

## Appropriating Modernism: From the Reception of Team 10 in Portuguese Architectural Culture to the SAAL Programme (1959-74)

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This paper aims to map the relations between the Portuguese appropriation of Team 10's architectural ideas and the housing policies initiated by the state, especially through the famous SAAL programme. The SAAL programme was launched after the Carnation revolution of 1974, which brought democracy to Portugal. SAAL intended to offer better housing conditions to underprivileged urban dwellers through an ambitious building programme of new houses and infrastructure, including the use of participatory models.<sup>1</sup> SAAL stands for Ambulatory Support to Local Residents Programme and ran for a brief period between 1974 and 1976, yet had a major impact on the country's architectural culture. The fervent anxiety of the revolution demanded quick results from the state. Therefore the 1950s and 60s architectural debate naturally emerged as the basis of the SAAL strategy.<sup>2</sup>

This paper seeks to demonstrate, through intellectual speculation based on an analysis of the historical discourse, how the critical and interpretative reception of Team 10's ideas by the Portuguese architectural culture played an important role in the process leading up to the SAAL programme. Team 10 will therefore need to be defined in order to provide a reference framework for the study of its impact in Portugal. This will make it possible to understand Team 10 in a wider sense, as a palimpsest built up over time. The aim of this approach is to encourage reflection on the various ways in which Team 10 and its ideas were received and critically interpreted, disseminated and assimilated by the Portuguese architectural culture.

From the mid-1940s onward, during Salazar's dictatorial regime, modern architects in Portugal organized themselves in Porto through the Organization of Modern Architects (ODAM), and in Lisbon, through the Arts and Technical Cultural Initiatives (ICAT).<sup>3</sup> The architects who assembled in these groups sought to develop an alternative to the conservative and nationalist cultural policies of the regime by looking beyond the confines of their country. From the mid-1950s onward, a new generation of architects emerged, with a common interest in following the international architectural debate prompted by the third series of the magazine *Arquitectura* (the most important Portuguese architecture magazine at the time). Active exchanges took place between participants, who took on special, but different roles. Nuno Portas, in particular, who was appointed Secretary of State for Housing and Urban Planning after the 1974 revolution, was to play a highly decisive role in this process. In his capacity as Secretary of State, he became one of the key people responsible for implementing the SAAL programme. One of his more difficult tasks was mediating between politicians, architects, sociologists, social workers and representatives of the resident associations.

### Team 10: 'The story of another idea'

An examination of the significance of Team 10's influence on Portuguese architecture encounters a number of difficulties. As Dirk van den Heuvel and Max Risselada pointed out in the introduction to their book *Team 10: In Search of a Utopia of the*

*Present*. 'The group's history,' they write, 'challenges conventional historiography, as well as the more specific historiography of modern architecture.'<sup>4</sup> One could say that the Portuguese context and Team 10's architectural ideas have an oblique relationship. However, there are some signs that confirm the importance and pertinence of Team 10's presence.

Indeed, there is no obvious way in which to approach the object of study. First, Team 10's composition was diffuse, having a central core of several architects who stood out as a result of their greater presence and militancy, and a number of invited participants whose presence was of a more irregular or occasional nature. As a heterogeneous group, Team 10 brought together architects from a variety of origins, with diverse concerns and viewpoints. Second, Team 10 was averse to dogmas, doctrines and technocratic guidelines. As such, its intention was not to present an alternative to the Athens Charter, such as the much debated proposition of a Charter of Habitat, or any other explicit new programme of action. It can be said that the absence of answers and the 'right to be vague' as Aldo van Eyck phrased it, enabled a multifaceted, frank and open debate in the first Team 10 meetings.<sup>5</sup>

In opposition to CIAM's bureaucratic and rationalist model, Team 10 redefined the semantics of architectural discourse, favouring anthropological notions and developing perspectives more sensitive to the socio-psychological needs of identity, neighbourhood and belonging. It also raised questions concerning context, history, mobility, everyday life, spontaneity, as well as questions about habitation on a large scale, the structure of a community, the participatory process and the connection to a specific place.

Hence, the richness of Team 10's legacy and its influences may be understood in terms of an open-

source legacy that permits a variety of intellectual appropriations, not only with regard to the group's impact on the postwar debates about modern architecture, but also with regard to the Portuguese context. This specific quality of Team 10's influence is defined by the structure of Team 10's discourse. In an introductory text to the *Team 10 Primer*, Alison Smithson wrote how important the exchange of ideas was to the group: 'In a way it is a history of how the ideas of the people involved have grown or changed as a result of contact with the others, and it is hoped that the publication of these root ideas, in their original often naive form, will enable them to continue life.'<sup>6</sup>

Team 10 frequently uses the term *idea* to set itself apart from CIAM's doctrinaire concepts of *norm* or *guideline*. *Idea* suggests something more inclusive, something that can be appropriated, something open to derivation and novel interpretations. In this sense, the first issue of the new series of the Dutch magazine *Forum*,<sup>7</sup> (called 'The story of another idea', which was distributed among the architects attending the 1959 CIAM in Otterlo) represents a turning point. This manifesto-like issue marks a programmatic change in both the *Forum*'s discourse and the approach of its editorial team, led by Aldo van Eyck and Jaap Bakema. The issue's cover consisted of a series of words cut out and arranged circularly, which illustrated some of Team 10's typical signature concepts such as 'cluster', 'change and growth', 'identity', 'hierarchy of human associations', 'identifying devices' and 'mobility', among others. This cover summarized what might be considered the essence of Team 10 - a set of ideas gravitating around an undefined centre, left blank and open to appropriation. [fig. 1]

So, when we speak of the reception of Team 10, we are speaking of the reception of their ideas, developed and elaborated both within the group and individually, within the broader context of a critical revision of the modern movement. Team 10



has been associated with the easily recognizable form languages of Brutalism and Structuralism, or the concept of mat-building. Nonetheless, Team 10 did not aspire to any kind of specific pattern, style or formal code. Instead, it represented a socially committed ethical stance based on deep critical reflection, which made it possible to supplant the strictly functionalist character of CIAM, the Athens Charter and architecture associated with the International Style.

### **The Portuguese presence at the postwar CIAM meetings**

The revision of modernism, as initiated by several Team 10 members in postwar CIAM meetings, left its mark on Portuguese architectural culture in the 1950s. In Portugal, ODAM provided the first opportunity to come into contact with this profound programmatic revision. ODAM, whose members included former CIAM delegates representing Portugal, was founded in Porto in 1947. This youthful group, comprising around 40 architects born between 1908 and 1925, included some of the most important and active architects in Porto in the 1950s, both in terms of practice and teaching, such as Arménio Losa, Viana de Lima, Agostinho Ricca, Mário Bonito, Octávio Lixa Filgueiras, Fernando Távora and José Carlos Loureiro.<sup>8</sup>

ODAM played a vital role in Portugal from 1947 to 1956. It affirmed the spirit of modern architecture and opposed the monumental and nationalistic architecture promoted by the authoritarian regime of Oliveira Salazar. In 1972, Cassiano Barbosa, one of the group's oldest members, published a book outlining ODAM's main goals: 'To disseminate the principles upon which modern architecture should be based, seeking to affirm, through the work of its members, how the professional conscience should be formed and how to create the necessary understanding between architects and other technical experts and artists.'<sup>9</sup>

This role was shared with the ICAT group, founded in Lisbon in 1946 and mobilized by Francisco Keil do Amaral, Celestino de Castro and Hernâni Gandra, among others. ICAT took over the second series of the magazine *Arquitectura* (nos. 1-58, 1946-57), and used the magazine to publish texts and works by the major authors of the modern movement, in addition to being in charge of the publication and Portuguese translation of the full version of the Athens Charter, which was published in a series of twelve issues between 1948 and 1949.<sup>10</sup>

A new generation of architects thus came together in these two groups, in Lisbon and Porto, all of whom were equally involved in promoting the ideas of modern architecture as an antidote to the regime's nationalistic guidelines. This political stance formed the ideological core of these groups' architecture and identity. In 1948, they both played a decisive part in the first National Architecture Congress organized and promoted by the National Architects' Union.<sup>11</sup> The meeting was sponsored by the government, however, thus revealing the political ambiguity of the congress. Not only did the congress express strong support for the modern principles of the Athens Charter and commit itself to resolving the housing problem, but it also represented a turning point, a collective awakening of architects that wanted to reconquer freedom of expression and express a renewed and more intense opposition to the Salazar dictatorship.

