



# The Great Indoors Award

At long last, *Frame* magazine is organizing an international prize for interior design: The Great Indoors Award. Initiator Guus Beumer explains.

Words: Martijn Goedegebuure

The Great Indoors Award – the long-awaited *Frame* prize – was actually initiated by an outsider: Guus Beumer, the Dutch ‘king of culture’. For years, Beumer was the driving force and art director of Alexander van Slobbe’s fashion labels Orson + Bodil and SO. Beumer also served as director of the prestigious Rotterdam Design Prize. Since 2006 he’s been in charge of two cultural institutes in the southern Dutch city of Maastricht: the regional branch of the Netherlands Architecture Institute (NAi) and Marres, centre of contemporary culture. This coming November, winners of The Great Indoors Award will receive their prizes in Maastricht at a congress of the same name: an event devoted to interior design. Guus, why this prize?

Because it’s necessary. Interior architecture is assuming an increasingly dominant position within the realm of design, but not enough attention is being paid to this development. The monumental interior is disappearing in favour of the interior shell with a highly flexible character, and the interior is having a stronger influence on discussions involving public space. This award will attempt to make such developments visible.

Nice words, but how do you translate them into an international competition?

My work for Marres and the NAi puts me in regular contact with policymakers. My proposition is that when you organize an award and a congress, the event is going to draw a lot of know-how and expertise into the area. That was reason enough for the province of Limburg and the municipality of Maastricht to sponsor the project.

Surely there’s more to choosing Maastricht as the home of the award?

The city offers no fewer than three schools of design: the Academy of Fine Arts, the Academy of Architecture and the Jan van Eyck Academy. Just across the border in Germany, Aachen has a Technical University with an architecture department and a University of Applied Sciences with a design programme. And, last but not least, you’ll find cultural centre Z33 in Hasselt, which is also a mere stone’s throw away. This Belgian city has also played host to a highly ambitious design biennial in recent years.

What kind of outcome are you hoping for?

I’m hoping for a spirited debate on the future of the profession, a discipline that touches on so many current developments. The interior is the ultimate sanctuary of utopian thinking. Seen in that light, any debate on interior architecture already has a cutting-edge topic and sense of urgency. A lot of talent and expertise will be pouring into the region, so we can anticipate the formation of new networks.

## ‘The interior is the ultimate sanctuary of utopian thinking’

Guus Beumer

What does it mean for a prize like this to be backed by *Frame*?

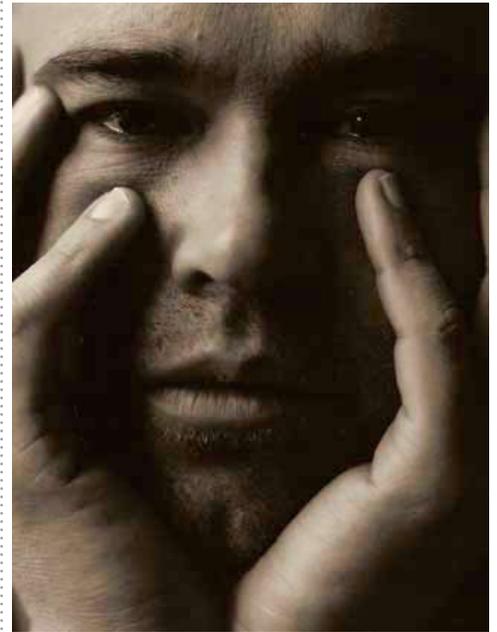
It’s incredibly important. To begin with, *Frame* is an authority in the market, and its input is essential. The magazine can generate instant publicity and publish the results, thus guaranteeing worldwide participation in the debate.

You were director of the Rotterdam Design Prize. How does this award differ?

The Great Indoors Award is international, which already makes it hugely different from a national competition like the Rotterdam Design Prize. What’s more, the Design Prize covers virtually all design disciplines, and The Great Indoors focuses exclusively on the interior. You can say that the Rotterdam Design Prize came into being when people no longer recognized a hierarchy among the design disciplines. The Great Indoors, on the other hand, emerges from the idea that the interior is filling a more and more dominant role, perhaps even to the point of eclipsing other disciplines. New era, new prize.

### The Full Story

We had additional questions for Guus, who had much more to say than we have space for here. You can read the full story on *Frame*’s website: [www.framemag.com](http://www.framemag.com).



## CALLING FOR ENTRIES

*Frame*’s new, biennial, international interior-design award is calling for entries. Eligible for entry are all nonresidential interior designs and installations that were realized between 1 September 2005 and 31 August 2007.

The five categories are:

- Show & Sell (retail);
- Relax & Consume (leisure);
- Serve & Facilitate (public);
- Concentrate & Collaborate (work);
- Interior Design Firm of the Year.

Deadline for all entries is 1 September 2007. Each category holds €10,000 in prize money.

[www.the-great-indoors.com](http://www.the-great-indoors.com)