

Ministério da Educação e Saúde.

Ícone urbano da modernidade brasileira 1935–1945

By Roberto Segre

Publisher: Romano Guerra, São Paulo

ISBN: 978-85-88585-40-9

Language: Portuguese

Year: 2013

Revisiting the headquarters of the Ministry of Education and Health in Rio de Janeiro¹

Architects, researchers and Brazilian critics found many ways to try to define the uniqueness of a certain office building built in Rio de Janeiro in the late 1930s. It hosted the Ministry of Health and Education (MES in its Portuguese acronym), the Ministry of Education and Culture, called now the Palácio Gustavo Capanema. Lúcio Costa credited the headquarters of the MES to be the revelation of the genius of architect Oscar Niemeyer, which in itself would have a special recognition in the historiography of Modern architecture. But Lúcio Costa also stated that it was “[...] a project that would belong to [...] the general history of fine arts as a lasting mark of a new and fruitful cycle of the timeless art of building. It was indeed in this building of considerable size—carried out with such care and full comprehensive conceptual purity—where, for the first time, it was possible to carry out the main ideas that 25 years before the creative genius of Le Corbusier had presented with the passion, the fearlessness and the faith of a true crusader. Of all the seeds that he had generously thrown all over the world [...] this one, left here, [...] was the one, after all, that in fact avenged.”²

For Carlos Eduardo Comas the palace is “prototype and monument,”³ Ruth Verde Zein considers it a “mandatory quote, frame of any historical approach of Modern Brazilian architecture”⁴; for Maurício Lissovsky and Sergio de Sá “born monumentally, the construction of this building immediately assumes a mythological character,”⁵ Italo Campofiorito says the building is “graceful, gentle and strong [...] touched with elegance, delicacy and force [...] a perfect portrait of Modernism when Young.”⁶ The authors of *Le Corbusier and Brazil*⁷ referred to it saying that “from the invitation to provide feedback on the project of the MEC in Rio de Janeiro the roles of teacher and students” redefined itself to make a new “Modern and Brazilian” architecture. The bold entrepreneurship and autonomy of Brazilian students annoyed the European Master: “How have these youngsters managed to do, in a country like Brazil, what I was not able to do here in Europe?”⁸ The incident came to undermine the relationship

between teacher and students when Le Corbusier, disagreeing when credited as project consultant, committed the “slip” of publishing in *Ouvre Complète, 1934–1938*, “a sketch made a posteriori based on photos of the built building”, pointing out Lúcio Costa in correspondence: “(you) publish (the sketch) as if it were an original design, (which) caused a sad impression.”⁹



The formula that Roberto Segre found in order to summarize all the previous ones and that will suit the title for the book that will review, complete and delve into the story of this Modern palace—clarifying once again the authorship issue among many others—was “urban icon of Modernity”. To understand and situate a debate that had gone on for so many years—and that was only exposed in final consensus with critics and Brazilian researchers—Roberto Segre assembled a team of collaborators. He then undertook a life that would arise, as he explains in the Introduction, from his passion for the city of Rio de Janeiro where he established himself as a researcher and professor in 1994. He also continued with his other passion, the architecture of Le Corbusier, which had aroused when he was a young Italian architecture student immigrant in Buenos Aires.

The academic research started in 1998 became the book *Ministério da Educação e Saúde—Ícone urbano e modernidade brasileira* in 2006. Two years later Segre was appointed responsible of the application of the Palácio Gustavo Capanema as a World Heritage Site, a long standing claim that the Brazilian government has not yet presented to UNESCO. It could even complement the 1987 Brazil entry since the city was accepted primarily as it represented “un événement majeur dans l’histoire de l’urbanisme.”¹⁰

In 1948, the MES was listed by the Brazilian Office for National Artistic and Historical Heritage, as national heritage. Just three years after its opening—anticipating its unusual uniqueness as a monu-

ment and the issues surrounding the protection of Modern Movement architecture—the building was inscribed in the book *Livro do Tombo das Belas Artes*, as “it was the first monumental building aimed at public services’ headquarters, ever planned and built worldwide in strict compliance to the principles of Modern architecture.”¹¹

The Palácio Gustavo Capanema—named after Getúlio Vargas’ Minister who played a key role in the recruitment of the *carrioca* architects, in bringing Le Corbusier to Brazil and in the viability of the project—was designed by a team of young architects then composed by Lúcio Costa (1902–1998), Carlos Leão (1906–1983), Óscar Niemeyer Soares Filho (1907–2012), Affonso Eduardo Reidy (1909–1964), Ernani Vasconcellos (1912–1989) and Jorge Machado Moreira (1904–1992). Le Corbusier participated as a consultant. Other partners who joined were Roberto Burle Marx (1909–1994), responsible for the design of the green areas, and artists Candido Portinari (1903–1962), who designed the tiles and executed murals; Bruno Giorgi (1905–1993), Jacques Lipchitz (1891–1973), Adriana Janacópulos (1897–1978), and Celso Antônio (1896–1994), author of the numerous sculptures that populate the building, plus the engineer Emilio Baungart responsible for the structural calculations.

