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**The Phenomenon of Being Distinguished in
Architecture; a Study on Pritzker Prize**

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The Phenomenon of Being Distinguished in Architecture; a Study on Pritzker Prize

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Abstract

The origin of architecture can be discussed based on the need of shelter and/or noble desire and it is thought that independent of its period, aim, function or audience; architecture, as a profession has desired to reach that which is unique within its definitive context. The tendency of being distinguished justifies itself basically in representation of architecture and this representation is established through the practice of architectural institutions. Besides these, institutionalization of architecture has not produced any theoretical attempt which problematizes architecture as something being ordinary; this has always been extraneous in the practice of these societies. The aim of this paper is to discuss the phenomenon of being distinguished in architecture through the gentrifying mechanisms of these institutions and to bring the problematic of being ordinary into question as a succeeding discussion. The gentrifying institutions in architecture that establish its representation as a unique product, will be discussed firstly. To understand the underlying mechanism that generates this phenomenon of being distinguished, institutions which are architectural schools, periodicals, social media, and award systems, will be included in this study. Following this, architectural award systems and the Pritzker Prize, will be analyzed as case study. As the method of this study, descriptive phrases defining architecture in Pritzker jury citations for laureates will be analyzed. These phrases will be evaluated based on their representation of honorary expressions of architecture. Towards defining these descriptions, those definitions which refer to architecture as a distinguished object will be discussed in terms of the way of phrasing them. Finally, the phenomenon of being distinguished will be discussed within the context of how it promotes the reproduction of the conventions of architectural knowledge.

Keywords: Architectural Institutions, Distinguished, Ordinary, Pritzker Prize, Representation of Architecture.

Introduction

Throughout ages, architecture has been theorized with relation to a wide range of fields of study including such as art, cultural heritage, urban environment, capitalism, history and construction. While every field describes the architecture in its own theoretical framework, they altogether also interpret architecture as a special thing and define the architectural object in a similar way. Architecture, as well, has desired to reach that which is unique within its definitive context independent of its period, aim, function or audience. It is believed that this tendency also establishes the epistemology of architecture as a distinguished phenomenon hence it has not realized an epistemological attempt concerning the discussion of being ordinary.

Considering architecture as a distinguished phenomenon justifies itself basically in the representational field. This representation is established through a dialectical relationship between society and academics. This paper particularly aims to discuss representations of a gentrifying genre and focus on mechanisms that establish these representations. Before emphasizing these mechanisms, it is important to introduce what we, as authors, understand from the representation of architecture as a distinguished phenomenon. We consider the concept of architecture not merely as a building or design in this paper. We take it as an occurrence, a symbol or a matter of fact that represents a discourse within the architectural field. In other words, we take into consideration that “Architecture with capital letter A” and seek for the means of its representation. Therefore, representation mechanisms and discourses of society and academics that turns architecture from a building to a distinguished object determine the scope of this paper.

The definitions of architecture and the changing role of architects in society throughout ages will help us to understand the current gentrifying mechanisms of its representation. The gentrifying methods of these mechanisms with emphasis on the case of Pritzker Prize will assist to discuss the epistemology of architecture as a distinguished phenomenon.

The Gentrifying Definitions of Architecture and the Changing Role of Architects throughout the Ages

Architecture is not only a profession, but also a concept for expressing ideas, and it is believed that the metaphorical statements of architecture implicitly contribute to dignifying its position. The most well-known metaphor is the analogy of God as architect. Christian thought employed the concept of “God as the Great Architect of the Universe”. Although this analogy is associated with Christianity, it dates back to Plato’s *Timaeus* and Philo of Alexandria. Plato’s “demiourgos” corresponds to the creator of the universe. Philo compares the creation of the cosmos and the founding a city by referring to Plato, and promotes God as the creator of an architect. According to Philo, God creates the cosmos as a mega polis so a builder or a craftsman could follow the blueprint he has given (Friedman, 1974; Runia, 1986). The analogy between God and the architect became a highly

controversial topic once again in Modernism, which will be discussed later. Karatani also states that from Plato to contemporary thinkers, many philosophers prefer the concept of architecture to express the stabilization of unstable thoughts in their philosophies (Karatani, 2012). Wittgenstein used the metaphor of architecture to glorify some thoughts. According to him, architecture sublimates things, and if there is nothing to sublimate then architecture is irrelevant (Senturk, 2003). Derrida also defines architecture as a metaphor of a notion which desires to ground itself as an immortal being (Derrida, 1990).

