

ALBERTO CAMPO BAEZA **THE BUILT IDEA**

THE BUILT IDEA IS A COLLECTION OF SOME OF THE MOST IMPORTANT TEXTS BY THE ARCHITECT ALBERTO CAMPO BAEZA IN WHICH HE CONVEYS HIS IDEAS ABOUT ARCHITECTURE.

"ARCHITECTS REVEAL THE KEYS TO THEIR ARCHITECTURE IN THEIR DRAWINGS, THEIR FLOOR PLANS, THEIR SECTIONS AND ALSO IN THEIR WRITINGS. IT IS IMPORTANT TO APPRECIATE THE CONCISE TEXTS OF MIES VAN DER ROHE OR THE MORE PASSIONATE EXPRESSIONS OF LE CORBUSIER. AND THAT IS HOW I WOULD LIKE THESE TEXTS, PUBLISHED HERE TODAY, TO BE UNDERSTOOD." "TO USE WORDS THAT EXPRESS ONE'S INTENTIONS CLEARLY IS NOT JUST A CONVENIENCE FOR ARCHITECTS. ONE WANTS TO LET PEOPLE KNOW THE MEANING BEHIND THE THINGS THAT ARE BEING MADE. MY AIM IN PUBLISHING THESE TEXTS IS PRECISELY THAT."

"AND THE REASONING ON WHICH ONE BASES ONE'S WORK IN THEIR ATTEMPT AT ARCHITECTURE IS WHAT IS GOING TO BE REFLECTED HERE IN THESE TEXTS, SOME OF IT CONSCIOUSLY, SOME UNCONSCIOUSLY. REALIZING THE IDEAS EXPRESSED IN THESE WORDS IN BUILT WORKS IS OF COURSE THE BEST PROOF THAT THE IDEAS ARE VALID AND THE WORDS TRUE."

www.oscarrieraojeda.com

US \$19.95

ISBN 978-988-15125-3-6



9 789881 512536



OSCAR RIERA OJEDA
PUBLISHERS



ALBERTO CAMPO BAEZA **THE BUILT IDEA**



ALBERTO CAMPO BAEZA **THE BUILT IDEA**

ALBERTO CAMPO BAEZA **THE BUILT IDEA**

**WORDS,
IN ARCHITECTURE,**
ARE ALWAYS AN EXPRESSION
OF THOSE VERY IDEAS BUILT
BY THE ARCHITECTURE ITSELF.

WITHOUT IDEAS,
ARCHITECTURE IS VAIN,
EMPTY: ARCHITECTURA
SINE IDEA, VANA
ARCHITECTURA EST.



BE THOU ASSUR'D,

IF WORDS BE MADE OF
BREATH AND BREATH
OF LIFE, I HAVE NO LIFE
TO BREATHE WHAT THOU
HAST SAID TO ME.



**THE HISTORY OF
ARCHITECTURE,**

FAR FROM BEING A HISTORY
OF FORMS ONLY, IS BASICALLY
A HISTORY OF BUILT IDEAS.
FORMS ARE DESTROYED OVER
TIME, BUT IDEAS REMAIN
AND ARE ETERNAL.





ALBERTO CAMPO BAEZA **THE BUILT IDEA**



OSCAR RIERA OJEDA
PUBLISHERS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE	13
INTRODUCTION	14
1 ON ARCHITECTURE	
1.1. ARCHITECTURA SINE LUCE NULLA ARCHITECTURA EST On Light in Architecture	18
1.2. A MOMENT BEFORE THE LAST EXPLOSION The Future of Architecture	25
1.3. THE RIGHT WHITE On the Color White in Architecture	32
1.4. ESSENTIALITY More With Less	33
1.5. TO THINK OR NOT TO THINK, THAT IS THE QUESTION On the Art of Design and the Right Way to Communicate It	36
1.6. EVIL IGNORANT JUDGES On Restoration and Preservation in Architecture	37
1.7. MORE WITH LESS Idea, Light, and Gravity: All Well Tempered 3 Points, 3 Reflections, 3 Built Ideas	41
1.8. BOXES, LITTLE BOXES, BIG BOXES From the Stereotomic to the Tectonic	48
1.9. YOUR HOUSE, YOUR MUSEUM, YOUR MAUSOLEUM MY HOUSE, NEITHER MUSEUM NOR MAUSOLEUM Il cielo in una stanza	54
2 ON ARCHITECTS	
2.1. BALD BEAUTY On Alejandro de la Sota	60
2.2. CHISELED BEAUTY On Javier Carvajal	63
2.3. VOLCANIC BEAUTY On Francisco J. Sáenz de Oíza	65
2.4. REBEL BEAUTY On Miguel Fisac	70
3 ON WORKS OF ARCHITECTURE	
3.1. REFLECTIONS IN THE GOLDEN EYE OF MIES VAN DER ROHE On the Crystal Pavilion in Casa de Campo Park in Madrid, by Asís Cabrero	76
3.2. LEARNING FROM MIES On the Hubbe House in Magdeburgo, by Mies Van der Rohe	78
3.3. THE DAY THAT MIES VISITED SOTA On the Maravillas Gymnasium in Madrid, by Alejandro de la Sota	82
3.4. MORE SEA On the Utzon House in Porto Petro in Mallorca, by Jorn Utzon	84
3.5. MY HOUSE IN SUMMER IS A SHADE On the Gaspar House in Cádiz, by Alberto Campo Baeza	85
4 BIBLIOGRAPHY	88



**Be thou assur'd, if words be made of breath and breath of life,
I have no life to breathe what thou hast said to me.**

Thus, at the end of the third act of Hamlet, does Queen Gertrude define the paradox of language, not only here, but in all of Shakespeare.

