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Gehry's Guggenheim in Bilbao  
BY MARTIN POPS

**ELIZABETH FARNSWORTH:** How much was Frank Lloyd Wright in your mind?

**FRANK GEHRY:** I knew he would hate what I did ... because all of us hate each other's work in a way, and I would have been a young upstart, even though I'm an old man now. But I wanted to have a picture of Frank Lloyd Wright in the foyer sort of looking disgusted.

— Online *Newshour* Transcript (21 October 1997)

**B**ilbao is Spain's largest city in the north, the major city of the semi-autonomous Basque Provinces. It is an old city—700 years old in 2000—but if you click on its Web site, you may read its Revitalization Plan, a list of projects—some already completed, others in train—whose purpose is “to prepare for the 21st century.” Official acknowledgement, in other words, that an economy of goods and services, culture and tourism, has finally replaced iron-mining and ship-building, the traditional sources of Bilbao's wealth. The Plan is bold-faced and boosterish, as such documents are, but the projects are timely and substantial, and the city fathers have recruited some of the nomad-priests of contemporary archi-

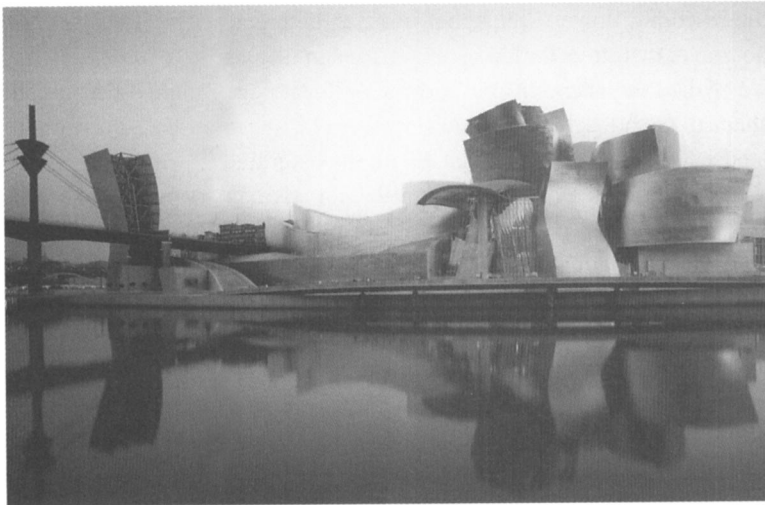
ecture. Sir Norman Foster designed the stations of the Metro (now affectionately nicknamed “fosteritos”), and two other Englishmen, James Stirling and Michael Wilford, the passenger interchange for local and inter-city traffic. The much-traveled Santiago Calatrava designed a control tower for the airport and a footbridge (with vitreous pavement) upriver from the Guggenheim, and two other Spaniards, Federico Soriano and Dolores Palacios, the Conference and Concert Hall downriver from it. Between the Hall and the Museum there is a derelict section of riverfront which Cesar Pelli—the Argentine-born American—will rehabilitate for commercial, residential, and recreational use.

The river in question is the sluggish Nervión, and the least glamorous project of the Plan—aside from expanding the port into which it flows—is cleaning it. *Bilbao Ria 2000*, a financial consortium, likes to quote Unamuno, a favorite son: “The river is the origin and source of Bilbao’s importance ... backbone of its trade.” But since ships are no longer made along it or ply it, *Bilbao Ria 2000* is quick to add that the volume of trade the port handles—via rail link and motorway—is already one of the largest in Europe. Like the Seine or Tiber, the Nervión is pleasantly and walkably narrow. In due course there will be promenades on either side, and the local claim is that it will be clean by 2004. (For “recreational use”? Rowboating on the Nervión?) The Revitalization Plan means to restore the river to its prominence in city life, and that’s where the Guggenheim comes in: Gehry’s building is the centerpiece of that restoration.

Altering a city’s infrastructure—even altering it stylishly—does not ordinarily alter our consciousness of it. (Bilbao? An exotic locale in a song by Brecht? Like Surabaya?) In another time (of course) a church would have answered—the medieval church at Santiago de Compostela, say, to which international pilgrims flocked. But if pilgrims are now tourists—as even pilgrims to Compostela are—their church is a museum. So the city fathers of Bilbao wisely approached the Director of the Guggenheim, Thomas Krens, who, suggesting a limited competition, elicited entries from three nomad-priests of contemporary architecture: the Japanese Arata Isozaki (who had renovated the Guggenheim SoHo) and two serious iconoclasts: the Austrian firm of Coop Himmelblau and the Canadian-born American Frank O. Gehry (b. 1929). Gehry of course

was awarded the palm so that in addition to its flagship in New York—Frank Lloyd Wright's spiralforn in Manhattan—the Museum now has satellites in Bilbao, SoHo, Venice, and Berlin and is looking to still other cities and continents. Hans Hollein had drawn plans (1989, unbuilt) for Salzburg, and *The New York Times* reported (5 February 1999) that the Guggenheim (with Gehry again as architect) is contemplating a second site in Lower Manhattan. (The Museum has also agreed to a long-term loan of more than 400 works—some of them large and unwieldy—to Mass MoCA [the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art] with enormous square footage in North Adams.) Can Tokyo be far behind? The Guggenheim Foundation has become the international church of the religion of art.

Although Guggenheim Bilbao (1991-1997) [fig. 1] is indeed spectacular—a building destined to alter one's consciousness of a city—Gehry had already designed several other cultural institutions in Europe and America in a less flexible but premonitory syntax.<sup>1</sup> Bilbao, I mean, is neither a sport nor a new direction but, like *Guernica* sixty years before, the summation of a style: in its complexity of form and fluency of handling. I cite *Guernica* as an example not because it is at the Guggenheim—it is, in fact, at the Reina Sofia in Madrid—but because



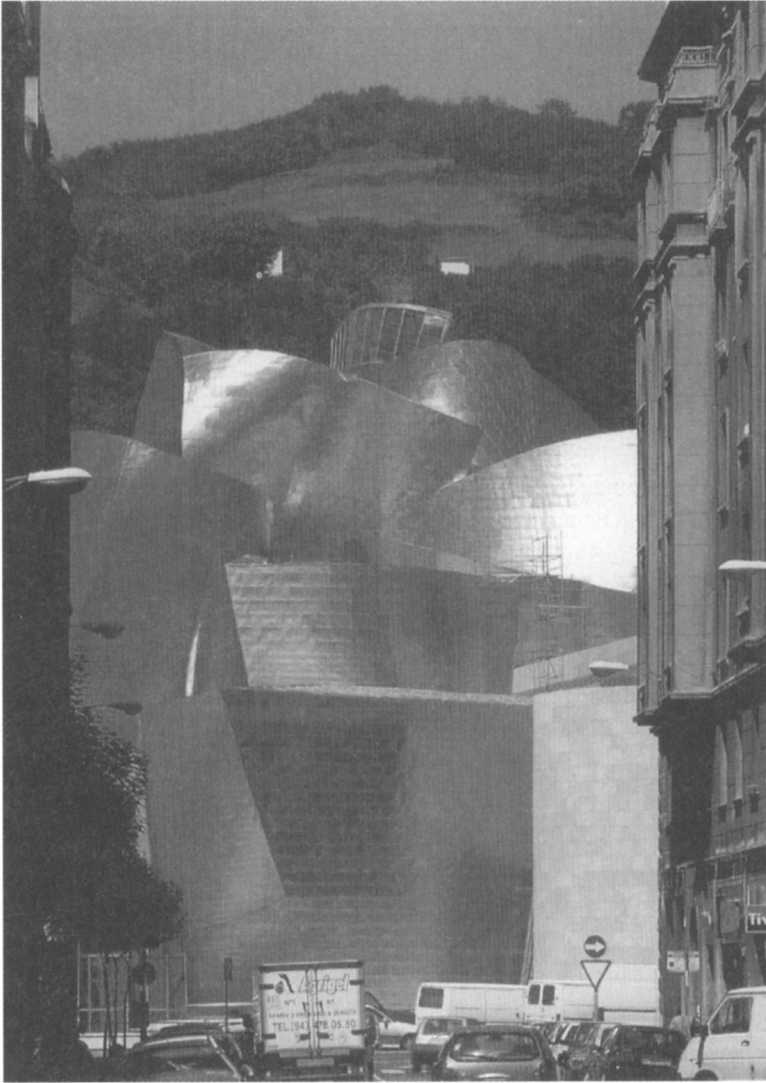
*figure 1*

there is said to be room “earmarked”<sup>2</sup> for it in Bilbao, its logical home: in a space presently assigned to (though not always occupied by) Damien Hirst, the Englishman of formaldehyde and severed animal parts ... as if the American curators had simply forgotten—or never remembered—the Spanish Civil War.