The discussions on the origin of architecture could be another testament to the phenomenon of being distinguished in architecture. While architectural historians date the origin of architecture to the prehistoric period (Moffet et al., 2003), and discussions on its definition are constructed under two main titles; which are shelter and noble desires (Coussin, 1979). While the need of a shelter describes architecture as a material necessity to protect human beings from nature, defining the origin of architecture through noble desires corresponds to the concept of Architecture with the capital letter "A". According to this theory, Stonehenge (3100 BC) or Gobekli Tepe (10,000-8000 BC) could not be considered as a need for a shelter, and these settlements being interpreted as architecture have always been desired in order to reach the unique and/or sublime within this context since the beginning. Moore is also of the opinion that the origin of architecture is based on abstract ideals and the sense of power. According to him, architecture has a desire to create within itself. Not only memorial buildings, but also houses reflect this desire of creation and power because no one wants a house that only has a functional sufficiency (Moore, 2014).

As previously mentioned, what has been represented as architecture throughout the ages is also another approach to understanding the tendency to be distinguished in architecture. Our aim is not to compile the definition of architecture and architects in chronological order, but to discuss the gentrifying definitions and changing roles of architecture for society throughout history. It is believed that from the Ancient Period to Modernism, architecture has been attributed to the sublime. In the Ancient Period, architecture was defined as the "art of building", which combined crafts and technology, and only originated in religious and/or royal buildings. The architect was the chief craftsman who took charge both in design and construction (Karatani, 2012). Daedalus, who is the first known architect from the Ancient Period, was known as "the cunning worker" or "skillful one". His client was the king, but his boss was God. The architect is also defined as "the one who can build for God" in Egypt; therefore, Senmut the architect of Queen Hatshepsut, was the only one who was not royal, but shared and shared alike with other royals (Kostoff, 1977). In the Roman Period, architecture was one of the most honorable professions, and these architects were not only professionals, but also respectable persons whose professional titles were written on their sepulchral monuments to honor them after they had died (MacDonald, 1977). Wilkinson suggests that architecture was redefined in the Renaissance Period when it was defined as Liberal Art, which is superior to all branches of the arts. Its praxis field also broadened from religious or royal buildings to houses and palaces.

However, once again in the Renaissance Period, this evolvement appeared to represent everydayness as architects only served for the higher classes in the society (Wilkinson, 1977). The distinguished definitions of architecture and positions of architects in society did not change during the 19th century. It is said that many American architects hosted New York's high society in order to create a customer portfolio to work for (Tanyeli, 2000).

Modernism is considered as a breaking point in architecture, not only in the field of discourse, but also in the field of praxis. Modern architecture embraced a wider range of class in society and aimed to get involved in everyday life. Modern architects claimed that not only Gods, royals or the upper- classes, but also the everyday man deserves architecture. Therefore, mass production is proposed to reach the everyday man with the same quality of architectural products. This production process abolished the uniqueness of architectural products, and created an expectation of a paradigm shift in the desire of architecture; hence, the new manifesto of architecture defines more ordinary and analog architectural objects instead of a unique one. However, while the definition and production of architecture shifted from unique to common, the representation of it was still established with distinguished discourses. Architecture was declared as the savior of the new world because it can provide quality living for all social classes and architects were founders of this new order (Le Corbusier, 2015). This declaration can also be interpreted within the context of the psychology and the physical conditions of the post war period. The years Modernism emerged were when the world had just emerged out of World War I. European cities were partially demolished, society became depressed, and they needed hope to survive, and architecture is believed to have supported the creation of new order discourses. These declarations surprised not the objects, but the phenomenon of architecture and architects in society, and evoked the analogy between God and the architect. Therefore, it is believed that the origin of the concept of "Starchitect" also dates back to modern architects. While architects contribute to the society as saviors of the physical environment, they are also represented as missionaries and epicure people. The new architectural style of Modernism also became popular in upper class families. An indissoluble bond between architects and the upper classes was established again. In that period, architects also became a magazine idol for society. It is said that the American upper class families were informed about the divorce of Frank Lloyd Wright through tabloid magazines (Tanyeli, 2000). Despite the definition and discourses of architecture being changed by Modernism, its representation as a distinguished profession still remains.

