



## The International Highrise Award 2018 Internationaler Hochhaus Preis 2018

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON IHA 2018 - ARCHITECT  
Frankfurt/Main, November 1, 2018

### **L. Benjamín Romano**

#### **Architect of “Torre Reforma” – winner of the International Highrise Award 2018**

Benjamín Romano is a Mexico City-based architect and founder of the LBR&A firm. He was the lead architect for Torre Reforma, a 57-story exposed concrete high-rise building that overlooks the expansive Chapultepec Park in Mexico City. LBR&A has been involved in offices, residential, cultural and industrial projects. The firm is known for its attention to contemporary design, high-tech and ecofriendly solutions and great spatial flexibility, derived from Romano's understanding of structural behaviour.

Romano finished his first construction project in 1978, while completing his bachelor's degree in Architecture & Urbanism from Universidad Iberoamericana. Since his early time at the university, he worked at the studio of Heberto Castillo, a prominent Mexican engineer and an expert on spatial structures.

After several Mexican financial and economic crises, in 1985 Romano founded his firm LBR&A, and decided to become a Developer- Architect, pursuing a special understanding on real estate assets.

He has taught in various capacities at the Universidad Iberoamericana since 1982, and lectured worldwide; in 2016-2017, he was invited as an Expert in Residence at the Harvard Graduate School of Design and a Visiting Affiliated Faculty Member at the CGBC (Harvard Center for Green Buildings and Cities).

The recurring Mexican economic crisis, his architect - engineer formation, and his continuous teaching and lecturing at universities, derived into the creation of long lasting properties, flexible spaces and profitable high-quality architecture.

His work has earned him international recognition, such as the 2016 Gold Medal at the XIV National Biennial of Mexican Architecture, the ACEC Diamond Award in New York, the Obras Magazine recognition as the Mexican Construction Work of the year 2016, the 2014 Augusto A. Alvarez Award for excellence in his architectural career by the FCARM Federation Colleges of Mexican Architects, Silver Medal at the XI, XII and XIII National Biennial of Mexican Architecture, the PCI Design Awards Program, and the 2011 Luis Barragan Award for Professional Merit in Professional Practice in Architecture by the CAM-SAM (Colegio de Arquitectos de la Ciudad de México y la Sociedad de Arquitectos Mexicanos).



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BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON IHA 2018 – WINNER  
Frankfurt/Main, November 1, 2018

### **Torre Reforma, Mexico City/Mexico**

Winner International Highrise Award 2018



Architects: L. Benjamín Romano,  
Mexico City/Mexico

Client: Fondo Hexa, S.A. de C.V.

Main use: Office

Height: 246 m

Completion: November 2016

Location: Mexico City/Mexico

Photo: © Moritz Bernouilly

In the middle of a region at risk of earthquakes the characteristic façade of Torre Reforma in Mexico City has more than just aesthetic purposes. Technical know-how and artistic aspirations contributed in equal measure to the unique shape of it. The two massive outer walls of exposed concrete and the third vitreous side not only create a triangular footprint in the shape of an open book, but also provide a maximum of earthquake-resistance.

The concrete walls reach 60 metres into the ground as a solid fundament. They were poured little by little during the construction process: 70 centimetre per day. The seams between the individual layers also serve as predetermined breaking points in the event of an earthquake, offering the forces at work a point of attack that does not affect the building's static equilibrium. Moreover, the building can move with the forces since the massive walls incorporate large openings as 'crumple zones'. In addition, the steel braces, which carry the floors, merge into flexible hinges in front of the glass façade. During the severe earthquake of September 2017 this concept has already proved to be highly effective. The only effect was a handful of fine, harmless cracks in the concrete seams. The entire width of the building's glass side opens onto the Bosque de Chapultepec city park. Aluminium sun shades allow natural lighting without heat gain in the strong Mexican sun. This façade also highlights the building's organisation in clusters of four floors each. The elaborate structural system allows the floors to be completely column-free.



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In order to create additional usable space, the storeys break free from the narrow corset of the triangle at the glass façade. To the front, the seemingly smooth façade forms a nearly imperceptible fourth corner. This angle projects further and further outward as the building rises to increase the surface area of the most attractive, uppermost storeys.

