

Kenya's BellTower named Grand Prix winner of the 2020 Lexus Design Award

Lexus International has announced that BellTower from Kenya is winner of the Grand Prix Lexus Design Award for 2020. BellTower's entry, titled "Open Source Communities", was selected for the award from among 2,042 submissions from 79 countries.



Image(s) Supplied.

BellTowers winning design addresses challenges often found in developing countries by using smart open source planning to design 'affordable communities' with sustainable clean water resources.

Accepting the award, John Brian Kamau said: "It was a great honour for us as BellTower, to be one of the finalists and then win the Grand Prix of Lexus Design Award 2020. Our journey began with many challenges. However, we persevered to showcase our ambitious concept. Our experience has taught us invaluable lifelong lessons. All our future designs will be aligned with the key principles we learned as part of the Lexus family."

Nurturing future talent

Considering this year's unique circumstances, Lexus innovated to create its first-ever virtual jury as part of this process that supports and nurtures the next generation of creative talent. The Grand Prix winner was announced after each of the six international finalists presented to a panel of judges, explaining how they would create A Better Tomorrow, which is inline with three key principles of the Lexus brand: to **Anticipate Innovate and Captivate in the quest for a Better Tomorrow.**

The programme's four mentors, who supported and guided the finalists for six months, were also on hand

for the grand finale of the Lexus Design Award 2020.



Announcing the panel's decision, programme judge and Studio Gang Founding Principal Jeanne Gang said, "At different moments in time, design has celebrated bold aesthetics, extreme functionality, and even humour and wit. But today, with our world plagued by the enormous issues of climate change and social inequality, there is a design imperative for systemic design solutions.

"The Grand-Prix winner expands our definition of design to include systems of finance for community projects and engages the critical role clean drinking water plays in enabling all citizens to thrive. By addressing the way that the project will come into being and be sustained economically, the designers broaden our thinking about what design is and could be. While the project is an apparatus to collect and store rain water for safe drinking, it is also a financial game plan for empowering a community."

The trophy presented to the winner was designed by Hideki Yoshimoto, a winner of the Lexus Design Award 2013 and now an established professional designer himself based in London. In Yoshimoto's words: "This trophy will be the face of the award for years to come, so I tried to create a simple, dignified form, free of affectation, in a design where boldness and subtlety co-exist.

"Artisans carve the trophy from smoke-seasoned wood and lacquer made in the traditional Kawatsura style from Akita Prefecture in Japan. Hand crafting each trophy imbues it with heart and soul to resonate with the winner's creative passion."

The Lexus Design Award 2021 is open for entries until 11 October 2020. Please note the details on the [design awards' website](#).