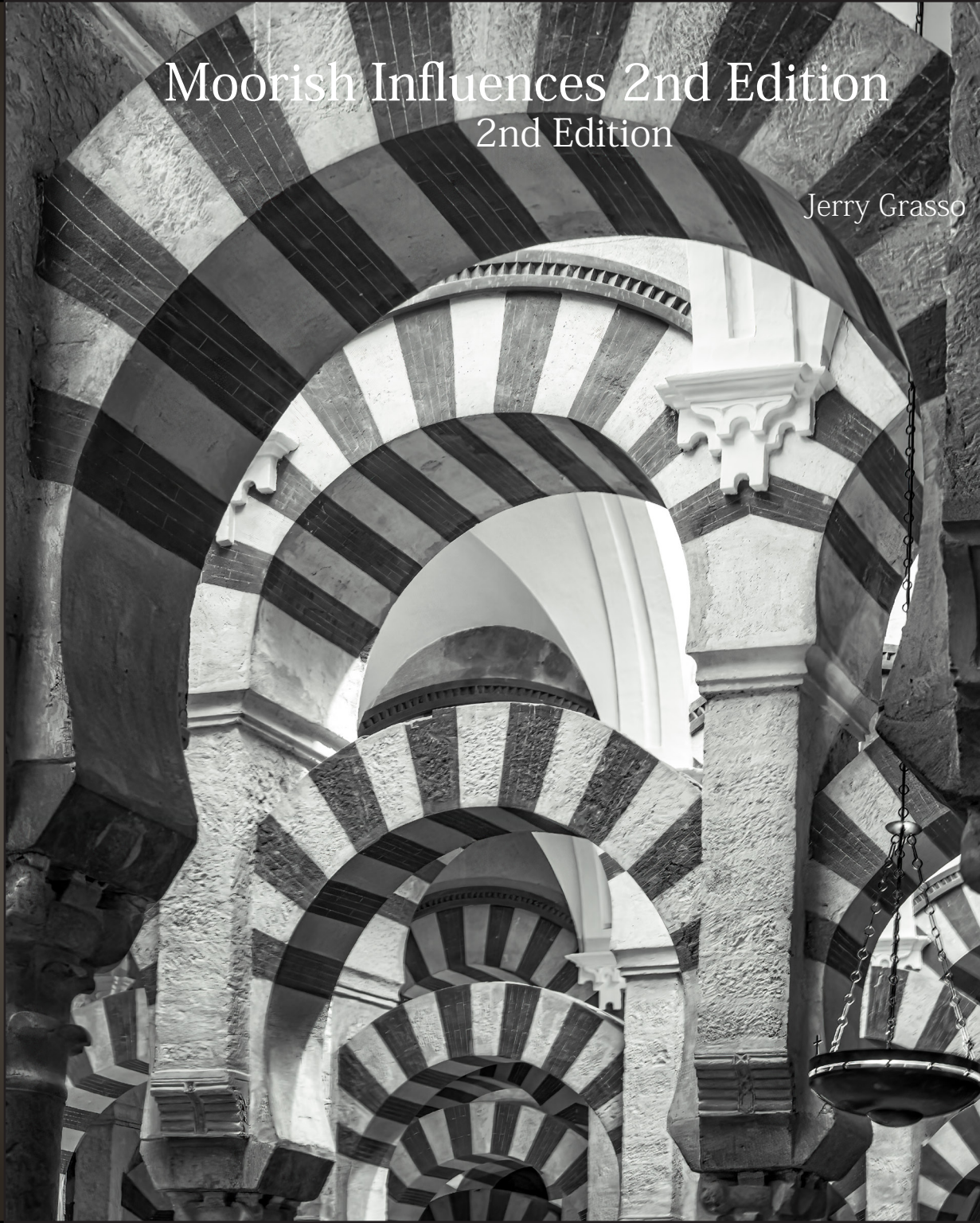


Moorish Influences 2nd Edition

2nd Edition

Jerry Grasso



Visitors to the province of Andalusia in southern Spain will immediately notice the beautiful Moorish influenced architecture of many of its ancient mosques, palaces, and fortresses. From the time the Moors invaded Spain in 711 until they were finally defeated and expelled by the Catholic monarchs, Ferdinand and Isabella, in 1492, the Moorish influence dominated local architecture.

Although copied perhaps from the Visigoths, Persians, or Byzantines, the famous horseshoe, “candy cane” arch is a popular feature of most of these structures. Domes are another significant feature and often contained stalactite ceiling decorations. It has been said that fractal geometry has been a key utility, especially for mosques and palaces. These are distinguished by the extent and variety of decorations, including mosaics, wall painting, sculpture, as well as carved reliefs with Islamic motifs.

