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Women's Fashion  
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# THE FUTURE IS BACK

Fashion for  
a grand  
re-entrance



Castellanos Lambley, Rafael Urzúa Arias and Luis Barragán Morfín — graduated from the city's Escuela Libre de Ingenieros (Free School of Engineers). Then a primarily conservative, Catholic town of merchants, tradespeople and regional bureaucrats, Guadalajara had, since its founding in the 16th century, largely eschewed the excesses of wealthier cities. Even the handful of grand neo-Classical monuments erected throughout the 19th century that dominate its historic center seem out of scale with the modest, low-slung urban landscape that surrounds them. In order to create a local architectural paradigm, the four founders of the so-called Tapatio School ("Tapatio" is the Mexican term for people from Guadalajara) had to excavate a history that the city itself didn't seem to possess.

Looking to the haciendas and convents of the surrounding countryside for inspiration, they covered walls with thick layers of plaster and organized their interiors around cloistral gardens. As architecture in Guadalajara started to look more modern in the 1950s and '60s — the forms reduced to abstract cubes; banks of windows shielded by brise-soleils — the heirs of the Tapatio School often used inscrutable facades to conceal winding passageways and quiet corners for contemplation: buildings that appealed to both a growing city and its pious population. As the 44-year-old architect Alejandro Guerrero, one of the city's most prominent contemporary practitioners, told me, "even Modernism in Guadalajara was never completely modern."

specialize in ceramics or blown glass and family workshops where artisans produce earthenware pottery using centuries-old methods. The inheritors of the Tapatio School, now entering its fifth generation, seem to use memory as a raw material, treating atmosphere and experience as no less essential than form and structure. Though less religious than their predecessors, they still gesture toward the sublime with every turn of the corner and encourage introspection with each blind facade. If many contemporary buildings wield technology as a blunt force, urging our attention toward the future, these take a more studious approach to progress, offering places to retreat, question and think. Invested less in novelty than the gradual evolution of a shared philosophy, Guadalajara's architects, whether building with brick, stucco or steel, continue to "recreate and renew nostalgia," as Barragán once exhorted, "making it contemporary."

Barragán was 24 in 1925 when he traveled to Paris to attend the International Exhibition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts. He returned to Guadalajara raving not about the vanguards emerging in Europe's architectural scene but instead about a pair of books published that year — "Jardins Enchantés" and "Les Colombières" — by the French landscape architect Ferdinand Bac. Organized around fountains, pergolas and perfectly framed vistas, Bac's romantic gardens were, as he wrote, "places of repose [and] peaceable pleasure." According to the 64-year-old scholar of Tapatio architecture Juan Palomar, those books "represented a synthesis of the Mediterranean — of the European coast and North Africa — that reminded Barragán of his own local architecture." The open terraces of the Côte d'Azur, the shaded medinas of Morocco, the dark passages of the Alhambra opening onto reflecting pools: All had analogues in the haciendas of Barragán's childhood, the whitewashed adobe houses of rural Jalisco and the drama of the region's Augustinian convents.

For the next decade, while many architects in Mexico City preferred the sharp-edged geometry of early Modernism, Barragán and his cohort filled Guadalajara's new neighborhoods with Mediterranean villas and Bac-inspired gardens embellished with flourishes of chrome or terrazzo. Their focus, Palomar says, "was an architecture that could attend more closely to the times without breaking with tradition." The best example might be 1937's Casa Aranguren, designed by Castellanos and recently renovated into three offices by the architects Francisco Gutierrez, 44, and Luis Aldrete, 50. Castellanos covered the facade with sensible stucco, now painted roan, turning what Gutierrez describes as his "flirtations with modernity" — an Art Deco frieze, a pair of Bauhaus-inflected windows — inward toward the gardens, as if to protect the neighbors' conservative sensibilities.

Gutierrez and Aldrete's renovation is fittingly discreet. Burbling water, audible as you make your way through the 10,900-square-foot plot, guides you through a procession of bone-white rooms, in which Aldrete and Gutierrez have etched delicate lines into the plaster: phantoms of now-sealed doors. As you arrive in

Guadalajara, Mexico, has grown the epicenter, a legacy of design a century ago with Luis Barragán a new spirit of contemplative, inspired residential architecture.