However, the group's sensibility began to change during ODAM's final phase, from 1952 to 1956. According to Edite Rosa, this shift was triggered by the *Survey of Portuguese Vernacular Architecture*, as well as pioneering work by Távora, such as the Ofir Summer House (1957-58).<sup>12</sup> Naturally, it was also influenced by the attendance of a number of ODAM architects at CIAM VIII in Hoddesdon (1951), the Siguna meeting (1952), CIAM IX in Aix-en-Provence (1953), CIAM X in Dubrovnik (1956) and CIAM XI in Otterlo (1959).<sup>13</sup>

In Sigtuna, Viana de Lima, the leading figure of the Portuguese CIAM group, presented the work 'Contribution à la Charte de l'HABITAT',<sup>14</sup> a project he carried out in collaboration with Fernando Távora, João Andresen, Eugénio Alves de Sousa and Luís Praça, and which provided an alternative to the normative 'CIAM grid'. It was used at the Sigtuna meeting to denounce the government's repression of modern architecture in Portugal.<sup>15</sup> 'Although our work offers nothing new,' de Lima said of CIAM's work, 'it is still the result of a considerable effort, given the limited time available and the very special circumstance of being the first work of a GROUP still "in progress", which is leaving its country for the first time.' After his presentation, de Lima also took the opportunity to 'acknowledge our imperfections and also the possibility of errors; but our presence at this meeting reflects our desire to benefit from your experience and your advice'. Though ODAM did not significantly interfere with the revisionist debates at CIAM, it was an important player in the Portuguese architectural debate.

De Lima belonged to the older ODAM generation. According to Sergio Fernandez, de Lima was 'an absolute fan of Corbusier'.<sup>16</sup> Fernandez, who also attended the 1959 Otterlo conference, worked with him while a student between 1956 and 1957. Fernandez recalls that Távora, as de Lima's younger guest, displayed a different sensibility, a more youthful unrest and theoretical involvement with the basic issues, which was reflected in his profound enthusiasm upon his return to Portugal.<sup>17</sup> This different sensibility is why Távora became a key interpreter of the Modern Movement revision in the 1950s.

In 1945, Távora published his seminal essay 'The Problem of the Portuguese House' in the newspaper *Aléo*.<sup>18</sup> Two years later, Manuel João Leal and Nuno Teotónio Pereira paid tribute to its importance by publishing a rewritten and expanded version of the text in *Cadernos de Arquitectura*, this time with

a wider distribution and hence greater impact.<sup>19</sup> This manifesto-like text issued the appeal: 'Everything must be remade, starting from the beginning.' It denounced the 'false architecture' of the nationalistic movement of the 'Portuguese House', a movement supported by the Salazar regime and theorized by Raul Lino.<sup>20</sup> Jorge Figueira points out that Távora used this text to 'position himself [...] on an extremely insinuating and tactical plane'.<sup>21</sup> In fact, Távora was defending a 'third way', an alternative, in-between position. This is because there were two facets to his statement that 'the vernacular house will provide great lessons when duly studied, as it is the most functional and least fanciful'.<sup>22</sup> On the one hand, it expressed a quest for genuine Portuguese architecture, and, on the other hand, it stated that Portuguese architecture would, 'when duly studied',<sup>23</sup> reveal a debt to functionalist logic.

These concerns, in line with a text published in 1947 by Keil do Amaral, formed the basis for the above-mentioned *Survey of Portuguese Vernacular Architecture* promoted by the National Union of Architects.<sup>24</sup> Work on the survey began in 1949. The initial attempt by the union leadership, presided over by do Amaral, failed. The survey project - an ambitious mission consisting of six teams geographically distributed throughout the country undertaking a scientific study of vernacular Portuguese architecture - was officially launched six years later in 1955,<sup>25</sup> and its results were published in 1961.<sup>26</sup> Távora led the team for the Minho region, alongside his colleague Octávio Lixa Filgueiras, in charge of the Trás-os-Montes regional team. These two northern teams shared a particular appreciation for anthropological concerns, attested to by their focus on the relationship between human associations and their spatial appropriations.<sup>27</sup> Thus, it is interesting to note that these questions related to identifying devices and community structures were in line with those discussed by Team 10.

A still young Álvaro Siza collaborated with Távora from 1949 to 1955. Siza recalls that Távora, as a member of CIAM, felt a powerful need to share his experiences.<sup>28</sup> His critical appropriation of the 1950s CIAM debate was of vital importance to the formation of the Porto School of Architecture. According to Siza, Távora 'had direct and personal information which he conveyed to the school, especially those who worked with him'.<sup>29</sup> It is no coincidence that some members of the school, such as Arnaldo Araújo and Octávio Lixa Filgueiras, were reflecting on concerns raised during the final CIAM congresses, such as identity, sociology or the social role of the architect. As Jorge Figueira states, this 'was decisive to creating a kind of cultural synchronization, via Porto, between the European vanguard and the fragile ideological tradition of Portuguese architecture'.<sup>30</sup>

Távora recalled the appearance, during his first CIAM congress in 1951 in Hoddesdon, of a new generation of English and Italians. According to Távora, the meeting, the subject of which was 'the heart of the city', presented 'contributions with a certain human warmth, unfamiliar to the rationalist mind'.<sup>31</sup> In 1956 in Dubrovnik, along with de Lima, Filgueiras and Araújo, Távora presented the 'plan for an agricultural community'<sup>32</sup> based on the *Survey of Portuguese Vernacular Architecture*. The plan argued that 'the architect is no longer the dictator imposing a form of his own, but the natural, simple, humble man devoted to the problems of his peers; not to serve *himself*, but to serve *them*, creating a work which may be anonymous, but is above all intensely experienced'.<sup>33</sup> [fig. 2] As Távora recalled in 1971, the project was 'an extremely specific, regionalized and in no way international project'<sup>34</sup> and was greeted with enthusiasm by Aldo van Eyck.

