

**WHAT THE BEST UNIVERSITY STUDENTS DO**

**Prologue. Arquitectura introductoria. Claudia Mut and Laura Soboleosky**

PUBLISHED IN

Arquitectura introductoria. Claudia Mut, Laura Soboleosky. Nobuko.  
Buenos Aires, 2011

## WHAT THE BEST UNIVERSITY STUDENTS DO

Prologue. Arquitectura introductoria. Claudia Mut y Laura Soboleosky

It is unusual for a publication to appear that showcases what the best students are doing. And I deeply agree with this spirit.

Everyone wants their children to be the best in college. Those who were because they think it's only fair that their children also be the best. And those who weren't because they think their kids can be, and that it's worth it.

But this society of ours today does not like to talk about "the best" even at the University. They confuse democracy with egalitarianism. They want the result to be the same, even if we behave in very different ways. Even if our behavior and our efforts come from the exercise of freedom. And this society is the same one that easily praises its sports or musical idols and just as easily tears them down.

This society of ours, which has so many wonderful things, has sometimes become soft, it tends to "anything goes", to everyone goes, which is profoundly unfair. I, who as an architect may not do badly, am a disaster in many other fields. I say, and it is true, that I am lucky to be always surrounded by people better than me.

I think it is time, as it has always been, to value excellence, the work done by the best, who, logically, are the ones who do the job better. And this, far from coming from something mysterious or elitist, comes from effort, perseverance, sacrifice, tenacity and these types of qualities that require the determined will to do things better.

There is a Spanish saint, Teresa of Jesus, who besides being with St. John of the Cross one of the summits of the Spanish Mystical Poetry, had a clear and resounding verb and said that to do things better, it was necessary "A great determination not to stop until I arrive, come what may, happen what may, work what I will work, murmur who will murmur, even if I die on the way, even if the world sinks." Very clear.

When someone from a humble family gets far through hard work, we all think it's great. And when someone from a rich family gets far without any effort, it does not seem so good to us. Because the excellence we are talking about is that of constant effort and hard work that can be achieved by those from poor families as well as those from rich families.

And this desire to be "the best", to do things as the best, or better than the best, is compatible with being generous and living a simple life. Those who, in order to be the best, do it at the cost of crushing others, are not worth it. I know Pritzker Architecture Prize winners who belong to the first group, generous and simple, like Eduardo Souto de Moura, who are an example for all of us. Other Pritzker prizes, in order to achieve such a feat, have done things that none of us would ever do. It is better to forget them.

When I am asked to write a foreword for a publication where excellence is defended, where we are told what the best university students of architecture do, I take it for granted that they are not only the best as future architects but also as people.

In the same line of Ken Bain's book cited in the introduction, What the best university professors do are those who dedicate themselves body and soul to teaching with those three conditions proposed by Julián Marías: to know, to know how to teach and to want to teach. Memory, understanding and will.

When you read this book and go through its chapters, you feel like being a student of these teachers who, besides being the best, captivate us with their proposals. The best I can say in this prologue is that, that I would like to be a student with these professors who propose this way of teaching capable of fascinating us. In Argentina, in Rosario, in its School of Architecture.

Although echo's authority on his spoon theory is great, I dare to contradict him a little. I believe that you can make good spoons, bad spoons, better spoons and worse spoons. Not all spoons are the same. I have a spoon designed by a well-known architect, which is so badly designed that I always drop it. Because of its shape, its size and its material. But it is beautiful as an object.

On the contrary, here in Rosario, the students have been taught to do things right from the beginning. They have been taught to make sketches of spoons that are an expression of their reflection on "the spoon". They have been taught to analyze "many spoons", good and not so good. And to know why some are good and others are not. They have been taught, with precision and well acquired knowledge, to project "great spoons", the best. And the best "spoons" of the best students are published here. And we are told that these Argentine students are "independent, critical and creative-minded thinkers". And that they "seek answers to important questions". And that they "devote a great deal of time and energy" to their work. And that they are "interested in other scientific fields" (and artistic ones I add).

I have read the texts and enjoyed the drawings in this book so much that I repeat that I would like to be "one of them". To be a student of this School of Architecture of Rosario, of these wonderful teachers. And corrected by them, to design the best Argentine silver spoon (Argentine means silver).

Alberto Campo Baeza

New York, June 10, 2011