

THE ALCHEMIST

The essential and the consistency
On architecture of Alberto Campo Baeza

"Je suis peut-être enfoui
au sein des montagnes.
Solitaire, comme une
veine de métal pur"

R.M. Rilke

THE ESSENTIAL

In "Le Chef d'Oeuvre Inconnu" by Balzac, a marvellous little story full of wisdom, Maître Freinhofer addresses Nicolas Poussin in the following terms :

"To be a great poet, it is not necessary to know your syntax in depth, nor write without mistakes. An artist's mission is not to copy nature but interpret it."

Rare is the poet today who does not let himself be distracted by current trends and who, in pursuing his passion invested with an inexhaustible energy, seizes, in the lucidity of his vision the spirit of all time and all things : the Essential ; and then transmits it to us.

The work engaged upon by Alberto Campo Baeza is entirely in this vein. Putting aside all subterfuge, turning its back on cliches and fashions, his architecture is formed of poetry, appositeness and emotion.

It is not nourished by a romantic formalism nor a particular esthetic, but rather by pure emotion driven by unsubordinated passion, clear reflection and critical reason.

We are led to think of these timeless creations which subjugate us: the Pantheon in Rome, the Pavilion of Barcelona, the Malaparte house, the church of Ronchamp... or perhaps the "Caja Metafisica" of Oteiza and the works of Caro or Chillida.

He, who transforms passion into poetry, space into emotion, an act of the present into history, thought into architecture; is truly an marvellous alchemist.

These essential works, are they not those which resume, in their way, history, adding their minute variations, sometimes imperceptible, but always fundamental.

CONSISTENCY

The architecture of Alberto Campo Baeza is a work nourished and built by thought. By "architecture" I mean mental explorations that come from a rigorous procedure which develops the founding IDEA and transforms the architecture into more than just a construction: a resonant object.

The architect elaborates his work in the same way as Wim Wenders, whose each films engages us in an intense reflection on construction and the consistency of things and images. With their

underlying affinity they interpellate us on the perception and point of view of the observer, the "promeneur" of the work, and also the manner in which we organize our space and live in our world.

In each of his buildings, Alberto Campo Baeza redefines with his implacable logic the edification of architecture and of all our environment.

His architecture is not a "constructive" architecture. It is neither tectonic nor stereotomic.

It is a "diachronic" architecture, fluid and resonant, luminous and free.

They are constructions of Time-Space, fragments of voids and solids, linked and folded together.

All is condensed by a minimum of effect and words, where each line and each movement is measured and purified.

He creates the maximum of tension which is necessary to achieve equilibrium and serenity. The buildings of Alberto Campo Baeza are like Haiku, like the traces and signs of Tapiès.

The materials that he uses are of course physical states rather than just visual imagery.

His chosen materials are SPACE, expanded or compressed; LIGHT, fluid or concentrated; MATTER, dense and heavy or light and suspended; and also the MEASURE of time and space; that is to say, conscience.

A. Machado has said that : "there are two modes of conscience: one is light and the other patience."

The slogan of Alberto Campo Baeza, "Idea must generate form" finds substance in his each and every project.

But beware of confusing form and formalism; there is a world of difference between feeling and formula.

The Gaspar House, the Turegano House, the library of Orihuela..., or the bank in Granada could never have existed as resonant objects without the preliminary and founding IDEA, and without the calling into play of these reactive materials: SPACE, LIGHT, MATTER and MEASURE.

Heidegger in "Building-Dwelling-Thinking" defines the act of building as that which edifies the place, founds and assembles a space, with thought and in measure.

"Poetry is born when the poet takes the measure" and restores man's respiration.

Alberto Campo Baeza brings Architecture to its supreme expression, and by this path, leads us to reflect upon the creation of an Idea-Place (Ideal); the art of creating and that of thinking.

Charles Poisay