

Space-time experience as a resource to dialogue with the place; the example of Álvaro Siza's Saya Park Art Pavilion and Rem Koolhaas' Casa da Música

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ABSTRACT: According to its three-dimensional condition, Architecture needs time. In other words, it depends on movement in order to provide a complete experience of its space. Furthermore, whenever Architecture has a relevant significance, it can be said that it reflects its own time. In that sense, there is a relationship between space and time.

Álvaro Siza's lesson arises as a fundamental approach to this subject. By framing Architecture as a result of a dynamic action in space, he sees time as an indispensable feature for the sensorial architectural experience. In this respect, he shares the same idea as OMA/Rem Koolhaas. Even though, unlike Koolhaas, Siza sees specificity as a basic condition for Architecture, it is not so surprising that the Saya Park Art Pavilion (North Korea, 2015-2018), by Siza, and Casa da Música (Porto, 1999-2005), by Koolhaas, show similarities. As this paper concludes, the autonomy in both works is not real nor *Generic*. They both consider their own context to paradoxically free themselves from the context. In other words, they both result from previous projects, and the architectural disciplinary scope is the key to contextualize Architecture, that is, the space-time binomial is the resource used to inscribe a specific meaning to both buildings. From this point of view, both are significant approaches to Architecture.

Keywords: Álvaro Siza, Rem Koolhaas, Generic city, Saya Park Art Pavilion, Casa da Música

1 OVERTURE: SIZA BY SIZA

The space-time binomial in Architecture can be perceived in two different ways. It is undeniable that as a creation with a three-dimensional definition, Architecture must consider time as a fundamental feature to provide a full spatial experience. On the other hand, relevant Architecture is always a reflection of its own time, in accordance with its role as a cultural expression of a specific place and moment. In Portugal, these two ways of perceiving Architecture come together. Both the practice and thinking of Portuguese architects rely on universalist meanings regarding the key disciplinary themes; however, in addition, their approach highlights the sensorial and phenomenological dimension as a primordial architectural "material": That kind of dimension is always based on a specific place and culture.

In short, the strong attention to the physical and cultural context, the proximity to life and people, and the universalist vocation (concerning the primordial disciplinary themes) may define some of the most relevant features of Portuguese Architecture.

Considering the abstract expression of his work, Manuel Mateus gives a significant meaning to the aforementioned arguments. He claims that permanent attention to the pre-existing context should always be a concern for architects in the European city: their design must provide continuity to the multiple historical levels of space and urban fabric (Mateus apud Cruz, 2017, p. 30).

The subject of this paper is based both on those premises and the hypothesis that arises from them. We will develop the arguments by looking at an exemplary Portuguese architect: Álvaro Siza. In his work, the space-time binomial is complex and rich enough to explore the ideas this paper aims to contemplate. We can say Siza perceives architecture far beyond a static point of view. Movement throughout the space is the key to understand his architecture, i.e., he always considers a sequence of spaces that may be discovered through sensory perception. We can say that this way of conceiving form and space depends on time for a full experience. In this sense, Siza compares the resources of the architect to those of the filmmaker.

[When someone directs a film], the camera... chooses different angles, organizes a *parcours* [sic], and can travel... so rhythm, differences of rhythm... We must relate different areas of a project. You design a hall, and you know that it is the preparation to enter the building, and after that comes another room or a corridor. And, maybe, we decide the ceiling will be low. And then, after entering, [we see] a high ceiling, [we experience] the sensation of space. Or it can be the opposite. We can enter a big room - for different reasons, we can consider that solution - and then we pass through a door and have a low corridor. A director works the same way... There is always movement, the succession of space, which provides different emotions according to the use of the building (Tchoban Foundation - Museum für Architekturzeichnung, 2019).

Movement in a building is a way of incorporating time into the architectural experience to increase the sensory experience of the human body in that space. As such, movement becomes a spatial experience. Moving throughout the space provides a continuous succession of unpredictable architectural “events.” The body, senses and perception are under permanent contrasts. The form of space and its dimensions, together with the light and different interior/exterior relationships give room for human experience over time. Time is, therefore, a major feature in Álvaro Siza’s designing method. He defines a set of resources to provide a sensory experience that is not possible to achieve without moving the body inside that space.