The [Great Mosque at Córdoba](#) in 785 marked the beginning of Moorish architecture in the Iberian peninsula and is noted for its commanding interior arches. Moorish architecture reached its peak with the construction of the [Alhambra](#), the magnificent palace/fortress of Granada, with its open and breezy interior spaces. The walls are decorated with stylized foliage motifs, Arabic inscriptions, and arabesque design work, with walls covered in glazed tile. These mosques are square or rectangular in plan with an enclosed courtyard and a covered prayer hall.

Islamic art, the arabesque, was an elaborate application of repeating geometric forms that often echo the shapes of plants, and sometimes animals, such as birds, instead of using pictures of humans which is forbidden in Islam. The choice of which geometric forms were to be used and how they were to be formatted was based upon the Islamic view of the world. These symbolize the infinite nature of the creation of the one God.

[Arabic calligraphy](#), [geometric Islamic art](#), can also be seen on the walls and ceilings of mosques. A common, prevalent inscription is often replicated and states “The world is for God”.

My project is a simple attempt to depict the progression of the Moorish architectural influences from the Great Mosque at Córdoba to the final grandeur of Islamic art in the Alhambra. I hope you enjoy the ordered repetition, radiating structures, and rhythmic, metric patterns that form the basis of Moorish style and history in southern Spain.

*** Many of the images in this ebook were featured in LensWork Magazine and LensWork Extended, [Issue #115](#), 2014.

Explore the many informational hyperlinks included within the ebook!

Any image found within this ebook or on my website is available as a print purchase. Just email me at jerrygrasso96@yahoo.com, or visit my website at jerrygrasso.com.

Enjoy life!

These images are from the [Great Mosque at Córdoba](#) built in 785AD. The Great Mosque was constructed on the orders of Abd ar-Rahman I in 785, when Córdoba was the capital of the Muslim-controlled region of Al-Andalus. It was expanded multiple times afterwards under Abd ar-Rahman's successors up to the late 10th century. The mosque structure is regarded as an important monument in the history of Islamic architecture and is considered by many scholars to have been highly influential on the subsequent "Moorish" architecture of the western Mediterranean regions of the Muslim world.





The Prayer hall with the famous candy cane arches in an extension added by [Al-Mansur](#), the autocratic vizier of [Caliph Hisham II](#), in 987–988.

The mosque-cathedral's
hypostyle hall dates from the
original mosque construction
and originally served as its main
prayer space for Muslims.









These images are from the [Alcazaba](#), a palatial fortification in Málaga. It was built by the [Hammudid dynasty](#) in the early 11th century.



A typical Moorish-style courtyard. This inner enclosure can only be accessed through the Puerta de los Cuartos de Granada ([Gate of the Granada Quarters](#)) which acts as the defence for the western side of the palace.





These images are from the magnificent palace/fortress of the [Alhambra in Granada](#). It was originally constructed as a small fortress in 889 CE on the remains of ancient Roman fortifications. It was renovated and rebuilt in the 11th century by the Amazigh king Badis ibn Habus of the [Zirid dynasty](#) and later completed in the 14th century by the Arab Nasrid dynasty. It was converted into a royal palace in 1333 by [Yusuf I, Sultan of Granada](#).



The entrance to the [Charles V's Renaissance Palace](#). The structure was commanded by [Charles V](#), Holy Roman Emperor, who wished to establish his residence close to the Alhambra palaces. After the conquest of the city in 1492, Charles V intended to construct a permanent [residence](#) befitting an emperor. The palace was not completed, and remained roofless until the late twentieth century.





