

Luis Barragán



Luis Barragán – A Master of light and color

(March 9, 1902 – November 22, 1988)

He was born in Guadalajara in **Mexico**. Educated as an engineer, he graduated from the Escuela Libre de Ingenieros in Guadalajara in 1923. After graduation, he travelled through **Spain and France**.

While in France he became aware of the writings of Ferdinand Bac, a German-French writer, designer and artist who Barragán cited throughout his life. In 1931, he again traveled to France with a long stop-over in New York. In this trip he met Mexican mural painter Jose Clemente Orozco, architectural magazine editors, and Frederick Kiesler. In France he briefly met **Le Corbusier** and finally visited the gardens realized by Ferdinand Bac. He practiced architecture in Guadalajara from 1927–1936, and in Mexico City thereafter.



Barragán attended lectures by **Le Corbusier**, and became influenced by **European modernism**. The buildings he produced in the years after his return to Mexico show the typical, clean lines of the **Modernist** movement. Nonetheless, according to Andrés Casillas (who worked with Barragán), he eventually became entirely convinced that the house should not be "a machine for living." Opposed to functionalism, Barragán strove for an "**emotional architecture**" claiming that "**any work of architecture which does not express serenity is a mistake.**" Barragán always used raw materials such as stone or wood. He combined them with his incredibly **creative use of light**.

In 1980, he became the second winner of the **Pritzker Architecture Prize**. Until now, he is still the only one who got the prize in Central America. The work of Luis Barragán is often (and misleadingly) quoted in reference to **Minimalist** architecture. Most architects who do minimalistic architecture do not use color, but the ideas of forms and spaces which Barragán pioneered are still there. Barragán's influence can also be seen in the work of many of Mexico's contemporary architects, such as Ricardo Legorreta.



'I think that the ideal space must contain elements of magic, serenity, sorcery and mystery.'

'It is essential to an architect to know how to see: I mean to see in such a way that the vision is not overpowered by rational analysis.'

'Architecture is a art when one consciously or unconsciously creates aesthetic emotion in the atmosphere and when this environment produces well being.'

-Luis Barragán



Casa Gilardi



In the streets of Mexico City, in a narrow elongated area of 10x36 meters, three walls and a mediator to the front line municipal, Barragán, its 80 years of age and after almost 10 years of inactivity, makes its last work, perhaps the most paradigmatic of all.

The house is located within the Federal District of Mexico City. Barragán accepted the job two conditions attracted by the project: the huge Jacaranda tree that should be kept in the sun and pool requested by the owner as part of the program.



The universal message of Luis Barragán capital has answers because, as he said: "... the man has always sought to protect themselves from anxiety and fear. He tried to promote living spaces in your mind the serenity ..." since, as also found by others to explain how generous: "... we have worked [...] in the hope that our work [...] cooperate in the great task of dignifying human life by trails of beauty and help to build a dam against the waves of dehumanization and vulgarity. If, at our work together in achieving some of these concepts do not succeed in solving the problems of man, at least cooperate to make your life fuller, more beautiful and more bearable and help to avoid the despair ... "

Reflected in his works around the baggage of modern concepts and also the dialogue with the environment is fantastic. The colors, textures, compositional elements are a product of Mexican culture.



With respect to the use of colors in an interview said that: "In my work as architect, the colors and the lights have always been one of fundamental importance. Both are basic elements in creating an architectural space, as they may vary conceptions of it."

