

VISIBILITY

On the Architecture of Emilio Tuñón and Luis Moreno Mansilla

PUBLISHED IN

10X10. Ed. Phaidon. Londres, 2005

Pensar con las manos. Ed. Nobuko. Buenos Aires, 2009

VISIBILITY

On the Architecture of Emilio Tuñón and Luis Moreno Mansilla

When I included in the book *Young Spanish Architecture*, which I published in 1985, twenty years ago, the name of Emilio Tuñón, who had already built a beautiful chapel in Alcalá, some people criticized it, because they thought it was betting too much. So young was our architect. So good was that first work. Well, it seems that he was not so misguided. Not only has he followed an upward trajectory, but now, with Luis Moreno Mansilla, he makes such good architecture that we can say that they have their own powerful voice. Tuñón and Mansilla are among the architects who are building the future of architecture in this new millennium.

Emilio Tuñón and Luis Moreno Mansilla are architects who think. And they publish their thoughts. It is common to read their texts in the main architectural media. And they encourage others to think: they are the promoters of the best architectural fanzine still alive, called *Circo*. They have done me the honor of calling me and publishing me in it a few times. And they have long since surpassed the number one hundred. This *Circo* is a very effective forum for architectural thought, where they publish from James Turrell to John Hejduk, from Josep Quetglas to Sancho-Madrirdejos, from Rafael Moneo to Stan Allen.

Both are already full university professors and smell of future professors, since they belong to the generation of the relay.

Their affiliation with Rafael Moneo, with whom both have worked for some years, is clear. But that just admiration for the master does not lead them to any cloned attitude. They have learned from him all the best he has, which is a lot. And now they alone speak with their own loud and strong voice in the world of architecture.

They designed a dark auditorium in León, like a "camera obscura", which is beautiful. So good that it won the 2003 Spanish Architecture Prize, the highest award given annually to a work of architecture in Spain. With a clear and simple floor plan, the jury of the competition for this auditorium highlighted the success of the insertion of the absolutely modern piece in a historic center like that of the city of León. And they ended their praise by rightly speaking of the "brilliant sensitivity of a complex and lucid musical score". And if I have pointed out that its interior is like a "camera obscura", its exterior, not to be outdone, manifests a facade that looks like an accumulation of camera lenses in different positions with respect to the environment. Like open diaphragms that seem to look expectantly at the Hostal de San Marcos in front of it. What they call "lion's head". Very beautiful.

In the Castellón museum, the main spatial theme is a cascading section that shows the concatenation of diagonal spaces supported by light, thus achieving highly effective perspectival spatial effects.

And also won by competition, the Library and Archives of the Community of Madrid in the old brewery of El Águila, where they coordinate a series of drawers each more interesting in an intelligent operation of great complexity.

Their architecture is recognizable and capable of being remembered for its spaces and light, rather than just for those images of Joseph Beuys that always accompany the competitions they always win.

Tuñón and Mansilla are a couple of architects who, being in fashion, are never slaves to it. Being very up to date, their architecture is not only agile and incisive, but also profound. Deeply beautiful.