck.com