I hope that my words, now translated into English, will breathe something of the same poetic breath that Shakespeare infuses in the mouths of his characters. How well the great scribe understood the value of a word.

Words in architecture are always an expression of the ideas built by the architecture itself. Without ideas, architecture is empty, vain: *Architectura sine idea, vana architectura est.*

Although these ideas might seem universal, the words we use to communicate them, after Babel, are different, spelled out in different tongues. So if we wish to communicate these ideas, it is absolutely necessary to put our words into other languages.

When George Chapman translated Homer's poems into English in 1614, the effect was such that two centuries later, in October of 1816 to be exact, John Keats dedicated a beautiful sonnet to him.

Today, it is commonplace to translate words learned from Cervantes into the language of Shakespeare. The impact of translation on the structure of contemporary media is almost unimaginable to the creative mind.

In contrast, the form of built architecture has a universal quality that needs no translation. This dependence on form differs from the relative freedom that the word enjoys, yet this is compensated for by the universality of built language, which requires no more explanation than its existence.

While architecture is conveyed by the universality of built work, the logic from which it originates and later develops is all too often hidden; concealed. The aim of an English version of these texts is to explain the logic, to offer clues, to reveal the foundation from which these ideas were conceived and to illustrate their subsequent realization in construction which creates the architecture we build.

It moves me to take words from Quixote and place them into the trembling hands of Hamlet, though it is perhaps the most efficient way to spread any message. And while I know that on the Internet my texts can travel anywhere in an instant, I cannot help but imagine my words in the hands of the desolate Danish prince, voicing his doubts in the beautiful English language. The very same language that was used, after Shakespeare, by Wren and Paxton and Soane, and later still by Sullivan and Wright, and even Mies Van der Rohe himself.

I can only hope that my words, my ideas and my work reach as far as theirs still do.

Alberto Campo Baeza
Columbia University, New York



1. ON ARCHITECTURE

“And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: And God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.”
Genesis. The first written word of God.

“I traced the form of my transit, not with ideas or stones, but with air and light.”

Octavio Paz. *Hijos del aire/Airborn*

LIGHT IS BOTH MATTER AND MATERIAL (On the material nature of light)

It is when an architect discovers that light is the central theme of architecture that he or she begins to understand; that they become a real architect.

Light is not some vague or diffuse thing to be taken for granted just because it is always there. The sun does not rise every day for nothing.

Yes, although we may no longer subscribe to corpuscular theory, light is nonetheless something specific, precise and continuous; it is a matter of fact. Wherever it might be, it is measurable and quantifiable matter: physicists are well aware of this but the fact seems to pass many architects by.

Like gravity, light is unavoidable. And it is lucky that architects cannot avoid it, since architecture's history is defined by these two basic facts of life: light and gravity. Architects should always carry a compass and photometer (used to measure the quality and the quantity of light) with them, just as they carry a tape measure, spirit-level and plumb line.

If the struggle to master gravity still occurs as a dialogue, giving rise to the best of architecture; it is the addition of the dialogue with light, the search for light, that results in the most sublime heights. One then discovers the essential truth that only light and light alone can truly overcome gravity.

Thus, when the architect traps the sun and its light, having it penetrate the space formed by structures of greater or lesser mass which transmit the primitive strength of gravity from the ground upwards, it is light that breaks the spell, making the space float, levitate and soar. Hagia Sophia, the Pantheon and Ronchamp are tangible proofs of this portentous reality.

Light has as much materiality in architecture as stone. We express the opinion that builders in the Gothic period accomplished marvelous sorcery, making architecture work to its utmost to attain more light. Properly speaking, we should be saying that what those architects did was to work with light as matter, as another material. Since they knew that the sun shines diagonally, they stretched their windows, raising them

to trap the diagonal, nearly vertical rays. They foresaw the possibilities available to us today. Rather than organizing stone to trap light, Gothic architecture can be seen as a desire to organize light, material light, in order to provide spatial tension.

We know that matter cannot be created or destroyed, it can only be transformed. That is why, instead of the term modern materials, it would be more accurate to say materials used in a modern sense. In this way we can include centuries of thought which we can then enjoy sifting through. After all, when all is said and done, everything is always just a simple question of reasoning and thought.

Thus was stone, plain old rock, transformed into the most modern of materials in the hands of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. Steel and sheet glass were not born out of nothing. These two materials, which have revolutionized architecture, have always been there, latent. Today, the conception of new ideas enables them to produce spatial miracles.

Might we not then think that the secret lies in a profound understanding of what light is? That it is matter, a material, a modern material? Is it not time to realize that moment in the history of architecture has arrived, a tremendously exciting moment when we will finally address light? To grasp light, to dominate light: let there be light! And there was light. The most eternal, the most universal of materials is thus identified as the central material with which we can build and create space. So the architect once again recognizes himself as a creator, as a master of the world of light.