In this process, the fragmentation of the form and space under complex geometries is a resource for defining spatial joints and achieving complexity: the building induces movement through a division into multiple volumes. In that sense, fragmentation is a resource that relates to Cubism, as if the volumes had been distorted by the action of time. It is known that this artistic movement, which Siza refers to as one of his main references, is a means of expressing time during both the conception and fruition of the work of Art. According to that approach, Siza’s Architecture is not fully experienced from a static point of view nor with few movements inside the space. It is not even possible to have reliable clues about his Architecture, because those clues are always incomplete (due to the complexity that shapes his Architecture). Therefore, it is never possible to foresee what has not yet been seen by those who experience Siza’s Architecture.

In this context, Siza refers to Arabic Architecture as a lesson that the West has forgotten. Accordingly, he often refers to the Alhambra, which he knows very well, as a model of how to use “thickness” between rooms.¹ Porticoes and other spaces with different degrees of light intensity and heights are

resources that inspire him. The articulation between the different parts of Architecture is not solely achieved by geometry and form; time is also a means to increase the complexity of the experience amongst sequential spaces.

This theme opens up a different subject. Siza’s designing method does not include fixed starting points. He assumes that circumstances may play an important role in the design choices, which is also true for finding the proper architectural models and references. History, or tradition, should be a permanent element in the designing process. The author looks at tradition as an inexhaustible updating of possibilities. In this sense, time, which refers to the past of Architecture, may play an important role in facing problems, even in the present.

I do not set out to create something ‘new’ for its own sake, and it is evident that memory plays a crucial role in my process of invention (Siza apud Curtis, 1999b, p. 15).

That sort of thinking means opening the way ahead (Siza apud Curtis, 1999b, p. 7). Amidst the objective difficulties of the design process and the quest to find the proper answers – technical, functional, cost, and others– the project eventually finds its own freedom:

You need to pass through all these considerations to achieve the freedom of the architectural idea (Siza apud Curtis, 1999b, p. 8).

Siza’s work as we know it begins at that point when intuition meets architectural culture and rational options. The opening up of multiple hypotheses – based on his freehand sketches – gives him different design possibilities, which are always unpredictable and often contradictory.

Sketching is designing, desire, liberation, recording and a form of communication, doubt and discovery, reflection and creation, a restrained gesture and utopia (Siza, 2009, p. 273).²

That process of extensive experimentation leads to a path of coherence and interdependencies. All the designing parts naturally adjust to one another and to the place. Taking the words of Curtis (1999a, p. 31) as a motto, one may state that Álvaro Siza recreates typologies and models.

Your reading of a context works as much with spaces as with forms. Your buildings seem to respond to the forces of a place – those of the past but also those of the present – and these are often contradictory (Curtis, 1999b, p. 8).

Granada (together with the Spanish architect Juan Domingo Santos).

2. All translations are the author’s except where otherwise stated: “Desenho é projecto, desejo, libertação, registo e forma de comunicar, dúvida e descoberta, reflexo e criação, gesto contido e utopia” (Siza, 2009, p. 273).

1. In 2011, Siza won the competition for a new entrance and visitor center at this UNESCO world heritage site in

The places become more complex in this process as they are redefined by the dialogue between the new proposal and the preexisting reality. This means that the architect pays full attention to orography, the surrounding buildings, etc. More than just the building, what really matters to Álvaro Siza is the territorial dimension. Building and landscape (not only urban) are intertwined. The essence of the place becomes central in the process of searching the designing solutions.

It is clear that specificity cannot rely on a strange and autonomous Architecture. However, Siza rejects to understand the context in a straightforward and obvious way: to find order is to reconcile the opposites (Siza, 2009, p. 27), and his sketches provide him with the means to understand the strongest features of a place. Accordingly, if Architecture must improve human life, it means that Architecture must not only be respectful of places, but also improve them. Therefore, Architecture should be designed as a major contribution to spaces with specific and identarian features. As such, authorial work does not concern Siza if it means a generic intervention, merely as a result of an author expressing his personal style with no attention to the place. Accordingly, Siza assumes pseudonyms - in Berlin, The Hague, Manhattan, Évora, or any other city. He does so rather than accepting the city's transformation as something that takes place against local specificities. It does not mean that Siza rejects urban dynamics with nostalgia. He is not someone who yearns to recover a lost paradigm. On the contrary, Siza pays attention to the circumstances and present time. All that can survive the passage of time has a timeless value, if not a universal meaning. Tradition must lead to innovation, since conflict and compromise are the basis for transformation: this means that "... Innovation has inevitably to go through tradition" (Siza apud Santos, 2009, p.28). His eulogy to Aalto must be understood with that precise meaning.

