

Continuity and Rupture - Álvaro Siza Vieira interviewed by Gonçalo Furtado

Architectural Association, 2004

I.

GF – I'd like to talk about Portuguese Architecture and the contexts of your work, the perspectives from which critics deal with it, as well as the work of younger generations. I suggest the idea of "continuity and rupture", because the history of Architecture has evolved out of this dialectic, just as it does in Portugal. The Modernist architecture that we have arose in a particular cultural and political context. Some of its practitioners were active until recently, such as Fernando Távora in Oporto, who was so significant not only in the establishing of Modernist architecture in Portugal but also in moving on from it.

AS – There were various talented architects teaching in Oporto, although given the constraints of the political contexts of the period they became frustrated. Távora is an example of a distinctive architect who influenced Portuguese architecture in two aspects: his wide and sensitive learning along with the fertile period of development and mutation his work underwent. When he entered the Faculty it was already under the sway of Le Corbusier, and directed by a person who was well aware of the benefits of encouraging young talent.

Afterwards, things became more open on account of a relaxing of political control, and there was greater access to information and the possibility of travel, to the impact of other influences (Neorationalism, etc) and works (Frank Lloyd Wright, Alvar Aalto, etc), and to such projects as magazines on Portuguese Architecture. Modernism was under revision, as was Portuguese culture in general. And after the period of struggles within the academies, prison sentences both literal and metaphorical (in the form of being marginalised by the establishment, the Faculty, etc), and the 25th of April Revolution in 1974, Architecture moved closer to the people through the experience of the S.A.A.L.

GF – In that process of the evolution of Modernism, there were numerous conditioning factors, both internal and external, such as the influence of Brazilian Modernism that could be seen in magazines or the study of the work of Alvar Aalto.

AS – Influences operated more through affinity than through superficial appreciation, although sometimes the latter occurred in the case of magazines. The Brazilian influence in the 1950s can be understood through these affinities, which could even be affective given the cultural links between the two countries. The interest in Aalto and in Finland has to do with the relation between the two countries in terms of their peripherality and the continuing presence of folk culture in both of them.

GF – Did Távora's "third way", recognising the limits of Modernism and adapting it, find any echo in your work?

AS – Our trajectories and concerns are different. At first Távora produced "Ramalde" or other modernist works that were turned down by government ministers. But the great transition in his work took place with his small "House in Ofir". It was at that time that I worked with him. For example, we both worked on the competition for the "Market", in the year he travelled around the world it helped us in the "Restaurant" competition, he gave me the "Swimming Pool" project on noting my obsession with the "Conceição Estate" (Quinta da Conceição). He was a man who shared everything enthusiastically, his trips to International Congresses of Modern Architecture, Le Corbusier's latest doorhandle, and so on.

But we had different trajectories. For example, I didn't take part in the *Survey of Portuguese Architecture*, and thus the influence of vernacular architecture is much less direct or pure in my work. What was passed on was an attitude towards continuity that questioned the latent spirit of conservatism at the time in which it rejected whatever was new.

GF – Did the north and south of the country, which would at times be considered as distinct schools of or attitudes towards architecture, possess at the time different types of commission, references, liveliness, scale of work and so forth?

AS – Lisbon was very controlled because of its proximity to those in power. This meant that many architects from there came to complete the course in Oporto, and even Carlos Ramos, that seminal director of the Faculty in Oporto, was from Lisbon. He didn't just take responsibility for architects who were politically active against the regime teaching in the Faculty, he also participated in the defence of others who were imprisoned.

Thus, at a transitional moment, there was a drawing closer of the two cities, on the part of students who passed through the two Schools, on the part of the group involved in the *Revista Arquitectura Portuguesa* (Journal of Portuguese Architecture) or of events such as the Convention that established our guidelines as a professional class, or the *Survey* that studied the realities of national architectural practices etc.

Even if there were different opportunities, production characteristics or types of industrial development, as well as possibilities of travel or liveliness with respect to the discovery of new references, the Lisbon-Oporto dichotomy is mostly a fabrication, restricted just to the basic realities in which architectural production took place.

GF – With respect to this myth of “Schools” in a small country, you said in one text that a School would achieve prestige of it had the agility to renew itself, a comment that I would like to extend to Portuguese Architecture as a whole.

AS – There existed in the 1950s and 1960s a School that managed to get around the constrictions of political pressure better. But I don't see that there's much sense in using the term School (as in “Oporto School”) afterwards, it's a source of error and of a certain elitism. After consolidating the different teaching faculties what happened was a mixture, as I said, in such events as the Convention or the *Survey*, which were the expression of a unified position. Naturally, different methods of production, opportunities, travel restrictions etc are not things that are unified overnight, and even though specific factors such as geography, regional cultures, traditions concerning property etc persist, that's different from the idea of a “School” that brings with it connotations of a “Factory”.

GF – In the 1980s the country was permeable to multiple external references and a veritable explosion occurred (in the number of places where architecture could be studied, courses, architects, diversity of practices etc). There was also an increasing focus on architecture in the media, even architecture as public spectacle, which at times revealed the limitations of its political dimension, or potential for protest.

AS – When I started to work in Matosinhos, near Oporto, in 1953-54, there were almost no architects, and there was conflict with engineers, who saw us as dispensable. The great difference after the Revolution in 1974 was the decentralisation of architects away from Lisbon and Oporto. Today I think there are Architectural practices that involve protest just as there is opportunism. What has happened is that the link between Architecture and power, which is historical, has become increasingly strong and at times painful. Municipal councils are in office for four years, and if they are voted out the new council generally cuts the projects begun or planned under their predecessors, which goes a long way to explaining the low quality of public architecture. But more than problems with architecture (where effort and the energy of younger generations can result in quality work despite the conditions), what I observe is a generalised destruction of the landscape. What's the point of a work of Architecture in a dilapidated landscape? I think this is an aspect that is not taken at all seriously enough on account of the widespread narrowness of vision in politics.