“The luster and gleam of the stone, though itself apparently glowing only by the grace of the sun, yet first brings to light the light of the day, the breadth of the sky, the darkness of the night. The temple's firm towering makes visible the invisible space of air.”

Martin Heidegger. *The Origin of the Work of Art*

SINE LUCE NULLA! (On light as the central theme of Architecture)

When I propose the axiom “*Architectura sine luce nulla architectura est*” I mean that architecture is impossible without light. Without light, an indispensable material would be missing.

If I were asked to give three hypothetical examples of the destruction of architecture, I would suggest covering over the central opening in the Pantheon dome, walling up the glass block façade of the Maison de Verre and closing the colored openings which illuminate La Tourette chapel.

If, to protect the Pantheon in Rome from the elements, the nearly nine-meter diameter of the central opening that crowns it were to be covered over, a lot of things might or might not happen. Its skilful construction would not change, nor would its perfect composition; its universal function would not cease to exist, nor its context; Ancient Rome would not notice (at least not on the first night). All that would happen is that the most wonderful trap that human beings have ever laid for the sun, to which the regal heavenly body joyously returned day after day, would be eliminated. The sun would break into tears and so would architecture, because they are rather more than just friends.



Great painters use the color white to represent and materialize light. An extremely pure white expresses fury and irony in the eyes of Goya's figures. A dense, dull white makes the robes of Zurbarán's friars seem more real and tangible. Velázquez uses a white masterfully faded into smoke to give substance to the air in his scenes.

Even more so than in painting, the color white in architecture is essential; it is far more than a mere abstraction. It is a solid, secure, effective base with which to resolve the problems light presents: trapping and reflecting it, shifting and sculpting it. Once light is tamed and the white planes that shape it are illuminated, the space is controlled.

What is the magic of architecture if not the creation of this prodigious rapport between man and space through light? But moving beyond the anecdotal, the use of the color white, the right white, is the correct instrument with which to dominate the spatial mechanisms of architecture. This was what the masters of the history of architecture understood.

The best work by Mies van der Rohe; The Farnsworth House, is white. The most paradigmatic Le Corbusier, the Villa Savoye, is also white. The Parthenon, helped by the consecration of the passage of time, is now white once more, as it was when Ictinus and Callicrates saw it; before the application of its poor polychrome finish.

The circle of divine light produced by the sun as it passes through the eye of the Pantheon is white as it runs across the surfaces, resplendent within Emperor Hadrian's sublime architecture.

White is the color of Bernini's touching Sant'Andrea, Terragni's serene Casa del Fascio, Wright's luminous Guggenheim, Melnikov's fascinating cylindrical house in Moscow, Utzon's natural, difficult but simple Bagsvaerd church in Copenhagen. The color white is a symbol of the infinite, of the universal in space and the eternal in time. Time always ends up turning both hair and architecture white.

White; silent like music in the midst of the noisy superficial things that disturb us. Silence following all manner of deafening cacophony. Nudity after too much senseless ornamentation. Rectitude after complication. Absence after so much empty presence. White represents a sincere architecture that seeks to achieve everything with almost nothing; more with less.

As Melnikov explained, referring to his white Moscow house: "Having made myself the boss, I entreated her (Architecture) to throw off her gown of marble, wash off the powder and rouge and reveal herself, unclothed as a goddess, graceful and young. And, as befits a true beauty, she turned out to be agreeable and compliant."

MANIFESTO

I propose an ESSENTIAL Architecture of IDEA, LIGHT and SPACE. Of a built IDEA, materialized in ESSENTIAL SPACES animated by LIGHT.

An Architecture which has IDEA as its origin, LIGHT as its basic material and, in its ESSENTIAL SPACE, the will to achieve MORE WITH LESS.

An IDEA demanding to be built, an ESSENTIAL SPACE capable of translating these ideas efficiently, and LIGHT which defines man's relationship to those SPACES.

IDEA

The IDEAS which give rise to Architecture are complex concepts. Complexity in Architecture is due to the complexity of the IDEA. An IDEA capable of encompassing the very specific requirements that make up architectural reality. CONTEXT, FUNCTION, COMPOSITION and CONSTRUCTION.

CONTEXT is conformed by the location, its Geography and History; the "where". The *UBI*.

FUNCTION is the source of all Architecture, it is its "why".

COMPOSITION organizes the SPACE with its "geometric how": with Dimension, Proportion, and Scale.

CONSTRUCTION builds the SPACE with its "physical how": with Frame, Structure, Materials and Technology, guiding Gravity.

The IDEA is at its zenith when it best answers these questions: Where? Why? and How?

LIGHT

LIGHT is an essential component in any understanding of the nature of the SPACE. Isn't the History of Architecture a History of the different interpretations of LIGHT? Of the search for LIGHT? Hadrian, Bernini, Le Corbusier! Isn't LIGHT the only way to transform the unbearable gravity of matter into lightness?

LIGHT is the fundamental material of Architecture. It has the mysterious but real and magical power to make SPACE tangible for man. The power to produce INTENSITY within the SPACE, making it efficient for man. The power to infuse the SPACE with QUALITY that moves humanity.



Salinas
de Jambio

M.

LIGHT

Light is the essential, indispensable component in the construction of Architecture.

