

A HOUSE WITH CORNERS OF AIR

The Domus Damero by Jesús Donaire

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Almost 100 years ago, Mies Van der Rohe proposed a house with no corners, the Fifty Foot by Fifty Foot House built in 1950, which was an ode to Beauty. It was possible to build a house with no corners! Where was the emphasis on the cornerstone? No wonder the evangelist said that the “cornerstone” was the stone that the architects discarded. Curiously enough, after Mies I have never seen another house without corners.

Now, however, after all these years, Jesús Donaire has dared to design a house without corners, with corners of air, and to build it, creating a very beautiful piece of architecture. And while Mies' house was supported on four pillars, in an ode to lightness, Donaire's house starts from four white concrete walls, in a sublime ode to beauty.

I must admit that the first images I saw of this house were striking, incredibly beautiful. A white concrete box without corners, full of air and light, constructed with frugal wisdom, as a poet might say. In terms of composition, echoes of Palladio resound, interpreted here with enormous freedom and a great sense of proportion. A square divided into squares by the hand of symmetry, just like Palladio. And on the facade, a checkerboard, as its author likes to call it.

In his *Protrepticus* Aristoteles tells us that "satiety creates insolence and, ignorance with power, folly". In this house, Jesús Donaire opts for Miesian frugality and profound culture. That is how well it has turned out. Of course, before his Domus Damero in Majadahonda, Jesús Donaire had built other wonderful houses, such as the one between old mud-walls that merits a separate ad hoc text.

Jesús Donaire currently works as a professor of architecture in Madrid and Milan, and is acknowledged by students as one of their favorite teachers.