In 1957, Távora wrote a fundamental text in which he explained his design approach for the Ofir Summer House (1957-58).<sup>35</sup> 'In Portugal,'

wrote Fernandez, 'the Ofir House was undoubtedly a kind of starting point for all of us. It represents a milestone in the historiography of Portuguese architecture. I believe Távora felt this too.'<sup>36</sup> The project was related to the 'third way' defended ten years before in his 1947 text. However, as Távora recalled in 1986, the survey was decisive since it 'had an immediate and direct influence on the Ofir Summer House'.<sup>37</sup> In his 1957 text, Távora likened the house to a chemical 'compound', 'where an infinite number of factors would be involved, meaning of course factors with variable values but all of which must be taken in account',<sup>38</sup> factors which 'are not within the scope of the architect's responsibilities; others belong to the field of the architect's training, as well as to his own personality'.<sup>39</sup> Jorge Figueira described this text as a 'manifesto on the handling of references without losing the identity of the whole'.<sup>40</sup> Listing these factors, Távora pointed out in an autobiographical tone that 'the architect has his own cultural, plastic and human background (as far as he is concerned, the house is more than just a building). He knows the meanings of words, such as organicism, functionalism, neo-empiricism, cubism, etc., and at the same time he experiences a deep-rooted feeling of unparalleled love for all spontaneous architectural manifestations which he finds in his own country'.<sup>41</sup>

In this way, according to the 'compound' logic developed by Távora, the various factors were critically filtered, leading to different forms of appropriation adapted to the Portuguese setting. Indeed, one could argue that Távora's critical appropriation mirrored Van Eyck's stance in his quest to reconcile architecture with the basic values represented in the Otterlo Circles by the 'classical tradition', the 'modern tradition' and the 'vernacular tradition'.

In 1961, Nuno Portas pointed to the privileged position of Távora as a mediator of ideas between Porto and Team 10; Portas wrote in *Arquitectura* that Távora, 'having participated in the four CIAM

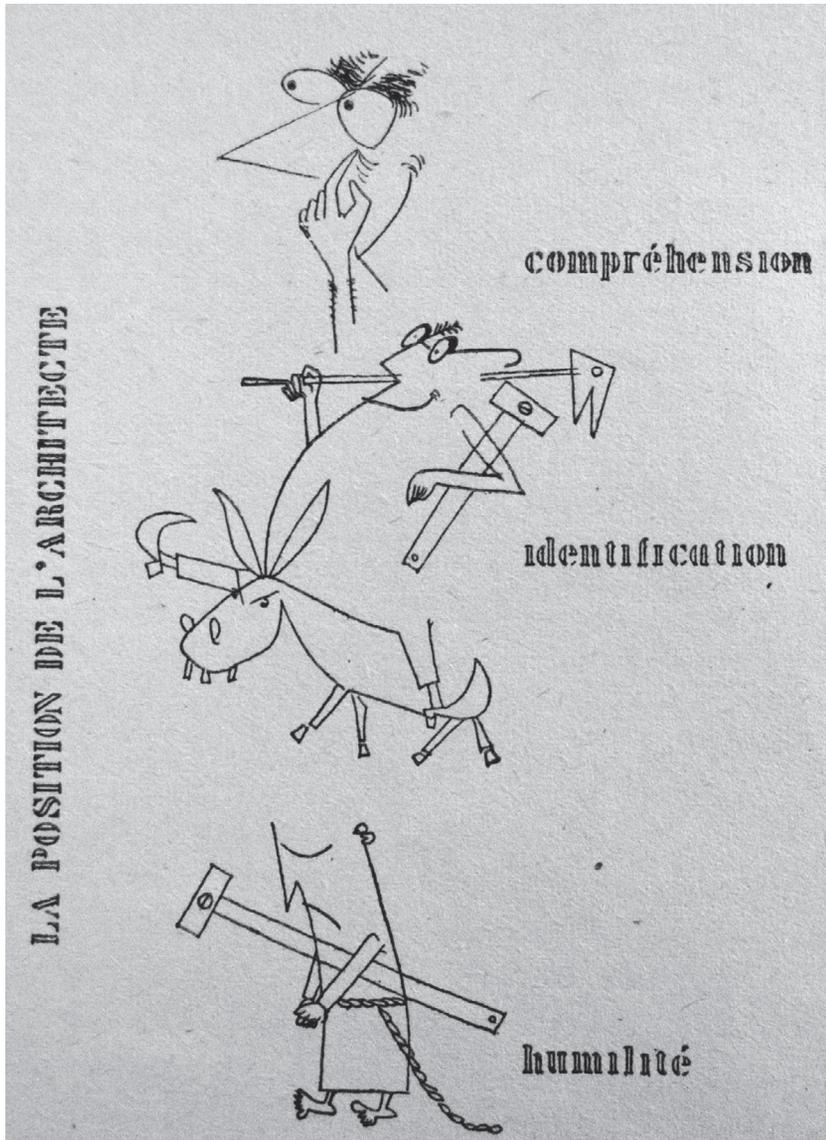


Fig. 2: Detail of panel 4: 'The Positioning of the Architect – Comprehension, Identification, Humility' (Groupe CIAM Porto, Portugal - 'Habitat Rural: New Agricultural Community', panel 4, 1951.) as published in: *Arquitectura*, 64, 1959.

congresses held over the last decade, [...] had the opportunity to follow, live, the crisis which occurred within the very heart of the modern movement (within the very indoctrination that shaped it), since, not being party to Team 10's opposition to "orthodox functionalism" or "Italian revisionism", he was able to gain a better understanding of the profound causes which separated them'.<sup>42</sup> Siza confirmed this interpretation when he recalled that 'from the final CIAM, [Távora] followed the thinking of Coderch of the Catalan houses, and not that of Candilis of the new cities; of the rebel Van Eyck and the new Italians, and not of Bakema and triumphalist reconstruction'.<sup>43</sup> This affirmation reveals the importance of Távora's critical reception as it illustrates the debate's different degrees of permeability sparked by Team 10.

In Otterlo, at the final CIAM congress in 1959, Viana de Lima presented Bragança Hospital, a project that went unnoticed due to its rationalist nature, while Távora presented his project for the Vila da Feira Market (1953-59) and, in a parallel session, the Ofir Summer House (1957-58). 'The CIAM architects,' recalls Fernandez, who also attended the congress, 'thought the market was great, but paid little attention to the Ofir House. I think that to those people, it was vaguely regionalist in nature. The Ofir House, which for us is extremely important, was the height of modernity. It was the leap from Corbusier to so-called authentic architecture. But with those little roofs, people didn't really get it.'<sup>44</sup>

As for the Vila da Feira Market, it provoked a discussion about 'the possibilities inherent in architecture of transcending its simple three-dimensional existence as space, and becoming an element which might encourage the spontaneous meeting and intermixing of people'.<sup>45</sup> The design of the market was central to this debate, in which Van Eyck suggested that 'the notion of space and time no longer carried its original impact and that it be

replaced with the more vital concept of place and occasion'.<sup>46</sup> It is interesting to note that this remark by Van Eyck could have described his own design for the Municipal Orphanage (1955-60) in Amsterdam. There are similarities between the spatial configuration of both places, particularly with a view to the gathering place as the central element.<sup>47</sup> [fig. 3]

Bakema, during the final session of the Otterlo congress, expressed a vote of confidence in Portugal's participation: 'Among the panels there is some fine work. The Portuguese plans [...] are examples of work in which I feel there is a force that is continuing on a good line.'<sup>48</sup> This observation by Bakema, as well as Van Eyck's enthusiasm about the Vila da Feira Market, probably led to Távora being invited to the Royaumont meeting in September 1962. Yet, if Otterlo represented a change of guard between the generations, as personified by de Lima and Távora, Royaumont marked another shift in the exchanges between Portuguese architecture and the Team 10 debates. Távora, 'the metropolitan Portuguese', attended the meeting along with Pancho Guedes, 'the African Portuguese'.<sup>49</sup>