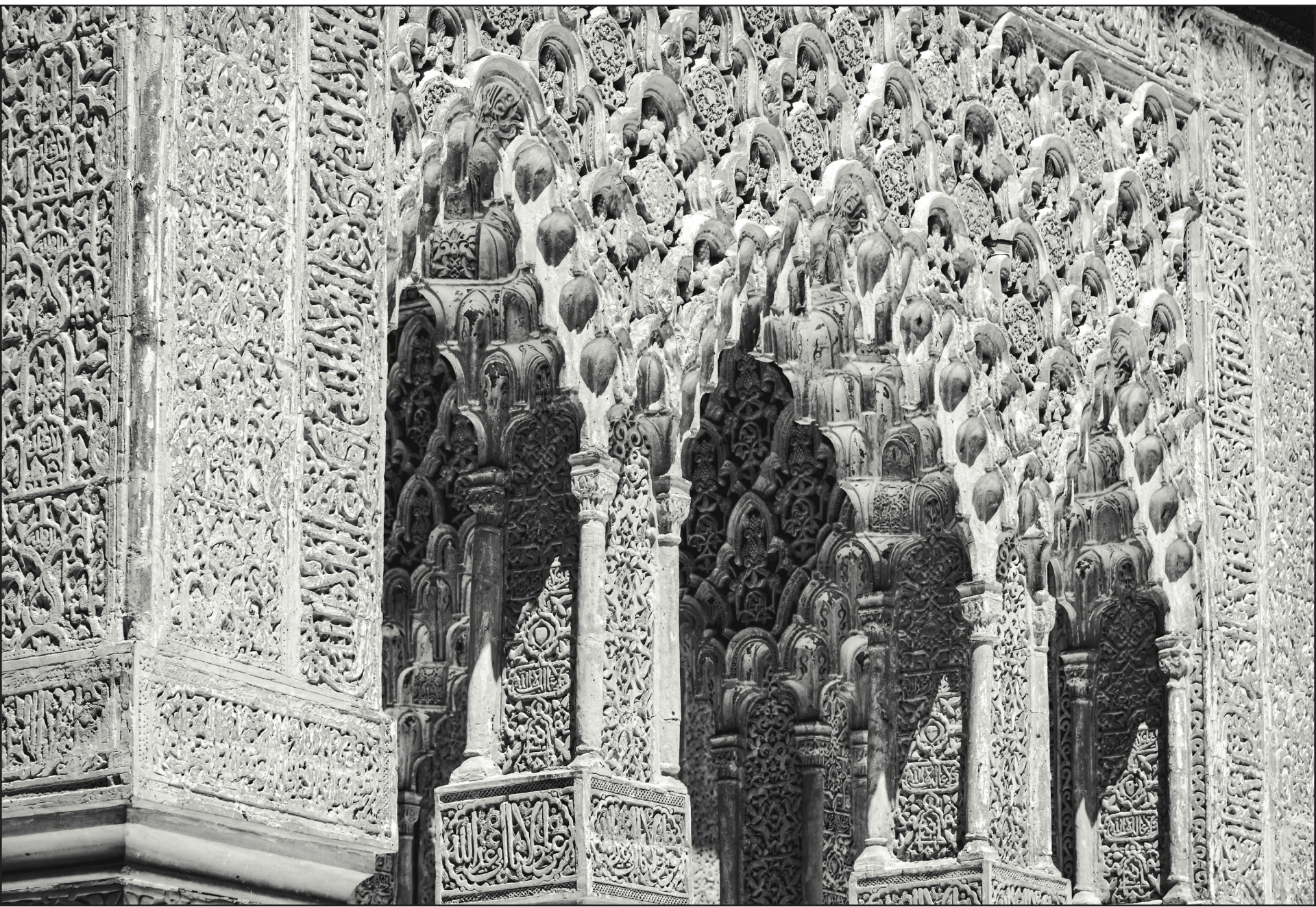


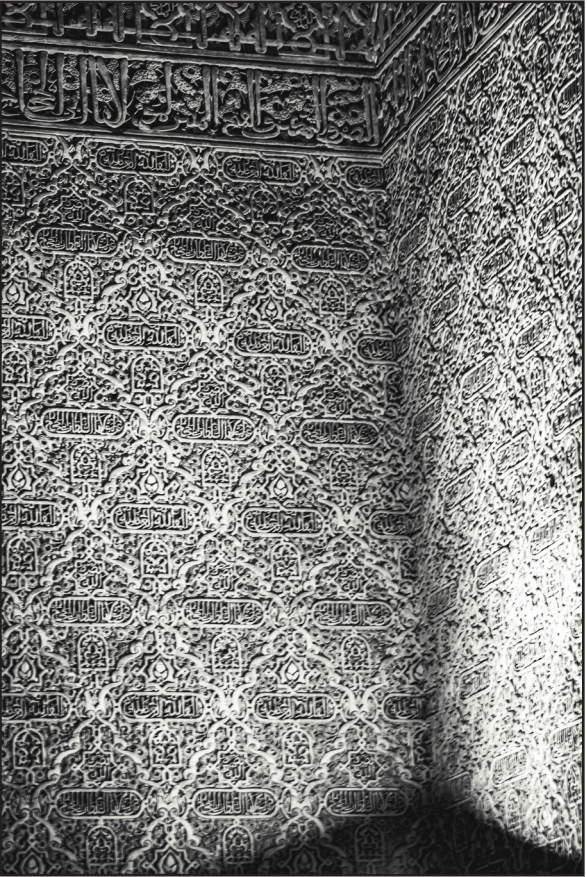




The Islamic inscription, [“There is no Victor but God”](#), is repeated frequently throughout the [wall coverings](#).





