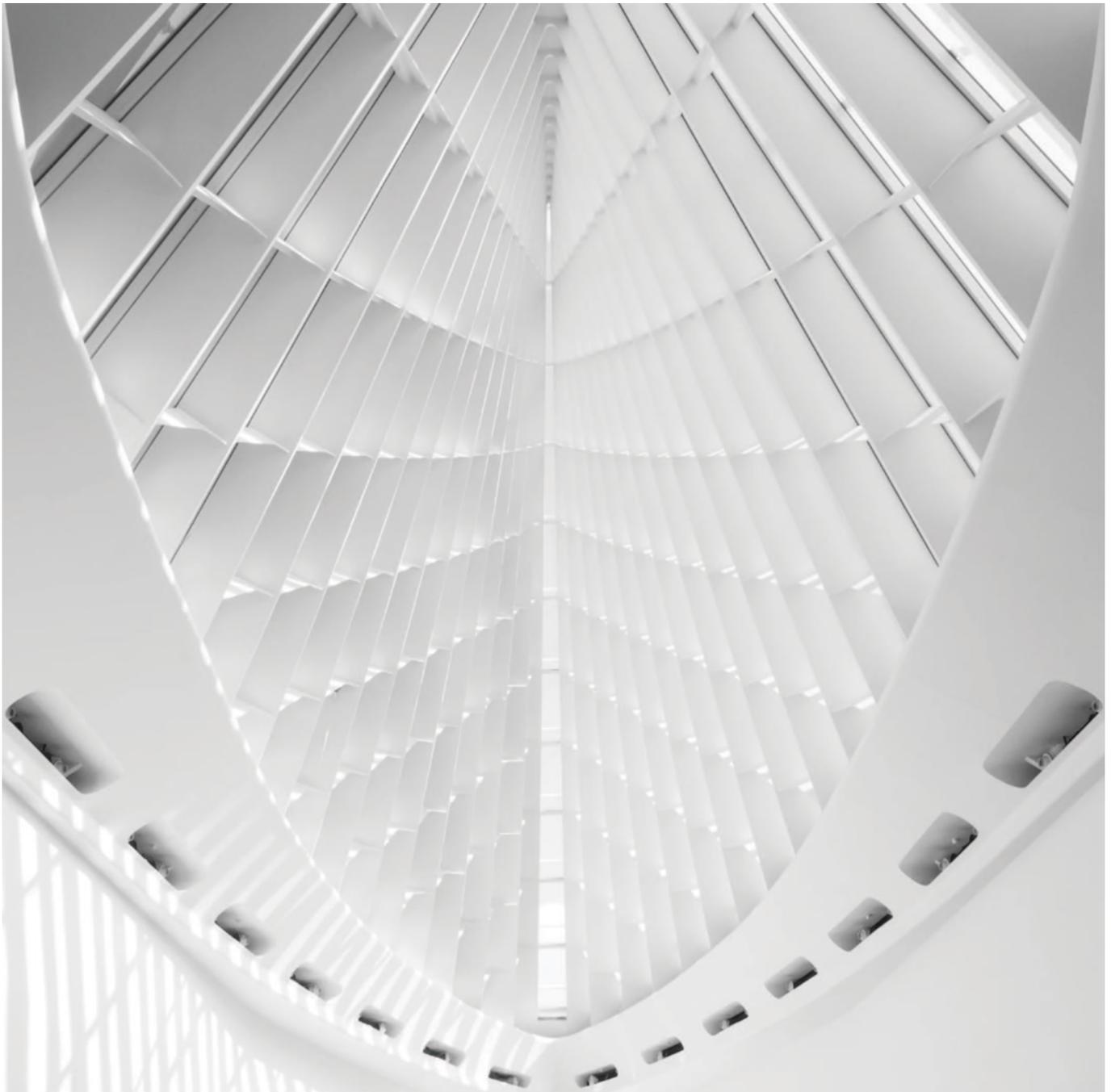


Architectural Photography

IÑAKI HERNÁNDEZ-LASA ARPS



“Architectural photography might be considered by some an aseptic documentary process. However, it becomes visual art when the photographer engages and shares his or her interpretation of those buildings”.



