

FROM THE GROUND UP

This year, spring made its appearance in Oviedo, Asturias, along with Stravinsky at the hands of Gustavo Dudamel, conductor of the Los Angeles Philharmonic (incidentally, the LAPhil building was designed by Gehry). There, the bows of over a hundred musicians moved incessantly at their own free will until they all ceased abruptly, leaving the grandeur of what had just been heard floating in the air. Some of Gehry's works are like that... we see, or rather we sense a battalion of effort deployed behind it, even though it is already completed, it has already taken shape. Effort born from a few sketches like the ones you shall enjoy here which branch out and are developed by an enthusiastic army that he rigorously yet caringly leads. *Homo Ludens*, without a doubt; one who plays so that we may also play. *Homo Ludens*, who plays with his much-loved team to make us move with and be moved by his buildings and to love him, too...ever treading the course of his destiny with firm steps, like that other soldier by Boccioni.

We are lucky. We have found our lucky star. Frank Gehry has given our country important works from his world. This shows you are about to see, chosen following geographical criteria, contains three examples: The Fish in Barcelona, the Marqués de Riscal winery hotel in Rioja and the Bilbao Guggenheim, which are in themselves three clear-cut examples –three crucibles– of what his work comprises. Here you will have the opportunity to see the first chrysalises of the Guggenheim, sketches in which he progressively focuses the building's relationship with the old town, the river, the park, the overhanging bridge with its highway...You will be able to follow the exegesis of the Marques de Riscal building, unearth his intentions and also see how the playful Fish roams the neighbouring building in a series of proposals until definitively finding its cohesive location, ousting the other possibilities he played with and decidedly marking the chosen course.

Starting from the ground up, from a site occupied by lowly materials –chain link and rudimentary concrete blocks, not to mention plywood–, Gehry has gradually created a world of his own from the ground up, a world he shares with us all. He attempts to downplay the building in the purest tradition of American pop art. Yet he can no longer fool us into seeing this as something casual, as there comes a point at which everything is under control in the project as a whole. Every material, every curve, every shape... it all achieves the perfection of a gem in which everything finds its place, like in a perfect clockwork device. Like in the *Consecration of Spring* his friend Dudamel offered us as a gift, there is a happy ending after so much effort; one which is also comes to a close with silence: the stunned silence of grateful wonder.

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