On ground floor level, Torre Reforma integrates the adjacent historical villa by enclosing the public foyer together with it. In the middle of the building, easily accessible to all users, there are the terrace, the auditorium and the conference rooms.

Beginning at a height of 200 metres, one of the two concrete walls bends strikingly inward. This feature is a response to a building regulation: the skyscrapers on Paseo de la Reforma may be no more than twice as high as the width of the street. If a building exceeds this height, the upper part has to be recessed or tapered. Due to Romano's creative handling of this regulation, the building, depending on the viewer's perspective, changes not only its materiality but also its sculptural form.

### **Sustainability**

LEED Platinum Certification Commitment to being carbon-neutral by 2030. Rain and waste water are 100 % reused for the air-conditioning cooling towers with zero drainage to the city's sewage system. Naturally ventilated patios and horizontal aluminium shades protect the glass façade. A robotic parking system places 480 cars free of toxic fumes. Thanks to a floor height of three metres the garage can be transformed into office space should traffic be redirected. Each cluster's MEP is monitored separately to optimize the energy efficiency. 80,000 trees were newly planted citywide as stipulated by building permit.

### **From the jury's assessment**

On the way to their decision, the jury's wide-ranging discussion considered how a high-rise contributes to the urban fabric and how it encourages street life. The following aspects were analyzed, among others: the overall narrative, the sculptural qualities, the structural concept, the mix of uses, and the balance between commerce and culture.

Summing up the discussion, Kai-Uwe Bergmann enthused: "Torre Reforma is one of the most complex highrise projects I've ever seen. Benjamín Romano has been extremely bold, taken his chances and in the process come up with a highly intelligent approach. He has created a distinctly local typology for a location on the main avenue in Mexico City. The solution he has found not only looks but is completely unconventional. It is a highrise with two thoroughly different views, so that driving toward it you could be mistaken for not recognizing it if you only knew it from the one side."



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BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON IHA 2018 – STATUETTE  
Frankfurt/Main, November 1, 2018

### Statuette International Highrise Award 2018



Statuette Internationale Highrise Award

Titanium and granite, 35 x 15 x 12 cm

Artist: Thomas Demand

Photo: Friedemann Steinhausen

Thomas Demand is a reputed international photo artist and was brought on board by DekaBank to design the award statuette. Since 2004, the symbol of the International Highrise Award is made anew every two years and bestowed on the respective winner. The statuette consists of striking wafer-thin layers of titanium made using an electron-ray melting technology (EBM) which means they can be layered in almost any geometry at random. The process, which is otherwise mainly used to manufacture medical implants and in the aerospace and automotive industries, is currently considered the most innovative method of rapid manufacturing.

A building consists first and foremost of ideas that then take form during the design phase as concepts, plans, data and presentations, later as contracts, lists of claims, agreements, etc. – a veritable tower of documents.

Pieces by Thomas Demand are 2018 on show in museums in Florence, Frankfurt, Hamburg, London, Los Angeles, Munich, Nashville, New York, Oslo, Tokyo and Vienna.



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BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON IHA 2018 – EXHIBITION  
Frankfurt/Main, November 1, 2018

### Exhibition

#### **BEST HIGHRISES 2018/19 – INTERNATIONAL HIGHRISE AWARD 2018**

**3 November 2018 – 3 March 2019**

at Deutschen Architekturmuseum (DAM), first floor  
Schaumainkai 43, 60596 Frankfurt/Main

Opening hours: Tue, Thu — Sun 11.00 — 18.00 \ Wed 11.00 — 20.00

Guided tours: On Saturdays and Sundays at 4 p.m., led by Yorck Förster

Trends in highrise architecture are no longer being defined just in North America and Europe, but worldwide. One that is emerging in Southeast Asia and China, for example, involves individual structures being grouped together in ensembles. And increasingly hybrid usage is what is called for. Exciting concepts are all the more driving forward the development of surrounding areas and even entire districts. The exhibition presents all 36 nominated buildings and thus showcases the range of ideas and current trends in contemporary highrise architecture.

