



Rarely has reflection about design, its impact and underlying bases occupied such a prominent place in the contemporary political, economic and cultural context. Indeed, the turn of events has brought design to the forefront of debate. Surpassing the confines of its subject area, design nowadays assimilates the set of issues that stimulate current debate and the efforts to deal with and overcome multiple crisis situations.

Given that international events such as the Milan Triennale are able to legitimate the validity of certain areas beyond their disciplinary boundaries, it is therefore significant that the theme of the 21st Triennale is Design after Design. What is queried and what is intended by this play on words? Most likely nothing programmatic; perhaps it just opens a heuristic passageway, questions in hope of building a problem and giving it chances to be resolved.

The vanguard practices of the 1960s and 1970s carried out their fight against a system of production, reception, consumption and registry of merchandise by, among other forms, dematerialising the production of art, design and architecture. To produce something that is not an object, semio-production, was an intentional way to combat a dominant production system.

To speak of Objects after Objects is to evoke that relational, conceptual, ideological and immaterial production, though it is also to assert the validity of utilitarian, functional, material and object-associated production. The Future after the Past seemingly cannot be solidly built without resisting the imperative of the new, become tradition, exhausted by ceaseless repetition of formulas, fashions and trends. Thematisation of the crisis, the aptness of respective debate and the experimental contrivance of micro-utopias to potentially overcome the crisis may surely be played-out experiments, yet it is also certain that there is nothing left for us but to radicalise processes, radicalise discourses, radicalise combats, in an effort to still find meaning and efficacy for avant-garde practice in contemporary times.

Departing from the general theme of the 21st Milan Triennale, this issue of *PLI Arte & Design* magazine is arranged around three main topics: relationships between ideology, form and content provide reflection material in the conversation between Gabriela Vaz Pinheiro and the curators of the Portuguese representation at the Milan Triennale and that subject is also examined from the standpoint of the Syria crisis by Dutch visual artist Jonas Staal in the essay on "Ideology = Form"; a second topic centres on curatorship as a space for cultural diplomacy, discursive practice and an approach to the history of Portuguese curatorship; finally, a third set of content considers the work of two major references in Portuguese contemporary architecture: Pancho Guedes, recently deceased, and Eduardo Souto de Moura, who in an interview speaks about recent projects, his working method and influences.

The editors' intention has been for this *PLI* issue to be a continuation of the three previous ones. Reflection about Design After Design can be put into better perspective by reviewing the themes covered in the previous issues on "Production" (number 5), "Hot&Cool" (number 4) and "Enthusiasm" (number 2/3).

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Cultural Diplomacy

*New territory for the
curatorship of contemporary
architecture in Portugal*

Ana Neiva

Annette (org.), "Portugal : arquitetura do século XX", München: Prestel, 1997, p.10.

19. "manifestation culturelle qui incarne de manière spontanée l'intuition collective de notre peuple". Freely translated from the introductory text by Ferreira Neto, José Manuel, in *Catálogo da Exposição: Gomes, Paulo V. (general commissioner); Costa, Alexandre Alves; Dubois, Marc; Pereira, Paulo* "Points de repère: architectures du Portugal", Bruxelles: Europalia, 1991, s.p.

20. "Cette exposition s'est fixé pour objectif la confrontation du public à la possibilité de conférer une identité à l'architecture portugaise contemporaine et d'évaluer l'apport des courants internationaux pour ainsi dire, 'domestiqués' en fonction du goût portugais". Freely translated from the introductory text by Luz Afonso, Simonetta, in *Catálogo da Exposição: Gomes, Paulo V. (general commissioner); Costa, Alexandre Alves; Dubois, Marc; Pereira, Paulo* "Points de repère: architectures du Portugal", Bruxelles: Europalia, 1991, s.p.

21. "Dans le cadre de l'unification de l'Europe, cette exposition prouve qu'au sein de la Communauté européenne un pays relativement petit peut conserver son caractère national tout en s'insérant dans une plus vaste communauté internationale". Freely translated from the introductory text by De Staercke, Jacques (general commissioner of Europalia 91 Portugal), in *Catálogo da Exposição: Gomes, Paulo V. (general commissioner)*, op.cit.

22. "...each curator of the specific country was free to choose how to make the presentation. If you look at the catalogues, you will see a wide variety of approaches. This was entirely intended as I do not believe in a single "correct" historiography." Wang, Wilfried, *Re: Research in Phd - Request for information about Frankfurt 1997 - "Portugal: arquitetura do século XX"* [personal message], received by ananeiva.faup@gmail.com on April 3rd, 2014.

23. Tostões, Ana; Wang, Wilfried; Becker, Annette (org.), "Portugal : arquitetura do século XX", München: Prestel, 1997, p.11 and 12.

