

Visionary architect awarded Rössler prize



Rössler prize winner Philippe Block with Max Rössler (left) and ETH president Lino Guzzella.
© ETH Foundation / Nicola Pitaro 6 July 2018

At yesterday's "Thanks Giving" event of the ETH Zurich Foundation, civil engineer and architect Philippe Block received the 200,000 Swiss franc Rössler Prize 2018. He is one of ten brilliant researchers who have received the award since 2009 and whose research promises great potential for the future.

Philippe Block is looking for new structural forms and constructional systems that would allow materials to be used more efficiently and takes inspiration from historical building principles. Some of Block's favourite examples include the vaults in Gothic cathedrals or Catalan vaults made from thin bricks.

Together with his research group, Philippe Block uses computational methods to re-invent these building techniques of the past. This results in diverse shapes and systems, which often require no mortar or reinforcement and can bear heavy loads with little material.

Philippe Block studied architecture and civil engineering at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel. In 2009, Block completed a PhD at MIT in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and was then appointed Assistant Professor at ETH Zurich. In 2014, he became Associate Professor of Architecture and Structure at the Institute of Technology in Architecture (ITA) and was awarded his full professorship in 2017.

Philippe Block has received many prizes and awards for his work, most recently in January 2018 the Berlin Art Prize for Architecture.

In 2012, he won the Edoardo Benvenuto Prize and was awarded both the Tsuboi Award and the Hangai Prize from the International Association of Shell and Spatial Structures (IASS) in 2010 and 2007 respectively.

Block's most famous works include the Armadillo vault for the Venice Architecture Biennale 2016, and the ultra-lightweight, unreinforced, rib-stiffened floor elements and sinuous concrete roof for the experimental HiLo building on the NEST platform.

About the Rössler prize

The Rössler Prize has been awarded annually since 2009 to young professors from ETH Zurich. The prize is a mark of honor for the mostpromising young scientists and should be a stimulus for the further development of their careers. The Rössler prize is financed by ETH Zurich Foundation to which ETH-Alumnus Dr. Max Rössler has made a generous donation. With 200,000 Swiss francs, the prize is the highest endowed award for research at ETH Zurich and is presented at the "Thanks Giving" event of ETH Zurich Foundation.

<https://ethz-foundation.ch/en/spotlight/news-2018-roessler-prize/>

PDF exported on 01/28/2026 04:32

© 2026 ETH Zurich Foundation