

THE REFLECTION OF BEAUTY

**On an architecture in the Garden of the Reales Alcazares of Seville by Juan
Domingo Santos**

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"It is true that I am in this garden a fresh eye". So reads a beautiful poem epigraphed in the mullioned window of Lindaraja of the Alhambra in Granada. The learned Arabist who glosses it, after warning us that the Nasrid walls speak to us from "the interiorized cosmology of the pronoun I", suggests how this poetry is capable of "filling with magical intimacy and cordial content" the Architecture that sustains it.

Well, just like that, like "a fresh eye", is the accurate piece of Architecture that the architect Juan Domingo Santos has created in the center of the Garden of the Reales Alcazares of Seville, as the culmination of the exhibition that he has made there on "Music and Poetry to the south of Al-Andalus". Perhaps the most interesting of all those that make up "The Andalusian Legacy" that are taking place in various Andalusian cities in the summer of 1995.

It could be said that, in the mime of this piece, the silence, the quiet music, is the epigraphic poetry that speaks of the serene beauty of the Architecture that is offered here.

The piece is composed of two impossible glasses of 2.52 m high by 6 m long. They are simply suspended in the ground, looking to our eyes as if they were suspended in the air.

Translucent to such a degree that in the mysterious game they establish with the light, they sometimes appear half transparent, allowing us to see the nature of the other side in a veiled way. As if it were a fine Hisram fabric.

Opaque at other times they would be thought to be imbued with the white silver of the light that passes through them. So in them "sings the light wounded by the ice" as Federico wrote.

Polished like mirrors, they become capable of reflecting the surrounding nature and capturing it as if it were an architectural window.

The dimension, placement and degree of translucency of these magical glasses are so agreed upon that it is not clear whether what our eyes see is what is reflected or what is transparent, or whether we are in front of or behind the contemplated nature. This produces that loss of the notion of time, that suspension of time, so typical of the best architecture. Made here with almost nothing.

And if the space of classical architecture, closed, moves to the rhythm of the sunlight that tensions it, this space of modern architecture, open, Miesian, moves to the rhythm of the light that soaks it. This is more than mere minimalism. What in Richard Serra is still sculpture, here, closer to Donald Judd, is already resoundingly Architecture. This is an operation of essential architecture where the architect, accurately, uses only the

precise number of elements to make clear what he wants to achieve: to catch the Beauty, in this case reflected in his Architecture.

The exhibition that is crowned with this piece is about Poetry and Music. The architect, who has also designed the materialization of the sound and the word, makes us listen, when we get to the garden, poems in Arabic language that progressively merge with the same, recited in Spanish, leaving only the language of Berceo at the end.

Thus, in this same sense, I would like to understand this splendid small work of contemporary architecture. After crossing the Arabic architecture of the Reales Alcázares and arriving at the Garden of Paradise of myrtles and orange trees, cypresses and palm trees, the crystalline piece that first merges with them, ends up emerging powerful, showing us once again the moving force of contemporary architecture. It speaks to us clearly that Architecture is still possible. The architecture of a splendid Architect.