



PRESS RELEASE

Emerging Perspectives: The Winners of the ICONIC AWARDS 2026 Announced Spatial Responses to Changing Conditions – Architecture, Interior Design and New Ways of Inhabiting Spaces

Frankfurt am Main, 24 August 2026

The German Design Council has announced the winners of the ICONIC AWARDS 2026. Around 800 entries from more than 45 countries underscore the international significance of the ICONIC AWARDS as a platform for architecture, interior design and product innovation. A total of 45 projects have received the **Best of Best** distinction.

The award-winning projects show how architecture and design respond to the challenges of the present. They transform existing buildings, develop products as part of the infrastructure and, in interior design, combine spaces for community and retreat with a precise engagement with material, light and use. Behind the projects are creative working methods that take responsibility and develop distinct solutions from the conditions of their respective contexts. Architecture is understood not through the finished building alone, but also through the processes, partnerships and forms of responsibility that underpin it.

“The award-winning projects open up new perspectives on architecture and interior design. They respond to the demands of our time through different design approaches and combine spatial quality with responsibility. They demonstrate that future-oriented solutions emerge from a precise engagement with place, material, use and atmosphere,” explains Lutz Dietzold (CEO, German Design Council).

The five special and honorary distinctions for 2026 show how this understanding of quality takes shape across different roles and scales. They recognise individuals, practices, projects and clients that are making a distinctive contribution to the international architectural debate.

The 2026 Special Distinctions: Five Perspectives in the International Architectural Debate **Architects of the Year – DnA_Design and Architecture**

With the **Architects of the Year** distinction, the jury recognises Tiantian Xu and her practice DnA_Design and Architecture. The practice consistently develops architecture from its context. For Tiantian Xu, place, use and their interplay are the starting point of every design. Rather than pursuing a recognisable formal signature, the practice develops projects from the spatial, cultural and social conditions of their surroundings. Works such as Quarry No. 9 demonstrate how minimal interventions can transform existing landscapes into public spaces and strengthen the cultural identity of their locations.

Interior Designers of the Year – Studio Wok

With Studio Wok, the jury recognises a Milan-based practice that understands interior design as the shaping of living environments. Architecture, interior spaces and landscape are developed as interconnected disciplines. Working closely with local craftspeople and responding to the conditions of each site, the practice creates projects of great precision and atmospheric quality. Farini Bakery demonstrates how natural materials, precise detailing and spatial restraint can create places whose quality develops through use.

The **Interior Designers of the Year** distinction recognises a young studio that is helping to shape a contemporary understanding of interior design and places durability and material integrity before short-lived effects.

Creator of the Year – TEN

With the **Creator of the Year** distinction, the jury recognises a practice that understands architecture as an open process of research and design. TEN works in project-based, interdisciplinary teams, combining design, research and knowledge exchange. Each project develops its own methodological and narrative framework; workshops and design sprints create room for collective authorship. The distinction demonstrates that architectural innovation can arise from new forms of collaboration as much as from the built result.

Architects' Client of the Year – Zheshui Village Committee and Luo Studio

With the Zheshui Village Committee, the jury highlights the role of committed clients and their collaboration with architects and users. Together with LUO Studio, the committee developed the Zheshui Natural Library as a place of learning and encounter for children and the village

community. Local materials and traditional building methods meet a contemporary understanding of participation. The jury recognises a project that understands architecture not merely as a building task, but as a place of cultural identity and social cohesion.

Debut Work of the Year – ABF-LAB

For the Maison du Département des Solidarités in Langon, ABF-LAB receives the **Debut Work of the Year** distinction. The French practice combines architecture and engineering in a way of working in which ecological requirements shape the design from the outset. Bioclimatic strategies, low-tech principles and construction in timber, straw and clay interlock to form a building for the social sector that understands material, construction and use as one coherent system. The jury recognises an approach that understands sustainable building not as a technical addition, but as an integral part of architectural quality. The distinction is endowed with EUR 10,000 and supported by dormakaba.

All award-winning projects from 2026 are available in the [online showroom](#).

Media Partner DETAIL

Together with the architecture magazine DETAIL, the ICONIC AWARDS promote international exchange on architecture and building culture. The media partnership creates space for in-depth engagement with the award-winning work and extends the debate on current developments in planning and construction beyond the competition itself.

The Jury of the ICONIC AWARDS 2026

The ICONIC AWARDS are decided by a newly appointed international jury of leading figures from the fields of architecture, design and material culture. The 2026 jury includes the following members, among others:

- Jonas Bjerre-Poulsen (Norm Architects)
- Caroline Nagel (COBE)
- Eva Marguerre and Marcel Besau (Besau-Marguerre)
- Lara Katscher (Werner Sobek AG)
- Peter Ippolito (founder, Ippolito Fleitz Group – Identity Architects)

Discover all jury members [here](#).

Award Ceremony on 6 October 2026

Auditorium at BMW Welt

Am Olympiapark 1

80809 Munich

All special award winners and Best of Best winners will receive their distinctions on this day.

Programme

2.30 p.m.: Doors open

3 p.m.: Panel discussion with Jeanette Kunsmann (Editor-in-Chief, DETAIL)

4.30 p.m.: Pitch & Pulse – project presentations and expert talks

7 p.m.: Awards ceremony, including a keynote by Tiantian Xu (DnA_Design and Architecture)

Followed by: An evening reception

The full programme is available [here](#).

Link to the [Press kit](#).

About the ICONIC AWARDS

The ICONIC AWARDS recognise outstanding projects in architecture, interior design and product innovation. Presented by the German Design Council, they have provided an international stage for projects from more than 45 countries for over ten years and have established themselves as a leading platform for architecture, industry and the construction sector. They promote exchange among leading figures in the industry and provide new impetus for the future of architecture.

Discover the new website at:

www.iconic-awards.com

About the German Design Council

The German Design Council has been Germany's authority for design since 1953. As a thought leader, it has a particular responsibility to unlock the potential of design for a sustainable future. To this end, it brings business and design together – for circular design, transformation and commercial success.

www.german-design-council.de