

# KING HOUSE

**Paulo Mendes da Rocha**  
**1973**  
**São Paulo, Brazil**

Above all else, Paulo Mendes da Rocha was devoted to public works projects. He was frequently quoted as saying, “All space is public. The only private space that you can imagine is in the human mind.” Yet, the emergence of a military dictatorship in Brazil in the 1960s meant that such work faded into distant memory for over a decade. It is in this context that he became known for his residential masterpieces. In Chácara Flora, a then sparsely populated neighborhood in southern São Paulo, Mendes da Rocha took an approach rooted in both creativity and rationality when designing one of his famed concrete forms for the English expatriate James Francis King. The house, a perfect square built upon eight columns so as not to interfere with the steep incline of the plot, sits above ground level. Rather than extending out toward the dense greenery, it is arranged around a central courtyard. This internal landscaping, reducing the scale and tying nature and daily life together in a more intimate fashion, contrasts with the vast exterior, which blends into its surroundings without dividing walls or fences.

For the interior, Mendes da Rocha set out to eradicate unnecessary intermediary spaces that separate public and private. The bedrooms and bathrooms exist on one side along the facade, all opening directly onto the communal quarters. With the exception of the fireplace, around which domestic life centers, the main living area consists of large, uninterrupted space—simultaneously cozy and expansive—allowing inhabitants to adapt it to their particular needs. The U-shaped plan is connected at the back by a narrow, open-air corridor. Separated by the courtyard, the walkway produces a reciprocal gaze between those moving through it and those occupying the house. The relationship between differentiated spaces only becomes more deeply intertwined, making this a true Mendes da Rocha creation.