Wright’s Guggenheim (as everyone knows) is unrelated to the streets and the park which surround it: an unrelation—in truth, a disrelation—in which Wright, contemptuous of city life, gloried. Nevertheless, Wright did not choose the site—he would have preferred a hilltop—and was forced to accommodate himself to 89th Street and Fifth Ave.<sup>3</sup> Gehry was no doubt luckier—the riverfront became available—and at least as ready as the usually authoritarian Wright to work within the given. “In the way it grows out of the city the Guggenheim ... could exist only in Bilbao.”<sup>4</sup> Its long facade borders the Nervión, its tower annexes La Salve Bridge, its plaza spans railroad tracks. The Guggenheim bears a literal—that is to say, a symbolic—relation to urban energies: as a node of convergence and intersection.

In the sheen of sunlight and wrinkled shadow, beyond the brown realism of a narrow street, it is a radiant spectacle: not stone nor even glass or steel but stacked masses of warm titanium, compressed and emergent: the “metallic flower,” metaphor of an emergent city. [fig 2] At the bottom of that street the Guggenheim remains the destiny of our focus, and we realize the shape of the “flower”—its site and height—rhymes the shape of the hill across the river (or, as in a Japanese garden, “borrows the landscape”), the cultural aligned with the natural.

From across the Nervión the complementary metaphor of the flower is a vessel: massed stacks as of smoke-stacks, long hull and prow. And this metaphor is also and inescapably political, as if the Museum were the last ship built along the river and the last to ply it: a commemorative vessel—itsself and its cargo, culture—for a city setting forth. The Guggenheim lies before us like a dream, shining softly like silver, dematerialized in light and doubled in the water of the Nervión: various, beautiful, new, and thrillingly inaccessible. An archetypal architecture, Christian and other, of a holy city across the water. We may approach it only as we approach a dream we hope to recover—that is to say, tangentially, across La Salve Bridge. It persists in its otherness as Delft lies

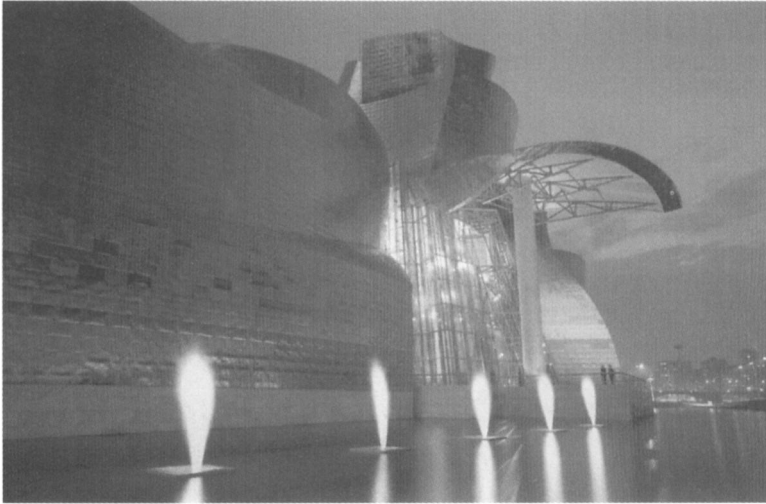


*figure 2*

before and beyond us across the river in Vermeer's painting: a vision of light, a New Jerusalem. The Guggenheim is not a New Jerusalem, and we are not novitiates about to cross the water in a ritual of rebirth, though on the bank of the river it is hard not to recognize these ancient implications. The Guggenheim is a building of grandeur and glamour, a sacred repository for a secular age.

From this opposite bank, on a lucky night, we may see Yves Klein's *Fountains of Fire*, five fountains of fire jetting from a riverine enclosure alongside the waterfront elevation. [fig 3] These images of romantic desire govern the waterfront as Jeff Koons's *Puppy* dominates the plaza. [fig 4] The world's largest puppy at forty-one feet, earthen and stolid, sits at the front of the plaza clad in soil from which a thousand flowers bloom (many even in winter). We are, in other words, in the workaday world—inclusive and democratic—of exits and entrances, of a plenitude of possibilities. We may descend that long flight of shallow steps and enter the museum. [fig 5] Or we may walk toward the administrative building painted bright blue (IKB or International Klein Blue I take it, in silent homage). Or, in another direction, toward the restaurant and auditorium. (A banner which announces the current exhibition is attached to a curving steel frame projected over the auditorium. Gehry is himself a sailor: it is not beside the point that the banner seems to swell sail-like.) Or we may descend another set of steps alongside the museum to the river's edge. Or around the other side of the museum and across the bridge. We may wander along the river or across it for the simple pleasures of parallax. Or, like *Puppy*, we may just sit in the hum and buzz of dailiness.

The plaza incorporates the hectic of the street—getting and spending, meeting and greeting—leafleteers appealing to conscience or pocketbook. The ambient noise of traffic. Immersing ourselves in that discordance of style, scale, shape, sound, material, color, and choice of direction, we may experience a certain strain in our capacity for wonder. We may also wonder why the Main Entrance to the museum is down that long flight of steps and not on the glamorous facade. (A back door, which issues onto the riverine landing, is reachable only through the museum.) Is the Main Entrance, then, at the back of the building? Gehry is very good at countering expectation, even as he preserves the otherness of riverine glamour.