II

GF – Thinking about the theory of Architecture, the application of other systems of critical thought could be useful in the cultural and political contexts of the country. The ruling “Critical Regionalism” articulated most notably by Kenneth Frampton comes out of a structuralist thinking clearly marked by Heideggerian Phenomenology and Marxist critique. I identify a leap in the new book, which can be appreciated for example in the interview from last October in which your work is covered. The area can be considered in terms of more internal relations of power, of divisions within working practices and differing contact with the means of production. A proto-poststructural analysis, deeper and more wide-ranging, that in focusing on Architecture’s experiential or contextual dimensions

consciously reflects on the subject itself, on its status as a system of production with a particular impact (using your terms, it may be that the “factory” aspect is focused on more than the “solo” aspect).

In the case of your work, for example, approaches may be developed that, apart from the obvious privileging of its tectonic and spatial qualities, stressed by means of a vocabulary of place, context, experience etc, also stress the problematizations and referential inscriptions present in your methods (with respect to presuppositions, relations and organisations). Like the presence of a recognisable author, the relation of the world of the project and its construction, the tension between contextualised and globalised practices (I recall Portuguese craftspeople in your Dutch work for example), all of which would encourage debate that is important for the currently enlarged professional community, a community increasingly liable to be turned into a media-driven spectacle.

AS – Speaking of Frampton, I feel that his work as a critic is that of a certain “continuity”. I hear that he is changing, but of course it’s a change in the direction of a successively more wide-ranging continuity. As far as the term “critical regionalism” is concerned, and I believe he thought it up, I have an idea that I once said it was a dangerous term, or somewhat inappropriate, because when we say “critical regionalism” what leaps out at us is the Regionalism, and from there we soon end up with the historical and technical implications of that word. Frampton’s efforts lie in making known work that is overlooked (Nordic architecture, Portuguese architecture etc), a gathering of references from a reality anterior to the ballad of globalisation.

GF – It is said that it had to do precisely with the phenomenon at that time, and at a juncture in which there was supposedly a tendency to accept a reduction in the range of visual references, that it asserted a particular position on the left.

AS – Those are the reasons. A Post-Modern attitude if one thinks that globalising tendencies can be imputed to, for example, Le Corbusier. Frampton’s contemporary critical work presents an opening out that we hadn’t seen in earlier writings. Because in a book one can’t deal with everything, it depends on the order we consider things and what we notice

most (as is the case with a work of architecture, which doesn't mean everything, given that although it might be an enormous manifesto it is no more than a part of any evolving thought process and not restricted to its specific aspects). Accordingly, that term "critical regionalism" functioned almost as a call to arms, containing as it did the word "regionalism". As far as the "author" is concerned, the word is cursed. Yet never perhaps has authorship been so fundamental, for on the one hand Architecture can't exist without a means of production (which authorship can facilitate), while on the other there is a fight against opportunism. There is some confusion over the word "authorship", when at bottom there is complementarity, over what is personal intervention in a project and what is the work of a group or circumscribed by the means on hand. This tension and ideological struggle has always existed. Taking the idea of continuity in human thought, certain forms presented as new are not new at all, but rather new shapes given to thought, and even then the shape doesn't change all that much. There are revolutions, but revolutions are only analysable a posteriori.

GF – In the publication by the Order of Portuguese Architects on Post-Modernism, I wrote that the concept of Post-Modernism in Architecture shouldn't be confined to its initial expression, initiated 40 years ago after all.

AS – At least.

GF – Post-Modernism has taken in attitudes and positions that are very different. Initially it was thought of as an anti-orthodox style, fronting up to Modernism's universalising positivism with an ambition to communicate that put its historical referencing under pressure. Later on it ended up in an identical homogenisation, due to a certain politically dubious relativisation. If we think that moment of rupture in terms of continuity, perhaps we could still refound a type of modernity-post, or at least problematise a new interventionist capacity for the area. I believe that since the 1970s a tendency has developed that, while parallel to structuralism-phenomenology and equally opposed to the "Greys", has become a debate about the discipline itself, and whose application to Portuguese Architecture or even to your own work would be quite productive given the cultural context we are moving through.

AS – The term (Post-Modernism) was created and used by critics to mark something out. Architecture is a slow form of thought, that evolves along with knowledge and events that are not exclusively architectonic, with the general increase in knowledge. At a certain moment in this interrelationship of Architecture with other fields the need was felt to give some order to what was being thought or discovered through the use of a name. The name chosen was Post-Modernism. I remember that certain things made all sorts of opportunism possible, and in an anthology of Post-Modernism you could find a work by Stirling beside something quite disastrous.

Today we don't speak any more of the superficial sense of style in Post-Modernism, or without having an idea of and a sensibility towards the period. It has become an international style, with the same foibles in America, Portugal or China, and in that sense the word is of no interest. However, in terms of new concerns and broadenings, yes, they are part of the evolution of thought in general as well as of the Architectonic. Classifications are very fluid, in a few years we'll be speaking about Post-post-modernism.

GF – A recurring impasse.

