

SETTING A GEMSTONE

About Ignacio Mendaro Corsini's Municipal Archives in Toledo

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"To express the inexpressible, the rest is only language". This is how well the poet Jaime Siles describes what Literature is. So also the Architecture of this Municipal Archive of Toledo, built by Ignacio Mendaro, is capable of expressing the ineffable.

A building that not only has the quality of having known how to wisely read the city of Toledo and its history, but also has the unusual quality of moving us.

There are brilliant works of architecture, spectacular, that are capable of filling the most cutting-edge magazines and the heads of the most restless students, which is not a bad virtue.

There are other works that are more logical and that also touch our head in a different way, from reason.

And there are other works that, in addition to touching our head, also call to our heart. They are works that, besides being impeccable from a purely rational analysis. And they have the ability to go beyond that level and express, following the words of the poet, the inexpressible, and touch us.

If we analyze the building of the Municipal Archives of Toledo from the usual points of view, it is impeccable. The clarity of its structure, the perfect resolution of the functions, the clear order of its circulations, the careful study of light and shadow.

But I would like to emphasize here what I believe to be the most accurate. Its suitability to the place. His deep understanding of the role of new architecture in the historic city. How, in the face of the conservative response of pastiche, architecture demonstrates that it is alive and capable of responding with a strong voice, giving reason to the time in which it arises.

There is something of a goldsmith in the work of Ignacio Mendaro setting a new precious stone in the historical jewel that is Toledo, one of the most beautiful cities in the world.

The lessons of Aldo Rossi in his Architecture of the City sifted by the teaching of Julio Cano Lasso, as is evident in the beautiful drawings of the project, are there well learned and made reality (how much the common master would have enjoyed walking through those bright spaces!) How could we not understand perfectly after this work that of the "recuccitura della città"? And the fact is that this work is very pedagogical. Even if some have not been able nor wanted to see it.

When Bernini went to Paris to see about building the Louvre, he designed something "so modern" that it aroused the opposition of the courtiers, who managed to get him to return to Rome. That was lost in Paris. And it was Mansart, the brother of the king's pharmacist, who built the new building. And history keeps repeating the same mistakes.

Ignacio Mendaro, against the wind and tide, which were unleashed at the time, has managed to bring the project to a successful conclusion and has built an exemplary and beautiful piece. And he does not hesitate to write generously that "all that enriched the citizen debate and invited to reflect on the always difficult issue of intervention in historic environments".

He was finally awarded the Castilla-La Mancha Architecture Prize.

Ignacio Mendaro is a first-rate architect voluntarily removed from the din of the battles that take place in the architecture of printed paper. He is silent, calm, far from the useless noise. He has not yet succeeded, nor is he trying to, in tearing out the Machadian thorn of the passion for Architecture in which he continues to put all his heart. And so he continues to build works such as this Municipal Archive of Toledo, which is capable of moving us and which seems to follow Machado's precept to the letter: "Despacito y buena letra, el hacer las cosas bien importa más que el hacerlas" (Slowly and well written, doing things well is more important than doing them). And as God lives, he does them very well.