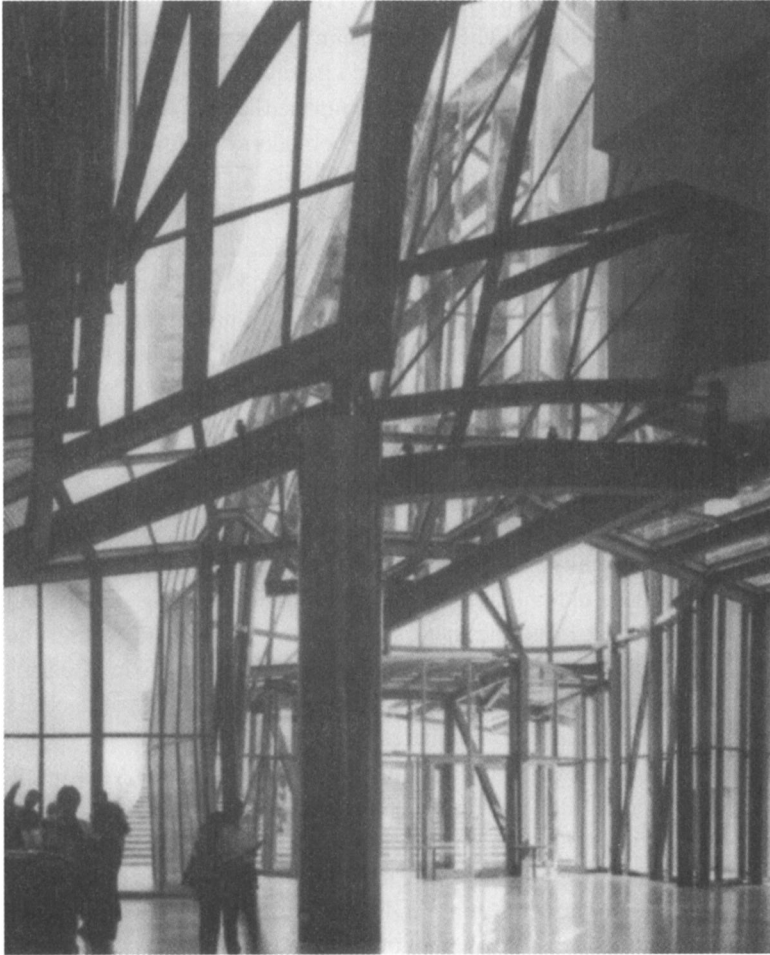
*figure 3*



*figure 4*



*figure 5*



*figure 6*

The Museum is integrated into landscape and cityscape, but it is quite unlike either. Perhaps that is why it attaches itself to La Salve Bridge, a piece of engineering (albeit conventional) less alien to it than any local building. The Guggenheim will literally be less alone when Pelli's designs are realized, but it will probably look no less strange. (It might look a little less strange in a more cosmopolitan place—the Barcelona, say, of Gaudí's Casa Milà with its curvilinear facade [1906 -1912] and Gehry's own curvilinear Fish Sculpture [enormous at 160 feet x 100 feet] above the Vila Olímpica [1989-1992].) The Guggenheim looks strange because Gehry manipulated a material hardly ever used before into shapes hardly ever seen before for a purpose hardly ever contemplated before. The Guggenheim is a free-form design in futuristic metal for modern art. It would astonish anywhere. And that's just the outside.

After descending those shallow steps, we buy our ticket in a foyer—a forest, really [fig 6]—of steel beams and glass before proceeding to the three-storied atrium which has already been more than once compared with cathedral space and which is in its own right an environmental sculpture, a “dizzying baroque vortex”<sup>5</sup> 165 feet high, more than one-and-a-half times the height of Wright's rotunda, a riot of unpredictable shapes and astonishing juxtapositions in a riot of contending materials—plaster, limestone, steel, glass, titanium—irregular curves and sharp angles, notches/projections/stalactites, as if in architectural fulfilment of Breton's prophecy: “Beauty will be convulsive or it will not be.” [fig 7]

The “reality” of Gehry's atrium, in other words, is the dynamic body, and these unfamiliar shapes—lunging and plunging, jutting and swooping—evoke in us kinesthetic sensations. “[Y]ou get the feeling you are really looking at a body.”<sup>6</sup> More than looking at: being in. Gehry's sculpture—the softness of plaster and limestone, the hardness of steel and glass—does not imitate but intimate soft tissue and hard bone. A “cyborg” then? I think not. But neither the structure of Vesalian man. A biomorph rather. By defamiliarizing the metaphoric space of the body, Gehry defamiliarizes the literal space of the atrium. I'm thinking of Chuck Close defamiliarizing the portrait (calling it *Head*) and, more to the point, Peter Eisenman defamiliarizing home (calling it *House*): “The house may once have been a true locus and symbol of nurturing shelter, but in a world of irresolvable anxiety ... such symbols are today meaningless and merely



*figure 7*

nostalgic.”<sup>7</sup> Gehry seems to have pursued a similar argument regarding atrial space, thereby negating the old saw: that art is the opiate of the middle classes.

The atrium is overwhelming, and it is hard to imagine that anyone will ever find it underwhelming. (Though one never does know: Flask, third mate of the *Pequod*, takes the measure of *Moby Dick* as 960 cigars.) Nor would I deny that defamiliarizing can lead to refamiliarizing. On my second visit to Bilbao—already an old hand—I eagerly patrolled the second and third floor catwalks and walkways as if the atrium were a vast exploratorium of shape and substance at the service of my curiosity.

We enter Wright’s Guggenheim at street level. A passage—low-ceilinged and deeply overhung—takes us directly into the rotunda where the “reality” of the building—that great core of inner space—bursts upon us: the thrilling space, at once spiritual and carnal, of privileged enclosure. Whatever else they are, Wright’s passage and rotunda are abstract metaphors of female anatomy—sexually antiseptic—even as Gehry’s atrium is visceral and visually contentious. (In both buildings the openness of the central core surprises us—in the Wright even more than in the Gehry—but in neither can we predict inner space from outer design.) Gehry imagined his atrium “an idealistic city” after Fritz Lang’s *Metropolis*: from the river side of the Museum (he noted) “the cars on the bridge look like they’re going into the building.”<sup>8</sup> The building ingests the traffic. The film which comes to mind in regard of Wright’s Guggenheim is Chaplin’s *Modern Times* in which the machine ingests Charlie. Wright famously disparaged—perhaps deliberately misread—Le Corbusier’s famous definition of a house as “a machine for living in.” “Provided the heart is a suction pump,” he added, though if any museum is a machine for looking at modern painting—the modern art Wright notoriously disvalued—it is the spiralform of the Guggenheim. In one parodic version we enter the museum, take the elevator to the top, then let gravity draw us down the rampway and into the street, while someone else, entering the museum, takes the elevator to the top.<sup>9</sup>

But let us take Wright at his word. We enter the museum, take the elevator to the top, then let ourselves “drift down” or “stroll down” the spiralform. “You will *feel* the building,” Wright claimed, “as a curving wave that never breaks”<sup>10</sup> before fetching up in the rotunda, communal

and social space. We have moved, as in an Emersonian dialectic, from Solitude to Society. And now, presumably renewed, we are ready to start looking at pictures. On the other hand, one may fairly say that resisting the body's downward drift and perpetual imbalance is hardly conducive to looking long or well. If we take to heart Louis Kahn's deadpan definition of architectural Form—"a harmony of spaces good for a certain activity of man"—we might conclude that the Guggenheim rampway—whatever its architectural (and sculptural) virtue—is not particularly good for that certain activity of man which is looking at pictures.<sup>11</sup>

In contrast to Gehry's high atrium is his long gallery (425 feet), a space—with one permanent exception—for such temporary shows as the one I saw in July 1998. Near the entrance was a *Labyrinth* by Robert Morris. But since the labyrinth is unicursal, there will be no opportunity for a play of wits or a game of lost-and-found. A largely thankless task awaits those who wait—or were waiting—on queue to traverse it, dire irony of participatory art. At the far end of the gallery was the witty *Knife-Ship* by Claes Oldenberg and Coosje van Bruggen: a Swiss pocket knife (with motorized blades) as large as a small ship (with protrusive oars). Between them, in the center of a concrete floor, the one permanent exception: Richard Serra's "site-specific" *Snake*, six curved sheets of rusted steel paired as three ogival ones, weighing 172 tons. One hundred feet long, 13 feet high, 2 to 3 feet apart. Walking through the Serra—some fearful folk won't—induces a double echo, auditory and visual. The height of the sheets and the narrowness of the passage cause sound to reverberate; the shape of the sculpture complements the complication of ribs across the ceiling. But the Serra creates a real problem. Although the gallery dwarfs it, it dwarfs everything in the gallery. And not just because it is so big and powerful. *Snake looks* permanent and everything else looks temporary.