Europalia, a multidisciplinary exhibition that has taken place biannually since 1969 in the city of Brussels, under the high patronage of the Belgian royal couple, is aimed at promoting and disseminating the artistic and cultural tradition of participating countries. The Portuguese participation, in 1991, with support from the Portuguese President's office and from *Crédito Predial Português*, rests on a structure comprising Music and Dance, Literature and Theater, Cinema and Animation, and Architecture. It emphasizes the disciplinary participation of Architecture as a "cultural manifestation that spontaneously embodies the collective awareness of our people"¹⁹ and which enhances the goal of "confronting the public with the possibility or impossibility of endowing contemporary Portuguese architecture with an identity and to evaluate the influence of so-called 'domesticated' international trends according to Portuguese 'taste'"²⁰. The topic of *Identity* overarches every intervention included in the catalog and in the text by general commissioner Paulo Varela Gomes, which lends its name to the exhibition.

José Manuel Ferreira Neto, (*Crédito Predial Português*) and Simonetta Luz Afonso (Exhibition Director) both mentioned above, together with Jacques de Staercke (General Commissioner of Europalia 91) are unanimous in their assertion: "within the framework of unifying Europe, [that] exhibition proves that even within the European Community, a relatively small country is able to retain its national character despite being part of a vast international community"²¹.

Something similar would take place six years later, with the exhibition in Frankfurt. The challenge, as put forth by the Deutsches Architektur-Museum, proposes that the main architectural and urban developments in the 20th century in each country be documented. The organizing of a festival surrounding the topic "The 20th century," which included nine countries: Austria, Portugal, Finland, Sweden, Spain, Ireland, Greece, Switzerland and Germany, would be held for five years in Frankfurt and, in a few cases, it would spawn presentations in the countries of origin themselves. The proposal put forth by Wilfried Wang (director of the DAM) enabled each curator to outline his/her own content selection and presentation²².

The Portuguese exhibition on display in Frankfurt, on the occasion of the Book Fair, from October 11th, 1997, to January 4th, 1998, was put on display, months later, at Belém Cultural Center, from June to September 1998. This, along with the main Architecture Exhibition, as commissioned by Ana Tostões, in collaboration with Annette Becker and Wilfried Wang, Margarida Veiga, commissioner of the Visual Arts Exhibition.

Once again, architecture was put on display alongside other cultural events, and yet again, the qualifying adjectives of Portuguese architecture gravitate around ideas such as *originality*, *specificity* or *identity* of Portuguese production. In objective terms, Ana Tostões proposes to "outline a roadmap of 20th-century Portuguese architecture, by valuing its originality and specificity (...) reassess the author's architecture within the framework of an eclectic sampling, a reflection of the pluralism characterizing production over the course of a century"²³, and Margarida Veiga, in turn, reads as follows: "the originality of this [resident] production in the way it combines the wish to preserve and to innovate, avant-garde and nostalgia, modernity and tradition".

With this exhibition returning home, here in Portugal it was possible to outline a general overview of our recent history, by crossing a chronological sequence with an expressively broadened program selection. Moreover, the currently established curatorial discourse would be taken as a reference for a significant number of exhibition proposals in the decades that followed.

Our last example, the exhibition entitled *Portugal, fora de Portugal*, for Berlin in 2009, is an obvious replacement. Commissioned by Ricardo Carvalho, it presents projects and works from Portuguese architects outside Portugal, corroborating the embodiment of the internationalization of Portuguese architecture already highlighted in 1997, by Rogério Vieira de Almeida.

24. Cavaco Silva, Aníbal
"Message from the
Portuguese President, in
<http://www.presidencia.pt/alemanha2009/?idc=721>,
visited on October 24th,
2015.

25. *Idem, Ibidem.*

26. Rodeia, João Belo, in
Catálogo da Exposição,
Carvalho, R; Palma, R.
(coords), "Arquitetura:
Portugal fora de Portugal",
Berlin: Aedes am
Pfefferberg, 2009, p. 13.

27. *Idem, Ibidem.*

Thus, the purpose involves a State Visit to Germany by the Portuguese President. Along with an Economic Seminar "*Germany / Portugal Corporate Meetings*", Aníbal Cavaco Silva *decided to include*, in the group of promoted events, an exhibition on Manoel de Oliveira, in celebration of his 100th birthday, as well as the said architecture exhibition, comprising four generations of architects, represented by 21 projects. The curatorial discourse is so in line with what had been produced in 1997 by Wang and Tostões that they once again include the theoretical reflections accompanying this exhibition, as we shall see.

If, "*through the work of Manoel de Oliveira, we can take a walk through the history of Portuguese cinema*"²⁴, the exhibition entitled *Portugal outside Portugal* () proves "*that, on every continent, we can find works by Portuguese nationals, [as such a fact constitutes a significant] source of pride*"²⁵. The agenda of this state visit shows a willingness to capitalize Portugal's cultural production, through the nation's biggest names in different spheres (Manoel de Oliveira, Álvaro Siza or "fado" singer Kátia Guerreiro) in an agenda that includes an Economic Seminar, the "*Lançamento da Campanha Promocional de Portugal*" (the Launch of Portugal's Promotional Campaign) as well as visits to large German companies. Along with the identity-related value, the idea is to convey its greatest asset as a *creative economy*.

