

Special mention in the interior design category

Casa Nube (Madrid)

Studio Animal

Photos by José Hevia

DESCRIPTION OF CASA NUBE

Casa Nube (Cloud House) is a refurbishment project to a home in Colonia Niño Jesús, next to Madrid's Retiro park. The original layout had certain characteristics typical of homes of the period: several small rooms, a service area connected to a kitchen isolated from the rest of the home, small bathrooms, and narrow corridors. In short, it was a highly compartmentalized medium-sized home.

The main aim of the project was to create a luminous space, taking maximum advantage of the surface area of the property and its potential light and climatic conditions. Another goal was to create private areas very different from our client's communal living space.

For this purpose, a decision was taken to do away with all the corridors. A big area for all the home's communal activities was envisaged, housing the living and dining areas, the kitchen, reading area etc. in one single white luminous space.

This space would allow for cross ventilation, while also taking advantage of the natural light that entered through the windows in the façade and from the communal courtyard, substantially improving comfort levels. Next to this communal area is the private section, made up of two symmetrical twin bedrooms, one alongside the main façade and the other beside the inner courtyard. In contrast with the neutral white communal area, each of the bedrooms was decorated throughout in a colour chosen by its users.

A long narrow buffer area acted as a filter between the communal facilities and the private ones. This contained the home's wet areas. To reach the communal part of the home from its private rooms, this wet 'cloud' must be passed through in a kind of ritual. The inhabitants wake up in the morning in the privacy of their bedrooms, enter the cloud to spruce themselves up and get ready for the day ahead, before emerging into the home's communal areas.

This 'cloud' is raised above the level of the rest of the home's floors so that it can house the drainage system to the main down pipe and also to emphasize the transition from the luminous white 3-metre high communal space to the more secluded coloured private area. Two big curved doors lead into these rooms. All the inner surfaces of this 'buffer area' are clad in 2.5x2.5cm glass mosaic tiles to form a single skin. The tiles on the curved walls

were supplied on a mesh backing, and the ones on the floor were hand laid, tile by tile, aligned with the curve of the wall at its base to form concentric circles.