

GAGOSIAN GALLERY

US sculptor Richard Serra wins top Spanish arts prize



AFP/File – American avant-garde sculptor Richard Serra, seen here in 2008 and who is known for his minimalist large-scale

MADRID (AFP) – American avant-garde sculptor Richard Serra, known for his minimalist large-scale works, was Wednesday awarded one of Spain's highest honours, the Prince of Asturias prize for arts.

"Richard Serra is regarded as one of the most relevant avant-garde sculptors in the second half of the 20th century, for his innovative vision of incorporating urban spaces in pieces of art that inspire people to reflect," the Prince of Asturias Foundation said in a statement in announcing the prize.

Serra's massive "site-specific" sculptures use industrial materials such as lead, steel and concrete.

Serra, 70, said he was "honored" to receive the prize.

"The award is particularly meaningful to me in that the country of Spain has offered me many great opportunities to realise my work for over three decades," he said.

Several of his works are on show in Spain, including at Madrid's Reina Sofia Museum and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Barcelona.

His sculpture "Snake and The Matter of Time", which the foundation said "Serra considers his most important work", is on display at the Guggenheim Museum in the northern city of Bilbao.

One of his most spectacular sculptures, Tilted Arc, is at the Federal Plaza in New York City.

Last year the prize went to British architect Norman Foster.

Previous winners include Oscar-winning Spanish director Pedro Almodovar, Grammy-winning US singer Bob Dylan and Brazilian architect Oscar Niemeyer.

The prize is awarded to a person, group or institution whose work in cinema, dance, music or other forms of artistic expression "constitute a significant contribution to mankind's cultural heritage."

The Prince of Asturias awards are also given in the fields of communication and humanities, scientific and technical research, social science, letters, international cooperation, international understanding and sport.

Named after Crown Prince Felipe, they are presented in the northern Spanish city of Oviedo, capital of the Asturias region.