We should note the participation of the Architects' Association in organizing this exhibition, hitherto absent, of the cases we present. In fact, whereas the pioneering initiatives came from the Architects' Association regarding the discussion of disciplinary practice, with the first National Architect Congresses, and the Association was playing a relatively active role in promoting congresses and exhibitions over the years, it is also true that such diligences were hardly brought about in an international context. As an example, suffice it to briefly think of the representations in Venice or in São Paulo, supported, firstly, by the General Arts Administration and organized in the last few years around the time of the Lisbon Triennial.

To João Rodeia, chairman of the Portuguese Architects Association in 2009, Portugal's return to Germany shows the "*growing acknowledgment of architecture as a unique resource for Portugal's assertion in the world, along with the enormous international prestige of some of its best authors, in particular, Álvaro Siza*"²⁶, which doesn't bring much in the way of new ideas to be added to those already disseminated in 97, while incorporating the concept of "*peculiar way [of doing]*," of an "*endemic reality of Portuguese Architecture, conditioned by the peripheral contingency, by a very particular tradition all its own and by the insurmountable distancing from the world's main centers of reflection, dissemination and production*"²⁷.

On the other hand, if we think through the selected exhibitions beyond the common aspects we sought to leave listed – the affiliation in state diplomatic policies, the contexts of cultural exchange where they took place, the central goal of conveying an idea of cohesion and strong cultural identity – and we seek to reflect on the conditions surrounding the different chosen moments, we can learn more in depth on the evolution in curatorial narratives in Portugal, in the last few decades.

The texts found in the catalogs (too dense and complex for an accurate reading of the positioning of all of its authors, in this essay) and the critical reception regarding these exhibitions are the clue to identifying an evolution in curatorial and diplomatic practices in the time window that includes the selected cases.

Thumbing through discourses

The first exhibition, as commissioned by Carlos S. Duarte, and originally produced in collaboration with Col·legi d'Arquitectes de Catalunya, in 1986, for Barcelona, it traveled for eight years (an expressively relevant fact, even in the contemporary scenario) through ten other cities: Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo and Buenos Aires, in 1987, a return to Portugal (Lisbon, 1989), as well as Strasbourg, Macau and Mumbai, in 1990, New Delhi and Beijing, in 1991, and finally Tokyo, in 1992.



Porto Poetic. Triennale di Milano, Milano, 2013.
Photos: Rita Burmester

Cultural diplomacy is the linchpin of public diplomacy; for it is in cultural activities that a nation's idea of itself is best represented¹.

1. Report of the Advisory Committee on Cultural Diplomacy U.S. Department of State (September 2005). <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/54374.pdf>.

2. The Fletcher School. Tufts University. <http://fletcher.tufts.edu/About/Mission-and-Impact>

3. Report of the Advisory Committee on Cultural Diplomacy U.S. Department of State (September 2005). <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/54374.pdf>

4. Yudice, George, "The Expediency of Culture: The Uses of Culture in the Global Era", Durham: Duke University Press, 2003.

Starting from the evoked political reach of Art and Architecture, consciously manipulated by the platforms of power in its diplomatic and negotiating practices, we confirm a new sphere of action for the subject of Curatorship: Cultural Diplomacy.

The evolution of diplomatic understanding in international relations adds density and efficiency to the subject of Public Diplomacy, in achieving its central goals: "*maintaining the stability and prosperity of a complex, demanding and increasingly globalized society*"², by acknowledging the weight of Culture as an active agent in the diplomatic process.

It is our understanding that its outcome, the emergence of *Cultural Diplomacy*, will not be reduced to a branch of Public Diplomacy in charge of providing a channel for cultural exchanges in the strict sense; on the contrary and *a priori*, it is a necessary platform for forging relations and international political commitments.

Its greatest asset lies in the broad, multifaceted understanding of what *Culture* means, and in the different ways it can be operated internationally.

Using the definition put forth by Raymond Williams in *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (1983), culture can be explained as a process of intellectual, spiritual and esthetic development; a set of habits of a certain people, period, group, or of humanity in general; a product or result of intellectual practices, especially artistic activities.

From a national calling card – "*It is in cultural activities that a nation's idea of itself is best represented*"³ – to an economic, social or political asset, Culture has been studied, in the universe of diplomatic practices, according to different viewpoints.

To George Yudice⁴, it is a vital resource for developing the economy, from the moment when it contributes toward reducing social conflicts, establishing cooperations, partnerships and generating confidence. On the other hand, as the product of intellectual activities, particularly of the artistic variety, it is the origin of the recent economic fabric of creative industries.

Thus, we understand the growing acknowledgment that Culture has garnered in the universe of international diplomatic policies, contributing toward establishing new discourses that value interactive and collaborative positions and which rely on new extended communication networks that go beyond the diplomatic dimension.

5. Gadanho, Pedro, "Sob Influência: Do Vulcão À Pool Genética", in *Habitar Portugal 2006/2008*, Lisbon: Caleidoscópio, 2009.