AS – Afterwards "Deconstructionism" was used, and we had to change again. There are events that are related to the general broadening of focus, and to the relations of Architecture with other activities. But in Architecture, with its slow rhythm, they manifest themselves suddenly, jerkily. In activities like poetry for example, that keeps up with what's going on, I don't see this fragmentation and marked divisions, although of course conflicts among factions do exist. Labels are reductive ... even if necessary.

GF – And as well as that sometimes they're not understood very well, being appropriated by Architecture Theory, not always in consonance with evolving thought or with a style's intrinsic strategic significance, as a style. The career of Philip Johnson comes to mind.

AS – He went through everything.

Taking artisans to work in Holland is a contemporary act. We can observe mobility of materials as of labour. Globalisation and mobility have existed throughout history, albeit with another rhythm, and Portugal is a proof of that. All is vertiginously new but it is also not completely new.

GF – That seems somewhat “Post-Critical Regionalism”. And thinking about the explanations that have been given, I would say that the contemporary moment must be seen according to the complexity of the coexistence of continuities and ruptures, rather than the succession of generations. Thinking about literature and politics, I think that Deconstruction allowed apparently excluded items to be analysed (such as the ideological institutionalisation present in texts, for example the Marxist opposition between the individual and the collective) and in Architecture that can be a productive strategy-outline.

AS – It is complex. I see projects thought out that, with a change of political majority, are summarily dismissed. Perversities, astounding things, perhaps because our democracy is recent, but it happens all the time.

GF – Opportunism. There exists one acceptance of Architecture in which what people want is the signature of an “author”, and yet in dealing with the pragmatism of efficiency projects may become amorphous, mutating in the service of supporting whoever is in power.

AS – I see people repeating the projects with a makeover according to the administration of the day. Ethics are going through a bad time at the moment.

GF – Now reflecting on this exhibition that I have curated, we've seen from the 1980s "generation" after "generation" declaring themselves. There have been interesting exhibitions in that period—I'm thinking of those dealing with Rodeia, Vítor, etc. But we have to question whether this state of affairs hasn't contributed to a fragile process of sequence and rupture. It appears productive and lucid to me to identify the coexistence of "continuities and ruptures" that make up the dialectic of Architecture as an institution.

AS – Yes, they do, they do.

GF – We've selected works that provide a balance between continuities and ruptures. For example, in the houses designed by the first architect selected we can see many aspects that are conventional within Portuguese practice, but also a certain freedom and playfulness in their application: the front part doesn't have anything to do with the back, traditional elements such as the patio are altered, diluting his stamp on the work, sharing its design with the client in an impressively super-humble fashion.

AS – There are lots of ways to put an exhibition together. Naturally things aren't all rupture and there are legible continuities here and there. In an exhibition of the work of young people certain aspects are important, such as allowing for the greater difficulty they have in finding work. I know it's not easy at all! These days a President wouldn't give work to anybody as young as I was when it happened to me thanks to a recommendation by Távora. There is more work, there are more opportunities, architects are now recognised and they work all over the country, but there are many more difficulties and restrictions, much more bureaucracy. The spread of Architecture is subject to political pressures, competitions are not transparent processes, but there are other types of difficulties.

GF – But the new generations have shown ability to find work and become more visible. There are things that will improve, ease of access to references, willingness to coexist with difference within the generation itself etc, things that are apparent in the unquestionable diversity of present-day Architecture.

AS – There are improved conditions, the openness to information, mobility, etc. But Portugal possesses such a disordered landscape that it affects whatever Architecture is carried out. Good architects are produced, but the chaotic visual landscape is the greatest problem we face.

GF – It's something that has to do with all generations, it questions the relations between Architecture and Society. The new generation is marked by information and mobility, and has demonstrated merit in its constructional abilities. But there are times when it seems to establish a relation with the surrounding culture that is merely media-driven, and many young architects end up participating in a debate that is more of a spectacle than anything else. If there was a time when Architecture came to represent even opposition to a regime, the culture of the profession is shedding its political dimension.

AS – Everything has broadened, and there aren't so much the extreme and defined factions that once established the need to take a political stand. But there is more information, the faculties are better, and there is more contact. Look at the implications that something like the Erasmus programme can have for example. Naturally, there are positive aspects and extremely talented architects.

GF – The architects that we tried to select have got different references, although in our small country they end up being placed side by side. If Pedro, who won the national Secil prize, appropriates references in terms of continuity, the As group who work in Lisbon incorporate their experiences abroad to aid them in the successive competitions they've won.

AS – An exhibition organised in this fashion represents a choice and an assessment of what's being done. It has documentary value as well as the merit of sparking debate.

GF – We’ve tried to allow “continuities and ruptures” to coexist in the National Institute of Architecture. The second architectural practice, whose recent work I’ve been following up north, appear as an ironic and opportune counterpoint in the context of the current “mediatisation”. Almost at the critical limit represented by Didier, who told me that his work is moving closer to Art.

AS – That is happening and it’s odd how there are a lot of artists moving closer to Architecture. It seems a positive development to me, one which is opposed to the tendency to an extreme specialisation. It might look like a dialogue with other areas, such as speaking with a physicist in the abstract, but it isn’t. In architectonic practice it is often difficult to get the various specialists to relate to each other, and I often wonder about the possibility of more openness, more of a sense of relationship, breaking with that terrible spirit of specialisation. There are positive aspects.

GF – It’s a topical debate in a community which has grown and diversified professionally and academically. In professional practice, for example, we see nowadays the appearance of many figures who mediate architecture in their professional activity, sometimes in as small a detail as a piece of gearing.

