Interview:

Micheel, what's your practice known as and what areas do you specialize in?
We're known as Energiehaus Arquitectos, and we're a Spanish-based planning and consultancy practice that specializes in renovating and refurbishing buildings in an energy-efficient way. The prime aim of our work in doing so is to reduce the building's ecological footprint through our own architectural means.

Could you tell us more about ShowPass and its use?
ShowPass is a typical Mediterranean terraced house that was built in the early 20th Century and has been renovated by us into a carbon-neutral building. The project has already earned Spain's Ecómetro certification. In creating ShowPass we wanted to present some concrete answers to today's climate crisis, because we do have tangible means in the construction sector to sustainably reduce emissions while still paying due and full regard to the architectural qualities of Mediterranean cities and towns.

How did you work with the natural daylight here?
The first floor is centered around a small inner courtyard that lets in little natural daylight in the winter months. To improve this, we created a large open room. The space and freedom this provides are not just functionally and aesthetically appealing: they also give free rein to the natural lighting, which can now spread unobstructed throughout the various first-floor zones.

Why did you opt for Metalunic Sinus® and not some other solar shading system such as rolling shutters?
The second floor of the house has a south-facing *galeria* – a glazed loggia zone that's very typical of Barcelona homes of the 19th and 20th Century. And we chose the Metalunic Sinus® solar shading solution for this to make the most of the warmer season. These Griesser blinds help give us a living area that can still be used even in the hot summer months, keeping the sun outside while still letting the natural daylight in.

Have you opted for manual or automatic blind controls? And if they're automatic, what benefits do you see in this?
We used an outside motor to operate the Metalunic® blinds. The motor is linked up to the house's Modbus system, which ensures the best possible shading. It's all automatically controlled; but it can also be operated via touchscreen or with an app.

What was the thinking behind the choice of blind color? How does this fit in with the house's interior and exterior design?
We chose a sand-yellow color for the blinds. We felt this fitted best with the house's larchwood facade while still providing a color of its own. Inside, the color of the blinds tends to give the whole interior a warm yellow tone. And with the red stone floor, this provides some really special refraction effects.

How much has the solar shading you've chosen helped ShowPass meet the 'passive house' criteria?
The exterior solar shading was vital to achieving the energy values that a passive house needs to show in summer. In winter, the blinds are primarily used for darkening at night.

What kind of future do you feel the passive house standard has in Spain and other Mediterranean countries?
We've been steadily adjusting the passive house concept to the climatic and the sociocultural conditions of the Mediterranean region since 2008. And in Spain at least, this energy standard has gradually become a byword for sustainable but also high-quality building construction.

What influence do solar shading solutions have on this standard?
In Spain, the passive house concept should generally be pursued with externally mounted solar shading – though there will, of course, always be the exceptions that prove the rule.

And do you have any particular advice for any architect looking to use solar shading in a home?
Yes: see it not as a dry obligation, but as a creative element in your design!