Like stone, light is matter and material that can be quantified and qualified, controlled and measured.

Without light there is NO Architecture. We would have only lifeless constructions. Light is the only thing capable of making space tangible for man. It defines man's relationship to the space created for him, making it tangible and visible.

It is light that expresses time; it is light that builds time.

GRAVITY

Fortunately, we cannot escape gravity. It is the *g* we studied in Physics equations when we were young. And as the history of architecture is one long battle to direct, dominate and conquer gravity, without gravity, architecture would disappear. It would be atomized. Without gravity, architecture is not possible; its material necessity vanishes.

GRAVITY BUILDS SPACE. Material elements, which create the forms that make space real, eventually pass gravity, and the weight of their materiality into the earth. The system that sustains gravity, the structure, orders space; it constructs it.

Therefore, I call an essential space that which is formed by only the indispensable number of elements capable of translating an idea into reality with precision.

Architecture whose materiality is a built idea, whose time is built by light, and whose space is constructed by gravity; this is the architecture I call essential.

To continue clarifying this proposition, to disrobe it, I propose three statements: Light is capable of conquering gravity.

The passage of time removes the superficial from architecture, leaving only the essential.

And; Architecture makes allowances for a certain kind of imperfection in its materiality, it praises imperfection.

LIGHT AND GRAVITY (On how light conquers gravity)

Light, a material that is always in motion, is the only element capable of making space float, levitate: space created by built forms of gravid materiality. It inspires flight and the disappearance of gravity. Gravity is vanquished. The unbearable heaviness of matter, inevitable and indispensable, can only be overcome by light.

The imposing mass of the Pantheon, whose ideal spherical form implies the overwhelming power of its space, rises in indescribable movement, as if it were levitating, when the sun casts its spell, piercing the magnificent oculus. Light overcoming gravity invokes a sublime beauty.

Curiously, or perhaps not so curiously, the two technological inventions which caused a revolution in architecture are directly related to both light and gravity: plate glass, in large dimensions, and steel, on its own or in reinforced concrete.

Plate glass has made possible the Copernican rotation of vertical light to strike the horizontal plane above man's head, allowing the upper horizontal plane to be transparent.

Steel, alone or in reinforced concrete, allows for another Copernican rotation, the ability to separate enclosure from structure. The skin from the bones. The bones, the columns, where gravity inevitably flows down into the earth.

TIME'S CLARIFYING PASSAGE

Time, built by light, slowly and patiently erases the superficial elements which so often ornament the coquettish face of Architecture. Like a doctor attempting to enact a resuscitation, Time strips architecture down to its most essential parts. Dimension, proportion, and scale give life to materials which contain within them the invisible tension of gravity. All of these are cleaned by light – the builder of time – which produces a visible tangibility capable of moving man to silence. Ruins, wiped clean of all superfluous decoration, often rise radiantly before us with all the splendor of naked beauty.

When Heidegger speaks in precise terms of the "temple's solid growth which makes the invisible space of the air visible," he invokes the ruin of the Parthenon, in all of its splendor, as an Essential Architecture that seems to heed his words: "The temple, in surviving, causes things to be present so that men can take their presence into account."

IN PRAISE OF IMPERFECTION

Before my first visit to Finland, my admiration for Alvar Aalto was enormous. Ever since I was a student I have been drawn to the fluidity of his plans, the sectional richness, and the incredible light of his spaces, images of which always dazzle. My admiration for Aalto and by extension for all Finns, is in part an appreciation of a degree of perfection unattainable by other mortals. And now there, I discover that the master's projects feature more than one familiar imperfection: leaks, cracks and elements that weather badly. Seeing this "human" side of Aalto's works, far from diluting the strength of that admiration, has increased it. This "imperfection" in the finish of certain details accentuates still more, if possible, the "perfection" of Alvar Aalto's ideas: that which is essential to the architecture of Alvar Aalto, the essence of his architecture.

Regardless of details and design, perfection or imperfection, architecture is established by its most essential components. Details and designs are only valid when they serve to underline the central themes.

Nowadays we are inundated, and the press contributes to this process, by a multitude of repugnant buildings, architectures (architectures?) that are seasoned and ornamented, topped with details and designs perfectly finished with the most sophisticated technology.

When Alvar Aalto wishes and is able to, he knows how to wield both design and perfection appropriately, and does so. The unforgettable Villa Mairea is an outstanding





2. ON ARCHITECTS



Entering the labyrinth of humanized air that is Miguel Fisac's Architecture offers the pleasing reward of rediscovering something which many of us had already encountered but had been unable to find for a long time: a timeless Architecture. He is a profound Architect, a builder of thoughts. A complete person of radical coherence.

Ángel Ferrant used to say, "Everything has been said before, but since nobody listens, you're always having to start over again." This accurate appraisal of the overall state of affairs in Spain is most clearly reflected in the case of our architecture. And this is a good time to restore Fisac to the place he deserves.

If I had to describe the beauty of Fisac's architecture, I would use the word rebellious. The rebelliousness of profound creation; above and beyond fashion, bypassing it completely. The rebelliousness of creating thought-based architecture at a time when superficiality seems to have pride of place in the frivolous window display of the numerous magazines that assault architects.