AS – In such a vast field there will be specialisation, but I see that the challenge is that of relationship and complementarity. With respect to what you mention, sometimes it’s awful. But if we think about continuity again, the establishment of such relationships takes time. These days we realise that everything is subject to the vertigo of the immediate, but time is an architect, time works hard, and less and less do we accept its existence and its importance. Everything is more intense in contemporary life. There’s an anxiety of the new in which what looks new is already old. Time ends up winning...

GF – That reminds me of something Souto Moura wrote in his final exams.

AS – Really? I suppose so.

GF – I remember some years back the idea was going round that you had spoken of withdrawing from the fray in order to develop your dream of being a sculptor. Would that be a less dramatic activity?

AS – It's not just your memory, I do have a need, almost a type of substitute for the wearing down the profession induces, a compensation or complement in the design of objects. These objects are equally demanding, but they can be completed, observed, confirmed and critiqued quickly. It's a type of liberation, almost therapy. It's not unusual for a work of Architecture to take 10 years, and it's not unusual because of the constant to and fro, difficulties in getting projects approved, financial constraints and so on. (...)

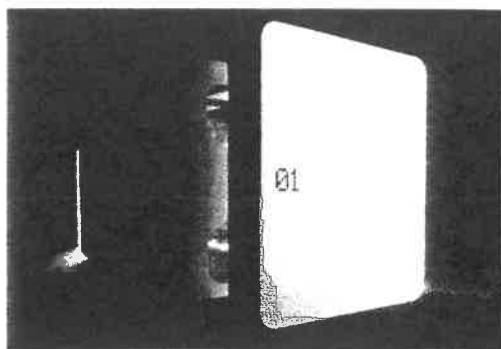
GF – If we think about the life of an architect and the time it takes to be trained, the generations that are in the exhibition are very young. After the dedication of a lifetime and the renown that it has conferred on you, what do you think Architecture is good for, why do we do Architecture?

AS – In principle, so that people can live better...or sometimes worse, don't we? On the other hand an interest in constructing is part of human nature as well as something we need, and naturally this interest becomes more concentrated in some people than others. It may be that inside every architect there exists the desire that Architecture weren't necessary. But here, for example, there's a desperation to build in the historic centre of the city, unnecessarily, given the very high percentage of new projects compared to rebuilding projects that one sees in other countries. That's what it's like in Oporto, and local pride just withers away over time. A little while ago we spoke of authorship, and there are situations when it's not understood that this is not necessarily innovation. I remember that my Plan for the Chiado (in Lisbon), which understood the historic centre as an architectonic whole, was attacked as being pastiche. Anyway, you shouldn't let me finish the interview so pessimistically.

GF – No. I like the idea that Architecture might be that subliminal desire that architects weren't necessary.

Fixe

No queremos ser menos que... y también le hemos dedicado un *especial* a nuestro
edno preferido. De una tacada ofrecemos el panorama actual de lo que se está cocinando en los fogones culturales portugueses: moda,
multimedia, literatura, música, diseño, tendencias, arte... gracias a gente de allí y de aquí, que está relacionada de una u otra forma
na, presente *cultural* luso. Ni todo es de color rosa, ni todo es provinciano, pero hay que reconocer que en algunos aspectos nos pue-
en dar algunas lecciones. No nos cerremos en nosotros mismos y dejémonos contaminar por lo que nos llega del oeste, que es mucho
bueno.



Diseño Viaje al diseño portugués

En el FAD podemos ver la exposición *Voyager*, una muestra itinerante que recoge la obra de más de 70 creadores portugueses de disciplinas tan diferentes como la arquitectura, el diseño industrial, nuevos medios o el *sound design*. Tras pasar por Lisboa, Milán y Londres, ahora llega a Barcelona. Gonçalo Furtado, arquitecto y colaborador de *Suite* en Portugal, habló con Pedro Gadanha, comisario de la exposición más ambiciosa de diseño portugués. **Gonçalo Furtado** ¿De dónde surgió el concepto de la exposición *Voyager*? **Pedro Gadanha** Surgió como una exposición itinerante que pretendía concretar dos objetivos, por un lado, hacer una divulgación, en ese momento anticipada, de la bienal *Experimenta*, introduciendo el tema de la bienal y presentando las áreas disciplinares que habría en ésta. Se quiso presentar en un formato no habitual, sin hacer una feria o un dossier de prensa, utilizando el formato exposición que recogiera el espíritu de la bienal. Por otro lado, se pretendía también divulgar la cultura portuguesa emergente en esas áreas: desde el diseño industrial y de producto, en el que se centra la bienal, hasta otras áreas, como el diseño gráfico, la arquitectura, la danza y el diseño de interiores. Así, se transformó en una exposición que se alimenta de las diferentes áreas y del estímulo de los creadores para presentar en formatos innovadores los contenidos de la exposición. Estamos hablando de artistas diferentes que cubren varias áreas del panorama creativo portugués, incluso de distintas generaciones y aproximaciones, que parece que están ocupando el lugar de las instituciones. ¿Cómo es posible organizar una exposición así? No pretendemos sustituir a ninguna de las instituciones destinadas a la divulgación de la cultura portuguesa, sino dar una visión propia que tiene mucho que ver con el espíritu que se ha desarrollado internamente en la bienal. Nosotros mismos, los organizadores, provenimos de diferentes disciplinas. Yo soy arquitecto, Guita Moura Guedes es diseñadora y gestora cultural, João Paulo Feliciano es artista plástico, músico y diseñador gráfico, y todo eso se traduce en una manera diferente