6. An exhibition commissioned by Carlos S. Duarte and Manuel Graça Dias, under a joint initiative from the Office of the State Secretary for Culture and of the Foreign Affairs Ministry, presented in Barcelona (1986); Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo and Buenos Aires (1987); Lisbon (1989); Strasbourg, Macau and Mumbai (1990); New Delhi and Beijing (1991); Tokyo (1992).

7. We chose the work of architects Álvaro Siza, Raúl Hestnes Ferreira, Luiz Cunha, Manuel Vicente and Tomás Taveira, while seeking, in the words of Carlos S. Duarte, "to provide a significant, transparent vision of what architecture is in Portugal today" in *Catálogo da Exposição "Tendências da Arquitetura Portuguesa" (catalog of the Exhibition entitled "Portuguese Architecture Trends")*, p. 7.

8. Grande, Nuno, "Arquitetura Portuguesa em fim-de-século: entre o pós-ideológico e o pós-moderno" ("End-of-the-century Portuguese Architecture: between the post-ideological and the post-modern"), in *Camões. Revista de letras e cultura lusófonas*, nº22 – 2013, p.61.

9. Part of the 19th Triennial of Milan and commissioned by José Manuel Fernandes, Arch. The exhibition, comprising works by ten architects, was on display in Milan, at Palazzo de la Triennale, in February and March 1996, and was once again on display that same year, in June and July at Belém Cultural Center.

10. Under the leadership of Wilfried Wang, then-director of the Deutsches Architektur-Museum, several nations took part, including Austria, Portugal, Finland, Sweden, Spain, Ireland, Greece, Switzerland and Germany, for a period of five years. The Portuguese exhibition was on display in Frankfurt, from October 11th (1997) to January 4th, 1998, and, months later, was put on display at Belém Cultural Center, Lisbon (June to September 1998).

11. Grande, Nuno "Três Percursos Geracionais", in Cannatá, Michele; Fernandes, Fátima (ed.),

The main instrument of Curatorship comprises *discourse*, the ability to engender narratives to elaborate on how they are conveyed. On the national horizon, in the field of architecture, the curatorial activity has been expressly developed in national representations at events with large-scale media coverage, commonly linked to the *biennial phenomenon*. However, national representations, at events with large-scale media coverage, are not exclusive to the universe of biennials (where curatorial discourse gains autonomy and importance) as there was a relevant experimentation in the decades leading up to the year 2000 and an active influence on Portugal's diplomatic activity.

We propose a trip through the national horizon over the last thirty years, while seeking to establish key points representing emphasis on internationalization of Portuguese architecture, which will enable the choice of four larger exhibitions, on government initiative, which can illustrate ways of thinking and acting, in disclosing and promoting architecture *out there*, within a diplomatic context.

Topography of international exhibitions of Portuguese architecture

The choice of these examples emerges from the consideration of a broad framework, which will be left on display to show the choice of highlighted cases, as well as their articulation, unnoticeable at first blush.

Long gone are the days when reflection on national architecture gained relevance on the Portuguese cultural horizon [at times such as the *I National Architecture Congress* (1948) or the *Survey of Portuguese Architecture* (1961)], and, while garnering international interest with the work of architect Álvaro Siza starting in the 1960s and 1970s, those were the decades that unfolded from the dawn of the nation's freedom as being the most fertile in bringing about moments of reflection and a summary of national architecture. *Within (Portugal)* and, at the same time, *out there*, the first capable expeditions were ventured, where Portuguese architecture was first built as *value for export*⁵ and was sent to Europe and to the world in small batches stamped with the name *Pritzker* (the prize earned by Álvaro Siza in 1992), broadly explored by the rest of the professional community.

The national exhibitions that emerged in the early 1980s, most notably *Depois do Modernismo* (After Modernism)(1983) and the first experiences with Biennials – Soure (1986/1988), Évora (1991) and Sintra (1990, 1993 and 1997) –, counteracted initiatives of a broadened international impetus and scope, such as the exhibition *Tendências da Arquitetura Portuguesa* (Portuguese Architecture Trends)⁶ which, from 1986 to 1992, put on display a set of works by a selection of five architects⁷ and the exhibition *Europália 1991: Points de Repère*, "bringing together the best of what emerged from that post-modern debate, from North to South, and also uncover a possible combination or fusion of endogenous and exogenous positions in this power play"⁸. The events from 1986 and 1991 are the first to be considered in this sequence, as readings emerging from the post-modern spirit experienced in that moment and the first examples of the *high patronage* of the Portuguese government.

Five years later, in 1996, marked the timid inauguration of the start of official representations at international biennials and triennials, with Portugal's representation at the 19th Triennial of Milan: *Il Portogallo del mare, delle pietre, delle città*⁹ and, a year later, in 1997, Ana Tostões commissioned, for Deutsches Architektur-Museum in Frankfurt, the broadest display produced up to that point, and which reflected on the topic of *20th-century Architecture: Portugal*¹⁰. This exhibition defined contemporary Portuguese architecture, by the overview it provided, supported by a strong set of historical and critical texts that worked toward defining a national *architectural identity*, as put on display in Europe. Thus, this will unmistakably be our third example. The ability to promote a summary reading of a century's worth of Portuguese architectural production would become a reference for many of the experiments undertaken in successive years.