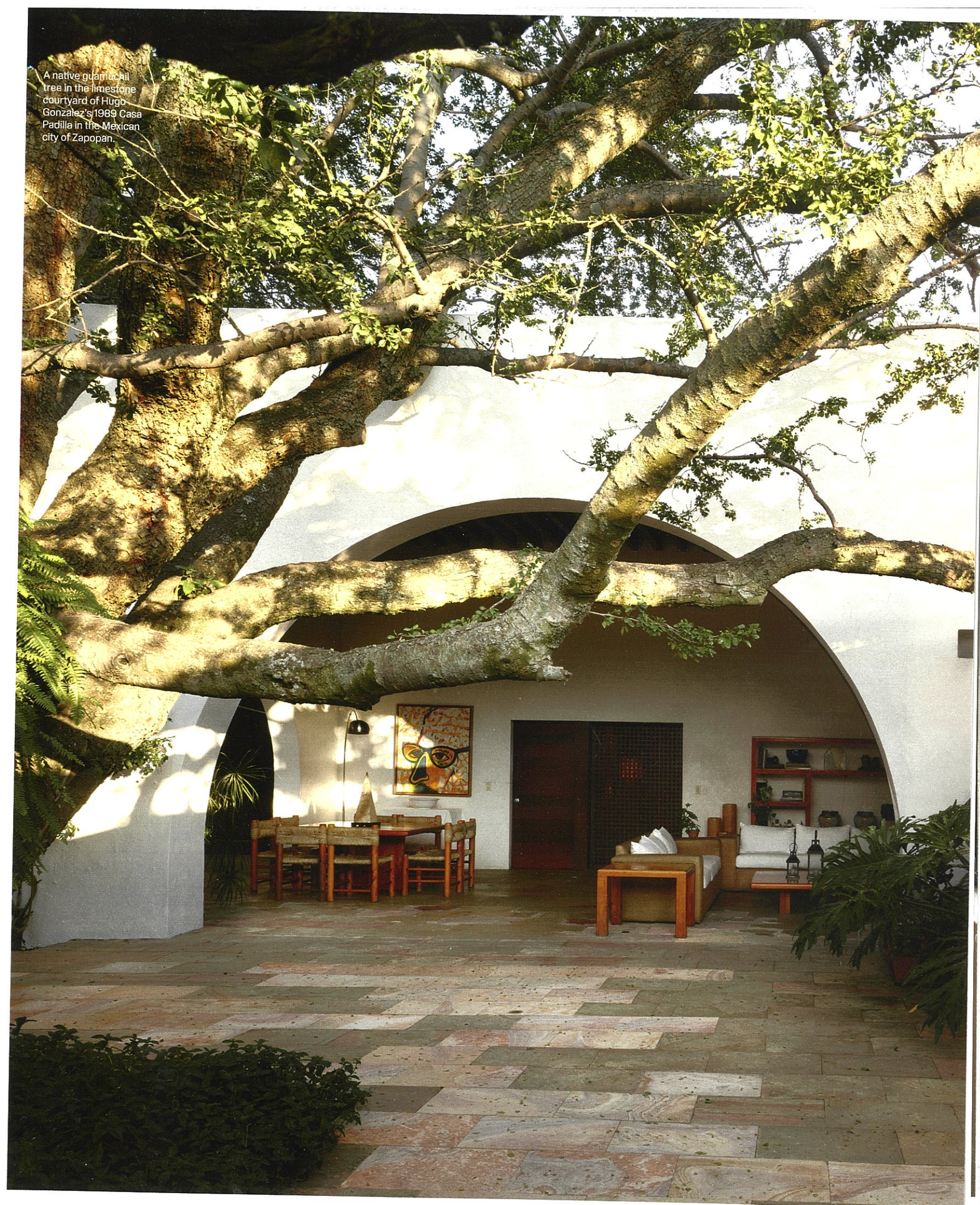
# SACRED SPACES

By Michael Snyder  
Photographs by  
Anthony Cotsifas

Today, Guadalajara is home to more than five million people, the second largest city in Mexico and increasingly a destination for artists and designers who are drawn to its mixture of craft and industry: Cement plants abut small factories that