de mirar el panorama creativo. ¿Cómo es posible mirar el panorama artístico, que es fragmentado, frágil y disperso, y elegir áreas tan dispares como la arquitectura, la música, el diseño... dando una idea de unidad e interrelación? Para nosotros fue tanto un desafío como un ejercicio importante de comisariado. Es decir, en *Voyager* queríamos apostar por formatos, digamos, alternativos, explorar formas de presentación propias de la cultura visual y de la cultura del objeto de una forma diferente. Así que trabajamos sobre la idea de laboratorio para desarrollar esta experiencia. Proponíamos un concepto e invitábamos a los comisarios a desarrollarlos, empujándolos a cruzar las diferentes áreas presentes en la exposición y a que promovieran las colaboraciones. Por otro lado, fue el propio diseño de la exposición lo que nos permitió unificar este contenido. Se intentó establecer un lenguaje común para todas las disciplinas, que pasó por el soporte audiovisual en algunos casos y en otros, por el diseño de los expositores. ¿Cómo piensas que la creatividad, representada en esta exposición por el panorama portugués, puede ser comprendida, interpretada o criticada en otros lugares? Las reacciones en el resto de ciudades donde ha estado han sido positivas, sobre todo porque no esperaban este tipo de contenidos. Por ejemplo, en Milán donde *Experimenta* es conocida como organizadora de eventos, la exposición causó un efecto interesante en el marco de la Feria Internacional del Mueble, ya que no era una exposición exclusivamente dedicada al diseño industrial. Por otro lado, en Londres la reacción fue muy positiva, era lo que la gente esperaba de la cultura portuguesa y se demostró que Portugal puede organizar y mostrar este tipo de contenidos al mismo nivel que otras culturas europeas. Durante el transcurso de esta itinerancia se ha incluido un nuevo módulo. La exposición fue concebida teniendo muy en cuenta el componente sensorial. El primer módulo, el rojo, es una pieza que se atraviesa, que funciona como puerta de entrada, una experiencia sonora creada en colaboración entre un poeta y dos músicos. A partir de

ahí la expo es una instalación de módulos contenidos específicos. En uno de ellos interacciona el diseño industrial y el diseño de moda: hay una silla específicamente para la exposición por un diseñador industrial y uno de moda. Otro módulo concentra tantas disciplinas interrelacionadas a través del soporte audiovisual. Otro módulo tiene que ver con el patrocinador de la exposición, que es Atlântica, un fabricante de cristal portugués, que presenta una selección de objetos para la vida cotidiana en cristal, diseñados por diseñadores portugueses e internacionales. En Barcelona sólo podrán verse los diseños portugueses. Para nosotros es importante porque representa un *link* entre el mundo de la creatividad y la industria. En Barcelona, la exposición crece con un módulo que no estuvo en el resto de presentaciones, es una selección de jóvenes diseñadores portugueses. Estos son los que llamamos «objects with a twist», productos adaptados a la vida cotidiana tratados con humor. La continuidad va a tener la exposición para la difusión de la cultura del diseño en Portugal? Desgraciadamente en la sociedad portuguesa esta todavía muy marcada por la recepción que las cosas experimentan en el extranjero. Es un espíritu un poco provinciano, pero nuestra estrategia ha seguido esa línea, hemos intentado crear reflejos de esa audiencia extranjera para demostrar la buena acogida que tienen los productos. En este sentido, el impacto fue positivo y vamos a seguir trabajando en promover la cultura del diseño, no tanto como una disciplina, concretamente el diseño industrial, sino como una herramienta creativa que surge por diferentes disciplinas.

Voyager,

del 2 al 30 de octubre en la sala de exposiciones del FAD y en la Capilla dels Àngels.

Parte-se para uma conversa com José Salgado com alguns minutos de atraso, regados por um copo de uísque e condicionados pelo início de um programa de televisão. Começamos por ler num papel manuscrito as 58 perguntas efectuadas, no início do ano lectivo, aos alunos de História do 2º ano. É o inquérito de José Salgado. A entrevista que se segue começa e acaba aí.

Inquérito Salgado

(e se eu não falasse com estranhos?)



Unidade - lembro-me de fazer o inquérito e de pensar; se são as respostas que nos distanciam, então, são as perguntas que nos aproximam. Não é paradoxal, é assim mesmo?

Salgado - A ideia desde o início, de fazer o inquérito, era tentar obter elementos que facilitassem uma relação mais personalizada com os alunos; o início de uma relação pedagógica é sempre determinante, isto é, o primeiro contacto do professor com o aluno é efectivamente muito especial porque os alunos estão com algumas expectativas, estão mais interessados em ouvir um sujeito que ainda não conhecem como professor.

Unidade - Embora no segundo ano já tenham algumas informações sobre si.

Salgado - Evidentemente que eu não sou completamente desconhecido para os alunos do 2º ano, mas não deixa de ser um primeiro contacto, que é sempre muito importante.

Unidade - Como surgiu o inquérito?

Salgado - A ideia do inquérito surgiu-me como a forma expedita de obter os elementos que, provavelmente, se obteriam numa conversa informal se houvesse a oportunidade de falar com cada um em particular... esse tipo de perguntas acabaria por aparecer... com o inquérito a coisa ganha um aspecto mais formal mas é uma forma rápida de, num tempo de uma aula, obter as informações que sustentam muitas das conversas entre as pessoas...

Unidade - Mas também se torna mais agressivo ou indiscreto; não se costuma perguntar, de uma maneira formal, a uma pessoa que não se conhece, se toma banho nua, à noite, no mar.