There is a real demand today for Aalto (Siza apud Curtis, 1999b, p. 20).

When referring to the Finnish architect, Álvaro Siza states, in an apologetic sense, that Aalto shows that Architecture originates from a permanent dialogue between former reality and a will for transformation (Siza, 2009, p. 212). Consequently, Siza's words show that as an architect, he is undoubtedly committed to architectural culture: invention depends on already existing models. In this sense, the concepts of tradition, classicism, modernity, vernacular, international, local and universal are the subjects of his work. Memory and, in that sense, the past of a subject with centuries of existence, as well as territorial and urban (and not only urban) specificities are the determinants of his first idea for a project: it is about "... rediscovering the uniqueness of the evident things"³ (Siza, 2009, p.29). In other words, it is about universality and history as part of the future (Siza, 2009, p. 186), that is, the project should discover and

express what gives a city "... character and identity" (Siza apud Santos, 2008, p. 25).

Spontaneity does not fall from the sky. It is more like an assemblage of information and knowledge, conscious and subconscious (Siza apud Zaera, 1994, p.10).

The complex understanding of the relationship between time and space - which always merges architectural culture with sensory experience and a sense of place - can be summarized in Siza's own words:

This is the important thing to observe at a time when Singapore is making the same thing as New York. I have big hopes for the interchanges between different cultures... The hope for architecture... [relies on stepping away] from the small local work. This does not mean destroying each culture, or my own culture, quite the opposite. There is the need to open the local so that it does not disappear, to open it in order to give it new stimulus (Siza apud Curtis, 1999b, p. 21).

Aiming at inscribing a relevant meaning to Architecture from the beginning of his career, Álvaro Siza always faced the peripheral condition of Portugal as a motivation to overcome the narrow frontiers of knowledge. It was actually a starting point for learning and designing an Architecture that was able to be important outside of the local scope while reaching universal meaning (Siza apud Zaera, 1994, p.6)

Universality is not equivalent to neutrality; it is not the Esperanto of architectural expression. It is the capacity to create from the roots...

My sense of universality has more to do with the vocation of the cities, arising from centuries of intervention of crossbreeding, of superposition and mixing of the most opposed influences, creating an unmistakable identity (Siza apud Zaera, 1994, p.6).

Accordingly, he claims that the most significant cities developed themselves in a balance between local, specific and idiosyncratic features and, on the other hand, the innovations coming from abroad (Siza apud Zaera, 1994, p.8). Thus, the ultimate objective of a building should be the sense of belonging to the city, while expressing its universality. In Architecture, such duality should be expressed through a sense of permanence and a quest to update the disciplinary thinking.

Regardless of design, what really matters for the city is that specific quality.

... We always work within this conflict between autonomy and belonging to the whole (Siza apud Zaera, 1994, p. 17).

Expanding the scope of this debate, specificity also concerns architectural expression. In the author's perspective, language is a matter that also has to do with

3. "... redescobrir a singularidade das coisas evidentes" (Siza, 2009, p.29).

time and place, or, in other words, language goes beyond both the brief and the function. This subject leads to the act of designing and thinking the project. The design exercise cannot be safe nor stable, Siza says, refusing to have a supporting theory if it means a set of fixed and stable rules to be used on every work (Siza, 2009, p. 383).

For the architect, "... language expresses its most powerful arguments with the context." This means that "language always implies a relationship with the cultural context, with the moment" (Siza apud Zaera, 1994, p. 7). In other words, all the decisions depend on specific and non-generalized circumstances. Thus, the architect's work is to discover the room for freedom in a project, without neglecting the circumstances (Siza apud Santos, 2008, p. 19).

