

Obituary – Françoise-Hélène Jourda

Françoise-Hélène Jourda, one of the groundbreaking pioneers of sustainable building, died on Sunday, 31 May 2015.

To preserve an environment worth living in and to assume our responsibility towards future generations – this was the mindset that Prof. Françoise-Hélène Jourda strove for. In a unique way the French architect succeeded in combining architecture and urban planning, her own architecture bureau, university teaching and research at the Vienna University of Technology (TU Wien).

“Sustainability is a philosophy, an ethic – not just a technological solution.”

One of Françoise-Hélène Jourda’s main concerns was to create architecture that on the one hand takes account of the landscape and on the other hand of environmental balance, also tapping new resources for the land and the region while promoting the economy.

International career

Françoise-Hélène Jourda was always concerned with ecological and social issues. At the very beginning of her career she won the first European architectural competition for solar energy – and many further awards were to follow. In 1996 Jourda was one of the authors of the European Charter for Solar Energy, she taught at universities in France, Norway, Britain, Germany and in the United States. In 2004 she designed the French pavilion at the Architecture Biennale in Venice. In 2007 she received the Global Award for Sustainable Architecture.

From 1999 she was a professor at the TU Vienna – as the first female architect at the Institute for Architecture and Spatial Planning. She had a lasting influence on the work at the faculty. Teamwork was very fundamental to her.

In 2009, in order to anchor sustainability in university teaching and raise the awareness of coming generation of architects, she initiated the “Blue Award”, the international competition for students of architecture.

Besides her university activity in Vienna and her architecture bureau in Paris and Lyon, Jourda headed the eo.cité consulting company for urban planning.

Her family life was also part of Françoise-Hélène Jourda’s professional world. Her four children work in the field of architecture and urban planning. “I would like to achieve an environment that is worth living in for my children!”

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