

david zarzo



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spanish designer **francesc rifé**, founder and principal at francesc rifé studio, appeals to the rewards of timelessness, rationality and the rejection of trends in good spatial design

**How would you characterise innovative use of space in hospitality design?** In our studio, we work for spatial harmony and timelessness, and I believe that the best way to achieve this is through the correct integration of all the elements that participate in the design. A space free of superficiality and shrillness, yet at the same time deeply conceived, will always be a more comfortable space.

**In your opinion, what is the importance of space in this project typology, when compared to other elements, like use of materials, colour and light?** As simple as it sounds, I believe that space is the main protagonist in projects. For me, it is the true luxury. Our main objective is always to work towards giving visitors a good awareness of space, and then provoke a more intimate experience through materiality, light and colour.

**How do these different elements come together in your design for multi-purpose space Convent Carmen?** With the greatest respect for the original building, we tried to create very little noise through the design of a strictly minimalist structure. We wanted this structural element to function as a contemporary sculpture that gives personality to the space and provides technical solutions, as it hides all the electrical, lighting and audio-visual features. Through light, we highlighted the main elements of the church. The RGB colour light system allows you to experience space in a much more mystical and special way, so the dialogue between light and materiality is necessary and constant.

**What are the main considerations to be had in terms of space in hospitality design?** Order. I believe everything is achieved with it: warmth, harmony, proportion.

**What are the main challenges?** Nowadays, the biggest challenges are to make spaces as versatile as possible, so you have to design with various projects in mind at the same time.

**How would you describe bad spatial design?** It would be the one which is improvised or created solely according to fashions. More than ever, we must avoid any frivolous notion of design, reject trends in favour of space, and be deep yet rational.

**Throughout your career, what have been the main influences in terms of the use and organization of space?** More than any of my projects, it has been the DNA of Japanese architecture that has undoubtedly defined my career. There was a time when I often visited and worked in Japan. The sobriety and rationalism, with which I identify so much, have inspired me.

Perhaps the Caro Hotel project in Valencia (2012) is where I have left more record of these ideas. The walls form a series of historical elements that have been revealed over time: remains of an Almohad wall dating from the 12<sup>th</sup> century, or a mosaic from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC. The rigorous neutrality in our interior architecture was essential to achieve a good coexistence between these actors endowed with such history and emotion. The complexity of the project and its extensive execution over time led us to express reduction and simplification. Although this way of working may seem difficult to understand when the intention is to create something extraordinary, through this method of subtraction we have learned to sharpen our ingenuity.