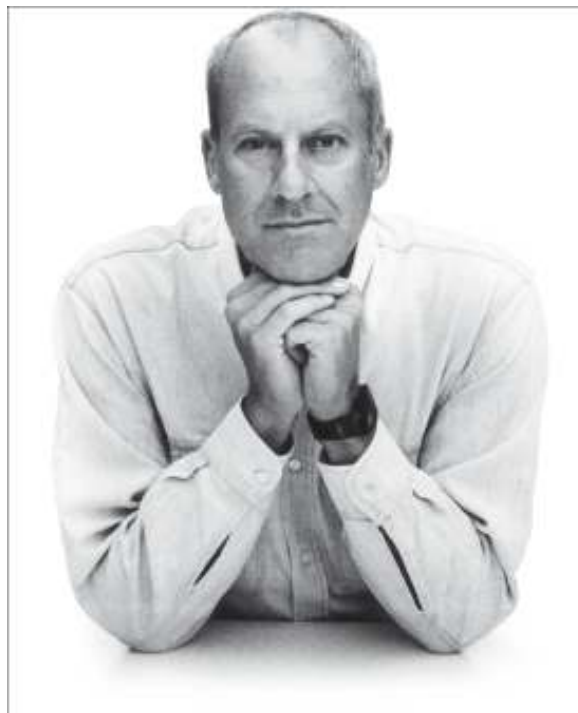


How Much Does Your Building Weigh, Mr. Foster? 28th January, 2011



Presents

A Film by Norberto López Amado & Carlos Carcas



HOW MUCH DOES YOUR BUILDING WEIGH,
MR. FOSTER?

UK Cinema Release Date: 28th January, 2011
Runtime: 74 Mins

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HOW MUCH DOES YOUR BUILDING WEIGH, MR. FOSTER? traces the rise of one of the world's premier architects, Norman Foster and his unending quest to improve the quality of life through design. Portrayed are Foster's origins and how his dreams and influences inspired the design of emblematic projects such as the largest building in the world Beijing Airport, the Reichstag, the Hearst Building in New York and works such as the tallest bridge ever in Millau France. In the very near future, the majority of mankind will abandon the countryside and live entirely in cities. Foster offers some striking solutions to the problems that this historic event will create.



SHORT SYNOPSIS

“How much does your building weigh, Mr. Foster?” is the first feature film focused on the architect Norman Foster and it will be the beginning of a series of productions on the key figures of the art and culture of the XXI century. The film shows Norman Foster’s journey from Manchester to a global practice. It talks about architecture, and why it matters, and how difficult it is to do it well. Norman Foster has rewritten the rules of architecture. His vision and unswerving passion for excellence have created some of the most exceptional structures of our times. Architecture comes alive. Foster’s projects are photographed in a cinematic style that seeks to bring the spectacular nature of their size and scale to the big screen. It also speaks to the specialists and the priesthood of design, but it is not just for them. It speaks to everybody who has ever been excited by a work of art, or who has understood that some spaces have special qualities that others do not share. It’s for everybody who has been excited by the daring of a bridge, jutting out into space, or by the spectacle of a skyscraper that can define the identity of a city. It portrays how the world of art has influenced Foster and how Foster has brought the world of art into his design. Art, for the sake of the pleasure it gives and how, when combined with architecture, it leads to something greater and more uplifting than the sum of the two. It celebrates the special qualities of some of the most extraordinary structures of our times, and explores what it was that made them possible



BIOGRAPHIES

Norberto López Amado – Director

Tito López Amado has been working for the past 20 years as a filmmaker on diverse projects in cinema, television, and advertising. Born in Orense, Spain and based in Madrid, he studied law and film direction. In 1989, he joined the Spanish EFE news agency as a correspondent, covering diverse stories around the world such as the first Gulf War. He moved into the field of cinema directing a number of documentaries and short feature-films. His first full-length feature film, “Nos Miran”, was a commercial success and was well received by critics worldwide. He is currently considered one of the leading directors of episodic television in Spain. Lopez’s second feature film, “Zig Zag” is in pre-production.

