

当代世界建筑经典精选(1)

塞扎·佩利

# CESAR PELLI

Selected and Current Works



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塞扎·佩利

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## 编者按

塞扎·佩利出生于阿根廷,毕业于图库曼(TUCUMAN)大学建筑系,又获得美国伊利诺州立大学的建筑硕士学位。之后,他在不同的建筑设计室工作,并于1977年成立了塞扎·佩利设计室。1977年~1984年,任耶鲁大学建筑学院院长。此后,仍继续在该学院教授建筑学课程,指导项目设计。

塞扎·佩利早期的著名作品有加利福尼亚州圣贝纳迪诺的圣贝纳迪诺市政厅、洛杉矶的太平洋设计中心、东京的美国大使馆等。

作为建筑师,他认为建筑的美感产生于每个项目自身的独特性。如四周环境、主要功能、施工技术等等。对日益普及的计算机设计系统,他认为计算机不能替代人的创造性思维。由于计算机可以提供大量的选择机会,反而使建筑师懒怠思索、不自觉地逃避艰苦的设计创作,从而产生大量没有思想的作品。在从事创作设计时,建筑师应始终明确作品的主题,并贯穿于整个设计过程中的每一环节与步骤,使用计算机只是其中的一个环节。

在这套系列作品中,本书是唯一按建筑材料的分类来编排的。也许这正体现了塞扎·佩利的独到之处——善于选材、用材。他认为,当今世界有太多的建筑材料可以选择,建筑师应充分发挥并善于驾驭。不分场合地选用同一种建筑材料、表现同一种主题思想是大忌,而选择最能体现建筑物内涵与本质的材料是基本准则。

塞扎·佩利是美国建筑学会的会员,美国文学与艺术学会会员,美国全国设计院院士。他是第一个获得康涅狄格州艺术奖的建筑师。1989年,塞扎·佩利设计室获得美国建筑学会的建筑企业奖。1991年,被美国建筑学会选为健在的最有影响的十大建筑师。他所设计的纽约世界金融中心、纽约炮台公园中的冬园也被选入自1980年以来的美国十佳建筑。

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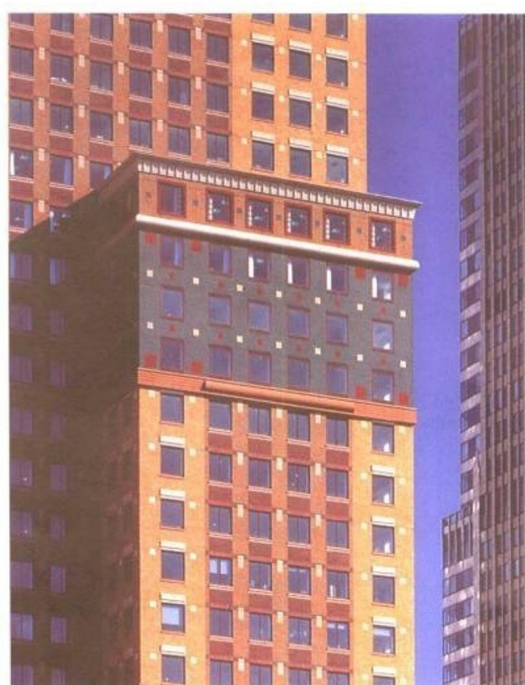
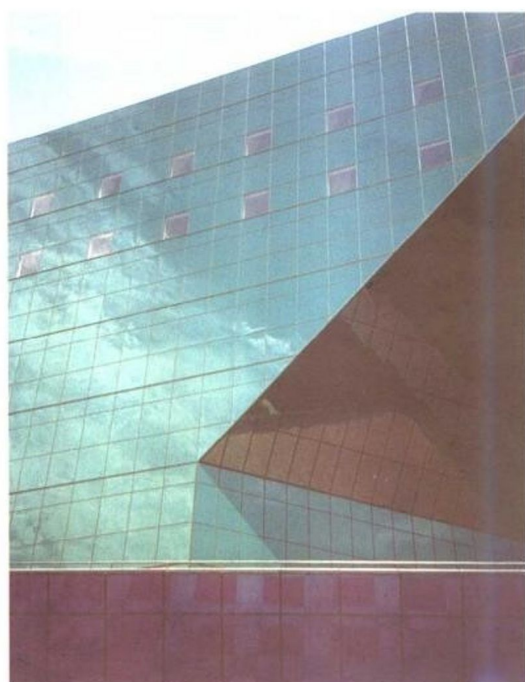
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Selected and Current Works

