



RICHARD ROGERS + ARCHITECTS

FROM THE HOUSE TO THE CITY

Press dossier

CaixaForum Barcelona

From 9 July to 18 October 2009

"la Caixa" Social and Cultural Outreach Projects presents, for the first time in Madrid, a retrospective of the work of the British architect, winner of the 2007 Pritzker Prize

Richard Rogers + Architects. From the house to the city

"The last humanist". This is how Richard Rogers has been defined, in recognition of his belief in a civil society and in the relationship that exists between the built environment and social inclusion. After its display in Barcelona, "la Caixa" Social and Cultural Outreach Projects presents in CaixaForum Madrid the "Richard Rogers + Architects. From the house to the city" exhibition, which illustrates Rogers' fascination for the building as a machine and his interest in clear, transparent architecture which integrates public and private space. The display consists of a detailed survey — using a wide variety of materials — of the works of this British architect born in Florence in 1933, and will enable visitors to understand some of the constants in Richard Rogers' work, such as his capacity to generate new public spaces and his use of high technology materials and innovative production methods to construct flexible, adaptable and efficient buildings. It also provides an insight into the architect's fascination for transparency as a method to break with traditional hierarchies and his defence of sustainability and energy efficiency in architecture, as well as dedicating a space to his urban design proposals based on the compact city. This exhibition arrives at a crucial moment in Richard Rogers' professional career, as evidenced by the international recognition he has earned over the last few years. Spain, and more specifically Madrid, forms part of the recent itinerary followed by this prestigious architect, where Terminal 4 at Barajas Airport has become in one of the most avant-garde icons in the city and in a jewel of the contemporary town planning.

The exhibition *Richard Rogers + Architects. From the house to the city* can be seen in CaixaForum Madrid (Pº del Prado, 36) from 9 July to 18 October.

Madrid, 8 July 2009. The architect Richard Rogers, the general manager of “la Caixa” Foundation, Jaime Lanaspá, and the director of “la Caixa” Foundation Culture Area, Ignasi Miró, have today presented the *Richard Rogers + Architects. From the house to the city* exhibition. The British architect has often been described as the last humanist, in recognition of his determination to create public spaces that encompass the diversity and complexity of the contemporary world and to contribute to finding new forms of collective living.

The display consists of a detailed survey of the work of Richard Rogers and his varied teams of collaborators over the last 40 years and will enable visitors to discover architectural and urban design projects from the start of his career, placing special emphasis on his collaboration with Renzo Piano on the design of the Centre Georges Pompidou (1971-1977), as well as the numerous projects executed from his own architectural practice, Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners (formerly Richard Rogers Partnership).

From the Lloyd’s of London building to Terminal 4 at Barajas Airport; from the innovative Zip-Up House of 1968 to his proposals for Shanghai’s Lu Jia Zui urban development, the exhibition presents a wide range of projects which will help the public gain an insight into the social role that Rogers attributes to architecture.

Influenced by the “English School” of the 1970s in his buildings, and by the Italian approach to cities, Rogers’ architectural and urban philosophy is based on his belief in a civil society and the relationship between the built environment and social inclusion. The exhibition also illustrates the concern for ecologically sustainable development which has shaped Rogers’ work since the beginning of his career.

By employing new materials and innovative techniques, Rogers and his team build structures which are lightweight, transparent and environmentally friendly, that establish a seductive interplay of light and shadow and are simple to understand and use.

The exhibition was inaugurated in the Centre Pompidou in Paris in November 2007, coinciding with the 30th anniversary of the opening of that cultural complex, and subsequently travelled to the Design Museum, London, where it could be seen during Spring 2008. Following its stage in CaixaForum Barcelona, the display

moves to CaixaForum Madrid, before continuing its international tour of Europe, Asia and North America.

For its presentation in CaixaForum Madrid the exhibition will dedicate special attention to current and future projects, above all those being undertaken in Spain. So Madrid will provide an opportunity to see plans and models of Rogers' work for the Palmas Altas Technology Park in Seville, for arrival of the high-speed train to Valladolid and for the Zaragoza 2008 Expo Bridge. Additionally for the Madrid exhibition, new models have been created of Heathrow Airport's Terminal 5.

The exhibition includes a huge 50-metre wall which shows Rogers' architectural output in chronological order, offering a rapid review of 40 years of architectural theory and practice. In the adjacent hall, the architect and his team discuss their work, their philosophy and its influences in two audiovisual productions. The projects unfolded by Richard Rogers and his partners are illustrated in the exhibition with a wide variety of materials, including models, drawings, photographs, films and writings by the architect.