Carlos Carcas – Director

Carlos Carcas is an independent documentary filmmaker based in Madrid. Born in Miami, Florida in 1968, he began working in film production after graduating from Boston University’s College of Communication. He worked for several years for the international press agency Worldwide Television News (WTN) as a freelance cameraman and news producer in Peru, Haiti, Bosnia, Liberia and Spain. He has collaborated with Spanish director Fernando Trueba on several projects. Among them, Carcas shot and edited “Blanco & Negro” which won the Latin Grammy in 2006 for the best long-format music video. Carcas also worked with Trueba on “The Miracle of Candeal”, winner of the Spanish’s academy’s Goya prize for best documentary. In 2008, Carcas released “Old Man Bebo”, his first feature length documentary, which he wrote, directed and edited. With this work, he was awarded the prize for best new documentary filmmaker at the Tribeca film Festival in 2008.

Elena Ochoa – Producer

Elena Ochoa was a Fulbright Scholar at the University of California, Los Angeles (USA) and Visiting Research Scholar at the Universities of Cambridge (UK), Chicago (USA), Kraków (Poland), Hamburg (Germany) and Pennsylvania (USA), amongst others. She was Professor of Psychopathology at the Complutense University of Madrid (Spain) for almost two decades; she has also worked in the Spanish National Television, Spanish National Radio and as well as newspapers such as El País. Until 2001, Elena Ochoa was Honorary Professor at King’s College London (UK). She founded Ivorypress in 1996 and acted as the co-Editor in- Chief during the making of the ten-volume C Photo Collection. Since the beginning, Ivorypress has been devoted to producing artist’s books and other publications related to contemporary art, photography, design and architecture. In 2008 Ivorypress opened Ivorypress Art+Books Bookshop in Madrid (Spain) as well as Ivorypress Space, commissioning exhibitions of artists such as Miroslav Tichý, Ai Weiwei, Michal Rovner, Claes Oldenburg and Buckminster Fuller, among others. Elena Ochoa was Chairman of the Tate International Council and trustee of the Tate Foundation for five years. Currently, she is a trustee of the Isamu Noguchi Foundation and is also the main advisor and trustee of the Art Trust Foundation. Elena Ochoa is the Founder and current CEO of Ivorypress and Art Commissioners.

Antonio Sanz – Executive Producer

Antonio Sanz has a wide academic background in Art History. He began his career as professional photographer then moved toward cinema where he has worked as director of photography, screenwriter and director. In 2005, Sanz joined Art Commissioners, a London-based company focused on the commissioning and promotion of artistic works. He has curated art exhibitions around the world such as at the 2006 Biennale di Venezia, or the London Victoria & Albert Museum in 2008. He is the managing director of Ivorypress/Art Commissioners.

Deyan Sudjic- Scriptwriter

Deyan Sudjic is the director of the Design Museum in London. Born in London of Yugoslav parents, he studied architecture at the University of Edinburgh, but decided not to practice architecture. Instead he became a writer, and critic, and has established an international reputation as commentator and curator. He was the founding editor of Blueprint magazine, and for four years was the editor of Domus, the authoritative Milan based architecture and design revue. He has been architecture critic for three of Britain’s leading newspapers; The Sunday Times, the Guardian and the Observer. He is the author of a number of well-received books. The Washington Post nominated his Edifice Complex as book of the year, and it has been translated into six languages. His authorized biography of Norman Foster was published in 2010. He spent four years in Glasgow, as director of the UK City of Architecture and Design project from 1996 to 2000, and was the director of the Venice Architecture Biennale in 2002. He has commissioned exhibitions in Istanbul, London, Glasgow, and Copenhagen.

