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Canadian Architect Gregory Henriquez Receives the 2026 American Prize for Architecture

The first Canadian architect and social justice advocate to receive the honour ~ Presentation December 11th at 32nd American Architecture Awards in Chicago

VANCOUVER, British Columbia – November 24, 2026 – Gregory Henriquez, Design Principal of Henriquez Partners Architects, has been named the **2026 American Prize for Architecture Laureate**. The prize is presented by The Chicago Athenaeum: Museum of Architecture and Design and The European Centre for Architecture Art Design and Urban Studies.

Gregory becomes the first Canadian to receive this prestigious recognition which is regarded internationally as one of the highest architectural honours in the United States.

"Gregory Henriquez has reimagined functionality and accessibility of new buildings through a carefully thought-out modern design that confronts environmental urgencies, transforms social relationships, reinvigorates cities; and in the end, creates a socially responsible urbanism," said Christian Narkiewicz-Laine, architecture critic and President/CEO of The Chicago Athenaeum.

The prize honours living architects for excellence in built work and for a significant, consistent contribution to humanity. Gregory Henriquez joins recent laureates who include Shigeru Ban (2025), Chad Oppenheim (2023), Eric Owen Moss (2020), and Sir Norman Foster (2018 & 1999).

Architecture as Activism
For more than three decades, Gregory Henriquez has worked from the conviction that architecture has the potential to be a poetic expression of social justice. The studio starts by embracing each site's unique characteristics and the community it serves. The goal is to find meaningful metaphors and curate programs and uses that reflect the diverse needs of a city.

"**Contemporary architecture is often revered purely as an aesthetic rather than as a social force. The architect, as a navigator, has a leadership role in pursuing the meaningful intersection of justice and beauty, of ethics and aesthetics. In the creation of communities that encourage values of inclusivity, diversity and social benefit, the architect's role has the potential to facilitate a transfer of equity to those most in need."** ~ Gregory Henriquez

In Canada, Gregory Henriquez has made the firm a leading voice in architecture and complex mixed-use development. Its projects pair private development with public good – social and below-market homes, community centres, libraries, parks and public art. The firm, headquartered in Vancouver, now has offices in Toronto and Calgary, with recent work extending into the United States. Projects include:

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Vancouver – Woodward's (2010) – Large-scale, mixed-use redevelopment of an abandoned department store, encompassing almost an entire city block in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. One of the most complex mixed-use projects in the city's history, Woodward's brought together inclusivity, social aspirations, scale, and partnerships in order to successfully revitalize the site; the outcome demonstrates the many elements necessary for any liveable neighbourhood. Comprised of 1,000,000 ft2 across four buildings, it integrates market and non-market housing, food and pharmacy stores, retail, a public plaza, community non-profit space, federal and civic offices, a daycare, and is anchored by Simon Fraser University Centre for Contemporary Arts.

Vancouver – Oakridge Park – A 1950s suburban mall on a 28-acre site, once old-growth forest, is becoming the city's first municipal town centre outside downtown. The $6B plan includes more than 3,000 homes with 420 social housing units. It also includes a nine-acre public park, a community centre of over 100,000 square feet with Vancouver's second-largest library, and childcare and a seniors' centre. Phase 1 is scheduled to complete in 2027.

Toronto – Mirvish Village – This mixed-use project reimagines 4.5 acres in downtown Toronto – including the site formerly occupied by the beloved Honest Ed's store – as a comprehensive purpose-built, complete community for rental apartments and innovative retail. Mirvish Village will be home to over 2,000 Torontonians, comprising 33 micro buildings that appeal to the human scale. Inspired by the small building floorplate densification of Tokyo, the collection of buildings is broken into small towers and street wall buildings with retail at the ground plane to preserve the rhythm of the existing streetscape. Of the development's almost 900 rental suites, 40% will offer rents at or below 30% of median Toronto household income, and over 40% will be family-sized units. Scheduled to complete in 2027.

Vancouver – Western Canada's Tallest Towers — The mixed-use project, with its tallest tower rising 1,033 feet (314 metres) will deliver 1,939 homes, a 920-room hotel, 70,000 ft2 of conference space, and new transit connections to support housing goals. The design features sculptural forms inspired by rare British Columbia glass sea sponge reefs with the towers targeting net-zero carbon operations. The development creates construction and permanent jobs while adding public amenities, Indigenous cultural spaces, and a plaza to energize the city centre. On a second site, a 308-foot (94 metres) tower provides 237 city-owned below-market housing units alongside a ground-level gallery for the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh (MST) Nations.

Seattle – AERO1200 — At the northeast corner of the Denny Triangle, twin towers are conceived as a gateway building into downtown Seattle. This mixed-use project occupies an entire city block and is comprised of two 47-storey residential – with sculptural balconies as the most striking feature – and hotel towers resting on a three-storey commercial podium. The podium is cleaved by a three-storey high structural glass galleria, houses a full-size Boeing 747, a winding garden and access to the residential lobbies.

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Beyond the buildings
Gregory's conviction extends to written works – publishing five books that look at the architect's duty to society: *Towards an Ethical Architecture* (2006), *Body Heat* (2010), *Citizen City* (2016), *Ghetto: Sanctuary for Sale* (2021), and *How can we live together?* (2024). Under his direction, the practise has imagined and exhibited future looking projects and inspiration – beginning with bringing **GHETTO** to life at the 2021 Venice Architecture Biennale, followed by a second exhibition, ***Symplasma*****,** its 2025 exhibition at the European Cultural Centre during the Venice Architecture Biennale.

A family of builders
Gregory Henriquez is the fourth generation of architects in his family, a line that began in the 19th century with Henriques Brothers in Kingston, Jamaica. His father, Richard Henriquez, moved to Vancouver in the 1960's, founding what was to become the Henriquez Studio. Gregory grew up there and after studying under Alberto Perez-Gomez joined the practice in 1989. He became managing partner in 2005, expanding studios to Toronto in 2015 and Calgary this year. His son, Jacob Henriquez, followed in the family footsteps, joining the studio in 2023 after attending the University of Toronto, and becomes the fifth generation of Henriquez architects.

About Henriquez Partners Architects
Henriquez Partners Architects designs complex mixed-use projects that bring together ethics and poetics to build inclusive, engaged communities. The firm believes architecture should be a poetic expression of social justice. It works through cross-sector partnerships to deliver buildings that are culturally, environmentally and economically sustainable. Henriquez Partners has five other Principals: Patricia Tewfik, Rui Nunes, Peter Wood, Shawn Lapointe, and Jennifer Mallard.

"Henriquez is a practical utopian, full of dreams about what architecture should be and positioned to realize those dreams in built space." ~ Robert Enright, Art Critic

www.henriquezpartners.com

About the American Prize for Architecture
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