FEATURED PHOTOGRAPHER

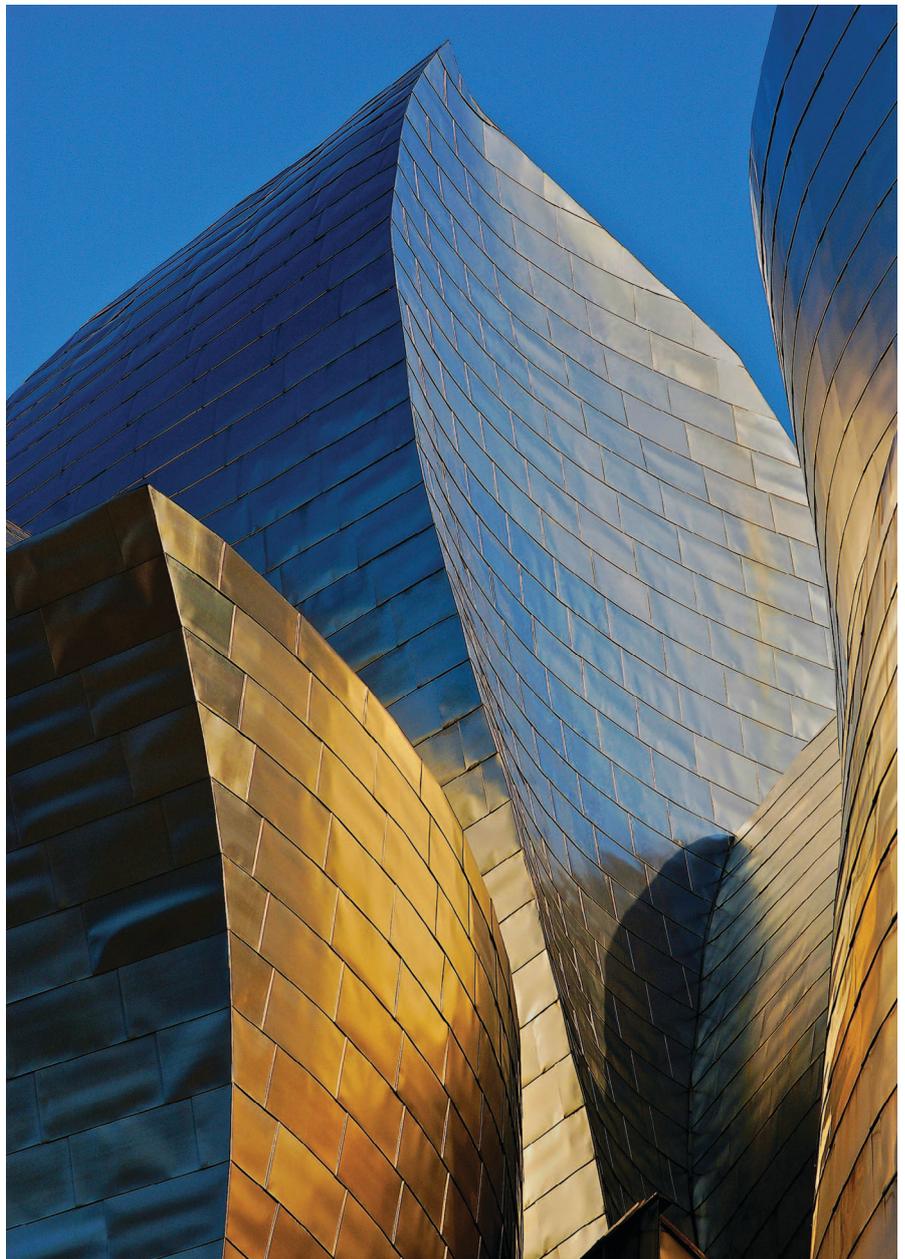
Iñaki Hernández-Lasa is an amateur architectural photographer who has lived in Ireland for the last 27 years. Born in Spain, he grew up in a family where architectural designs, plans and sketches were a recurrent topic of conversation during dinner time. While professionally he chose an alternative route, childhood nurtured in him an artistic interest in contemporary architecture, a passion which he brings to his photography.