Everything else, of course, is. In July 1998 another Robert Morris just sat on the floor, neither here nor there. A square-shaped Donald Judd surrounded a flat electrical plate, as if the plate were the reason the Judd were not somewhere else. And then there was the real disservice done Dan Flavin. A green glow just off the long gallery indicated a colored space. The Flavin, a green fluorescent tube, was stuck in a *terrain vague* between the long gallery on one side and bathrooms and a café on the other: a dirtied

passageway inhospitable to higher functions. (In January 1999 the *terrain* was still *vague* but, at least and mercifully, the Flavin was gone.) As for the paintings—Warhol, Stella, Lichtenstein, Rosenquist, et al—they seemed merely to occupy space, not inhabit it: as if they were not just hanging but hanging around. What worked best for me in the long gallery was Lawrence Weiner's *REDUCED*—the text in enormous letters bonded directly to the wall—a work at once reduced from three dimensions to two yet, in those two dimensions, the biggest reduction in the world: a comedy, that is, of disproportion, like the world's biggest puppy. The long gallery needs to be made hospitable to painting and sculpture.

In its own "site-specific" alcove off the atrium is Jenny Holzer's *Installation for Bilbao*, and in a gallery adjacent the long one an alcove housing an installation by Christian Boltanski. So here is a thought-experiment. Construct an environment—into which the Serra might or might not fit—of the long gallery, perhaps a *Merzbau* after the manner of Kurt Schwitters in which to install, among other things, a Mario Merz! (There are two Merzes in the "gallery adjacent.") In any case, inflect the space. Have Robert Gober cut holes in the wall, Anish Kapoor to cut holes in the floor. Alter the air! Fly some Calder's! (In July 1998 a Rauschenberg fabric did hang from the ceiling.) According to van Bruggen, a sympathetic observer, the space of the gallery—spare, columnless, unencumbered—is like an airplane hangar.<sup>12</sup> Well, Anselm Kiefer builds airplanes.... (In July 1998, in the long gallery of Richard Meier's Museum of Contemporary Art in Barcelona there were seven upright columns and one listing Kiefer rocket.) An uneven floor—I'm thinking of Gaudí's spectacularly uneven roofs—might make the long gallery wheelchair-unfriendly, but the labyrinth is already wheelchair-unfriendly, and I'm not so sure about the snake. The concrete floor of the long gallery, barren of detail, is reminiscent of a warehouse. The permanent collection, in other words, has not yet been integrated into the radical architecture of this enormous room. The curators of the Guggenheim have a task before them.

In the meantime they acquitted themselves handsomely for the Rauschenberg Retrospective: not by inflecting the long gallery but, after emptying it of everything save the Serra, attaching to its walls, in a nearly continuous band, panels (and variously mixed media) of Rauschenberg's

unfinished excursus *The 1/4 Mile or 2 Furlong Piece* (1981- ). Rauschenberg is as dominating an artist as Serra, and the thousand feet of the *Piece* he has finished not only make a strong environment around the *Snake*—a turning world for a still point—but show to greater advantage in the long gallery than in New York’s Ace Gallery. (Seven free-standing sculptures from the *Piece* did not compromise its effect.) In fact, the Retrospective itself looked much better in Bilbao where it was located in one venue instead of three and for which it had been neatly pruned: about 300 works instead of the overplus of nearly 500 in New York. Rauschenberg (b. 1925) and Gehry are contemporaries, but the real point of contact between them is that they share a dedication to the unpredictable and indeterminate: experimenting with unorthodox materials and techniques, creating odd juxtapositions and unexpected spaces, controverting generic categories and blurring distinctions. Both of them are very young old men. Wright’s Museum—may I say it?—is too square for Rauschenberg, not wild enough to answer his wildness.

On the second and third floors Krens wanted three rectilinear rooms each. Gehry’s team thought the idea “stodgy,”<sup>13</sup> but the Director wanted them as a contrast to the curving and non-right-angled walls of other galleries. One could argue that in such an original building rectilinear rooms seem unnecessarily conventional—“stodgy”—and that in such an exuberant building they feel unnaturally confining. This argument, however, does not fully cover the case. On the second floor the walls are long and high, on the third floor the ceilings are curved, and on both floors the ceilings are square-slotted so that one can see the veiled presence of sky. Should Gehry have gone (or been allowed to go) the whole hog and “deconstructed the mimesis” of conventional museum space? Wright of course had deconstructed it forty years before with, I should say, uneven result: right to the tipping point between sculptural architecture and architectural sculpture. The museum as idiosyncratic sport. At any alcove of his spiralform we stand on a floor that slopes, before a wall that curves and slants. We might remind ourselves how Wright arrived at this unusual arrangement.

Before there was a Guggenheim Museum there was a Guggenheim collection whose curator, the Baroness Hilla Rebay, was passionately committed to Non-objective art: in particular the geometric abstraction of

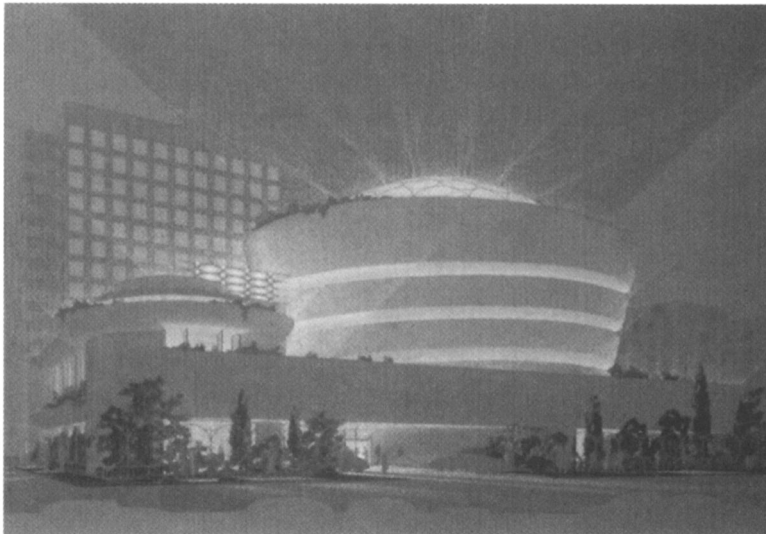
Kandinsky and Rudolf Bauer in whose work she not only recognized the release of modern painting from the material world but through whose work she discerned (albeit with mystagogic eye) access to “the cosmic beyond.”<sup>14</sup> Rebay believed that painting of such transcendental intuition deserved a special *locus*—a “temple of spirit”—and in 1943 she asked Frank Lloyd Wright to design such a building. With incredible persistence, Wright (1867-1959) designed and redesigned it the rest of his life. (The building was finally finished six months after his death.) If Gehry’s Guggenheim is the product of old age, Wright’s is the product of very old age.

Why did it take sixteen years? Wright had to accommodate himself to a new Guggenheim in 1949 (Harry, that is, instead of Solomon) with a tighter grip on the purse-strings and to a new director in 1952 (James Johnson Sweeney, late of MoMA) with an entirely secular portfolio. Neil Levine enumerates the many concessions Wright made to satisfy his principals,<sup>15</sup> but in the matter of slope and slant he did not yield. Wright wanted to tilt unframed paintings—Non-objective ones of course—against the base of the curving wall: the non-rectilinear space of the building in large would “frame” these paintings even as the alcove in small would “liberate” them.<sup>16</sup> Sweeney was not impressed, and it was during his tenure that the secularization of the Guggenheim began. What remains of Rebay’s temple of spirit is an odor of sanctity: the dome (reminiscent of the heavenly dome) and the spiralforn (reminiscent of the spiritual path). As for Kandinsky and Bauer, they have taken their size-places in the history of modern art.

