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## 10th award for King Fahad National Library

Gerber Architekten have won the A+ Award

**In just one year, the King Fahad National Library which was designed planned and constructed by Gerber Architekten has already won its 10th international architectural award., Architizer, the world's largest website for architecture, annually recognizes the best built architectural projects with the A+ Award. The award ceremony will be held on May 14th in New York City.**

Awarded now for the third time, the prize pays tribute to the world's greatest designs, considering form, function and innovation. The jury, consisting of architects, curators and journalists, including Bjarke Ingels (BIG) and Charles Renfro (diller, scofidio + renfro), selected the winners from the international nominees. The King Fahad National Library has won in the category Architecture +Material and is now recognized as an exemplary architectural project with groundbreaking design quality.

This project sees Professor Eckhard Gerber and his Gerber Architekten team accomplishing one of the most important urban development and cultural projects in the capital, Riyadh. The design functions as the central driving force behind a piece of urban development and rearrangement, and combines the challenge of designing within the existing building stock with respect for Arabian culture. The symbolic cuboid shape of the new building surrounds the existing building on all sides, thus presenting the National Library as a new architectural image in the Riyadh cityscape without abandoning the old building, which now operates as an internal stack, making it the centre of knowledge within the new library as a whole. The square new building is covered by a filigree textile façade following traditional Middle Eastern architectural patterns and linking them with state of the art technology.

The key element of the façade was developed especially for the new building. It is a cladding made up of lozenge shaped textile awnings, which playfully combines revealing and concealing. White membranes, supported by a three-dimensional, tensile-stressed steel cable structure, act as sunshades and reinterpret the Arabian tent structure tradition in a modern, technological way. This meeting of

old and new creates a uniform and dignified overall architectural appearance with an individual look. At night the façade gives out a soft white light and becomes the city's cultural lighthouse.

One particular challenge for the façade is the enormous temperature differences in Saudi Arabia. In summer the steel ropes can heat up to a temperature of 80°C and will expand. In winter the material can shrink because of nighttimes which can reach minus temperatures. These effects had to be calculated to optimise the tension of the steel wires. The façade was combined with a ventilation and cooling system consisting of layered ventilation and floor cooling. In this way, thermal comfort was increased and energy consumption significantly reduced by using special methods and technologies for the first time in the Arab world. "The theme of sustainability using up-to-date energy concepts and rational building structures runs through all our activities as a matter of course." (Professor Eckhard Gerber)

**Further Information:**

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**Foto:**

King Fahad National Library      © Gerber Architekten      Fotograf: Christian Richters

**Awards:**

Meed Award 2014 – Social Project of the year  
Meed Award 2014 – GCC Winner  
Detail Preis 2014 – Nominee  
WAN Award Façade 2014 – Short Listed  
German Design Award 2014 – Special Mention  
Iconic Award 2014 – Product Facades  
International Architecture Design Award 2014  
Ingenieurbaupreis des Deutschen Stahlbaus 2015  
MIPIM Award 2015 – Finalist  
Architizer A+ Award Architecture + Material 2015