

LINEAGE AND LEGACY

A certain Modernism in Cadaqués

Stephen Bates Fernando Villavecchia

Front Cover: View from Federico Correa's apartment terrace

Back cover:
Marta and Javier Villavecchia
with a friend in casa
Villavecchia's dining room

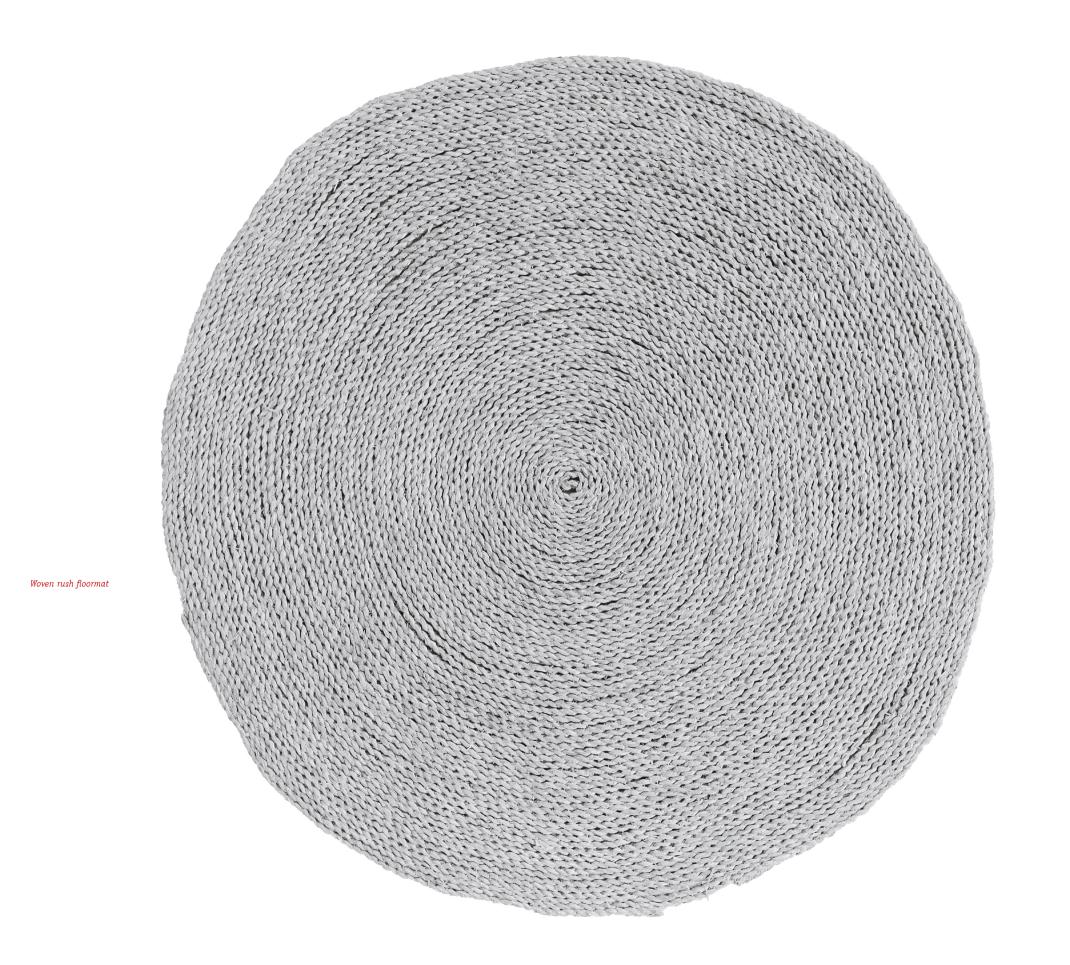


In memory of

Marta Obregón 1923 - 2019 and Javier Villavecchia 1921 - 2018

-

Federico Correa 1924 - 2020



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PREFACE

a. Stephen Bates, Eileen Liebman and Fernando

b. 2019

Villavecchia, Cadaqués,

This book explores a particular kind of architecture that thrived in Cadaqués in the 1950s through a number of holiday houses built in those years by a group of architects who shared bonds of friendship and architectural affinities, as well as connections with the international Modern Movement. It has been four years in the making, slowly emerging from leisurely conversations in Fernando and Eileen's studio in Barcelona, and in Cadaqués, over long lunches in kitchens and gardens, over drinks at Bar Maritim, along the mountain paths and stony beaches that surround the village, and drifting on Calima in the crystal waters of the coves beyond the bay.

Since we met in 1989 - Stephen an intern, Fernando an architect and teacher - we have both been drawn towards a domestic architecture of quiet comfort, refined simplicity and deep connection to place. A number of houses in Cadaqués seem to have achieved that elusive balance. And, as our dialogue on architecture has been a recurring theme of our friendship, it felt natural that this book on domestic architecture would also include the relationships between the architects and clients who made it happen, which Fernando had witnessed growing up. This is our modest homage to this particular architecture of Cadaqués, and a celebration of the relationships that brought it about.

A home – and a holiday home is no different – is something more than the sum of its physical components: it emerges from dreams, the desire to recreate experiences and a vision of the future. Like a home, it is a refuge, a place of intimacy and comfort, but its temporary nature also requires it to be low-maintenance and adaptable, a place of freedom from the conventions of everyday life. Designing it is a challenge that entails operating cannily and negotiating the constraints of regulations and the pitfalls of construction so that the dream is not lost but reinforced in the process. All players must tread carefully between the world of dreams and practicality, vision and investment.

energy to be spent thinking and drawing, involves client and architect in argument and compromise, and relies on problem solving and intuition. Architects know that making seemingly simple spaces to sleep, prepare food and wash, to be together as a family, alone, or in the company of friends - has deep-rooted cultural implications. A building connects with or stands apart from its context by the dimensions and orientation of its windows and the choice of materials used, as architects test ideas learned through their own experience, and by looking at the work of others, transforming and adapting them to suit the peculiarities of the site, the client's requirements and their own vision.

The design process establishes an intimate relationship between architect and client, as past experiences and personal beliefs become way markers in navigating unknown territory. At times, the architect's professional role evolves into that of a confidente, offering counsel and guidance, holding the client's hand in the process of realising desires that are not always clearly articulated at the outset. At times, the client takes on the role of mentor, enabling and nurturing the architect's vision. In the houses described here, this complex web of dreams and skills is brought to life piece by piece, a physical manifestation of the evolution of shared ideas.

As Xavier Monteys says, 'modern architecture, as recorded and catalogued by official historiography, has left many things in the margins - which are usually an interesting place. Cadaqués is one of those places. These houses epitomise an architecture of simplicity and comfort that encapsulates the history of the village and its relationship with the wider world in ways that continue to inspire us. We hope it may inspire others, too.

Stephen Bates and Fernando Villavecchia April 2020

Building a house is a search for identity and character; it requires a disproportionate amount of