The spiralforn, in fact, had not one but two destinations. Addressing Solomon Guggenheim, a convert to Non-objectivity, Wright stressed Rebay’s “Holy of Holies” on the main floor, putative sanctuary of the most important paintings in the collection. Addressing unconverted Harry Guggenheim, Wright stressed the rotunda on the ground floor, communal space of social renewal. Not that Wright—despite talk of “drift” and “stroll”—meant to encourage freedom of choice. On the contrary. Wright suppresses choice to shapely effect, and the gravitational pull of the spiralforn urges upon the visitor—for his own good!—the inexorable route of the architect’s narrative. An over-determined instance, one might say, of Philip Johnson’s definition of architecture as “the organization of procession.”<sup>17</sup>

In 1998 Krens curated *The Art of the Motorcycle*, an historical survey of 111 bikes (all of them, alas, stationary). Gehry installed it, cladding the face of Wright's rampway in stainless steel. Instead of the roar of engines, we experienced the glare and dazzle of optical trespass and, speaking of trespass, motorcycles in the "temple of spirit"! On the other hand, Wright might well have been charmed by the sociality of the rotunda: not just art-loving singletons and dating couples but nuclear families with kids in tow and numerous biker boys and chicks.

In comparison with Miesian rigor the exterior of Wright's Guggenheim is plastic and continuous—romantic, even exotic: in colorful tempera rendering a UFO in repose. [Fig 8] But in comparison with Gehry's Guggenheim—free-form and extensible—it is classical: harmonious and self-enclosed, reinforced concrete in a unifying dun (not the rose Wright wanted). Whereas Gehry constructed a collage in Bilbao: an incongruous array of textures, colors, and materials—simultaneous, discontinuous, multiple—processional in neither time nor space: an intersection of pre-modern limestone, modern glass and steel, and post-modern



*figure 8*

titanium.<sup>18</sup> Inside or out, we can easily commit Wright's puristic design to memory, but it will take a while—perhaps a long while—to memorize Gehry's salmagundi of shapes.

Would Wright have memorized them? Or would he have looked on "sort of looking disgusted" at the work of a "young upstart"? Was Gehry's remark an oedipal way of dispelling the anxiety of influence? For Gehry (who as a young upstart in the late Fifties did work in a Wrightian manner) is confronting not just the Guggenheim but Fallingwater. As if he were saying: If Wright can incorporate a large natural artifact (a waterfall) into his design, I can incorporate an even larger cultural artifact (a bridge) into mine. Gehry incorporates the bridge by extending the long gallery beneath and beyond it and by positioning a tower on its far side: then by running a catwalk from a mid-point in the tower to the deck of the bridge. The tower is split and splayed, limestone partially cladding but not concealing a steel skeleton, its shape abstractly biomorphic, perhaps pisciform. Gehry left it "unfinished": as a gesture of tonic immediacy, even voyeuristic temptation. "[T]he primitive beginnings of architecture," he once said, "come from zoomorphic yearnings and skeletal images."<sup>19</sup> As if he had responded to such a yearning and constructed such an image.

Nevertheless, we don't need the tower to cross the river. We can walk along either side of the bridge—the far side nearer the tower or the near side nearer the museum—and take an elevator to the opposite bank. We could, in other words, confine our passage to the merely sufficient, but the tower helps us do something more interesting. So starting from the plaza, let us descend that set of steps which leads around the building, cross a flung span (inside of which is the riverine enclosure), ascend another flight of steps to the tower, and climb it to the catwalk. (Just as in Bachelard's topoanalysis one always climbs *up* a tower.) Exiting onto the far side of the bridge, we proceed to an elevator which takes us down to the opposite bank. [We admire the building at our leisure.] In due course, we take the other elevator to the near side of the bridge and proceed along it—the museum at our shoulder—to our starting point. The charm of this procession lies in its informality, our sense of play in the freedom of discovery. Gehry never dictates our route or coerces our attention. We satisfy our curiosity about both tower and bridge—on, under, around, and

about—as we satisfy it about atrial space: in the manner of a game. The tower is an interdependent element of the Guggenheim ensemble, sculptural but not a free-standing piece of sculpture.

The ultimate source of Wright's museum is the ancient Mesopotamian observatory or ziggurat whose circumference, storey by rising storey, gradually contracts.<sup>20</sup> A symbolist might recognize human finitude in that contraction. Wright inverted the ziggurat, making it a widening gyre in which a symbolist might discern the infinitude of private man: or, as Emerson might have written, of man destined to rise through all the spires of form. But the metaphor of evolutionary progress which is upward outside the museum is downward inside it: the progressive evolution of painting toward Non-objectivity. One drifts down the spiralform on the wave that never breaks as Thoreau and his brother, John, "dream[ing] yet deeper at our oars [on the Concord], floated in imagination farther down the stream of time."<sup>21</sup> The diminishment of consciousness is relaxing and refreshing but not an ideal strategy for studying pictures.

In an accumulation of metaphor Wright compared the Guggenheim not just with a "curving wave" but with a "sea-shell" and a "chambered nautilus." The oval pool at the base of the spiralform is a "seedpod" from which the spiral forms: a seedpod inseminated in a female space. Wright also thought the Guggenheim "snail-like."<sup>22</sup> So metaphors of circularity and cyclicity—though not of perfect circles and cycles—dominate *Walden*: organic metaphors suggesting the priority of natural process. The Guggenheim—despite its mid-Twentieth Century date—is the realization of a mid-Nineteenth Century metaphysic (a realization reminding us of Philip Johnson's notorious quip: that Wright was the greatest architect of the Nineteenth Century).

As Wright's museum is a stylization of process, Gehry's is a fluid enactment of it. Bilbao got that way because Gehry was able to answer the question he asked himself in 1985: "How could a building be made to look like it's in process?"<sup>23</sup> A literal way, of course, is to "unfinish" it, as Gehry "unfinished" the tower, its exterior partially clad, its skeletal structure exposed. (The nineteen galleries which surround the atrium on three storeys are finished in plaster, but the atrium itself bears marks of "unfinish": not just the proliferation of unclad steel beams but the raw, even brutal, conjunction of one material butting against, colliding with, or

penetrating another—steel, say, penetrating limestone—without concealment or transition.) It is one thing for Melville or Cézanne to subvert a binary distinction as seemingly immutable as unfinished/finished. It is quite another for an architect to subvert it, architecture far slower at subversion than literature or painting.<sup>24</sup>

A metaphorical way of suggesting a building in process is by introducing a metaphor of natural process. “Since 1963, Gehry has adopted the earthquake as a model” and not just because he has a house and an office in Santa Monica. “[H]e has used its concentrated, instantaneous efficacy against closed, banal constructions.”<sup>25</sup> The stone tower, in other words, may be “unfinished” but it is also “ruined.” Not just roofless but splayed open: as if fissured by seismic violence. In truth, a familiar modern motif: as in the upheaved hillside of Cézanne’s *Bibémus Quarry* [Museum Folkwang, Essen] (1895) or the crumpled prose of Henry Green’s *Loving* (1945) or the buckled facade of Peter Eisenman’s Nunotani Headquarters [Tokyo] (1992). (How do you say—with-a-smile “Coals to Newcastle” in Japanese?)

Not that Gehry’s metaphors are always violent. For Camp Good Times, for example (1985, unbuilt), he envisioned eleven small buildings on an arid plateau, siting them, as they might have been accidentally sited, in the recession of high tide. For the Guggenheim he designed the metallic flower, by turns angular and curvilinear. From the plaza or across the water, its “petals” are twisted, folded, undulant—ie. warped—even as, from Fifth Avenue, Wright’s rotunda is circular and symmetrical—ie. round. Gehry’s curves may seem private inventions, but, according to Charles Jencks, they “certainly come from nature, and are close to the lessons of chaos and catastrophe theories.”<sup>26</sup> Which is to say, they “get closer to the reality behind nature”<sup>27</sup> than Wright’s stylizations of circle and spiral ever mean to.