In the following years of Modern architecture, between 1950-1968, social theories on everyday life also lead to architectural discussions in the area of everydayness. The exhibition of "Architecture without Architects" in MOMA in 1964 (Rudofsk, 1964), was at the fore of the discussion that theorized architecture not as a distinguished object, but as a reflection of nature and everyday life. This theory was a chance to discuss the epistemology of architecture through the phenomenon of ordinariness; however, it only enhanced the studies on vernacular architecture and was unable to influence theoretical discussions.

The relationship between capitalism and architecture also had an impact on rethinking the representation of architecture. The paradigm shift did not happen in real terms in the definition of architecture, but in its representational field. Taking architecture as a commodity supports the representation of architecture as a distinguished object. Architecture still embraced the everyday man, but its discourse was different. Instead of serving everyday man within a definitive architectural quality as modern architecture tended to do, taking architecture as a Meta concluded with developing a new discourse on gentrifying the everyday man. The architectural object has become one of the gentrifying mechanisms that represent its users in a distinguished way in society. It can be said that there is a dialectical way of gentrification in a capitalist way of production through architecture; architecture is represented as a distinguished phenomenon which is capable of moving up the social ladder of its users, and also the architectural taste of high culture gentrifies architectural products. The important thing is the quality and suitability of the architectural object is out of the context of this kind of gentrification process. In other words, the symbolic meaning of architecture (which is established through representation) is dominant in the function or reality of the architectural object.

The capitalist production system also creates new fields to gentrify the phenomenon of architecture. Star architects (who were and will be mentioned as Starchitects in this paper), architectural award systems, advertising works of architectural firms, and books on the life of Starchitects help to dignify architecture, architectural objects, and also architects. Even cities have commercialized their representation with the works of Starchitects. As an example of that, Frank Gehry's Guggenheim Museum Bilbao is not only a unique architectural product, but also the landmark of the city, which also boosted the tourism economy of Bilbao. In the contemporary world, not only architecture, but also architects are represented by the capital letter "A". Although, Starchitects neither represent the architectural design process of the common nor the millions of people that work as an architect yet still, architecture and architects are generally represented by them and their works (mostly by architectural institutions which will be discussed in the next chapter). This shows us that even the roles of architects have changed throughout the ages, but their representation as distinguished identities has not. Once, they were the one after the King of Egypt, then they were honorable persons to build for the nobles in the Renaissance, and later they became the saviors of the world and the founder of the new world in Modernism, and then stars, who can even affect cities' tourist attractions in the contemporary world.

This is also evident that, even its context, definitions, users, and functions have changed throughout ages; architecture has always been nothing but a flashy and prestigious phenomenon. In the end, if we consider architecture "with the capital letter A", its representational field has always been grounded on the idea of distinguishment. The changing roles and definitions bring its representation in compliance with the Zeitgeist, but always in a gentrifying way.

As mentioned above, the phenomenon of being distinguished in architecture has always been supported by architectural and societal institutions. While every age and period has its own representation mechanism to gentrify the phenomenon of architecture, this paper emphasizes the representation established through the practice of architectural institutions. These institutions will be discussed with emphasis on the Pritzker Prize in the next section.

Practices of Architectural Institutions as Gentrifying Mechanisms

Architectural institution, including architectural schools, periodicals, social media, and award systems in this study, generate the epistemology of architecture within the definitive context of their practices. The problematic issue in terms of this generation is, it is believed that while every institutional practice has its own mechanisms to discuss or guide architectural knowledge, either intentionally or not, they also turn it into a distinguished phenomenon. The aim of this section is to discuss the practices of architectural institutions as gentrifying mechanisms that boost the representation of being distinguished in architecture with the emphasis on The Pritzker Prize.

Architectural schools such as École des Beaux-Arts and Bauhaus could be considered as examples of these institutions that gentrify the phenomenon of architecture and its representation. However, the aim of these schools was not to declare architecture as a distinguished phenomenon in itself. They defined an architectural movement and constituted knowledge of it, and of course, they were not the only architectural movements to define architectural education. However, their educational methods, aims, and discourses could be exemplified as a gentrifying mechanism in architecture.

