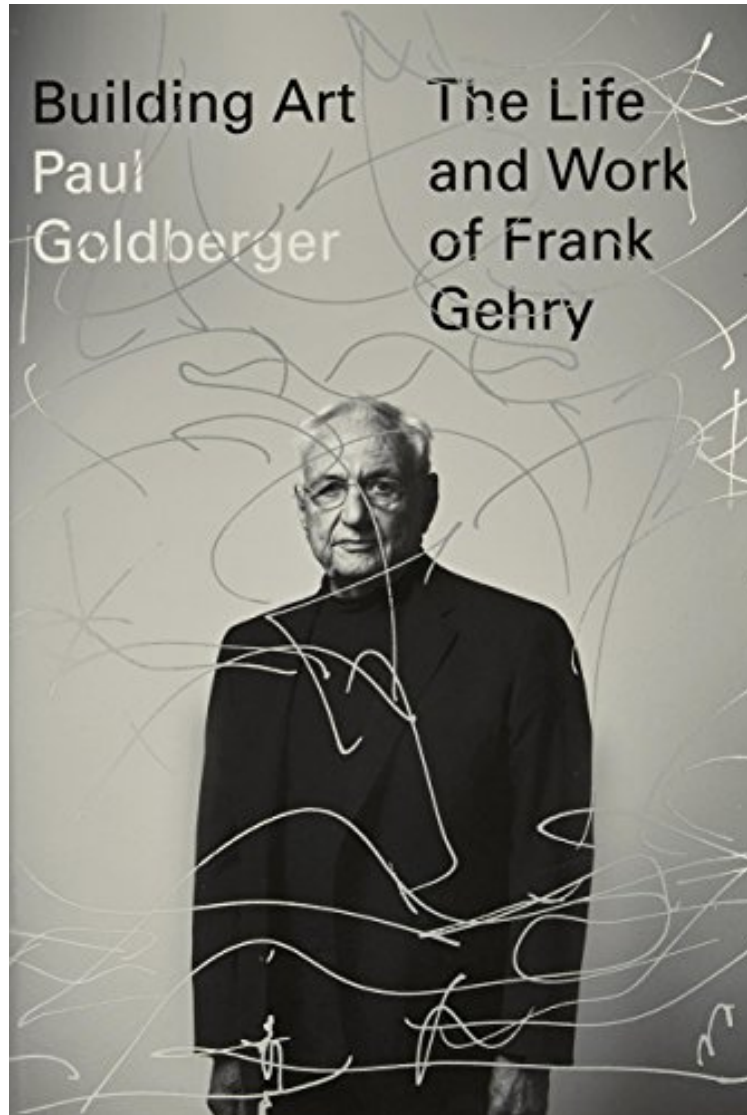


Building Art: The Life and Work of Frank Gehry

Paul Goldberger

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Paul Goldberger : Building Art: The Life and Work of Frank Gehry before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Building Art: The Life and Work of Frank Gehry:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A Terrific Read!By PlancentricFrank Gehry is today's most famous American architect, now comparable to that other Frank -- Frank Lloyd Wright. So it is high time there was an authoritative Gehry chronicle. As a biography the new Goldberger book is as important and insightful about an architect's motivations and evolving frame of mind as Le Corbusier: A Life, by Nicholas Fox Weber. The author takes us from Gehry's difficult childhood in Toronto in the 1930s, through the move to Los Angeles in 1947, architecture school at USC, a stint in the army, city planning at Harvard, work for shopping mall designer Victor

Gruen, time in Paris and then back to LA where he launched his practice in 1962. There he found friendship with, and inspiration from, a circle of up-and-coming modern painters who incorporated ordinary found objects in their work. Subsequent chapters cover the building of his and second wife Bert's famous cyclone fence house in Santa Monica, his fish sculptures and cardboard furniture, the commissions for Bilbao and Disney, the range of New York work, the Dwight Eisenhower Memorial in Washington D. C., and the Louis Vuitton Museum in Paris, which opened last year. The author is adept at drawing Gehry out and getting at the thinking, and the contexts and stories, behind the designs. In a way Goldberger acts as kind of architectural therapist, helping Gehry unravel and make sense of a lifetime of anxiety about his own work and, in effect, complementing the actual psychotherapy Gehry received from his friend the psychologist Milton Wexler. So I guess you could say that this book is the architect's ultimate "psychiatry couch session." One theme that's especially strong throughout *Building Art* is the sense of contradiction, both within Gehry's nature and his art. For example, Goldberger writes: "Frank's work represented emotion as much as intellect and emerged out of intuition far more than theory; like all of his architecture, Bilbao was at once pragmatic and idealistic." He makes the point that Gehry was heavily influenced, in a push-pull sort of way, by the mid-century California modernism of his early milieu. Describing the billowing shapes of Disney Hall, he writes: "The great sails were a symbol of the new, but they were also a way of creating decoration, or giving the building an element that existed solely for visual pleasure. Frank was consciously going against the puritanical strain that had always run through modernist architecture, the belief that a building needed to be 'honest,' 'pure,' and 'rational'—that ornamentation was not just a self-indulgent frill and a useless return to historical copying, but an ethical transgression, a violation of modernist principles." A related theme is Gehry's desire to express movement in architecture, leading to his manipulation of fish shapes and compound curves, which drew inspiration from Japanese carp and Greek sculpture. Expressive movement would become his way of providing the third ingredient in the classical Vitruvian definition of architecture as "commodity, firmness, and delight." Goldberger explains: "The architecture of Bilbao would articulate his larger goals more clearly than ever before: he wanted less to shock than to find a fresh and different way of using architecture to produce the sensations of satisfaction, comfort, and pleasure that more traditional buildings did." I have experienced a concert at Disney Hall and there Frank Gehry made not only a new symbol for LA on the outside, but also a space that lifts the audience, reshapes and recombines it with the orchestra, and transports both into a sensual new reality. It's a room that does more than reverberate—it resonates. So does this book.