Fisac always begins with thought; there is always a reasoned foundation to his work. Form and forms are decisions that some people resolve by relying on fashion and others resolve by relying on thought, and Miguel Fisac is the latter type of person. There are good reasons for the pagoda form of the Jorba Laboratories. The forms of hollowed cement are clearly explicable in his "flexible formworks". There is a clear, almost didactic logic to his "bones". He is a model of reason.

And if Beauty has been, is and will always be the only, true and dangerous revolution against a society which has opted for mediocre stability, Miguel Fisac has risen to become a creator of this rebel Beauty.

AN ARCHITECT'S ARCHITECT

Like a Gypsy curse, someone once told Fisac that he would never be an "architect's architect". This curse, a jinx in which some of us never believed, fortunately never came to pass. And the spell was broken definitively when he was awarded the Gold Medallion; by architects.

I am reminded of a lovely anecdote told by Yehudi Menuhin. When he was still very young, the then promising violinist made his first public concert appearance. When he finished, the auditorium rose to its feet and applauded enthusiastically. But, and this was the best part, the musicians in the orchestra, overwhelmed by the Beauty of his playing, also stood up, carried away by his genius to applaud. For Menuhin the musicians' applause was what truly mattered. He was recognized by "those who really understood".

Similarly, it was that it was an architects' recognition that gave the distinction profound meaning to Miguel Fisac.

And that recognition comes on top of what he had already received, for a long time, in certain international circles. From the Golden Medallion awarded him in Vienna in 1954 for his church in Vitoria or his lectures in Stockholm based on his "bones" in 1982, up to the retrospective exhibition of his work in Munich.

HISTORY, LIGHT AND BONES

We could try to arrange Miguel Fisac's architecture into three periods, though both he and his buildings resist classification or labels.

His sage reading and intelligent distillation of History led him to produce his first, still fascinating works, when so much was happening in Architecture and too many fashions were crowded into a few years. This is the period of the buildings of the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, (Council for Scientific Research) of 1942 and the Instituto de Optica (Optics Institute) of 1948.

His prodigious mastery of light was the main feature of the period during which he built his best-known churches. This mastery is realized in canny articulations of straight and curved walls which he cuts open into exact slices so that the light can penetrate and magically stretch and offer the space tangibility. This can be seen in the Arcas Reales of Valladolid, from 1952, the Dominicos of Alcobendas from 1955 and the Coronación de Vitoria from 1958, as well as in the most recent Flor del Carmelo from 1992, with the Santa Ana from 1965 in between, both of these latter churches being built in Madrid.

And a third period in which he displayed a profound understanding of new technologies, leading him to such overwhelmingly logical inventions as his "bones" or his "flexible formwork," and also in works as 'current' as the Centro de Estudios Hidrográficos in Madrid from 1960, the Bodegas Garvey in Jerez and the IBM building in Madrid from 1967 or the Casa de la Moraleja from 1973.

Dating Fisac's works makes us realize that so many of the buildings he built yesterday would be understood just as well if they had been built today or tomorrow. It is an architecture that resists dating, that goes beyond time. Isn't that the one trait the greatest creations of Humanity have always had?

Because Miguel Fisac is so personal, so full of "genius", when the best architects in the 1950s were engaged in "rationalism", he was making something else, a splendid architecture that is hard to classify. Rebellious. Revolutionary. Free. And if that period of the post-war architects who constructed modernity has been called heroic – rightly so – I would dare to suggest here that what Fisac did was extremely characteristic. He undertook "the most difficult thing yet": he was a hero amongst heroes. To be rebellious among revolutionaries. To be entirely free among the free.

THE MOST BEAUTIFUL SONG

The fact is, Miguel Fisac has followed his own path; he has made his own architecture; and he has played his own song, a most beautiful song. A short story by Max Bolliger tells a tale: There once was a king who, having heard an unknown bird's beautiful song

in his dreams, sent his bird keeper to catch it for him, threatening terrible punishments, including death, for failure. Imitating their sounds with his flute, the bird keeper traveled around, trapping the most melodic birds, but their calls never coincided with the song the king had heard in his dream. The last day before the deadline, the dejected bird keeper grabbed his flute and, preparing to die, played his own song. And oh what a surprise! The King recognized the melody he'd dreamed. He spared the flute-playing bird keeper and gave him his freedom, along with all the birds in the kingdom, and a great celebration was held.

