Frank Gehry

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<th>Frank Owen Gehry</th>
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<th>Born</th>
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<tr>
<td>Nationality</td>
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<td>Awards</td>
<td>AIA Gold Medal</td>
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<td>National Medal of Arts</td>
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<td>Pritzker Prize</td>
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<th>Work</th>
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<td>Buildings</td>
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<td>Guggenheim Museum, Walt Disney Concert Hall, Gehry Residence, Weisman Art Museum, Dancing House, Art Gallery of Ontario, EMP/SFM, Cinémathèque française</td>
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**Frank Owen Gehry**, CC (born Frank[1] Owen Goldberg; February 28, 1929) is a Canadian American Pritzker Prize-winning architect based in Los Angeles, California.

His buildings, including his private residence, have become tourist attractions. His works are often cited as being among the most important works of contemporary architecture in the 2010 World Architecture Survey, which led *Vanity Fair* to label him as "the most important architect of our age".[2]

Gehry's best-known works include the titanium-covered Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain; MIT Stata Center in Cambridge, Massachusetts; Walt Disney Concert Hall in downtown Los Angeles; Experience Music Project in Seattle; Weisman Art Museum in Minneapolis; Dancing House in Prague; the Vitra Design Museum and MARTa Museum in Germany; the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto and the Cinémathèque française in Paris. But it was his private residence in Santa Monica, California, which jump-started his career, lifting it from the status of "paper architecture" — a phenomenon that many famous architects have experienced in their formative decades through experimentation almost exclusively on paper before receiving their first major commission in later years.

**Personal life**

Gehry was born Frank Owen Goldberg[1] on February 28, 1929, in Toronto, Ontario. His parents were Polish Jews.[3] A creative child, he was encouraged by his grandmother, Mrs. Caplan, with whom he would build little cities out of scraps of wood.[4] His use of corrugated steel, chain link fencing, unpainted plywood and other utilitarian or "everyday" materials was partly inspired by spending Saturday mornings at his grandfather's hardware store. He would spend time drawing with his father and his mother introduced him to the world of art. "So the creative genes were there," Gehry says. "But my father thought I was a dreamer, I wasn't gonna amount to anything. It was my mother who thought I was just reticent to do things. She would push me."[5]

He was given the Hebrew name "Ephraim" by his grandfather but only used it at his bar mitzvah.[1]
In 1947 Gehry moved to California, got a job driving a delivery truck, and studied at Los Angeles City College, eventually to graduate from the University of Southern California's School of Architecture. After graduation from USC in 1954, he spent time away from the field of architecture in numerous other jobs, including service in the United States Army. He studied city planning at the Harvard Graduate School of Design for a year, leaving before completing the program. In 1952, still known as Frank Goldberg, he married Anita Snyder, who he claims was the one who told him to change his name, which he did, to Frank Gehry. In 1966 he and Snyder divorced. In 1975 he married Berta Isabel Aguilera, his current wife. He has two daughters from his first marriage, and two sons from his second marriage.

Having grown up in Canada, Gehry is a huge fan of ice hockey. He began a hockey league in his office, FOG (which stands for Frank Owen Gehry), though he no longer plays with them. In 2004, he designed the trophy for the World Cup of Hockey. Gehry holds dual citizenship in Canada and the United States. He lives in Santa Monica, California, and continues to practice out of Los Angeles.

**Architectural style**

Much of Gehry’s work falls within the style of Deconstructivism, which is often referred to as post-structuralist in nature for its ability to go beyond current modalities of structural definition. In architecture, its application tends to depart from modernism in its inherent criticism of culturally inherited givens such as societal goals and functional necessity. Because of this, unlike early modernist structures, Deconstructivist structures are not required to reflect specific social or universal ideas, such as speed or universality of form, and they do not reflect a belief that form follows function. Gehry’s own Santa Monica residence is a commonly cited example of deconstructivist architecture, as it was so drastically divorced from its original context, and in such a manner as to subvert its original spatial intention.

Gehry is sometimes associated with what is known as the "Los Angeles School," or the "Santa Monica School" of architecture. The appropriateness of this designation and the existence of such a school, however, remains controversial due to the lack of a unifying philosophy or theory. This designation stems from the Los Angeles area's producing a group of the most influential postmodern architects, including such notable Gehry contemporaries as Eric Owen Moss and Pritzker Prize-winner Thom Mayne of Morphosis, as well as the famous schools of architecture at the Southern California Institute of Architecture (co-founded by Mayne), UCLA, and USC where Gehry is a member of the Board of Directors.
Frank Gehry

Gehry’s style at times seems unfinished or even crude, but his work is consistent with the California ‘funk’ art movement in the 1960s and early 1970s, which featured the use of inexpensive found objects and non-traditional media such as clay to make serious art. Gehry has been called “the apostle of chain-link fencing and corrugated metal siding”. However, a retrospective exhibit at New York’s Whitney Museum in 1988 revealed that he is also a sophisticated classical artist, who knows European art history and contemporary sculpture and painting.

