

Special Mention in the Architecture Category

Una pérgola abierta a la Huerta (A Pergola Overlooking the Orchard) (Sot de Ferrer, Castellón)

Bona fide taller (Alejandro Martínez del Río)

Photography: Oleh Kardash Horlay

REPORT – Una pérgola abierta a la huerta (A Pergola Overlooking the Orchard)

Place and reason

The western boundary of the municipality of Sot de Ferrer is formed by the principal irrigation channel that supplies its network of washing places. Between the channel and the course of the River Palancia, which flows upriver, we find fields of loquat and citrus fruit trees.

However, the town does not look out over the countryside: a run-down street façade forms a blind spot. The project, which came about as a result of the CRU competition for urban regeneration using ceramic tiles, seeks to breathe new life into the setting through the use of ceramic tiles and to valorise rural life.

Intervention and recovery

The project aims to regenerate the area surrounding the Inchidor washing place, which conserves its basin and part of the original wall and pilasters that bordered the original volume. The path down to the washing place from a viewpoint has been adapted in order to resolve the street perspective, bringing the orchard and its backdrop closer.

A Mediterranean space: the square facing the irrigation channel

The wall retains the incline and creates a space for the square. It runs alongside the channel, enabling passers-by to sit on its edge and dip their feet into the cooling water.

The entire site is covered by the vaulted pergola, providing a meeting place for locals under the shade of the creeping vine, which will gradually cover the structure.

Ordinance and detail

Every aspect of the project has been meticulously planned and designed. From the curved metallic joists, whose ends have been worked in a manner reminiscent of the wooden beams of traditional eaves, to each of the specifically-adapted gaps that filter the light to the space, or the furniture constructed in-situ and even the folded sheet metal litter bins. The pattern of the

ceramic tiles has been carefully studied in order to adapt to the particular features of each space included in the project.

Materials

The range of materials is limited to a minimal expression, and is fully in keeping with the colours of the surrounding area: together with the inclusion of austere elements and uncomplicated gestures, the result blends in perfectly with the background. However, this does not prevent the work from featuring myriad encounters, textures and elements that make for an enriching experience that reflects meticulous attention to detail.

A focal feature are the ceramic tiles chosen for the flooring: a natural extruded stoneware tile with a high iron content that produces delightful violet tones that are the perfect match for the shades of the local Rodeno stone. The elongated tile measuring 32.5 x 12.5 cm makes for an elaborate layout. Indeed, the layout of these tiles is one of the project's focal points, transmitting the character of the space as we move through it.

The washing place roof, one of the key elements of this intervention, has been resolved with the use of slim format ceramic tiles measuring 6.5 x 24.5 cm. The choice of this product is due to its wealth of features, that naturally shape a stunning and shifting palette of colours and textures, blending in perfectly with tiles that cover the roofs of the village buildings and the colours of the stones that form the boundaries of the village and its fields.

Project development

This project has been carried out entirely by hand, from the initial ideas to the project execution and works management plans.

This work method was accompanied by a constant dialogue among all the agents that took part in the project. The result is a construction of excellent quality that has fed on the skill and expertise of all parties, in a process that has been fully inclusive and based on good human relationships.