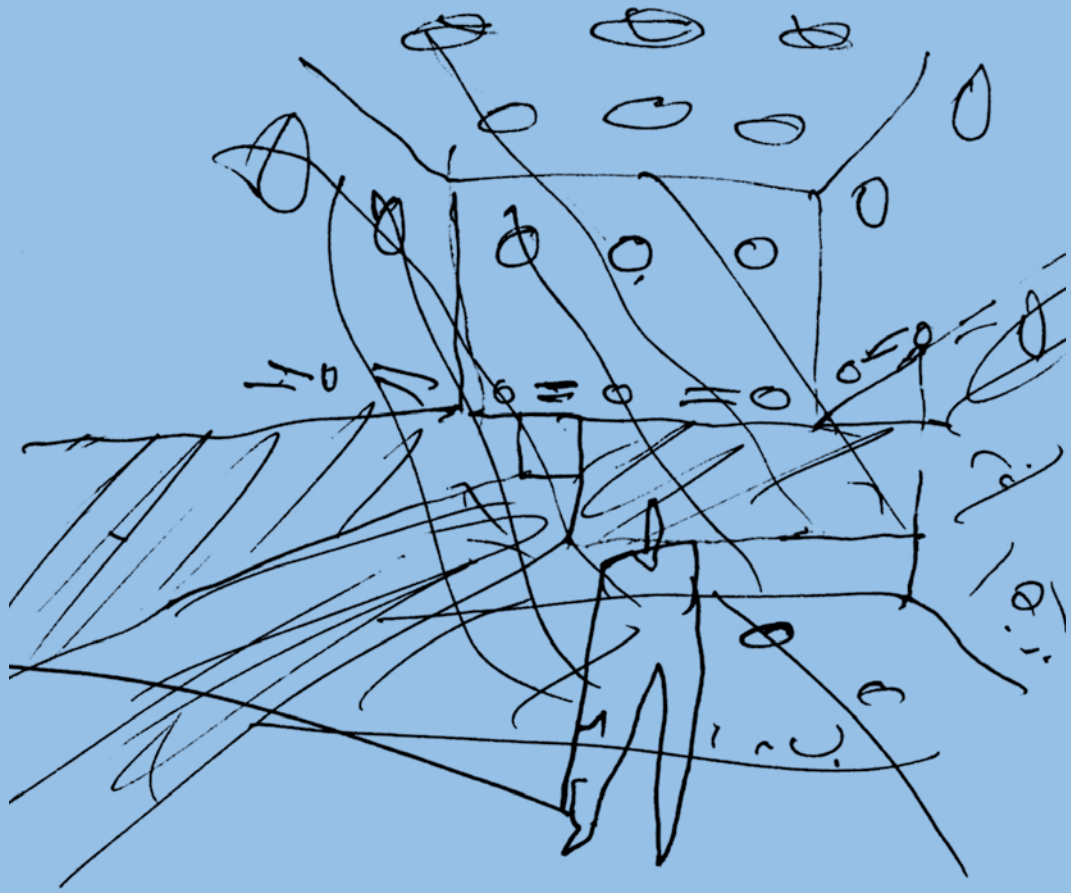
Well, this, his own song, the most beautiful song, is what Miguel Fisac has always played, with his architecture, putting his soul and his life into it. And with it, with his architecture, he has achieved the most precious gift, that of freedom. Indispensable freedom for a creator, an architect who has achieved the most beautiful and rebellious Architecture in his work.

Finally, architects, and bear in mind how fastidious they are, are turning their attention to Fisac once again, discovering that he is one of the greats. As a person, he is whole and coherent. As an architect, he is revolutionary and rebellious. Unclassifiable. Free.

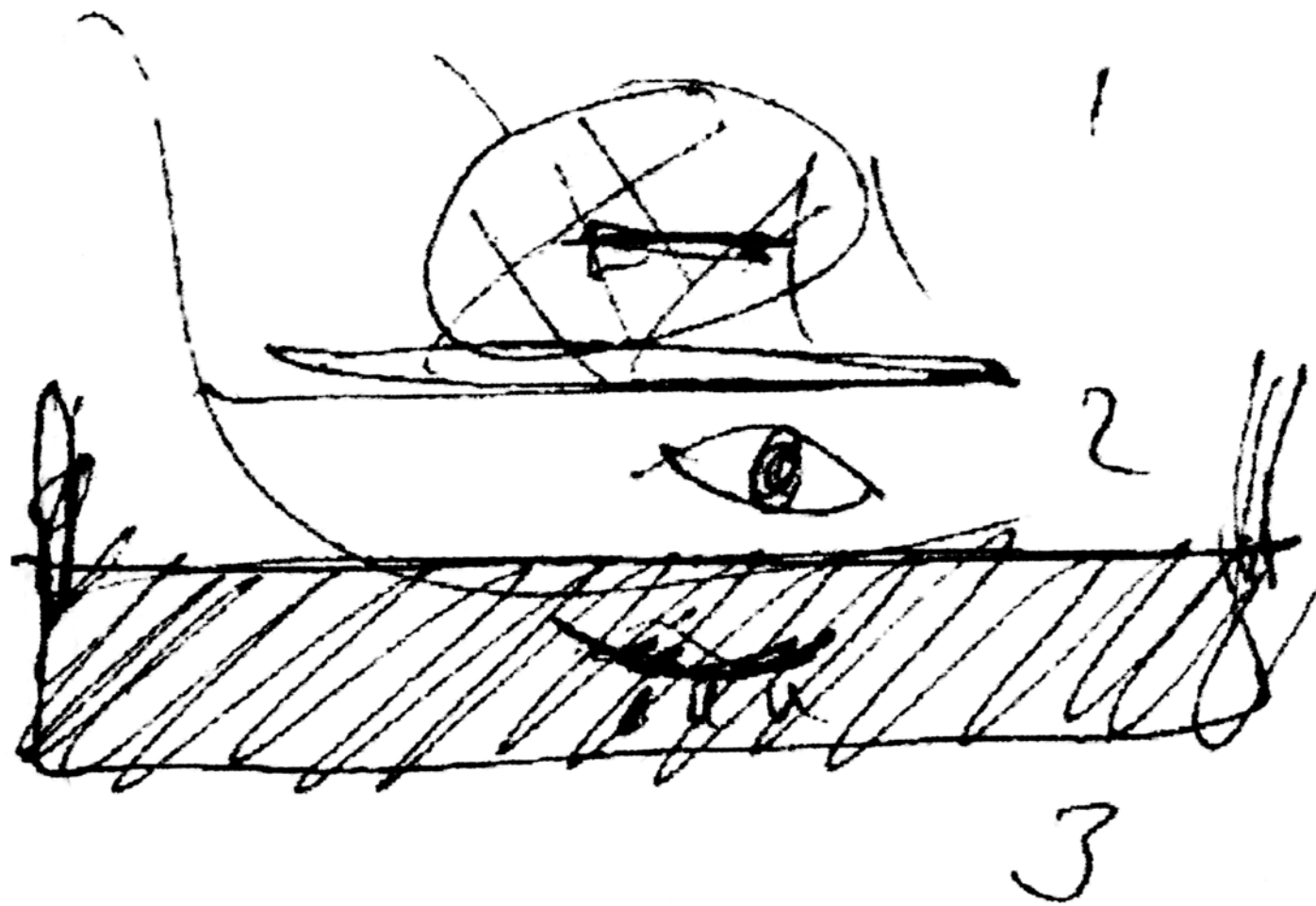
Like Ulysses, he has crossed the straits of life, yoked to the mast of the ship of Architecture tied with cords of reason and honesty. With his ears and eyes wide open, he has seen it all and it hasn't mattered. Like the Greek hero, the fascinating sirens have tempted him with their seductive song: money, fame and power. Scylla and Charybdis have tried to swallow him like the son of Laertes, with misunderstanding, contempt and oblivion. But nothing and no one has succeeded. And he has finally reached his Ithaca, his reunion with and recognition by Penelope.

