

Paris, 5 May 2025

Press release

Prix Versailles 2025: The World's Most Beautiful Museums

Today, 5 May 2025, the Prix Versailles is officially launching its 11th edition with the announcement of the seven projects forming the World's Most Beautiful Museums List 2025.

On that occasion, this honour is being bestowed on seven recently created or renovated structures.

From Asia to the Americas, by way of Europe and the Middle East, each one is the product of meticulous, long-term work based on a rigorous, artistic design that was developed at the initiative and in service of an authentic approach focused on heritage and scenery.

Of those seven museums, three will also receive the further distinction of a World Title – Prix Versailles, Interior or Exterior – to be awarded in December.

About this selection, Jérôme Gouadain, Secretary General of the Prix Versailles, notes that:

“The World's Most Beautiful Museums List for 2025 provides an extraordinary and particularly remarkable survey of the latest museum constructions, representing both the exuberance of youthful creativity and the maturity of the skills that inspire these achievements and make them possible. By fostering their own special ambiance, tailored to each site's specific mission, these places deliver singular experiences to their visitors, encouraging them to open their minds both outwards and inwards.

Never before has the entire world exhibited such a clear need to recall how deeply rooted it is in free, united humanity.”

The architectural prizes discerned by the Prix Versailles aim to promote intelligent sustainability, in which culture serves and transcends the notion of the environment.

The next World Selections for 2025 will be announced on 2 June for the Hotels category, on 16 June for Restaurants, on 23 June for Campuses, on 30 June for Airports, on 1 September for Emporiums, on 3 November for Passenger Stations and on 10 November for Sports.



PRIX VERSAILLES

WORLD'S MOST BEAUTIFUL MUSEUMS LIST 2025

Grand Palais

Paris, France

Saka Museum

Bali, Indonesia

Audeum

Seoul, Republic of Korea

Kunstsilo

Kristiansand, Norway

Diriyah Art Futures

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Cleveland Museum of Natural History

Cleveland, United States

Joslyn Art Museum

Omaha, United States

*The Laureates are listed in the alphabetical order of the countries they represent
(based on their two-letter ISO 3166 country codes).*



PRIX VERSAILLES

PRESENTATION OF THE LAUREATES

Grand Palais

Paris, France



© Simon Lerat / GrandPalaisRmn

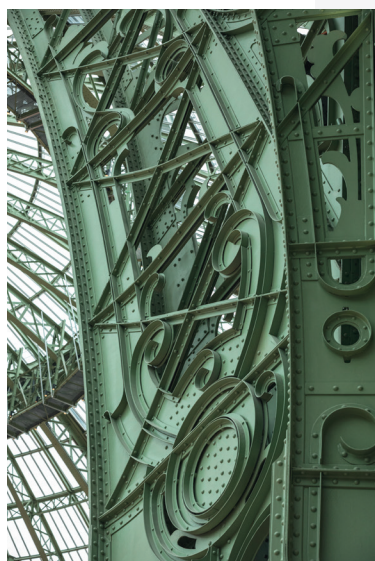
Originally built under the supervision of architect Charles Girault for the 1900 Paris Exposition, the Grand Palais stands out as one of the jewels of Paris, the museum city.

It was raised in the space of just three years, thanks to the tireless efforts of hundreds of labourers and some forty-odd artists, featuring sculptures, mosaics and frescoes that imbue it with an otherworldly atmosphere.

More than a century later, an extensive restoration project was led by Chatillon Architectes, once again involving hundreds of workers.

Its enormous 17,500 m² glass roof continues to bathe the space in natural light today. But behind its dusty coloured façades and its reseda green metal framework, the Grand Palais has been transformed into a place of discovery and sharing, where the arts, innovations and immersive experiences intermingle.

Inside, the upper gallery running around the entire interior has been preserved and enhanced. That walkway serves as a real promenade that establishes a striking link between the building's past, present and future, simply by means of its architecture which can be admired there down to the last detail, giving visitors an educational vision of the history of Paris.



© Simon Lerat / GrandPalaisRmn



© Simon Lerat / GrandPalaisRmn

Saka Museum

Bali, Indonesia

What if luxury could become culture? Since July 2024, Saka Museum – tucked away inside Ayana Bali, a hotel complex overlooking Jimbaran Bay – has answered that question with a resounding “Yes!”

Devised by Mitsubishi Jisho Design, the new museum embodies the Balinese philosophy of Giri Segara, the sacred balance between mountain and sea, symbolising the interconnected forces of spiritual power and life’s continuous transformation.

That principle is reflected in the sloping roof, which visually bridges the mountains and the ocean, while the reflecting pool surrounding the museum mirrors the shifting moonlight in a metaphor for introspection and renewal.

Saka Museum houses archival documents and historical objects, while its exhibitions showcase the island’s living traditions, including the contemplative philosophy of Nyepi, the Balinese Day of Silence. Here, both contents and container are one with their environment. An architectural marvel in the service of timeless culture.



© SAKA Museum



© SAKA Museum



© SAKA Museum

Audeum

Seoul, Republic of Korea

Making a musical instrument out of a building is a challenge that has been faced by many architects over the years. With Audeum, Kengo Kuma has exceeded the goal of mere sound by creating an architectural instrument that allows visitors to reconnect with nature by engaging all of their five senses.

The façade deploys a dense, vertical array of bright aluminium pipes to capture the coexistence of order and disorder found in nature, as well as the ephemeral beauty of natural light.

As visitors navigate through the forest of aluminium tubes and down the valley of stone steps, the hard exterior gradually gives way to an entrance made of fragrant cypress. The aroma and warmth of the wood stimulates the senses while drawing out a feeling of intimacy with nature.

