

1st european collective housing award



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**1st european collective
housing award
2024**

Euskadiko Arkitektura
Institutua
EAI

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arc en rêve
centre d'architecture

schlor – schöner leben ohne raiffeisen, vienna, austria

Gabu Heindl, Elena Mali, Lisa Schönböck,
Hannah Niemand, Stana Marjanovic, Fabian Liszt,
Petko Grablij, Maura Schmitt, Anne Altmeyer,
Sebastian Christiansen & Lucas Bogunovic



pre-existing condition

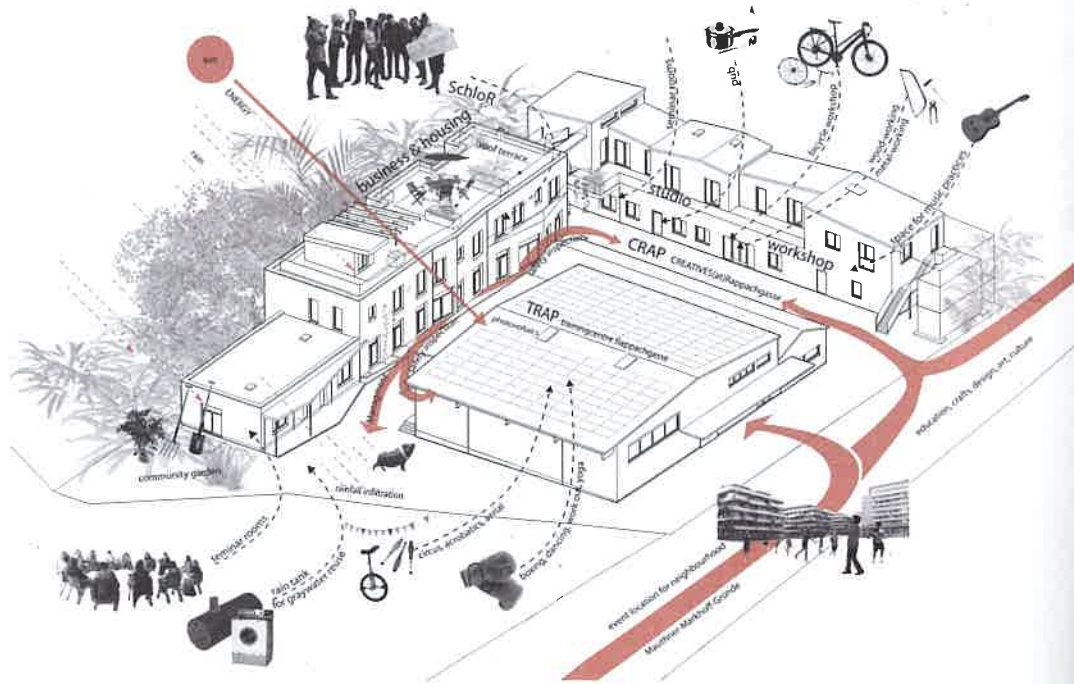
renovation



1st european collective housing award



section + elevation II



self-organised collective housing and production



preamble

Pablo García Astrain

5 The European Collective Housing Award initiative was launched in 2023 by the Basque Government's Directorate for Housing, Land and Architecture, as part of its commitment to promoting collective housing as a distinctive feature of European identity and the European welfare state.

At a time when access to affordable housing is becoming increasingly difficult across Europe, it is important to acknowledge and remember that Europe has a long tradition of collective housing. In particular, there is a certain history of public housing provision, as well as a "housing culture" and even a specific "architectural housing culture", that are unique to this continent; they make a decisive contribution – with all the richness of their local variations – when it comes to shaping the European city and supporting people's life plans.

From the outset, this competition was conceived as a truly European project, the result of cross-border collaboration between two neighbouring architecture centres with a clear continental focus. Following the success of this first edition – which received 171 entries, from nineteen countries – the European Collective Housing Award is set to become, as it continues to grow, a real living observatory of collective housing in Europe.

