



A Moving Tribute

Architect **Santiago Calatrava** transports his vision for lower Manhattan's transportation hub

AS PLANS WERE UNVEILED for the redevelopment of the World Trade Center site, almost everyone in New York had a different opinion. Endless rounds of revisions, bickering, and disappointment clouded the project. But on one element, there was little disagreement: **Santiago Calatrava's** design for the World Trade Center transportation hub was a beautiful, visionary feat of art and architecture.

"Breathtaking," exclaimed *New York Times* architecture critic Herbert Muschamp. The station "will be more than a building. It will cast out the defeatist attitude that has clogged New York's architectural arteries since the destruction of the old Pennsylvania Station [in 1964]." Paul Goldberger of *The New Yorker* called it "spectacular." Calatrava has "all but usurped the role that [Daniel] Libeskind had hoped for as the shaper of iconic architecture at the site," Goldberger wrote.

Scheduled to open in 2010, the glass-and-steel building is intended to evoke a dove being released from the hands of a child. During the day, natural light will penetrate some 60 feet through glass paving, all the way down to the train platforms. At night, the illuminated station will serve as a beacon for the entire neighborhood.

But what drew the most raves were the building's moving parts. On September 11th of each year, and on clear spring and summer days, the wings of this massive structure will part some 40 feet, opening the station to the heavens. Calatrava likens the movement to "something being opened to the sky and becoming free."

The universal acclaim for Calatrava's latest project comes as no surprise to his growing legion of followers. The Spanish-born, Swiss-trained architect and engineer has been designing gorgeous train stations, bridges, airports, and other public buildings throughout Europe for decades. Calatrava's first commission in the United States, an addition to the Milwaukee Art Museum, was named Best Design of 2001 by *Time* magazine. With its signature *brise soleil* (sun shade), it not only transformed the museum, but also instantly turned that city into an architectural destination.

"We used to get 120,000 visitors a year," says Elysia Borrowy-Reeder, the museum's marketing director. "Now we're seeing about 300,000."

The transportation hub is expected to give a similar boost to lower Manhattan, giving the neighborhood a soaring public space on the order of Midtown's Grand Central Station. "A great many people will use the transportation hub every day — coming and going from their jobs, visiting the cultural sites, and of course, coming to the Memorial," says the 56-year-old Calatrava. "I hope the building will offer them all a moment of inspiration — of being filled with spirit — as they go on their way."

The unique combination of artistic beauty and mathematical precision in Calatrava's work — so many of his creations seem to be anthropomorphic sculptures with exposed white steel or concrete beams serving as a skeleton — has him much in demand lately. In addition to his first residential building (in Malmo, Sweden), other Calatrava projects under way include the new Symphony Center in Atlanta, a skyscraper in Chicago that's projected to be North America's tallest, and bridges in Dallas, Dublin, Jerusalem, and the architect's birthplace, Valencia, Spain.

— John Rosenthal

ANDREW KIST (MCKMANUS); FACING PAGE: MICHAEL FALCO (CALATRAVA)