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Design

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- **16800 | Shadowspace: project for a funeral home in Porto**

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Death is an unavoidable event in life that needs a proper space for its celebration. Currently, the funeral home is the architectural approach to this need, providing a set of spaces for increasingly personal and symbolically expressive rituals.

The present dissertation is the result of an investigation about the conception of a funeral home for the city of Porto. It stemmed from a relationship between two concepts: the mental construction of a space dedicated to celebrating the ritual of death, and the designed construction of a building capable of accommodating a program with very sensitive requirements, idealized as a singular concept which lives in the limbo between a crematorium, a cemetery and farewell spaces. Then, the proposal consists in the elaboration of a funeral home that opens to the landscape: a meeting place between the living and the dead.

The various ways of dealing with the finality of life have left marks in the conception of the spaces of death, but in general, these have always been linked to religious institutions, a status which has recently been questioned by the increasing tendency of secularization of crematoriums and funeral homes. Nowadays, they present themselves as references of a space of death, which are associated with the emotional values and different identities of each society, rather than their religious values. Thus, the architect must reflect on these significant tensions and transformations over the last decades, designing strategies that aim to define an appropriate space according to the understanding of contemporary needs.

The approach to the concepts of place and to the programmatic and symbolic construction is aimed at the search for translation of the approached concepts into architectural design, in an inseparable relationship between theory and practice. The architectural project is thus a way to graphically represent the issues thrown in the dissertation.

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