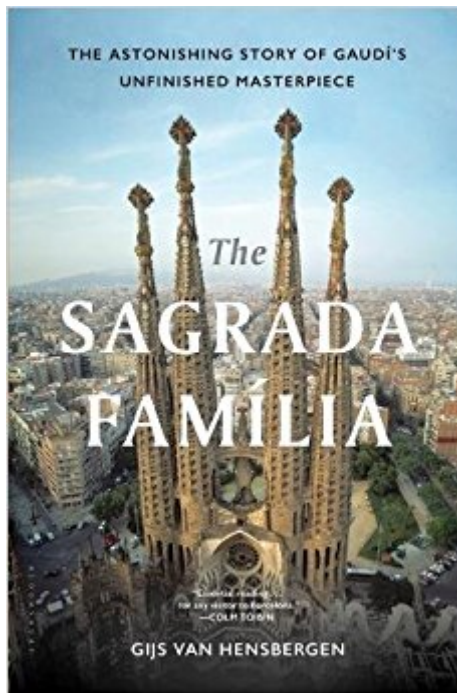




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The Sagrada Familia: The Astonishing Story Of Gaudí's Unfinished Masterpiece



Synopsis

An illuminating biography of one of the most famous--and most famously unfinished--buildings in the world, the Sagrada Familia of Barcelona. The scaffolding-cloaked spires of Antoni Gaudí's masterpiece, the Sagrada Familia, dominate the Barcelona skyline and draw in millions of visitors every year. More than a century after the first stone was laid in 1882, the Sagrada Familia remains unfinished, a testament to Gaudí's quixotic ambition, his religious devotion, and the sensuous eccentricity of his design. It has defied the critics, the penny-pinching accountants, the conservative town-planners, and the devotees of sterile modernism. It has enchanted and frustrated the citizens of Barcelona. And it has passed through the landmark changes of twentieth-century Spain, surviving two World Wars, the ravages of the Spanish Civil War, and the "Hunger Years" of Franco's rule. Gijs van Hensbergen's *The Sagrada Familia* explores the evolution of this remarkable building, working through the decades right up to the present day before looking beyond to the final stretch of its construction. Rich in detail and vast in scope, this is a revelatory chronicle of an iconic structure, its place in history, and the wild genius that created it.

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Customer Reviews

"This book solves many of the puzzles and mysteries that have surrounded the creation of Gaudí's great, mad, intriguing dream. It is essential reading for any student of Catalonia's fascinating and complex heritage, as it is for any visitor to Barcelona." - Colm Toibin, author of *HOMAGE TO BARCELONA* and *NORA WEBSTER*
"A wonderfully illuminating and enriching book." - Andrew

Graham-Dixon, author of CARAVAGGIO "Few writers know Gaudi as intimately as Gijs van Hensbergen. Fewer still are capable of transmitting and explaining the mixture of magic, spirituality and outright eccentricity that has driven the construction of one of Europe's most emblematic temples." - Giles Tremlett, author of GHOSTS OF SPAIN and ISABELLA OF CASTILE "Exquisite . . . A wonderment of an essay about a wonderment of a building." - Paul Preston, author of FRANCO and JUAN CARLOS "Gijs van Hensbergen has pulled off a remarkable feat, taming the monster of 20th century architecture, without diminishing him. He takes a level headed and highly readable journey through the life of Antoni Gaudi, an architect loved by Dali, hated by Picasso, and now destined for sainthood." - Deyan Sudjic, director of The Design Museum, London "Extensively researched historical fact is presented in an accessible and readable style . . . Gaudi is presented as charismatic and driven, with a distinctive vision combining Gothic and Art Nouveau forms. Though there are a number of other books on the general topic, this is a singular English-language title as others function more as guides than histories." - Library Journal "With the sharp eye of both an art historian and Gaudi scholar, Gijs van Hensbergen takes readers on a tour of the Sagrada Familia." - Shelf Awareness Pro "Art historian van Hensbergen crafts an admiring study of Catalan architect Antoni Gaudi's masterpiece, the Sagrada Familia, tracing its evolution from local basilica to one of the world's most recognizable structures . . . Van Hensbergen serves as an enthusiastic guide in this more than thorough account of one of the world's most eccentric and stunning buildings." - Publishers Weekly "Intoxicating . . . instantly engages . . . Van Hensbergen's rich, poetic prose is perfectly suited to describe this unprecedented work of art. An engrossing, vivid inquiry into a man and his magisterial creation." - Kirkus Reviews

Gijs van Hensbergen is an art historian and Hispanist. In March 2013 he was featured on "God's Architect," a CBS profile of Gaudi's breathtaking Sagrada Familia for 60 Minutes. He has been a fellow at the Harry Ransom Center and the London School of Economics, and lectured all over the world, including at Oxford University, the National Gallery in London, the Prado, and the prestigious summer school at El Escorial. His previous books include Guernica: The Biography of a Twentieth-Century Icon and Antoni Gaudi: A Biography.

There's only one problem with this book. It was too short. It left me wanting to know more about Gaudi, Spanish history and the actual building. However, I can't penalize the author for telling the story so well. Van Hensbergen writes well, and give the reader the context for the decisions and events surrounding the construction of the Sagrada Familia. You will get the story from this book but

it is such a rich story that I was left wanting to know more. However, as an overview of its subject, van Hensbergen's work is excellent.

Having seen the Sagrada Familia, I thought the book was interesting. More illustrations would have helped.

great book

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