

CARI AND THE ART OF PRESERVING WHAT TIME ERASES

Mari Carmen and I, along with some family members and friends, had the pleasure and privilege of attending the exhibition of my daughter Carmen Mariscal, which marks the culmination of her PhD at the Royal College of Art. I felt a deep emotion to have had the opportunity to be with her at this very important and milestone moment, after six years of hard work. But, above all, it was deeply moving to see once again Cari's artistic expressions in her unique and brilliant way of profoundly expressing sensitive themes. She connects them not only on personal levels, but also within the historical aspect of what houses and their demolitions imply both for memories and for cities.

Her exhibition was titled *A House (Re)membered and Other Spectral Topographies*, similar to her doctoral research: "A house (re)membered: memory, materiality, and erasure of a modernist home in Mexico City".

Her research is based on both artistic practice and critical theory; it explores the remains of a house built in 1957 (designed by my father, who was an architect, and where I grew up); this house was demolished nearly six decades later to build an apartment building there. The thesis relies on the debris of demolitions, both from this house and other sites, to study individual and collective memory. It also investigates some of the densification processes that have been occurring in Mexico City, changing its appearance to one that is difficult for many of us to recognize.

Through her thesis, Cari examines the parallels between construction processes and those related to memory and forgetting. My daughter managed to integrate artistic practice with historical and cultural analysis, creating a dialogue between the material remains of buildings and intangible memory.





Pascal House, photographs by Guillermo Zamora 1957, printed 2026. 40 x 50 cm
(Re) membering the Pascal House, photographs by Carmen Mariscal 2016-2026, 24 x 30 cm

With age, one begins to forget, but images, smells, and, of course, certain materials take us back to past eras and to what our minds hold as relevant from our passage through time in that specific space.

Another project that Carmen presented in her doctoral examination exhibition was a video installation about a factory in Oaxaca where I worked as a young man and which had been abandoned for several years. For me, this factory represented my beginnings as a civil engineer, round trips to Oaxaca during a time filled with hopes because I was about to marry Mari Carmen.

And what can I say about the house my father built on Blas Pascal Street, where my mother lived until almost the end of her days and where we had countless meals and gatherings? For me, that house represented a place that taught me to always open the doors to friends, family, and acquaintances—something my parents strived for and that I have continued. Dialoguing with people, building bridges between them, and creating synergies is a great motivator for me, and of course, my memories—like those of so many of you—revolve around people and the places where we live.

The reflection and the moment that Carmen (or Cari, as we call her in the family) gives us are unique and will remain in my memory. Warmest congratulations, daughter. I am very proud of you.

You can find more information and more of her works at: <https://www.carmenmariscal.com/>