Aldrete's studio, which occupies 1,615 square feet on the ground floor, a tiered limestone fountain finally reveals itself through a half-moon arch. In a second patio out back, Gutierrez and Aldrete covered an open-air catwalk connecting the main house to the former servants' quarters with a rigid hood of glass and painted steel. Inside, a rounded threshold marks the point where they broke through the roof to open a staircase between the second and third floors. When the sun slips behind clouds, its light diffuses through a ribbon window in the

A native guariuchil tree in the limestone courtyard of Hugo Gonzalez's 1989 Casa Padilla in the Mexican city of Zapopan.







hallway's eastern wall, and the simple geometries of doorjambs and stairwells flatten to two dimensions, an arrangement of nested shapes that resembles the German-born American artist Josef Albers's late 1950s square paintings (themselves thought to be influenced by studies of Mexico's pre-Hispanic architecture). But when the pounding Jalisco sun bursts back through, a skylight concealed behind the arched threshold floods the stairs with light, resurrecting them from the shadows.

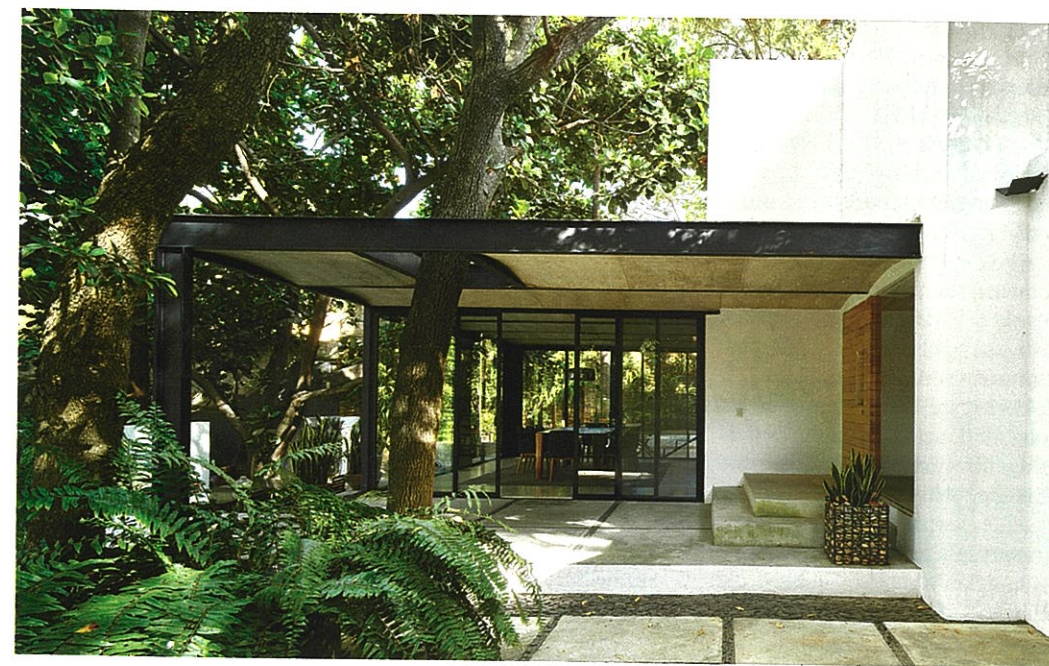
The year before Castellanos built Casa Aranguren represented "a caesura" in the development of the Tapatio School, says Palomar. In 1936, Barragán left Guadalajara for Mexico City, where he spent the following four decades honing his mature voice, reducing the mannered ornamentation of his early houses first to a crude functionalism and, eventually, into the bold colors and abstract volumes he's most associated with today. Two years later, Castellanos took his vows as a Franciscan monk and spent the remainder of his career focused on increasingly contemporary churches around Guadalajara. In the years that followed, one of their peers, Díaz Morales, plowed new thoroughfares through the city's old quarters and bulldozed several blocks to build the Cruz de Plazas, a cruciform sequence of public squares around the cathedral: a crusade for modernity executed, in a typical Tapatio paradox, from the foot of the cross.