While France was declared as the center of intellectual arts and high culture in the 17th century, École des Beaux-Arts was founded as the Royal Academy of Architecture (*Académie Royale d'Architecture*) in 1671, Paris (Britannica, 2017). It is said that the idea of the nation state in France led to the main discussions on ancient and modern in the 17th century. Architecture was also taken as the main topic of these discussions, and the power elites believed that it represented the integrity of the representative values of a nation such as culture, religion, power, and language. Therefore, academics of the Beaux-Arts acted as advisors of the government for national architectural style and buildings in France (Civelek, 2003; Cret, 1941). This movement affected architectural education not only in France, but also in other parts of the world. The French ideals of architecture were brought to America by architects who had graduated from Beaux-Arts, and the neo-classical movement became a part of architectural education in America at the beginning of the 19th century. This is also evident that an architectural school could be both a gentrifying mechanism that dignifies the phenomenon of architecture, and also a mediator to gentrify a nation. Beside this, the relationship between the high class and architecture also can be seen in the foundation phase of the academy. While École des Beaux-Arts proposed a neo-classical style for architecture and architectural education, Bauhaus proposed the opposite; Modern architecture. As already mentioned, Modern architecture declared itself as the founder of

the New World Order, and Bauhaus was the only school of Modernism in architecture which was founded in 1919, Germany. Gropius, the founder of the school, suggested a new architectural style, which was unrobed from all historicist approaches. Architecture should be designed with minimal approaches, which also supports mass production (Gropius, 2002). Modern architecture as the new architectural style of the world, defined architecture; is designed by architects down to the last detail. Therefore, the curriculum of Bauhaus included not only architecture, but also sculpture, painting, and furniture design because architects should be competent persons and this attempt also generated the representations of architects in society. Like Beaux-Arts, Bauhaus also affected architectural education in the world, and defined a new era for the representation of architecture. This definition was based on the idea of architecture as the founder of modern man, which also contained a gentrifying discourse.

Architectural periodicals are another gentrifying mechanism that enhance the representation of architecture as a distinguish phenomenon. The method or criteria of publishing based on the idea of choosing something among others, which had a gentrifying mechanism in itself. Hence, an architectural project and/or an article that is published in an architectural periodical, has already been distinguished among equivalents. Architectural websites, which can be considered as architectural periodicals in the contemporary world, also have a similar process with published periodicals, and rank among websites having been approved as the best promotion for both an architectural project and for architects. Architectural social media such as forums and correspondence columns also have control over the current trends in architecture. The critiques and expectations of the audience have an effect on the discussions, and this process also highlights certain architectural projects and architects while precluding others.

Architectural award mechanisms, as the main focus of this study, are considered one of the most effective means to gentrify architecture. Being awarded corresponds to being distinguished and honored among others, not only for architecture, but also in every area. In other words, award mechanisms define a representation which is based on selectness. In the field of architecture, award mechanisms appear in architectural competitions, institutional awards such as RIBA International Prize, The American Architecture Prize, The Pritzker Prize etc., and even at architectural websites such as Archdaily and Architizer, which announce various buildings as “the best building of the year”.

However, the Pritzker Prize has become differentiated from others; hence, it is accepted as the “the Nobel Prize of Architecture” and also the highest honor in architecture. The Hyatt Foundation, which was established by Jay A. Pritzker and Cindy Pritzker, created The Pritzker Architecture Prize in 1979, and since then they have honored an architect every year for his/her contribution to the profession of architecture. The family’s interest in architecture has been built through their hotel chains around the world. According to Jay A. Pritzker, architecture should be encouraged as a profession that inspires a great creativity; however, architecture has not even been included in the Nobel Prize. Hence, they created an international award for architecture, which is represented as the Noble award in architecture (Mun-Delsalle, 2016).

The Hyatt Institution declared the aim of the Pritzker Prize as “to honor a living architect or architects whose work demonstrates a combination of those qualities of talent, vision, and commitment, which has produced consistent and significant contributions to humanity and the built environment through the art of architecture”. The jury members, include experts in different fields, such as architecture, education, art, culture, business, and publishing, and range from five to nine members. It aims to redress the balance between old and new members; therefore, a professional can be a jury member for many years (The Pritzker Prize, 2017).

