

15 November 2006

15th Annual BCA Berthold Lubetkin Lecture

Internationally renowned architect Daniel Libeskind presented the 15th annual British Cement Association Berthold Lubetkin Memorial Lecture in London on 9 November. The lecture, held in partnership with The Concrete Centre, commemorates the contribution of Berthold Lubetkin to design and celebrates inspirational works by contemporary engineers and architects. Some 800 academics, architects, structural engineers and students packed into the Kensington Great Hall to hear how Daniel uses architecture as a communicative art to encourage interaction with a building's location and the people who use it.

Daniel's design philosophy rests on the belief that every building tells a story. He designed the Imperial War Museum North in Old Trafford, Manchester, to convey the struggle for peace and how the world has become fragmented in this struggle.

Perhaps most famous for his design of The Memory Foundations and World Trade Centre master plan, he explained the difficult dichotomy of delivering a plan that acknowledges the terrible loss of life and yet look towards the future with hope. "The architecture communicates the vigour of New York, the spirit of democracy, the need for vitality in the face of danger and for hope in the aftermath of tragedy," Daniel explained. "Of all the arts, architecture is the most public and civic. It is not something placed in a private gallery; it is the gallery."

The audience also heard about the possibilities for innovative design in a range of building materials, including concrete. At the end of the lecture, Sasha Lubetkin (Berthold's daughter) presented Daniel with a concrete sculpture made by Carole Vincent. Mike Gilbert, chief executive of the British Cement Association, summed up the evening: "This was a fantastic opportunity for architects and engineers to hear a master at work".

The 16th Annual Berthold Lubetkin Lecture, which will take place on 18 October 2007, will be delivered by Santiago Calatrava.

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For further information:

Damian Testa, Head of Public Affairs and External Communications at the British Cement Association. Telephone 01276 608700, mobile 07866 388250 or email: dtesta@bca.org.uk.

Or

Liezel Tipper, Press Officer at the British Cement Association. Telephone 01276 608707, mobile 07870 179769, email ltipper@bca.org.uk

Notes for editors:

1. The British Cement Association (BCA) is the trade and research organisation that represents the interests of the United Kingdom's cement industry in its relations with Her Majesty's Government, the European Union and relevant organisations in the United Kingdom. The members of the BCA (Buxton Lime Industries, Castle Cement, Cemex Cement UK and Lafarge Cement UK) are the major domestic manufacturers of Portland cement producing over 90% of the cement sold in the UK.

The cement industry has an annual turnover of £775 million and is a major supplier to the construction industry. It employs around 3,400 people directly with a further 15,000 jobs depending upon its operations.

2. The Concrete Centre is the central development organisation for the UK's concrete and cement sector. It aims to provide a focus for excellence in concrete design and construction that will enable all those who design and construct in concrete, whether they work for national or local government; client bodies; architectural practices; civil and structural engineering consultancies; main and specialist contractors or housebuilders, to realise the full potential of concrete.
3. The BCA, with the support of The Concrete Centre, hold the Berthold Lubetkin Memorial Lecture every year; is a prestigious annual event that commemorates the contribution of Berthold Lubetkin to design and celebrates inspirational works by contemporary engineers and architects. Born in 1901, Berthold Lubetkin was widely regarded as the most outstanding architect of his generation in England. His architectural legacy includes landmark buildings such as the two Highpoint apartments in Highgate, the Penguin Pool at London Zoo and Finsbury Health Centre.