



GAUDÍ. ARCHITECTURE AHEAD OF ITS TIME

Exhibition: 02.10. – 02.11.2014, Architekturzentrum Wien

Die Ausstellung wurde koordiniert vom Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, Barcelona

PRESS CONFERENCE: Wed, 01.10.2014, 2 pm

OPENING RECEPTION: Wed, 01.10.2014, 7 pm

Speakers at the Press Conference:

Dietmar Steiner, Director Az W

Daniel Giralt-Miracle, Curator of the Exhibition

The work of Antoni Gaudí is widely known by the general public and acclaimed and esteemed by the international expert world. UNESCO has declared many of his buildings part of the world cultural heritage. However, the spectacular exteriors of his buildings can lead us to forget that behind Gaudí's architecture there is an express wish for functionality. The architect used an empirical approach that allowed him to rethink his own designs time and time again and to try out new solutions.

The exhibition "Gaudí. Architecture ahead of its Time" presents the immense range of Gaudí's work in a way that allows it to be grasped, and shows the unusual and forward-looking methods that he applied in order to build his designs. The show is divided into several sections: the first part deals with the biography of the Catalan architect, while in the second his best-known buildings (Casa Batlló, La Pedrera, the Church of the Colònia Güell, Park Güell and Sagrada Família) are presented in the form of videos, plans and models. The third section deals with Gaudí's early works many of which were of decisive importance for the development of the parabolic arch that he used so often, for instance in the Col legi de les Teresianes and the Torre de Bellesguard.

The exhibition also presents the models that Gaudí used to work out the structure of the church in the Colònia Güell, as well as Gaudí's workshop and the site huts that he set up on the site of each of his buildings in order to produce models made of plaster, wood or clay directly on site. The architect used these models to empirically calculate the load-bearing structure and form of the respective building. He himself called this way of working "my experimental methods" and – together with the most modern technology – it is still used today in the site hut of the Sagrada Família. The exhibition concludes with a chapter on Gaudí's extensive design work, above all in the area of furniture.



Organisation: Generalitat de Catalunya, Government of the Region Catalonia
Curator: Daniel Giralt-Miracle
Coordination: National Museum for Catalan Art, Barcelona
Design and Graphic Implementation: Virgili
Assembly: Croquis, SL
Project Coordination Az W: Alexandra Viehhauser

Guided Tours:

Sat, 04.10.2014, 9 pm (in the framework of the Long Night of the Museums)
Wed, 15.10.2014, 6 pm
Sat, 01.11.2014, 5 pm

Opening Hours: daily 10 am -7 pm

Tickets: € 7 / reduced € 4,50, Guided Tours € 2

Over the course of the exhibition period a combination ticket is available:

Az W + Kunsthaus Wien (without temporary exhibition)

2 institutions – 1 ticket: € 15

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ANTONI GAUDÍ BIOGRAPHY

Text © Daniel Giralt-Miracle

Gaudí was born in 1852 in Reus, in the south of Catalonia and grew up in a rural environment. In 1869 he went to Barcelona to begin the study of architecture, completing his studies there in 1878. As was usual at the time a classicist and neo-romantic understanding of architecture played a dominant role in his training but Gaudí always showed a particular interest in the models provided by nature and in structural solutions based on geometric principles. He therefore took a path of his own with regard both to the design of his buildings and their artistic decoration. Gaudí did not follow the stylistic line of Art Nouveau, which at the time played a dominant role, not just in Catalonia but also in many major European cities.

Antoni Gaudí's creative work can be divided into two periods: in the first he arrived at a number of independent solutions for building commissions but on the whole remained tied to a kind of academic eclecticism. In Gaudí's second period his own unmistakable style emerges. To generalise somewhat we can say that the first period encompasses the buildings he designed in the 19th century and the second those he planned in the 20th century, which are marked by technical innovations and the avant-garde nature of the aesthetic solutions. This second period includes such important works as the church of the Colònia Güell (1898-1917) in Santa Coloma de Cervelló, a small village 20 km to the west of Barcelona; the garden city Park Güell (1900-1914), the Casa Batlló (1904-1906), the Casa Milà, "La Pedrera" (1906-1912), and the provisional school building of the Sagrada Família (1909) – all located in Barcelona. Here, naturally, mention must be made of the Church of the Sagrada Família on which the architect worked from 1883 to his death in 1926. In all the buildings referred to it is noticeable how Gaudí anticipated the architectural solutions employed by Expressionism, organic building and indeed even those later arrived at by Rationalism.

Gaudí endeavoured to create a total work of art and consequently decorative ornaments were just as important to him as structural elements or functional aspects. On this account he also designed furniture, door and window frames, door leaves, window and door handles, spyholes or door viewers, railings, plaster ceilings, liturgical vessels and much more. All these designs for the furnishing the interiors of his buildings are marked by a particularly ergonomic approach to form-finding on which account Gaudí is also regarded as a designer who was ahead of his time.

The press release on the exhibition, project lists as well as high-resolution press photos can be downloaded free of charge at www.azw.at/press_gaudi.

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