The beginning of the long process that includes the design and construction of the palace was marked by the launch of an official competition for the new headquarters for the Ministry of Health and Education in April 1935, and its subsequent annulment. It continued with the appointment of the Modern Movement architects and artists, the coming of Le Corbusier to Rio de Janeiro in 1936, and with the laying of the cornerstone of the building in April 1937. It ended with the official opening on October 3, 1945. These ten years faced the difficulties of economic and political contradictions that marked the government of Getúlio Vargas; years lived in the context of World War II in Europe; and the cultural clashes that made the work of the MES a privileged field to weigh up between the academic tradition and the *avant-garde* art, both confronted since the 1920s in Brazil.

In 544 pages and 945 reference notes, the teams of the author of the book, Roberto Segre, and Publisher Editora Romano Guerra, articulate and organize bibliographic sources, and reveal and publish documents, thus casting new light on the debates surrounding the long gestation of monumental Modernity in Brazil and showing the headquarters of MES from different sides. The first one emphasizes the role of the building in the transformation of the city of Rio de Janeiro. Located in a new area of expansion, the project discusses the provisions of the

development plan devised by the French Urbanist Donat Alfred Agache for Rio de Janeiro in 1927. It breaks with the classical proposal of compact occupation with blocks to release an important space of land for gardens and pedestrian circulation under *pilotis*.

The development of the design, in all its phases, is dissected and scrutinized by posting sketches, drawings, photographs and texts, explaining compositional, constructive and even conservation and restoration issues. In the presentation of the book, Jean-Louis Cohen draws attention to some of these aspects, such as the fact that the headquarters of MES usher in a new type of skyscraper, establishing not only a lexical rupture—with the use of *brise-soleils* and the corbusian matrix of *pilotis*—but a structural rupture referring to the elongated plant, the decentralized core and the flat roof crowning the volume.

During a trip to Brazil in 1936, Le Corbusier writes the text “*L’architecture et les Arts Majeurs*”¹²—aboard the Zeppelin airship— which he entrusts to Lúcio Costa when he returns to France. There he develops his ideas, still embryonic, on the possibility of an effective relationship between the three major arts—architecture, sculpture and painting—and these with other means of expression. Among other principles, the MES implements and inaugurates the Synthesis of Arts mainly through the themes of the works of art associated with the design and use of the traditional blue and white tile panels. From this dialogue between the arts appears the seed of the characteristic Brazilian nascent Modern architecture of Rio de Janeiro: “[...] the very national character is expressed through architectural collaboration of authentic artists, thus preserving what is imponderable, but genuine and irreducible in the differentiated character of each people.”¹³

By illuminating the path through the most remote corners of the Palácio Gustavo Capanema, the research now published unveils some of its mysteries, clarifies old doubts and raises new ones. It points to the importance of the debate about Modern architecture, while it also confirms an old suspicion: as for most palaces regarded as milestones in the history of exceptional architecture, the existence of this Modern palace can be regarded as a happy occasion which brought together the power and the determination of a *Prince*, Minister Gustavo Capanema, and the genius and intelligence of an artist, architect Lúcio Costa.

Notes

1. Segre, Roberto, *Ministério da Educação e Saúde-ícone urbano e modernidade brasileira*, São Paulo, Romano Guerra, 2013
2. Costa, Lúcio, “Carta a Gustavo Capanema datada

de 3 out. 1945”, Leonidio, Otavio “Lúcio Costa: palavra definitiva”, I ENANPARQ, Rio de Janeiro, 2010, <http://www.anparq.org.br/dvd-enanparq/simpósios/138/138-794-1-SP.pdf>