"Arquitetura Portuguesa Contemporânea 1991-2001". Porto: ASA Editores, SA, December 2001 (2nd edition), p. 21.

12. Exhibition and catalog, commissioned by Michele Cannatá and Fátima Fernandes for CONCRETA / EXPONOR; Fernandes, Fátima; Cannatá, Michele, "Arquitetura portuguesa contemporânea em Portugal: 1991-2001". Porto: Edições Asa, 2002 (2nd edition).

13. A seminar under the responsibility of Diogo Seixas Lopes, Paulo Seródio Lopes and Pedro Rufino (editors of the magazine bearing the same name) and which enabled "bringing together, in Porto, a unique group of architects, essayists and critics of Architecture from a variety of academic and professional contexts, getting them engaged in face-to-face discussions, but also with the Portuguese architectural culture itself (which always requires provocations)." Grande, Nuno "Intro", in *Seminário de Arquitetura Prototipo' 01. Cidade em Performance Prototipo #007*, Lisbon: August 2002.

14. Triennial site, <http://www.trienaldelisboa.com/pt/#/about/mission>, visited on October 22nd, 2015.

15. An exhibition produced by the AEP and by the Portuguese Architects' Association for São Paulo, as commissioned by Fernandes and Cannatá, following the previous exhibition entitled *Contemporary Portuguese Architecture 1991-2001*.

16. Designed by Jonathan Sergison for Riba in London, in 2009, and subsequently put on display in Barcelona, Milan, Loulé and Lisbon, from 2009 to 2011. The list of six young architectural firms included Aires Mateus, Paulo David, Inês Lobo, Ricardo Bak Gordon, Búgio/João Fávila and Ricardo Carvalho + Joana Carvalho.

17. Rodeia. João Belo, in *Catálogo da Exposição*, Carvalho, R; Palma, R. (coords), "Arquitetura: Portugal fora de Portugal", organização OA e Berlin Aedes Am Pfefferberg, Berlin: Aedes am Pfefferberg, 2009, p. 13.

18. Matos, José Sarmiento (director of Portugal-Frankfurt 97) in *Catálogo da Exposição*, Tostões, Ana; Wang, Wilfried; Becker,

Also in 1998, Portugal made its appearance at the 1st Iberian-American Biennial. *Architecture and Civil engineering*, in Madrid, as Portugal hosted the all-important Lisbon World Exhibition, *Expo'98*. In this *end-of-the-century* scenario, it can be stated that Portuguese Architecture establishes an evidently highlighted position in cultural agendas, both in Portugal and around the world, by expanding its media coverage through exhibitions, conference cycles, commissionings and inaugurations expressively disseminated in the media.

In this sequence, we acknowledge the turn of the century as a new and important paradigm, as the "*moment of all balances and predictions*"¹¹. As part of *Porto 2001 - European Capital of Culture*, the Exhibition entitled *Contemporary Portuguese Architecture 1991-2001*¹² and the *Seminar of Prototypical Architecture '01. City in Performance*¹³ enabled the crossover of perspectives of a varied set of personalities, belonging to several generations of Portuguese professionals and academics and *founders* of the internationalization of Portuguese architecture.

It will be their mature intention to disseminate Portuguese production, on the one hand as an instrument of cultural diplomacy and, on the other hand, dictated by the need to export an identity brand, constantly validated / confronted with an emerging critique, which will guide how the curatorial discourse of the early 21st century will be put together, regarding Architecture in Portugal.

The following decade would be heavily marked by Portuguese representations at large-scale events such as Architecture Biennials of Venice (2004) and São Paulo (2007) and participation at the Quadrennial of Prague - *Scenic Space and Design* - (2007), and at the Architecture Biennial of Buenos Aires (2011); this, along with representations at the Triennial of Milan and at traveling exhibitions such as the BIAUs (*Iberian-American Architecture and Urban Planning Biennial*); and *within our borders* there would emerge the Architecture Triennial of Lisbon, in 2007, whose mission consists of "*researching, streamlining and promoting architectural thinking and practice, with a major forum of debate, reflection and dissemination to be held every three years, thereby crossing disciplinary and geographical borders*"¹⁴.

Other diligences have been successfully brought about, such as the exhibition entitled *Des-Continuidade (Dis-Continuity)*¹⁵, in 2005, and the exhibition *Overlapping: Six Portuguese Architecture Studios*¹⁶, in 2009 and, the same year, the exhibition *Architecture: Portugal fora de Portugal*, held in Berlin, as part of the Portuguese president's state visit to Germany. The latter exhibition would round out the set of examples studied in this essay.

Four Points de Repère

The said exhibitions share a set of aspects in common, regardless of the time and the context in which they are brought about. First off, their affiliation to the state: whether it's the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and State Secretary's Office for Culture, in 1986, the patronage of the Portuguese President's Office, at the exhibitions of 1991 and 2009, or even, through the creation of a body with this specific initiative under its tutelage, as was the case with the *Sociedade Anónima Portugal-Frankfurt 97*.