In the beginning it was Fisac. Then, silence. And now, finally, Fisac again. Welcome home!





3. ON WORKS OF ARCHITECTURE



to dream

to live

to die

On that now far off, calm day of placid summer light, Jorn Utzon, the maestro, was sitting, silently attentive, in his cane chair during the course of the construction of his legendary house in Porto Petro, Mallorca. The maestro was inside, apart from a sea and sky of insulting beauty. The architect in the shade, the landscape in the light.

The luminous landscape was framed by built shadows. Built and defined with the precision of the large window openings, which are sensibly square.

The interior space, higher than is habitual. What architects call double height. The openings at human figure height. Lintel, jambs and threshold were the four sides with which the frame was formed, underlining, glorifying the impressive nature outside: nothing less than the whole ancient Mediterranean sea. The spectator is entranced by the supreme work of art.

But, the architect thought, still seated, that there was too much sky. That the sea of Mallorca was insuperable. And he had abandoned the subtle mists of Copenhagen for what was before him, resplendent in furiously radiant calm. And if he was there, it was because he loved this sea. More sea.

He invented a simple mechanism. He shifted the stones, tunneling outwards with the ancestral wisdom of an old Druid. He inclined the lintel until it met the precise line. Angling the jambs to just the right position. And he maintained the magnetic horizontality of the threshold. Outside is a simple glass which we don't see, which disappears.

Like a magician who knows the secrets to the control of space, the maestro touched everything with his magic wand and, abracadabra!, the spell was cast: the light was made tangible. And today there is more sea. More sea than sky. And immense beauty. Utzon the maestro.

My summer house is shade raised between four walls. Shade which, like darkness, is transparent for all the light that battles there.

My summer house is tranquility, a place where calm has settled, a haven of peace which one comes back to.

My summer house is a raft where my shipwrecked friends come to find the comforting word, to rescue so much lost time. Poems of nothingness, perhaps the most beautiful thing in life, are born there.

But, in the final analysis, what is the house and what is it like? It is a simple architecture. Four high walls, white and well designed, arranged with frugal wisdom. With an interior of carefully measured shade that persists, always, against the bold light. A solid floor of stone, as though found, as if the earth had emerged to support our bare feet. And there in the background, in the center, a serene pond has been dug, containing an almost still water in silence. A lost seagull bathes there, hardly touching or marking it. And so it is that the water in this shade is a mirror, an infinite periscope from the sky. And at its four clear cardinal points, piercing the stone to its core, lemon trees blossom, opening their white flowers each morning.

My summer house is architecture, in the fullest sense of the word. An enclosed garden, arcadia, paradise. Four walls and a tree and a pond. And light and darkness in good time. And the fresh stone floor that gives joy. Heaven on earth, after all, what else is architecture if not that?