Clearly aware of Siza's research, Souto de Moura underlines the accuracy of his method:

He is an infallible personality in his answers. He has a grammar that he refreshes on the basis of each situation, and that means being very contemporary (Souto de Moura apud Grande, 2009, p. 7).

However, having considered these points, Álvaro Siza's own words are the ones that best summarize all that has been said.

The city is a repetitive fabric that flows through history, and it only arrives at rift situations when there are certain points of common interest. However, when that moment arises by force through a large-scale gesture without the community's acceptance, it is usually bound to fail because it lacks the sense of naturalness, we find in things that have changed inevitably (Siza apud Santos, 2008, p. 23).

Nevertheless, Siza admits that there are key periods when language may change. In such moments language "... becomes freer and comes more to the forefront" (Siza apud Santos, 2008, p. 23).

You cannot say that intervention resides solely in the architect's desire to do something really new and different; it is the context that requires a different sort of willpower, something imperious that is manifested as the fuel for the project (Siza apud Santos, 2008, p. 23).

2 KOOLHAAS: BEYOND THE GENERIC CITY

Language changes lead to another architect. Rem Koolhaas looks at tradition and contemporaneity in a different way. For him, "identity... as a form of sharing the past is a losing proposition" (Koolhaas & Mau, 1995, p. 1248). Koolhaas states that in a stable model of continuous population increase, there will be less and less to share, in the sense that common cultural values will become less significant. The architect does not regard this as a negative aspect, but rather a liberating path.

The stronger the identity, the more it imprisons, the more it resists expansion, interpretation, renewal,

contradiction. Identity becomes like a lighthouse – fixed, overdetermined: it can change its position or the pattern it emits only at the cost of destabilizing navigation (Koolhaas & Mau, 1995, p. 1248).

The author claims that the concept of identity centralizes identity highlights a point, the epicenter from which the city's expansion takes place. However, as the distance from the center increases, the sphere of influence and authority of the core becomes weaker. That process leads to the breaking point and Koolhaas argues that Architecture should focus on that opportunity: "... without center, no periphery..." (Koolhaas & Mau, 1995, p. 1249).

That sort of ideas led him to the concept of *Generic City*: a city that does not depend on the center. The *Generic City* stops the "... destructive cycle of dependency" (Koolhaas & Mau, 1995, p. 1249). It expresses the present and depends only on the present. It does not need maintenance or special care. In a sense, the *Generic City* is a process that regenerates itself, with no need for safeguarding or preservation: only the present counts. Realism shapes its character: it accepts whatever may happen. "It is superficial," so it can produce a new identity every Monday morning (Koolhaas & Mau, 1995, p. 1249).

The radicality of his own words takes the author significantly far. "The *Generic City* is the post-city being prepared on the site of the ex-city" (Koolhaas & Mau, 1995, p. 1252). If there is no preexisting city in a given place, a completely new city may be set up there. That new city can even replace a former one. This is the expression of a convenient and desirable process, as opposed to the historic city. Most of all, it is a mutant form of urbanism made up of new Architecture scenarios (Koolhaas apud Colomina, 2007, p. 354). Accordingly, the only acceptable style for the *Generic City* is the "free style" (Koolhaas & Mau, 1995, p. 1254). One may say that tradition and identity cannot be the instruments of a city that wants to be free, as the expression of the present and the result of its own internal energy and self-regulation. As such, the *Generic City* will determine the end of planning: cause and effect will no longer be a concern while dealing with the city (Koolhaas & Mau, 1995, p. 1255). To sum up, in the *Generic City*, nothing will be predetermined. In addition, no specificity will define the city because it will not define architecture and its relationship with urban space either.

In *The Tabula Rasa Revisited* the author expresses one more important argument (Koolhaas & Mau, 1995). For him, the European city has a problem with time. Time should not mean value, but the continent's long history has led to a perverse understanding. For the architect, not everything that has been built shows sufficient relevance to ensure its own preservation. A clear look into this way of perceiving history may be given by the competition for La Défense, Paris, in 1991. In that context, the architect asked himself:

“How many of these buildings deserve eternal life?” (Koolhaas & Mau, 1995, p. 1099).