Guedes grew up in Mozambique, a former Portuguese colony, and studied architecture in South Africa.<sup>50</sup> In 1950, he returned to Mozambique to work as an architect, a painter and a sculptor. Guedes was introduced to Team 10 by the Smithsons, who came in contact with him in 1960, during a visit to London where he also met Reyner Banham, the assistant executive editor of *The Architectural Review*, and the South African Theo Crosby, technical editor of *Architectural Design*. Guedes recalled that in Royaumont Távora 'listened to everything in silence, and became perturbed'.<sup>51</sup> Indeed, upon his return to Portugal, Távora was asked to write a statement in *Arquitectura* in which he shared his uneasiness following the meeting. 'The fact that we did not reach a conclusion in Royaumont, nor even tried to reach one, strikes me as profoundly

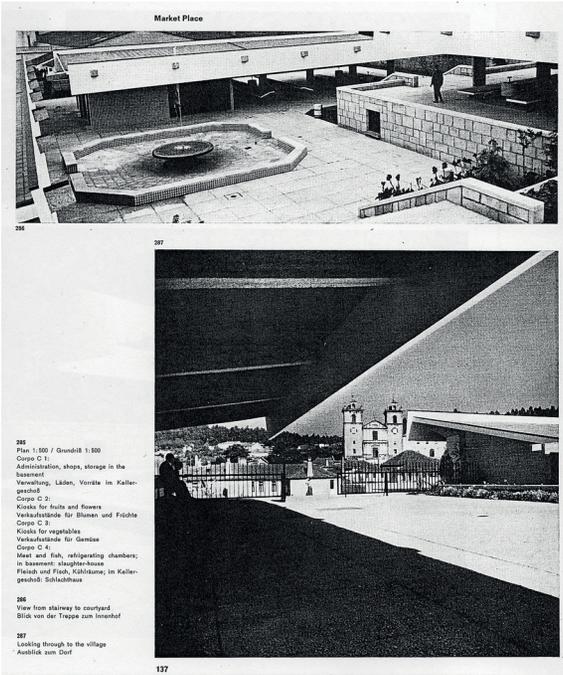


Fig. 3: Fernando Távora, Vila da Feira Market (1953-59) and Aldo van Eyck, Amsterdam's Municipal Orphanage (1955-60), as published in: Oscar Newman *CIAM'59 in Otterlo: Documents of Modern Architecture* (London: Karl Krämer Verlag, 1961).

significant. There are moments [...] when the only conclusion possible is... that no conclusion is possible'.<sup>52</sup> [fig. 4] Távora knew that times were changing. 'One can feel,' he wrote 'that this is a moment of inquiry and doubt, of reunification, of drama and mystery. How, then, to conclude with clarity?'<sup>53</sup> Faced with the impossibility of reaching a conclusion, he expressed the desire to continue: 'May this desire to *continue* and to *survive* be the most significant conclusion of our meeting, and encourage us to hold further meetings in the future.'<sup>54</sup>

Távora did not take part in any of Team 10's subsequent meetings, despite being invited to the Berlin meeting of 1965.<sup>55</sup> Guedes, for his part, continued to attend and participate in Team 10's meetings. However, despite his close contact with Team 10, Guedes did not play an active part in the dissemination of its ideas or its critical reception in Portugal. It is interesting to stress that Guedes was not asked to write a statement along with Távora, as one might have expected. Despite this absence of testimony, Guedes was featured in the same issue of the magazine with an unsigned article about his African projects - an article that criticizes the 'sculptural and formal concerns' and that denounces 'a gratuitous fantasy solution' of a specific façade or 'the dubious, even misleading, structural solution' of a given apartment block.<sup>56</sup> [fig. 5] Among others the article referred to issues of *The Architectural Review*<sup>57</sup> and *l'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*<sup>58</sup> dedicated to Guedes' work. It was written on behalf of the editors of *Arquitectura* since it clearly affirmed: 'We do not conceive architecture in this way.' The text also stated that Guedes' architecture was opposed to an architecture of social intentions. Therefore it could be argued that the *Arquitectura* editorial board,<sup>59</sup> based on their ideological and architectural viewpoints, missed the opportunity to broaden the debate in Team 10 with Guedes' testimony, thus stifling the exchange between the Portuguese and Team 10's architectural discourse.

### From *Arquitectura* to the SAAL programme

By 1963, when Távora's Royaumont statement was published in *Arquitectura*, a new generation had taken over the magazine (third series, nos. 59-131, 1957-74). This new phase in the life of *Arquitectura* was in stark contrast to the second series led by ICAT. This new wave played a central role in the critical revision of the modern movement in Portugal, based on the collaboration of architects such as Carlos Duarte, Pedro Vieira de Almeida and Nuno Portas, among many others. Subsequent issues of the magazine critically monitored the new Portuguese and international architectural output and specialist literature.

Carlos Duarte wrote in the magazine's architectural literature section that 'what most effectively defines an architecture magazine is its ideological stance with regard to the works and problems of its time',<sup>60</sup> calling *l'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* a panoramic magazine which did not interfere with events, in contrast to *The Architectural Review*, which 'by its more original and consequential attitude, exercises considerable influence on the evolution of architecture'.<sup>61</sup> It was in the latter, more ambitious and involved field of intervention that *Arquitectura* positioned itself. However, Duarte denounced the idea that *The Architectural Review* was neither original nor of decisive importance to the evolution of the modern movement, as 'the magazine has for a long time defended the validity of the rationalist functional attitude formally codified in what we habitually call the International Style'.<sup>62</sup> In just a few lines, Duarte had clearly mapped out the magazine's anti-rationalist stance.

The new editors displayed great agility and knowledge to remain up to date. For example, José Antonio Coderch's text 'It isn't geniuses we need right now' was published in *Arquitectura* in December 1961, just one month after it was first published in the Italian *Domus*. Another example, Georges Candilis' 'Problems of Today',<sup>63</sup> was published in



*Arquitectura* in January 1963, the same year as its publication in the Swiss magazine *Architecture - Formes et Fonctions*.<sup>64</sup> In this text, Candilis focused on the problems of 'habitation', 'number' and 'greatest number'. The text appeared at the very beginning of *Arquitectura*, with an illustration depicting an enormous explosion with the caption: 'We live in an era of extraordinary transformations - a great era - but technique and technical specialists have been caught unawares...'<sup>65</sup> [fig. 6]

Portas was a central character in this editorial project. In the late 1950s, he studied the evolution of the different ideological positions that converged in *Arquitectura* and beyond, based on the careful critical interpretation of theoretical reflections. His role in promoting the international debate was neither neutral nor passive. On the contrary, Portas' writings in the late 1950s were marked by a committed critical stance influenced by Bruno Zevi's organic school of thought.

