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For Immediate Release

Birdair Builds Replica Canopy for Pritzker Architecture Prize Ceremony

The 2015 Pritzker Architecture Prize ceremony honoring architect Frei Otto was held May 16th beneath a Birdair open-air, hyperbola shaped, 1,000-square-foot [PVC membrane structure](#), designed as a replica of a stunning, 1955 Frei Otto canopy design. [Birdair](#) was honored to design and build the canopy for the ceremony, which took place in Miami Beach at the New World Center, a venue designed by 1989 Pritzker Prize Laureate Frank Gehry.

“Being selected to design and build the canopy for the Pritzker Architecture Prize is an honor,” David Capezzuto, Director of Business Development for Birdair, Inc. “We’re proud to be a part of the celebration of Frei Otto’s life work. He was a pioneer in the field in which we strive to continue to innovate.”

About the Award

The Pritzker Architecture Prize honors a living architect or architects “whose built work demonstrates a combination of those qualities of talent, vision, and commitment, which has produced consistent and significant contributions to humanity and the built environment through the art of architecture.” The laureates receive a \$100,000 grant and a bronze medallion.

The international prize was established by the Pritzker family of Chicago through their Hyatt Foundation in 1979. It is granted annually and is often referred to as “architecture’s Nobel” and “the profession’s highest honor.”

Visionary Architect

Frei Otto was an architect, visionary, utopian, ecologist, pioneer of lightweight materials, protector of natural resources and a generous collaborator with architects, engineers, and biologists. He passed away at the age of 89, in his native Germany on March 9, 2015.

Otto pioneered the use of modern, lightweight, tent-like structures. In 1958, he founded the first of several institutions that were dedicated to lightweight structures — the Institute for Development of Lightweight Construction. Otto wrote extensively throughout his career. His books include *Biology and Building* and *Ancient Architects*.

Over the years, Otto’s research teams included philosophers, historians, naturalists and environmentalists. He became a world-renowned innovator in architecture and engineering who pioneered the use of tensile membrane for architectural structure including roofs and also worked with other materials and building systems such as grid shells, bamboo and wooden lattices. The

late Walter Bird, founder of Birdair, Inc., collaborated with Frei Otto on various tensile membrane structures.

Otto is best known for the roofing of the main sports facilities in the Munich Olympic Park for the 1972 Summer Olympics, for the German pavilion at the 1967 International and Universal Exposition, the Japan Pavilion at Expo 2000 in Hannover, Germany, a series of tent structures for German Federal Exhibitions in the 1950s, and for his work in the Middle East.

***About Birdair:** Birdair, Inc. is the leading design build contractor of custom tensile structures throughout the world. In addition to pre-construction services such as design assistance, budgeting, construction methodologies and project scheduling, Birdair provides design build solutions in all aspects of project design, fabrication, installation and maintenance. The company offers a selection of architectural fabric membranes, including PTFE fiberglass, ETFE film, PVC and Tensotherm™, an insulated tensioned membrane system. Birdair, based in Buffalo, NY, is a member of the Taiyo Kogyo Group, with operations serving North and South America and other international locations. For more information about Birdair, [like us on Facebook](#), call 1-800-622-2246 or visit www.birdair.com.*

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