Introduction by Michael J. Graham



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# Contents

- 7 Introduction  
A Conversation with Cesar Pelli  
*By Michael J. Crosbie*

## Selected and Current Works

- 19 Urban Nucleus

### Glass

- 22 San Bernardino City Hall  
24 UN City  
26 Commons of Columbus  
28 Niagara Falls Winter Garden  
30 Museum of Modern Art Gallery Expansion  
and Renovation  
32 Four Leaf/Four Oaks Towers  
34 Pacific Design Center (Phase I),  
Pacific Design Center Expansion (Phases II and III)  
38 St Luke's Medical Tower

### Stone

- 44 US Embassy, Tokyo  
46 Crile Clinic Building  
48 Norwest Center/Gaviidae Common  
54 World Financial Center and Winter Garden  
64 NationsBank Corporate Center and Founders Hall  
72 Society Center  
76 Yerba Buena Tower  
78 181 West Madison  
82 Miglin-Beitler Tower

### Metal

- 86 COMSAT Laboratories  
88 Canary Wharf Tower, Retail and Assembly Building  
and Docklands Light Railway Station  
94 777 Tower  
98 Plaza Tower  
102 NTT Shinjuku Headquarters Building  
108 New North Terminal, Washington National Airport  
118 One Market  
126 Kuala Lumpur City Centre, Phase I

### Brick

- 138 Herring Hall, Rice University  
144 Ley Student Center, Rice University  
148 Mattatuck Museum  
152 Boyer Center for Molecular Medicine, Yale University  
160 Mathematics, Computing and Engineering Center,  
Trinity College  
166 Carnegie Hall Tower  
172 Century Tower  
176 Worrell Professional Center for Law and Management,  
Wake Forest University  
182 Physics and Astronomy Building, University of Washington/Seattle  
186 Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, Vassar College  
192 Mathematics Building and Lecture Hall,  
Institute for Advanced Study  
198 Humanities and Social Sciences Building,  
University of California/Riverside  
202 North Carolina Blumenthal Performing Arts Center  
210 Ohio Center for the Arts—Cincinnati  
214 Hakata Bay Oriental Hotel and Resort

- 227 Biographies  
230 Design Credits  
234 Associates and Collaborators  
235 Chronological List of Buildings and Projects  
242 Awards and Exhibitions  
248 Bibliography  
254 Acknowledgments  
255 Index





## Introduction

A Conversation with Cesar Pelli  
By Michael J. Crosbie

*The name Pelli is also the Italian word for “skins”. So it is wholly appropriate that this monograph is organized according to the skins with which Cesar Pelli has clad his buildings. The skin, for Pelli, is the primary mode for expressing the system of building. While other reviews of Pelli’s works have focused on them as purely aesthetic objects, this monograph presents the architecture as the architect thinks about it: as an expression of construction technique, a generator of urban life, the result of a carefully designed process for making buildings in the late 20th century. The work process of this prodigious firm has been the subject of as much design attention as the work itself, and Pelli’s partner, Fred Clarke, joins the conversation to explain the work methods that are particular to Cesar Pelli & Associates.*

CROSBIE    How did you come to study architecture in the United States, after your education in Argentina?

PELLI        I grew up very much as an Argentinian, and I realized much later that my family was atypical. We had fewer ties than traditional Argentinian families. My mother has been all her life very active in teaching, lecturing and writing, and we had a home environment that looked as much toward the rest of the world, particularly Europe, as to Argentina. This was even more so with Diana—my wife’s—family, who were Europeans, who had come to Argentina in the late 1930s because of the Civil War in Spain. Both her parents also taught. In 1950 I graduated, was working, and had just married, but was restless, needing to see more. I applied to study abroad and one day this envelope came with a ticket to study in the United States at the University of Illinois. “Where is Illinois”, my mother asked. “South of Chicago!” We were to come for nine months and we had every intention of returning to Argentina. But after nine months we had a son, we had debts, and both Diana and I had offers to teach at the University of Illinois. We stayed another year, after which I was offered a job with Eero Saarinen. And before we knew it, we were Americans.