Salgado - Parece-me claro que se eu colocasse essa questão no início do inquérito as pessoas pensariam: "este tipo é maluco! o que é que ele quer?" e, de imediato, responderiam na defensiva. O que eu tentei fazer foi agrupar as questões de modo a que gradualmente as pessoas sentissem que "estão" numa conversa e não num interrogatório de esquadra da polícia. As questões começam por ser muito vagas, indicativas de uma identificação, como por exemplo se "o aluno nasceu em casa ou numa maternidade", é uma pergunta que confirma o desuso de uma prática muito corrente nas pessoas que têm agora 40 ou 45 anos e que nasceram em casa.

Unidade - Hoje já não se percebe o sentido da pergunta, parece estranha...

Salgado - nascer em casa, hoje, significa coisas que não significava dantes.

Unidade - Existem outras questões menos objectivas...

Salgado - Há muitas outras questões, há um bloco de dados objectivos, e depois há um bloco de perguntas mais subjectivas que tentam situar indicadores de gosto, de expectativas, como quando se pergunta "que tipo de edifício gostaria de projectar?" e são dadas várias hipóteses mas 90% das respostas são "a casa particular" e não edifícios de serviços ou equipamentos.



Unidade - Poucas preocupações sociais ?

Salgado - Essas questões são colocadas no sentido de tentar despistar o universo em que se movimentam os alunos.

Unidade - Sobressai um interesse de comparar ou rotular?

Salgado - Basicamente isto tem-me servido para reflectir um bocado sobre as diferenças geracionais; constatar que eu com vinte anos, e a gente da minha geração, responderíamos a este inquérito de formas completamente diferentes, ou mesmo pessoas que fizeram o inquérito há quatro ou cinco anos. Lembro-me perfeitamente que em 78 os automóveis eram uma realidade que só tocava uma minoria de alunos, agora são poucos os que não têm, era aquela fase conturbada do pós 25 de Abril, estava-se na "onda" social, as pessoas "queriam" só carros utilitários, o carro dos sonhos era no máximo um volvo, o resto andava pelos renault 5, agora os carros de sonho são outra vez os ferraris ou maseratis. Havia uma realidade escamoteada nas respostas daquela época.

Unidade - Reconhece, agora, uma certa tipificação das respostas associadas ao nosso universo académico ?

Salgado - Eu retirei algumas perguntas que existiam em inquéritos anteriores, como designar arquitectos ou obras, porque eram na generalidade referências muito "óbvias", essencialmente autores de que se tinha falado no primeiro ano; Corbusier, Rossi, Siza, Mies,...quatro ou cinco nomes que apareciam exhaustivamente, quando apareciam nomes fora dessa lista dizia chamavam-me a atenção," porque é que este fulano menciona o Luigi Snozzi?", normalmente eram respostas de pessoas que já estavam a trabalhar, ou partilhavam outros ambientes de arquitectura fora da escola.

Unidade - Existe uma cultura dominante ?

Salgado - Há sinais claros da cultura dominante... os estudantes (não quero chamar-lhes classe...) espelham muito bem os tiques da cultura dominante que naturalmente vai sofrendo flutuações, oscilações de gosto e de referências.

Unidade - que rapidamente se transformam em peças da arqueologia social...

Salgado - Sim, como os filmes ou as coisas que se lêem nos jornais. As respostas são enquadráveis dentro de um determinado esquema, hoje em dia



também se vê mais televisão, nota-se que há uma circulação da informação mais frenética e rápida do que quando fiz o primeiro inquérito.

Unidade - Uma questão reconhecidamente fora de moda: se a nossa geração não é "rasca" então o que é que é ?

Salgado - Não acho que seja "rasca", acho que é uma geração que não tem naturalmente as mesmas referências que a minha geração teve, e penso que a dificuldade de entendimento das novas referências é a dificuldade da minha geração. A desvalorização que delas se faz, parte também do desajuste que existe na simples passagem do tempo, as coisas mudam com muita rapidez, mudam na superfície, não tanto naquilo que seria essencial, e a cultura actual é uma cultura de superfície, disso não tenho a menor dúvida. Penso antes que se trata de uma geração "perplexa"...a que retiraram grandes desígnios motivadores.

Unidade - Mais do que apaziguar um "conflito de gerações" o inquérito procura reforçar uma relação pedagógica professor/aluno.

Salgado - Não pode haver uma relação pedagógica válida se o professor encarar os alunos que tem à sua frente como números: ou os encara como pessoas, e cada pessoa é um caso, e é um caso que muitas vezes tem especificidade, que este inquérito, não detecta logo à primeira, mas muitas vezes ajuda a detectar ou dificilmente poderá existir mais do que o conflito de interesses que se joga na relação de poder. E o professor tem sempre mais armas e mais defesas... Algumas pessoas ficam melindradas, respondem à defesa, mas de um modo geral as respostas que dão são relativamente sinceras, porque têm de responder depressa, não há muito tempo para pensar, existe uma certa espontaneidade que me dá uma certa vantagem... Também há os que começam por responder "atinadamente" e depois "revoltam-se", penso que são os tais comportamentos de defesa.

Unidade - Provavelmente porque se joga só de um lado, não há um diálogo...acaba por ser um bocado confessional.

Salgado - Claro que numa conversa existe outro entendimento, há sempre a possibilidade de ver a reacção, por exemplo, facial, os olhares, a empatia do interlocutor, cria-se uma relação diferente, também por isso não avanço com perguntas de foro íntimo, ou avanço mas com alguma descontracção, as pessoas não sentem que se estão a confessar mas a conversar.