Joan Valent – Musical Composer

Valent was born in Palma de Mallorca 1964. In 1988 Joan Valent moved to Los Angeles where he took lessons in classical composition, film scoring and orchestral conducting at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) and under the guidance of the composer Aurelio de la Vega at the University of Northridge (CSUN). In 1993 Michael Douglas asked him to create and present the piece “Escape From the Century” (screened on TVE). In 1996 Valent relocated to Madrid. While accepting commissions from orchestras around the world he also founded the Ars Ensemble, with whom he recorded the live album “Ars.” After the release of “Ars” in 2000, Joan Valent started to perform his music live and was nominated for the Spanish Premios de Música. American pop singer David Byrne included the string sextet Ars Ensemble during his tour of Spain and Portugal in 2001. In April 2002 his second album “Ensems” was released in Spain, Belgium and The Netherlands. Valent & Ars Ensemble took part in the XXVII edition of the prestigious Sfinx festival in Belgium. Since 2002 until the present, he has released several works of symphonic, choral, and instrumental music; 4 CD productions with Montserrat Caballé (two of them awarded with a Grammy); a DVD release of his concert for violin “Four seasons in Mallorca”; a CD release with works combining the violin, piano, and electronic music “Insula Poetica”; the creation of the ballets “Deseo” for Hojarasca Danza company, the Ballet “CARMEN” for Sara Baras Company, and many other recordings productions and arrangements for different pop, classical and flamenco artists. Valent is currently working on an opera, a new piano concerto, a new CD, and several movies scores scheduled to premiere.



Why This Documentary

The project emerged from an idea of the executive producer, Antonio Sanz, who has a multifaceted career in the world of art (photographer, film director and scriptwriter and curator of prestigious international exhibitions). His close collaboration with Elena Ochoa's publishing company Ivorypress led him to propose this project to her: publishing a book with moving images, a film exhibition on the work of one of the greatest contemporary architects. Over the past five years, Art Commissioners, has undertaken the international commissions of contemporary artists like Richard Long, Anish Kapoor, Sol Lewitt and Cai Guo-Qiang and others. In the audiovisual field, Art Commissioners has produced The First Look, presented and screened during the Venice Biennale 2006 in the Italian Pavilion, Ivorypress' short films C Photo and the film Blood on Paper for the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.



Interview with the Directors

What can cinema lovers find in this documentary? Why a documentary based on an architect?

Norberto López Amado (NLA) I've always been attracted by architecture, by being able to relate the mystery that is hidden behind the creation of the master pieces that transcend the era of their creators. This will happen with Norman Foster and I expect this documentary could be seen in 50 years and the audience could be able to recognize the person who is behind all these buildings.

Carlos Carcas (CC) I'm not an architect, nor do I consider myself someone who knows about architecture. So for me, the main question in this film is "Why should I care about architecture and what does it matter to me?" I think the film addresses this question and shows the audience that architecture is not just about building a pretty building, but that the difference between intelligent and mediocre design has a huge impact on peoples' lives, especially if it's in a major city.



When/how the idea of this documentary came up?

CC Antonio Sanz (executive producer and “father” of the idea) and I have worked together on several projects for over ten years. The idea for this project is something that we had talked about on more than one occasion. In 2007, Foster was awarded the Aga Khan prize for architecture and I was asked to cover that event. That trip coincided with a visit to the Beijing airport before its opening. Foster had been given permission to film there for the first time since the start of construction. I was hired to shoot both the award ceremony in Kuala Lumpur and Foster’s visit to the Beijing airport, and it was during that trip that the idea for the film really clicked. We had good chemistry working together. It was during that trip that Elena, who’s more from an arts background, understood that the idea of making the film was, in the end, a good one.

Making documentary is something like solving a great puzzle without seeing the final photo before... Could you tell us about the preparation process in this case?