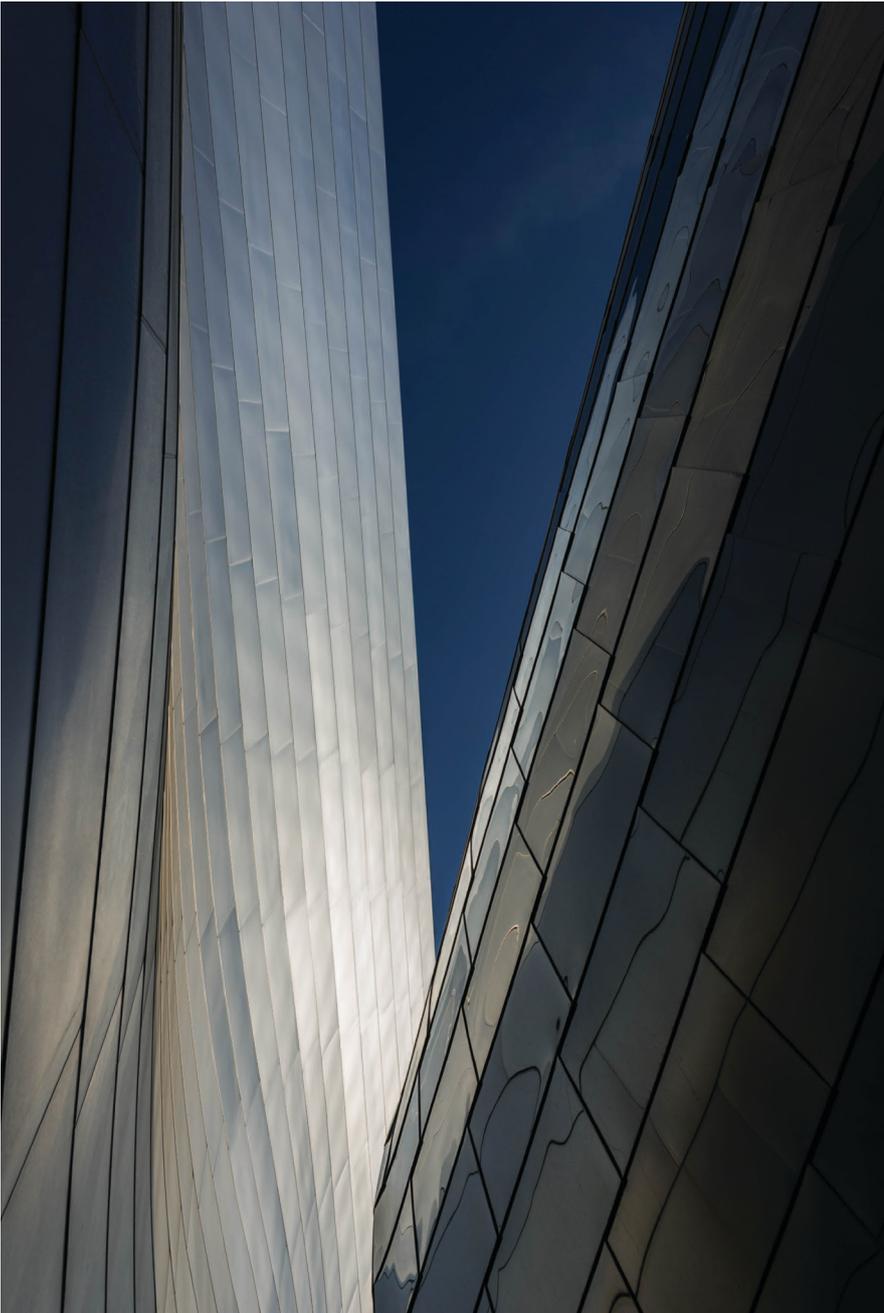
“I started experimenting with various photographic subjects and styles through the medium of film and slide during my school years using my father’s camera which I remember had an incredibly sharp Carl Zeiss lens”.

However, he remembers fondly how everything changed when his parents presented him with a Nikon F-601. From that moment, endless Fuji Velvia rolls were shot and sent to the lab in a constant attempt to learn and improve his photographic skills.

Moving to Dublin at the age of 24 led to rolls and rolls of beautiful landscapes of the West of Ireland, capturing lush greens and majestic seascapes. But city environs, buildings and materials still held a stronger attraction.

The definitive moment came in 1997 with the opening of the world-famous Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao by Frank Gehry. This remarkable building completely transformed Iñaki’s native city from an industrial, grey urban area to a modern, vibrant city. **“Apart from the ‘Guggen’ as we locals call it, Bilbao also opened a state of the art underground, designed by Sir Norman Foster, Santiago Calatrava’s Zubi Zuri bridge, Arata Isozaki’s Atea towers and more recently César Pelli’s Iberdrola tower. And all within a 10-minute walk from my parent’s house. An architectural photographer’s dream”.**