In all of these cases, the goal is easily apparent and objectively expressed: to promote "*Portugal's assertion in the world*"¹⁷. The willingness to disseminate an idea of national cultural identity is the primary vector of these initiatives, as Architecture is shown as an "*excellent calling card for an autonomous culture*" and "*one of the privileged data for an in-depth understanding of the cultural, political and social experience of a specific medium*"¹⁸.

While competing for this premise, it often happens that architecture exhibitions are part of an expanded set of initiatives that address other cultural fields. Except for the exhibition *Tendências da Arquitetura Portuguesa* (Portuguese Architecture Trends), which asserts itself as an exclusively architectural event, the other examples are all part of expanded and diversified programs of Cultural Diplomacy.



Porto Poetic, Galeria Municipal, Porto, 2014.
Photos: Ricardo Castelo.

28. Freely translated from Duarte, Carlos S., "De la Revolución de Abril al tiempo presente" In *Catálogo da Exposição: "Tendências de la Arquitectura Portuguesa"* (Portuguese Architecture Trends), Lisbon: Trama, 1986, p. 25.

29. *Idem, Ibidem*, p. 7.

30. Freely translated from Graça Dias, Manuel "Cinco Modos" In Duarte, Carlos S., "Tendências de la Arquitectura Portuguesa", Lisbon: Trama, 1986, p. 28-29.

31. *Idem, Ibidem*.

32. "Quatre batailles en faveur d'une architecture portugaise" In Gomes, Paulo Varela, op. cit. p. 21-62.

33. "Rhetorique. Empirisme. Quelques édifices portugais anciens" In Gomes, Paulo Varela, op. cit. p. 63-94.

34. "Architecture Portugaise. Essai de description de son processus" In Gomes, Paulo Varela, op. cit. p. 95-106.

This exhibition took place shortly after another multidisciplinary exhibition, promoted by Luís Serpa, in 1983, in Lisbon. *Depois do Modernismo* ("After Modernism") proposed a discussion on the post-modern condition and included the fields of visual arts, fashion design, music, theater and architecture. Its polarization from Lisbon brought about a refusal from the *Escola do Porto* to participate, a relatively controversial event which exacerbated the north/south discrepancies, currently evident, without producing effects internationally.

The exhibition *Tendências da Arquitetura Portuguesa* (Portuguese Architecture Trends) is not that far off from this reality. Commissioned from Lisbon, it proposes a group of five architects: Álvaro Siza, Hestnes Ferreira, Luiz Cunha, Manuel Vicente and Tomás Taveira, which precisely denounces this, or an affinity for a southern "post-modern formalism", according to Porto. After doing a brief history of Modernism in Portugal, in a text by Carlos S. Duarte, where the Luís Serpa exhibition is examined, we point out a set of architects not convened for this exhibition, because they were not prominent, in the illustration of the "trends we have just described from contextualism to historical post-modernism and pop and to the neo-rationalist reaction"²⁸.

With this exhibition, Carlos S. Duarte seeks to "offer a clear-cut and significant reading of what Architecture is in Portugal. With this purpose, we chose five architects representing the main trends crossed in the sphere of architectural production and of the controversy that comes with it"²⁹.

We present the five chosen ones from five keywords, which give rise to five texts, signed by Manuel Graça Dias and entitled "*Cinco Modos*" (Five Modes): Siza, o *Depurado* (Purified) is placed alongside the *Impuro* (Impure) Manuel Vicente, for whom "equally important is History, the present, the learned, the vernacular, the elegant, the current (...) filling gaps, renewing ideas from everything that's been built"³⁰ or of Tomás Taveira, the *Extravagant One*, "a fan of the latest formal conquests"³¹ and fascinated by Graves or Stirling. Luís Cunha, who is given the adjective *Familiar* and Hestnes Ferreira, o *Luminoso* (the Luminous One) round out the team. Another set of texts, written specifically on each personality, by five critics, completes the catalog and helps to gain a more in-depth understanding of the roles of these architects in questioning what is Modern. This autonomous and solely architectural exhibition, despite its wide international reach, does not appear to have originated or resulted in the willingness to convey a national diplomatic message, while having been more relevant in the discussion as being internal to the discipline itself.

In 1991, for Brussels, Paulo Varela Gomes assembled an extended team in producing a far denser exhibition. In the catalog, Alexandre Alves Costa, Marc Dubois, Paulo Pereira and Paulo Varela Gomes sign a set of core texts that reflect different approaches to defining Portuguese Architecture. The historical character will not be casual, with Paulo Varela Gomes as general commissioner. The texts "*Quatro batalhas a favor de uma arquitetura portuguesa*" (Four battles in favor of a Portuguese architecture)³², signed by the commissioner, "*Retórica. Empirismo. Alguns edifícios portugueses antigos*" (Rhetoric. Empiricism. A few old Portuguese buildings)³³ by Paulo Pereira, and the contribution from Alexandre Alves Costa "*Arquitetura Portuguesa. Ensaio de descrição do seu processo*" (Portuguese Architecture. An essay describing its process)³⁴ proposes a journey through the history of Portuguese architecture, bringing to the surface the construction of its identity by showing times of crisis, political and cultural contingencies and their responses, and backtracking, with Alexandre A. Costa, to a medieval period and to reflection on the importing of international models, using the Benedictine expansion as the first point of reference.

