Born in Valladolid, he saw the Light in Cádiz. His works have been widely recognized. From the houses Turégano, Gaspar, de Blas, Cala or the Infinite House, to buildings like Caja Granada, the Offices in Zamora for the Regional Government of Castilla y León or the Sports Pavilion for the University Francisco de Vitoria, in Madrid. He has won the 1st Prize to build the new Lycée Français of Madrid.

He has exhibited his work in the Crown Hall IIT Chicago, the Urban Center New York, the Palladio Basilica in Vicenza, the Tempio S. Pietro in Montorio and the MAXXI in Rome, the MA Gallery of Tokyo, the American Academy of Arts and Letters of New York, and the Universidade Lusíada of Lisbon in 2005.

He is a Full Member to the Royal Academy of Fine Arts of San Fernando of Spain.

He was awarded the Heinrich Tessenow Gold Medal, the Arnold W. Brunner Memorial Prize of the American Academy of Arts and Letters of New York, the Attolini Lack Medal of the Anahuac University of Mexico, the Piranesi Prix di Roma and the RIBA International Fellowship. He has been named Honorary Fellow of the American Institute of Architects of New York in 2019.

He is a Professor in the School of Architecture of Madrid, ETSAM 1986. He has taught at the ETH in Zurich and the EPFL in Lausanne, as well as the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, the Kansas State University, the CUA University in Washington, and the University at Buffalo. And in many other Schools of Architecture.
To my father
SHARPENING THE SCALPEL
On Architecture
1st Edition in English

Alberto Campo Baeza
# PREFACE

9  SHARPENING THE SCALPEL  
Alberto Campo Baeza

# THEORY

15  RELENTLESSLY SEEKING BEAUTY

35  THE ARCHITECT WHO WANTED TO CAPTURE THE CUBE  
Dimensions in architecture in relation to the dimensions of man

39  LIGHT IS MUCH MORE

45  MIES WITHOUT COLUMNS

51  LIGHT AND AIR. ARCHITECTURE AND MUSIC  
About precision in the use of light in architecture

57  AN IDEA FITS IN THE PALM OF THE HAND  
On small-scale models as a synthesis of the projected space

61  THE BRAIN IS SQUARE

65  THE ORDER OF THE WORLD

71  THE APPLE AND THE LEAF  
On how in architecture there are no indisputable truths

77  ON INTELLECTUAL ENJOYMENT IN ARCHITECTURE
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>85</td>
<td>PROJECT DESIGN IS RESEARCH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There are countless reasons that demonstrate why an architectural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>project is a work of research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97</td>
<td>ON THE WISDOM OF THE ARCHITECT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>107</td>
<td>WINKING MY EYES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>On the drawings in Architecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>111</td>
<td>RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STRUCTURE AND SPACE IN ARCHITECTURE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>115</td>
<td>ON THE PANTHEON IN ROME</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>125</td>
<td>SUSPENDING TIME</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>On time. On the ineffable detention of time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>139</td>
<td>ON SURRENDER AND UNIVERSALITY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T.S. Eliot, Ortega and Sota. Moreover, Gombrich and Melnikov</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

| 147  | SHARPENING THE SCALPEL BIBLIOGRAPHY                                   |
In this book I have tried to include the most interesting writings from the numerous texts I have penned over the years and published in English. I have always said that teaching and writing for an architect is like a good surgeon sharpening his scalpel to operate with maximum precision, just like my late father used to do. I dedicate this book to him.

I have always maintained that, in one way or another, the writings of an architect reflect the reasons why he makes his architecture, and I have always defended reason as the architect’s primary and principal tool. And now, these texts in English are exponentially increasing their readership.

I have already written several books in English and these collections of texts have always been very well received. From The Built Idea, reissued so many times that I’ve lost count, to Thinking with Your Hands, which complemented that first publication and follows the same trajectory. These were followed by further titles in English: Principia Architectonica and Teaching to Teach. And now this volume.

I cannot but thank Alison Hughes and Penelope Eades for providing an English version of these texts over the years. They are my voice in English. More than once I have been praised for my good English. It is they who deserve the credit, not me.

And I think it may be appropriate to repeat the same words that I previously wrote to accompany the English translation of some of my writings:

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.
At the end of Hamlet Act III, Queen Gertrude thus defines the paradox that language holds, not only here, but in all of Shakespeare. I wish that my words, now translated into English, could breathe something of the same poetry which 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 those very ideas built by the architecture itself. Without ideas, architecture is vain, empty: Architectura sine idea, vana architectura est.

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

When George Chapman translated Homer’s poems into English in 1614, it had such an effect that two centuries later, in October of 1816 to be exact, John Keats dedicated a beautiful sonnet to him. Around the same time, Cervantes commissioned Shelton to translate El Quijote to English, which made an invaluable contribution to the worldwide dissemination of his work.

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

In contrast, the very 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 is compensated by the universality of built language, which requires no more explanation than its existence.

While architecture is conveyed by this universality of built work, the logic from which it originates and later develops is all too often hidden or not revealed. The aim of the English version of these texts is to explain these reasons, to offer clues, to discover the basis from which these ideas were conceived, and to illustrate the materialisation of these ideas in the architecture we build.
It moves me to place the words of Don Quixote into the trembling hands of Hamlet, although it is perhaps today the most efficient way to spread any message. Even though I know that on the Internet my texts can travel through space in an instant, I cannot help but imagine my words in the hands of the desolate Danish prince, voicing his doubts in the beauty of the English language. That 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, along with them, my work, reach as far as theirs still do.

Alberto Campo Baeza

New York, 2019

NB

Once I finish the introduction to this printed book in English, I and my colleagues will be preparing the digital edition of a series of lessons, entitled Digital Lessons, with the clear objective of reaching out further and to many more people. I do not know what the future holds for us in these fields. I still cannot get my head around the over 5 million visits to my www.campobaeza.com or the over 500 references in my UPM Digital Archive. It is clear that the world, and communication, have changed.