

DENSE ARCHITECTURE

On Jesús Aparicio

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Reading "Six Memos for the Next Millennium" I was reminded of Jesús Aparicio when Italo Calvino describes a Bocaccio story and attributes a virtue, gravity, to its protagonist Guido Cavalcanti (1). This virtue, which is depth in thinking, profundity, is for Calvino and for me, cause for hope for the future. And as it happens, it is with this deep thinking and the enormous strength of its materialization that Jesús Aparicio, one of the most gifted young Spanish architects of the 21st century, makes his architecture. Both because of the special density of the materials he uses, such as reinforced concrete poured in situ and thick sheets of steel, and because of the way he uses them, with great thicknesses and generous openings. In this way, with density, he works with light and shade, his favourite material. In his latest writings, he emphasizes the value of these shadows which make working with light possible.

His works, made slowly, are capable of communicating to us the strength and immense serenity with which they were conceived. That is how the most prestigious magazines such as Casabella or A+U have understood them when they published them.

His first houses in brick and concrete in Salamanca are very beautiful (2). And his Day Center for the Elderly in Santa Marta de Tormes is magnificent, written about in a lovely little book which describes the entire process of its genesis and its construction (3). Or the recently completed auditorium contained within an enormous beam of reinforced concrete that plays a leading role in an episode of high spatial tension in Nuevos Ministerios in the centre of Madrid, which Francesco dal Co praised publicly in Vicenza.

Jesús Aparicio has received numerous awards for his not so-numerous works, which have been exhibited in such outstanding venues as the Venice Biennale 2000.

Fulfilling the requisites of life and more, he has planted trees and had children and published a book of his ideas about architecture that I always recommend to my students (4). In it, he begins clarifying some of the theories he learned from Kenneth Frampton during his years as a Fulbright Scholar at Columbia University in New York. Jesús Aparicio has been a visiting professor at several Architecture Schools, in Rome and Naples and at the AA in London. He is recognized as one of the most prestigious professors at the Madrid School of Architecture where he began with Juan Navarro Baldeweg and is now tenured Professor of Projects.

He has in his hands all of the instruments, the knowledge, intelligence and constancy, to continue making a deep mark on contemporary architecture. Beyond the passing fashions, he understands our time profoundly and he distils it in an architecture of unstoppable force.

Alberto Campo Baeza

- (1) SIX MEMOS FOR THE NEXT MILLENIUM
Italo Calvino
Vintage Ed.
New York, 1993
- (2) A+U 351. (cover and pages 112-119).
Tokyo, 1999
- (3) DAY CENTER FOR THE ELDERLY. SANTA MARTA DE TORMES
Jesús Aparicio
Ed. Ayuntamiento de Santa Marta de Tormes
Salamanca, 2003
- (4) EL MURO
Jesús Aparicio
Ed. CP 67 y Universidad de Palermo
Buenos Aires, 2000