The jury is constituted by the Hyatt Institution, and the laureates are decided by the jury and announced at the beginning of every year. The system is not based on a nominating process, and architects cannot nominate themselves for the prize; therefore, the Pritzker Prize differentiates itself from other architectural competitions and international architectural awards. Due to its representation as “the highest honor in architecture”, the winner of the award and his/her architectural works become predominant and inevitably distinguished in architectural communities throughout the world. However, the aim of this study is not to define its effects on gentrification of architectural representation, but to discuss its gentrifying methods that generate the phenomenon of being distinguished in architecture through architectural awards. Therefore, the jury citations were used as references to interpret their gentrifying expressions (if any) while honoring and announcing an architect. To achieve this aim, descriptive phrases defining architecture in the Pritzker jury citation texts for laureates will be analyzed according to years, winners, and phrases, defining architecture in jury citations.

The Interpretation of Pritzker Jury Citation Phrases

The descriptive phrases defining architecture in the Pritzker jury citation texts are examined according to their gentrifying genres on architects, architectural objects, and contributions to the profession. The descriptive phrases and/or adjective clauses have been chosen according to how they define an honored architecture and/or architect. In this section, we would like to present the epitomic phrases of the Pritzker jury citation texts in the years that generated the phenomenon of being distinguished in architecture, and/or architecture as a distinguished phenomenon.

Before proceeding with the special emphasis on architectural phrases in the jury citation text, we would like to point out to literary and poetic expressions of the jury citations. These expressions are not only gentrifying, but also aestheticizing. Here are some selected examples of them included as in the following;

To honor Rafael Moneo (the winner of 1996 Pritzker Prize) and Luis Barragan (the winner of 1980 Pritzker Prize);

“José Rafael Moneo is above all an architect of tremendous range.”¹

¹ The Pritzker Architecture Prize, jury-citation, 1996. Last Access; 07.05.2017 <http://www.pritzkerprize.com/1996/jury-citation>

“We are honoring Luis Barragán for his commitment to architecture as a sublime act of the poetic imagination.”²

Defining Christian de Portzamparc’s architecture (the winner of 1994 Pritzker Prize) as;

“It is a lyrical architecture that takes great risks and evokes excitement from its audience.”

“Recognizing the talent of a powerful poet of forms and creator of eloquent spaces, who is aware of the past, but true to himself and his time,”³

Defining the architecture of Alvaro Siza (the winner of 1992 Pritzker Prize) as;

“The architecture of Alvaro Siza is a joy to the senses and uplifts the spirit.”⁴

The material choice of Sverre Fehn (the winner of 1997 Pritzker Prize) was phrases as;

“His eloquence with materials is easily matched by his poetic command of words”⁵

As it is mentioned above, gentrifying statements can also be interpreted according to the phrases that honor architects and their skills and also the phrases that honor architectural products.

Phrases that Honor the Awarded Architects

To announce Kenzo Tange (the winner of 1987 Pritzker Prize);

“Given talent, energy, and a sufficiently long career, one may pass from being a breaker of new ground to becoming a classic.”

“leading theoretician”

“inspiring teacher”⁶

To announce Aldo Rossi (the winner of 1990 Pritzker Prize)

“Words as well as drawings and buildings have distinguished him as one of the great architects.”⁷

² The Pritzker Architecture Prize, jury-citation, 1980. Last Access; 07.05.2017
<http://www.pritzkerprize.com/1980/jury-citation>

³ The Pritzker Architecture Prize, jury-citation, 1994. Last Access; 07.05.2017
<http://www.pritzkerprize.com/1994/jury-citation>

⁴ The Pritzker Architecture Prize, jury-citation, 1992. Last Access; 07.05.2017
<http://www.pritzkerprize.com/1992/jury-citation>

⁵ The Pritzker Architecture Prize, jury-citation, 1997. Last Access; 07.05.2017
<http://www.pritzkerprize.com/1997/jury-citation>

⁶ The Pritzker Architecture Prize, jury-citation, 1987. Last Access; 07.05.2017
<http://www.pritzkerprize.com/1987/jury-citation>

To announce Christian de Portzamparc's (the winner of 1994 Pritzker Prize);

"He is a gifted composer using space, structure, texture, form, light and color all shaped by his personal vision."⁸

To announce Zaha Hadid (the winner of 2004 Pritzker Prize);

"Her path to worldwide recognition has been a heroic struggle as she inexorably rose to the highest ranks of the profession."

