

A black and white photograph of three runners in a modern building courtyard. The runners are seen from behind, moving away from the camera. The runner on the left wears a tank top with 'ISI' on the back. The middle runner wears a white t-shirt with 'U.S.A.' on the back. The runner on the right is shirtless and wears shorts with a vertical stripe. The courtyard is paved and has a low concrete wall. In the background, a modern building with a large circular opening and multiple levels with windows is visible. The title 'RADICAL PEDAGOGIES' is printed in large, white, sans-serif capital letters across the upper middle of the image.

# RADICAL PEDAGOGIES

EDITED BY  
BEATRIZ COLOMINA  
IGNACIO G. GALÁN  
EVANGELOS KOTSIORIS  
ANNA-MARIA MEISTER



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Culture. At the Louvre, in front of the politically charged sculpture *Winged Victory of Samothrace*, the sociologist Bruno Queysanne staged a public intervention titled "Le Capital dans la Construction et les Travaux Publics." The two hundred students who attended the event appropriated the slogans of the nascent strike: "Urbanisme = spéculation," "Pas de prof de construction," and "3 morts par jour sur les chantiers."<sup>2</sup>

In Nantes, until the opening of a formal school in 1974, architectural education revolved first around the question of program and, later, around the construction of new buildings, a process which was then understood as "theoretical practice." In this context, the Nouvelle École (New School) group was constituted in 1971 as the Centre d'Étude et de Recherche Opérationnelle en Architecture (Center for Operational Study and Research in Architecture). Over the next three years, the entire faculty worked with students on proposals for functional distributions of space and program. This led to the development of a complex space defined by metal girders: the beams featured a geometry typical of the early 1970s, a framework with forty-five-degree angles, creating sections of twenty-five square meters—each intended for work groups of twenty-five students. These liberalized and labyrinthine spaces represented a rupture with the ideal type of the immense Beaux-Arts atelier. Despite functional flaws in the construction, everyone was allowed to work in isolation or in small groups in a way that allowed radical changes of atmosphere within the space of a few meters. In line with the spirit of the time, the building was never officially inaugurated, but rather was inhabited and appropriated by the students.

Simultaneously, during the summer of 1972, two issues of *Les Temps Modernes* (nos. 313 and 314–315)

were edited collectively, providing active support to the struggles of agricultural labor in the surrounding areas of Nantes. Indeed, the public figure of Bernard Lambert, as well as the movement of "worker peasants," were born in the region at that time.

In all these instances, architectural interventions became the vehicle for defiant political activism in the public sphere. In 1971, when the design process for the new school at Nantes had just begun, there was even a suggestion to simply build a huge garage, as a hub for trucks which would go forth to spread architects' wisdom to the surrounding cities. It is necessary to remember this period, as—at least in France—the human sciences landed with a crash in architectural teaching, changing the field forever. To quote one of the Maoist slogans so popular at the time: "The one who has not done research has no right to speak out!"

^ Plastic arts workshop, UPAN new school site of Mulotière, 1975. Georges Evano and Jean-Luc Pellerin, with Bernard Barto. Photograph by Gilbert Champenois.

< UP6 Villeneuve la Garenne students give shape to a new "Maison du Peuple," May 1972.

1. See Michel de Certeau, *La Prise de parole et autres écrits politiques*, ed. Luce Giard (Paris: Seuil, 1994). Certeau's analysis was first published as *La Prise de parole. Pour une nouvelle culture* (Paris: Desclée De Brouwer, 1968).
2. "Urbanisme = spéculation," "No professor of construction," "Three deaths every day on building sites."

## REVOLUTIONARY LEARNING IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Joaquim Moreno

**Protagonists** Álvaro Siza Vieira (1933–), Francisco Guedes (1945–2013), Eduardo Souto de Moura (1952–), Adalberto Dias (1953–), Domingos Tavares (1939–), Manuela Sambade, Graça Nieto, Paula Cabral

