

## ENGLISH SUMMARY

### THE CASTELLANA: ITS RECENT ARCHITECTURAL TRANSFORMATION

Anton Capitel

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Architect and critic Anton Capitel begins his discussion of the Castellana Boulevard by comparing it with a main east-west axis in Madrid, Alcalá Street. Why, he asks, does one offer an integrated urban image while the other, the Castellana, expresses disharmony and chaos? Could it be that the architects of 50 to 70 years ago were more skillful than those of today? Has speculation restricted the possibilities for architectural and urban interventions? Or, do current legal requirements make interesting architectural solutions impossible?

Capitel cites that the buildings of Alcalá Street are unmistakably architectural — buildings with a clear concept of scale within an urban context. In contrast, those of the Castellana do not follow this concept. If one were to build models of the buildings situated in the Castellana, one would have to look to details and materials to give clues as to the scale of the building. Likewise, the potentially uniting character, the *urban nature* of the buildings, is not at work in the Castellana. In part, this comes from the conflicting concepts of a grand boulevard located near the compact city center.

The author furthers his analysis by examining individually some ten buildings of this boulevard (which are presented in greater detail in the pages following the article). The most positive critiques are given for the successful integration of Bankinter within its urban context, by architects Moneo and Bescós; the Fénix Building of Gutiérrez Soto which balances the change in scale from the wide Castellana to the smaller street behind; the ability of Carvajal as seen through his office building; the elements of scale of the Windsor Tower of Alas and Casariego; and the Bilbao Bank of Sáenz de Oiza which opts for the difficult path of modernism.

### MADRID, THE CASTELLANA. CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT THE NORTH-SOUTH AXIS OF MADRID

Estanislao Pérez Pita

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Without a doubt the north-south axis of Madrid known as the Castellana is today the most representative street of the city. In the east-west direction, the axis which extends from Ventas to Alcalá Street, Mayor and continues on the Extremadura Highway is also strongly defined. Why, therefore, one must ask, with two axes which are apparently similar, one, the Castellana, plays an important role in defining the character of the city while the other serves a mainly functional purpose.

Architect Pérez Pita briefly presents the historical development of the Castellana which can be traced back as far as the Plan of 1857 by Castro and is strongly defined in the Plan of 1941 by Bidagor, and the construction of important buildings such as Ministries, the Nacional Institute, the Football Stadium, etc.

Analyzing this axis from the point of view of urban spaces, the new section (Generalísimo) is an example of an unsuccessful boulevard. It possesses the physical dimensions of a boulevard but lacks the design considerations (plazas, forward facing facades, etc.) needed to establish a boulevard.

Other failures of this axis are seen as one travels south towards the center of the city and passes Columbus' Square. This is an intervention by

one of the city's most urbanistically insensitive mayors made especially serious when coupled with the demolition of the Palace of the Dukes of Medinaceli.

### THE MIRAGE OF AN ARCHITECTURAL PROBLEM

Juan Antonio Cortés and María Teresa Muñoz

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Architects Cortés and Muñoz critique the recent exposition of Buildings for Best Products in the Museum of Modern Art of New York. Six well known architects were invited to present designs for the Best Company stores and showrooms which are, according to Arthur Drexler, essentially a windowless brick box of  $60 \times 57 \times 9$  meters.

Three initial questions are proposed by the authors on which they base their critique: what interventions can the architects undertake when given such a strong preestablished program which includes dimensions of the building, position of the entrance, lack of openings and definition of materials? To what point should a problem which so strictly defines the terms, yet invites international architects with formal and programatic positions well established, be considered an *architectural exercise*? If the objective of the exposition is really to view the *state of the art* of architecture, why has such a non-architectural theme been selected?

All six participating architects emphasize the importance of the facade of the building through the use of pop elements, historical allusions, changes in scale and materials with the accompanying lack of attention paid to the essence of the original building.

Venturi's scheme, the Best store of Oxford Valley, Pennsylvania, is, according to the critics, the most architectural solution. It affirms the nature of the box by solely applying a large flower decoration. In short the exposition expresses that *it is possible to decorate a building, but not build a decoration*.

### APROXIMATIONS ON THE THEME OF ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION

Antonio Miranda

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A university should be a living entity and a place of critical analysis according to architect and professor Antonio Miranda. His present thesis is that the current educational crisis in Spain should be carefully reviewed due to the fact that almost any situation of crisis can be transformed for the political or economic benefit of certain interest groups.

The present degradation of the Spanish university could be seen by some as a justification to establish a parallel system of private and elite universities, an undesirable possibility according to the author. A second misinterpretation of the current situation is that there are too many architectural students. Rather, what is needed is an improvement of the facilities and a reduction of the student-teacher ratio in order to educate the *future architects that a less monopolistic society will demand*. A third problem outlined by Miranda is the imbalance between the pure sciences, taught many times without relation to theory, which in turn is presented by some as little more than ridiculous mysticism. A final proposal of Miranda is to use the Modern Movement as a theoretical model to support the teaching of the subject of *projects*.