The last member of the introductory quartet, the lone international contribution, writes precisely on the external vision of recent Portuguese architecture, from the exposure garnered by Álvaro Siza and, in that sequence, its internationalization process.

35. Tostões, Ana; Wang, Wilfried; Becker, Annette (org.), "Portugal: arquitetura do século XX", München: Prestel, 1997, p.11 e 12.

36. *Idem, Ibidem.*

Given this framework which represents us, there follows six theme clusters of projects that render the said specificity from distinct and complementary viewpoints and which, through the 25 projects by 16 authors, illustrate the diversity of areas where Portuguese architects manage to be active.

While theme clusters are heterogeneous and variable in the quantity of works brought together, they illustrate works in diversified contexts: "*A Travers la Ville*" condenses works in an urban and national context, while "*Sur le Paysage*" deals with works that modify or structure the landscape, even though both are found within the same urban context. The topic of housing is dealt with on two scales: "*Horizons de l'Habitat*", which presents a selection of four houses between Ponte da Barca and Portalegre, whereas the chapter "*Les Beaux Quartiers*" addresses expanded residential clusters that tend to encompass low-cost collective housing. Lastly, we see a chapter comprising hybrid examples, "*Impuretés*": by António Marques Miguel, the only example from the Portuguese island territories – Edifício "Avenida" (building), Funchal –, which combines high-standard housing and stores.

The variety of projects presented tends to comprehensively cover Portuguese architectural production and to briefly highlight the historically rooted strong character not alienated from the country's social and political reality, which Portuguese architecture managed to maintain.

The increase in cases shown, of compiled reflective texts and addressed topics, in this context, reaches its culmination with the exhibition in Frankfurt, in 1997, and which has not been surpassed since.

Ana Tostões outlines a broadened Cartesian matrix that will allow reading the presented cases under a chronological perspective when cross-referenced with a program reading. This structure, which outlines the way works are grouped around their functional purpose, also allows a temporal reading intrinsically linked to the country's political and social reality. To this end, Tostões establishes two sets of texts in the catalog presentation: *I. Chronologies* and *II. Topics*. The 20th century, the only object of interest in this exhibition (far from the rooting in the history of the proposal by Paulo Varela Gomes), is thus broken down into seven moments that are densely described by seven texts that combine the early part of the century ("*A 'Casa Portuguesa' and the New Programs 1900-1920*", by Raquel Henriques da Silva) with contemporary reality ("*De 1976 ao Final do Século. Convergências, Divergências e Cruzamentos de Nivel*", signed by Rogério Vieira de Almeida), while making sure to address the period of the *Estado Novo* Regime, Modernization processes, the assertion of Regionalism and the recurring SAAL ("*1974-1975, o SAAL e os Anos da Revolução*"), as portrayed by the no less recurring Alexandre Alves Costa.

Architecture deeply linked to the political context, an expanded number of presented works, and a *multilayer* reading, introduces a notable complexity relative to the discourse proposed in 1991, exhausted between the topic of housing and the relationship with the city.

Housing is now once again presented, "*without forgetting single-family homes when it presents resumed progresses and experiences, while naturally favoring multi-family housing and its extension as a design of the city*"³⁵, as well as works on the built-up heritage "*as the reuse of constructions has been a constant occurrence in Portuguese architecture*". We notice the inclusion of religious architecture because of how it "*sets a certain collective unconsciousness*", of the pavilions of international exhibitions "*as the black-or-white position of a public image*" and, in a basic way, public equipment: "*The major works or notable buildings, the most significant constructions for the community – are, therefore, the privileged type in this choice and which somehow clarifies the evolution of architecture throughout the century*"³⁶.

In that regard, a set of renowned authors is convened in the theme-based reflection that accompanies this theme-based sectoring, without it being a necessary or direct consequence. We can refer, for instance, to the following texts: "*Arquitetura e*

37. Carvalho, Ricardo, "Um Panorama Interior", in Carvalho, R; Palma, R. (coord), Catálogo da Exposição "Arquitetura: Portugal fora de Portugal", organization OA and Berlin Aedes Am Pfefferberg, Berlin : Aedes am Pfefferberg, 2009, p. 13.

38. Tostões, Ana; Wang, Wilfried; Becker, Annette, op. cit., p. 11 and 12.

39. Carvalho, Ricardo, op.cit., p. 13.

40. Idem, *Ibidem*.

41. Bártolo, José M., "Como fazer coisas com palavras. 3 apontamentos sobre Curadoria (em Portugal)", in *Artcapital*. net, 30.01.2014, available at <http://www.artcapital.net/perspectiva-159-jose-manuel-bartolo-como-fazer-coisas-com-palavras-3-apontamentos-sobre-curadoria-em-portugal>.