Richard Rogers + Architects. From the house to the city is organised in seven colour-coded sections, each of which examines an architectural theme which is developed through a series of projects, models, photographs, drawings and films. The thematic areas presented — Transparent, Legible, Green, Public, Urban, Lightweight and Systems — feature one or more projects which are particularly relevant under each heading. In this way the visitor is introduced to the architect's most important achievements around the world, for example the Lloyd's building (London), the Centre Pompidou (Paris), the Bordeaux Law Courts, the National Assembly for Wales (Cardiff), the Millennium Dome (London), the Pudong Masterplan (Shanghai), Terminal 4 at Barajas Airport (Madrid) and 88 Wood Street (London). The exhibition is completed with two further sections. One, under the heading *Early Projects*, shows a prototype of the Zip-Up House, his revolutionary proposal for the industrial construction of houses, while the second and final section, *Work in Progress*, provides a detailed review of recent and current projects by the team of Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners.

LEGIBLE

Lloyd's of London, headquarters of the oldest insurance company in the world, is a clearly structured building which reflects how it was built, how it is supported and

how it works. Legibility in architecture finds order, scale and expression in the construction process. The overlapping of different layers is both a functional and a visual resource: it creates an architectural texture that invigorates the building, either from a distance as an integral part of the city or viewed close up. A series of towers situated on the perimeter house those elements that are subject to regular change (lifts, stairs, installations and toilets) while at the same time articulating the project.

The concept of “legibility” can be understood as an attempt to make visible the activities that take place inside a building, to give them an identity rather than leaving them as anonymous functions within uniform blocks.

LIGHTWEIGHT

Richard Rogers’ practice strongly defends lightness and constantly seeks the maximum economy of means: doing more with less, through close interaction with engineers. The result is an architecture which is lightweight and which responds to functional needs.

There are a number of projects that reflect this idea, from the entrance to the Berkeley Hotel (a work in progress, one of whose carbon-fibre beams of the roof can be seen in the exhibition), to the Millennium Dome in London, which is nothing more than a huge marquis erected over a minimum structure and held up by extremely long cables.

GREEN

Global warming constitutes the most important threat to the future of the planet. Architects, scientists and politicians must work together to reshape cities in such a way that ensures they use less energy, Richard Rogers explains. Processes are needed that take maximum advantage of the energy produced by wind, sun and water, as well as the earth’s own energy.

The use of natural resources to warm and cool buildings provides the starting point for shaping our buildings and cities. The Bordeaux Law Courts stand out in this respect as an appropriate solution in the context of a historic site, as well as for

their environmentally-friendly design. Glass walls allow the interior to be seen, but in the current situation of a global environmental crisis the building's most innovative characteristic is the use of passive cooling and ventilation systems that minimise carbon-generating energy consumption.

In Cardiff, the National Assembly for Wales is another example of the union between democratic transparency and a progressive ecological strategy. The public space surrounding the debating chamber has natural ventilation and the land on which the building is sited acts as a coolant. Its architecture corresponds to the social values the building represents and is, at the same time, an example of a significant response to the crisis threatening our planet.

SYSTEMS

Since the beginning of the modern age, the hope has regularly arisen of using new construction techniques that bring the advantages of mass production to architecture. Innovative production processes and the use of high-tech materials that were inconceivable only two decades ago have made it possible for building systems to become flexible, adaptable and efficient.

Rogers' practice developed an industrialised system of producing houses to be manufactured in South Korea based on prefabricated units made from steel sheets, like those employed in the automotive industry. The result is houses at 20% of the cost of a conventional flat.

Barajas Airport is another example of the combination of design and mass production. From the aesthetic point of view, the terminal celebrates the adventure of travelling, but the building's structure is based on a rational, repetitive construction system, product of the needs of engineering. The impressive final result is due both to the terminal's functionality and to the use of modern materials. Another, similar case included in this area of the exhibition may be found in Terminal 5 of London's Heathrow Airport.

TRANSPARENT

Transparency in architecture is a representation of the breakdown of traditional hierarchies that are hidden behind solid walls. The use of different layers of

materials allows for the play of light and shadow to be manipulated to create the impression of transparency.

A glass façade may look like a solid mass in daylight. Illumination however, be it natural or artificial, can make the building transparent, as demonstrated by three office blocks in London designed by the Richard Rogers practice. Interior lighting of the offices accentuates the facades' expressiveness in the 88 Wood Street project. The atrium of the Channel 4 building receives natural light during the day and at night is transformed into the television channel's centre of activity. The Lloyd's Register of Shipping in the City of London is another example of transparency: its towers stand out above a difficult site, revitalising the city's skyline and offering spectacular views to those who work in them.

URBAN

Compact, multi-centred cities are the only sustainable form of urban development for future generations from the environmental perspective. They are a rational and economical way of creating human settlements that offer a high quality of life. They need to combine living and work and encourage the rich and the poor, the old and the young, to mix freely. Pedestrians, bicycles and public transport take priority over the car, and environmental responsibility has to be the driving force behind the planning of such settlements.

Rather than expand over valuable green spaces, cities must employ brownfield land and empty, disused buildings. Shopping centres on the outskirts of town, industrial estates and suburban developments accessible primarily by the private vehicle are the enemies of a prosperous city.

The urban plan that Rogers' practice designed for the Lu Jia Zui district of Pudong in Shanghai, one of the fastest growing cities on the planet, offered the possibility of achieving a truly sustainable, compact city. It would be open 24 hours a day, with a comprehensive public transport system and housing within easy distance of places of work. The Masterplan was based on an urban grid that allowed for the coexistence of buildings of varying heights and shapes; it was submitted to the competition organised by the city, which finally opted for an alternative solution.