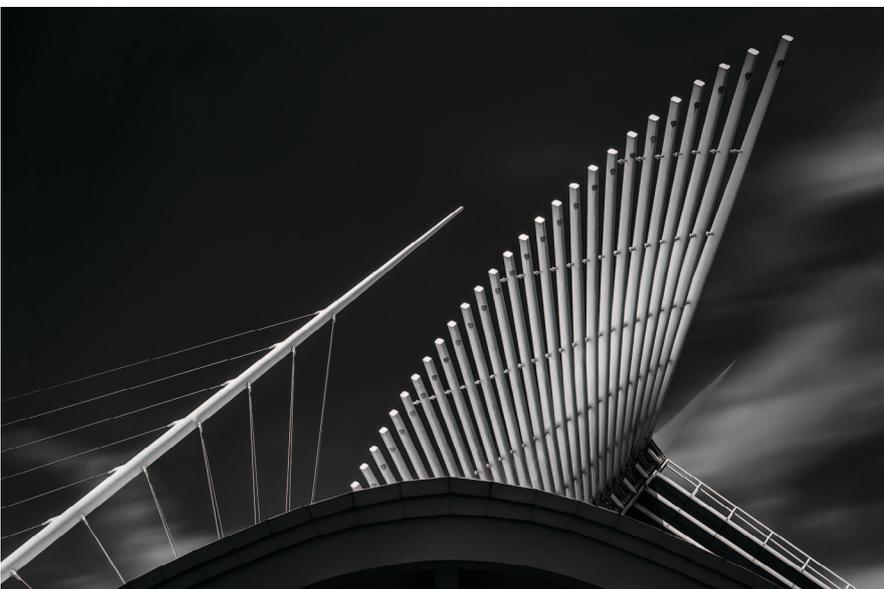
From the opening of the Guggenheim in 1997, it was clear that Iñaki's interest lay firmly in architectural photography and for many years he would practice and perfect his technique. He considers himself to be an enabler of communication between the buildings and the public.

“The ultimate objective is to express and convey the different aspects of these buildings while trying to create an aesthetically pleasing image”.

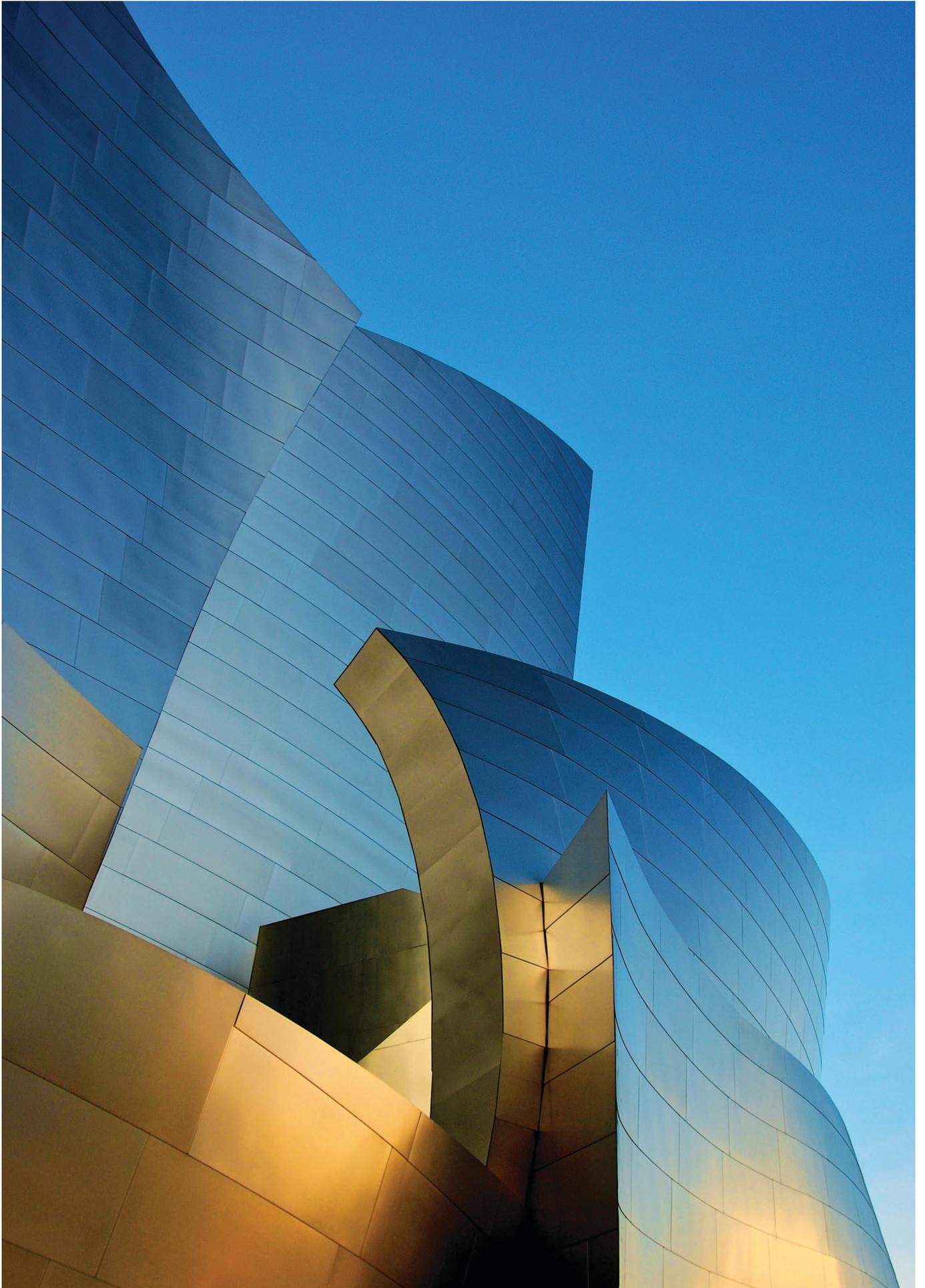
Trips to Bilbao on a yearly basis to visit his family allowed for numerous shoots in his native city. However, he also travelled over the years to many locations featuring stunning architecture, and planned his shoots with great care in order to expand his portfolio: Los Angeles, Chicago, Berlin, Milwaukee, Miami, Valencia or Dublin to name but a few.

