

Press release

21 May 2010

The Art of Architecture: Foster + Partners opens at Antiguo Colegio de San Ildefonso, Mexico City

El Arte de la Arquitectura: Foster + Partners

Antiguo Colegio de San Ildefonso, Mexico City

21 May to 31 July 2010

Foster + Partners: the Art of Architecture is the first major exhibition by the practice in Mexico and is arranged around six main themes: infrastructure, sustainability, high-rise, urban planning, history and culture. While these highlight the incredible diversity of the practices work, they also demonstrate the changing nature of architectural practice. Although the international scope of the practices work has widened since its foundation over 40 years ago, the same set of values underpins every design, regardless of its size or type. Each is united by a common thread a belief that the quality of our surroundings has a direct influence on the quality of our lives.

The exhibition features a timeline representing the 227 projects in 20 countries completed by the practice since its inception in 1967 as Foster Associates. On display are models of seminal projects, such as the Reichstag and the Free University in Berlin, the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts and the Great Court at the British Museum. In addition, it features aviation projects, such as Beijing and Stansted Airports, together with Spaceport, New Mexico, the worlds first commercial space port. Along with completed works, the exhibition also showcases some of Foster + Partners 30 projects currently under

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construction, including Masdar, the world's first zero waste, carbon neutral city and Campus Biometropolis, Foster + Partners' first project to be built in Mexico.

Sustainability has been a central theme of Foster + Partners work for more than 40 years. The practice was investigating alternative energy sources and sustainable forms of development in the 1970s long before people were using the term green. This involves finding a balance between old and new, whether that means retrofitting existing cities or creating sustainable new communities. The models and photographs on display illustrate how a sensitive intervention can give a new lease of life to a historic building, by improving facilities and setting impressive new environmental standards. While the computer has revolutionised the way designers work, the language of drawing and model making still play a central role in Foster + Partners studio. The exhibition offers further insight into the art of architecture through a display of sketches which show some of these stepping stones in the design process.

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