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Sagrada Familia: Gaudi's Unfinished Masterpiece Geometry, Construction And Site



Synopsis

An Exhibit at the Bernard and Anne Spitzer School of Architecture City College of New York, September 2014- May 2015. Curator: George Ranalli More than a century after Catalan architect Antoni Gaudí began working on The Expiatory Church of the Holy Family, Sagrada Família remains under construction. This catalogue focuses on that dynamic and ongoing process and on the successive builders' incorporation of new technologies into the structure's magnificent design, a living work of performance in itself. It documents the cathedral's evolution using handmade drawings, plaster models, digital imaging and 3D modeling. It examines the geometries and formal languages that have informed generations of architects and builders. At the same time, it shows the integration of traditional craftsmanship with the most cutting age computer graphics and robotic engineering. Originally situated on the outskirts of the city, La Sagrada Família today serves as the enduring symbol of Barcelona. But unlike the Eiffel Tower or Brooklyn Bridge, Barcelona's icon is still a work in progress and a magnetic center of spiritual life.

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Customer Reviews

I first visited what Catalans in Barcelona call in full name the Temple Expiatori de la Sagrada Família (Expiatory Temple of the Holy Family), or just Sagrada Família, in 1973. At the time, there were just the four huge sugarloaf conical towers of the Nativity Facade, pretty much as the architect Antoni Gaudí had left them when he died in 1926. The building was obviously unfinished; a model within showed that this was one of three similar facades, and there were to be as well even

taller towers rising to a huge one in the center. There was little work being done on the building when I visited; I remember joking that it was such a peculiar structure that the builders were stalling. When I visited the last time, in 1991, serious construction was underway, with a Passion Facade being constructed, along with interior nave spaces. The building process has continued, and the plan is that it will be all completed in 2026 in commemoration of the centennial of the architect's death. How I would love to see it then! Until then, there is a gorgeous book documenting a recent exhibit about the structure, *Sagrada Família: Gaudí's Unfinished Masterpiece, Geometry, Construction and Site* (Oscar Riera Ojeda Publishers), edited by Mr. Riera Ojeda, with contributions from historians, architects (including some working on the church), engineers, and mathematicians. Best of all, there are pages and pages of photographs, showing the work as it has progressed and as it now stands in all its eccentric glory. It is simply one of the most beautiful and original buildings in the world. Gaudí's strange shapes were far from arbitrary. "I am a geometrician," he said, and the catenary forms of the strings would bear him out.

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