CROSBIE    How valuable to you were those early years with Saarinen?

PELLI        There were two critical periods in my formation: the first was my schooling at the University of Tucuman, which was extraordinary, with great intellectual effervescence. At Illinois, there was no comparison. I was much better prepared than anyone there. I had a solid understanding of the principles of the Modern movement and I knew how to use theoretical constructs to design with—that’s perhaps why my professor was impressed with me and recommended me to his friend John Dinkeloo, who offered me a job with Saarinen. This was most important in my development. It is one thing to get trained in a school where you learn what architecture is about, but another to become an architect. In one you learn theories about swimming, but in the other you have to jump in the water and swim and are properly coached. This is what happened with Saarinen. Good, sometimes great architecture was being done there and we were part of it. All that it takes to produce good architecture was there, open to our eyes. It was being created by Saarinen’s efforts, which were visible to us, and by our own efforts, which we could interpret as we wished. Usually great architecture is seen as this thing that mysteriously happens, produced by extraordinary beings. The truth is that it is done by means that everyone has, some more than others.

- CROSBIE What did you learn about the process of architecture?
- PELLI I carry a number of things that I learned from Saarinen, of course transformed to the circumstances of today and my personality. One commonality is the open process. Occasionally Eero would come with sketches from home, with a complete *parti* for a building. I remember that every time he did that, things did not go so well and the process was harder. But when the design process was in the open, it was infinitely richer, and it was easier for the whole team to carry it further. So I never come with sketches from home, or do them alone in my office. I will conceive ideas, but I make sure that the first time I put them on paper I do so with my team around me. As I start working, they may say, "Hey, you forgot that we don't own that piece of land," or whatever. From the beginning, the design is informed by the intelligence of everyone participating, and by their research.
- At Saarinen we had an open process, and we also used models. The regular use of large-scale models developed during the design for the TWA Terminal at JFK Airport in New York. Eero had designed the terminal before I was part of the team. He had been working on it for about a year. Then a model was built to present to the client, who approved it for working drawings. The next day Saarinen called the client to tell them that he did not like how the design had come out, and he wanted an extra year. He got it, and we started over. What happened was that when Eero saw in three dimensions forms that looked good in drawings, he realized that some were terribly awkward. I was asked to resolve a problem with the legs of the shells. I developed the sculptural forms that were built. Then I was put in charge of the design team and a whole new aesthetic approach grew. We ended up building a very large, very crude model and testing everything in model form. The extraordinary value of models as a tool for designing became obvious to me. They are an impartial, objective way of looking at architecture. If I start drawing something and it doesn't look good, sometimes by just thickening a couple of lines the same drawing looks very good, but the architecture hasn't changed—just the thickness of the lines in the drawing. Models are built following a rather rigid convention. They don't tell you everything, but they are much closer approximations than drawings. I can study them together with my team and share them with my clients. Models are also efficient. I make a few comments and give direction. I go away, the team works very hard, and the next morning I can review the models again and quickly understand what the aesthetic or functional issues are and decide on the best direction for the design to take.
- CROSBIE You also use models to test three or four ideas simultaneously.
- PELLI Correct. We also did that with Eero. The way we draw with the stabilo pencils also came from that office, starting with Eliel Saarinen through Eero. Just about everyone in our office can draw that way. I like the technique because it expresses volume and it renders buildings in a tangible way. I must confess that we use it less now since computers.
- CROSBIE Do you see similarities in how you use models and renderings in design, and the way you use computers?
- PELLI The model tells us more than a computer drawing does. A computer screen is two dimensional. But in some ways we use a similar process. We also study a number of alternatives using computer drawings. My concern is that with a computer it is easy to produce too many alternatives in a short amount of time.

CROSBIE Too much choice?