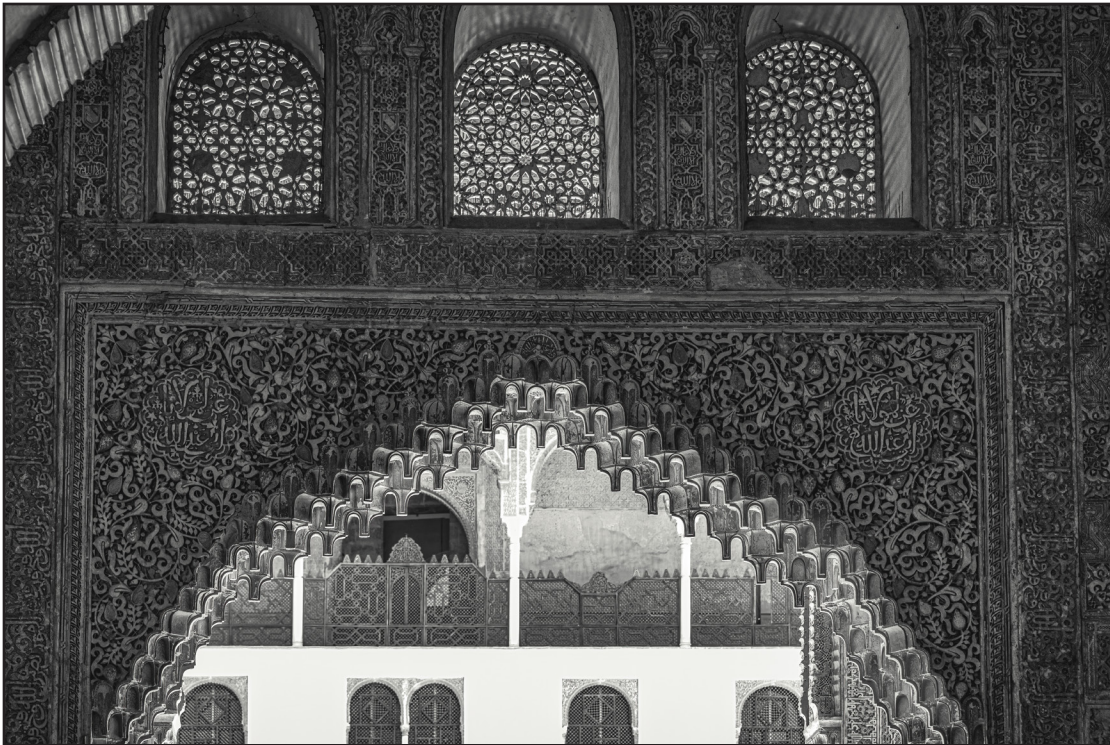






The [Hall of the Ambassadors](#), also known as the [Throne Room](#), and the [Hall of the Blessing](#).

The ceiling itself is a cupola made up of over 8,000 pieces of wood representing the seven heavens of Paradise. It looks like a galaxy of shooting stars, or a never ending display of fireworks, exploding simultaneously against the night sky. Half stars along the edges suggest both infinity and man's finite reach, i.e. the impossibility of ever containing the heavens within human dimensions.



