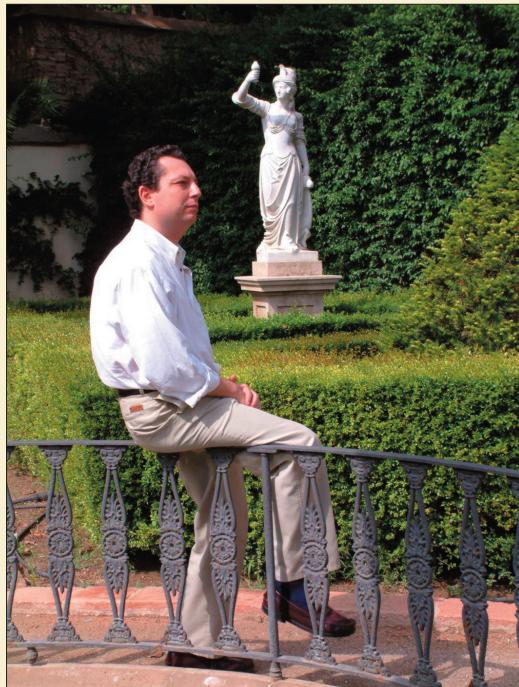


## PROFILE: ROBERTO DUATO VEYRAT

When the conservation of our natural environment becomes a standard in our culture, and human spaces are constantly being reorganized, this opens up a debate about Man and Nature, and his cultural tendency to govern it and conserve it for reciprocal benefit. This progress of civilization, which goes from natural man to destructive man and then to man as the custodian of nature, represents a constant revisiting of our capacity to create spaces, even if artificially, as a reconstruction. It therefore becomes necessary for specialists to bring us their integral vision of the environment, in which the amalgamation of humanist disciplines is unavoidable. In the most classic sense, Roberto Duato Veyrat could classify himself as a humanist, because an understanding of the intrinsic disorder of nature and the squandering of resources by civilized man provides a vast knowledge not just of the environment but also of everything involved in its capitalization. Roberto Duato is a Landscape Architect, but the truth is that he could also call himself a philosopher, an anthropologist, a sociologist or a landscape politician, though in fact the name 'landscaper' contains all these disciplines in its symbolic definition. It is not surprising to learn that he is the grandson of Edmundo Veyrat, (1909-1971) the creator of numerous parks and gardens not only in Spain but also abroad, who was regarded by many writers as one of the greatest designers in this field, a man of tremendous technical skill and mastery who played an extremely important role in the world of landscaping and gardening. Roberto Duato has thus long been familiar with the

art of transforming urban spaces, correcting rural landscapes and preserving our historical heritage through artisan's work. Indeed, his sketches are workshop watercolors, almost Impressionist paintings, like plans from another era. The verb 'plan' is of great importance to him: having a plan, according to Duato, means improving one's observation, getting specific, creating a landscape. This is why through



the eyes of the landscaper we can see the real world and the cultural world simultaneously. His projects can be found abroad as well as in Spain. Duato is a member of the International Federation of Landscape Architects, the Urban Land Institute and the Spanish Landscapers' Association; he is a regular participant in the annual ASLA awards (American Society of Landscape Architects) and attends seminars and conferences as a speaker all over the world on the subjects of urban planning, landscaping and the environment. His working premise is that reflecting on the landscape leads to

improving the world in which we live, to the joint prosperity of people and nature living in harmony, and above all to the survival of the environment. The landscaper approaches, conserves and participates, but most importantly he plans, using ethics as his most important tool; the place and the tradition need to be considered above any other eventualities or urgencies. Although his work almost always allows him complete creative freedom (this being understood as the contribution of his viewpoint), such as in the rehabilitation of the patio of Casa Decor in Valencia – a 15th century palace – and the gardens of Alfinach, La Cañada and Viver, amongst so many other creations, sometimes this freedom is placed at the service of the powers-that-be and the contingencies of the spaces themselves, this perhaps being the case of the Hotel Las Arenas in Valencia, where he cooperated fully in the conception and layout of the gardens, or in the case of institutional projects, such as the commemorative fountain for the America's Cup, and the so-called "Meeting Place". However, in all these projects, Duato fulfills his objective: to turn landscaping into an activity that imbues each project with quality. Whether for private enjoyment or public use, he sees landscaping as something that must have an influence on conserving the environment. The landscape designer is the necessary result of culture in his determination to preserve; he revives what we have mistreated and with this natural vision he is a type of visionary who shows us the breach that has grown with time. The landscaper sees and then creates the right setting for conserving nature, a nostalgic sign of contemporary man •

| Text: Raquel de Diego.