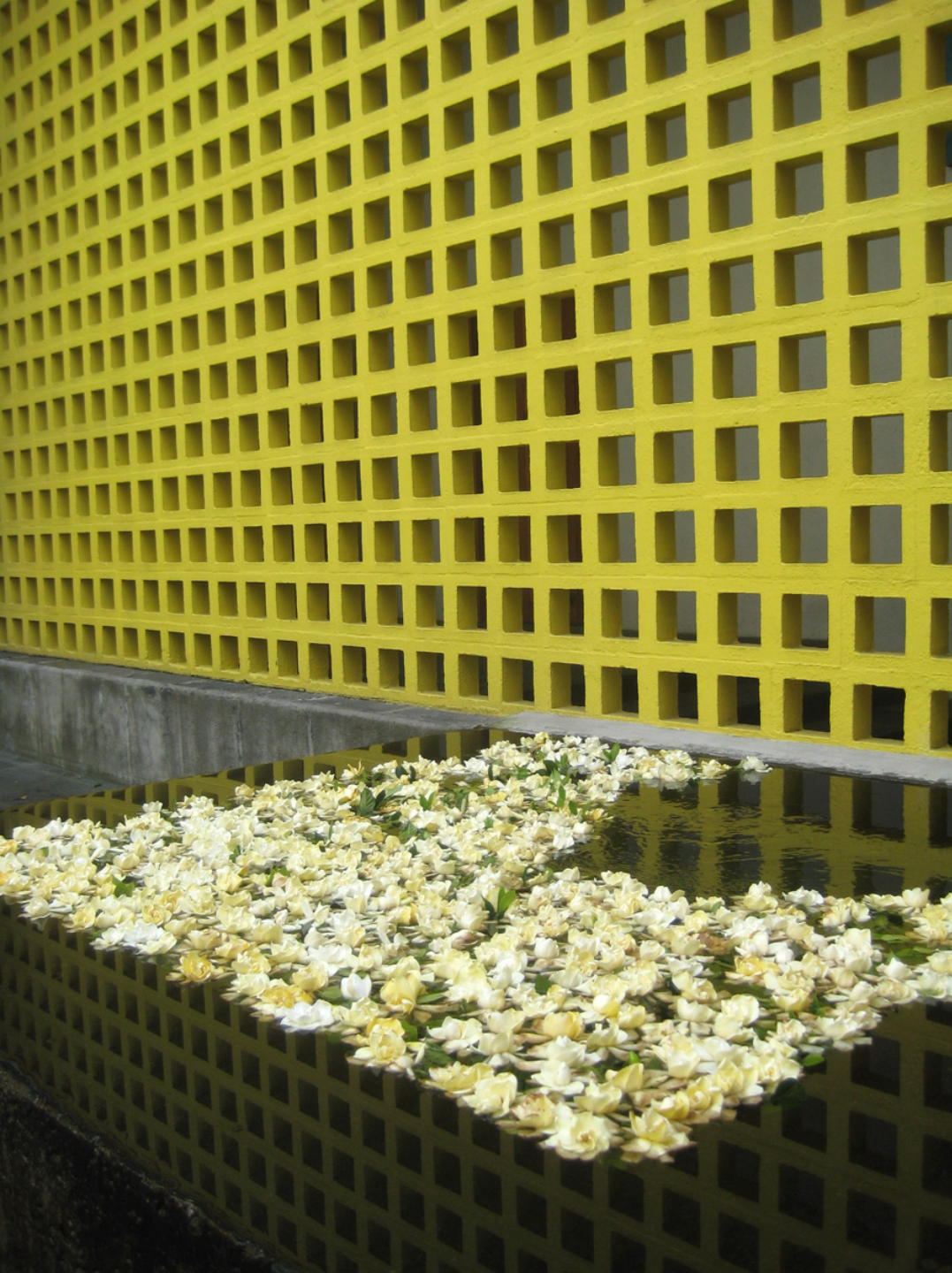
In this work, colors play an important role. The patio is purple color, very vibrant. The broker prepares the journey through the house to reach a very important area: the dining room with a pool deck. Suddenly, the pond comes a pink wall that cuts off the water and almost reaches the ceiling. The wall gives way to space, he does magic, creates some tension. From the roof a linternilla light bathes the wall, and emphasizes their role.



The provision in plant gradually discovers cracks through filters light and silence. A world of sensations: single entry, the hallway is broad, stairs without railings and is levitated by the effect of daylight, we have an exciting runner invaded the soft yellow light that is filtered by a series of vertical openings with glasses onix color, at the end of which a door leads to an austere space that contains only a small stretch of water, a rustic dining table, chairs and a sideboard, while a disturbing red wall and skylight bathes the subject pool the rest is all light. This pool-dining-being, the center of the house, becomes a magical area where the soil is broken into a silent passage between the solid and liquid, because the dining-be installed along the water, and pink wall, which plunges into it, it vibrates with the geometries produced by the changing daylight that is transforming the area throughout the day.