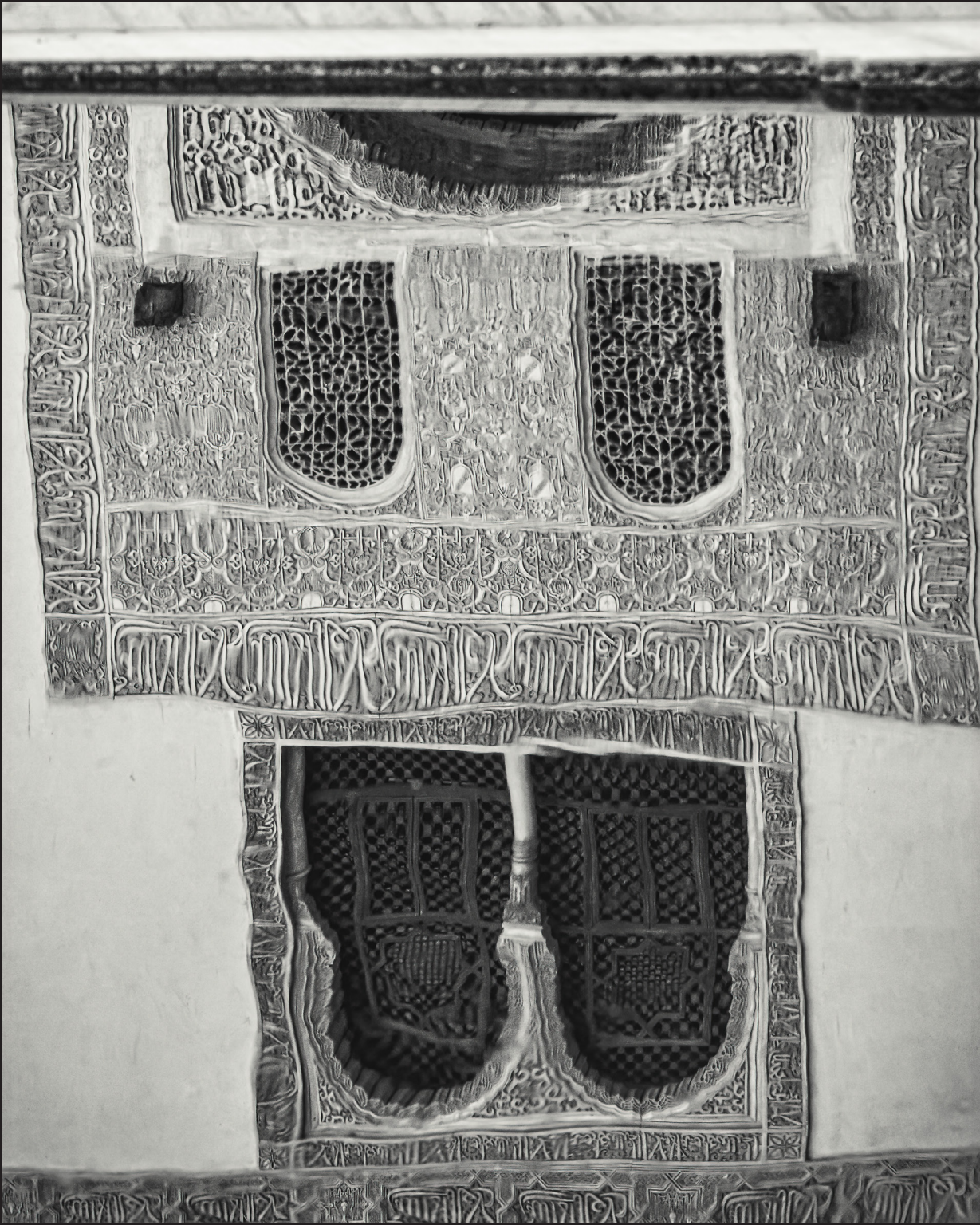


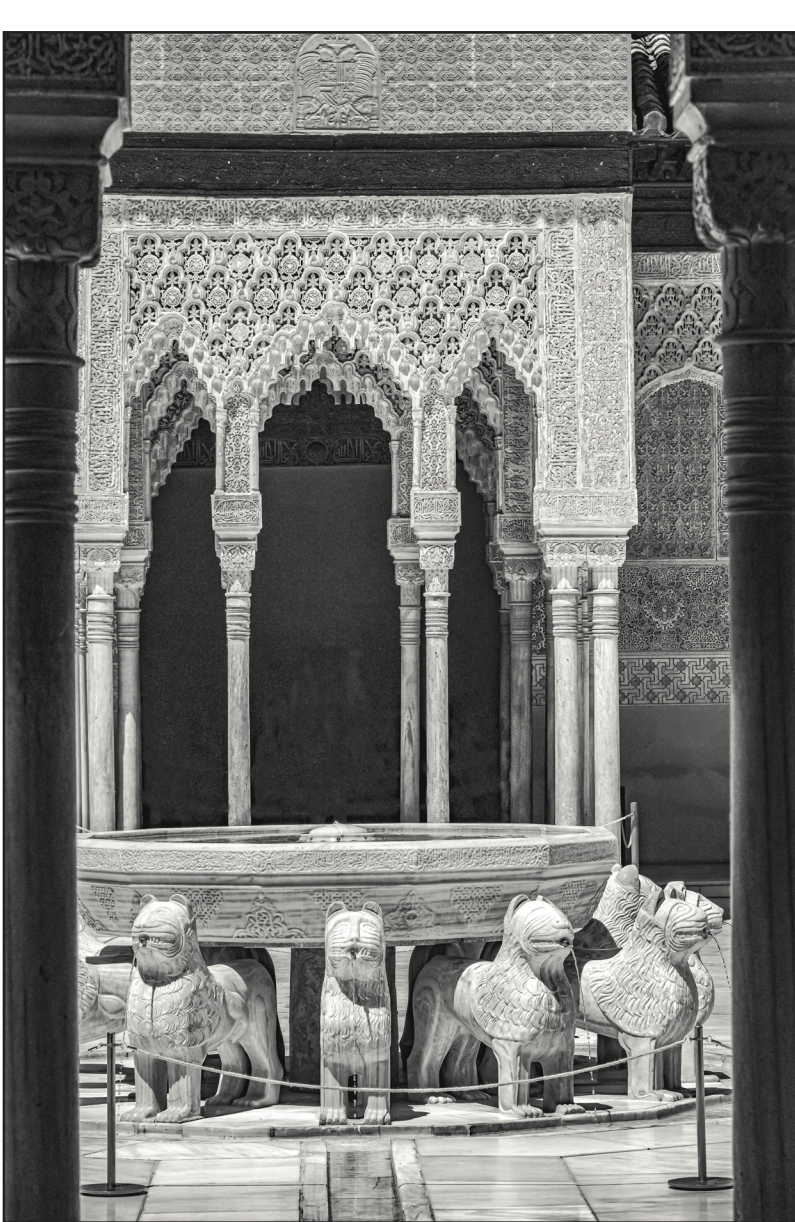
The Patio del Cuarto Dorado (the [Court of the Golden Room](#)). It is said that this small, enclosed patio once served as a sheep pen and chicken coop, a far cry from times when the king held court there. He sat between the two doors of the southern wall, a dazzling, stuccoed tapestry topped by elaborately carved eaves.





The [Patio de los Mirtos or Arrayanes](#) (Court of the Myrtles).

