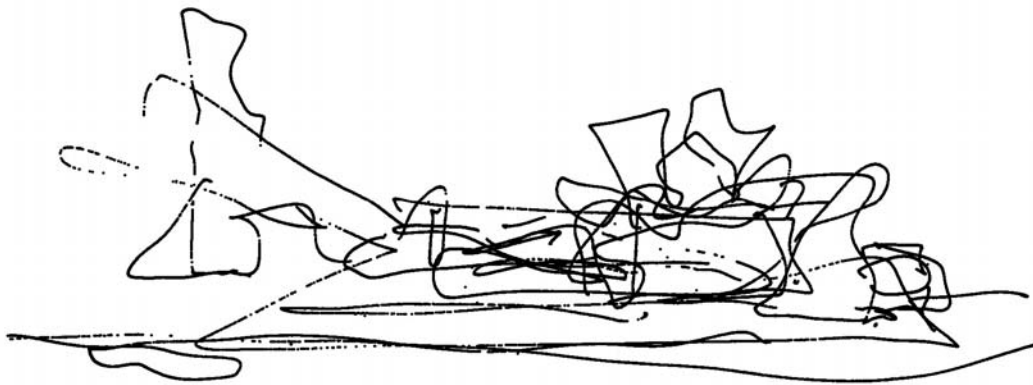


ON OCTOBER 30
THE GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM BILBAO
PRESENTS



FRANK GEHRY, ARCHITECT

an exhibition which offers a comprehensive view of the
master architect's career, staged in one of his most
monumental structures

The presentation of *Frank Gehry, Architect*—the most comprehensive exhibition to date of the North American architect’s work—opens at the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao on October 30th in celebration of the fourth anniversary of the Museum. The exhibit *Frank Gehry, Architect*, will remain on view through February 17th, 2002, and will give visitors the opportunity to take an in-depth look at Gehry’s extensive designs completed throughout the course of his career. The dynamic setting for this presentation will be Gehry’s own building, the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, which has been lauded since its opening in 1997 as a masterpiece of contemporary architecture. This retrospective presents approximately 40 of the architect’s most significant projects, from early residential designs and furniture to his most recent public buildings worldwide. The exhibition explores the origins and continued development of Gehry’s unique vocabulary through drawings, plans, models, furniture designs, photographs, and video footage, providing a context with which to view the Los Angeles-based architect’s extraordinary contributions to the field of architecture and design.

“Frank Gehry has raised the bar for architectural innovation,” said Thomas Krens, Director of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation. “He has accomplished this because of his openness to the concept of difference and radical juxtaposition. Place two unlikely elements together and Frank will say, ‘Why not?’ He is a master at transforming the material environment—whether natural or artificial—into architecture.”

The exhibition has been organized for the Guggenheim Museum by guest curator Mildred Friedman and J. Fiona Ragheb, Associate Curator for Collections and Exhibitions, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, and coordinated by Kara Vander Weg.

Frank Gehry, Architect will fill the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao’s second floor galleries. The exhibition provides an overview of Gehry’s career and organizes the architect’s most important projects to highlight key moments in the development of his remarkable architectural vocabulary. The variety of building types represented—including residential designs, institutional projects, performing arts facilities, and commercial spaces—illustrates

the ease with which Gehry's vocabulary adapts to both building program and context. Seminal projects featured in the exhibition include: the renovation of the architect's own home in Santa Monica, California (1977–78, 1991–92); the Loyola Law School in Los Angeles (1978–present); the Winton Guest House in Wayzata, Minnesota (1983–87); the Chiat/Day Building in Venice, California (1985–91); the Vitra International Manufacturing Facility and Design Museum in Weil am Rhein, Germany (1987–89); the Lewis Residence in Lyndhurst, Ohio (1987–95); the Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles (1987–present); the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao (1991–97); and the DG Bank at Pariser Platz in Berlin (1995–2001), among others. With the interior of the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao functioning as the backdrop for the exhibition, visitors have the opportunity to experience the drama and excitement of Gehry's work first hand.

The exhibition begins with early residential projects interspersed with commercial and institutional work, all of which were integral to the development of Gehry's subsequent vocabulary and to his approach to the definition of space. The early residential designs include the 1977–78 transformation of his own home in Santa Monica, in which he used chain-link fencing, asphalt flooring, plywood, and corrugated sheet metal to effectively build a house around an existing house; the unbuilt Familian Residence (1978), which hints at the quality of arrested motion that Gehry so successfully executes in later projects; and the Winton Guest House in Wayzata, Minnesota (1983–87), a cluster of rectangular, square, wedge, and cone-shaped buildings. Gehry's interest in creating a sense of place and his approach to the workspace are evident in his campus for the Loyola Law School in Los Angeles, a project that Gehry began in 1978 and remains ongoing, and the Chiat/Day Building in Venice, California (1985–91).

