

The Socialist, the Architect and the Twisted Tower

Synopsis:

The intriguing inside-story on building Santiago Calatrava's Turning Torso. Europe's highest residential building, a 190 meter twisted building, which was appointed "World's best residential building project" at Mipim in Cannes, 2005.

The film brings us close to the constant crises and quarrels between people who all have great prestige at stake. A hazardous project, with cultural clashes, financial crisis and heavy personal defeats.

Calatrava is one of the world's most noticed architects. He has built bridges, airports, and opera houses all over the world. Turning Torso is his first skyscraper. It mustn't go wrong since a success will lead the way to the mother city of all skyscrapers: New York City.

HSB, the property developer, is a cooperative housing company in the Swedish welfare tradition. Johnny Örbäck is MD in Malmö, a former social democratic top-politician. He is the force behind the controversial decision to build Turning Torso. "A showpiece for the rich" according to angry critics. When the budget is exceeded over and over, Johnny Örbäck puts his political reputation at risk. "If the project is in trouble, I'm in trouble!"

Directors Statement:

"I've always been interested in architecture and town buildings. More from a social and political perspective than from the strict esthetical perspective. For many years I was a journalist for Arbetet, a working man's newspaper, here in Malmö. Once I wrote about Santiago Calatrava's proposal for the Oresund bridge, and was because of this article in direct contact with the architect. His proposal for the bridge was much prettier than the bridge that was built according to me, but the construction of the bridge still fascinated me and my colleague Lars Westman. We made the documentary "Walking on Water" where we follow some people for almost five years. Right before the premier of "Walking on Water" I read that Calatrava was about to build a high building in Malmö. In August the year 2000 I met Santiago Calatrava and Johnny Örbäck and asked if I could follow the process from the inside. I wanted to get in behind all the closed doors, to follow the process even in times of resistance. That promise they might have regretted sometimes, but we were allowed to follow the process. The filming gave pay off. "The Socialist, the Architect and the Twisted Tower" raises many questions about the big companies within the building trade and their power in Sweden. It also shows the architects role and what happens if any one dares to dream of something big in this country.

The documentary is made for a great audience. It will be screened for television in eight different countries and we're soon expecting more."

Fredrik Gertten

Filmfacts:

Produced by: WG Film **Genre:** Dokumentär **Length:** 58 min. **Year of production:** 2005

Format: Video **Director:** Fredrik Gertten **Producer:** Fredrik Gertten **Editing:** Marie-Louise Bordinggaard & Olivier Bugge Coutté **Sound:** Ivar Hamrin **Music:** Cecilia Nordlund Krister Jonsson **Distributor:** WG Film / First Hand Films