If Gehry is close to the lessons of modern science, he is even closer to the lessons of modern technology: Bilbao could not have been built without a program of computer modeling called Catia which Gehry borrowed from the French aircraft manufacturer, Dassault. Since Catia is a program which “is pretty much capable of defining any surface as an equation,”<sup>28</sup> it can digitize a complicated interplay of sculptural shapes—those, for example, of the Guggenheim—with speed and accuracy hitherto

unimaginable. (If the Museum were “drawn with a pencil and straight-edge,” declared one of Gehry’s principals, “it would take us decades” to build<sup>29</sup>—withal, it still took 60,000 hours on CAD [computer-assisted-design] work stations and over 50,000 computer drawings just “to produce all the elements of the facade.”<sup>30</sup>) Catia defines structure mathematically, but since it is also “a definer of the paths used by milling machines in the construction process,” it cuts whatever it defines with mathematical precision.<sup>31</sup> The result at Bilbao—given the enormity of the task—is a demonstration that one can build a complexly curved building on budget and on schedule.

Gehry is not Abbot Suger and his Museum is not St Denis, but I would note that his *oeuvre* in the Nineties is at the technological cutting-edge and that, as a splendid instance of that *oeuvre*, the Guggenheim happily represents the maturation of an architectural type (though not necessarily the type of a museum). Catia is bound to prove an irresistible tool for any architect whose disposition and imagination match Gehry’s. There is also of course the matter of budget. Gehry made his first reputation rehabilitating garden-variety goods like cardboard (for furniture) and chain-link fence before proving at Bilbao—if proof were needed—that with a hundred million dollars he could work very dear as well as very cheap. Titanium, which had never been used on this scale in building, is much dearer than the copper or stainless steel Gehry first intended but warmer in tone and so exceedingly resistant to corrosion that even though each panel is but a third of a millimeter thick, that thickness is “a hundred-year guarantee against city pollution.”<sup>32</sup>

The panels themselves are set in a regular pattern, overlapping and staggered, and although industrially produced, differ one from the next in subtle unevenness, the variant cladding of dimple and bulge which solicits touch (and nowhere more ardently than when—from the bridge—touch lies just beyond our reach). And it is a cladding which dramatically welcomes light, turning graymetal silver or silvery blue, sodium white, pale gold, copper, violet, green. As if the building were a sentient creature subject to transient moods! “The erotic flaunting of the narrow passages and swollen muscles of a building in which the sense of touch seems to prevail over every other sensation makes Gehry the Mapplethorpe of architecture.”<sup>33</sup> (The Mapplethorpe, indeed!) At the base of Wright’s

museum is the sentimentalism of an inseminated seedpod: a seedpod doubtless inseminated by its onlie begetter. Gehry's building, in these sexual terms, is self-begotten—Aphrodite, as it were, sprung from the head of Zeus—soft ductile titanium self-birthered from sawn rectilinear limestone. (Yet titanium is not a soft metal but a very hard one, ie. masculine; limestone is not a hard stone but a very soft one, ie. feminine. "Soft titanium" and "hard limestone" are oxymoronic: multivalent and oppositional. Gehry presses the category of sexual difference until it inverts itself.) Flamboyantly curved, seductively clad, his Guggenheim is an erotic object, beckoning us: Come hither, love, to me. Consider Wright's museum in this context. Flower moats along the facade (save before the entrance itself) ensure our distance from an unseductive surface: plastic paint over reinforced concrete. Better to stand back from such a standoffish building. Wright's Guggenheim solicits our admiration, not our hand, adjuring us: Touch me not.

This distinction between facades—Wright's emphasis on sight, Gehry's on touch—is typically evident in their respective draftsmanship. Wright represents his museum as drawn in visual space; Gehry generates tactile space in (the act of) drawing his museum. [fig 9] Gehry disconnects his drawing from the rationalized space of traditional discourse in which a subject looks at an object, and I am reminded of Peter Eisenman's hypothetical: "Suppose for a moment that architecture could be conceptualized as a Moebius strip, with an unbroken continuity between interior and exterior."<sup>34</sup> Gehry's heuristically inquisitive line creates the unbroken continuity his building can only imply. Or as Eisenman says elsewhere: "[A] building has to function, but it does not have to look like it functions."<sup>35</sup> If Gehry had created an unbroken continuity, what would have kept out the rain? The Guggenheim could not have functioned (as a museum), and we'd have had to call it a (very expensive) piece of (architectural) sculpture. But Gehry implies that continuity by running exterior cladding—limestone and, in particular, titanium—well beyond an intersecting window wall that, keeping out the rain, relocates the cladding in the interior. Or is it, then, interior cladding? We remember a Duchampian paradox: the door which is both open and closed at the same time. Without doubt Gehry takes pleasure in blurring what we supposed another categorical distinction.



figure 9

As Gehry turns titanium on the outside of the museum to greater sculptural advantage than glass, steel, or limestone, he turns glass, steel, and limestone on the inside to greater sculptural advantage than titanium. In the foyer, for instance, we find ourselves beneath an infrastructural canopy of steel beams at the base of which, more precisely cylindrical than the bole of any tree, is a load-bearing steel column: a metaphoric lesson in tectonic values.<sup>36</sup> Another lesson awaits us in the atrium where glass and steel (in tandem), limestone, and plaster predominate. Gehry concedes their functional value in the administrative and service buildings: outer walls of limestone panel, windows of steel-framed glass, inner walls finished in plaster. (Which is to say, we don't look at the glass but through it; we don't look at the plaster but at what's on it.) One surprise of the atrium, then, is that we look at the glass and at the plaster—glass as glass, plaster as plaster—and at the limestone too. In Wright's rarefied rotunda, space is endowed with sculptural value; in Gehry's atrium matter is.

The three ways of sculpting are modeling, carving, and constructing (with or without welds), and Gehry employs all three. He models plaster, the softest and most manipulable of his materials, as if he were

drawing abstractions in air: an extravagant play of swooping curves and angular shifts. We immediately recognize these intensified shapes as plaster; their restless course affects our dizzying sense of atrial motility.

Gehry carves—in this case, mechanically cuts—limestone, a material which is harder than plaster and which seems to have been harder to manipulate imaginatively than plaster. I am thinking of the enormous sculpture in the atrium which reminds me a little too closely of a gigantic mushroom. We have noticed (and will notice) organic metaphors throughout the museum, but the “mushroom” seems to me a little too literal. I cannot unsee it by an act of will.

Gehry makes an enormous construction, an assemblage, of glass and steel: an object lesson in contrariety. On a window wall, glass is ordinarily locked inside a steel frame; on the construction, it is fastened outside a steel frame. Thick sheets of glass are fastened—surely securely!—to an enormous double-curved steel frame which rises high above our heads. The demi-damoclean physicality of glass is—to say the least—a little anxiety-provoking. A second assemblage partially encloses two glass-and-steel elevators—there are also two staircases—for there are three separate stories to the Museum with neither the continuity of a Moebius strip nor even a rampway to join them. It is not proper to complain, but these elevators are a disappointingly vertical mode of travel through dynamic space. To be sure, they convey folk from floor to floor with minimum fuss, but I wanted to be transported in two senses, not just one. Perhaps a midget airplane after the example of *Metropolis*.