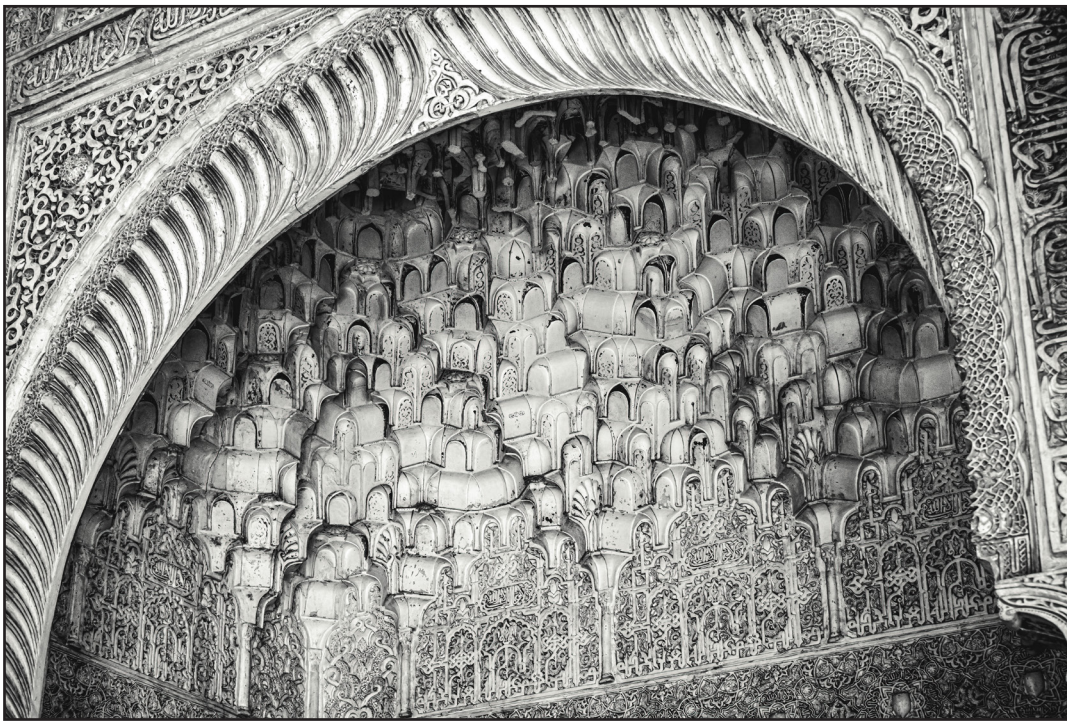


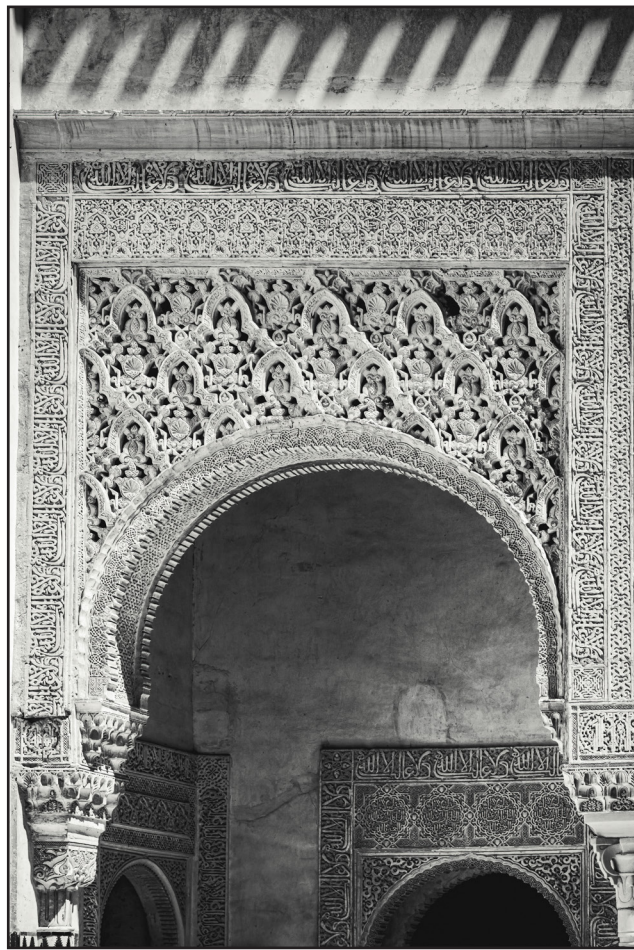
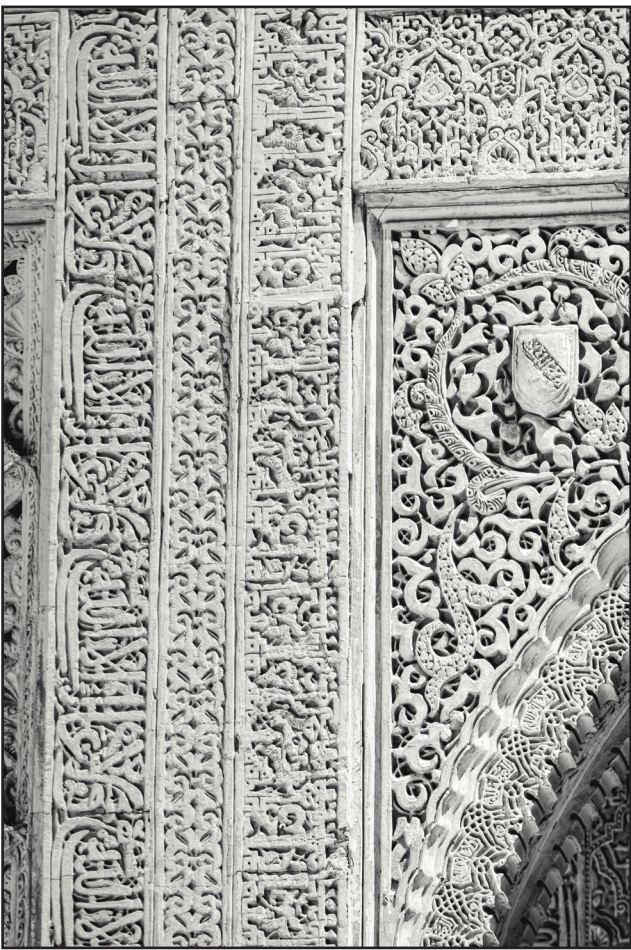