NLA It has been a demanding, rigorous and slow creative process (more than two years) in order to draw the conclusion that less is more”, as Norman learned from Buckminster Fuller (one of his mentors), this exact quote has become the exact metaphor for this project. CC Besides studying a stack of books, the most important thing for me was to spend time with Foster and the architects who work with him. This came about in a natural way from day one, during the trip to Asia in 2007. Visiting the Beijing airport, it was easy to see the amount of pressure the team of architects there was facing to build the world’s biggest building in record time. I remember driving up to the terminal for the first time – and keep in mind that it was almost finished but it still wasn’t open. There were no lines of taxis or passengers with baggage, so out front it was kind of empty. Driving up I saw this huge, futuristic blade curving out against a rare, clear blue sky in Beijing. My breathing stopped. It was like landing on Mars and discovering a lost colony. I realized at that moment that I was surrounded by a very special group of people. So once the project for the documentary began, the first step was to spend some time in the main office in London. I began to attend design meetings and conduct interviews, but instead of taking notes with pad and pencil, I used a camera, which is the way I think and work. So in the beginning, I shot a lot of footage that doesn’t necessarily appear in the film, but the very act of filming is my way to get to know them and for them to get to know me.

You have done before some documentaries/feature films and several TV series. Have you found big differences making this documentary?

NLA No I haven’t, there’s always underneath everything the aim of finding the emotion, and this is what has exactly happened. CC I think the main difference in this film was the challenge of capturing the portrait of a man who is constantly in motion, travelling great distances at great speed. Add to this the fact that deep down inside, Foster didn’t really want to have a film made about him. He has a

huge list of priorities and a movie about his life is probably second to last on the list. He's not interested in having his picture taken. He doesn't have that need. For Foster, the high comes from design, and the main preoccupation is how to make the next design a little bit better. So how do you keep up with someone who's going from country to country faster than you can keep up with and who's not going to wait to make sure you get a good shot. That, and to spend time travelling together in close quarters knowing that the person in front of you would probably be happier if you weren't holding a camera – that was the main challenge and in the end he was great, very generous.

What do you find more difficult: working with actors or working with buildings?

NLA Filming architecture is very difficult. I started the shooting with one premise: "Let's shoot like no one has ever done before" so what we first did was understanding the building to be able to explain it without any words, caressing every part of it with the care and detail to make the audience not only feel but understand.



CC Rather than having actors hit a mark, for me the hardest thing is being invisible when you're working with a camera. It's something close to impossible. The minute there's a camera, and I don't care if it's a home movie, people change, they become self-conscious. And if you become a nuisance with the camera, it's over. An actor is someone who is trained to work with a camera; they know where to stand, when to speak. In a documentary, the filmmaker has to take on that responsibility. You have to hit the mark and capture the moment when it happens. There is no rehearsal, no "take two." And that's exactly what makes documentary filmmaking exciting.

About the impeccable aesthetic of this film, the images show the buildings from privileged and unusual angles ... What have you wanted to show from the buildings in particular? What shooting techniques have been used? Has this affected the shooting plan?

NLA We looked for different emotions from each building: from flying to finding spirituality, or risk. I dealt with buildings as if they were characters, with their conflicts and virtues. CC It was obvious from the start that this film had two very distinct and very different needs. On one hand, the filming of the architecture deserved a cinematic approach, with all the equipment, time and care that this implies. On the other, the filming of the characters had to be quick, lightweight. So a lot of the time, when I was with Foster, I was with a small hi-def camera or else we simply would not fit into the car. As far as the architecture was concerned, I think Tito knew early on that he had to choose a selection of buildings to tell the story. I remember him saying, "I want to be able to caress those buildings, to show the poetry intrinsic to them." For me, the thought of making a film about huge structures that don't move is terrifying. And that's where I think Tito and Valentin Alvarez, the director of photography,

have done a spectacular job because they've managed to create a dance between the audience and the buildings. They make you fly.

Working with an artist of this size is always impressive ... How would you describe Norman Foster after spending so much time with him?

