

## BIOGRAPHIES: THE ARCHITECTS

Since Frank Lloyd Wright was commissioned to design the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in 1942, the Guggenheim Foundation has worked on a number of building projects, and takes pride in its legacy of working with the finest contemporary architects. The Wright-designed building gained landmark status in 1990, the youngest building in New York to achieve such recognition. While the museum's collection and staff grew, the space designed for storage, offices, and conservation in the original Wright building became too limited. Only a small fraction of the Guggenheim's collection of approximately 6,000 works could be shown in the museum at one time. The need for additional space resulted in the conversion of gallery and public space into offices and storage. It became clear in the 1980s that an expansion was necessary, as was the restoration and modernization of the Wright building. Gwathmey Siegel & Associates Architects was the firm selected to design and implement the expansion and restoration. In 1990, the possibility of more gallery space arose, namely a new museum. Japanese architect Arata Isozaki was commissioned to design the museum in a landmark building in SoHo. Other architectural projects affiliated with the Guggenheim Museum are: Hans Hollein's design for a museum in Salzburg, Austria, which is pending regional approval, and the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, designed by Frank Gehry, scheduled to open in 1996 in Bilbao, Spain.

A brief biography of the architects and firms responsible for the design of the Guggenheim Museum in its newly restored and expanded condition follows:

## FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT

When the notion of a museum to house Solomon R. Guggenheim's art collection was conceived in 1942, Mr. Guggenheim's curator, Hilla Rebay, contacted the architect Frank Lloyd Wright. She wrote to him requesting that he design the museum: "I feel that each of these great masterpieces should be organized into space and only you, so it seems to me, would test the possibilities to do so."

Frank Lloyd Wright was born on June 8, 1869, in Richland Center, Wisconsin. He attended the University of Wisconsin where he studied civil engineering until his final year when he decided that he wanted to be an architect. He left the university and moved to Chicago where he found work in the drafting room of architect Louis Sullivan. Sullivan taught Wright the ground rules of architecture and instilled in him his ideas for radical design. After four years, Mr. Wright left to set up his own office.

Early in his career, Wright was hailed in Europe as the creator of an American architecture; he was not so readily accepted in his own country. Wright condemned the skyscraper as well as the "box" house, declaring, "a box is more of a coffin for the human spirit than an inspiration" (New York Times, April 10, 1959). During his lifetime Frank Lloyd Wright was considered the great radical of American architecture and the leader of a flourishing modern school of building.

His own philosophy of architecture was seen in the low terrain-conforming homes that became known as "prairie architecture" and in functional office buildings of modest height using such materials as concrete slabs, glass bricks, and tubing. Among Mr. Wright's many famous designs, including the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, are

his own home, Taliesin, in Spring Green, WI; The Imperial Hotel, Tokyo (that withstood the great earthquake of 1923, but was destroyed in the 1960s for development purposes); the Larkin Company administration building, Buffalo, NY; the Johnson Wax building, Racine, WI; Falling Water (formerly Edgar J. Kaufmann's home) Bear Run, PA; and Taliesin West, Wright's second home, in Phoenix, AZ.

The numerous awards Wright received in his lifetime include the Royal Gold Medal for Architecture from King George VI in 1941, the Gold Medal of the American Institute of Architects in 1949, and the Gold Medal Award of the National Institute of Arts and Letters. He was a member of many professional organizations such as the Academie Royale des Beaux Arts of Antwerp, the Royal Institute of British Architects, and the National Academy of Design. He authored numerous books including Modern Architecture (1931), An Autobiography (1932), The Disappearing City (1932), An Organic Architecture (1939), An American Architecture (1955), and A Testament (1957).

Regarded by many as the greatest architect of the twentieth century, Frank Lloyd Wright died at 89, on April 9, 1959, six months before the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum was completed.