Díaz Morales's most significant accomplishment, however, was the founding of his hometown's first school of architecture at the University of Guadalajara in 1948. After traveling around Europe, he assembled an eclectic faculty for his program, among them the charismatic German-born artist Mathias Goeritz, who would die in Mexico City in 1990, and the Austrian architect Erich Coufal, now in his 90s and still living in Guadalajara. Instead of teaching architecture as merely an outgrowth of urbanism or engineering, Goeritz and Coufal focused on composition and craft. In Goeritz's 1953 Museo Experimental El Eco in Mexico City, angled walls distort perspective, offering the sensation of depth. In Coufal's Banco Industrial de Jalisco and Casa de las Artesanías, both completed in the mid-1960s, elaborate screens fashioned from cast concrete

transform staid Modernist boxes into floating artworks that are as richly textured as hand-knotted carpets.

Studying these ideas under Goeritz and Coufal and local luminaries like Salvador de Alba and Julio de la Peña, the first generation to graduate from the program developed their own strand of Modernism, one enriched with painterly composition and a focus on movement. At the eastern edge of Guadalajara's historic center, Alejandro Zohn's San Juan de Dios market complex, completed in 1959, appears as a three-story maze of exposed brick and concrete, its origami-like concrete roof raised on cement pilasters. The project bears as little resemblance to the work of Barragán and Castellanos as it does to the open hangars of Mexico City's midcentury markets. Instead, Zohn's creation unfurls as a series of narrow pathways, like a medieval souk, which open abruptly into soaring atriums; the materials may be utilitarian, but the sense of wonder they invoke is not.

By the 1980s, the work of many practitioners of the Tapatio School had stagnated, overwhelmed by "a kind of mystic, religious love of Barragán," says the 64-year-old architect Sergio Ortiz. Barragán had spent years in Mexico City cultivating his persona as a poet of light,



shadow and color, sidelining his early regionalist work. In 1986, two years before Barragán died, Ortiz joined the faculty of the Jesuit-run Western Institute of Technology and Higher Education, or ITESO, a university whose architectural school had espoused Díaz Morales's pedagogical tradition starting in the early 1970s. Frustrated by what he saw as a "dead and petrified" regionalism, Ortiz incorporated philosophy, poetry and contemporary art into a classic curriculum of architectural theory and practice.

Since then, Ortiz's own home, built in 1992 in the Colonia Seattle — a cobbled suburb popular with the city's intellectual elite — and his nearby studio, completed in 2008, have become lodestars for a new generation of Tapatio architects. The 3,660-square-foot house — a floating prism of flat-white surfaces punctured by square and semicircular windows — reads as a habitable abstraction. At his studio, Ortiz traded plaster for stacked fieldstone, a humble material from Jalisco's countryside, then cut a 6½-by-19-foot window into the facade, exaggerating the 1,292-square-foot building's verticality. Through the front door, nearly 10-foot-high ceilings striated with slender steel beams hover over volcanic stone floors the color of burned coals. What looks like a grain silo from the outside morphs into a kind of cocoon. The building isn't just reticent, it's deceptive — as irreverent as Ortiz himself — and not so much a challenge to the Modernist dogma of transparency as an affectionate joke at its expense.

