

## **Special Mention in the End-of-Degree Project Category**

### **Salam-Bir (A community centre for the mind and body)**

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On the shores of Buendía reservoir lie the remains of an old spa town called La Isabela. The only vestiges of this 19<sup>th</sup> century town, whose origins can be traced back to the Moorish period, are fragments of its vertical walls.

Salam-Bir occupies the spaces between the ruins, reviving the area's traditional use as a thermal spa. The project takes advantage of an existing spring's medicinal waters, using brick as a material at a structural, construction and formal level.

It aspires to offer an experience not found in everyday life, through a symbiosis between water, at the thermal spa, and craftwork activities at workshops, where the value of the area's traditional trades is promoted, such as wickerwork making.

The architecture of the different spaces is made up of brick domes, inspired by local ice stores. These pits, which were used to store snow, consist of stone retaining walls crowned by a conical dome whose base starts at ground level. The outcome of their reinterpretation is architecture semi-buried in the ground. Its visible round domes modify the landscape, contrasting with the orthogonal geometry of the ruins and breathing new life into this historical site in La Alcarria.

Because ceramic materials are mainly used in this project, building systems that work through compression were needed, and so all the spaces are made up of vaults and domes. Hence, ceramic materials feature in all parts of the project—structurally and for the walls and roofs—, and they play a prime role in architecture with the emphasis on space and light, intended to spark off reflection among visitors.

The domes are built using a series of offset courses of bricks, arranged so that they can be built without formwork. What is more, through a combination of different brickwork patterns on the inside, a "mosaic" is created that showcases all the potential that this material offers. The walls of the lower section of the dome combine load-bearing walls with brick latticework for the light to filter through to the remaining sections.

Salam-Bir, named after the original Arab baths, emphasizes the importance of La Isabela's landscape, history, architecture and geometry through a project where ceramic materials play a star role.