3. Comas, Carlos Eduardo Dias, “Protótipo e monumento, um ministério, o ministério”, *Revista Projeto*, ago. 1987, nº 102.
4. Verde, Ruth Verde, “*Segundo a ordem das razões e mais além*”, editorial do número especial da Revista Projeto dedicado ao centenário de Le Corbusier, August 1987, nº 102.
5. Lissovsky, Mauricio; Sá, Sergio M de, “*Mais vale saber de Le Corbusier que conhecê-lo aos pedacinhos*”, *Revista Projeto*, August 1987, nº 102. By the same authors: Lissovsky, Mauricio; Sá, Paulo Sérgio Moraes de, *Colunas da educação: a construção do Ministério da Educação e Saúde*. Rio de Janeiro: MINC/IPHAN: Fundação Getúlio Vargas/CPDOC, 1996.
6. Ítalo Campofiorito interviews Hugo Segawa, *Revista Projeto*, August 1987, nº 102.
7. Santos, Cecília Rodrigues dos; Pereira, Margareth da Silva; Pereira Romão da Silva; Silva, Vasco Caldeira da, *Le Corbusier e o Brasil*, São Paulo, Tessela/Projeto, 1987.
8. Carmem Portinho interviews Hugo Segawa, *Revista Projeto*, August 1987, nº 102.
9. Letter from Lúcio Costa to Le Corbusier, 27/11/49, FLC, C1.18.76 a 78, Santos, Cecília R. dos, et alt. Op. cit.
10. Cf.: <http://whc.unesco.org/fr/list/445>
11. Segre, Roberto. *Ministério da Educação e Saúde-ícone urbano e modernidade brasileira*, São Paulo, Romano Guerra, 2013, 456-457.
12. Le Corbusier, “*A arquitetura e as Belas-Artes- As tendências da arquitetura racionalista relativamente à colaboração da pintura e da escultura. O estudo da tendência que, ao contrário, impera na arquitetura racional de excluir como supérfluo, seguindo uma lógica rigorosa, o concurso das artes figurativas*”. Translated by Lúcio Costa and published for the first time in *Revista do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional*, Rio de Janeiro, IPHAN, nº 19, 1984, 53-69.
13. Costa, Lúcio. “O arquiteto e a sociedade contemporânea”, Xavier, Alberto, org. *Lúcio Costa: sobre arquitetura*, Porto Alegre, Editora Uniritter, 2007, 2.

Cecilia Rodrigues dos Santos

PhD Architect and Researcher
Faculdade de Arquitetura e Urbanismo
Universidade Presbiteriana Mackenzie,
São Paulo, Brazil

Maledetti Vincoli

By Ugo Carughi

Publisher: Allemandi

ISBN: 978-88-42221-96-8

Language: Italian

Year: 2013



In a territory reduced to an exclusively market-based instrument, the excesses of new interventions, the delays of administrative culture and the media driven accelerations of contemporary architecture are shortcomings in the basic protection legislation. This volume explores incidents that have sparked lively discussions and put forward the need to formulate a system of shared criteria to update the Code of Cultural Heritage and Landscape. The study compares the development of the law of conservation and the current intervention strategies on an international scale linked to identity which is in continuous transformation.

The editor

Ernesto N. Rogers 1909-1969

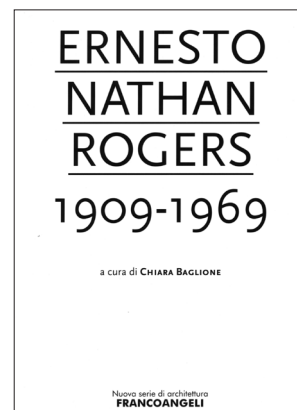
By Chiara Baglione

Publisher: Franco Angeli, Milan

ISBN: 978-88-20419-42-4

Language: Italian

Year: 2013

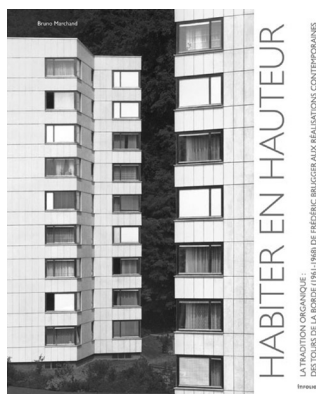


This volume contains new studies on Ernesto Nathan Rogers. It offers a critical review of his cultural heritage. Two generations of architects and historians are confronted with the figure, the thought and the work of Rogers. The memories and reflections of Rogers' students are intertwined together with the unpublished research of young scholars who look with renewed interest to his experience and lessons. The essays are arranged in thematic chapters that reflect the various areas deployed in the complex and multifaceted activities of Rogers (architect, professor of architecture, intellectual, director of Domus and Casabella) without, however, wanting to create an artificial separation between fields of action which he always considered closely related, as shown in the many references and connections detected in the content of the essays.

