



Designing America: Spain's Imprint in the U.S.



An interactive look at Spain's architectural and urban cultural legacy in the United States.

SPAIN arts & culture presents *Designing America: Spain's Imprint in the U.S.*, an exhibition organized by [Fundación Consejo España-Estados Unidos](#), in partnership with Biblioteca Nacional de España (BNE, National Library of Spain). Through the dialogue between historic documents and the combined narration of texts, images and audio-visual elements, the exhibit displays the important contributions that Spain has made to the construction of the United States territory, landscape and cities, starting with the first settlements to present day.

Curated by Spanish architects Juan Miguel Hernández León and Francisco Arques Soler and designed as an open cross-sectional tour through architecture, urban planning and the territory, *Designing America: Spain's Imprint in the U.S.* enlightens the historical, political and cultural events that have marked the course of 500 years of common history between the United States and Spain.

The Spanish contribution is present in emblematic cities such as New York City, San Francisco, Los Angeles or New Orleans, which preserve an undeniable Spanish presence in their twenty-first century structure, culture and heritage.

Designing America: Spain's Imprint in the U.S. shows us the fragmented stories of influential figures, such as Rafael Guastavino, a Valencian master builder who introduced timber vaulting to the U.S. and constructed nearly a thousand buildings with his patented tiling system, and José Luis Sert, an exile of the Spanish Civil War who went on to lead the Harvard Department of Architecture.

Embarking on a themed, yet non-sequential cross-sectional survey of these contributions, the exhibition is presented in four blocks: *The image of America*;

HERITAGE
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Tue, December 08–
Sun, February 28, 2016

Venue

Former Residence of the Ambassadors of Spain, 2801 16th St NW, Washington, DC

[View map](#)

Admission

Free and open to the public. Gallery hours: Monday to Thursday, from 10 am to 5 pm; Friday to Sunday, from 10 am to 6 pm. Closed from December 24 to January 3; January 18 and February 15.

More information

[Designing America](#)

Credits

Organized by Fundación Consejo España – Estados Unidos. Presented by SPAIN arts & culture, with the support of the Embassy of Spain and the Spain-USA Foundation. In collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Spain and the Biblioteca Nacional de España. Gold Sponsors: Hewlett Packard, Acciona, Ferrovial, Fundación ACS, Iberdrola, Obra Social La Caixa, OHL and Técnicas Reunidas. Additional support by the National Commission for Commemorations of New Spain. [See full exhibition credits](#). Image: Thomas Stackhouse, North America after the American Revolution. Spanish Territory was Recognized Internationally, 1783 © Biblioteca Nacional de España.



Constructing the territory; Cities: the Spanish urban space; and Constructed works: architecture and engineering. In each of these blocks, a set of more than 20 maps, images and objects is matched with parallel narrations that complement and enrich this collection.

The visit is completed by *The Spanish Language: place names in the United States*, an interactive installation that helps to localize the states and cities in the U.S., the video *The Spanish Frontier in North America*, and a multi-touch table with zoomable maps. Most of the images will have QR codes.

Exhibition Lectures

DESIGNING SPANISH FLORIDA: DISCOVERY, SETTLEMENT, AND EXPLORATION IN THE AGE BEFORE JAMESTOWN

- By [J. Michael Francis](#).
- **On Saturday, December 12 at 12 pm** at the Former Residence of the Ambassadors of Spain.
- Free admission. Space is limited, [RSVP required](#).

On September 8, 1565, Spanish conquistador Pedro Menéndez de Avilés founded the settlement of St. Augustine, Florida, the oldest continuously occupied European settlement in the continental United States. For Menéndez, St. Augustine was designed to serve as a strategic and economic link between the Atlantic and North America's vast interior. This talk explores the fascinating and controversial history of St. Augustine's colonial past, a past shrouded in myth and mystery.

THE CIUTAT JARDÍ MEETS FAIRHOPE, ALABAMA: CEBRIÀ DE MONTOLIU'S CITY PLAN OF 1921

- By [Susan Larson](#).
- ~~On Saturday, January 23 at 12 pm at the Former Residence of the Ambassadors of Spain.~~
- Free admission. Space is limited, [RSVP required](#).

The lecture has been cancelled due to the snow storm.

Cebrià de Montoliu i de Togores was a Catalan lawyer, translator and social reformer steeped in the urban and economic theories of his time. He spent much of his life translating forms of knowledge about modern urban planning between his native Catalunya, Germany, the United Kingdom, France and the United States. Drafted in 1921, Montoliu's highly original and city for Fairhope, Alabama is a result of the Catalan social reformer's imagining a hybrid urban concept that consciously reacted against what he thought were the alienating and ecologically destructive tendencies of the modern rational urban planning of Ildefons Cerdà in his native Barcelona.



THE SPANISH AND MISSION REVIVAL IN THE UNITED STATES, 1880-1940

- By [Richard Guy Wilson](#).
- **On Thursday, February 18 at 6.30 pm** at the Former Residence of the Ambassadors of Spain.
- Free admission. Space is limited, [RSVP required](#).

Spanish architecture had an impact in what is now the United States in two distinct periods, first in the 17th and 18th centuries in the South West and California through missions and a few dwellings, and then in the later 19th and early 20th century through what is called sometimes, “the Spanish Colonial Revival” and the “Mission Revival.” This talk will consider this “revival” of Spanish forms and ornament in buildings and how it helped shape an American identity. Buildings of all types, from skyscrapers to houses will be considered and how the idea of the Spanish Colonial was transmitted.

THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY SPANISH COLONIAL VISION: CONNECTING EAST AND WEST FROM SANTA ELENA TO NEW SPAIN

- Panel discussion by [Dr. David Moore](#), [Dr. J. Michael Francis](#) and [Andrew J. Beall](#).
- **On Saturday, February 27 at 12 pm** at the Former Residence of the Ambassadors of Spain.
- Free Admission. Space is limited, [RSVP](#) required.

Spanish conquistador Pedro Menendez de Avilés founded Saint Augustine in 1565. In 1566, Menendez moved the bulk of his colony to Santa Elena, located on today’s Parris Island Marine Corps Base near Beaufort, South Carolina. From December 1566 to 1568, Captain Juan Pardo led two Spanish army expeditions from Santa Elena through the South Carolina coast, into the Piedmont and mountains of North Carolina. Along these native pathways his army camped at more than 30 Native American settlements and he built forts at six of the Native towns. Although Pardo failed in his mission to reach northern Mexico, the six forts were occupied for 18 months before their local host communities destroyed them. These forts represent the earliest European settlements in the interior of the United States. The complex story of this early expansion of a European colony in North America is poorly understood by most Americans. This presentation brings archaeologists and historians from Florida, South Carolina, and North Carolina to tell the story of St. Augustine, Santa Elena, and Fort San Juan.

Opening night On Tuesday, December 8, from 7 pm to 8:30 pm, at the Former Residence of the Ambassadors of Spain. Free admission; space is limited, [RSVP required](#).