Pablo García Astrain
director of Housing, Land
& Architecture, Basque
Government

foreword

Fabrizio Gallanti
José Ángel Medina Murua

It was in San Sebastián, amid informal conversations in January 2023, that Pablo García Astrain – director of Housing, Land and Architecture of the Basque Government – first floated the idea that arc en rêve centre d'architecture (Bordeaux, France) and the Euskadiko Arkitektura Institutua/EAI (San Sebastián, Spain) could work together on the creation of a new award, to celebrate the design and production of collective housing across Europe.

In May 2024, again in San Sebastián, the award's jury (presided over by Anne Lacaton) announced its first two laureates.

The speed with which this initiative was set in motion, and the efficacy of its execution – 171 projects from nineteen European countries were submitted and thoroughly analysed – can be explained by considering at least three reasons.

The first is rather straightforward: the teams from our institutions felt a strong affinity with each other, which eased their collaboration. Both institutions are somewhat nimble; we take pride in being peripheral to the two countries' self-proclaimed centres of cultural production around architecture (i.e. Paris and either Barcelona or Madrid), and we are passionate about the field. In particular, we pursue the idea that architecture should be understood as characteristic of the society that we live in; it is a reflection, and, in its best expressions, a solution. This is why we actively seek to establish exchanges with non-specialised audiences: for us, architecture is a public and collective practice.

The second reason is more mundane: quite simply, it has been nice to work together, and so enjoyable to meet up in Bordeaux and San Sebastián. The process has been intense, but we had the pleasure of discussing and sharing, and we learned so much from each other's knowledge and skills. We realised, despite the differences in our respective backgrounds, that there is a whole world of opportunities to explore, across borders of all kinds.

The third is a matter of urgency and relevance, which sparked our passion for creating this award: we were aware that the conditions of collective housing in Europe – and all

8 around the globe – were returning to the centre of the political and social discussion, having been sidelined for too long. We believe that an award with a strong ambition can make a positive contribution to the debates about the role of architectural design, housing policies and how dwellings are produced. Ultimately, initiatives like this can also have an impact on the demands expressed by society. How can we maximise equal access to dignified living spaces? How can we provide buildings that take into account issues of ecology and sustainability? Can we imagine innovative ways of living together, eschewing the obsolete models that are so often imposed by the market? Are houses utilities or financial assets? Can offices and factories be turned into homes? These were some of the immediate questions that came up, often during passionate debates, thus confirming our idea that such an award was needed.

In the present cultural landscape, there are numerous architectural awards being given out. Some of them already deal with social housing, while others are increasingly becoming commercial endeavours: that is, prizes with bombastic names, in which architects must pay hefty fees to participate. Therefore, we felt the urge to expand the scope of our actions.

Assisted by our advisory committee – composed of Bernard Blanc, Aurora Fernández Per, Carmen Imbernón and Vittorio Magnago Lampugnani – a series of key decisions laid the foundations for the award. It would encompass the whole of Europe, so entries were accepted from all 46 countries that are currently members of the Council of Europe.

The award celebrates collective housing, i.e. interventions that group together multiple dwelling units, sharing communal spaces and facilities. This can be just a staircase and a foyer, or a more ambitious programme.

No distinctions have been made between public and private initiatives, no benchmarks in price have been introduced, and nor are there any sub-divisions of housing type (social, affordable, cooperative, subsidised). Each jury must select the finalists and winners, not only on the

9 architectural merits of the proposals, but also considering issues of their financial setup and governance. Essentially, a high-end complex in a privileged spot might compete against a frugal intervention in an underdeveloped area. The award seeks to highlight the broad spectrum of possibilities, painting a comprehensive picture of housing in Europe today, with a view to tomorrow.

There are only two main categories for the award: new buildings and the renovation of pre-existing structures. We wanted each jury to have enough space and scope to make their decision.