PELLI No, the problem is not too much choice. The problem is that it allows the architect not to think. That's bad. In developing three alternatives, one has to think hard about it. Two or three alternatives can be very good ones. But with the computer, it is possible to produce a thousand thoughtless alternatives, and that's no good at all. That's the danger. Just producing and choosing alternatives is not design. Choosing from alternatives is one specific aspect to the design process, but it is not the design process. What directs the design is an intention. If you have an intention, you can choose options that will take you closer to your objective. But only if your objective is extremely clear. If you don't know where you're going in a design, just choosing will get you nowhere. There are a thousand steps in the design process, and a thousand choices at each step. So you can become thoroughly lost by just choosing. It's the intention that matters. The architectural intention includes artistic objectives, functional objectives, social objectives, the whole complex world of architecture.

CROSBIE So you have a clear intention in most cases?

PELLI Yes.

CROSBIE How do you arrive at that?

PELLI Our first steps are always the same. We start by analyzing the problem, talking with our clients, visiting the site, walking around the city to see the character of the buildings and understand the tradition of the area, studying the program, and analyzing the budget. We also build a model of the site and its adjacent buildings. Then we build a couple of models of what we call "dumb" schemes—very obvious and simple massings—just to have an idea of what happens when you put something that big in that place. At this point one has to make an intellectual and subjective leap. Given all of the factors of the project, I usually see two or three ways to respond to these conditions that will give us the best possible building. Then we test these alternatives, again in a crude form, until I sense that one idea is a better response, will be the better building, and has greater artistic potentials. You should notice that I do not start with sketches or design ideas. I always wait until I have a thorough understanding of the problem before I start conceiving solutions or forms. In this way we have no false starts and the design responds from the beginning to all the circumstances of the problem. Almost always I will try to put into words what it is that we are seeking. So each scheme has, from the beginning, a theoretical backbone—something that the whole team can refer to as they are seeking to solve minor or secondary problems, or to develop other elements. The purpose is always articulated.

CROSBIE At what point do you articulate it?

PELLI As early as possible. Most of the time, if the project is clear, I'm able to articulate an intention very early on. It gets adjusted as we go, and elaborated upon. Often we'll discover secondary but important possibilities that were not apparent at the beginning, and I count on those opportunities appearing as the project develops.





CROSBIE Do you articulate the purpose verbally or graphically?

PELLI Both. I do very simple drawings, enough to communicate the idea. Sometimes I'll develop an idea over a drawing with trace. If I can articulate it verbally, I'd rather do it that way. I draw only if I need to.

CROSBIE So this is a conversation that goes on with everyone on the team?

PELLI Yes. I try to involve everyone on the team. When we have client presentations we try to include as many members of the team as possible. Everybody is part of the process and should hear it first-hand. Designers working with me are not my "hands", they are my collaborators.



CROSBIE This sounds similar to the way a design studio works in architecture school. Is this a technique developed through teaching, and as Dean at Yale's architecture school?

PELLI Of course. But in school the purpose is to encourage each student to seek his or her vision of the problem. Here, the purpose of the team is to help me develop my vision of the problem. The teaching-learning atmosphere is the same as in a design studio, but the primary purpose is quite different. Teaching helps you to articulate, helps you to listen. But as a teacher you shouldn't interject your vision of the problem. When teaching I offer guidance but no solutions. In the office, I do the reverse but in a similar context.

CROSBIE Your work has incorporated many different materials over the years. How do you arrive at the choice of a material—how do you appraise its potential power in a project? What makes it the right choice?

PELLI From the beginning of my practice I wanted to understand and express the nature of today's buildings. Contemporary buildings are containers of space and, given our building technology and standards, these containers need to be tight, efficiently sealed envelopes. This is totally unlike traditional masonry architecture. I wanted the maximum artistic expression of these qualities, and San Bernardino City Hall is probably the clearest of all of the buildings that I have done in expressing this idea. The City Hall is a very didactic, polemical design. The Pacific Design Center is in a similar category. I became interested in going beyond that—keeping the same conceptual basis, but exploring it in different ways. The only way to achieve a consistent, total envelope is to do it in glass. Because buildings need windows, there is a certain percentage of the skin that has to be glass. If you want the building to be one material, the only choice you have is glass. And the San Bernardino City Hall is one of the clearest expressions of that potential. The American Embassy in Tokyo required that the walls be concrete for

security reasons. How do you do this and at the same time express the taut enclosure? I had to rethink the problem to be able to include concrete and other materials, like stone, which today can be a very thin veneer, as we used it at the World Financial Center. I have been moving over the years to be more inclusive—if I can use a Charles Moore term—in the use of materials and in exploiting their expressive potentials, while maintaining the intellectual integrity of their relationship to the nature of contemporary buildings.

