



Best Tall Buildings

A Global Overview of 2013 Skyscrapers



CTBUH Awards



Antony Wood, Steven Henry & Daniel Safarik

CTBUH Awards

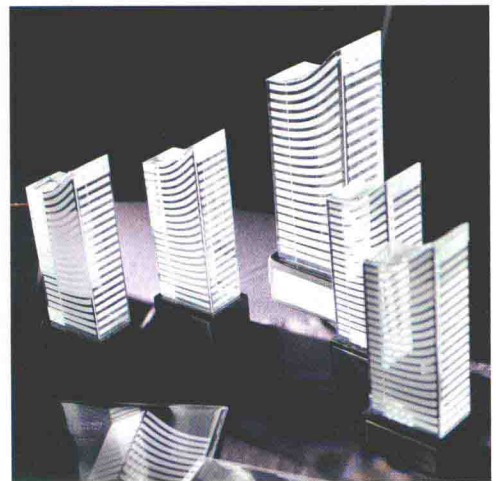
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Jeanne Gang, 2013 Awards Jury Chair

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Yet what resonated most for me was that, for many cities, tall buildings have become the “new normal.” Thousands of high-rise buildings already exist and form the urban context in hundreds of cities worldwide. There are 490 new buildings scaling 200 meters or higher currently under construction around the world, with 11 over 500 meters in height. Tall buildings are no longer rare exceptions to the rule; they are becoming the preferred modality of the city.

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These and other research projects are vital to the continued progress of the tall building with regard to its sustainability and efficiency as well as its construction and operation. They epitomize the way innovative technologies work together to change our perception of what is possible within this typology and to inspire future invention.

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Contents

Foreword	6
Introduction	8
CTBUH Best Tall Building Awards Criteria	25

Best Tall Building Americas

Winner:

The Bow, <i>Calgary</i>	28
-------------------------	----

Finalists:

Devon Energy Center, <i>Oklahoma City</i>	34
Tree House Residence Hall, <i>Boston</i>	38

Nominees:

1214 Fifth Avenue, <i>New York</i>	42
Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital, <i>Chicago</i>	44
LOVFT, <i>Santa Catarina</i>	46
Mercedes House, <i>New York</i>	48
Trump International Hotel & Tower, <i>Toronto</i>	50
Coast at Lakeshore East, <i>Chicago</i>	52
Helicon, <i>San Pedro Garza García</i>	52
Pacifica Honolulu, <i>Honolulu</i>	53
Reforma 342, <i>Mexico City</i>	53
Rush University Medical Center Hospital, <i>Chicago</i>	54
Torre Begonias, <i>Lima</i>	54
Torre Paseo Colón 1, <i>San José</i>	55

Best Tall Building Asia & Australasia

Winner:

CCTV Headquarters, <i>Beijing</i>	58
-----------------------------------	----

Finalists:

C&D International Tower, <i>Xiamen</i>	64
PARKROYAL on Pickering, <i>Singapore</i>	68
Pearl River Tower, <i>Guangzhou</i>	72
Sliced Porosity Block, <i>Chengdu</i>	76

Nominees:

Brookfield Place, <i>Perth</i>	80
Hangzhou Civic Center, <i>Hangzhou</i>	82
Hysan Place, <i>Hong Kong</i>	84
International Finance Centre, <i>Seoul</i>	86
I Tower, <i>Incheon</i>	88
Japan Post Tower, <i>Tokyo</i>	90
NBF Osaki Building, <i>Tokyo</i>	92
Shenzhen Stock Exchange, <i>Shenzhen</i>	94
Shibuya Hikarie, <i>Tokyo</i>	96
Soul, <i>Gold Coast</i>	98
The Ellipse 360, <i>New Taipei City</i>	100
Zhengzhou Greenland Plaza, <i>Zhengzhou</i>	102
Alamanda Office Tower, <i>Jakarta</i>	104
ARK Hills Sengokuyama Mori Tower, <i>Tokyo</i>	104
City Tower Kobe Sannomiya, <i>Kobe</i>	105
Dolphin Plaza, <i>Hanoi</i>	105
Huarun Tower, <i>Chengdu</i>	106
Net Metropolis, <i>Manila</i>	106
Pyne, <i>Bangkok</i>	107
Reflection Jomtien Beach, <i>Pattaya</i>	107
Shenzhen Kerry Plaza Phase II, <i>Shenzhen</i>	108
Yixing Dongjiu, <i>Yixing</i>	108
Yokohama Mitsui Building, <i>Yokohama</i>	109

