

Special Mention in the Interior Design Category

Vivienda/Galería en la Gran Vía de Granada (Home/Gallery on Granada's Gran Vía) (Granada)

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Photography: Javier Callejas

REPORT – Vivienda/Galería en la Gran Vía de Granada (Home/Gallery on Granada's Gran Vía)

The origin and brief for this project was the transformation of a flat dating back to the 1920s, part of a building designed by the architect Francisco Prieto Moreno, into a short-stay residence for a couple whose permanent homes are located in London and Singapore.

Despite its transformation, the interior conserves many of the original Modernist features and elements that defined the architecture of Granada's Gran Vía: elaborate carpentry, ceiling mouldings, considerable heights and mosaic floors. Right from the start, the intention was to create a project that complied with the need to conserve the building's typical features and elements whilst adapting the interior to a particular lifestyle, completely removed from the traditional room layouts that prevailed in the early 20th century.

Work was already underway when a new requirement appeared, considerably affecting considerations of space and material. The building was to house an art collection that the developers wished to bring to Spain, whilst a customised space was being constructed.

We were therefore faced with the need to resolve two challenges. The first responded to the need to find locations for the service and wet areas that would not divide the large spaces the exhibition needed. Yet at the same time, these private spaces must also be suitable for when the flat recovered its function as a home, albeit without compromising the pre-existing elements we considered to be of value, or preventing the appreciation of their original nature.

The premise was that the new service area volumes were not to impede the understanding or appreciation of the space, which is at once historical and intended for exhibition purposes. It was therefore decided that the new volumes should not affect the ceilings, leaving the traces of the original divisions and emphasising the notion of a container, not only for art but also for history (and stories). The appearance of these volumes was not to compete with the outstanding craftsmanship of the home's original mosaic, of major value due to its rarity in Granada.

The second challenge stemmed from the gradual disappearance over the years of large sections of the original flooring, which had been replaced with alternatives that were less attractive or of a poorer quality.

We resolved to tackle both challenges from the same premise, considering them as a whole, in order to develop a single tool in order to achieve a result that was both legible and coherent. In this sense, the sections of original mosaic flooring were restored, and in those areas where it had been lost, we were faced with the question of what to replace it with.

After considering possible options, work began on the large-scale production of ceramic mosaic tiles, using a traditional technique applied on an industrial scale. New moulds were produced (using the measurements of the original mosaics) and later retractions were calculated, using spray-dried powders with the stains and pigments that were in use in the early 20th century (a fairly limited range). This new production capacity was used to restore the areas that had been lost, but in large monochromatic areas, providing a material solution, not only for the lost flooring, but also for the new service rooms in general.

The material is historic, but its use is contemporary, applied in a way that composes a new and complete volumetry. The result is a series of spaces where two different forms of dwelling meet, reflecting a hundred years of history and our proposal intended as a space for living and exhibiting.