42. Cycle of Conferences produced by Prototipo and included in the activities of Porto 2001 – *Capital Europeia da Cultura* (European Capital of Culture). This event was recorded in the issue *Prototipo#01: City on Performance*. Porto, 2001, p.260.

Artes Plásticas" (Architecture and Visual Arts) by José Augusto-França, "*Arquitetura e Poder: Representação Nacional*" (Architecture and Power: National Representation), by Pedro Vieira de Almeida, or "*Arquitetura e Transformação*" (Architecture and Transformation) by Álvaro Siza, whose projects are included at every exhibition mentioned, and who emerges here as the author of a theoretical text.

Lastly, in 2009, at the exhibition *Portugal fora de Portugal*, the application of a formula in a contracted version of the model we have just presented is relatively clear-cut. The discourse is so much the result of a vision of continuity that Ana Tostões and Wilfried Wang (leading figures at Frankfurt 1997) are the partners that Ricardo Carvalho chooses for opening the catalog.

The goal of producing an "*inevitably panoramic exhibition (...) because it does not thoroughly present the works (...) but also because the idea is to show various modes and positionings*"³⁷, is re-placed and the identity features that are read on the national panorama are nothing other than those identified in the late 20th century.

That architecture, "*sustained using 'actual things', built from the response to multiple implications of programs, budgets and sites, as well as the wills of creators and commissioning individuals, which constitutes a veritable tradition of pragmatism, at times more decisive than cultural tradition itself*"³⁸, is reaffirmed and outlined by Ricardo Carvalho as an "*architecture that works the landscape, differentiated programs and situations of commissioning, whose common denominator is the uncommon ability (...) to express a unique understanding of places*"³⁹.

Four generations of architects, producers of 21 works, are now being read in a single set, in the space of formal, program or scale categorizations, as they have been brought together on just one condition: that they represent realizing the internationalization of Portuguese architecture, that is, being located outside Portugal's borders. The common denominator, if any, in the curator's words, is "*the precision in the work with constraints and its ability to enhance the response within the context of arrival. They are projects and works that build an identity from dialogue, interlocution with the constraints and sites, understanding the opportunity for a transformation of existing conditions, but also as the development of a body of disciplinary research*"⁴⁰.

The selection exhibited extends beyond the nation's borders, by asserting the success of the Portuguese Diaspora and the growing affirmation of its architecture as an active economic sector, recognized and appreciated in international markets.

New territories

Architecture is more than recognized for its predominant role in international diplomatic relations, as it is valued as a *resource* in "*Portugal's affirmation in the world*" (João Belo Rodeia), economic *capital* (asset or service to be exported) and even, as a *power*, thinking in terms of *soft power* through the attractiveness it manages to generate, thereby turning Portuguese architecture into a reference on the European horizon.

As for curatorship, as applied to the disciplinary field of architecture, it is naturally conditioned by the context and by the political intent giving rise to these exhibitions and which subsequently determines its territory and scope of action.

The exhibitions being considered (and tending to be the dominant discourse during the 20th century) agree on the existence of a *specific Portuguese mode* of producing architecture, and on establishing a panoramic, comprehensive, sure narrative. The idea is to show this homogeneous and historically upheld image in the diplomatic process of seduction.

It is perhaps in the exhibition most unrelated to these diplomatic purposes – *Tendências da Arquitetura Portuguesa* (Portuguese Architecture Trends), 1986 –, that the curatorial discourse shows the greatest autonomy, as it directs the reading of selected contents, by emphasizing a choice while determining a certain understanding of architectural reality, questioning and managing room for disciplinary discussion.

More than just an autonomous curatorial, sedimented and continuous practice, doing school, we will be in the presence of a strong disciplinary affiliation, the heir of a national architectural identity, capable of transposing its *modus operandi* to the discourse that captions and represents it.

The discursive trend currently involving issues pertaining to representation, discussion and questioning the very disciplinary definition itself, does not yet feature much relevance, or exposure, at these exhibitions. Assuming it could be the result of its diplomatic origin and of the necessary display through concrete examples of an ability *to do*, another alternative should be provided.

The weight of the historical inheritance that dominates Portuguese culture, as rendered in architecture by the importance given to the site, to pre-existence or to the heritage (with particular emphasis on the *Porto School*), will be a serious conditioning factor for an objective and concrete way of *doing* and *showing*, which (still) runs counter to the visually expanding discursive trend in the last few years.

This idea of "*doing things with words*"⁴¹ raises many other issues and somehow assumes that we could consider that "*architecture is not the production of objects. It is more about producing a discourse, an impassioned discussion or argument on the riddles of objects. Thus, the center of architecture does not consist of buildings in themselves, but, rather, a certain way of talking about them*"⁴².

In the *space between* theory and architectural practice, a factor of internal divergence from the discipline of architecture, and a trigger for discussion and questioning, the curatorship is likely to find room to build and a more complex narrative, allowing integrating and pacifying various *ways of doing* in Portuguese architecture.