Unidade - Depois como é que gere essa informação?

Salgado - Tenho pena de não rentabilizar mais este trabalho, poderia ser utilizado como um indicador sociológico, se calhar, de pouco rigor científico. As respostas junto-as à caderneta do aluno com a fotografia e outros dados pessoais, por vezes servem-me para ver se o aproveitamento que eu considero que o aluno teve, corresponde ao perfil que o inquérito permite ler, muitas vezes há desconexões; o inquérito também não pode ser avaliado em melhor ou pior, mas há respostas que sugerem que o aluno tem pouca informação e acaba por ser bom aluno e vice versa.

Unidade - Nunca pensou em divulgar as respostas que daria às suas perguntas do inquérito?



Salgado - Já pensei e já me pediram muitas vezes, e não me nego a isso, se quiserem vou respondendo durante o ano lectivo...
Unidade - Desculpe interromper, mas o programa que a Teresa queria ver, está a começar...
Salgado - (levanta-se e vai chamar a Teresa)
M. Sousa Tavares - (na televisão) "...o que é a felicidade para os portugueses? - saúde vêm à cabeça com 54%, boa vida conjugal: 20%, dinheiro suficiente para ter uma vida agradável: 11%, dar-se bem com a família: 7%, e apenas 1,4% acha que é uma condição essencial de felicidade ter um trabalho que se goste..."
Nota Final: Ao reler a entrevista verifiquei que havia o subtítulo: "e se eu não falasse com estranhos?" Bom, certamente perderia a oportunidade de encontrar alguém bem interessante... (J.S.)

se não fez o inquérito com o José Salgado, envie-nos as suas respostas pelo correio e habilite-se a ganhar um magnífico automóvel. nós temos as respostas certas.

(20) considera que teve uma infância muito mimada, medianamente, mimada, ou nada mimada?

(22) houve algum livro que o tivesse marcado em especial? se sim, qual?

(23) vai habitualmente à missa?

(27) em média, quanto tempo vê por dia a televisão?

(34) qual é o seu prato favorito?

(37) qual é o automóvel dos seus sonhos? de que cor?

(40) joga habitualmente no totoloto?

(45) quem é que, para si, personifica o ideal de beleza?

(47) já viu filmes pornográficos?

(51) tem algum medo ou fobia em especial?

(52) todos nós achamos que somos capazes de fazer bem qualquer coisa. qual é a sua "especialidade"?

(53) já alguma vez tomou banho no mar, à noite, completamente nu?

(54) qual é a qualidade que considera imprescindível existir no outro para ser seu amigo?

(55) qual o dia que acha que foi o mais feliz da sua vida?

Matosinhos, 8 de Janeiro de 1997.

PORTUGAL TRACING THE

AA FRONT MEMBERS' ROOM
12 NOVEMBER TO 7 DECEMBER 2004

EMERGENT ARCHITECTURAL SCENE:
A.S.* (CÉLIA GOMES, PEDRO MACHADO COSTA)
AUZ (JORGE LAPA, JOSÉ MACEDO, PEDRO SANTOS)
PEDRO MAURÍCIO BORGES

Continuity and Rupture

The following extract from an interview between Álvaro Siza Vieira and Gonçalo Furtado, one of the curators of the '100 Years of Portuguese Architecture' exhibition, offers an introduction to Portugal's contemporary architectural influences that have shaped it.

GF I'd like to talk about Portuguese architecture and the context of you as well as the work of younger generations. I suggest the theme of 'continuity and rupture', because the history of architecture has evolved out of this dialectic. The modernist architecture we have arose in a particular cultural and political context. Some of its practitioners were active until recently, such as Francisco Távora in Oporto.

AS Távora is a distinctive architect who influenced this country's architecture in two respects: through his wide and sensitive learning, and through the fertile development his work undertook taking modernism in new directions. When he joined the Faculty of Architecture in Oporto in the 1950s it was already under the influence of Le Corbusier, and directed by Carlos Cruz-Andrade, who was well aware of the benefits of encouraging young talent.

Later on, with the relaxation of political controls, there was greater access to information and more opportunities for travel, to be exposed to other influences (whether Neorationalism or the work of Frank Lloyd Wright or Alvaró Aalto). Modernism was under revision, as was Portuguese culture in general. The academies went through a period of struggle that resulted in prison sentences both literal and metaphorical – in terms of being marginalised by the establishment or one's colleagues. But after the Revolution of 25 April 1974 architecture moved towards the people.

GF There were numerous factors conditioning that process of evolution: modernism, both internal and external. For example Brazilian modernism, or the work of Alvaró Aalto, which could be seen in magazines.

AS These influences operated primarily through affinity. The Brazilian influence in the 1950s can be understood in terms of cultural links between the two countries. The interest in Aalto and in Finland had to do with both countries being on the periphery, and both having a living tradition of folk culture.

GF Did Távora's 'third way', recognising the limits of modernism and adapting it, find echoes in your work?

AS Our trajectories and concerns are different. At first Távora produced modernist works that were rejected by government ministers. The real turning point for him came with a small project for the House in Oñiz. I was working with him at the time. We worked together on competition for the Market, and he



GOLDENIAN
FOUNDATION

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me the Swimming Pool project after noticing my obsession with the 'Conceição Estate' (Quinta da Conceição).

Távora was a man who shared everything enthusiastically: his trips to the CIAM Congresses, Le Corbusier's latest design for a door handle, and so on. But we had different trajectories. I didn't take part in the *Survey of Portuguese Architecture*, for example, and so the influence of vernacular architecture is much less direct or pure in my work. What was passed on was an attitude towards continuity that questioned the spirit of conservatism that prevailed at the time.