The students who graduated from ITESO starting in the late 1990s — "a brilliant generation," Ortiz calls them — have turned the Tapatio School

outward once more, referencing a century of influences without becoming beholden to them. Notable among these architects is Alejandro Guerrero, who founded the firm Atelier Ars in 2006. For his wife, Andrea Soto, 33, who joined as a partner in 2011, Barragán is mostly notable for his use of boundaries to generate space. She and Guerrero took a similar approach with their 4,198-square-foot House With Seven Patios, a 2011 renovation of an unremarkable adobe ranchlike home from the 1980s, also in the Colonia Seattle. Maintaining what they could of the original 3,200-square-foot building, the architects added a glass-and-steel pavilion, which

extends into a lush subtropical garden. Alongside the structure, a staircase folded from a long sheet of steel rises steeply between a pair of white plaster walls barely three feet apart. The claustrophobic proportions force the eye upward to a point where the steps end in a window without glass, a void framing a patch of sky. The whole house is an act of bricolage, from the surrealist staircase to the adobe embankment dripping with ferns against the neighboring plot. "Modern architecture sheds elements to make something abstract," Guerrero says. But by incorporating such elements, "you're connecting yourself to a history."

Another pair of graduates from ITESO and Guerrero's rough contemporaries, Salvador Macías





Tradition still has its place here, of course, but so does the subtle irreverence that these contemporary architects have introduced. Consider, for instance, the Casa RC1, designed in 2018 for a family of five in the leafy suburb of Rancho Contento by the 35-year-old architect Saúl Figueroa. Community building guidelines require angled roofs with terra-cotta tiles, hollow gestures toward conventional forms that Figueroa both respects and subverts: By turning the slanting roof inward, he hides its surface from direct view and transforms the street-facing exterior of sand-colored stucco into a flat plane, like a cube sketched onto a piece of paper. Through a narrow patio, the main entrance opens into a cedar-paneled foyer fragrant with resinous wood, its far side a glass door that leads into the house's interior patio. Surrounded by greenery, the room resembles a transparent pergola, a space delineated by a garden rather than a garden bound by walls.

But neighborhoods like Rancho Contento are also symptomatic of the

issues that arise when a city is bursting at its seams. Guadalajara continues to expand outward in clusters of gated communities and fortified suburbs — yet another inheritance of Barragán, whose projects around Mexico City helped introduce the American-style suburb to his country. Developments like these sacrifice the sense of place that defines the best Tapatío architecture in favor of privacy and security, the new ideals of a country overwhelmed by violence and distrust. Previous generations of architects grew up in constant contact with the landmarks left by their ancestors; younger practitioners “grew up in a city made of walls,” says the 31-year-old Miguel Valverde Hernandez, who is a partner, with Daniel Villanueva Sandoval, 33, in the firm V Taller.

In their Entrelomas House, a 3,691-square-foot home built in 2020 for a young couple on a treeless suburban cul-de-sac, Valverde and Villanueva shielded the entryway from the street with a free-standing wall of stucco; in the mornings, a fragrant Chilean myrtle planted in the intervening space fills with birds, their songs audible in the two bedrooms upstairs. Terrarium-like gardens appear around every turn, inventing views out of nothing, offering opportunities for movement and discovery. On the ground floor, the entire back wall opens onto a garden, where philodendrons, elephant ears and fern trees shroud a dull concrete retaining wall, as if to erase it. “If there’s no atmosphere,” Valverde says, “you create it.”

All the gestures are smaller here, more compact, the possibilities constrained as they are throughout the growing city. To build something new in Guadalajara today requires not just recreating and renewing nostalgia, as Barragán suggested, but reconsidering what exactly it’s worth being nostalgic for. “We take on our heritage and it becomes a set of questions,” Peredo told me. “How do you take these ideas of poetics and domesticity to different scales? How do you make something so powerful with so little?” How, in other words, do you restore enchantment to everyday life? It’s nostalgia not as a guiding principle but as a question, a boundary that generates an idea, a point of departure — or, perhaps, a wall to one day overcome. ▀

PHOTO ON WALL: MANUEL ALVAREZ BRAVO, “EL ENSUEÑO” (“THE DAYDREAM”), 1931, PERMISSION COURTESY OF ARCHIVO MANUEL ALVAREZ BRAVO, A.C. AND ROSEGALLERY



In the entrance of the architect Sergio Ortiz's 2008 studio, rough plaster walls, steel windows, volcanic stone floors and cedar millwork. Opposite: a bright yellow wall, with philodendron and wedelia in the Casa Padilla courtyard.