Writing on Architecture

ARCHITECTURA SINE LUCE NULLA ARCHITECTURA EST

Lichtfest. Licht und Architektur	Ingolstadt	1992
Circo 07	Madrid	1993
Architecti 18	Lisbon	May 1993
Domus 760	Milan	May 1994
Taller 7 ETSAN	Pamplona	1994
Diseño Interior 38	Madrid	Sep. 1994
Ehituskunst 13	Tallinn	1995
Opus Lucis (Catálogo. Hilario Bravo)	Cáceres	Dec. 1996
RT. Revista Técnica 3 – 98	Lugano	1998
Cosa Mentale	Paris	2010

A MOMENT BEFORE THE LAST EXPLOSION

Diario 16	Madrid	16th oct. 1993
Oeste 13	Cáceres	1995
a Arquitectura 15	Mexico	1995
KA 134	Seoul	1995
Domus 776	Milan	1995
Circo 30	Madrid	1996

THE RIGHT WHITE

Baumeister	Munich	Dec. 1991
Arquitectura 291	Madrid	March 1992
Casabella 593	Milan	Sept 1992
Ehituskunst 11	Tallinn	1994

ESSENTIALITY / MORE WITH LESS

Arquitectura 291	Madrid	March 1992
A + U (Architecture and Urbanism) 264	Tokyo	Sept. 1992
Architecti 18	Lisboa	May 1993
Boletín Académico ETSAC 17	La Coruña	January 1993
AD (Architectural Design) 110	London	1994

TO THINK OR NOT TO THINK

Course Statement 1994 - 95 ETSAM	Madrid	1994
Course Statement 1996 - 97 EPFL	Lausanne	1996
Course Statement 1998 - 99 U.of PENN	Philadelphia	1999

EVIL IGNORANT JUDGES

ON	Barcelona	1993
Domus 756	Milan	1994
El Mundo	Madrid	1994
Arquitectura Cuba, 378	Havana	1998

MORE WITH LESS

Architecture of the Essential	Jyvaskylä	1995
A + U (Architecture and Urbanism) 337	Tokyo	1998
D. A. Documentos de Arquitectura, 2	Lisbon	1999

YOUR HOUSE, YOUR MUSEUM, YOUR MAUSOLEUM MY HOUSE, NEITHER MUSEUM NOR MAUSOLEUM

Diseño Interior 51	Madrid	1996
Nuevos Modos de Habitar	Valencia	1996

BOXES, LITTLE BOXES, BIG BOXES

A et A Architettura et Ambiente 1	Rome	Dec. 1997
-----------------------------------	------	-----------

Writing on Architects

BALD BEAUTY

El País	Madrid	3 Mar. 1990
Arquitectos 115	Madrid	1990

VOLCANIC BEAUTY

Arquitectos 129	Madrid	1993
-----------------	--------	------

CHISELED BEAUTY

El País	Madrid	20 Abril 1991
Arquitectos 120	Madrid	1991
J. CARVAJAL. Ed. F.COAM	Madrid	1996

REBEL BEAUTY

Arquitectos 135	Madrid	1994
ABC	Madrid	15 Aug. 1996
FISAC .Ed.CSCAE	Madrid	1997

Writing on works of Architecture

REFLECTIONS IN THE GOLDEN EYE OF MIES VAN DER ROHE

Arquitectos 90	Madrid	1990
----------------	--------	------

LEARNING FROM MIES

Casas Ibéricas 4	Madrid	1993
------------------	--------	------

THE DAY THAT MIES VISITED SOTA

ABC	Madrid	16th Feb. 1996
De la Sota (Ed. ETSAM)	Madrid	1996

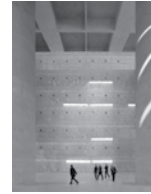
MORE SEA

Arquitectura, 309	Madrid	1997
El País	Madrid	30th Aug. 1998

MY HOUSE IN SUMMER IS SHADE

Telva 688	Madrid	August 1996
Diario de Cádiz	Cádiz	Sept. 1997
Revistatlántica, 20	Cádiz	July 1999

CAPTIONS & CREDITS



Cover Caja Granada + Frampton
 Photographer: Estudio Campo Baeza



2-3 Guerrero House
 Photographer: Fernando Alba



4-5 Pibamarmi Stand
 Photographer: Giovanni De Sandre



6-7 Benetton Childcare Center
 Photographer: Hisao Suzuki



8 Benetton Childcare Center
 Photographer: Marco Zanta



12 Alberto Campo Baeza
 Photographer: G. Hörh



16 Asensio House
 Photographer: Hisao Suzuki



30-31 Porta Milano, Render
 Model: Estudio Campo Baeza



38-39 Salinas de Janubio, Sketch
 Drawing: Alberto Campo Baeza



46-47 Van Thillo House, Frontal view
 Drawing: Estudio Campo Baeza



52-53 Centre BIT Mallorca
 Photographer: Raúl de Valle



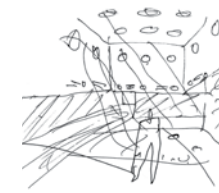
58 Alberto Campo Baeza with R. Wesley and H. Kojama at Penn, Philadelphia, 1999.
 Photographer: Penn Univ.



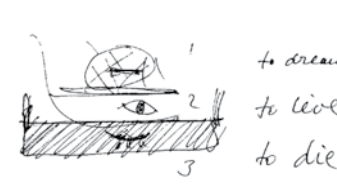
68-69 Mercedes Benz Museum, Render
 Drawing: Emilio Delgado Martos



73 Gaspar House
 Photographer: Hisao Suzuki



74 Benetton Childcare Center, Sketch
 Drawing: Alberto Campo Baeza



80-81 Moliner House, Sketch
 Drawing: Alberto Campo Baeza



86-87 Olnick Spanu House
 Photographer: Javier Callejas



98-99 De Blas House
 Photographer: Hisao Suzuki



100-101 Gaspar House
 Photographer: Hisao Suzuki



102-103 Between Cathedrals
 Photographer: Javier Callejas