#### GWATHMEY SIEGEL & ASSOCIATES ARCHITECTS

Gwathmey Siegel & Associates Architects was selected as the firm to execute the restoration and expansion of the Guggenheim Museum. The plans included a ten-story tower, which referred to earlier designs by Frank Lloyd Wright, as well as the total

interior and exterior restoration and modernization of the Frank Lloyd Wright building. In 1986 the firm was commissioned to renovate other areas of the museum. The next year the top ramp of the spiral and the second-floor Thannhauser Collection galleries were renovated and restored in time for the foundation's Fiftieth Anniversary Celebrations. By 1988 the construction of the tower and the restoration of the Wright building had begun.

The firm of Gwathmey Siegel & Associates Architects, formed in 1968, has designed and constructed over 150 projects including university and corporate buildings, residences, and a variety of interiors. Recent examples of the firm's work include Harvard University's Fogg Art Museum, Werner Otto Hall Addition, Cambridge, MA (1990); The American Museum of the Moving Image, Astoria, NY (1989); The Contemporary Convention Center, Walt Disney World, Orlando, FL (1991); The College of Architecture, University of North Carolina, Charlotte (1989); College of Agriculture, Gymnasium/Field House, and The Theory Center at Cornell University, Ithaca, NY (1989).

Recent awards bestowed upon the firm are the American Institute of Architects (AIA) Firm Award as well as the National Honor Awards for the Westover School Library/Science Building, Westover, CT; Whig Hall, Princeton University; Dormitory and Dining Hall, State University of New York at Purchase; Taft Residence, Cincinnati, OH; and the Straus Residence at Purchase, NY.

Charles Gwathmey attended the University of Pennsylvania School of Architecture (1956-59), and received his Master's of Architecture from Yale University (1962). For

over twenty-four years he has maintained faculty positions at numerous universities, including Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Columbia, and The Cooper Union, as well as serving on numerous boards including the President's Advisory Board of the School of Architecture at Yale University. He became a Fellow of the AIA in 1981. Among Mr. Gwathmey's many awards are the Brunner Prize from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, the Medal of Honor from the New York Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, and in 1985 he became the first recipient of the Yale Alumni Arts Award from the School of Architecture. In 1988 he was inducted into the Interior Design Magazine Hall of Fame. In 1990 he received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the New York State Society of Architects.

Robert Siegel received his Bachelor's of Architecture from Pratt Institute in 1962 and his Master's of Architecture from Harvard University in 1963. His many awards include the Medal of Honor from the New York Chapter of the AIA in 1983, and in 1988 he was awarded the Pratt Institute Centennial Alumni Award in Architecture as well as being inducted into the Interior Design Magazine Hall of Fame. In 1990 he received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the New York State Society of Architects, and in 1991 he was elected a Fellow of the AIA.

#### ARATA ISOZAKI & ASSOCIATES

Arata Isozaki, the architect for the Guggenheim Museum SoHo, located at 575 Broadway at Prince Street, has designed the exhibition, retail, and public spaces on the first two floors of the landmark building.

Born in Oita City, Kyushu, in 1931, Mr. Isozaki received his Bachelor's of Architecture degree from the University of Tokyo. He lives in Tokyo, Japan, and maintains offices in Tokyo, New York, Paris, and Barcelona.

Mr. Isozaki has designed numerous museums including The Museum of Modern Art, Gunma, Japan (1971-74) and the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art (1981-86). Along with co-architect James Stewart Polshek & Partners, he designed the Brooklyn Museum Master Plan, Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Auditorium, and West Wing Galleries renovation (1986-92). Mr. Isozaki's other recent projects include Sant Jordi Sports Hall for Barcelona's 1992 Olympic Games (1983-90) and the Team Disney building at Walt Disney World, FL (1987-91).

Among the many awards Mr. Isozaki has received are the American Institute of Architects Honor Award (1992) for the Team Disney building, The Chicago Architecture Award (1990), the Arnold W. Brunner Memorial Prize from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters (1988), the Gold Medal from the Royal Institute of British Architects (1986), and the Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres from France's Ministry of Culture (1984). Mr. Isozaki is an Honorary Fellow of the American Institute of Architects. An exhibition of his work, Arata Isozaki 1960/1990 Architecture, is currently on a world tour.

For the history of the design and construction of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum please consult the foundation's chronology.

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