“Over many years, I have been privileged to photograph these remarkable structures. I tend to concentrate on their “genius loci”, the very essence and nature of these buildings. I enjoy capturing their three-dimensional interplay, by providing a spatial reference and highlighting the breadth and scale of these extraordinary structures”.

One of his questions when shooting architectural photography has always been: **“what can I ‘interpret’ that other people around me have not? How can I express the architect’s feelings and intentions for his building through the medium of photography and transfer that to a larger audience? The main purpose is to present a more intimate view of the building, by eliminating distracting elements and their surroundings, and by concentrating on a less standardised view. I try to provide a more artistic and personal interpretation while maximising materials and light”.**



FEATURED PHOTOGRAPHER



Before getting down to shooting Iñaki plans carefully and analyses the buildings as much as possible, walking around them a few times looking for interesting angles and compositions that may catch his eye. **“At this stage the camera is still in the bag: I just want to examine what is possible, where the light is, where the reflections lie, juxtapositions of materials, angles, anything that may create a strong composition”**. One of Iñaki’s beliefs when it comes to contemporary architectural photography has always been influenced by those words of renowned architect Mies van der Rohe: **“Less is more”**.

Light, time of day and the human element play an important factor too, so it is not surprising that he was first in the queue on a freezing cold winter morning in Berlin to shoot Foster’s dome at the Reichstag.

“I had a vision that I wanted an uncluttered shot of a single person walking up the ramp to highlight the dimensionality of the Reichstag dome. And that is best achieved by showing the ratio of the human element versus the height of the structure”.

Iñaki approaches his shoots as if he were still shooting film, making dozens of images rather than thousands. **“I try to slow down, think of the composition, frame every image as best as possible and expose it as correctly as I can”**. It is perhaps his background in film that makes him pause and think twice before pressing the shutter and his approach means that post processing is usually very fast, a matter of minutes. The more painstaking task is usually cloning those unattractive scratches, so characteristic of Gehry’s L.A. Concert Hall or Guggenheim Museum titanium-clad façades.

Over the last few years, Iñaki has presented his work at numerous photographic societies and has acted as a judge nationally and internationally. He has also taken photographers to Spain where he has run architectural photography workshops in Bilbao and Valencia.

In May 2013 Iñaki received a Fellowship of the Irish Photographic Federation (FIPF), and he is the only photographer to have received an FIPF for architectural photography. In 2017 he gained his Associateship of the Royal Photographic Society. His aspiration is to continue to engage and attract photographers into this fascinating genre.

In Iñaki’s opinion, **“these outstanding buildings are best understood in their environment, by examining and engaging with their abstraction, their angles, their lines, their materials and their beautiful minimalism. I experiment and pursue that glint of light that brings life and energetically transforms their materials into contrasting elements”**.

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