A palpable shift in Gehry's aesthetic began to occur in his design for the Vitra International Manufacturing Facility and Design Museum in Weil am Rhein, Germany (1987–89), Gehry's first European commission. This design, and that of the Frederick R. Weisman Art Museum at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis (1990–93), initiated a transition as Gehry pushed beyond the confines of conventional rectilinear building vocabularies toward

more boldly sculptural forms. The construction of these new forms presented increasingly technical complexities, and required a computerized solution. Beginning with the monumental Fish Sculpture at Vila Olímpica in Barcelona, Spain (1989–92), the firm began to use CATIA (computer aided three-dimensional interactive application). CATIA, which was originally developed for the French aerospace industry, has enabled the translation of Gehry's fluid sketches and models into built works and the realization of ambitious designs within established project parameters.

One of Gehry's most dramatic formal breakthroughs was in the design for the unbuilt Lewis Residence (1989–95), which spawned a number of design innovations. Though it began as a cluster of relatively conventional forms and motifs organized around a central court, the design became more elaborate and fantastic over time. An increasingly sculptural and organic vocabulary emerged during the design process, including Gehry's signature horse head, which reappeared in his design for the DG Bank Building, Berlin (1995–2001).

Gehry's longstanding concern with context and scale is explored in several current projects. The varied strategies that Gehry deploys to achieve a dialogue between his buildings and their environments are visible in such diverse designs as his Ustra Office Building in Hannover, Germany (1995–present); the Millennium Park Music Pavilion and Great Lawn in Chicago, Illinois (1999–present); and the Hotel at Marqués de Riscal in Elciego (1998–present).

In recent years, Gehry has been awarded the large-scale projects that have come to define his career. The unconventional impulse behind the architect's forms makes them especially suited to buildings devoted to both artistic creativity and scholarly innovation, with each design inspired by the character of the particular institution. Part of the exhibition explores these

projects, including the Experience Music Project in Seattle (1995–2000); the Walt Disney Concert Hall, the new home of the Los Angeles Philharmonic (1987–present); and the Ray

and Maria Stata Center at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (1998-present). Audiences are drawn as much by the arresting forms of these buildings as by the organizations housed in them.

The Guggenheim Museum Bilbao provides a striking example of the powerful draw of Gehry's unconventional architecture. The museum attracts millions of visitors to the city and exemplifies a building's contribution to the process of urban transformation and economic revitalization. A colossal sculpture sheathed in stone, titanium and glass, the forms of the Guggenheim reference the city's industrial and seafaring past, and the arresting building serves as a gateway to the city's historical and business districts. The interior features a variety of spaces designed to accommodate a broad range of artwork, with some galleries rectangular and classical, while others are comprised of radical curves. Gallery 203 is devoted entirely to the exploration of this project from its early stages of design through its built form.

Gehry's experiments with furniture design, which have been complementary to his architectural endeavors, can be seen in gallery 202. This includes his celebrated *Easy Edges* and *Experimental Edges* cardboard furniture (1969–73 and 1979–82), *Bent Wood* furniture (1989–92), and his series of playful *Fish and Snake Lamps* (1983–86) made from Colorcore, a translucent plastic laminate. His most recent furniture designs, the *FOG* chairs and tables created for Knoll, are part of the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao restaurant, café and office furniture.

Background

Born in Toronto, Canada, Frank Gehry moved to Los Angeles with his family in 1947, at the age of 17. Gehry received his Bachelor of Architecture degree from the University of Southern California in 1954, studied City Planning at the Harvard University Graduate School of Design, and opened his first office in Los Angeles in 1962. His work has earned several of the most significant awards in the architectural field, including: the Arnold W. Brunner Memorial Prize in Architecture from the American Academy of Arts and Letters

(1977); the Pritzker Architecture Prize (1989); the Praemium Imperiale Award by the Japan Art Association (1992); the Dorothy and Lillian Gish Award for lifetime contribution to the arts (1994); the National Medal of Arts (1998) the Gold Medal from the American Institute of Architects (1999); the Gold Medal from the Royal Institute of British Architects (2000); and the Lifetime Achievement Award from Americans for the Arts (2000).

Catalogue

The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue, published by the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao. Edited by J. Fiona Ragheb, the catalogue features a preface by Thomas Krens, an introduction by Mildred Friedman, and essays by Jean-Louis Cohen, Director of the Institut Français d'Architecture, Paris, and the Sheldon H. Solow Professor in the History of Architecture, Institute of Fine Arts, New York University; Beatriz Colomina, Associate Professor, History and Theory of Architecture, Princeton University; William J. Mitchell, Professor of Architecture and Media Arts and Sciences, and Dean, School of Architecture and Planning, MIT; and J. Fiona Ragheb. The catalogue is designed by Bruce Mau Design.

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