

DERMOT BOYD + PETER CODY

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Serene would be the most appropriate adjective to describe the architecture that Dermot Boyd and Peter Cody make.

On my first visit to Dublin, I met a close-knit group of young architects, all of them aggressive and belligerent proponents of modern architecture that they have been maturing marvelously for some years now. They form the hard core of the most valuable contemporary Irish architects.

They had, and have, so much interest in architecture that they have even managed to dedicate part of their time to solving the problems architects face. At one time or another, both Dermot Boyd and Peter Cody have been Presidents of the Architectural Association of Ireland in Dublin.

Their work, done during their short but intense career, has been shown in such prestigious places as the Royal Hibernian Academy in Dublin and published in the best known architecture magazines, such as A+U, which recently dedicated an issue to these young Irish architects.

Dermot Boyd and Peter Cody trained at the Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT), where Dermot is now a professor, while Peter is a professor at University College Dublin. They have both worked with prestigious architects. Dermot Boyd with John Pawson and with me, and Peter Cody with Alvaro Siza.

The project for the Monaghan County Offices is splendid. They have made it into a brilliant exercise of light. Starting from some sober and well-articulated floor plans that conform and adapt to the geography of the place, the architects excavate and perforate everywhere so that light enters, penetrating through everywhere. The result is the achievement of space with great brilliance and beauty.

The Alma Road House is of an overwhelming firmness and polish. The strong parallelepiped imposes itself on the powerful stone walls that define the place. The great holes, rather than reducing the scale make the volume appear even greater and announce an extraordinary light in the interior space.

And in both the Cody House design and the Pratt House, they continue researching an architecture that I once called, “boxes, little boxes, and big boxes”. All with the best architectural aroma.

In the house of Temple Bar Cottages, behind a restored façade that could not be touched, where only the strong red color of the door suggests that something is going on there, we find ourselves once again with an operation of spatial excavation filling the entirety with light. Far from being “minimalist” operations of known continuities and transparencies, the spaces are conceived as more complex, concatenated, adding a greater spatial richness to the operations of light.

The studio in New York is exquisite and in the few operations with which it has been worked on here, it has been made with enormous precision. White, metal, and artificial light are combined in wise measure.

And still, the houses in Rathmines, an interpretation of the traditional “mews” in Dublin made by Dermot Boyd with Paul Kelly, perhaps their best known work, continue to impress us for the sobriety of a performance of a great spatial richness, with a skillful treatment of light by means of some skylights which, as Raymond Ryan aptly said, “filter the moonlight”.

Dermot Boyd and Peter Cody belong to that breed of architects who bring together an enormously deep and skillful head with a brilliant capacity to materialize their ideas in splendid spaces. They are indeed splendid architects for this recently begun millennium.