

## Barragan frozen

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The Barragan house is frozen. Francisco Ugarte intervened one of the most significant spaces of Mexican architecture by wrapping every object inside it with aluminum foil. The residence of the architect that received the Pritzker price in 1980 has broken its introspection. It hid all its objects, its mementos, obsessions, furniture, books, photographs, paintings and spheres behind a thin metallic layer. Perhaps the effect sought by Ugarte with this installation conformed by 230 rolls of aluminum foil and open to the public until March 23, has an origin on those golden spheres that Luis Barragan obsessively installed on strategic points of his house. With this resource from the baroque, related to anamorphic games and deformations, Barragan allowed to intuitively understand the totality of a space disregarding the fact that he fragmented it by means of dividers, walls and doors. The complete reading of the ceiling's beam grid, universe and memory at the same time, which connects with his childhood's haciendas, has a deformed reflection on the metalized balls.

Now, the texture, the presence and the memory of all these codified objects, hide another effect under metallic reflections. At the living room, they are all square: the chimney's mouth, the oak table, the bookshelf, the Joseph Albers' squares' painting that is now metalized. The sofa's comfort, warm and absorbent, becomes rigid as the Wizard of Oz with his new-silvered outfit, and the lectern loaded with mementos and trivial photographs becomes a silver chalice. A vague memory of the Warholian Factory redounds on its differences: If Warhol's was pop and frivolous, Barragan's help to tense its morbidity.

On the other far side, the second living room with the library, from where access to the studio is gained through a staircase converted into an icon of Mexican architecture. Books are mere contours encrypting secret knowledge. The staircase, made of natural oak, painted white on its reverse side by Barragan provoke those ambivalent shades that made it the most light of modernity's famous staircases, is now a heavy and solid stainless steel, silver or lead ravine that shows its imperfections and unevenness that the texture absorbs from the wood.

The ritual extends throughout the whole house. It leaves evidence on the most trivial rooms, while at the same time forgets to intervene the most significant elements: the golden angel that gathers and disperses the zenithal light from a corner, still keeps its warm light and the golden painting by Mathias Mathias Goeritz sits untouched. This is odd. The spectator misses the chromatic transformation that Francisco Ugarte's alchemy might produce, where image cools down and space freezes. Perhaps he missed to intervene the "other" spaces of the Barragan house, appropriating some object that belongs to someone else by means of wrapping the roof's flooring or a rock from the garden with aluminum foil. Perhaps these absences accuse the presence of a discourse that lacks more density.

On any given case, the perceptive experience proposed by Ugarte transforms a known temple into another place, where intuition perceives the materials' textures, the presence of objects becomes recognized and the memories of the contents of images and books hidden under the metallic reflections become present. Moreover, the most

abstract virtues that a virtual walk or a real sized model might offer are seen in the coldness of these spaces tensed by the wrapping membrane. Far away from intimate connotations, the memories that impregnate all the objects in these architectural journey, melt all the vernacular and modern influences, from the routes on the first floor, the built-in staircase, the open space and the large window. From the L'Esprit Nouveau Pavilion to the Mazamitla hacienda. Yes; to a great degree, Barragan's legacy was to discover things that were already there, with the metamorphosis of "those things that were already there," proposed by Ugarte, the spectator recognizes the space of Barragan in its most pure form.