



Light

No doubt about it: The most wonderful thing about the LafargeHolcim Awards is the **encounters** they make possible. In the nearly 15 years of its existence, the LafargeHolcim Foundation has produced a sort of worldwide family. A few family members whom I have known for years always seem to show up at one ceremony or another, and I look forward to seeing them like a little boy before the circus. For example, the architect and regular jury member Joe Addo from Ghana. Or Board Member Maria Atkinson from Down Under. And and and! And then there are always many new encounters that enrich my life. For example, with the highly talented organizer Kavoi in Nairobi, who even amid the greatest turmoil remains gentle and quick-minded. Wherever you go, you always meet people with intellect, humor, and heart.

Shadow

Preparations for the event are already in full swing: As soon as you arrive on location, there is something to **eat**. A bite here, a gigantic breakfast there, dinners of course, plus all the little culinary extras that just seem to appear. There is always a sandwich waiting somewhere. If you are on a diet, you are definitely going to have a tough time at the Awards ceremonies! Just refrain, you say? You have no idea how good it all is!

Light

The LafargeHolcim Awards have at least one thing in common with the old Hollywood musicals: In the end, everything always turns out well,

Bright Awards universe

One sign of a successful LafargeHolcim Awards ceremony is when no one in the audience realizes how much work goes on behind the scenes. For example, the work of Marius Leutenegger. He was present at all five regional ceremonies 2017 – and had a lot of fun, which he describes here, along with the flipside.

Thousands of people were connected in one way or another with the five regional ceremonies of the LafargeHolcim Awards this year – as guests, organizers, suppliers, winners, and so on. But only two were present at all five events: Edward Schwarz and I. Edi as the head man in charge, possessing an overview that still seems uncanny to me even after our many years of working together. And me as a freelance director of the Awards ceremonies and (video) journalist for the Foundation.

Five ceremonies around the globe – that means making five long trips, living in hotels for almost five weeks, having very predictable working hours for five weeks (from as early as imaginable till as late as possible), five weeks of “can you quickly...?” and “we should still...!” But above all: five weeks of **adventure and excitement!** I accumulated so many memories during those weeks that I feel no urge at all to get out and about since then.

You might ask, what was particularly good about this high-adrenalin marathon – and what was less agreeable? The LafargeHolcim Awards are like a complete little universe, and naturally in such a place we find both: light and shadow.



even if things might have gotten a bit touchy in between. During a ceremony year, we seem to make our way from one successful premiere to the next. Of course, I have to apologize for being overly enthusiastic after every ceremony and trying to convince everyone that this was definitely the very best of all the good ceremonies – but that’s just how it feels! The key to the perpetual **feel-good buzz** is the mix of the experience of all those who have been there before and the fresh impetus and high ambitions of the LafargeHolcim host companies’ representatives, who do everything possible to make their event a success.

Shadow

The aseptic “internationalism” of the big **hotel** chains is not my world. Each of the five hotels we stayed at during the LafargeHolcim Awards could have been in any of the other four places. I just feel unqualified for this world, which always reminds me of a freshly-pressed airport terminal. For example, I almost never manage to turn off the dreaded air conditioning in my room completely and definitively. And the light switches usually lead me into involuntary slapstick – I press one switch, two lights go out, but a third one comes on. And if I really deserve punishment, the air conditioner also restarts. The pillow landscapes on the lavishly made beds completely befuddle me. Who needs eight pillows – with the option to order even more from room service? The latest annoyance is the elevators that allow you to reach “your” floor only. We shift a lot of material back and forth – not only on one floor!

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I must admit, I love the lever that the LafargeHolcim Foundation has. **Quality** is always at the center of every decision. Uncounted world-famous architects have appeared as speakers, the moderators are usually among the best in the country, and the technical equipment leaves nothing to be desired. We save where we can – but never at the expense of quality.

Shadow

You spend five days at a great **destination** like Costa Rica – and see: the airport, the hotel, the first venue, the second venue (because the first was closed due to a hurricane) and

Outlook 2018:

The Global phase of the 5th LafargeHolcim Awards

The Gold, Silver and Bronze Awards winning projects from the five regional competitions are automatically qualified for the global Awards 2018. The independent jury led by Alejandro Aravena (Chile) will meet in Zurich in March to nominate a total of four projects for a global prize – **Gold, Silver, Bronze and a Jury Wild Card Award** for a particularly outstanding Acknowledgement or Next Generation prize winning project 2017. These prizes will each be handed over in the second half of 2018 at the location where the project is to be built.

All winners and runners-up of Next Generation prizes in the five regional competitions will be able to participate in the LafargeHolcim **Next Generation Awards Lab** which will be combined with one of the global hand-over events 2018. Additionally, these young professionals and students have the chance to apply for one of three **Research in Practice Grants** that the LafargeHolcim Foundation is offering authors to take their project or idea in sustainable construction a step closer to realization.

The next **LafargeHolcim Roundtable** will be hosted by Werner Sobek at the University of Stuttgart (Germany) and will be working on the input for the international **LafargeHolcim Forum** in April 2019 in Cairo (Egypt) on the topic of “Re-materializing construction”. More information on all activities at www.lafargeholcim-foundation.org

two shopping malls (because of a computer bug – they always hit at the dumbest moment). Plus of course the inside of a few taxis. At home, they are all envious of the great trips, because they automatically associate such destinations with holidays, and they simply cannot work up the compassion you deserve for sustaining the double punch of jet lag plus a 70-hour workweek. Really infuriating are the so-called friends who advise me at home to simply tack on some vacation days when the event is over. But in four out of five cases, after

the ceremony is shortly before the next ceremony! No chance to lounge around the pool!

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But of course I understand all those who don’t stroke my head in pity because I have to go to Kenya or Malaysia. Because I confess: It’s just **insanely cool** to contribute anywhere that people experience a great event. Even if I just fly economy. But that’s enough of the shadow side for now – in the end, of course, the light shines brightly!



His trademarks are extremely colorful shirts, colored leather shoes, and hair tied into a ponytail: Marius Leutenegger in action at the LafargeHolcim Awards ceremonies 2017.