

## **REBELLIOUS BEAUTY**

**About the architecture of Miguel Fisac**

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## REBELLIOUS BEAUTY

About the architecture of Miguel Fisac

Entering the labyrinth of humanized air that is the Architecture of Miguel Fisac has the pleasant reward of rediscovering something that many already knew and that a long time and a too long silence had hidden from us. An Architecture above time. A profound architect, a builder of thoughts. An integral person of radical coherence.

Ángel Ferrant used to say that "everything has already been said, but since nobody listens, it is necessary to start continuously", and this very accurate assessment of the Spanish reality, in all fields, is undoubtedly true in the case of our architect. And this is a good opportunity to put Fisac back in his rightful place.

If one had to describe the beauty of Fisac's architecture, I would describe it as rebellious. With the rebelliousness of a profound creation above fashions, without paying attention to them. With the rebelliousness of an architecture based on thought, in a time when superficiality seems to triumph from the frivolous shop windows of the numerous magazines that harass architects.

Fisac always starts from thought, there are always reasons to explain his work. The form, the forms, are always decisions that some resolve by the hand of fashion and others, and this is the case of Miguel Fisac, by the hand of thought. There are reasons for the pagoda shape of the Jorba Laboratories. The shapes of the concrete poured in their "flexible formworks" are clearly explicable. There is an evident, almost pedagogical logic in their "bones". A paragon of reasons.

And if Beauty has been, is, and will always be the only true and dangerous revolution, in the face of this society that has opted for mediocre stability, Miguel Fisac has set himself up as the architect of this rebellious Beauty.

### ARCHITECT OF ARCHITECTS

Like a gypsy curse, someone predicted that Fisac would never be an "architect of architects". That "evil eye", with which some of us never agreed, fortunately never came true. And now the enchantment has been definitively broken with this Gold Medal that the architects, precisely they, have awarded him.

A beautiful anecdote about Yehudi Menuhin comes to mind. Still very young, the then promising violinist made his first public appearance at a concert. At the end, the audience, on its feet, applauded wildly. But, and this was the best part, the musicians of the orchestra, also on their feet, also swept away by the genius, applauded, overcome by Beauty. For Menuhin, that - the applause of the musicians - was what was really important. That he was recognized by "those who truly understood this".

It is the recognition of architects, of "those who truly understand this" that gives deep meaning to this distinction to Miguel Fisac.

And this recognition comes in addition to the one he has already had for so long, in some international media. From the Gold Medal he was awarded in Vienna in 1954 for the church of Vitoria, or his lectures in Stockholm as a result of the "bones" in 1982, to the most recent anthological exhibition in Munich last year, which is currently on display in Weimar, where Fisac will soon go to give a lecture.

## HISTORY, LIGHT AND BONES

We could try to frame Miguel Fisac's architecture in three periods. Although both he and his buildings resist any kind of classification or labels.

The wise reading of History and its intelligent distillation lead him to produce his first works, so interesting, and even more so now, when in so few years so many things and so many fashions, too many, have happened in Architecture. It is the time of the buildings of the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (1942) and the Instituto de Óptica (1948).

His prodigious mastery of light, materialized in those wise articulations of straight and curved walls on which he cuts the precise slits for the light to penetrate and magically tense the space, presides over the time in which he built his best-known churches. From the Arcas Reales de Valladolid, of 1952, the Dominicos de Alcobendas, of 1955, and the Coronación de Vitoria, of 1958, to the more recent Flor del Carmelo, of 1992, and Santa Ana, of 1965, both in Madrid.

And a third period in which the deep understanding of new technologies, which leads to such overwhelmingly logical inventions as "bones" or "flexible formwork", is manifested in works as "current" as the Centro de Estudios Hidrográficos de Madrid, 1960, or the Bodegas Garvey de Jerez and the IBM building in Madrid, 1967, or the Casa de la Moraleja, 1973.

The observation of dates leads to the consideration that many of Fisac's works made yesterday could be understood as made today, or tomorrow, an architecture that resists being dated, that goes beyond time. An architecture that resists being dated, that passes over time. Isn't that a clear characteristic that the highest creations of Humanity always have?

Because Miguel Fisac is so personal, so "brilliant", that when the best architects in the 50s were doing "rationalism" he was doing something else: a splendid architecture of difficult labeling. Rebel. Revolutionary. Free. And if that period of those postwar architects who stood up for modernity has been described, I think, with justice, as heroic, I would dare to propose here that what Fisac did is something very typical of him: "the most difficult yet". To be heroic within the group of heroes. To be rebellious within the group of revolutionaries. To be libérrimo within the group of the free.

## THE MOST BEAUTIFUL SONG

And the fact is that Miguel Fisac has followed his own path, has made his own architecture, has played his own song, the most beautiful song. As told in a short story by Max Bolliger: Once upon a time there was a king who, having heard in a dream the beautiful song of an unknown bird, ordered his birdcatcher, under terrible threats, including death, to catch it for him. Imitating its sound with his flute, the birdcatcher went about catching the most melodious birds, whose trill never coincided with the song dreamed by the king. On the last day of the appointed period, the birdcatcher, desolate, took his flute and played, ready to die, his own song and oh surprise! the king recognized in it the dreamed melody. And he pardoned and gave freedom to the flute-playing birdcatcher and, with him, to all the birds of the kingdom, and a great feast was held.

For that, his own song, the most beautiful song, is the one that Miguel Fisac has always played, with all his architecture and with all his soul and with all his life. And with it, with his own architecture, he has achieved the most precious gift, that of freedom. An essential freedom for a creator, an architect, who has achieved with his work the most beautiful and rebellious Architecture.