Entering the selection is free and straightforward: participants are not tasked with complex submission procedures, because we hope to receive as many projects as possible. This is also why the online platform (for uploading and evaluating entries) was custom-designed for ease of use and simplicity. Furthermore, entries can be proposed by people other than architects; different stakeholders, such as public administrations, citizens' organisations and private developers are also encouraged to submit projects.

All of the participating institutions and experts – arc en rêve centre d'architecture, the Euskadiko Arkitektura Institutua, representatives of the Basque Government and the advisory committee – understood the importance of the jury in such initiatives. We thus came up with a formula for selecting the jury members, who would duly bring their expertise and multiple angles of approach. It was agreed that each jury would consist of five members, in line with our set of criteria. Firstly, the president must be an architect of international renown who has actively engaged with issues of housing; there must be another architect from outside of Europe, as we considered that our identity has evolved (and continues to do so) in relation to other contexts and cultures; thirdly, a scholar must feature, namely an academic who has worked on issues of domesticity or urban conditions, operating in disciplines other than architecture; there must also be a policymaker, i.e. someone involved in the management,

administrative and political decision-making processes around housing production; finally, we stipulated that the jury must include a representative of the residents themselves, to speak up for how people actually use their living places.

With this formula in mind, we put together the award's first jury. It was composed of architect Anne Lacaton, from the Paris-based agency Lacaton & Vassal; architect Fernanda Canales, from Mexico City; philosopher Emanuele Coccia; architect and urbanist Kristiaan Borret, the Bouwmeester Maître Architecte (BMA) of Brussels Capital Region (Belgium); and architect Christian Hadaller, co-founder and board member of Kooperative Großstadt e.G in Munich.

The jury gathered in San Sebastián on the 30th and 31st May 2024. They selected two winners: the conversion of a former wine storehouse in Basel by Esch Sintzel Architekten (2023), and the La Borda housing cooperative in Barcelona by Lacol (2018). They also gave special mentions to Phase 2 of the Park Hill redevelopment in Sheffield (2022) and the Ekko housing complex by Duncan Lewis in Bordeaux (2021).

This award does not come with any monetary prize. Instead, it provides a space for dialogue and reflection, through multiple actions, lectures, articles, exhibitions and a dedicated website. Furthermore, the present book is the first in what we believe will be a series of publications; we hope they will provide a platform for exploring, in greater depth, the topics that compel us to take action.

Our overarching aim is not just to hold a recurrent celebration, but also to contribute to the knowledge and discourse about collective housing in Europe today. That is, looking to the future, we hope that this award will continue to look at the broader picture: we would like it to become established as an instrument of knowledge and memory. Ideally, over time, the collection of real, built dwellings that we compile will form a collective record, like an ever-evolving atlas that reflects the many ways in which Europe imagines, produces and inhabits collective housing. A narrative of many voices will gradually take shape, forming a cartography that

reveals not only the diversity of architectural solutions but also the complexity of the social, political and cultural contexts that sustain them.

This award does not seek to establish models, but rather to open up questions, offer references and generate fertile ground for exchange. Like architecture itself, this award is conceived as a collaborative practice, a space where knowledge is shared, perspectives are confronted and the experience of living together is translated, in the broadest sense of the term. As Umberto Eco once wrote, "Europe will become a community not because it shares a single language, but because it knows how to translate itself." This project has the same vocation: to compile and translate the many forms of inhabiting, and to let them be seen.

Throughout the decades, the European city has shown that its essence lies not only in its monuments, but particularly in its housing. Most of its fabric is made up of homes, courtyards, thresholds and communities. As Aldo Rossi reminded us, the house is the fundamental and persistent element of the urban landscape, the place where everyday life accumulates and transforms into history. To acknowledge, look after and reinvent collective housing is, consequently, a way of caring for our cities and for the very way in which we relate to one another.

If, over time, the award succeeds in becoming an observatory of best practices and a catalyst for thought on contemporary dwelling, then it will have fulfilled its purpose.

Fabrizio Gallanti
director of Arc en rêve
centre d'architecture
2021–2025

José Ángel Medina Murua
director of Euskadiko Arkitektura
Institutua / EAI

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