



A Maturing Voice

One of the most courageous voices of Mexico —which will undoubtedly last as long as the classics— is the voice recorded by Augusto H. Álvarez in his buildings. He had the ability to communicate the emotions that Aeschylus, the *Popol Vuh*, Shakespeare, Orson Wells, John Lennon, Goya and so many other classics have left us. Being a classic in architecture is being able to throw the user of a construction into the abyss of creation to deposit him, unharmed, in an unknown paradise.

Silent and discrete, almost timid, the voice of this architect is, however, stronger and more powerful than the clamor of all today's self-advertisers in this field.

Just like with birds, any stridency chases away classicism from a space. Augusto (as he was frequently called to combine his name with the adjective denoting respect and veneration due to how imposing and majestic his work was)¹ was never strident, either in his behavior or his work. It is clear that the elimination of stridency in his work is another factor in Álvarez's classicism.

When a certain kind of rigorousness also possesses propriety and precision, intentionality and vehemence, it does not exclude pleasure. This is the kind of rigorousness that Augusto H. Álvarez employs in his spaces, through modular geometry, in honor of apotheosis, to the benefit both of users and observers of his buildings.

Without the voice of this architect, transformed into inhabitable space, Mexico would not be what it is; it would not have seen its territory covered with constructive rationality melded with beauty that this artist spread through his work and the teaching of generations of students. In his work and thought, reason has been witness to the efficiency of the emotions.

The National University of Mexico has collected the oral history of Mexico's great creators in the very valuable collection *Voz Viva de México* (The Live Voice of Mexico). The live voice of Augusto H. Álvarez, heard in his architecture, does not need to be preserved aurally: it is preserved in the cement, steel, glass and wood which delimit the space he created, as well as in the values of his disciples.

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¹ "Augusto" in Spanish is not only a name, but the adjective "august," meaning "inspiring reverence." [Translator's Note.]