In the 1959 text 'The responsibility of a brand-new generation of the modern movement in Portugal',<sup>66</sup> Portas adopted a basic stance - 'to interrogate a brand-new generation - not just its ideas and intentions, but above all its work'.<sup>67</sup> This generation consisted of 'young people who were educated and began their careers in the midst of the revision of the concept of modernity'.<sup>68</sup> As a result of this interrogation throughout the 1960s, the new series of *Arquitectura* functioned as a powerful 'agitprop tool'.<sup>69</sup> Figueira argues that in this text 'Portas was already indicating the path he would follow throughout the '60s and which would lead him away from the Zevian camp - denoting, for all intents and purposes, a formal dispute - towards methodological concerns which bring him closer to the social sciences'.<sup>70</sup> Indeed, a shift can be detected in which Portas began attaching greater value to method and process to the detriment of form, when he stated that 'urbanistic and architectural modernity is no longer part of a given vocabulary; but it is possible

and necessary to define it in relation to methodology, i.e. the connection between the creative act and the processes whereby reality can be known'.<sup>71</sup>

His first book, *A arquitetura para hoje* (Architecture for today), published two years after he joined the National Laboratory for Civil Engineering (LNEC) in 1964, confirmed his desire to distance himself somewhat from issues of form, favouring instead the quest for scientific objectivity. However, Portas still appreciated the proposals of certain architects. Towards the end of the book, Portas cited a number of examples which 'by the novelty and originality of their contribution [...] constitute a response to the "crisis": the British "Brutalist" movement, for example, identified with "Team 10" which catalysed CIAM's agony, and from which emerged the work of Lasdun, Smithson, Stirling-Gowan, the Sheffield team, the Dutchman Van Eyck and the "Frenchman" Candilis-Woods', along with the new Italian and Spanish generations, as well as Távora, Teotónio Pereira and Siza.<sup>72</sup>

In 1969, Portas published his second book, *A cidade como arquitetura* (The city as architecture), which elaborated on the line of thought pursued in the previous book, also based on his experience at LNEC. [fig. 7] However, a shift in thinking could be detected: while the 1964 book explored issues related to the building by means of architectural criticism, the 1969 book used a methodological approach to examining the city and urban planning issues. The title clearly illustrates this change: if the first proposes an 'architecture for today', the second moves one step further, suggesting that 'the city' should be understood 'as architecture'.

In Portas' preface to the 1970 Portuguese translation of Zevi's *Storia dell'architettura moderna*, he identified 'two trends, with almost opposite objectives, though both arising from men characterized by rationalism',<sup>73</sup> and formed in the period from 1955 to 1970. On the one hand, there was Team

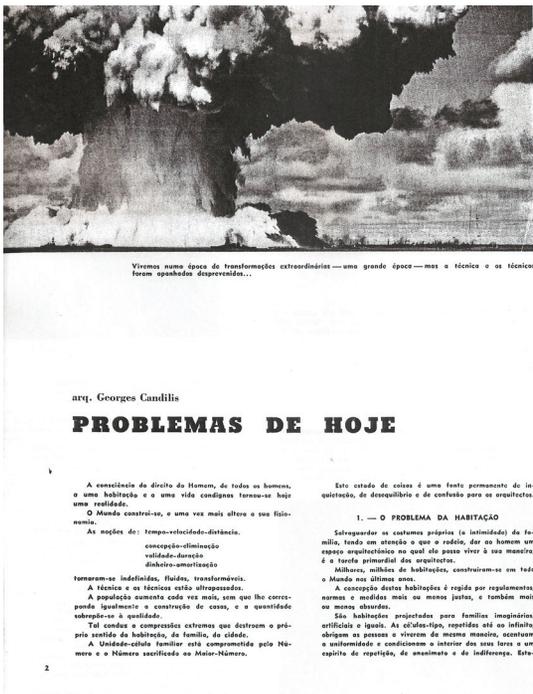


Fig. 6



Fig. 7

Fig. 6: Article by Georges Candilis: 'Problemas de Hoje', *Arquitectura*, 77, 1963.

Fig. 7: Cover of Nuno Portas' book: *A Cidade Como Arquitectura* (The City as Architecture), 2007 edition.

10's work. 'The more positive trend was receptive to the major urban problems, proposing the integration of architecture and urbanism into a single system, translated into new forms of habitat and reviving the opportunities for contact with environmental structures such as the street, gallery, square and courtyard found in historical and vernacular traditions.' On the other hand, however, Portas also discerned a postmodernist tone. 'The other trend, more serious and diffuse [...] is lost in a sterile quest for new layouts, for new volumetrics and, above all, for new *façades*.'<sup>74</sup>

In 1970, in line with his growing 'anti-formalist' sentiment, Portas appears to retain some confidence in the procedural potential arising from Team 10's ideas. Indeed, Portas' stance during this period can be compared to one of the goals put forward by Team 10 at its first post-CIAM meeting in 1960, to continue the 'struggle against [...] formulas, against formalism'. Portas' growing 'anti-formalist' sentiment led him to include a critical note in his 1969 book about the Japanese Metabolists and Archigram. 'We are not impressed,' he wrote, 'by these science fiction effects,'<sup>75</sup> accusing them of merely 'exaggerating current tendencies found in surplus societies, and formulating hypotheses regarding needs, naturally taking some into the mythical domain, namely those which connote change and mobility'.<sup>76</sup>

Portas began work in 1956 in Nuno Teotónio Pereira's studio, where he had the opportunity to 'combine the practice of planning with other fields of work, which were becoming increasingly open to the influence of other areas in the scientific, sociological or merely political domain'.<sup>77</sup> However, it was by recourse to the practice of planning that the studio was to test the problems of collective habitation, as Teotónio Pereira had extensive experience in this domain through the Federation of Provident Funds, the body responsible for building social housing for pensioners from the various professional corporations and the Lisbon Tenants Association (1956-57).

Another opportunity arose with the Olivais project, the construction of the 'largest satellite district promoted by Lisbon Town Hall in the '50s and '60s'.<sup>78</sup> Olivais represented two different conceptual trends, embodied in the North Olivais plan (1955-58), based on the modern Athens Charter models, and the South Olivais plan (1959-62) by Carlos Duarte and José Rafael Botelho, which strove to socially integrate 'the occupants of the different types of habitation'.<sup>79</sup> According to Portas, 'the main change had to do with the shift from the functionalist concept of "neighbourhood unit" - still clearly visible in North Olivais - to the cluster model, combining the integrative *patio* and the generative street, opting for unitary blocks of moderate height, to the detriment of higher and more isolated buildings'.<sup>80</sup> [fig. 8] The housing complex in South Olivais illustrates this shift to a cluster model, a typical Team 10 concept. It consisted of seven independent blocks designed by Vítor Figueiredo and Vasco Lobo in 1960, which put into practice the 'idea for a pedestrian street in the air for high buildings' developed by the Smithsons in the Golden Lane Project in 1952.<sup>81</sup> [fig. 9]

In the late 1960s, Lisbon Town Hall launched the Chelas plan. Led by Francisco Silva Dias, this plan envisaged an urban structure organized according to continuous linear outlines interspersed with built-up units. According to Portas, the plan 'is closely modelled on the "rhizomatic" structures developed by Team 10 (with clear references to the British "new towns" and the *ville nouvelle* at Toulouse-le-Mirail), while certain sections, such as Gonçalo Byrne's "Pantera Cor-de-Rosa" [Pink Panther] (1971-75) and Vítor Figueiredo's "Pata de Galinha" [Chicken Foot] (1973-80) exemplify the *buildings-as-street* approach'.<sup>82</sup>

Collective habitation was one of the main concerns of Nuno Teotónio Pereira's studio - a dynamic and active group that debated the matter at length in *Arquitectura* and in various forums. In 1960, for example, Nuno Portas and Octávio Lixa

