

NEXT PROGRESSIVES

The Politics of Spanish Architect Andrés Jaque

Spaniard Andrés Jaque is shaping a novel approach to practice, based on lessons from the economic bust.

By [CHRISTOPHER HAWTHORNE](#)



Luis Díaz Díaz

Andrés Jaque poses in front of his firm's "Escaravox" project. Jaque purchased a series of winged rolling irrigation platforms, added speakers, wiring and lighting, and staged them in a public square in Madrid. Musicians, DJs, writers, and actors used them to plug in equipment and hold impromptu readings and performances.

Since the economic crisis, one question has dominated all others in architecture: How should the profession remake itself? From that question flow several others. Does architecture bear any responsibility for the overbuilding and false confidence that spread across the United States, Europe, and much of Asia before 2008? If so, is some kind of penance required for the damage done by the resulting collapse, or some radical re-imagining of the architect's role in society? Or it is simply enough to pick up the pieces and get back to the business of designing buildings, perhaps ones that are slightly less flashy and oversized than before?

There has been no shortage of meaningful, persuasive answers to those questions in the last five years. Most of them have included one or more of the following words and phrases: bottom-up, tactical, temporary, user-generated, makeshift, ad-hoc, social, sober, anonymous, communal, or open-source. In addition to adding new language to the architectural lexicon, many of those responses have provided attractive new models for making cities, not to mention for doing more with less. Still, virtually all of those answers have shared one major liability: They haven't really qualified as architecture. They have had a lot more to do with urban design, technology, planning, politics, or transportation.