

SOLID LIGHT VS. DIFFUSED LIGHT

PUBLISHED IN

Trece trucos de arquitectura. Ed. ACB. Madrid, 2020

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Of course, rather than confronting the two types of light, solid *versus* diffuse light, we should speak of solid light piercing a space filled with diffuse light. As if it were the rays of the sun passing through a cloud. That which some painters had already represented in their paintings.

Can it be understood that working with only translucent light in a single space can be considered a mechanism of architecture? I think so.

If we erect a translucent space, filled only with whitish translucent light, we might think we are building a cloud. I have before me three images of translucent spaces of the first order: Pierre Chareau's *Maison de Verre* in Paris from 1932, Angelo Mangiarotti's *Baranzate Church* in Milan from 1958, and Myron Goldsmith's *Keating Hall* at IIT Chicago from 1968. All three are sublime examples of this architecture made with translucent light, with only whitish translucent light. The three spaces also have in common that they are rectangular in plan and of great height, and that their roof is opaque. And the light in all three is fascinating.

When I proposed something similar, first for the *Porta Milano* project and then for the *MIA* in New York, everyone jumped on me and exclaimed in unison: "Impossible. It doesn't meet any of the requirements of the current regulations." Indeed, the facility engineers, the glass engineers, and my co-workers were all right. But what about the sheer beauty of that space, wasn't it worth it? It is true that, in my case, the ceiling was also made of translucent glass, which complicated matters even more.

In my case, I proposed a light, all-encompassing structure composed of bars both horizontally and vertically, which was painted all in white. It was then covered on the outside and inside, top and sides, with a double skin of translucent glass. This created a large air chamber that was conditioned with hot or cold air as needed to control the interior temperature. And all the large interior space with a beautiful light, like a cloud. Then we worked with small perforations in both layers, so that the light could be seen to move.

After many diverse and amusing vicissitudes, everything came to nothing. Like when something on the computer gets complicated and is minimized hoping that in that mysterious place everything is going to fix itself.

I must say that not only is the proposal credible, but it can be considered a true architectural mechanism. The building we did in Zamora had something of this, although there it was all transparent and very transparent.

Of course, the translucent space, without so many opponents, has already been present in the architecture of past times. Even before the three modern buildings mentioned at

the beginning of this text. So were the first Gothic cathedrals when, before the advent of colored stained glass, they were divine spaces filled with a wonderful whitish light. I still dream of seeing a Gothic cathedral without any stain of color. It has been a long time since I wrote that provocative "more doctrine and less light", which was the cry with which those beautiful and whitish spaces were charged.

We can well imagine when in the early Gothic glass technique made those holes were plemented with a glass more translucent than transparent because of the technique, or lack of technique. That light, as if it were celestial clouds, must have been very beautiful.

And when the "pavés verre" appeared in the last century, something similar happened again. And if we have already mentioned the Maison de Verre in Paris by Pierre Chareau, no less beautiful was the house made by Giuseppe Terragni in 1933 for the Triennale de Millano, which, inspired by the Paris house, gives a twist and adds a pavés roof that also qualifies the translucent light in an extraordinary way. And as if that were not enough, he adds high white silk curtains that make visible the verticality of the double height and translucence.

Is there then not enough reason to set up the total translucent box capable of controlling, and well, the interior temperature? Is it so difficult to achieve it? And I do not continue to tell you about the coincident perforations of the two skins because in that way the movement of light is made visible as I have already written in other texts in a more developed way.

In summary, I understand that this of the cloud, the total translucent light in a total space is a simple and possible mechanism to qualify the architectural space.