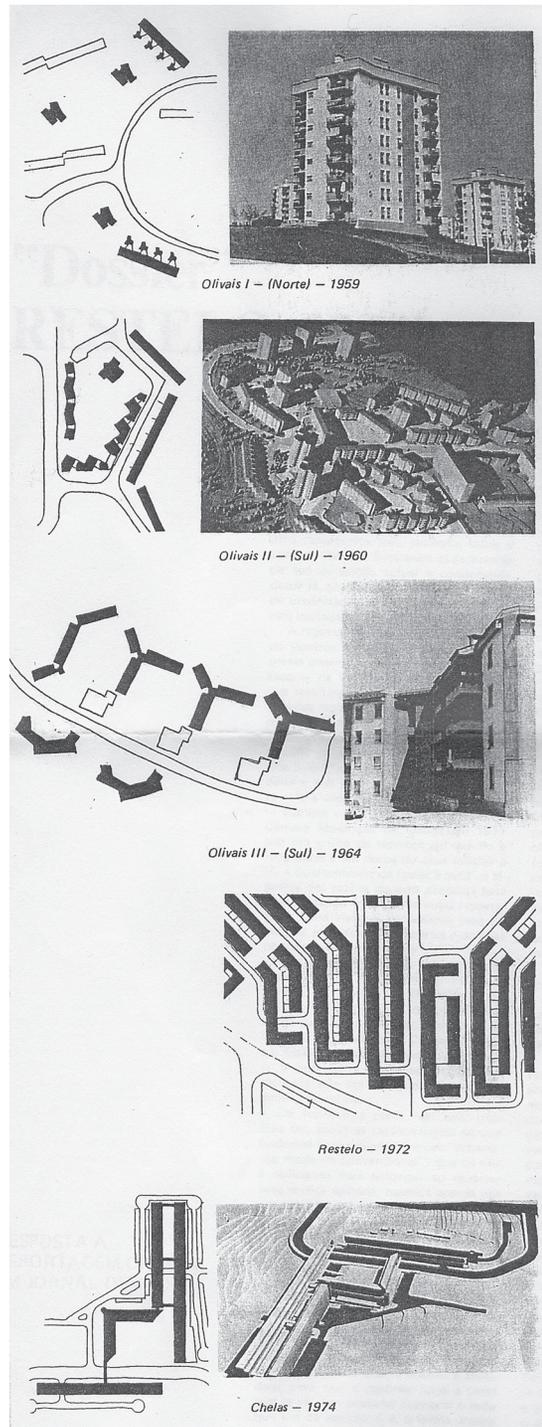


Fig. 8: Illustrations by Nuno Portas showing the evolution between North Olivais (1959) and Chelas (1974), as published in: *Arquitectura*, 130, 1974.

Figueiras were on a committee that organized a debate devoted to the problem of habitation.<sup>83</sup> The specific topic was 'social aspects in the construction of habitat'. One of the invited speakers was the influential sociologist Paul-Henry Chombart de Lauwe, who spoke of the sociological implications of the use of habitation, based on questionnaires circulated extensively in French residential districts.

In late 1969, the National Meeting of Architects (ENA) was held in Lisbon. The meeting was not attended by Portas, as José António Bandeirinha reported.<sup>84</sup> However, Portas sent 'an incisively critical message, aimed not so much at the social context surrounding the profession, but essentially at the architectural profession's inertia in affirming itself in society.'<sup>85</sup> Portas also listed three examples of how a 'competent architect'<sup>86</sup> might contribute to this: by creating evolving habitats as an alternative to the conventional 'completed' neighbourhoods; by developing directional centres, bringing together transport and services; and by singling out the best ideas for the city and the best ways of realizing them.

It is in this context that Portas referred to Team 10's concepts of city. 'The ideas we have today of the city,' he wrote, 'were developed by ten men (Team X) in two or three congresses. They extracted from their everyday alienated professional experience, but also from their unbridled imagination, a few concepts that are a long way from being exhausted or proven invalid.'<sup>87</sup> Portas' message continues by proposing 'a methodological assault to fearlessly overcome the sterile continuation of the theoretical discussion surrounding the profession's social dilemmas'.<sup>88</sup> To this end, Portas proposed two possible ways forward: first, to broaden the debate surrounding architecture to include new horizons for intervention; second, 'a progressive and systematic occupation of positions within the major decision-making centres by competent individuals interested in participating in strategies and coordinating oper-

ative tactics'.<sup>89</sup> Meanwhile, Portas' message to the 1969 ENA was to have reverberations five years later, when the dictatorial regime that had ruled for 48 years came to an end.

The revolution of 25 April 1974 paved the way for the appointment of Nuno Portas as Secretary of State for Habitation and Urbanism of the First Provisional Government on 16 May. At that time, the experience he had accumulated over the previous two decades was of vital importance. A key figure in the Portuguese critical reception of the international debate on the transformation of habitat, Portas had a unique opportunity to put into practice in the political arena the issue of collective habitation, the city's responsibility towards its underprivileged urban population and the importance of multidisciplinary teams.

The impatience inherent to all revolutions demanded quick results here as well, and the debate that raged in the late 1950s and 1960s formed the obvious basis for a new housing policy. So, on 31 July, SAAL was launched as 'an alternative system for public promotion based on an autonomous organization of social demand and on the virtual capacity of self-management'.<sup>90</sup> In a process of cooperation between the state and its citizens, the population directly managed operations through housing associations and cooperatives supported by technical teams of architects, engineers and social workers nominated by the state. [fig. 10] According to Portas, SAAL was 'a process intended to produce results in "city design", through the paradigms of evolutionary and participatory habitats'.<sup>91</sup> A common understanding can be discerned here between these concerns and Team 10's concept of 'change and growth'. In both cases, the city is understood as an open entity that depends on the time factor - an urban structure without a preconceived model. Portas' references are part of the research into evolutionary habitats developed at LNEC with Francisco Silva Dias.<sup>92</sup>

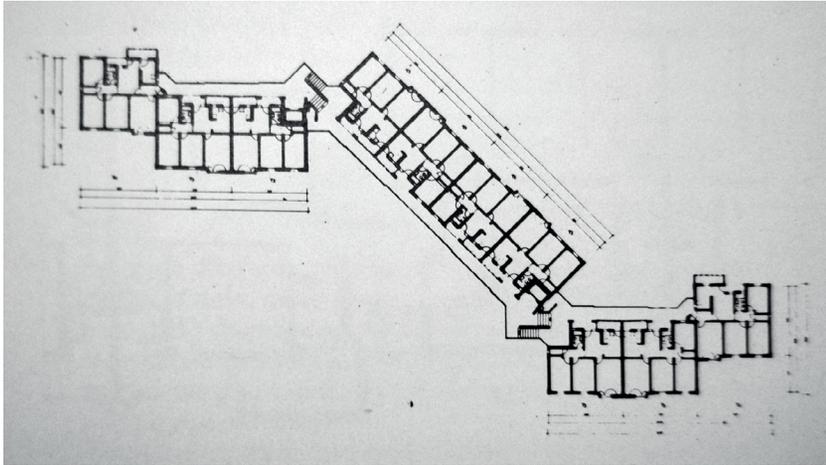


Fig. 9



Fig. 10

Fig. 9: Upper floor plan, seven storey housing block, by Vítor Figueiredo and Vasco Lobo, South Olivais, Lisbon, 1960, as published in: *Arquitectura*, no. 135, 1979.

Fig. 10: Film still from 'As Operações SAAL', by João Dias (2007).