GF At times the north and south of the country have been considered to hold distinct attitudes towards architecture. During this period, did they have different types of commission, different references, scales of work...?

AS Lisbon was very controlled because of its proximity to those in power. This meant that many architects moved to Oporto to complete their studies. Even Carlos Ramos, that seminal director of the Faculty in Oporto, was from Lisbon. Ramos didn't just take responsibility for members of the Faculty who were politically active against the regime, he also participated in the defence of others who were imprisoned.

Thus, at a transitional moment, the two cities drew closer, partly because of the exchange of students, partly because of the group involved in the *Revista Arquitectura Portuguesa* (Journal of Portuguese Architecture), partly because events such as the Convention or the *Survey* served to establish guidelines for our profession. Even if there were different opportunities, the Lisbon-Oporto divide is mostly a fabrication, applicable only to the basic conditions of architectural production.

GF With regard to this myth of 'schools' in a small country, you have written that a school achieves prestige if it has the agility to renew itself – a comment I would like to extend to Portuguese architecture as a whole.

AS In the 1950s and 1960s there was one school that was more adept in getting around political constraints. But I don't see much sense in retrospectively using the term 'Oporto School': it's a source of error and of a certain elitism. What came out of the consolidation of the different teaching faculties was, as I said, a mix of events such as the Convention or the *Survey*, which were the expression of a unified position.

GF In the 1980s the country was open to multiple external references and a veritable explosion occurred (in the number of places where architecture could be studied, in courses, in the diversity of practices, etc). There was also an increasing focus on architecture in the media, even a sense of architecture as public spectacle, which at times revealed the limitations of its political dimension, or its potential for protest.

AS When I started to work in Matosinhos near Oporto, in 1953-54, architects were in the minority, which led to conflict with the engineers, who saw us as surplus requirements. The great difference at the Revolution in 1974 was the decentralisation of practice away from Lisbon and Oporto. The dependency of architecture on the mechanisms of power has always been a fact of life in this country, but today it has increased, becoming painful at times. Municipal councils serve a four-year term and if they are voted out of office the act of the new council is generally to cancel the projects begun or planned by the predecessors. This goes a long way towards explaining the low quality of public architecture. But more serious even than these problems with architecture (which can still be overcome by the efforts of younger generations), is the widespread destruction of the landscape. What's the point of a fine work of architecture if it is set in a degraded landscape? I think this is an aspect that is not taken seriously enough, on account of a lack of political vision.

GF There is one view that what people want of architecture is the signature of an 'author', and yet projects that are contingent on political approval tend to become amorphous, mutating in the service of whoever is in power.

AS I see people repeating the same mistakes with a simple make-over according to the administration of the day. Ethics are through a bad time at the moment.

GF Reflecting on this exhibition, we tried, through our selection of work, to identify the coexistence of the 'continuities and ruptures' that make up the dialectic of architecture as an institution. For example, in the houses designed by Pedro Maria Borges we can see many things that are conventional aspects of Portuguese practice, but also a certain freedom and playfulness in their application: the part doesn't have anything to do with the whole, traditional elements such as tiles are altered, diluting his stamp on them. And the design is shared with the client in an impressively humble fashion.

The architects in the show have different frameworks of reference, although in a small country they end up being grouped together. While Borges, who recently won the important Secil Prize, appropriates references in terms of continuity, the group from Lisbon incorporates the experiences they have gained abroad. Their successful competition proposal for the AUZ, in turn, appears as an ironic and opportune counterpoint to the current 'mediatisation' of the profession. The newest generation is defined by information and mobility, but there are times when its relation to culture seems to be merely media-driven. The profession seems to be shedding its political dimension.

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AS Everything has relaxed, and it is no longer necessary to take an extreme political stand. There is more information, and more contact with outside architects. Think of the implications of something like the Erasmus programme, for example. At the same time there is an increasing specialisation in architectural practice, and it is often difficult to get the specialists to relate to each other. I often think about the need to set up a more open dialogue, to break away from that terrible spirit of specialisation.

But returning to the theme of continuity, such a thing takes time to achieve. And these days everything is subject to the vertigo of the new. There is less and less acceptance of the importance of time.

GF I remember some years back there was a rumour that you were going to withdraw from the fray in order to pursue your dream of becoming a sculptor. Would that be a less frantic activity?

AS I do have a need to find an outlet in the design of objects. It's a way of countering the wear and tear of the profession. These objects are demanding to design, but they can be completed, observed, confirmed and critiqued in a short space of time. It's a type of liberation, almost a therapy. By contrast, it's not unusual for a building to take 10 years to complete, because of the difficulties in getting projects approved, financial constraints, and so on.

GF In the terms of this profession, and the time it takes to train, the architects in the exhibition are all very young. After the dedication of a lifetime and the renown it has conferred on you, what do you think architecture is good for, why do we do it?

AS In principle, we do it so that people can live better. An interest in building is part of human nature, as well as something we need, and naturally this interest is more concentrated in some people than in others. It may be, however, that every architect secretly wishes that architecture weren't necessary. We've talked of authorship, but many people don't seem to understand that it does not necessarily involve innovation. I remember that my plan for the Chiado (in Lisbon), which conceived of the historic centre as an architectonic whole, was attacked as pastiche. But you shouldn't let me finish the interview on such a pessimistic note.

GF No. I like the idea that architects might secretly wish that architecture didn't have to exist.