Best Tall Building Europe

Winner:

The Shard, <i>London</i>	112
--------------------------	-----

Finalists:

ADAC Headquarters, <i>Munich</i>	118
New Babylon, <i>The Hague</i>	122
Tour Total, <i>Berlin</i>	126

Nominees:

Mercury City, <i>Moscow</i>	130
Unicredit Tower, <i>Milan</i>	132
No. 1 Great Marlborough Street, <i>Manchester</i>	134
Torre Unipol, <i>Bologna</i>	134
Varyap Meridian Block A, <i>Istanbul</i>	135

Best Tall Building Middle East & Africa**Winner:**

Sowwah Square, <i>Abu Dhabi</i>	138
---------------------------------	-----

Finalists:

6 Remez Tower, <i>Tel Aviv</i>	144
Gate Towers, <i>Abu Dhabi</i>	148

Nominees:

JW Marriott Marquis, <i>Dubai</i>	152
Diplomat Commercial Office Tower, <i>Manama</i>	154
Faire Tower, <i>Ramat-Gan</i>	154
Frishman 46, <i>Tel Aviv</i>	155

10 Year & Innovation Awards**10 Year Award Winner:**

30 St Mary Axe, <i>London</i>	158
-------------------------------	-----

Innovation Award Winners:

BSB Prefabricated Construction Method	164
KONE UltraRope	168

Innovation Award Finalists:

Megatruss Seismic Isolation Structure	172
Precast Concrete Façade	176
Rocker Façade Support System	180

Lifetime Achievement Awards

Lynn S. Beedle Award, <i>Henry N. Cobb</i>	186
Fazlur R. Khan Medal, <i>Clyde N. Baker, Jr.</i>	192
CTBUH 2013 Fellows	198

Awards & CTBUH Information

CTBUH 2013 Awards Jury	199
Review of Last Year's CTBUH 2012 Awards	200
Overview of All Past Winners	206
CTBUH Height Criteria	208
100 Tallest Buildings in the World	211

Index

Index of Buildings	216
Index of Companies	217
Image Credits	220
CTBUH Organizational Structure & Members	222

CTBUH Awards

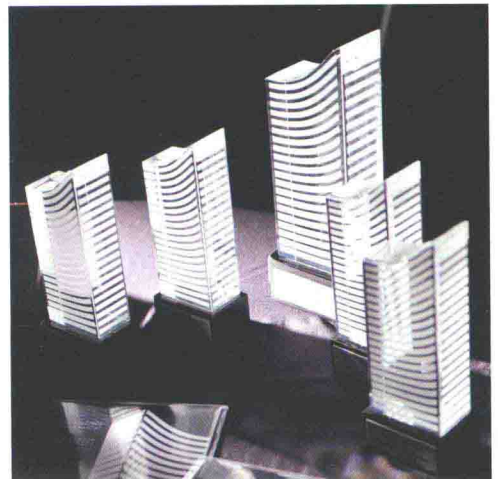
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Contents

Foreword	6
Introduction	8
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-------------------------	----

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Index

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Introduction

Antony Wood, *CTBUH Executive Director*

Abu Dhabi, Beijing, Calgary, London. I wonder if, even ten years ago, we'd have predicted that the Best Tall Buildings in the World completed in 2013 would be based in those four cities, as opposed to the New Yorks, Dubais, or Shanghais of the world, where the center of gravity of tall buildings – certainly in terms of numbers – seems to have been focused.

