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Four nominated for the award as the world's best public library

The field has been narrowed to four libraries competing to win the 'Systematic – Public Library of the Year 2016' prize, which is awarded to the world's best new public library.

Four libraries from Australia, the US, and Denmark, respectively, have been nominated for the prize as the world's best new public library. The prize will be awarded at the annual meeting of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) in Columbus, Ohio, USA on 15 August. The four nominees are:

- Chicago Public Library, Chinatown Branch, USA
- Dokk1, Aarhus, Denmark
- Geelong Library & Heritage Centre, Australia
- Success Public Library, Australia

The international panel of judges has expressed the following about the four nominated libraries:

The nomination of the Chicago Public Library is based on its fundamental consideration for the library's users. Its location in China Town has created a basis for an extremely congenial architecture. The building occupies the city space in a natural and accommodating way thanks to its architectural form, scale and uniform facade with a clear sign on the façade. The clear form is implemented from the outside to the inside, where the proportions and materials work well together. The central atrium acts as a gathering point, and the spare glass walls ensure that the building is considered coherent. The library has a clear focus on children and young people and is one of the first

libraries in Chicago to emphasise early literacy. The space for teenagers, the “YOUMedia area”, provides access to technology and learning programs. Moreover, the interior design and furnishings are flexible, so they can quickly be adapted to different purposes.

Architects: Skidmore, Owings & Merrill LLP and Wight & Company

The nomination of Dokk1 in Aarhus is based on the building’s unique, central location in the city, which has become an important element in a far-sighted strategy to create more life on the harbour. Its clearly integrated accessibility with outdoor areas and access to the building from all sides is supported by its form and façade work. Both outside and inside, the stairs are utilised as a functional necessity but also as a place to meet and hang out. The high material quality is simple and raw without seeming ostentatious. With its ‘space for transformation,’ the library can do the same thing as a classic library and more besides. Its size and very flexible interior design provide excellent possibilities for its users and the library’s own activities. There are activities for all age groups - particularly, children for whom the outdoor playground is an extra plus. There is a high level of innovative technology built into the physical space.

Architects: Schmidt, Hammer, Lassen Architects

The nomination of the Geelong Library & Heritage Centre is based on its central location as a socio-cultural hub in a city on its way from a heavy industry economy to a modern knowledge economy. The architecture is used as a clearly visual means to communicate the building’s internal program with a focus on diversity and life. It also functions with a high degree of sustainability and is constructed with the Australian weather in mind. The use of hexagons as a fundamental element in the design of almost all its components is impressive as well as the colours inspired by Goethe’s colour wheel, which helps make orientation clear for users. The library is appealing thanks to its many facilities for cultural and learning activities for all age groups, including makerspace with 3-D technology and virtual reality. With very few fixed components, the library is flexible and well-secured for the future.

Architects: ARM Architecture

The nomination of the Success Public Library is based on its conscious position as an asset in an effort to gather more opportunities for people in the centre of the city. The building’s architecture is expressively mediating and helps create welcoming outside areas with matching urban furnishings. The large double-height space with a glass facade through which light is regulated by colourful slats creates a space that both addresses the world outside and creates a framework for inside absorption contemplation. Moreover, the incorporation of local aboriginal artworks enhances its great quality.

Particularly noteworthy are the library's learning areas with room for many different forms of learning and diverse activities from interactive learning and makerspace options to author readings and healthy diet programmes. This is a multi-functional library with room for activities for all age groups and, since all the furniture is moveable, space can quickly be created for new activities.

Architects: Bollig Design Group

About the prize

The 'Systematic – Public Library of the Year' award is part of the *Model Programme for Public Libraries* project of the Danish Agency for Culture and Palaces and Realdania, and the prize is sponsored by the IT firm Systematic.

The purpose of the programme is to develop the library of the future, so it takes into account, among other things, digital developments, user demands, local culture, and the desire to accommodate diverse population groups with an open and functional architectural expression.

The library must be a newly-built or refurbished in buildings that have not previously been used as a library. The opening of the new library must have taken place in the period between 1 January 2014 and 1 June 2016. The prize is for \$5000.

Read more about the nominees and the library of the future at the Model Programme's homepage: <http://modelprogrammer.kulturstyrelsen.dk/en/>

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