

## **THE SKY ABOVE THE SKY**

**About the José Guerrero Center of Antonio Jiménez Torrecillas in Granada**

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## THE SKY ABOVE THE SKY

About the José Guerrero Center of Antonio Jiménez Torrecillas in Granada

In front of the marvelous mass of the cathedral of Granada, perhaps the most beautiful cathedral of Andalusia, has appeared, as if it were a David against a Goliath, a small piece that, besides facing it face to face, takes as the central theme of its architecture an absolute respect and admiration for the historical piece.

There was a building there, the Patria, of relative value, but to which the city, of which it was the usual landscape, had already become accustomed. It seemed that the old building, after being turned around like a sock, had been resurrected, obtaining a first-class result.

The original spatial structure, which consisted of two boxes, an outer box and an inner box that became a courtyard, has been reinterpreted in a very ingenious way. The outer box has been manipulated without changing anything essential, and the inner box, now closed, has been used as the central exhibition space on each floor. In the soffit space, the circulation and server elements are placed. It is presided over and organized by a wide staircase that runs through the air. In the closed central box, the lighting of Guerrero's large paintings, in which there is a certain aroma of Rothko, is adequately controlled. At the start of the building the architect has escaped the temptation to create a larger entrance. He has been able to read very well the serial system of arcades on that narrow street and has enhanced these panels by lining them with stone. There are very intentional details such as the chamfering of the corner up to the second floor.

The building is thus resolved with a clear strategy of ascending path around the central box. Like a vertical architectural promenade. A journey in crescendo through light-filled spaces around an enclosed central space. But the best, as it should be, comes at the end, at the culmination. Just when we think it is all over, a petrified landscape appears at the top, bathed in an explosion of light, in contrast to the certainly abstract work of the museum. The Cathedral, its crowning stone lacework, appears within reach. The lesson learned from Le Corbusier of the box open to the sky, the Andalusian lesson of the roof has been transmitted here in an opening to the sky in front, because in front is the magnificent landscape of the Cathedral. The formal solution of focusing this last piece towards the Cathedral with total transparency is masterful.

The luminous image of Narciso Tomé's Transparent in Toledo Cathedral comes to mind. Someone might think that the operation of introducing a baroque space on a majestic gothic space was very daring, which it was. The splendid reality of the piece of sky full of light snatched from that Transparent is unquestionable in such a way that it is in all the Histories of Art and Architecture. Here in Granada, a first-class architect has dared to act with a modern piece in front of the great Renaissance monument. History is something alive, and time is something that beats. In this case with a very good pulse. And with the consideration that the key point of this masterful architectural operation is precisely that accurate, wise reading of history. The modern piece by Antonio Jiménez

Torrecillas has its *raison d'être* in that admired look at the Renaissance piece, whose value is increased if possible, through this new architecture of the first order.

When, after the calm journey through the halls of the Warrior, we arrive at that space at the top, which is like a piece of heaven in the sky, we will never want to leave.