The winner 2018, the office building **Torre Reforma** in Mexico City by L. Benjamin Romano, will be shown elaborately alongside the four finalist projects – **MahaNakhon** (Bangkok/Thailand) by Büro Ole Scheeren, Bangkok/Thailand and OMA Office for Metropolitan Architecture, Beijing/China; **Beirut Terraces** (Beirut/Lebanon) by Herzog & de Meuron, Basel/Switzerland; **Chaoyang Park Plaza** (Beijing/China) by MAD Architects, Beijing/China and **Oasia Hotel Downtown** (Singapore) by WOHA, Singapore.

The exhibition displays structural designs and technical details in the form of architectural plans. The façades and interiors are depicted in numerous photographs, and for some buildings there are films. Models of the finalist highrises give the observer an idea of the buildings in their entirety. Short texts explain the key aspects of each project as well as the ecological criteria.



Accompanying catalog

**"Best Highrises 2018/19. The International Highrise Award / Internationaler Hochhaus Preis 2018"**

Ed: Peter Körner, Maximilian Liesner and Peter Cachola Schmal  
Prestel, Munich

german-english, card cover, 21 x 27 cm  
144 pages, 230 colored ill. and drawings  
ISBN 978-3-7913-5831-4

Available at the museum shop for EUR 22,–  
Available at the book stores for EUR 30,–



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## Internationaler Hochhaus Preis 2018

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON IHA 2018 – PARTNERS

Frankfurt/Main, November 1, 2018

#### **International Highrise Award 2018 Partners**

##### **City of Frankfurt**

Frankfurt is the dynamic financial and cultural center with Germany's most impressive skyline. Thanks to its outstanding infrastructure, Frankfurt at the center of the FrankfurtRhineMain region is not only very easy to reach, but also very well networked. With some 60,000 companies, 650,000 jobs, 248 square kilometers of space, and 700,000 inhabitants from 180 different nations, Frankfurt is a vibrant and diverse metropolis where everything is close at hand. Renowned sights, such as the Imperial Cathedral and the Paulskirche, the cradle of German democracy, are both located not far from the highrises, as are Frankfurt's riverside museums. These museums form the core of Frankfurt's museum world, an impressive synthesis of attractive cultural highlights and exciting urban planning. The theaters are another great ambassador for Frankfurt the Cultural City and their artistic output thrills the international cognoscente. Frankfurt forges a skillful bridge between the traces of the past and contemporary architecture, and thus between tradition and modernity – Frankfurt stands for remarkable continuity at the highest of levels.

##### **Deutsches Architekturmuseum (DAM), Frankfurt/Main**

DAM was founded in 1984 as the first museum of architecture in Germany. It organizes changing exhibitions on national and international architectural and urban planning topics. As a center of debate on current issues, it hosts lecture and workshop series, brings out numerous publications, and takes part in national and international juries. The architecture of the museum building on Frankfurt's riverside is the brainchild of famed Cologne architect Oswald Mathias Ungers. The historical villa from the turn of the 20th century has a house-in-house inserted into it, using fundamental architectural means to make the architecture itself a theme.

##### **DekaBank Deutsche Girozentrale, Frankfurt/Main**

DekaBank is the Wertpapierhaus (securities services provider) of the German Savings Bank Finance Group. Together with its subsidiaries it forms the Deka Group. The Deka Group has total customer assets of around EUR 288 billion (as at 30/06/2018) and more than four million securities accounts, making it one of the largest securities services providers and real estate asset managers in Germany today. It provides retail and institutional clients access to a wide range of investment products and services. DekaBank Deutsche Girozentrale celebrates its 100th anniversary in 2018.

The Deka Group's global real estate expertise is pooled in its Real Estate Division. The two investment companies, Deka Immobilien Investment GmbH and WestInvest Gesellschaft für Investmentfonds mbH, and the service company, Deka Immobilien GmbH, manage and service around EUR 34 billion in real estate assets (as at 30/06/2018).



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**For further information and press images as downloads please visit:**

[www.international-highrise-award.com](http://www.international-highrise-award.com) / [www.dam-online.de](http://www.dam-online.de) / [www.deka.de/deka-gruppe/presse](http://www.deka.de/deka-gruppe/presse)

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Media partner of the International Highrise Award 2018:



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