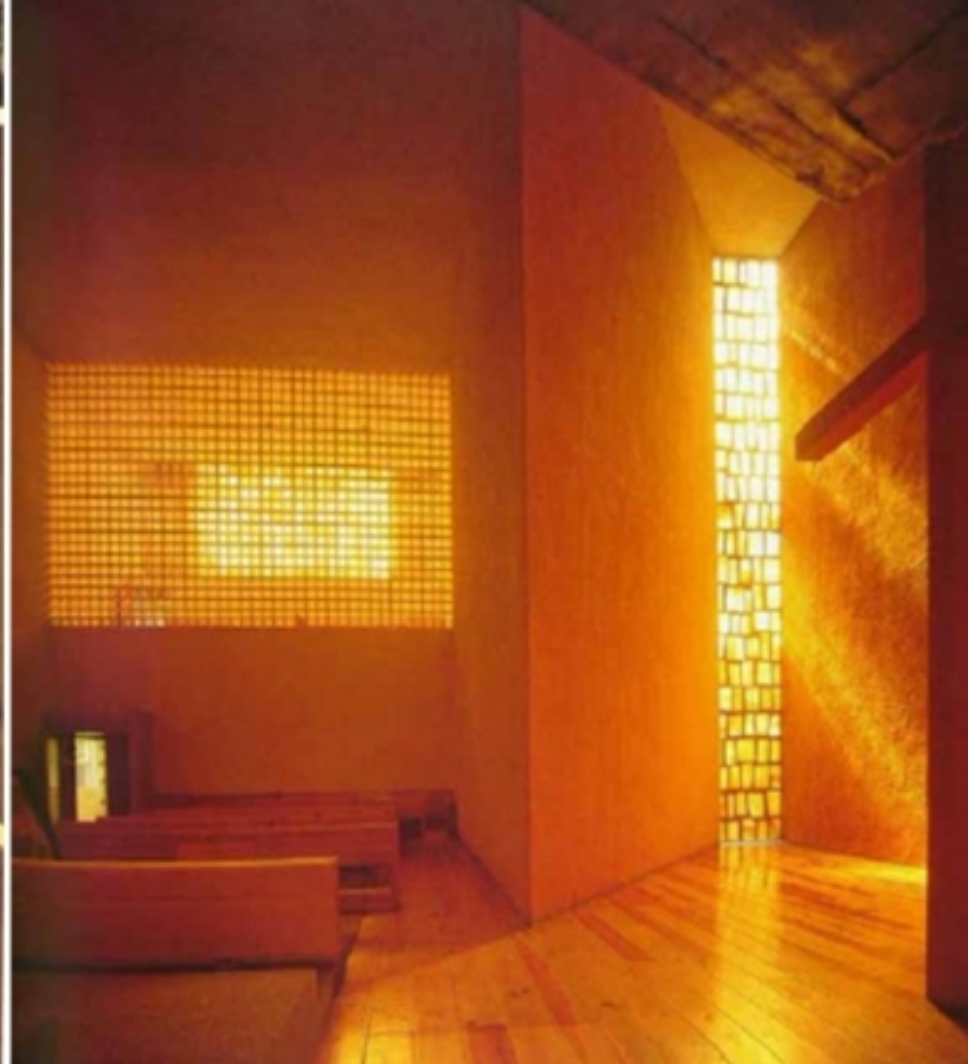


Chapel of the Capuchinas



"...the words beauty, inspiration, enchantment, magic, sorcery, charm and also serenity, silence, intimacy and amazement have disappeared at an alarming rate in publications devoted to architecture. All of them have found a loving welcome in my soul, and even if I am far from claiming to have made them complete justice in my work, they have never ceased to be my beacon."

Luis Barragan,
acceptance speech for the Pritzker Prize



The convent and chapel is designed in a minimalist fashion, with its clean parallel lines and natural raw materials echoing the simple convent lifestyle. Rather than using pure minimalism, however, Barragán utilised light to create an 'emotional space', offsetting the austerity of the structure with beautiful glazing that turned the light entering the chapel into shades of sunshine yellow, caramel and rose red. Elsewhere, latticework allows light to stream through from the outdoor courtyard whilst decorating walls with shadow play and acting as a veil to allow an element of privacy. The result is a simple space where the warm lighting evokes colours of the earth, linking the manmade structure back to nature.



Casa Luis Barragan







Barragan discovers a poetry in architecture, straying from the standard and conventional line and creating a unique style that distinguishes who he is as a person and architect. He fuses his personal experiences, dreams and memories into a physical experience that is shared throughout cultures and ages.