"Discouraged, but undaunted..."

"One of the great architects at the dawning of the twenty-first century"⁹

To announce Peter Zumthor (the winner of 2009 Pritzker Prize);

"Peter Zumthor is a master architect admired by his colleagues around the world for work that is focused, uncompromising and exceptionally determined."¹⁰

To announce Toyo Ito (the winner of 2013 Pritzker Prize);

"A professional of unique talent..."

"He is a true master who produces oxygen rather than just consumes it."

"Toyo Ito is a creator of timeless buildings"¹¹

To announce Shigeru Ban (the winner of 2014 Pritzker Prize);

"He is an outstanding architect"¹²

To announce Ramón Vilalta, Rafael Aranda and Carme Pigem's (the winner of 2017 Pritzker Prize)

"They help us to see, in a most beautiful and poetic way, ... our roots firmly in place and our arms outstretched to the rest of the world."¹³

⁷ The Pritzker Architecture Prize, jury-citation, 1990. Last Access; 07.05.2017
<http://www.pritzkerprize.com/1990/jury-citation>

⁸ The Pritzker Architecture Prize, jury-citation, 1994. Last Access; 07.05.2017
<http://www.pritzkerprize.com/1994/jury-citation>

⁹ The Pritzker Architecture Prize, jury-citation, 2004. Last Access; 07.05.2017
<http://www.pritzkerprize.com/2004/jury-citation>

¹⁰ The Pritzker Architecture Prize, jury-citation, 2009. Last Access; 07.05.2017
<http://www.pritzkerprize.com/2009/jury-citation>

¹¹ The Pritzker Architecture Prize, jury-citation, 2013. Last Access; 07.05.2017
<http://www.pritzkerprize.com/2013/jury-citation>

¹² The Pritzker Architecture Prize, jury-citation, 2014. Last Access; 07.05.2017
<http://www.pritzkerprize.com/2014/jury-citation>

¹³ The Pritzker Architecture Prize, jury-citation, 2017. Last Access; 07.05.2017
<http://www.pritzkerprize.com/2017/jury-citation>

Phrases that Honor the Architectural Products of Awarded Architects

To define Kenzo Tange's (the winner of 1987 Pritzker Prize) Yoyogi National Gymnasium;

"His stadiums for the Olympic Games held in Tokyo in 1964 are often described as among the most beautiful structures built in the twentieth century... that lift our hearts."¹⁴

To define Frank Gehry's (the winner of 1989 Pritzker Prize) works;

"Gehry's work is a highly refined, sophisticated and adventurous aesthetic that emphasizes the art of architecture."¹⁵

To define Renzo Piano's (the winner of 1998 Pritzker Prize) works;

"Renzo Piano's architecture reflects that rare melding of art, architecture, and engineering in a truly remarkable synthesis."¹⁶

To define Glenn Murcutt's (the winner of 2002 Pritzker Prize) houses;

"... his houses are unique, satisfying solutions."¹⁷

To define Jørn Utzon's (the winner of 2003 Pritzker Prize) Sydney Opera House;

It is one of the great iconic buildings of the 20th century, an image of great beauty... "¹⁸

To define Eduardo Souta de Moura's (the winner of 2011 Pritzker Prize) works;

"His buildings have a unique ability to convey seemingly conflicting characteristics— power and modesty, bravado and subtlety, bold public authority and sense of intimacy."¹⁹

To define Wang Shu's (the winner of 2012 Pritzker Prize) works and The History Museum;

¹⁴ The Pritzker Architecture Prize, jury-citation, 1987. Last Access; 07.05.2017
<http://www.pritzkerprize.com/1987/jury-citation>

¹⁵ The Pritzker Architecture Prize, jury-citation, 1989. Last Access; 07.05.2017
<http://www.pritzkerprize.com/1989/jury-citation>

¹⁶ The Pritzker Architecture Prize, jury-citation, 1998. Last Access; 07.05.2017
<http://www.pritzkerprize.com/1998/jury-citation>

¹⁷ The Pritzker Architecture Prize, jury-citation, 2002. Last Access; 07.05.2017
<http://www.pritzkerprize.com/2002/jury-citation>