The San Bernardino City Hall pointed up a weakness of my early approach. It was architecturally correct and extremely well received by the press and my peers, but in my mind something was wrong with it. It was not doing what it should be doing for the city. What was the problem? It became clearer to me when I started to design buildings in much more critical contexts. The real test was Herring Hall at Rice University in Houston. When I went to the interviews, the building committee said that they had been wrestling with the fact that nobody liked the newer buildings on campus. But everybody liked the older, Ralph Adams Cram buildings. They asked me if I could design a building more like those. I told them that I agreed with their observations, but I didn't know if I could do it. Those are historical imitations, and that I wouldn't do. Herring Hall helped to resolve in my mind what had been up till then an unresolved conflict. Why is it that so many buildings that are so well received by the architecture community are not accepted by the public at large, are not enjoyed, and do not fit in their surroundings? These are essential objectives that any good architecture must achieve. Part of the solution was that some of my aesthetic predispositions had to give. The key to my being able to design responsive and responsible buildings while remaining faithful to our Modern condition is in the consistent relationship between the aesthetic system and the nature of the construction technology and systems with which we build. It's not that we have to express every line in a truss, but there has to be a correlation: a non-bearing wall should not look like a bearing wall. This has helped give intellectual continuity to my work.

We happen to live in a period in which a number of materials are available. There's nothing wrong with brick, stainless steel, or stone—why should I artificially limit my palette to make my work appear consistent, if I believe that the consistency between my projects is secondary? The consistency between a building and the place it is in, or with its purpose—those are very real and essential conditions. My approach is what is constant. If I build an art gallery it has a certain character. A gas station, or a factory, or a church, all should be different. If I build in New Haven for Yale, it's one kind of building, and if I build in Tokyo for NTT it's a different kind of building. Using every time the same aesthetic system with the same materials is a conceit. But it is a conceit strongly supported and promoted by the press, the critics, and the academics. Aesthetic consistency is easy to recognize and understand. Architects who have been able to maintain a consistent aesthetic approach can have their buildings identified with a recognizable image—it's a Richard Meier, a Frank Gehry, a Norman Foster, or a Michael Graves. For me it is more important to connect with the purpose of the building and the real place where the building is. This means that the images of my buildings must vary to suit their specific circumstances.

CROSBIE That was also true of Eero's work.

PELLI Yes, it was very true of Eero. When I was with him I thought that was one of Eero's weaknesses—that he did not have a recognizable style. He said he was looking for a style for the job. A style does not interest me, but the basic intention is the same. I was fortunate that in my formative years I was not trained to believe that aesthetic consistency is an essential goal in an architect's work. As you know, the vision of almost every young architect is distorted with this presumption. Architecture is the art that should change more according to the circumstances, more than painting or sculpture. I believe that we have been misjudging the practice of the art of architecture, because architectural criticism has been overly affected by painting theory and criticism. Over the last 100 years painting has been the dominant art and its theories and biases have been extended to architecture. But architecture doesn't fit. It has very little to do with painting. It is a very different art and there are a thousand other dimensions to architecture—social, economic, physical—that have nothing to do with painting analysis, but it continues to affect the way we discuss and judge buildings and architects.



CROSBIE These discussions are framed by critics who were trained in art history, not architecture. Getting back to our discussion of materials—glass, aluminum or stainless steel seem right for what you want to achieve in your architecture: the expression of a tight envelope.

PELLI They are materials that express most clearly what I believe to be the nature of architecture today. This is one of the yardsticks that I use to evaluate the choice of materials: the appropriate expression of the nature of contemporary construction. In the case of multi-story buildings it is the thin envelope. That's the way I believe that we will keep on building, so it is essential not only for my architecture but for architecture at large that we get on with the task of figuring out how to do an architecture that is expressive, versatile, and suitable to all the tasks of this marvelous art, and consistent with the way we build. The ancient forms of architecture have all come from a particular way of building. Arches, corbels, pediments, quoins—all of these architectural elements grew naturally from bearing stone construction and are completely consistent with the way we used to build, but don't any more.



