

The Guggenheim Museum Bilbao

presents the 8th June, 2005

RICHARD SERRA

THE MATTER OF TIME



Exhibition sponsor:



PERMANENT RICHARD SERRA INSTALLATION TO OPEN JUNE 2005 AT GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM BILBAO

Largest Site-Specific Sculptural Commission in Modern History

Permanent Collection of Modern and Contemporary Masters Reinstalled

The Guggenheim Museum Bilbao announces that the permanent installation of seven new large-scale works by the American artist Richard Serra will open to the public on June 8, 2005. These new works join the artist's existing work, *Snake* (1994–97), in a 430-foot-long gallery in the Frank Gehry-designed museum, creating a site-specific installation of a scale and ambition unparalleled in modern history.

This installation has been sponsored by ArcelorMittal. In recognition of this funding, the gallery featuring the Serra installation has been renamed the ArcelorMittal Gallery.

Richard Serra is one of the leading sculptors of the 20th century, renowned for his challenging and groundbreaking work, which focuses on the production process, the specific characteristics of his materials and the experience of time through space.

“One of the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao’s main acquisition guidelines is to commission works by the world’s most important artists,” said Guggenheim Museum Bilbao Director General Juan Ignacio Vidarte. “This historic commission of work by Richard Serra makes the Museum a pilgrimage site for anyone interested in the present and future state of sculpture.”

“Richard Serra’s commission is the culmination of a 35-year relationship between the artist and the Guggenheim,” said Thomas Krens, Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation Director. “This gallery was envisioned to hold art of the 21st century and Serra, working on such a monumental scale, is the perfect artist to realize its full potential.”

Installation Details

The Serra installation, titled *The Matter of Time*, builds on the language developed in his *Torqued Ellipses*, which were first exhibited in the mid nineties and were universally recognized as a significant breakthrough in the history of sculpture. The eight sculptures are placed in relationship to the space in its totality and in an interrelationship to one another. Upon entering the ArcelorMittal gallery, the viewer immediately enters the space of the installation, which is constructed with three spirals, one *Single Torqued Ellipse*, one *Double Torqued Ellipse*, the conical curves of *Snake* and two works comprised of spherical and torus sections.

Serra's *Snake*, commissioned by the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, is now the center of the installation, which includes (in sequential order):

Torqued Spiral (Closed Open Closed Open Closed), 2003-04

Dimensions: 13' 1.5" x 42' 11" x 46' 1.9" (4000 x 13082 x 14069 mm)

Torqued Ellipse, 2003-04

Dimensions: 14' x 27' 3" x 29' (4267 x 8305 x 8839 mm)

Double Torqued Ellipse, 2003-04

Dimensions: 14' x 37' 5" x 40' (4267 x 11407 x 12190 mm)

Snake, 1994-97

Dimensions: 13' 2" x 104' x 22' 4.5" (4013 x 31699 x 6820 mm)

Torqued Spiral (Right Left), 2003-04

Dimensions: 14' x 46' 3.5" x 42' 11.5" (4267 x 14111 x 13093 mm)

Torqued Spiral (Open Left Closed Right), 2003-04

Dimensions: 14' x 32' .1" x 41' 7.8" (4267 x 9776 x 12684 mm)

Between the Torus and the Sphere, 2003-05

Dimensions: 14' x 50' x 53' 11.4" (4267 x 15240 x 16444)

Blind Spot Reversed, 2003-05

Dimensions: 13' 1.5" x 29' 7.7" x 56' 5.2" (4000 x 9036 x 17200)

With these eight sculptures, the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao fulfills a key acquisition guideline: to focus on works by select artists to provide an in-depth vision of their creative quality. The scale of Serra's works in the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao makes *The Matter of Time* a museum within a museum, containing the most complex and ambitious installation of this artist's formal vocabulary in the last 20 years.

Permanent Collection and Temporary Exhibition Galleries

The Guggenheim Museum Bilbao has a growing collection focusing on works from 1945 to the present by modern and contemporary masters. Beginning in June, the Museum's first floor galleries will be devoted to medium- and long-term exhibitions from the permanent collection of the Guggenheim Museums that highlight the most important art movements of the second half of the 20th century and the 21st century; it is within this context that the Richard Serra commission will be permanently installed. Premiering simultaneously with the Serra installation is the exhibition *A Shared Experience: The Permanent Collection of the Guggenheim Museums*, featuring works from the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao collection by artists including Joseph Beuys, Anselm Kiefer, Richard Long, Robert Rauschenberg, James Rosenquist and Andy Warhol.

The Museum's second floor is dedicated to large temporary exhibitions; on view from March 19 to September 18, 2005 is the critically acclaimed *The Aztec Empire*, featuring the largest number of Aztec art objects dating from the 13th to 16th centuries ever seen in an international exhibition. The exhibition, which premiered at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York on October 15, 2004, is presented in Bilbao in an extended installation in which a subtle glass structure generates different spaces that mediate between the artworks, the spectator and the building. This unique installation creates an intimate experience for the visitor that emphasizes the contrast between the different degrees of transparency and the physical presence of the objects.

The galleries on the third floor will house smaller exhibitions and presentations from the Guggenheim holdings that are intended to foster a dialogue between modern and contemporary art. On view from March 8 to November 6, 2005 is *Art Informel and Abstract Expressionism in the Guggenheim Collections*, which includes works by key artists of these two tendencies, including Sam Francis, Philip Guston, Franz Kline, Pierre Soulages, and Antoni Tàpies.

The Guggenheim Museum Bilbao

Since its grand opening in October 1997, the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao has hosted nearly 80 exhibitions, many of which have ranked among the most visited worldwide, including: *Degas to Picasso*; *Andy Warhol: A Factory*; and *Calder: Gravity and Grace*. Additional critically acclaimed exhibitions

include: *The Worlds of Nam June Paik*; *Richard Serra*; *The Panza Collection at the Guggenheim Museums*; and *Moving Pictures*. The Guggenheim Museum Bilbao collection comprises almost 90 works that complement the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation Collections, and includes site-specific and outdoor installations by Jenny Holzer (*Installation for Bilbao*, 1997), Jeff Koons (*Puppy*, 1992), and Louise Bourgeois (*Maman*, 1999). To date, the Museum has attracted approximately 7,300,000 visitors, around 60 percent of which were foreign visitors, and its presence has generated—at the end of 2004—almost 1.2 billion euro GDP.

The Basque Country and the City of Bilbao

The Guggenheim Museum Bilbao is the result of a unique collaboration between the Basque authorities and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation. The Museum is the cornerstone of the redevelopment of Bilbao, which has entailed major architectural projects by some of the most renowned architects in the world, including Norman Foster, Arata Isozaki, Zaha Hadid and Santiago Calatrava. Bilbao, capital of Bizkaia, is in the Basque Country, with more than one million inhabitants in its metropolitan area. It is the fourth largest city in Spain and one of the most important ports in Europe.

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