

Creating Cutting Edge Architecture

Atelier 'Architecture Bruno Ericum is an international architecture practice based in Belgium. We invited Bruno himself, who has been awarded Architect of the Year for Belgium – 2017 in our renowned Global Excellence Awards, to tell us more.

Atelier 'Architecture Bruno Ericum draws on more than 32 years of experience to work in several fields such as residences, office and commercial buildings, as well as museums and galleries. Bruno discusses the practice's focus on innovation and how it works to create unique spaces that meet the needs of its clients.

"My colleagues and I have turned our Brussels workshop into a type of laboratory, where we work through different solutions, before taking the final ones to building sites in a dozen or so countries throughout the world. Each time, we compare in particular the benefits of different woods, stones as well as smooth and granular concrete.

"In Corsica, for example, we added luff, dust from some Bonifacio stone, to a mixture of sand, water and stone, so that the resulting colour of the concrete would blend into the surrounding nature. We also poured this concrete into forms fitted with planks of wood of different thicknesses. This resulted in a grooved effect and also created flat horizontal parts where vegetation debris and marine sediments could be deposited.

"This process gave the impression that the material was living, stamped with a certain 'dirtiness' reflecting the rocks encompassing this enormous structure. No more talk of 'ageing' or 'deteriorating', instead 'patina' and 'authenticity'. Put simply, the material creates an ode to time passing."

It is this unique process that defines the firm. Bruno explains how it evolved thanks to his observations on the architecture space.

"Personally, over my career I have always paid a lot of attention to detail so that I can make the most of techniques available and really bring out proportions. Alongside this, there is something else that has recently begun to influence my approach, as I have realised that after five or ten years, many modern constructions that were initially pristine lose their brilliance. To combat this, I decided to turn more and more to materials that wouldn't suffer the ravages of time, but would instead take on a patina."

Overall, it is Bruno's passion for architecture that has driven the firm to the success it enjoys today, and this will remain its ongoing focus moving forward as he highlights in his concluding comments.

"Fundamentally, my architecture practice stems from an unconditional love for the modernist movement. To my mind, architecture is about freeing oneself from all forms of decoration, including the facing of facades and walls - notably cement works- so that we can continue working unconstrained and creating stunning projects."