The [Patio de los Leones](#) ([Court of the Lions](#)).



















Part of the [Generalife Palace and Gardens](#).





The Alhambra and the backdrop of the [Sierra Nevada mountain range](#).



These images are from the [Alcazar of Seville](#), originally a Moorish fort. The initial [structure](#) was built in 712. During the five hundred years of construction, various architectural styles succeeded one another. There are no remnants of the initial [design](#), but the structure was probably refurbished with elements of Islamic ornamentation and patterns.

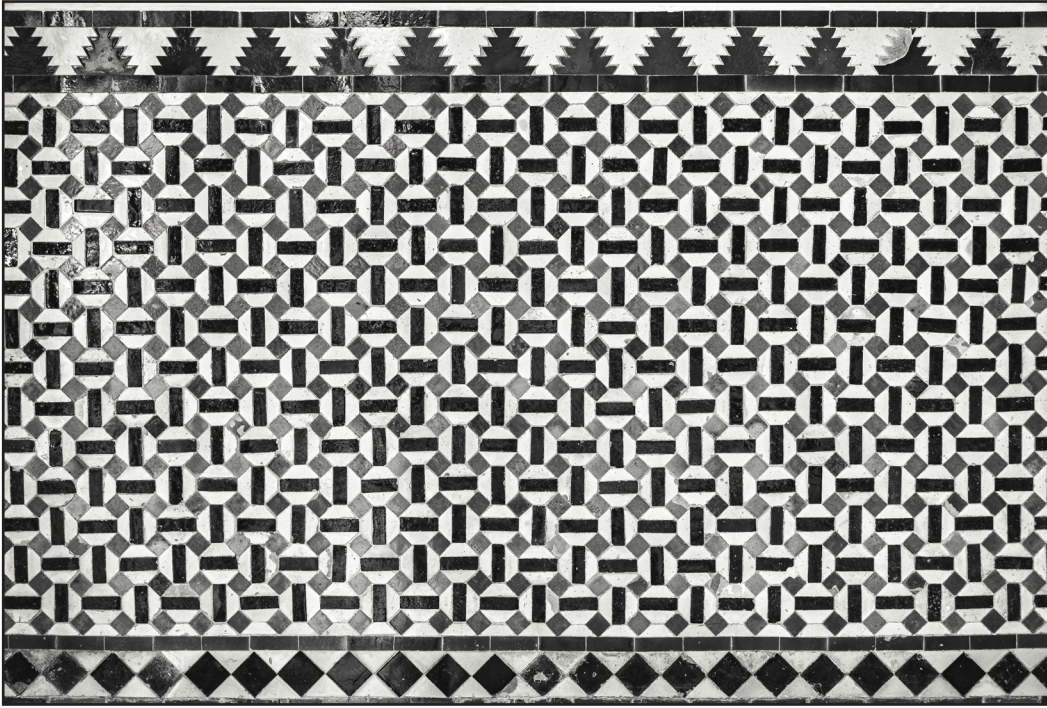


The Patio de las Doncellas courtyard. The name, meaning “[The Courtyard of the Maidens](#)”, is a reference to the apocryphal story that the Moors demanded an [annual tribute of 100 virgins from the Christian kingdoms of Iberia](#).