In the accumulation of organic metaphors at the Guggenheim—of flower and petal and corporeal biomorph—the piscine predominates. In the abstraction of fish-scales (titanium cladding) and fish-shapes (ogival curves) and fish-color and texture (dimpled iridescence in nightlight) and in the long gallery which Gehry’s staff calls a fish, which the author of *Jonah* might have called a “big fish,” and which Francesco Dal Co observes is “configured like the inside of a whale.”<sup>37</sup> Perhaps Gehry builded better than he knew, having designed a space very like an allegory. We enter from the atrium and halfway into the long gallery encounter the winding Serra: as if it were (for this occasion) a stenograph of intestinal passage. We notice the ceiling arched with ribs and remember Father Mapple in *Moby-Dick*: “The ribs and terrors in the whale, / Arched over me

a dismal gloom.” The long gallery tapers to its far end, and through a rectangular slot in the ceiling—provided the *Knife-Ship* or some other large installation doesn’t prevent us—we see the veiled presence of sky. *As if we were underwater.* And against the sky, like an upright tail, Gehry’s tower, looming. Like the atrium, the long gallery is not a neutral space. It is a space invested with human adventure at the climax of which lies disconcertion.

But we needn’t be (or just be) participants in this adventure, we may be spectators too. Gehry projected a second storey overlook—a viewing stand, really—over the entrance to the long gallery, providing what the Serra prevents from the floor: an unimpeded field of vision. We realize that the space of the gallery satisfyingly “tapers” according to the laws of perspective until we remember that, like a whale, it actually does taper. Gehry, who has long since played perceptual games in his architecture, plays one here as old as ancient Greece, even as Jenny Holzer plays a modern one in her installation. Colored letters seem to move vertically on LED signboards: red for English and Spanish, blue for Basque, spelling a text of love and death that begins well—I SAY THE WORD—but ends badly—I BURY YOU. If flashing diodes—LED means “light-emitting diode”—induce mild vertigo, that’s an appropriate response to an installation sited “specifically” off the vertiginous atrium.

Serra’s *Snake*, on the other hand, is not so much an annotation of the gallery it occupies as a shape fundamental to the Museum itself. For instance, on the riverside of the building there is an ogival plane longitudinally divided by a fold into two self-similar planes: each as cubistically elegant as a still-life by Ben Nicholson. [fig 10] But there are double-curves everywhere, inside and out: in many materials (titanium, plaster, limestone, even steel), in many emotional variations (variously elongated or compressed, thickened or attenuated). And sometimes a long legato double-curve will simply remind us of Hogarth’s phrase: “the line of beauty.”

The Holzer and Serra are permanent fixtures; the Klein (in the river) and the Koons (on the plaza) seem hardly less so. And on a second storey promontory, which must have been made to accommodate outdoor sculpture, there is a monumental *Cubi* by David Smith which that promontory happily accommodates. These five works—perhaps there will be



*figure 10*



*figure 11*

others—are not isolated in a sculpture court or garden. Gehry is one of those few major artists—Rauschenberg, of course, is another—who frequently collaborates with other artists. Or perhaps I should say: the Guggenheim is not exhibiting these five works in its space but is collaborating with them in a shared space.

Titanium is opaque and “light-receptive”<sup>38</sup>; glass is transparent and light-reflective. Light streams into the atrium through that large section of window-wall on the riverside; sheets of glass on the steel frame reflect sky, river, and buildings on the opposite bank. (To refashion a famous literary metaphor: glass is a mirror, titanium is a lamp.) The Museum “borrows” both landscape and cityscape, welcoming the city which welcomes it. “The whole idea,” said Gehry, “was to bring the city in.”<sup>39</sup> So light streams into the atrium not just from the river side but from the entrance side and from various places on high. The metallic petals are all skylit and there is, at the highest point of the flower, a glass-and-steel “bonnet.” The skylights are not visible from the street, but the bonnet is, and perhaps Gehry meant it as an homage to the work it vaguely resembles: Tatlin’s *Monument to the Third International* (1919-1920). That, however, was then. Now, as he told Herbert Muschamp, “[i]t looks like a pimple.”<sup>40</sup> Not even a beauty mark that hath some strangeness in it. A pimple. Is Gehry’s change of mind a confession of error, a revision of taste, or both? It’s consonant, in any case, with a declaration he made long ago: “I’m confused as to what’s ugly and what’s pretty.”<sup>41</sup> Withal, he seems to have made his peace with the bonnet: “I guess it’s O.K. for a face to have a pimple.”

But to have made his peace with the bonnet is to have made his peace with the man who made the bonnet, his own (somewhat) younger self. As if he regarded that other self as a collaborator with whom he might now disagree but whom he would not contravene. (Either self, after all, might well ask: What’s ugly and what’s pretty? And if we suppose a pimple ugly, either self might well ask: If the bonnet has become ugly, mightn’t it become pretty again?) Certainly Gehry regards clients as “partners in the game,” collaborators with whom he might disagree and whom he would try to convert—but not contravene. So Gehry and Krens about the long gallery. “The Director and I have a disagreement,” said the architect of his client. “I think it needs a few walls to give it scale.... It

could easily be fixed with a couple of small walls.”<sup>42</sup> Gehry (it seems to me) properly appreciates the difficulty of hanging paintings in such a large and open space, but it was precisely a large and open space that both Krens and Richard Serra wanted. Or as the sculptor said to his old friend, the architect: “If you put any walls in it, I’ll never speak to you again.”<sup>43</sup>

There is of course all the difference, even in jest, between punitive challenge (“I’ll never speak to you again”) and mild-mannered acceptance (“It’s O.K. for a face to have a pimple”). Gehry’s stance is attractive because he seems to see his collaborators as his own other selves, as other as the fellow who put up the bonnet, whose dignity in disagreement he neither denies nor demeans, indeed whom he treats with what we might call face-saving indulgence. This indulgence also extends to artistic life in the atrium. According to van Bruggen, Krens told Gehry: “This atrium is yours, you’re the artist here. This is your sculpture.” The challenge, in effect, of a permanent one-man show, and Gehry (as we have seen) rose to it: “part of me wanted to be discovered.”<sup>44</sup> But another part—the collaborative part—seems less interested in self-advertisement.

Thus, for the inaugural exhibit of the Museum, Oldenburg and van Bruggen’s gigantic sculpture *Soft Shuttlecock* was set upon, draped over, and hoisted above Gehry’s gigantic mushroom. [fig 11] And therein lay one of the unexpected dividends of collaboration, a surreal hybrid more exciting than its constituent stock: a gigantic mushroom with gigantic feathers, a feathered mushroom. (Would Gehry, Oldenburg, and van Bruggen agree with this estimate of their work? Perhaps not.) In any case, not everyone is as clever as Oldenburg and van Bruggen, and not every collaboration as controllable. Asked if he would like to redesign the square in Prague around his Nationale-Nederlanden Building (1992-1996) (since called “Fred-and-Ginger”), Gehry said no, invoking a politics of multiple viewpoint: “Democracy says a lot of people have to be involved in making a city.”<sup>45</sup> Or even, he might have added, in remaking just one section of a city—Bilbao, I mean, not Prague. The Guggenheim itself bespeaks Gehry’s large appetite for contradiction: for the tension of contradictory impulse and the toleration of difference.