NLA Norman Foster is a man who never gives up, he knows what he wants, he never feels fulfilled with his creations because he thinks that everything can always be improved, based on the word risk. CC I consider myself fortunate to have been able to work with some remarkable people, but I don't think I've ever met any so driven, so passionate, and so dedicated to his art as Norman Foster. Foster is a man who loves beauty and who likes to share that beauty. In my opinion, that what a good architect does because a building is not like a painting in someone's living room. A building is something that many people have to live or work in and that everyone sees. At the same time, I think Foster is a great teacher. He likes to share his knowledge. He's not someone who comes from a privileged family. He has worked, fought and risked for everything that he has achieved and I think he has also inspired everyone who works with him. I can honestly say that even my way of making films has been influenced from the year or so I've spent with him.

What side of Norman Foster have you highlighted on this documentary?

NLA I wanted to become Norman's mirror, the best thing is in the latest edition of the documentary Norman said, "this documentary is me". This has been my main challenge. CC Foster's background encompasses a wide variety of works. In all of them there is a lot a lot of thought, but also a lot of heart and soul. This is what we want to show



Locations

Millau Viaduct, Gorges du Tarn, France
Torre Collserola, Barcelona, Spain
Swiss Re Headquarters, London, England
Hearst Headquarters, New York, USA
Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, Norwich, England
Foster + Partners Studios in London, Madrid and
New York
Hongkong & Shanghai Bank Headquarters,
Hong Kong

City Hall and More London, London, England
American Air Museum, Duxford, England
Willis Faber Headquarters, Ipswich, England
McLaren Technology Centre, Woking, England
Petronas University of Technology, Malaysia
Millennium Bridge, London, England
The Sage, Gateshead, England
Al Faisaliah Tower, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
Stansted Airport, Stansted, England
The Great Court at the British Museum, London,
England
Carré d'Art, Nîmes, France
Free University of Berlin, Germany
New German Parliament, Reichstag, Berlin, Germany
Hong Kong International Airport, Chek Lap Kok, China
Beijing International Airport, Beijing, China
Masdar, Abu Dhabi, UAE
Bilbao's Subway, Spain
Engadin Valley, Switzerland
Casa de Campo, Madrid



With the participation of

Norman Foster
Tony Hunt/Engineer
George Weidenfeld/Publisher & writer
Richard Rogers/Architect
Bono/Musician U2
Deyan Sudjic/Writer & architectural critic
Paul Goldberger/Writer & architectural critic
Carl Abbott/Architect
Alain de Botton/Writer & broadcaster
Anish Kapoor/Artist
Richard Serra/Artist
Anthony Caro/Artist
Richard Long/Artist
Buckminster Fuller/Inventor and visionary architect

Ben Cowd/Architect
Cai Guo-Qiang/Artist
Ricky Burdett/Professor Architecture &
Urbanism LSE
And from Foster and Partners team
(in order of appearance):
Spencer de Grey/Senior Partner, Co Head of Design
David Nelson/Senior Partner, Co Head of Design
Narinder Sagoo/Architect, Design Board Member
Nigel Dancey/Senior Partner Design Director
Loretta Law/Architect, Resident Partner, Beijing
Mouzhan Majidi/CEO
Stefan Behling/Senior Partner Design Director
Jurgen Happ/Associate Partner
Gerard Evenden/Senior Partner Design Director
And the cooperation of Patrik Specker of Swiss Cross
Country Ski School, Pontresina.



CREDITS

An Art Commissioners production (UK)

In association with Aiete Ariane Films (Spain)

Producer Elena Ochoa

Executive Producer Antonio Sanz

Directors Norberto López Amado & Carlos Carcas

Written and narrated by Deyan Sudjic

Music by Joan Valent

Director of Photography Valentín Álvarez

Film Editor Paco Cozar

Line Producer Paloma López Vázquez

Associate Producers Imanol Uribe & Andrés Santana

Music performed by Bratislava Symphony Orchestra

Shooting date 2007 – 2008

Locations UK, Spain, USA, Germany, France, Italy,

Switzerland, China, Saudi Arabia, Arab Emirates

and Malaysia.

TECHNICAL DATA

Nationality UK – Spain (2010)

Format 35mm – 1:85 – Color – Dolby digital

Language English

Length 74' + credits

With the participation of



With the support of