Criticism

Gehry’s work has its detractors. Some have said:

- The buildings waste structural resources by creating functionless forms.
- The buildings are apparently designed without accounting for the local climate.
- The spectacle of a building often overwhelms its intended use, especially in the case of museums and arenas.
- The buildings do not seem to belong in their surroundings.

Other notable aspects of career

Awards

Gehry was elected to the College of Fellows of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) in 1974, and he has received many national, regional, and local AIA awards, including AIA Los Angeles Chapter Gold Medal. He presently serves on the steering committee of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture. Gehry was awarded the Pritzker Architecture Prize at the Tōdai-ji Buddhist Temple in 1989. The Pritzker Prize serves to honor a living architect whose built work demonstrates a combination of those qualities of talent, vision, and commitment, which has produced consistent and significant contributions to humanity and the built environment through the art of architecture. In 1999, he was awarded the AIA Gold Medal “in recognition of a significant body of work of lasting influence on the theory and practice of architecture.” He accepted the 2007 The Henry C. Turner Prize for Innovation in Construction Technology from the National Building Museum on behalf of Gehry Partners and Gehry Technologies.

Academia

Gehry is a Distinguished Professor of Architecture at Columbia University and teaches advanced design studios at the Yale School of Architecture. He has received honorary doctoral degrees from Occidental College, Whittier College, the Southern California Institute of Architecture, the University of Toronto, the California College of
Art and Crafts, the Technical University of Nova Scotia, the Rhode Island School of Design, the California Institute of the Arts, and the Otis Art Institute at the Parsons School of Design. In 1982 and 1989, he held the Charlotte Davenport Professorship in Architecture at Yale University. In 1984, he held the Eliot Noyes Chair at Harvard University. In January 2011, he joined the University of Southern California (USC) faculty, as the Judge Widney Professor of Architecture.[9]

**Budgets**

Gehry has gained a reputation for taking the budgets of his clients seriously, in an industry where complex and innovative designs like Gehry's typically go over budget. Sydney Opera House, which has been compared with the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao in terms of architectural innovation, had a cost overrun of 1,400 percent. It was therefore duly noted when the Guggenheim Bilbao was constructed on time and budget. In an interview in *Harvard Design Magazine* Gehry explained how he did it. First, he ensured that what he calls the "organization of the artist" prevailed during construction, in order to prevent political and business interests from interfering with the design. Second, he made sure he had a detailed and realistic cost estimate before proceeding. Third, he used CATIA (computer-aided three-dimensional interactive application) and close collaboration with the individual building trades to control costs during construction.

However, not all of Gehry's projects have gone smoothly. The Walt Disney Concert Hall in Downtown Los Angeles resulted in over 10,000 RFIs (requests for information) and was $174 million over budget. Furthermore, there was a dispute which ended with a $17.8 million settlement.[11]

**Celebrity status**

Gehry is considered a modern architectural icon and celebrity, a major "Starchitect" — a neologism describing the phenomenon of architects attaining a sort of celebrity status. Although Gehry has been a vocal opponent of the term, it usually refers to architects known for dramatic, influential designs that often achieve fame and notoriety through their spectacular effect. Other notable celebrity architects include Jean Nouvel, Zaha Hadid, Thom Mayne, Steven Holl, Rem Koolhaas, and Norman Foster. Gehry came to the attention of the public in 1972 with his "Easy Edges" cardboard furniture. He has appeared in Apple's black and white "Think Different" pictorial ad campaign that associates offbeat but revered figures with Apple's design philosophy. He even once appeared as himself in *The Simpsons* in the episode "The Seven-Beer Snitch", where he parodied himself by intimating that his ideas are derived by looking at a crumpled paper ball. He also voiced himself on the TV show *Arthur*, where he helped Arthur and his friends design a new treehouse. Steve Sample, President of the University of Southern California, told Gehry that "...After George Lucas, you are our most prominent graduate." In 2009, Gehry designed a hat for pop star Lady Gaga, reportedly by using his iPhone.[12]
Documentary

In 2005, veteran film director Sydney Pollack, a friend of Gehry's, made the documentary *Sketches of Frank Gehry* with appreciative comments by Philip Johnson, Ed Ruscha, Julian Schnabel, and Dennis Hopper, and critical ones by Hal Foster supplementing dialogue between Gehry and Pollack about their work in two collaborative art forms with considerable commercial constraints and photography of some buildings Gehry designed. It was released on DVD by Sony Pictures Home Entertainment on August 22, 2006, together with an interview of Sydney Pollack by fellow director Alexander Payne and some audience questions following the premiere of the film.