CROSBIE Many of your projects play important urbanistic roles: projects such as the Commons in Columbus and the World Financial Center in New York. How do these buildings energize a city?

PELLI Wonderful cities, wonderful urban places, are so because they have been able to achieve a certain density, a certain intensity of potentials, that make it wonderful to be there. It is much better, of course, when this happens in beautiful spaces with handsome proportions. Whenever one has the opportunity to accommodate and strengthen the forces that bring people together in the city, that interests me very much. Those qualities are at the heart of what makes our built environments good or bad, and they are more important than a building's aesthetics. There are places where the buildings are not extraordinary, but they make great cities. Paris is a good example. There are several great buildings in Paris, but what makes this city wonderful are all of those ordinary, good buildings that create spaces for activities and intense urban life. The urban places, the streets, the plazas are more important than any one building.

CROSBIE How did you adapt these lessons to your own architecture?

PELLI The precedent for the Winter Garden at the World Financial Center in New York was the Commons of Columbus, Indiana. They are representations of a new building type. I call them Public Halls or Public Rooms. They are public living rooms for the project and the city, and the number of different things that happen in them is extraordinary. These Public Halls are spaces that are centers of activity, focuses of urban life. The Commons is clearly the center of public life in Columbus. Irwin Miller of Columbus had asked me to design a small downtown shopping center. Miller wanted this project to bring downtown Columbus back to life. But a shopping center won't do that. The idea for the Commons was to create a space on the downtown street as a covered extension of sidewalk life at one end of the shopping center, not as part of it. This is not a mall. It is more like a downtown living room. You enter from the sidewalk on Washington Street, and it has its own life so it can function separately from the shopping center. Miller asked what would happen in this space. I told him that I wanted it to function for late 20th century America like a piazza functioned for 17th century Italy. Mostly it would be a great place where people would come, read the paper, have a cup of coffee, meet with friends. But occasionally something will happen there that will bring in people from the whole town. They have hundreds of such events every year. The Public Hall has to be downtown, because this is the only place that can bring all citizens together. People of all economic and social strata gather there, and it adds an essential dimension to the life of Columbus.

We just finished our third Urban Room at the NationsBank Corporate Center in Charlotte, North Carolina. It is already changing the nature of downtown Charlotte. None of these halls was in the program given by the clients. In all three cases I proposed them and, to my delight, they were accepted and built.





CROSBIE Fred, how did the firm's organization of collaborating with other architecture firms on large projects evolve?

CLARKE Our process for collaborating began when the firm had very few people and, for pragmatic reasons, we joined with other firms in going after large projects. This also coincided with our developer clients' interests in combining design firms, for marketing and other reasons, with solid technical firms. Now, after almost 16 years and more than 70 collaborations with other architects, our collaborative design process and products have become very thorough and complete. This is not design as you would understand it in school. In addition to schematics and design development we work through all construction documents and follow the project through construction.

This is also distinct from what is sometimes described as "design consultation", which some well-known architects have done. Our collaborative design process is something we do for about half of our projects—for the very largest projects and those that are distant from New Haven. But the other half of the practice provides full services in the way a more traditional architectural practice would. This is a distinction that one always has to make because, in general, people like to associate us only with design. The collaborative work has informed the traditional in the sense that the refined level of our communication with our associate architect in terms of design ideas and intent has had a significant impact on the quality and comprehensiveness of our full-service drawings and specifications. The level of our design development drawings, outline specifications and follow-through during construction administration is extraordinary.

CROSBIE Was this a matter of amplifying what you had done while providing just design services, or did it require a new approach to construction documents?

CLARKE They are two very different processes.

PELLI The reason we separate them is because the workplace culture necessary today to do good design is different to the culture you need to do good working drawings. To do good design you need an office that is loosely structured, with an emphasis on creativity. People are more independent. If you run a large working drawing department in this way, you will either go broke or mistakes will be made. In a well-run working drawing department, people work regular hours and the tables are neat and clean. A design studio is rather messy.