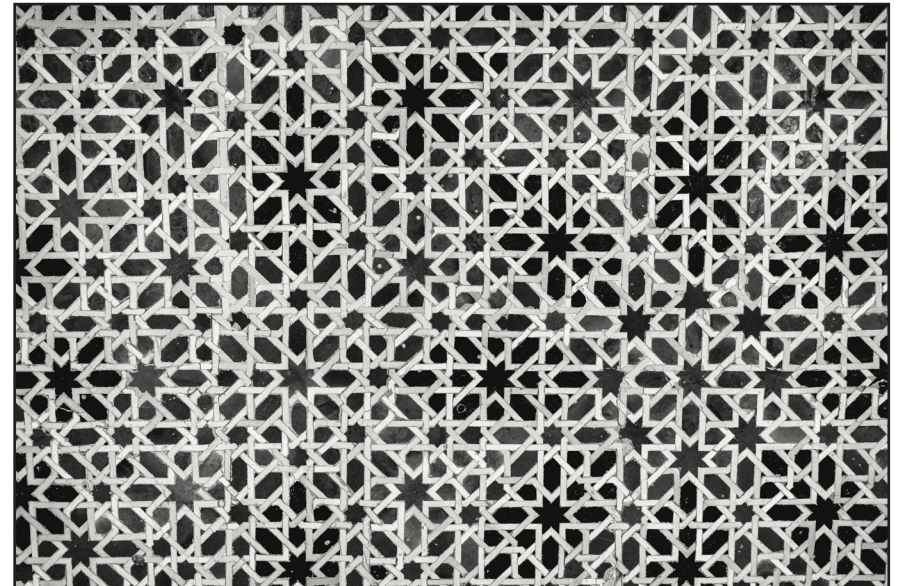








The palace is known for its tile decorations. The two tile types used are majolica and arista tiles. In the arista technique, the green body is stamped and each tile segment has raised ridges. This technique produces tiles with transparent glazes that are not flat. The art of [majolica ceramics](#) was developed later in the 15th–16th centuries. The innovation made it possible to “paint” directly on ceramics covered with white opaque glazes. Being a trade center, [Seville](#) had access to large scale production of these tiles. They were mainly of geometric design inspired by [arabesque ornamentation](#).





My Artistic Mission

Child-like wonder and inquisitiveness

are qualities frequently put aside once we become adults. We tend to slowly become sterilized by our right-or-wrong kind of world which too often has too little time to explore the what-if's and the what-could-be's. I believe we all need to re-connect with these qualities to re-enrich our lives. A first glance at a photograph of an onion often reveals the fact that, indeed, it is an onion. But what also lies beneath its surface? We won't know until we peel back its layers.

Animation innovator, Walt Disney, recognized this and tried to bring back the power and importance of imagination. Inspired by his spirit, my mission therefore is to encourage the use of viewer imagination. My work attempts to explore and suggest what often lies hidden within the personalities and mysteries present in the world that was, and the world that is around us.

For me, my photography often is not so much about the decisive moment. Rather, it is about creating an awareness of place and a sense of history, with an aura of mystery. It is the starting point for my artistic journey, not the destination. I try to use what I produce

as personal metaphors for my reactions to what I saw and felt. My favorite motivational quote is that "Life begins at the edge of your comfort zone." My works attempt to reflect this as I probe the emotional, mind's eye after-image that was captured by both the eye and the heart, and which often defies logical explanation by the mind.

My goal is that my projects will serve as a springboard into inventiveness and exploration with the hopes of awakening my viewer's inner child. I try hard to show the connections and implications of things that others may not readily see. My hope is that my work may also help viewers discover the beginnings of their attempt to understand and perhaps even learn to tolerate and sympathize with the human condition and the world in which we live. I will try to do whatever I can to make viewers linger longer in front of my works so as to ignite their imaginative response through discovery and inquisitiveness.

Any image found within this book or on my website is available as a print purchase. Just email me at jerrygrasso96@yahoo.com, or visit my website at jerrygrasso.com.

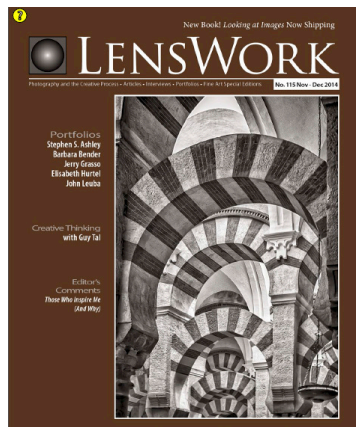
Enjoy life!



JERRY GRASSO has been an award-winning, international fine art photographer and visual artist since 2002. He has mentored locally with photographer, [Mallorie Ostrowitz](#), and then with internationally-renowned visual artist, [John Paul Caponigro](#). Photography is only the starting point for many of his projects. His favorite motivational quote is that “Life begins at the edge of your comfort zone.”

In addition to his travel photography, Jerry specializes in the intimately abstracted architectural photography, the photo essay, and the photo composite series.

Jerry’s mission is to awaken his viewer’s inquisitive inner child by creating an awareness of place and a sense of history, with an aura of mystery.



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2014

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