Offering a unique, multisensory experience, Audeum combines visuals, sound, wind and scent into a cohesive whole – a *gesamtkunstwerk* that serves as a place of rest and contemplation.



© Seojeon Cultural Foundation / Audeum



© Seojeon Cultural Foundation / Audeum



© Seojeon Cultural Foundation / Audeum

Kunstsilo

Kristiansand, Norway



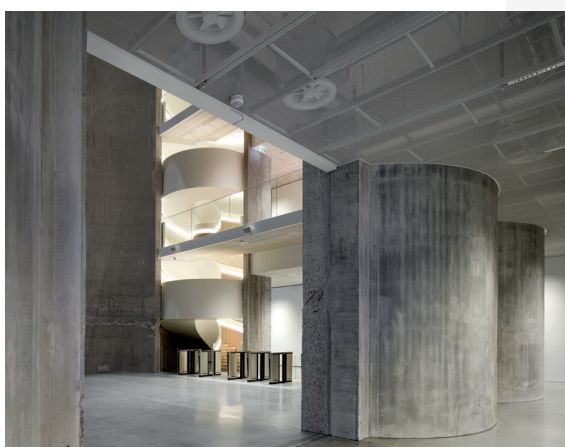
© Alan Williams

In Kristiansand, Mestres Wåge Architectes has transformed an immense, industrial port granary – comprising 30 grain silos – into an internationally renowned cultural venue, in a huge architectural gamble that has more than paid off.

Located on the waterfront, this extensive 3,300 m² three-storey building dating from 1935 has been the largest museum in Southern Norway since May 2024.

Housing the world's biggest private collection of Nordic art, Kunstsilo offers panoramic views of the region's spectacular coastline from the rooftop. But the most spectacular part of the building is its gigantic silos, which attract natural light, underscoring the monumental scale of the structure.

Like a concrete cathedral, this place inspires a sense of grandeur and poetry, all amplified by the towering staircase, which provides for an ascension that lends itself wonderfully to meditation.



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Diriyah Art Futures

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

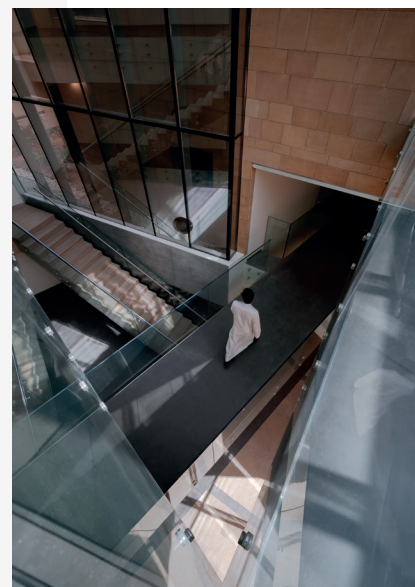
Designed by the Roman architectural firm Schiattarella Associati, Diriyah Art Futures – the first museum on the Arabian Peninsula exclusively dedicated to digital art – literally appears to have emerged from the earth. The connection between traditional architecture and new technologies offers visitors a sense of Nabataean vertigo, in which they can no longer tell what's more important, the container or its contents, the building or the collections.

To fulfil its ambitious programme of exhibition galleries, research labs, artists' residencies, an auditorium, a training centre and more, Diriyah Art Futures is actually a series of separate, streamlined spaces designed to seamlessly blend the urban and agricultural elements of Wadi Hanifah.

The concept, which is both contemporary and typical of the region, establishes a pleasing balance between construction and nature, tradition and future. In other words, it is a boundary structure but with open ramparts: fresh, shady areas created by narrow, deep passageways directly inspired by the spirit of the place.



© Hassan Alshatti



© Hassan Alshatti



© Hassan Alshatti

Cleveland Museum of Natural History

Cleveland, United States



© Phil Handforth

The new architecture of the Cleveland Museum of Natural History is intended to reflect Northeast Ohio's rich geological history. The challenge for DLR Group, which managed the renovation and expansion of this more than a century old museum, was to reorganise a varied complex into a coherent contemporary structure.

Inspired by the glaciers that carved the Great Lakes, the architect stylised flowing white alluvial forms in a single, continuous concept to unify the various parts of the facility.

Set on remarkable landscaped grounds, the museum recounts the history of life on Earth, with the Visitor Hall at the centre showcasing its most iconic specimens.

When architecture becomes an expression of the natural world, it fosters a sense of wonder and discovery. That primary mission of any museum is magnificently deployed here in Cleveland.



© Phil Handforth



© Phil Handforth

Joslyn Art Museum

Omaha, United States

The Joslyn Art Museum in Omaha, Nebraska, embraces paradox.

On the Central Plains of the Midwest, in the eastern part of the Great Plains, the museum was founded in 1931 using Sarah Joslyn's donation to the city to fund free public access to the arts, with the intention of documenting 5,000 years of human creativity and the diversity of the world's cultures.

The campus features three remarkable structures: the 1931 Joslyn Building, an Art Deco masterpiece created by the father-son team of John and Alan McDonald; the 1994 Walter & Suzanne Scott Pavilion, the first American commission for Norman Foster; and now the 2024 Rhonda & Howard Hawks Pavilion, designed by Snøhetta.

The paradox stems from the fact that, in contrast to its immediate environment, the contemporary addition by the Norwegian architectural firm seems to defy the ages, just as the Art Deco pavilion made no allusions to Roman conquest. And the result is spectacular. The Joslyn now provides an overview of all the twists and turns of US history and all the hopes of humankind for the next 5,000 years.



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