



# Palaces for the People: Guastavino and the Art of Structural Tile



Discover the Guastavinos' contribution to some of America's greatest public spaces.

Throughout the five boroughs are more than 200 long-overlooked marvels of engineering and architectural beauty —the interlocking tile vaults built by Spanish immigrants Rafael Guastavino, Sr. (1842-1908), and his son, Rafael Jr. (1872-1950). The system of structural tile vaults developed by the Guastavinos —lightweight, fireproof, low-maintenance, and capable of supporting significant loads— was used by leading architects of the day, including McKim, Mead & White and Carrere & Hastings.

Ellis Island's Registry Room, Carnegie Hall, the Bronx Zoo's Elephant House, and Grand Central Terminal all contain Guastavino vaults.

*Palaces for the People: Guastavino and the Art of Structural Tile* is a major exhibition exploring the innovations the Guastavino Fireproof Construction Company (1889-1962) brought to the science and art of building. It was originally organized by MIT's John Ochsendorf, who is a MacArthur Fellow; it is substantially expanded here to include some 20 key Guastavino spaces in the five boroughs.

DESIGN  
NEW YORK

Wed, March 26–  
Sun, September 07, 2014

## Venue

Museum of the City of New York, 1220  
5th Avenue, New York, NY 10029

[View map](#)

Phone: 212-534-1672

## Admission

[Buy tickets](#). Open 7 days a week, from 10  
am to 6 pm.

## More information

[Museum of the City of New York](#)

## Credits

Palaces for the People was originally organized by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology with contributions from the Boston Public Library and the National Building Museum. The national tour of the exhibition is made possible by the National Endowment for the Humanities and supported by the Institut Ramon Llull, International Masonry Institute. Spain Culture New York-Consulate General of Spain, and SPAIN arts & culture.

Image: Tile vaulting, City Hall Subway Station. Guastavino Company for Heins & La Farge, 1904. Photo by Michael Freeman.