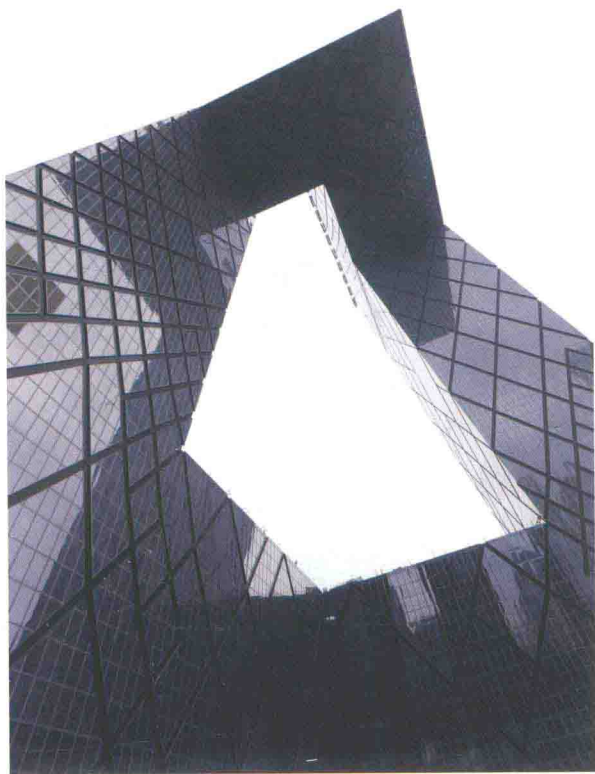
This is, of course, further evidence of the biggest trend that has been happening in tall buildings over the past

couple of decades; the simultaneous rise of skyscraper cities the world over. No longer concentrated in the US, or even Asia, we are seeing the vertical rise of cities on every continent and in virtually every region globally – increasingly so now, as the world starts to rebound from the financial crisis of five years ago.

Less apparent, but no less interesting, is the fact that, if we seek quality or innovation in tall building design and engineering – as is obviously the case with this book and the awards program that supports it – then it is often these “second-tier” vertical cities that hold the best examples, possibly enabled by their relative distance from the heated pace of construction in the megacities.

We believe that the four 2013 winning regional projects as profiled in these pages certainly do exhibit high levels of quality and innovation, but in different ways. The Bow in Calgary not only applies a steel diagrid to a curved skyscraper for the first time in North America; the building plan curves concavely into the predominant sun direction, symbolically and physically embracing the sun into the building, when the majority of buildings strive to block it out. Once inside, the building puts this solar gain to good use, especially during the cold northern winters, through a series of façade atria that act simultaneously as buffer zones and depositories for the excess heat built up in the office spaces beyond. The inclusion of three sky gardens within this façade atrium zone, and the embrace of a large public plaza at the ground plane created by the curve of the building, also assists with the social sustainability of the project.





Opposite: Americas winner The Bow, Calgary. The concave form is supported by a diagrid system and encloses façade atria and sky gardens.

Left: Asia & Australasia winner CCTV Headquarters, Beijing. A technically daring form creates a dramatic cantilever, helping make the CCTV Building an icon years before it actually completed construction.

By providing shared, semi-recreational spaces at height, where a sense of building community can develop, as well as a strong interface at the ground floor, where the public and building community meet, The Bow takes a bold step in a direction most tall buildings fail to address.

Some readers may be surprised to see the CCTV Building in Beijing winning the Asia & Australasia award this year. The building – already topped out and clad in 2008 – had such an iconic presence during the Beijing Olympics that many thought it complete several years ago. The reality, however, is that the building only became occupied and operational – an important part of the criteria for “completion” as defined by the CTBUH (see page 210) – in 2012, hence its inclusion in the awards this year. Unlike The Bow, where the innovations are primarily in environmental approach, the main innovations of CCTV are in form and internal planning. Though the building image has already been consumed millions of times and replicated on the pages of books,

journals, and in city branding since it was first proposed almost a decade ago, I ask you to cast your mind back to the first time you saw the proposition of this looping, cantilevering “anti-skyscraper” (as the architect intended it initially). Has a form as stylistically simple, and yet technically daring as this ever been attempted before? Though we have, by now, grown somewhat desensitized to that form due to its extensive media coverage, the jury felt it important to recognize the achievements of the building, and the positive impact it has already had on Beijing. Beyond form, the building program is amazingly complex, yet skillfully contained, with a “public loop” route through the building that takes visitors direct from the subway, up past television studios and associated facilities, to the spectacular observation deck with views out over the city, and down through glass apertures in the floor to the public plaza below. Speaking personally, I can say that visiting the CCTV Building is an amazing experience.

The Shard in London is, in many ways, no less remarkable than CCTV – not least in the negotiation of the considerable planning hurdles its creators overcame to make a supertall (300 meter+) building possible in such a historic city as London. The innovations in this beautiful column of glass include the clever accommodation of the differing physical requirements of its program within the tapering form: the smaller floor plates support residential and hotel programming in the top half, while larger floor plates support offices in the lower half. The project is also remarkable for its integration with, and rejuvenation of, the major transport