A lecturer at the Rice University School of Architecture, in Houston, Texas, Carlos Jiménez is one of its most acclaimed and devoted professors, fervently devoted to his teaching activity. His way of understanding teaching is very similar to the type of architecture he designs – always concerned with the surroundings and the real needs of his clients. This is surely the reason why he is one of his colleagues’ most appreciated architects.

He is one of those architects who have risen silently but whose ripple effect has endured solidly and with prestige. What Carlos Jiménez really enjoys is doing good work for his clients from his small Houston studio. Born in Costa Rica, he has lived in the United States for 35 years, and considers that it is this transcultural quality that endows his work with much more value, always concerned with the present, the past and the future. He once revealed that he likes to photograph his projects ten years after in order to see how the houses have affected the spaces around them. He talks of how “they grow together with their...”
Critical of architecture that is too self-centred, Carlos Jiménez is far removed from any sort of 'stararchitecture' and has a simple goal: "to build cities" just like most of his colleagues do. While admitting that there is a small group of more "creative", high-profile, global architects, Jiménez, who is also a professor at the Rice University School of Architecture (Houston, Texas), would rather consider the local values in his projects than be carried away by fads or styles that are overly subjective.

This very pragmatic vision of his profession is maybe the reason why he is so highly esteemed by his colleagues - who are always willing to rely on his opinion and years of experience. He has thus often been a juror for important international competitions, including the Pritzker Prize. He was a juror there for 11 years, and admits that the so-called 'Nobel Prize for Architecture' is not always as undisputedly clear as it seems to be, since each and every project is thoroughly analysed (and even visited) until a common denominator is found that makes the winner deserving of this medal. This Costa Rican architect likes to remember how the Chinese architect Wang Shu received the prize in 2012 precisely for his artisanal architecture that respects the environment – and totally different from today's standards in China.

In addition, his impassioned work as a lecturer led him to obtain the 2009 Prize for Professor of the Year, awarded by the American Institute of Architects (AIA) in Houston and, more recently, in 2013, for Most Admired Professor by Rice University. These awards can be added to another series of important international commendations that highlight the interest that Carlos Jiménez takes in his students and the support he offers them.
One of his most representative works is Crowley House (2000-2004, Marfa, Texas) – an 800-m² house set on a hill with panoramic views of the dunes of the vast Chihuahuan desert. Here he was able to make the most of the unique light of this southeast Texas region, even planting native species and trees to complement the materials, textures and colours used to fully integrate the building into its natural surroundings.

Also remarkable – not only for its intensely phosphorescent green colour – is the Library Services and Data Center at Rice University (2002-2007, Houston). A campus services complex for which he replaced Rice’s traditional brick for a system of pre-fabricated concrete blocks assembled in a geometric shape. An opaque design not only based on aesthetics, but which is also useful to maintain temperature and humidity constant: essential for optimally conserving and storing both paper documents and other delicate items such as reels of film.

Among his more personal creations is the Whatley Library (1999-2001, Austin, Texas), a pavilion designed as a self-contained structure housing a huge library and is connected to the main house and the guesthouse via ramps, balconies and stairs. Light plays a leading role for this project as the owners wanted the space to be a kind of sanctuary among the trees. As for the materials, limestone was used predominantly outside, and maple wood paneling was used inside.

Other outstanding works are the Irwin Mortgage company headquarters in Indiana, the De Santos photography studio in Houston, and another Crowley House, this time on Willard Street. He has just finished a social housing project in France, and today is carrying out different projects in the United States.