

**FOLDS OF LIGHT**

**About the Architecture of Juan Carlos Sancho and Sol Madrideojos**

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### About the Architecture of Juan Carlos Sancho and Sol Madridejos

Juan Carlos Sancho and Sol Madridejos are at the forefront of the avant-garde group of young architects in Madrid. And for several years they have had their own influential voice in Contemporary Architecture. The Sancho-Madridejos aroma is clearly recognizable. Their delicate deconstructions or the folds with which they shape the forms contained in the air of their architecture are, in addition to being singular, very personal and of enormous beauty.

It might seem a literary device to mention their intense contact and friendship with Eduardo Chillida, the great Basque sculptor who tempered the air so well with his iron and alabasters. Very close to him, sharing that subtle movement of the angles capable of tensing the worked spaces, we could attribute to them that common belonging to the Basque Country with all that is radical, of roots, that adscription has. It would seem that the power of the forces of nature that occur there in their most primordial sense, soaked all the work of both the master Chillida and our architects.

And if their first works have already deserved the attention of critics<sup>1</sup>, they have not ceased to appear in architectural books and magazines. *El Croquis*, the most influential Spanish publication, has repeatedly focused on them. In a recent issue<sup>2</sup>, some of their latest works appeared, very well presented: from the impressive teaching pavilion of La Arrixaca, an excavated box full of "gold dust"; to the sports center of Galdácano, where they continue to investigate themes already begun in the sports center of San Sebastián de los Reyes; or the chapel in Valleacerón, which alone would have deserved a monographic issue, so first-rate it is. And also appearing in this publication is the puzzle full of light that they have begun to build for the Museum of Contemporary Art of Alicante, the result of a first prize in a public competition.

What is Sancho-Madridejos's architecture like and how does it feel? I will never forget the moving experience of visiting his chapel in Valleacerón: a tremor of concrete, like an ironed and folded handkerchief in which the scale, the light, the material, the place, everything, was "nailed". Being small, it seemed big, so soul-widening was its contemplation. Being heavy concrete, it seemed to float in the air. Being dark, it was of blinding clarity. Being a perched object, it was at the same time the very ground that would have folded after an arcane seismic movement. I can attest that it has been one of the architectural spaces that have moved me the most. An exemplary folding. And now they are preparing to build a large church taking as its theme a fold of greater dimensions, with bigger words.

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<sup>1</sup> Young Spanish Architecture. AAVV. Intr. Kenneth Frampton. Madrid, 1985.

<sup>2</sup> *El Croquis* 106/107. Madrid, 2001.

Both architects are professors of projects in Madrid, and the quality of their teaching is attested by the group of students trained with them who are already beginning to emerge with their own voice. And there is always something pedagogical in their architecture. Their ideas have been translated into widely disseminated texts: *The Cubist Sense of Le Corbusier*, published in 2000<sup>3</sup>, is complemented by another book from 2001, in which they mix texts and images of his works with the expressive title of *Suite in 3 movements*<sup>4</sup>, where they write about the Void, the Tone and the Fold. Where they manage to materialize the "sonorous silence" of John Cage to which they always refer. A complete written and constructed manifesto.

Architects capable of substantiating emptiness with the fullness of their spaces. To thrill us with their quiet tone, to trap and move us, enveloping us in the folds of light of their marvelous architecture.

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<sup>3</sup> *The cubist sense of Le Corbusier*, Juan Carlos Sancho Osinaga. Munilla Lería. Madrid, 2000.

<sup>4</sup> *Suite in 3 movements*. Sancho / Madrudejos. Ed. Rueda. Madrid, 2001