

Professional Interest Areas

AIA Continental Europe Finds Treasure in Spain *Group's April tour of Madrid, Bilbao meets "the gold standard"*

AIA Continental Europe held its biannual meeting in Madrid, Spain, April 27-29, offering the 100 participants extensive access to architectural shrines and lucid presentations on the landmarks of Spain's architectural heritage.

"Architects live their profession. We cannot live a normal existence in the evenings or on vacation," explained AIA President John D. Anderson, FAIA. "The Guggenheim [in Bilbao] has become a pilgrimage site for many of us, because no photographs or images can capture the three-dimensionality, the movement of the building." Accompanied by 40 AIA members on a tour of Madrid and Bilbao, Anderson expressed the group's wonder to the local architectural press.

Tours of treasures

The conference opened with a dinner hosted by Madrid Governor Alberto Ruiz Gallardó at the Palacio des Correos, a 17th-century building restored and adapted to serve as the Madrid government seat. On receiving a presidential citation from Anderson, Gallardón said that his administration's accomplishments lie in "having always recognized culture as a vehicle for personal development and the benefit of the citizens."

The next morning began with a tour of the Monasterio

del Escorial, with presentations by Fernando Chueca Goitia, director of the National Heritage of Spain, and architect Rafael de la Hoz Castanys. That evening, the U.S. Embassy hosted dinner for the group at the Thyssen Museum. Presentation of the AIA Continental Europe International Design Awards and tour of the museum followed a lecture by Rafael Moneo.

On Day Two, the group participated in


a lecture and tour led by Francisco Rodriguez Partearroyo of his restoration of the Madrid Opera House. Later, a tour of the Royal Palace was complemented by a presentation by Chueca on the work of the National Heritage Department. Leo A. Daly, FRAIA, RIBA, gave a presentation on multicultural architecture.

"Gold standard" hospitality

After the conference, a smaller group—including a delegation of 14 members from AIA Virginia—embarked on an extraordinary extension tour that included:

- Burgos Cathedral
- Chillida Leku Museum
- Headquarters of the Colegio Oficial de Arquitectos Vasco-Navarro
- Rafael Moneo Conference Hall in San Sebastian.

In addition, Javier Salazar Rückauer, dean of the regional chapter of Spain's College of Architects, hosted a luncheon for the group at the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao. On the return trip to Madrid, the group took part in a walking tour of the historic town of Lerma.

The unanimous opinion of the participants was perfectly stated by Anderson, who, in expressing his appreciation to the college, "In the thoughtful preparations leading up to this conference, in the warmth of the welcome we have received ... you define the true gold standard of hospitality." 

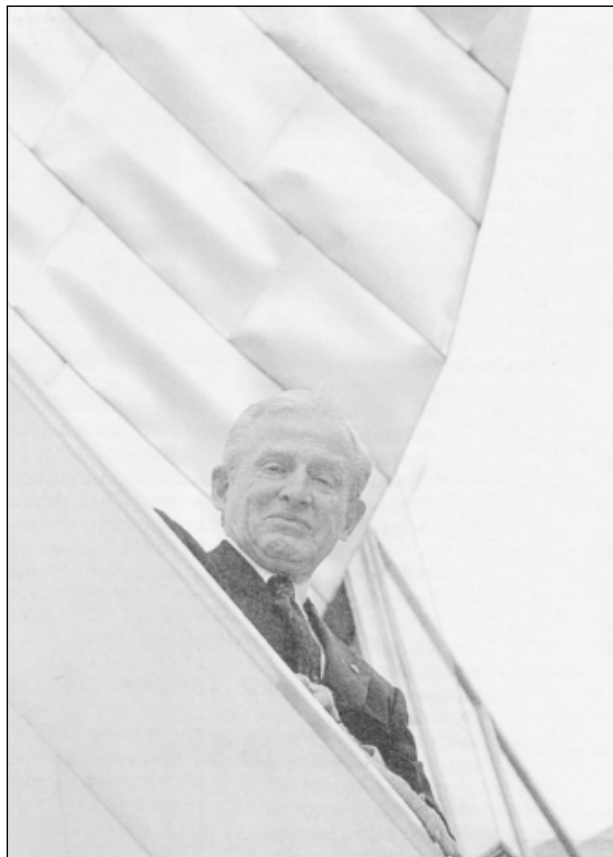


PHOTO BY BERNARDO CORRAL

Anderson on the Guggenheim Terrace. This photo accompanied an article interviewing him in Bilbao's newspaper, El Correo.