

## 7. Dresden International Doctoral Colloquium

### Architectural Aesthetics, Building Composition & City Design

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#### ***Campo Alegre***<sup>1</sup>

*A laboratory of urban design. Porto*

Located at the top of a steep scarp, facing the Douro, *Campo Alegre* is part of a beautiful charming landscape. It is coated with a dense mantle of ancient trees and lush gardens, dotted with important examples of built heritage, with the river flowing to the ocean at its base.

The urban form that shapes *Campo Alegre* is characterized by a profusion of pieces from very distinct times and city designs - there exists a bridge over the Douro and the road megastructure to access it, an university campus, modern residential blocks, elegant *villas*, and terraced vegetable gardens. It is the result of the overlapping of distinct layers over time. A process of more than two hundred years history, crossing every stages of urbanization through to *Campo Alegre's* full integration in the city.

Over time, *Campo Alegre* assumes the general shape of: a place of farms and cottages on the edge of the city; a place of sublime nature and picturesque qualities, where many foreign families - of traders and industrials from different Hanseatic cities – cultivated a Romantic life; a working-class district; a bourgeois residential suburb; and, finally, of a new city center, as a result of the new bridge. With this aim in purpose, *Campo Alegre* was the subject of several urban plans throughout four decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Worked by renowned architects, they represent different views on the construction of urban fabric developed in Europe through the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Among others, *Campo Alegre* was worked by the Italians, Marcelo Piacentini and Giovanni Muzio, by one of the Portuguese participants in the CIAMs, Fernando Távora, and by Álvaro Siza, author of the design for the Faculty of Architecture, located within this area.

Acknowledging the evolution process of *Campo Alegre's* urban form, the research ongoing states *Campo Alegre* as an exceptional study case on the construction of new urban hubs, invisible to straightforward first readings. Based on a wide-ranging archive material and on contemporary publications on Architecture and Urbanism, the research provides a revealing insight into *Campo Alegre*. It translates the entire process of its construction into drawing and discusses the paths by which its form evolved over time. It argues that *Campo Alegre* is as a invaluable *laboratory* of urban design.

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<sup>1</sup> *Mery Field*. The name *Campo Alegre* has an ambivalent sense: between a large, fertile, fruitful field and a pleasurable place.