**Institution** Architecture Section, Escola de Belas Artes do Porto (ESBAP), Universidade de Porto

**Location** Porto, Portugal

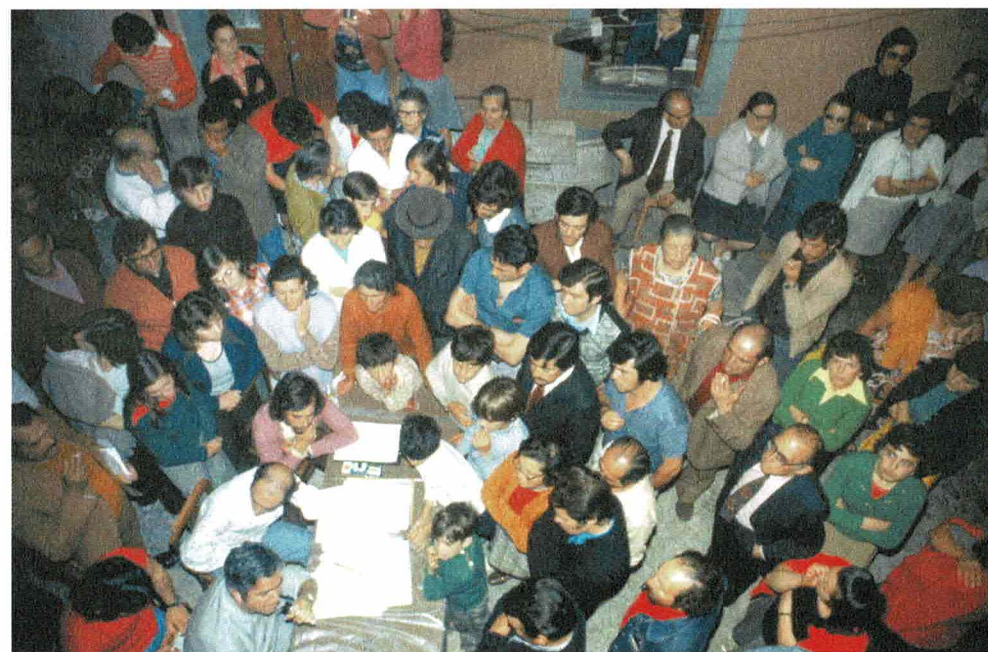
**Dates** 1974–1976

In August 1974, four months after the Carnation Revolution that brought it to power, Portugal's new socialist government issued a decree creating the SAAL (Mobile Local Support Service) program. Matching financial and technical support with grassroots politics and community organization, SAAL was arguably the most intense moment of "social architecture" in Portugal in recent times.

For architecture students at ESBAP, Porto's School of Fine Arts, which had been practically paralyzed by an "experimental" pedagogy and student protests, SAAL was both an extension and an alternative: an extension because it offered the opportunity to work closely with local populations;

an alternative because it opened up a mode of experimental practice focused on new conditions for urban life. Architect Álvaro Siza Vieira, who was teaching in Porto at the time, captured well the paradoxical nature of this collaborative work: "Architecture represents compromise transformed into radical expression; the capacity to reconcile opposites and overcome contradictions. To learn this requires an education that looks for otherness within each one."<sup>1</sup> For architecture students, the SAAL program offered a radical new perspective on the relations between architecture and society—and also between design and building, often involving a bottom-up approach to construction.

Before SAAL, faculty and students at the Porto school had engaged with the city through surveys of specific neighborhoods and studio assignments focused on the design of social facilities. But institutional stasis—the "impossibility of designing without knowing"<sup>2</sup> (an analytical position that deferred action)—meant their efforts were of no use to impoverished neighborhoods that were fighting for their survival, under threat from a totalitarian regime that wanted to raze the housing and decant the inhabitants to the periphery of the city. Nonetheless, this prior experience helped to establish a shared sense of belonging that was fundamental for SAAL's principal means of operation: grassroots political organization and the formation of residents' committees to steer the process.



< Meeting of residents and architects in the Leal neighborhood of Porto, 1975. Photograph by Sergio Fernandez.





Eduardo Souto de Moura and Adalberto Dias, then fourth-year students, recalled the earlier investigations undertaken by the school in the São Victor area. They had traced the nuclei of the so-called “proletarian islands”—rowhouses packed behind a street façade—and established basic criteria such as the number of people living in each house, or the number of families that had to share a single toilet.<sup>3</sup> These studies would allow them to jumpstart the SAAL process, which opened up the opportunity not only for active political engagement, helping local communities, but also for professional practice.

Both Dias and Souto de Moura thought it imperative to seize this opportunity but also understood that their education had not prepared them well for the task. For help in designing the housing, they turned to Siza, who they considered the best architect on the faculty. Siza has recalled the experience as one of intense dialogue, encounter, and confrontation.

Rather than supporting an approach that hovered between a reticent “architecture by the people” and a paternalistic “architecture for the people,” Siza proposed a design-based alternative. In conditions of scarcity—of building materials, space, time—form

had to be discovered through a consideration of the architectural issues. Only a collaborative design process could foster Siza’s alternative: “architecture with the people.” The design was therefore guided by a number of pressing questions: How to start immediately but also have a plan? How to construct in dialogue instead of manipulating the dialogue? How to learn construction and also learn how to build things with others? How to articulate the right to housing and the right to the city? How to resolve the lack of space without losing the feeling of solidarity in the community? How to transform compromise into radical expression?

