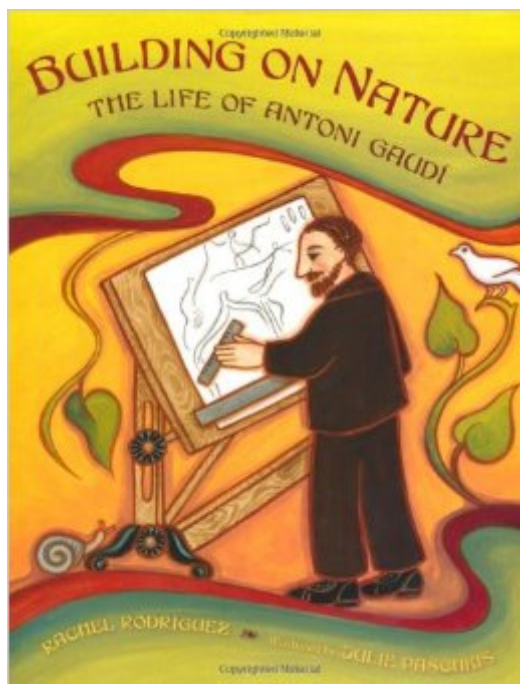


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# Building On Nature: The Life Of Antoni Gaudi



## Synopsis

In a small village in Spain lives a boy named Antoni Gaudí. His home is in Catalonia, a place of jagged mountain peaks and silvery olive trees, splashed by the sparkling sea. The wild beauty of this landscape makes a deep impression. He thinks of it as the Great Book of Nature, and he will read from it all of his life. Gaudí becomes an architect, learning the rules of form and structure that buildings are supposed to follow. But the shapes and colors of the natural world still inspire him, and he works them into his buildings. Leaves climb up walls. Pillars are giant animal feet. A long bench snakes around a playground. Antoni Gaudí turned nature into art, and in the process he revolutionized the world of architecture.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (27 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #161,741 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #45 in [Books > Children's Books > Arts, Music & Photography > Architecture](#) #89 in [Books > Children's Books > Biographies > Art](#) #108 in [Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Explore the World > Europe](#)

Age Range: 5 - 8 years

Grade Level: Kindergarten - 3

## Customer Reviews

This luscious book results from a perfect partnership of skills: the lyrical text and gorgeous illustrations are irresistible. The use of present tense brings the reader an immediacy and familiarity to the subject. The story begins, "In a small village in Spain lives a boy named Antoni Gaudí." Gaudí is a sickly child who "can't always run and play with his sister and brother" so he "has time to notice. With wide eyes, he observes the world. All around him is light, form, and the Great Book of Nature. He will read from it all his life." This brief picture book biography introduces an introspective boy who becomes a uniquely creative architect; many of his creations are "UNESCO World Heritage sites".

Paschkis' gouache illustrations are wonderfully colorful and beautifully expressive reflections of Gaudi's artistic accomplishments. An author's note provides additional interesting details about this remarkable person, and lists some web sites and a select bibliography. Every library will want to own a copy of this lovely book.

Like most art students and lovers, I have had mixed feelings about the architecture of Gaudi all my life. When our oldest son visited Barcelona and sent pictures of Gaudi buildings, I planned on learning more about him. Now I find this new and remarkable picture book telling children about a man who was perhaps little understood during his lifetime. What I find in the warmly-illustrated pages is a likeable man! A devout Catholic, a lover of nature and of poverty, married to his life's hard work. Perhaps his art isn't traditional, in any shape or form, but there is a genuine aspect of Gaudi's work that one can't help being attracted to. This picture book does a good job of bringing his life and work to young children and it is a fun read aloud, written in the present tense, in poetic lines. The author's note adds important biographical information including the fact that he was a very early recycler, using all sort of discarded materials in his buildings. A list of websites is also listed. I found this list of buildings with photos very useful!

Gaudi would approve! While Gaudi built dreams with bricks, Rachel Rodriguez has created a story from dancing words. Her words float over the page and create a world of wonder and understanding. Understanding of what caused Gaudi to emerge, almost like a butterfly from a cocoon. Rachel's roots has served her well in creating this story which soars; The illustrator's feat no less profound, since who would want to be tasked with drawing Gaudi. Yet she did, and together they are a perfect fit.

Antoni Gaudí- was a little boy whose eyes brightened with the wonders of the world around him. He was a sickly boy whose "bones and joints" would ache so it was impossible for him to play like the other children. Just because he was unable to run and jump with the rest of them didn't mean he would simply shrivel up and die, but rather took a different look at the world. He would read from the "Great Book of Nature," a book that would be forever reflected in his work. His family were artisans who worked with copper, hammering them into "shapes with a hollow space inside." When he graduated from high school, Gaudí- traveled to Barcelona. He was going to be an architect. His buildings became colorfully whimsical and imaginative. People weren't so sure they really liked this sort of thing and weren't used to "Gaudí- 's bright colors." There were climbing vines, birds, and

unusual little touches that were uniquely his. He made a peephole that looked as if a honeycomb were built into the door and then there was the door knocker that would smash a "bedbug underneath." Such vision and ingenuity weren't always welcome. His work began to get bolder and more imaginative. "Casa Milà waves and swells. Rounded rooms cluster into a giant beehive. Gaudí- is turning nature into art." Some people detested his work, but he was only interested in listening to his heart. This is an amazing biography that seems to catch the personality of Antoni Gaudí- perfectly. The artwork and the text mesh perfectly to create a stunning little portrait of this world renown architect. I loved the colors and the way the text and the artwork swirled through the pages. In the back of the book is a brief biography of Antoni, a selected bibliography and additional recommended web site resources. This is an inspired work about an inspired artist that will be a welcome addition to any shelves, even orange crates!

We bought this book in preparation for an upcoming trip to Barcelona. My child picks it up every day, we choose a page, find a photograph of the same work and enjoy comparing it with the illustration. We are fortunate to be heading to see Gaudí's work as the book says "with our very own eyes". I'm so glad we found this book, and whether or not a trip to Spain is in your future, I highly recommend Building on Nature for your library too.

This book is the story of Antoni Gaudí, an architect from Spain. It tells how Gaudí came to create buildings that imitated things he saw in nature. I had never heard of Gaudí or any of his buildings, so the whole book was new information for me. I liked the simplicity of the text and way the author shows how Gaudí's work evolves and grows, how he tries ideas no one has ever tried before. An author's note, a list of photos available online, and a bibliography in the back adds more information about Gaudí for those who are interested in learning more. A bit: "He designs a gate for his friend Guell's country home. A dragon perches atop diamonds and squares, baring his fangs and slithery tongue. Gaudí's creations get braver."

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