Urban plans for other cities, such as Florence, Viareggio, Berlin, Manchester and London have been based on a similar focus. In each case Rogers' strategy has been centred on compactness, sustainability and ease of access.

PUBLIC

Active public spaces reflect a prosperous society. For Richard Rogers they are the physical realisation of the values of a society. Communities shape the public spaces they use and, at the same time, are shaped by the public spaces that define them.

Thus public space acts as a catalyst, generating energy and excitement, and brings a calm and stillness that offers respite from the cities' essential noise and chaos. There is a continued urban tradition that links the Parthenon in Athens with the Piazza del Campo of Siena and Trafalgar Square in London, and which reflects the balance between collective life and private privilege.

The greatest challenge that confronts an architect is to design buildings that activate the life of the cities in which they are built. This goal has always been highly present throughout the over forty years of Rogers' professional practice, and never more so than in the project for the Place Beaubourg in Paris. Piano and Rogers' proposal in the competition for the Pompidou Centre defined the space in front of the museum as a "place for all people, all ages and all creeds; a cross between the British Museum and Times Square". And that is precisely what it has become: the building is integrated into the square and the public space extends up the escalators to the open-air piazzas. Other examples of Richard Rogers' work in this sense include his projects for the Rome Congress Centre (2000) and the South Bank Art Centre complex (London, 1994).

WORK IN PROGRESS

This section, updated for the CaixaForum Barcelona exhibition, offers an opportunity to see current projects by the Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners practice. These include the Leadenhall (London) office building and the Riverside South office development plan for Canary Wharf on the banks of the River Thames, as well as numerous projects that have been or are now being executed in Spain, such as redevelopment of Les Arenes bullring, the Bodegas Protos winery in Valladolid, the Palmas Altas Technology Centre for the Abengoa Group in Seville,

the Hotel Hesperia in Hospitalet de Llobregat, the Valladolid Masterplan and the Justice Complex of Madrid.

Richard Rogers. Biography and selected projects

1933 Richard Rogers is born in Florence (Italy) on 23 July

1939 The family moves to England

1954 Begins studies in the Architectural Association, London

1959 Travels to the United States to continue studies at Yale University

1963 Returns to the United Kingdom where he founds Team 4 alongside Su Brumwell and Norman and Wendy Foster

1966-67 First project by Team 4: Creek Veau house in Cornwall

1967 Team 4 project is awarded a prize for the Reliance Controls factory in Swindon

1969 House for Today Award for the prototype of the Zip-Up House. Dissolution of Team 4

1971 Along with Renzo Piano, he begins work on the Centre Georges Pompidou, which opens its doors in 1977

1977 Founds Richard Rogers Partnership alongside John Young, Marco Goldschmied and Mike Davies

1978 Wins the competition for the Lloyd's building, London

1989 Wins the competition for construction of Terminal 5 at Heathrow Airport, London

1996 Begins the project for Terminal 4 of Barajas Airport, Madrid

1998 Begins the project of the Antwerp Law Courts

1999 Begins the project of the National Assembly for Wales, Cardiff

2006 Stirling Prize for his project for Terminal 4 at Barajas, Madrid

2007 Pritzker Prize

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CaixaForum Madrid

Pº del Prado, 26
28054 Madrid

Times

Monday to Sunday, from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Information service of "la Caixa" Social and Cultural Outreach Projects

Monday to Sunday, from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Tel.: 902 22 30 40

www.lacaixa.es/obrasocial

Admission to the exhibition is free

If you would like further information:

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Multimedia press release

<http://premsa.lacaixa.es/obrasocial/>

<http://www.obrasocial.lacaixa.es>

COMPLEMENTARY ACTIVITIES AROUND THE *RICHARD ROGERS + ARCHITECTS. FROM THE HOUSE TO THE CITY* EXHIBITION

- **Opening lecture: From the house to the city**

By Richard Rogers, Graham Stirk and Ivan Harbour, of Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners

Wednesday, 8 July, at 18.30 h.

- **Lecture series: Architectures for cities**

Richard Rogers' work is based on the belief in a civil society and the relationship between the design of buildings and the capacity to generate social inclusion, providing access to housing for each and every citizen. Coinciding with the exhibition of Rogers' work, "la Caixa" Social and Cultural Outreach Projects proposes a review of some of the huge concerns that have been present throughout the professional career of this acclaimed British architect.

- **Scenic arts: Anxious Buildings**

Choreography and interpretation: Erre que Erre

Guest DJ: David Crespo, Balango

Friday, 10 July, at 21 h.

Price: 4 euros. Places limited.

Both architecture and dance are ways of drawing in space. The scenes of this performance offer a reflection on the relationship that can be established between movement, drawing and architecture. Richard Rogers' work and its chromatic foundations are the really attractive starting point from which to experiment with the movement and coordinates offered by an empty space.