This question is essentially forbidden in Europe, where urban context is assumed to be something that should be preserved and respected, not destroyed (Koolhaas & Mau, 1995, p. 1099).

Koolhaas believes this is a completely legitimate purpose in many cases, but not all of them. Within the scope of the competition, he states that all La Défense buildings over 25 years old can be declared “... worthless, null and void...” (Koolhaas & Mau, 1995, p. 1105). As a result of 5-year increments, the area would become progressively “clean,” according to “... a very strong urge to make a new beginning” (Koolhaas & Mau, 1995, p. 1101).

The paradox of the competition was that the extension of La Défense was already there – the area was full (Koolhaas & Mau, 1995, p. 1101).

The words acquire a more precise meaning if we consider that the competition can be read as a kind of manifesto. In Paris, but transcending its scope, history seems to repeat itself, as a reverberation of modernity. Even without Koolhaas’s own words (Koolhaas and Mau, 1995, p. 1103), it would be possible to notice the similarity with Le Corbusier’s *Plan Voisin* (1925).⁴ The Swiss architect proposed to keep only few significant Parisian buildings, freeing up most of the city’s space for setting up the *spirit of the time*. Likewise, the Dutch architect proposes to “... preserve buildings of merit, or buildings of sentimental value ...”, namely the Grande Arche, The CNIT, and the Tour Fiat (Koolhaas & Mau, 1995, p. 1105).

As it can be observed, Koolhaas’ perception is very different from Siza’s ideas. However, is the difference between both absolute and insurmountable? Le Corbusier’s work provides the proper framework to answer this question, which will lead us to further conclusions. Extending the scope of this analysis, we must focus on some of OMA/Rem Koolhaas’ exemplary works: Villa Dall’ava (1985-1991), in Saint Cloud, Paris; Kunsthall (1987-1992), Rotterdam; the Netherlands Embassy (1997-2003), Berlin, and Casa da Música (1999-2005), Porto.

At Villa Dall’ava, an extensive ramp leads from the entrance to the upper floor, where the house daytime spaces – living room and kitchen – are located. The ramp is complemented by a set of two stairs that connect the entrance floor with the bedroom level, located on the west and east tops of the building and served by independent accesses. When crossed, the living room links the ramp to both stairs. From an exterior gallery that connects the two volumes that host the bedrooms, a third staircase leads to the roof, where the swimming

pool is found. The gallery is also accessed by another staircase starting in the garden, at the living room level.

If we remember the circulation scheme of Villa Savoye, it is possible to draw a comparison, and not only due to the horizontal windows and the pilotis that support the bedroom volumes at Villa Dall’ava. Villa Dall’ava is a true *Promenade Architectural*,⁵ paying tribute to Le Corbusier’s ideas.

In Kunsthall, which is also a paradigmatic example concerning the same type of solutions, walking along the building is a permanent experience for those who discover the spaces. Kunsthall is a gallery for temporary exhibitions located between a park and an avenue: the building is highly interconnected with the urban context and provides great functional flexibility, ensured both by the way the entrances are located (individual for the gallery, the auditorium, and the restaurant), and the interior circulation scheme. That effective scheme allows the building parts to work separately or together: starting from the park, there is a walkway that goes up to the building entrance; from that point, it crosses one of the exhibition rooms, accesses the auditorium at the same level, descends along this space to the other exhibition room on the lower level, and then goes up once again to the entrance, defining a fluid and continuous movement.

The Netherlands Embassy (1997-2003) explores a complementary way of conceiving the walkways inside the building, according to similar principles. The ramps and stairs are alternately located between the center of the building and its facade, extending even beyond the limits of the built volume with formal autonomy. As such, they are defined as devices that characterize the image of architecture, and furthermore, contribute to providing changing perspectives of the building and the city. In short, an active role is given to movement throughout the building as a fundamental feature to shape the architectural space.

Inside the cube, the sense of security and stability required for an embassy co-exists with the free circulation provided by a 200m path that zig-zags up through the eight stories, determining the arrangement of the building’s spaces.

