

Portrait:

Thom Mayne and Morphosis

Thom Mayne, founder and principal of Morphosis, was born in Waterbury, Connecticut in 1944. He is based in Los Angeles but his renown as an architect spans the globe. Educated at the University of South California and the Harvard University Graduate School of Design, Mayne helped found the Southern California Institute of Architecture (SCI-ARC) in 1972. Since then he has held teaching positions at both SCI-ARC and the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). Thom Mayne received the Pritzker Prize in March 2005.

When **Morphosis** was founded in 1972 it was more an idea than an office. “It had to do with an interdisciplinary collective practice (...) a group of people who would work with graphics, interior design objects, furniture, architecture and urban design. We had a studio downtown. We sat around and talked. We’d do a little graphic thing here and there to make some money. We couldn’t get architecture. It was all very counter culture,” Thom Mayne explains. Today, as the scale and sophistication of the California-based firm’s projects continue to grow, Morphosis consists of a group of more than 40 professionals who remain committed to the practice of architecture as a collective and interdisciplinary enterprise.

Taking its name from the Greek *morphosis*, meaning to form or be in formation, Morphosis is a dynamic and evolving practice that responds to the shifting and advancing social, cultural, political and technological conditions of modern life. A critical practice where creative output engages with contemporary society and culture through architectural design and education, Morphosis is a process-driven firm that seeks new and different design challenges and has resisted becoming specialized in any particular building type.

Morphosis typically generates its ideas through brain-storming sessions, in which designers question all prior assumptions about a project and intensively test and refine different avenues toward a solution. The ultimate goal is to produce an architecture that surprises and inspires – a critical architecture that contributes to the conversation about how we live today.

Over the past 30 years, Morphosis has received 25 Progressive Architecture awards, 65 American Institute of Architects (AIA) awards and numerous other honors, including the Top Ten Green Project Award, American Institute of Architects Committee on the Environment (2007), the Pritzker Prize (2005), and the Chrysler Design Award of Excellence (2001).

Major Projects

Completed

- San Francisco Federal Building (San Francisco, California, 2007)
- Wayne L. Morse United States Courthouse (Eugene, Oregon, 2006)
- University of Cincinnati Student Recreation Center (Cincinnati, Ohio, 2006)
- Science Center School (Los Angeles, California, 2004)
- Caltrans District 7 Headquarters (Los Angeles, California, 2004)
- Hypo Alpe-Adria Center (Klagenfurt, Austria, 2002)
- Diamond Ranch High School (Pomona, California, 1999)

In progress

- New Academic Building for The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art (New York, New York, 2008)
- National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) (Satellite Operation Facility, Suitland, MD, 2007)
- Phare Tower, La Défense, France (The Lighthouse, „Green“ Wind-Powered Office Building, Paris, France, 2012)

For more information visit www.morphosis.net