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Goldberger provides not only the good aspects of the Gehry person and architect but quite ...By Violet Flower Really interesting book written by an honest admirer of the subject. Mr. Goldberger provides not only the good aspects of the Gehry person and architect but quite a bit of the bad as well. I would have given the book a 5 except it lacks enough images of the buildings described to lessen the impact the excellent writing could have had.

10 of 11 people found the following review helpful. Photo-free book about architecture? By Cynthia R. Grace I read Kindle's eBook version. It has a very few photos. Really? A book about architecture with few photos? I went to bookstore to look at the hardbound version. It has a lot more photos and many are in color. I feel cheated. I'm sure they do this to keep prices down. The problem is, you don't know before you buy the eBook version that it has no or fewer pictures than bound versions. I want this info upfront.

From Pulitzer Prize-winning architectural critic Paul Goldberger: an engaging, nuanced exploration of the life and work of Frank Gehry, undoubtedly the most famous architect of our time. This first full-fledged critical biography presents and evaluates the work of a man who has almost single-handedly transformed contemporary architecture in his innovative use of materials, design, and form, and who is among the very few architects in history to be both respected by critics as a creative, cutting-edge force and embraced by the general public as a popular figure. *Building Art* shows the full range of Gehry's work, from early houses constructed of plywood and chain-link fencing to lamps made in the shape of fish to the triumphant success of such late projects as the spectacular art museum of glass in Paris. It tells the story behind Gehry's own house, which upset his neighbors and excited the world with its mix of the traditional and the extraordinary, and recounts how Gehry came to design the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain, his remarkable structure of swirling titanium that changed a declining city into a destination spot. *Building Art* also explains Gehry's sixteen-year quest to complete Walt Disney Concert Hall, the beautiful, acoustically brilliant home of the Los Angeles Philharmonic. Although Gehry's architecture has been written about widely, the story of his life has never been told in full detail. Here we come to know his Jewish immigrant family, his working-class Toronto childhood, his hours spent playing with blocks on his grandmother's kitchen floor, his move to Los Angeles when he was still a teenager, and how he came, unexpectedly, to end up in architecture school. Most important, *Building Art* presents and evaluates Gehry's lifetime of work in conjunction with his entire life story, including his time in the army and at Harvard, his long relationship with his psychiatrist and the impact it had on his work, and his two marriages and four children. It analyzes his carefully crafted persona, in which a casual, amiable "aw, shucks" surface masks a driving and intense ambition. And it explores his relationship to Los Angeles and how its position as home to outsider artists gave him the freedom in his formative

years to make the innovations that characterize his genius. Finally, it discusses his interest in using technology not just to change the way a building looks but to change the way the whole profession of architecture is practiced. At once a sweeping view of a great architect and an intimate look at creative genius, *Building Art* is in many ways the saga of the architectural milieu of the twenty-first century. But most of all it is the compelling story of the man who first comes to mind when we think of the lasting possibilities of buildings as art. From the Hardcover edition.

ldquo;Fascinating. . . . An informative, startling journey into the inner sanctums of modern architecture.s power structure.rdquo; mdash;The New York Times Book ldquo;Revealing. . . . A penetrating portrait.rdquo; mdash;Morning Edition/NPRldquo;Riveting. . . . Full of little-known facts about the Pritzker Prize-winner that will surprise the most knowledgeable Gehry-philes.rdquo; mdash;Architectural Digestldquo;Excellent and comprehensive. . . . Undeniably fascinating.rdquo; mdash;Bloomberg ldquo;Terrifically readable. . . . Satisfying detail on Gehry.s career path and hugely complex personality.rdquo; mdash;Los Angeles Times ldquo;Convey[s] the architect.s personality and process with deft strokes that have an artistic ease of their own. . . . If yours.re intrigued by Frank Gehry . . . I can.s not recommend this expansive survey of his life and work too highly.rdquo; mdash;John King, San Francisco Chronicle ldquo;Fascinating. . . . Agilely balances the disparate subjects of art and biography. Goldberg.s critical assessments of Gehry.s designs are insightful and often riveting.rdquo; mdash;Richmond Times-Dispatch ldquo;Critically fluent, socially and psychologically acute. . . . An involving work of significant architectural history and a discerning and affecting portrait of a daring and original master builder.rdquo; mdash;Booklist (starred review) ldquo;This full-length critical study of an important contemporary architect is by one of our finest architectural critics. . . . [An] outstanding volume. . . . Highly recommended.rdquo; mdash;Library Journal (starred review) ldquo;Richly researched, intelligent, and graceful.rdquo; mdash;Kirkus s ldquo;[Goldberger] contextualizes Gehry.s work with smart discussions of trends in Modernism and the Los Angeles art scene that inspired such trends, and offers his usual shrewd, evocative insights into the look and feel of buildings.rdquo; mdash;Publishers WeeklyAbout the AuthorPaul Goldberger,nbsp;a contributing editor atnbsp;Vanity Fair,nbsp;spent fifteen years as the architecture critic fornbsp;The New Yorkernbsp;and began his career atnbsp;The New York Times,nbsp;where he was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for distinguished criticism for his writing on architecture. He is the author of many books, most recentlynbsp;Why Architecture Matters, Building Up and Tearing Down: Reflections on the Age of Architecture,nbsp;andnbsp;Up From Zero.nbsp;He teaches at The New School and lectures widely around the country on architecture, design, historic preservation, and cities. He and his wife, Susan Solomon, live in New York City.