From the entrance, the trajectory of the path leads to the library, on to the meeting rooms, skirting the offices, leading up to the fitness area and finally the restaurant on the roof terrace. This trajectory also distributes fresh air drawn from the double plenum façade to the workspaces (the areas that the path has carved out of the cube). At one point the path escapes the constraints of the cube and cantilevers

4. The Plan Voisin by Le Corbusier set out to raze to the ground the central area of Paris, on the right bank of the Seine. It intended to build another city, doing so in accordance with modern ideas and architecture.

5. Le Corbusier’s expression that refers to the special way he thought and designed movement in architecture, making the space reveal itself in a complex and surprising manner. As such, *Promenade Architectural* was a fundamental concept to characterize his own works, according to a set of sequential spaces organized under a particular order and framed views.

over the courtyard. The regularity of the cube's glass and steel facade is disturbed again at moments where the path grazes the exterior, making itself visible from the outside and providing strategic views of the Spree, and the television tower (OMA, n.d. c).

This is not so different from what can be experienced at Casa da Música (1999-2005). In its complex scheme of walkways, the north and south stairs are extremely expressive. They connect the public spaces around the concert hall from both its inside space – on several levels - and the outside, according to a lively sequence. The set of pathways and visual framing allows a permanent discovery of the building and its exterior, through carefully located glazed plans. The highest level of Sala Suggia (Suggia room) is linked to the foyer through the south staircase, and, on the opposite side, it is accessed from the entire north wing of the building.

There is deliberately no large central foyer; instead, a continuous public route connects the spaces around the Grand Auditorium by means of stairs, platforms and escalators. The building becomes an architectural adventure (OMA, s.n. a).

3 SIZA ONCE AGAIN

We shall now return to Siza and think about the ritualization of movement and time as a material. Siza does not hide his admiration for Le Corbusier. Siza often refers to him in interviews and lectures expressing the importance he gives to movement in architecture in general and in his own work.

In one of his first works, *Casa de Chá da Boa Nova* (1958-1961), Siza took advantage of a magnificent location on the Atlantic front, in Leça da Palmeira. The approach to the building takes place while looking south, from east to west. An inflection towards north, to take the stairs that lead to the entrance, prevents the visitor from looking into the sea for a short moment. After crossing a wall and leaving that moment behind, the Atlantic is visible once again. A freer look to the south or west occurs as one goes up. Before entering, a covered space defines the limits of a space that does not face the ocean. The Atlantic is seen after entering the building: first, one sees the horizon, and then, when going down the internal stairs, the eyes meet the waves hitting the rocks. After reaching the restaurant and tearoom level, the visitor has the whole Atlantic Ocean before him, framed by the wide windows: it is the corollary of a process that begins outside, with several inflections that sometimes show the ocean, and sometimes hide it.

It is not very different from Siza's proposal to *Piscina de Marés* (1961-1966). The approach, which starts at street level where the view has no limits, is enriched by the complex role played by light and shadows. The interior is all black, contrasting with the exterior courtyard, opened towards the sky. Afterwards, the eyes

look horizontally in a spatial sequence that leads to the outside. Finally, the ocean is the highlight of a journey through the Architecture. The eyes must conquer the Atlantic, while the body moves throughout the space.

In those early works, some themes that are still present in the author's work were tried out. In the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Porto (FAUP, 1987-1994), a long but intense walkway separates the different towers of classrooms and the library. The always diverse views to the outside one can observe while going down the stairs are enriched by the ground floor gallery closing and opening to the outside. The light coming either from above or the windows sets the tone along the ramps. Before reaching the library, a spatial constraint (in height and width) precedes a new view into the outside, in a space with a lower ceiling. The library at the end of the route is a complex space: the skylight provides light to the space while "moving" down to the interior of the room – as a result, one has to move inside the space to completely see and understand it.

Going back to the Dutch Embassy in Berlin, OMA/Koolhaas show how the building is organized through movement in a linear and sequential plan, by putting all the spaces at the same level: stairs, corridors, ramps and rooms with different uses. The graphic representation features a building organized along several architectural events, shown on the same floor plan. It is possible to draw a similar plan of the Faculty of Architecture of Porto representing the spatial sequence that FAUP is in itself and showing how the walkways structure the project. In short, it is a strong way of understanding time in Architecture.

