

January 24, 2017
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There are no words by which to adequately express my appreciation of the honour which the School of Madrid (ETSAM) has bestowed upon me on this occasion. Somehow my elliptical career as a teacher and a writer has been inextricably interwoven with the recent evolution of modern architecture in Spain, and I feel now, at the fortuitousness of this moment, how I felt all those years ago when I first encountered, virtually by accident, Rafael Moneo's newly completed Bankinter in Madrid and or later when, out of our mutual affinity, Ignasi de Solà-Morales gave me a fragment of the original steel column that they had unearthed in the process of reconstructing the Mies pavilion of 1929 or, at an equally felicitous moment when Alejandro de la Sota asked me to come and visit him in his office for seemingly no other reason than to have a brief chat. It seems that I had then, as I still have again now, an ineluctable affinity for Spanish modern architecture and for the spirit of Spain.

I am struck at this particularly sobering moment in world affairs of the extraordinarily fertile achievement of the modern tradition in Spain, dating back now more than half-a-century to the earliest houses by Coderch and Sostres in Barcelona and to those equally pioneering works in Madrid such as Antonio Fernández Alba's El Rollo monastery and Francisco Javier Sáenz de Oiza's Torres Blancas which along with De la Sota's Gobierno Civil in Tarragona and Corrales and Molezún's Spanish Pavilion built for the Brussels Expo of 1958 first put Spain on the world map as far as the latterday Modern Movement was concerned. Since then, despite the dark side of the EU which in the name of a supposedly free market effectively destroyed the hitherto crucial cultural role played by the Spanish *colegio* system, Spanish architecture has displayed a discernible capacity to resist the all but universal slide into a spectacular aestheticism. In this regard, Spanish architecture has continued to exhibit a contextual culture of tectonic realism which, with the singular exception of Finland, remains unequalled in European architecture.

This is a spirit and a capacity which is still alive today as we may judge from the surprisingly refreshing tectonic and contextual work of Paredes Pedrosa consistently maintained over the past 25 years as this was recently published by Luis Fernández-Galiano in his magazine *AV*. This journal remains along

with *El Croquis*, among the very few magazines of quality and commitment left today, amid the seemingly unstoppable commodification of the architectural press. And here one must acknowledge, the crucial role played by Spanish magazines in the cultivation of architectural culture throughout the country, from Juan Fullaondo's *Nueva Forma*, first published in 1966, to all the various *colegio* publications and to other faculty journals of exceptional quality, *2C Ciudad* or *R* published, at quite different times, out of Barcelona and Pamplona.

Equally crucial surely has been the patronage of the provincial city in Spain over the last half century, a record which can hardly be equaled by any other European country. This returns us to Coderch's insistence on the importance of the intelligent client as well as an architect of quality in order to arrive at an architecture of distinction. So that now, in a dark moment of history, when Jürgen Habermas's unfinished modern project seems destined to remain more unfinished than ever, what Spanish architects have been able to demonstrate is an enduring potential of the profession to achieve sensitive one off works which, although of necessity strictly limited in scope are nonetheless of lashing socio-cultural benefit to the society at large.

I cannot conclude this brief homage to Spanish building culture without alluding to the significant contribution of Spain to theory and practice of urban design, and above all to the fields of landscape design and landscape urbanism, particularly as in the case of the seafront promenade recently completed in Benidorm to the designs of Carlos Ferrater and Xavier Martí or the L'Illa Block in Barcelona of 1992 designed by the late Manuel de Solà-Morales and Rafael Moneo, with this last exemplifying for me, at least, the catalytic stratagem of the megaform with which to counter the pathological placelessness of the universal megalopolis. This brings me in the random trajectory of this homage to acknowledge the exceptional professional career of Moneo who despite having long since been internationally acknowledged as a recipient of the much coveted Pritzker Prize has so far, to his great credit, never attained the dubious status of being universally recognized as a star architect.