These questions all came into play in the construction of new social housing on the empty site of Senhora das Dores, where the neighborhood committee drove the process forward with a sense of urgency. In this context, where it was almost necessary to build before designing, Siza’s transmission of the accumulated knowledge of modern housing projects proved vital. While the experiments of Bruno Taut or J. J. P. Oud were not technically replicable in Porto’s inner city, given the scarcity of resources, these well-tested projects were useful references for a very delicate design experiment. Developed by a “technical brigade” led by Siza and mostly made up of architecture students engaged in an intense dialogue with the community, the Senhora das Dores housing remains an intense and fragile memento of the experimental application of SAAL’s revolutionary ideals.

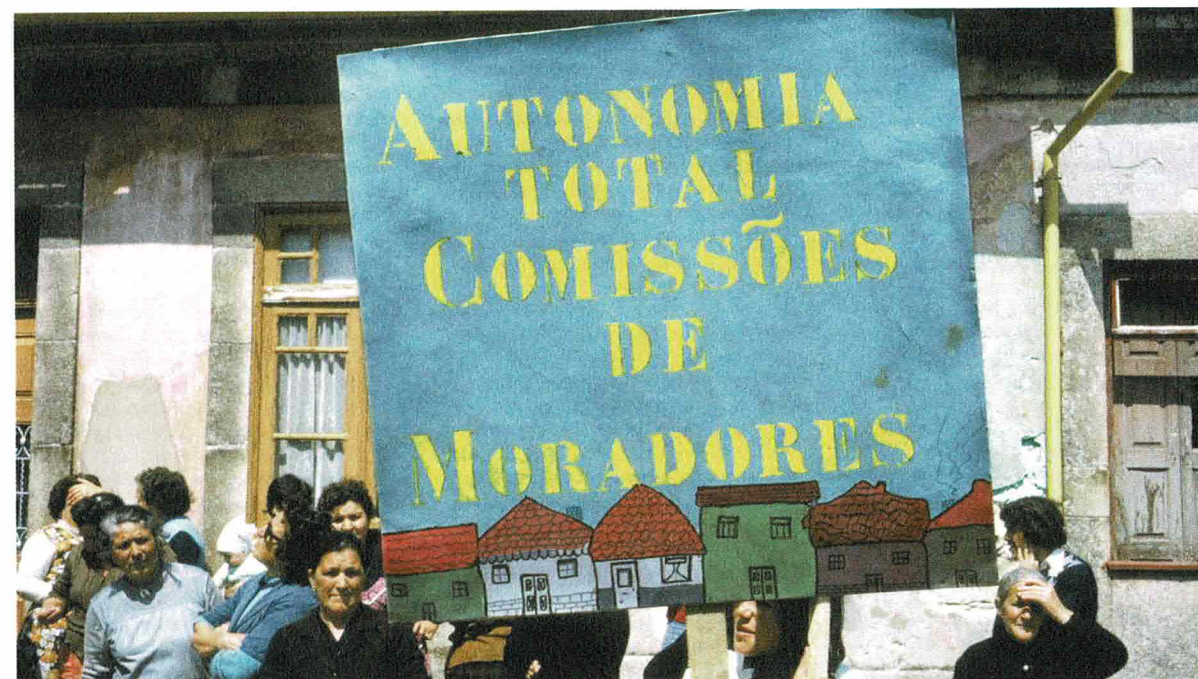
For those who lived this experiment from within, as students, drafting through the night and visiting the building the next morning, it was a dramatic introduction to both the role of architects in society and the role of participation in the discipline. The stagnation of the Porto school became an opportunity—an event where architecture overlapped with violence and reality; a juncture bringing together different scales, from the small islands of housing in the inner-city neighborhoods to the dreams and disappointments of the revolution; an occasion when architects were asked to face the growing complexities and contradictions of participating in changing social paradigms and to turn those challenges into a postinstitutional method.

^ Álvaro Siza on site at SAAL’s São Victor social housing, Porto, 1974.

> Residents demanding “total autonomy for the residents’ commissions,” Porto, 1975. Photograph by Alexandre Alves Costa.

1. Álvaro Siza, “Sobre pedagogia,” in *01 Textos* (Porto: Civilização Editora, 2009), 167–169. Original in *Jornadas Pedagógicas*, FAUP, 1995.
2. See José António Bandeira, *O Processo SAAL e a Arquitectura no 25 de Abril de 1974* (Coimbra: Imprensa da Universidade, 2007).
3. Information based on unpublished interviews with the protagonists of this process.





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**Front cover** Arie Sharon, Ife University, Nigeria, 1960s.  
**Inside front cover** Driftwood village, Experiments in Environment workshop, 1968. **Back cover** Demonstration in the central hall of the FAU-USP building designed by Vilanova Artigas. Photograph by Raul Garcez. **Inside back cover** Gyorgy Kepes, 1967. Photograph by Ivan Massar.

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