Koolhaas' Embassy also provides the opportunity for a comparison with another important proposal by Siza: Iberê Camargo Museum (1998-2008), Porto Alegre, Brazil. The building is traversed with the help of several ramps that are occasionally inserted into the interior of the plan, sometimes hovering in the air. In this project, the walkways also shape the architectural image of the building. Once more, it is a *Promenade Architectural* that moves around the central void of the museum and looks outside over the Lake Guaíba. So, the Architecture experience results from the experience in motion. Considering the role of the building as a "machine" for sensorial and temporal human experience, this museum is not so different from other projects that Siza has been designing for Asia in recent years. In Moae – Huamao Museum of Art Education (2014-2020), Ningbo, China (with Carlos Castanheira), the walkways crossing the building's vertical void cannot be seen from the entrance: one must cross a wall to enter that vertical space. That sort of mystery invites people to walk through the building. After the double-height gap that leaves the museum entrance behind, the ramps offer a spectacle for the enjoyment of Architecture. The bottom-up and top-down views, as well as the other visual angles from inside the exhibition spaces over the central void,

are spatial devices for surprising those who are invited to discover the building. Time and movement are resources to permanently show diversity with respect to space perception.

The approach to Asia leads us to Siza's most exemplary work in the context of this paper. At Saya Park Art Pavilion (2015-2018), Gyeongsangbuk-do, South Korea (with Carlos Castanheira), nspace discovering starts with mystery. Outside, the supporting walls widen and narrow the space, preparing for the sinuous movement inside the pavilion.

The entrance is preceded by a pathway built under the ground, which has a low ceiling. The natural light is left behind, enhancing the openings that let in the light coming from a patio. The tunnel, like a cleft, separates from the outside, and, in the hall, one may choose between two sections: one of them curved with a descending roof; the other straight and linear having a roof rising to its highest point in the opposite side of the building. At that point, a balcony overlooks the landscape. Both sections are shaped to emphasize the two rooms located at their tops: it is not possible to enter the exhibition rooms without leaving the building and re-entering it through a zigzag that takes place with the help of two smaller volumes with low ceilings: once there, it is possible to look outside in a reverse angle. After that, the light coming from a skylight, in both exhibition rooms, provides a sense of verticality. Between them, a covered pathway, also with a low ceiling, shapes a patio: a kind of shortcut closes the building in a ring, adding complexity to the spatial experience. At the end of the linear section, there is a new exit to a smaller room and another zigzag: those who move along the building can look out towards the north. After that, the ceiling rises in a room that ends up in the aforementioned balcony opening to the south and a landscape over the forest. The light is different there. Light and shadow are permanent resources for characterizing the Architecture in Saya Park.⁶

Referring to Siza's own words, it seems that this building originates from a traveling shot by a camera: time and space are in permanent dialogue. Nevertheless, it raises a disturbing question. The project is the adaptation of another one, carried out in 1992 for Madrid European Capital of Culture: a Gallery for Two Picassos - the linear section was made for Guernica; the curved one for *La Femme Enceinte*. Siza resized the project (it is smaller than the previous version) and set it in another continent, country and plot. Bearing in mind Siza's ideas about specificity, space, and time, one may wonder how he conceived this project, which apparently seems to be a generic solution, independent from the circumstances.

At first glance, the pavilion is disturbingly close to a work by OMA/Rem Koolhaas, Casa da Música,

which was also originated from a different project: the Y2K House, to be built in the Rotterdam suburbs.

In response to the client's particular demands and possibilities, we produced a house where everything that is necessary in a house (kitchen, bathroom, etc.) surrounded a single space, resulting in a tunnel-like design with a central space where the family could get together if and when they wanted to. Everything other than the central space became an external element or a body where all the organs were on the outside and where the skin is used on the inside (OMA, n.d. b).

When in 1999 OMA was invited to participate in the competition to design Casa da Música, Koolhaas decided to adapt the Y2K House to a new use, for it had never been built. By stretching it, its tunnel-like design having a central space, the living room was turned into the concert hall, surrounded by all the complementary rooms, like organs on the outside. Thus, we can say that Casa da Música is a bigger Y2K House. In that sense, it is inversely proportional to the Saya Park Art Pavilion, which is a scale to a lower size of the Gallery for Two Picassos.

