



Opus 35

Frank O. Gehry, Energie-Forum-Innovation, Bad Oeynhausen

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After his deconstructive beginnings in the eighties and nineties, Frank Gehry increasingly practised a very plastic form of architecture. His expressively sculptural cultural buildings, the Vitra Design Museum in Weil am Rhein, his project for the Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles and above all the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao (see Opus 32), have shaped the architectural awareness of our period and provided exemplary artistic alternatives to the architectural canon of Modernism.

Within Gehry's rapidly growing volume of work the comparatively small energy forum for the Minden-Ravensburg Electricity Company (EMR) plays a particularly striking role insofar as the extraordinarily complex brief involved blending almost contradictory functions in a very cramped space, thus compelling the architect to use highly differentiated forms and materials.

In this way something like a primal model of sculptural building emerged, a massively fissured, subtly lit structure that explains itself inside with amazing naturalness, making visitors gasp with its changing spatial situations as an exhibition and events centre, exploding all conventions as an office building and translating the theme of energy into sensual forms by architectural means as the electricity company's technical distribution centre. The old dictum »form follows function« acquires a new and radical quality in the architecture of the Energieforum.

Gottfried Knapp is responsible for architectural reporting as cultural editor of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* in Munich. He has written on contemporary architecture and urban development in almost all the specialist publications in Germany. After voluntary work with Pan Walther, Christian Richters studied communication design at the Folkwangschule in Essen. He is one of the most sought-after architectural photographers in Europe today. His photographs are to be found in publications like *The Architectural Review*, *Architecture*, *Bauwelt*, *Domus*, *El Croquis*, *L'Architecture Aujourd'hui* and *Zodiac*.

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