

DENSE ARCHITECTURE

About the architecture of Jesús Aparicio

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I was reminded of Jesús Aparicio when reading *Six memos for the next millennium*¹ when Italo Calvino describes in the first chapter a story by Bocaccio and attributes to his protagonist, Guido Cavalcanti, a virtue, gravity, which is depth in thinking and which is for Calvino, and also for me, an object of hope for the future.

It is with this depth of thought and with enormous strength in its materialization that Jesús Aparicio, one of the most gifted young Spanish architects of the 21st century, raises his architecture. Both for the special density of the materials he uses, such as reinforced concrete poured in situ or thick steel plates, and for the way he uses them, with great thicknesses and generous mouths. And in the same way, with thickness, he works with light and shadow, his favorite material. In his latest writings he emphasizes the value of those shadows that make it possible to work with light.

His works, created slowly, have the capacity to transmit the strength and immense serenity with which they have been conceived. This is how the most prestigious magazines such as *Casabella* or *A+U* have understood it when they have published them.

His first brick and concrete houses in Salamanca² are very beautiful. And his magnificent Hogar del Jubilado in Santa Marta de Tormes, of which he gives us news in a beautiful booklet³ where the whole process of its genesis and construction is described in detail. Or a recently completed auditorium contained in a large reinforced concrete beam that stars in an episode of high spatial tension in the Nuevos Ministerios in the center of Madrid, which Francesco dal Co publicly praised in Vicenza.

He has received numerous awards for his not very numerous works, which have been exhibited in such prominent forums as the Venice Biennale in 2000.

As if fulfilling the requirements that life demands, he has planted trees and had children and has published a book with his ideas on architecture that I always recommend to my students⁴. There he unfolds and clarifies some of the theories he learned with Kenneb Frampton in the years he spent with him as a Fullbright scholar at Columbia University in New York. He has been a guest lecturer at various schools of architecture such as Rome, Naples and the AA in London. He happens to be one of the most prestigious professors at the Madrid School of Architecture, where he started with Juan Navarro Baldeweg and is now Professor of Projects.

¹ *Six memos for the next millenium*, Italo Calvino. Vintage Ed. New York, 1993.

² *A+U* 351. (cover and pp 112-119). Tokyo, 1999.

³ *Retirement Home*. Santa Marta de Tormes, Jesús Aparicio. Santa Marta de Tormes City Council. Salamanca, 2003.

⁴ *The wall*, Jesús Aparicio. CP 67 and University of Palermo. Buenos Aires, 2000.

He has in his hands all the instruments, such as wisdom, intelligence and constancy, to continue to open a deep breach in contemporary architecture. Above fashions, he understands our time in depth and distills it into an architecture of irrepressible strength.