How can it be explained that Siza's designing attitude brings him so unexpectedly close to Koolhaas' options? The answer is given by Siza, when reflecting on the Casa da Música project. Siza's words probably emphasize the transparencies at the top of the concert hall, as well as the precise location of the volume (coordinated with the window transparencies), and the way the entrances face and relate to the urban context, considering notable points of the city.

The Casa da Música project shows Rem Koolhaas' reflection on the contemporary city and his convictions about the impossibility of globally controlling its evolution...

However, it seems to me that Casa da Música represents something new in the author's work. Its autonomy, as an architectural object, accepts and includes a precise environment. What had been presented as a translation of an unbuilt project found a way of contextualizing itself, even if this may reveal a contradiction (Siza, 2009, p. 326).⁷

It is also possible to notice that the internal spatial sequence – the “architectural adventure”, as Koolhaas calls it (OMA, n.d. a) – matches the design options concerning urban context. As such, it gives a broader meaning to the contextualizing process that Siza references.

6. Cf. Álvaro Siza & Carlos Castanheira, *Art pavilion and chapel in Saya Park* (South Korea). (2019). *Arquitectura Viva*, (212), 16-23.

7. “O projecto da Casa da Música traduz a reflexão sobre a cidade contemporânea e as convicções de Rem Koolhaas em torno aos sinais de impossibilidade de controlar globalmente o seu evoluir...”

Parece-me, contudo, que a Casa da Música representa algo de novo na obra do autor. A sua autonomia, enquanto objecto arquitectónico, aceita e inclui o encontro com um ambiente preciso. O que fora apresentado como translação de projecto não realizado contextualizou-se, com o que isso posso revelar de contradição” (Siza, 2009, p. 326).

That sort of paradox is also the key for understanding the project for Saya Park. It intends to take advantage of its location and orography, and to do so it is located in the limit of the slope, ensuring the space needed to include a patio between the two sections. In addition, it submerges underneath the ground on the entrance side, at the highest level of the site; in contrast, it emerges on the opposite side, launching the balcony towards south over the landscape. The internal spatial sequence takes advantage of the circumstances and all the possibilities it provides: the contrast between the free look into the horizon – the ultimate point to get to- and the Architecture that one may discover while moving inside the space. Hereby, the pavilion recreates the former project, which proposed a contrast between the city and nature (Siza, 1998, p. 21), with a tunnel between them; at the end of the building, the balcony, “... looking towards the mountains north of the city, one of the most characteristic panoramas of Madrid” (Cariño & Cohn, 1993, p. 120).

Referring to Siza’s ideas, it is possible to say that the Saya Park project also found a way of contextualizing itself.

4 CONCLUSION

To sum up, it is possible to conclude that, like Koolhaas, Siza found freedom beyond the “constraints” of the context. Nevertheless, the context was a significant stimulus for the project to achieve that sort of freedom. In both works – Casa da Música and Saya Park - the spaces take place in a temporal sequence that considers the context without submitting to it. The lesson by Siza and Koolhaas reinforces the disciplinary scope. There is always a certain degree of autonomy in Architecture. The typology of the courtyard house, as well as the high-rise building, does not depend on the circumstances in order to exist. It exists beyond all external factors. Likewise, a square or circular plan does not depend on the context.

Architects invent nothing... they work continually with models which they transform in response to problems they encounter (Siza apud Ewert, 1999b, p.39).

This quote has a deeper meaning when we look at both Saya Park and Casa da Música. While inventing virtually nothing, architects build important works for the architectural culture. We can therefore ask: which part of an architectural idea does exist in a specific place? The answer to that question cannot be direct nor simple. Moreover, both works rely on a rational decision that took into account the limits of Architecture in their specific context: the architects knew in advance that they would succeed. In fact, the adaptation of former projects for a different reality may always be the exception rather than the rule. Regardless,

Siza and Koolhaas reinforce a significant idea. Given the radicalism of their proposals, which were moved from other contexts, they probably do it in much more specific and clear terms than other projects. Disciplinary autonomy should always be a key factor within architectural culture, even to establish a dialogue with the place: Architecture relies on the space-time binomial that it shapes.

One looks at the aspects of a context in order to be freed from the context (Siza apud Curtis, 1999b, p. 15).

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