One characteristic of the SAAL process was its ability to address social needs - 'a methodological characteristic which aims to free itself from preconceptions of formal creation, in such a way as to integrate social demand and the participation of the dwellers in the project'.<sup>93</sup> Indeed, SAAL's stance valued process over form. Portas nevertheless pointed to some formal solutions. 'Although the teams were given no common guidelines,' he writes, 'the majority of the solutions are low-rise with medium or high density and well-defined exterior spaces - which can be reduced to street, square or patio archetypes - and continuous or connected buildings instead of the usual isolated slabs and towers.'<sup>94</sup> It is interesting to note that these lines, written in 1984, remind us of Portas' 1970 preface to Team 10's work: '(...) new forms of habitat that revive opportunities for contact with environmental structures such as the street, gallery, square and courtyard found in the historical and vernacular tradition (...).'<sup>95</sup> These two excerpts reveal a connection between the presence of a Team 10 *idea* within SAAL's formal solutions; an *idea* appropriated by Portas that appreciated the experiments in habitats based on a reinterpretation of the historical structures of street, square, patio and gallery; an *idea* that established a binary opposition between a connected urban logic related to Team 10 and an isolated urban model related to the Athens Charter.

The SAAL programme enjoyed a short life, yet it suffered from a conflict of interest between political factions and economic interests. As Paulo Varela Gomes wrote, 'the circumstances in which SAAL appeared and operated were a phenomenon typical of revolutionary times'.<sup>96</sup> So, on 26 March 1975, Portas was relieved of his post as Secretary of State for Habitation and Urbanism, a fact that jeopardized the revolutionary housing policy aimed at establishing a direct dialogue with organized residents in order to eradicate slums. On 27 October 1976, a government order transferring powers to the municipalities effectively extinguished SAAL's *raison d'être*.<sup>97</sup>

### An oblique line

Portas, and Távora as well, can be regarded as crucial interpreters of the post-CIAM revisions of modern architecture as a result of their critical engagement, their travels, contacts and pedagogical activities, both in academia and in practice. In this sense, they helped to decode the major issues of their time, interpreting them by means of a form of mediation which took into account the peculiarities of their context, their culture and their own personality.

Nuno Portas believes that Portuguese architecture is 'culturally closer to the Italian way'<sup>98</sup> despite having been subject to a huge variety of influences since the 1950s. However, it is significant to note how Portas' discourse throughout the 1960s makes reference to the ideas of Team 10 - from the 'testimonies of the Portuguese delegates to the final and 'decisive' meeting'<sup>99</sup> in 1959, to the message sent to the 1969 ENA, or the 1970 preface,<sup>100</sup> in which he contrasts Team 10's 'more positive trend' to their 'other' formalist one, 'lost in sterile quests for new layouts'. Indeed, as one of the main people responsible for implementing the SAAL programme, one could argue that Portas realized some of Team 10's concepts related to a new architectural sensitivity, as opposed to the strictly functionalist character of modern architecture.

Alexandre Alves Costa, one of the key ideologues of the Porto School, maintains that what profoundly distinguished the school was 'the coordination [of a particular] modernist conviction with the attempt to establish a method rather than to transmit or defend a formal code. It regarded history as a working tool with which to build the present'.<sup>101</sup> Recently, Alves Costa recalled the words of Aldo van Eyck. 'What we wanted,' Van Eyck wrote, 'was a richer, more inclusive functionalism, which could include the past and learn from thousands of years of building.'<sup>102</sup> Reading these lines, Alves Costa commented: 'It is as if we were reading and listening to Fernando

Távora. It is as if we had found the foundations of the Porto School. It is as if we listened to Álvaro Siza today and rediscovered the roots of his thought.<sup>103</sup> Alves Costa's remark establishes an improbable connection between Van Eyck and Siza, between a more inclusive functionalism and the Porto School. In a way, Alves Costa drew an oblique line that opened an area for reflection, in which the Team 10 discourse is understood in a wider scope. Just as Távora or Portas once did.

#### Notes

1. For an overview of SAAL's history, see José António Bandeirinha, *O Processo SAAL e a Arquitectura no 25 de Abril de 1974* (Coimbra: Coimbra University Press, 2007).
2. For an overview of the link between the SAAL programme and the various tendencies in the international architectural debate (and not only Team 10), see Bandeirinha, *O Processo SAAL e a Arquitectura no 25 de Abril de 1974*, esp. Chapter 1: 'Os sentidos do debate internacional', pp. 19-59.
3. For a preliminary overview of ODAM and ICAT, see Ana Tostões, *Os Verdes Anos na Arquitectura Portuguesa dos Anos 50*, (Porto: FAUP Publicações, 1997), esp. Chapter 1: 'Sinais de Contaminação do Pós-guerra', pp. 20-46.
4. *Team 10 1953-81. In Search of a Utopia of the Present*, ed. by Max Risselada and Dirk van den Heuvel (Rotterdam: NAI Publishers, 2005), p. 11.
5. Recalling the words of Aldo van Eyck - 'Nous avon le droit d'être vague,' in Oscar Newman, *CIAM'59 in Otterlo: Documents of Modern Architecture*, ed. by Jürgen Joedicke (London: Karl Krämer Verlag, 1961), p. 197.
6. *Team 10 Primer*, ed. by Alison Smithson (London: Studio Vista, 1968 [1962]), p. 2.
7. Hans van Dijk, 'Forum, the Story of Another Idea, 1959-63', in *Team 10 1953-81*, p. 83.
8. For an overview of the ODAM history, see Edite Rosa, *ODAM: Valores Modernos e a Confrontação com a Realidade Produtiva*, PhD Dissertation (Barcelona: Escuela Técnica Superior de Arquitectura de Barcelona, 2005).
9. Cassiano Barbosa, *ODAM - Organização dos arquitectos modernos 1947-1952* (Porto: Edições ASA, 1972).
10. *Arquitectura* 20-32 (February 1948 - August/September 1949), translation by Maria de Lourdes e F. Castro Rodrigues.
11. Ordem dos Arquitectos, *1.º Congresso Nacional de Arquitectura [edição fac-similada]*, (Lisbon: Ordem dos Arquitectos, 2008).
12. Edite Rosa, *ODAM: Valores Modernos e a Confrontação com a Realidade Produtiva*, p. 260.
13. For an overview of CIAM's history, see Eric Mumford, *The CIAM discourse on urbanism, 1928-1960* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000).
14. gta Archive - ETH Zurich, ref: 42-AR-12.
15. Eric Mumford, *The CIAM discourse on urbanism*, p. 223.
16. Interview with the author, 2007.
17. Ibid.
18. Fernando Távora, 'O Problema da Casa Portuguesa', *Aléo*, 10 November 1945, p. 10.
19. Fernando Távora, 'O Problema da Casa Portuguesa', *Cadernos de Arquitectura*, Lisbon, 1947; Fernando Távora, 'O Problema da Casa Portuguesa' [1947], in *Fernando Távora* (Lisbon: Editora Blau, 1993), pp. 11-13.
20. For an overview of Raul Lino's contribution, see Raul Lino, *Casas Portuguesas, Alguns Apontamentos sobre a Arquitectura das Casas Simples* [1933] (Lisbon: Cotovia, 1992); Diogo Lino Pimentel, José-Augusto França, Manuel Rio-Carvalho, Pedro Vieira de Almeida, *Raul Lino, Exposição Retrospectiva da sua Obra* (Lisbon: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 1970). For a critical history of the 'Portuguese House', see Alexandre Alves Costa, 'A Problemática, a Polémica e as Propostas da Casa Portuguesa' (1980), in *Seis lições, 2-Introdução ao Estudo da Arquitectura Portuguesa* (Porto: FAUP, 1995); Alexandre Alves Costa, 'Legenda para um desenho de Nadir Afonso', in *Fernando Távora* (Lisbon: Editora Blau, 1993), pp.17-20; Bernardo José Ferrão, 'Tradição e Modernidade na Obra de Fernando