¹⁸ The Pritzker Architecture Prize, jury-citation, 2003. Last Access; 07.05.2017
<http://www.pritzkerprize.com/2003/jury-citation>

¹⁹ The Pritzker Architecture Prize, jury-citation, 2011. Last Access; 07.05.2017
<http://www.pritzkerprize.com/2011/jury-citation>

“His buildings have the unique ability to evoke the past ... The History Museum at Ningbo is one of those unique buildings ...”²⁰

To define Ramón Vilalta, Rafael Aranda and Carme Pigem’s (the winner of 2017 Pritzker Prize) works;

“Their works admirably and poetically fulfill the traditional requirements of architecture for physical and spatial beauty ...”²¹

The Adjectives that Define Architects and/or Architectural Products

Another finding of the case is the adjectives that are preferred to define an architect and/or an architectural product. The adjectives such as “unique” which is the most preferred adjective in citation texts, “outstanding”, “vigorous”, “original”, “beautiful”, “distinguished”, “superb”, “exciting”, “satisfying”, “audacious”, “gifted”, “expressive”, and “excellent”, are not the kind of conventional definitive adjectives to define an architectural object or even an architect due to their subjective and exaggerated meanings. It is not clear in the citation texts what those adjective or phrases define.

It is also taken into consideration that the Pritzker Prize is an award to honor architects; therefore, the expression could be differentiating from any other architectural texts of evaluation. However, the Pritzker Prize has an impact on architectural discussions and implicitly on epistemology of architecture, and these adjectives inherently qualify the phenomenon of architecture. Architectural periodicals and social media platforms, which are followed by architects and architecture students from around the world, publish special issues for Pritzker Prizes. Hence, the critiques concerning the representation and epistemology of architecture constructed as a distinguished phenomenon are also enhanced by the Pritzker Prize.

Conclusions

This paper aimed to discuss the phenomenon of being distinguished in architecture through architectural institutions and the Pritzker Prize. It can be proposed that representation of architecture, which is taken as architecture with the capital letter “A” in this paper, is constructed through the idea of being unique and distinguished throughout the ages. Architectural institutions such as schools, periodicals, or award systems also enhance the phenomenon of being distinguished in architecture whether advertently or not, in their definitive context with differentiating methods.

The relationship between architectural products and/or architectural profession and the high class of society has also established this representation,

²⁰ The Pritzker Architecture Prize, jury-citation, 2012. Last Access; 07.05.2017
<http://www.pritzkerprize.com/2012/jury-citation>

²¹ The Pritzker Architecture Prize, jury-citation, 2017. Last Access; 07.05.2017
<http://www.pritzkerprize.com/2017/jury-citation>

and this process gentrifies architects too... From the relationship between kings and architects to the concept of Starchitect, architects are considered as distinguished persons. There has never been any attempt to call a professional a “star” in any profession, except in the movie industry. This can be interpreted as the analogy between God and the architect evolving into stars and architects.

In the case of the Pritzker Prize, as well as the gentrifying statements of jury citation texts to honor an architect, the social position of the Pritzker family should also be taken into consideration. The Pritzker family has been on the list of America’s Richest Families. This has been published in the Forbes Magazine since 1982 (Britannica, 2016), and the prize which is given by the family has also been announced as the “highest honor in architecture”. This relationship also helps to describe the field of architecture in relation to the high culture of today as it has been throughout the ages, and defines architecture as a distinguished phenomenon while at the same time turns architects into stars.

In the light of these thoughts, it could be said that the ontology of architecture is based on the idea of being unique and distinguished. And architectural institutions also help to promote this affinity. However, this tendency also established the epistemology of architecture. If the field of architectural knowledge has been generated within the idea of distinction, how can we discuss being ordinary in architecture, which is problematized as a succeeding discussion of this paper? In terms of the contemporary world of architecture, it is known that the Starchitects and their architectural works do not correspond to a considerable part of the profession; however, the phenomenon of architecture is mostly represented by them. In the present case, it could be interpreted as the epistemology of architecture is also being (and of course not only) generated by the representation of architecture. To conclude with a question; if being represented annihilates being ordinary, there is a paradoxical relationship between being distinguished and ordinary. Hence, is it possible to discuss being ordinary in architecture without gentrifying it?

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