Fish and furniture

Gehry is very much inspired by fish. Not only do they appear in his buildings, he created a line of jewelry, household items, and sculptures based on this motif. "It was by accident I got into the fish image", claimed Gehry. One thing that sparked his interest in fish was the fact that his colleagues are recreating Greek temples. He said, "Three hundred million years before man was fish...if you gotta go back, and you're insecure about going forward...go back three hundred million years ago. Why are you stopping at the Greeks? So I started drawing fish in my sketchbook, and then I started to realize that there was something in it."[13]

Standing Glass Fish is just one of many works featuring fish which Gehry has created. The gigantic fish is made of glass plates and silicone, with the internal supporting structure of wood and steel clearly visible. It soars above a reflecting pool in a glass building built especially for it, in the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden. Another huge Gehry fish sculpture dominates a public garden in front of the Fishdance Restaurant in Kobe, Japan.

In addition to architecture, Gehry has made a line of furniture, jewelry, various household items, sculptures, and even a glass bottle for Wyborowa Vodka. His first line of furniture, produced from 1969–1973, was called "Easy Edges", constructed out of cardboard. Another line of furniture released in the spring of 1992 is "Bentwood Furniture". Each piece is named after a different hockey term. He was first introduced to making furniture in 1954 while serving in the U.S. Army, where he designed furniture for the enlisted soldiers. Gehry claims that making furniture is his "quick fix".[14]

Software development

Gehry's firm was responsible for innovation in architectural software. His firm spun off another firm called Gehry Technologies which developed Digital Project.

Awards

- Gehry is a Senior Fellow of the Design Futures Council
- In 1989, Gehry was the recipient of the Pritzker Prize for architecture.
- In 1994, Gehry was the recipient of The Dorothy and Lillian Gish Prize.
- In 1995, Gehry was the recipient of the Academy of Achievement Golden Plate Award
- In 1998, he was awarded the National Medal of Arts.[15]
- In 1999, he was awarded the AIA Gold Medal.
- In 2000, Gehry was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum[16]
- In 2004, on November 3, Gehry was awarded the prestigious Woodrow Wilson Award for public service by the Woodrow Wilson Center of the Smithsonian Institution in New York City.
- In 2006 on December 6, California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and First Lady Maria Shriver inducted Frank Gehry into the California Hall of Fame located at The California Museum for History, Women, and the Arts.
Honorary doctorates

- Visual Arts; California Institute of the Arts (Valencia, California, USA—1987)
- Fine Arts; Rhode Island School of Design (Providence, Rhode Island, USA—1987)
- Engineering; Technical University of Nova Scotia (Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada—1989)
- Fine Arts; Otis College of Art and Design (Los Angeles, California, USA—1989)
- Humanities; Occidental College (Los Angeles, California, USA—1993)
- Whittier College (Whittier, California, USA—1995)
- Architecture; Southern California Institute of Architecture (Los Angeles, California, USA—1997)
- Laws; University of Toronto (Toronto, Ontario, Canada—1998)
- University of Edinburgh (Edinburgh, Scotland, United Kingdom—2000)
- University of Southern California (Los Angeles, California, USA—2000)
- Yale University (New Haven, Connecticut, USA—2000)
- Harvard University (Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA—2000)
- City College of New York (New York, New York, USA—2002)
- Art Institute of Chicago (Chicago, Illinois, USA—2004)

Notes


[6] (B. Adams)


References

- *Sketches of Frank Gehry* - Documentary
- *El Croquis* 74/75 1995
- Architects Today - Laurence King Publishers
- The Pritzker Architecture Prize- www.pritzkerprize.com

External links

- Gehry Partners, LLP (http://www.foga.com), Gehry's architecture firm
- Gehry Technologies, Inc. (http://www.gehrytechnologies.com), Gehry's technology firm
- Pritzker Prize page on Gehry (http://www.pritzkerprize.com/gehry.htm)
- One hour interview with Charlie Rose at Google Video (July 13, 2001) (http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=8650915086454055077&q=tvshow:Charlie_Rose+Frank+Gehry)
- TED Talks by Frank Gehry (http://www.ted.com/speakers/frank_gehry.html)
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