- Távora 1947-1987', in *Fernando Távora* (Lisbon: Editora Blau, 1993), pp. 24-32.
21. Jorge Figueira, *Escola do Porto - Um Mapa Crítico* (Coimbra: Edições do Departamento de Arquitectura da Universidade de Coimbra, 2002), p. 44.
  22. Fernando Távora, 'O Problema da Casa Portuguesa' [1947], in *Fernando Távora* (Lisbon: Editora Blau, 1993), pp. 11-13.
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  24. Francisco Keil do Amaral, 'Uma iniciativa necessária', *Arquitectura*, 14 (April 1947), pp. 12-13.
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  28. Interview with the author, 2010.
  29. Álvaro Siza, 'Entrevista realizada a Porto, l'abril de 1983, per Pepita Teixidor', *Quaderns*, 159, 1983, p. 5.
  30. Jorge Figueira, *Escola do Porto - Um Mapa Crítico* (Coimbra: Edições do Departamento de Arquitectura da Universidade de Coimbra, 2002), p. 40.
  31. Fernando Távora, 'Entrevista', by Mário Cardoso, *Arquitectura*, 123, 1971, p. 152.
  32. Viana de Lima, Fernando Távora, Octávio Lixa Filgueiras, 'Tese ao X Congresso dos CIAM [7/8/1956]', *Arquitectura*, 64, January/February 1959, pp. 21-28.
  33. *Ibid.*, p. 24.
  34. Fernando Távora, 'Entrevista', by Mário Cardoso, *Arquitectura*, 123, 1971, p. 153.
  35. Fernando Távora, 'Casa em Ofir', *Arquitectura*, 59, 1957, pp. 10-13; also published in English in Fernando Távora, 'Summer House. Ofir, 1957-58', in *Fernando Távora* (Lisbon: Editora Blau, 1993), pp. 78-83.
  36. Interview with the author, 2007.
  37. Bernardo José Ferrão, 'Tradição e Modernidade na Obra de Fernando Távora 1947/1987', in *Fernando Távora*, p. 29.
  38. Fernando Távora, 'Summer House. Ofir, 1957-58', in *Fernando Távora* (Lisbon: Editora Blau, 1993), p. 78.
  39. *Ibid.*, p. 80.
  40. Jorge Figueira, *A Periferia Perfeita - Pós-Modernidade na Arquitectura Portuguesa, Anos 60-Anos 80*, PhD Dissertation, Departamento de Arquitectura da Universidade de Coimbra, 2009, p. 45.
  41. Fernando Távora, 'Summer House. Ofir, 1957-58', in *Fernando Távora* (Lisbon: Editora Blau, 1993).
  42. Nuno Portas, 'Arquitecto Fernando Távora: 12 anos de actividade profissional', *Arquitectura* 71, July 1961, p. 16.
  43. Álvaro Siza, 'Fernando Távora', in *Catálogo da Exposição, Arquitectura, Pintura, Escultura, Desenho* (Porto: Museu Nacional Soares dos Reis, 1987), p. 186.
  44. Interview with the author, 2007.
  45. In Oscar Newman, *CIAM'59 in Otterlo*, 1961, p. 136.
  46. *Ibid.*
  47. For a comparison, see Oscar Newman, *CIAM'59 in Otterlo*, p. 137 and p. 28.
  48. Jaap Bakema, 'Concluding Evaluation of the Otterlo Congress', in Oscar Newman, *CIAM'59 in Otterlo*, p. 218.
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  50. For an overview of Pancho Guedes' history, see 'Pancho Guedes: an alternative modernist', *SAM*, 3, ed. by Pedro Gadanho (Basel: Christoph Merian Verlag, 2007); Pancho Guedes, *Manifestos, Papers, Lectures, Publications* (Lisbon: Ordem dos Arquitectos, 2007).
  51. Interview with the author, 2007.
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  56. 'Miranda Guedes, arquitecto de Lourenço Marques', *Arquitectura*, 79, July 1963, pp. 29-31.
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65. Georges Candilis, 'Problemas de Hoje', *Arquitectura*, 77, January 1963, p. 2.
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69. Nuno Portas, 'A Habitação Colectiva nos Ateliers da Rua da Alegria', *Jornal Arquitectos*, 204 (Lisbon: Ordem dos Arquitectos, 2002), p. 48.
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71. Nuno Portas, 'A responsabilidade de uma novíssima geração no Movimento Moderno em Portugal', *Arquitectura*, 66, November/December 1959, p. 14.
72. Nuno Portas, *A Arquitectura para Hoje* (Lisbon: Livros Horizonte, 2008 [1964]), p. 114.
73. Nuno Portas, 'Prefácio à Edição Portuguesa da *História da Arquitectura Moderna*' [1970], in Nuno Portas, *Arquitectura(s), História e Crítica, Ensino e Profissão*, ed. by Manuel Mendes (Porto: FAUP Publicações, 2005), p. 63.
74. Ibid.
75. Nuno Portas, *A Cidade como Arquitectura* (Lisbon: Livros Horizonte, 2007 [1969]), p. 155.
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77. José António Bandeirinha, *O Processo SAAL e a Arquitectura do 25 de Abril de 1974* (Coimbra: Coimbra University Press, 2007), p. 65.
78. Nuno Portas, Nuno Grande, 'Entre a crise e a crítica da cidade moderna', in *Lisboscópio* ed. by Cláudia Tabora, Amâncio (Pancho) Guedes, Ricardo Jacinto (Lisbon: Instituto das Artes - Ministério da Cultura, Corda Seca - Edições de Arte, 2006), p. 72.
79. José António Bandeirinha, *O Processo SAAL*, p. 101.
80. Nuno Portas, Nuno Grande, 'Entre a crise e a crítica da cidade moderna', p. 73.
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84. Ibid., p. 87.
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88. José António Bandeirinha, *O Processo SAAL*, p. 87.
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98. Nuno Portas, Nuno Grande, 'Entre a crise e a crítica da cidade moderna', p. 70.
99. Nuno Portas, 'A responsabilidade de uma novíssima geração no Movimento Moderno em Portugal', *Arquitectura*, 66, November/December 1959, p. 22.
100. Nuno Portas, 'Prefácio à Edição Portuguesa da *História da Arquitectura Moderna*' [1970], in Nuno Portas, *Arquitectura(s), História e Crítica, Ensino e Profissão* (Porto: FAUP Publicações, 2005), p. 63.
101. Alexandre Alves Costa, 'Legenda para um desenho de Nadir Afonso', in *Fernando Távora*, (Lisbon: Editora Blau, 1993), p. 19.
102. Alexandre Alves Costa, 'Escandalosa Artisticidade', in *Álvaro Siza Modern Redux*, ed. by Jorge Figueira (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2008), p. 34; cf. Aldo van Eyck, 'Everybody has his own story, Interview with Aldo van Eyck', in *Team 10 1953-81*, p. 331.
103. Alexandre Alves Costa, 'Escandalosa Artisticidade', in *Álvaro Siza Modern Redux* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2008).

### Biography

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