The Rauschenberg Retrospective suggests that the atrium will continue to serve as a staging area for collaborative work: as it did for *Earth Pull* (1998). (Rauschenberg is the founder of ROCI [Rauschenberg

Overseas Culture Interchange], though *Earth Pull* was not an overseas event under those auspices.) The artist installed a console with colored lights atop the mushroom, connected three thick ropes to the console, and hung them to the atrium floor. If we pull a rope, lights flash intermittently and the console emits grave sounds. So I pulled a rope. It proved something of a chore, as if gravity were resisting me. Then I heard a cheer—the collective voice of some schoolboys who (in another room) had just activated *Soundings*. In the atrium they yanked the unresisting ropes I remembered climbing in junior highschool gym. (Did I know the ropes? Of course I knew the ropes.) Bell-ringers, if not tumblers, not to say nomad-priests in the religion of art (I piously thought): and parishioners too, some of us.

## Notes

1. These institutions include the American Center in Paris (1988-1994), the Vitra Furniture Museum in Weil am Rhein, Germany (1987-1989), the Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles (1989- unfinished), and the Frederick R. Weisman Art and Teaching Museum in Minneapolis (1990-1993). The Samsung Museum of Modern Art in Seoul (1995-unfinished), which post-dates the Guggenheim, is even more flexible in syntax than its predecessor.
2. Bart Lootsma, "A Gehry for Bilbao," *Archis* (January 1998), 5.
3. Neil Levine, *The Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright* (Princeton, 1996), p. 317.
4. Lootsma, 3.
5. Lootsma, 6.
6. Lootsma, 2. See also Kurt W. Forster, *Frank O. Gehry: Guggenheim Bilbao Museoa* (London, 1998), p. 10.
7. Peter Eisenman, "Misreading" in *House of Cards* (New York, 1987), p. 172.
8. *Frank Gehry: Bilbao and Before* (a film produced and directed by Robert Sherrin), Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 1999.
9. Exhibition space at the Guggenheim was never just along the spiralforn, but since the Gwathmey Siegel renovation of 1992, that space has dramatically increased with the addition of "four distinct and interconnected horizontal pavilions." In other words, even as the spiralforn remains in public consciousness the museum's distinctive icon, most looking at

modern art will be done on the level. See *Gwathmey Siegel: Buildings and Projects, 1982-1992*, eds. Brad Collins and Diane Kasprovicz (New York, 1993), p. 20.

10. Quoted in Levine, p. 356.

11. Louis I. Kahn, "Form and Design" in Vincent J. Scully, Jr., *Louis I. Kahn* (New York, 1962), p. 115.

12. Coosje van Bruggen, *Frank O. Gehry: Guggenheim Museum Bilbao* (New York, 1997), p. 71.

13. Quoted in van Bruggen, p. 112.

14. Quoted in Levine, p. 315.

15. Levine, pp. 337-340.

16. Quoted in Levine, pp. 334, 335.

17. Philip Johnson, "Whence & Whither: The Processional Element in Architecture," *Perspecta* (vol. 9/10), 1965, 168.

18. Under the sign of "fragmentation and *discontinuity*" Charles Jencks identified Gehry as a Deconstructionist in 1988. See "Deconstruction: The Sound of One Mind Laughing (or the Solipsist's Delight)" in *The New Moderns: From Late to Neo-Modernism* (London, 1990), p. 205.

19. See "No, I'm an Architect" in *Frank Gehry: Buildings and Projects*, eds. Peter Arnell and Ted Bickford (New York, 1985), p. XVII.

20. Levine, pp. 322-327.

21. Henry David Thoreau, *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* (New York, 1963), pp. 310-311.

22. Levine, pp. 328, 340, 341, 340 respectively.

23. *Frank Gehry: Buildings and Projects*, p. XII.

24. Under the sign of "creative negation" and "reverse representation" Jencks declared Gehry "The First Deconstructionist" in 1985. See Charles Jencks, "Frank Gehry-The First Deconstructionist" in *The New Moderns: From Late to Neo-Modernism*, p. 194.

25. Germano Celant, "Reflections on Frank Gehry," in *Frank Gehry: Buildings and Projects*, p. 12.

26. Frank O. Gehry: *Individual Imagination and Cultural Conservatism*, ed. Charles Jencks (London, 1995), p. 39.
27. Charles Jencks, *The Architecture of the Jumping Universe* (London, 1997), p. 185.
28. Jim Glymph as quoted in van Bruggen, *Frank O. Gehry: Guggenheim Museum Bilbao*, p.135.
29. Glymph as quoted in van Bruggen, p. 138.
30. Pierluigi Nicolini, "The Dismemberment of Orpheus," *Lotus International* 98 (September 1998), 16.
31. van Bruggen, p. 135.
32. Gehry as quoted in van Bruggen, p. 141.
33. Nicolini, 23.
34. Peter Eisenman, "Visions' Unfolding: Architecture in the Age of Electronic Media" in *Theories and Manifestoes of Contemporary Architecture*, eds. Charles Jencks and Karl Kropf (London, 1997), p. 296.
35. Peter Eisenman, "Strong Form, Weak Form" in *Architecture in Transition*, ed. Peter Noever (Munich, 1991), p. 58.
36. Kenneth Frampton, "Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance" in *Theories and Manifestoes of Contemporary Architecture*, p 97.
37. Francisco Dal Co and Kurt W. Forster, *Frank O. Gehry: The Complete Works* (New York, 1998), p. 57.
38. Gehry quoted in van Bruggen, p. 141.
39. Quoted in *Frank Gehry: Bilbao and Before*. The Guggenheim (according to its own literature) certainly wants to bring Basque artists in, even as (according to its own security measures) it most certainly wants to keep Basque gunmen out. I am alluding to an incident in which members of the separatist ETA (an organization bent on separating the Basque Provinces from Spain) were discovered setting bombs near the Museum: in the ensuing shoot-out a policeman was killed. So the threat of violence is real, and the Museum is very security-conscious. There are stanchions with lights and cameras outside the building, and the first person we encounter inside is a guard with a sidearm. All objects of suspicious dimension must pass through a metal detector, though the Guggenheim does not require that visitors pass through a screening device. At least one young woman in (tasteful) uniform sits or walks and watches in every room of the Museum, and young men with "Security" writ

large across their jackets roam the atrium, the catwalks and walkways. Photography is forbidden—a camera, I presume, may house a gun or bomb, and guards inspect the bathrooms frequently. Despite all such visible precaution, the Museum still feels like a museum, not like an airline terminal or government building.

40. Herbert Muschamp, "The Miracle in Bilbao," *The New York Times Magazine* (7 September 1997), 57.

41. Quoted in Janet Naim, "Frank Gehry: The Search for a 'No Rules' Architecture," *Architectural Record* (June 1976), 95.

42. Quoted in *Frank Gehry: Bilbao and Before*.

43. Susan Hapgood, "A Snake + Nine Signs," *Guggenheim Magazine* (Fall 1997), 38.

44. Quoted in van Bruggen, pp. 115, 119.

45. Quoted in *Frank Gehry: Bilbao and Before*.

## Photo Credits

Fig 1 Christian Richters in Philip Jodidio, *Contemporary American Architecture* (Cologne, 1998), pp. 62-63.

Fig 2 David Heald in Coosje van Bruggen, *Frank O. Gehry: Guggenheim Museum Bilbao* (New York, 1997), front cover.

Figs 3 and 4 Erica Barahona Ede: Guggenheim Bilbao Museoa postcards.

Figs 5 and 6 Y. Futagawa in *GA Document 54: Guggenheim Bilbao Museoa*, ed. Yukio Futagawa (Tokyo, 1998), pp. 43, 49.

Fig 7 Christian Richters in *Contemporary American Architecture*, p.74.

Fig 8 Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum postcard.

Fig 9 Y. Futagawa in *GA Document 54*, p. 6.

Fig 10 Rayna Knobler.

Fig 11 Ralph Richter in Kurt W. Forster, *Frank O. Gehry: Guggenheim Bilbao Museoa* (London, 1998), p. 41.