

Statement of the Jury

On the award of the Julius Posener Prize 2018 to Jan Gehl

The Danish architect and urban planner Jan Gehl receives the Julius Posener Prize 2018, which appreciates his worldwide engagement to liveable cities. Immediately after graduating from The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in 1960, he developed a very remarkable approach for analyzing and exploring architecture and urban planning in terms of human quality of life.

In the last decades of his work, he has examined the structures of spaces like no other, he observed the users behaviour and studied their behavioural patterns, in order to develop cautious proposals for change. These proposals are never about radical solutions, but always about the process of implementing ideas step by step.

„Cities for People“ - the title of his book to the „Grammar of the City“, also published in German in 2015 - has become a lexicon of urban development. Jan Gehl is so sensitive and equally perceptive about the symbiotic relationship between public space and the citizens living in it, that one would like to recommend this book as compulsory reading to all urban planners and those responsible for urban development.

The Copenhagen Municipality has systematically implemented his research results. Their example was followed by other cities worldwide, the concepts developed for them were always accompanied and supervised by Jan Gehl over many years, the developments in the process were modified and adapted. His holistic approach, which takes into account all human senses, physical condition, preferences and health, can also be seen as a contribution to the democratic status of cities. By choosing the „human measure“ as a starting point for urban planning concepts, the results noticeably increase the satisfaction of inhabitants. Their participation and the quality of time spent in the urban space. More communication takes place and the urban space can again contribute to a sense of identity.

Jan Gehl has transmitted his point of view to his students and his numerous cooperation partners in many cities. Therefore, the jury associates the awarding of the Julius Posener Prize to Jan Gehl with the hope that there are also individuals in Berlin who will be inspired by his concepts, the city would benefit highly from it. The jury is convinced, that Julius Posener would have been very pleased about this prize winner and would have immediately found himself in a lively discussion with him.

Leonie Baumann
Uli Hellweg
Jan R. Krause,
Natascha Meuser
Johanne Nalbach
Matthias Noell
Sophie Wolfrum