The editor

Habiter en hauteur

By Bruno Marchand
 Publisher: Infolio éditions, Gollion
 ISBN: 978-28-84744-59-1
 Language: French
 Year: 2013



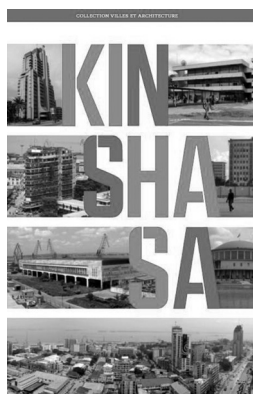
Habiter en hauteur. La tradition organique: des tours de la Borde (1961-1968) de Frédéric Brugger aux réalisations contemporaines is the complete title of this book which focuses on an exemplary cooperative example of the second post-war, which is part of an "action to encourage the construction of buildings with a social purpose" launched by the government to fight against the low rent housing shortage. They confirmed the reputation of the Vaudois architect Frederick Brugger. The study of the towers of the Borde illustrates a specific way of living "in height", the "neighborhood unit" proceeding from a logic that seeks to achieve high densities in the construction of tall buildings.

This choice resulted in lively debates and, curiously, it is still today the subject of intense discussions. The study of the towers of the Borde puts into perspective the quality of a construction of organic inspiration, in the wake of the humanistic trajectories of Frank Lloyd Wright, Alvar Aalto, Hans Scharoun, Otto Senn or Ernst Gisel.

The editors

Kinshasa

By Johan Lagae and Bernard Toulier
 Publisher: CIVA, Brussels
 ISBN: 978-29-30391-48-9
 Language: French
 Year: 2013



The book has been published by CIVA (Centre International pour la Ville, l'Architecture et le Paysage) and the University of Brussels's Faculty of Architecture La Cambre Horta, under the direction of Johan Lagae and Bernard Toulier, and with the support of TMB.

Kinshasa aims to be the definitive guide to the architectural heritage of the Congo's capital and will be an important resource for researchers and lovers of the city alike. The guide is the first of a series of guides dedicated to Congolese cities, including Lubumbashi and Kisangani. The series will seek to reflect the diversity of Congo's architectural heritage and to highlight the evolution of architectural forms across the country.

The editors

Maputo cidade aberta, open city

By Fabio Vanin
 Publisher: Fundação Serra Henrique
 ISBN: 978-98-99862-40-1
 Language: Portuguese and English
 Year: 2013



The book is the result of the investigation conducted in the Mozambican Capital by the author for his Ph.D in Urbanism (IUAV University of Venice, IT) and aims at highlighting some of the most relevant urban, architectural, social and cultural features of the city that are today confronted with the rapid transformations caused by the economic growth of the country. This delicate moment poses urgent questions on the future urban development that is divided by opposed forces: the ambition of becoming another Dubai and the struggle of keeping the existing identity.

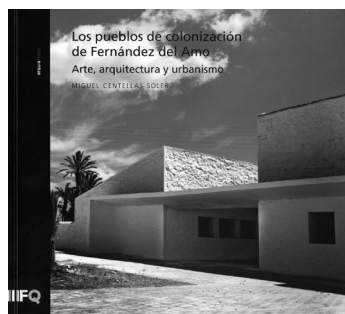
The editor

Los pueblos de colonización de Fernández del Amo.

Arte, arquitectura y urbanismo
 By Miguel Centellas Soler
 Publisher: Arquia/Tesis
 ISBN: 978-84-937857-0-3
 Language: Spanish
 Year: 2013

The value of the authentic, of the traditional, of what always sometimes has gone straight past in the history of contemporary architecture. The intrinsic characteristics that define a culture, in all its aspects developed by the draft of the passing of time, they should always be an element of reference and work guideline for the architect. In the book of Miguel Centellas Soler, *The Villages of Colonization of Fernández del Amo. Art, architecture and town planning* the importance of architectures

is more than adequately highlighted based on the vernacular and the direct contact with the place, in the broadest sense of the word, in which they are inserted. Through the work carried out by the Spanish architect José Luis Fernández del Amo between 1951 and 1969 for the National Institute of Colonization, as a public body responsible for conducting the ex novo villages to house the settlers, we learn how the tools and almost artisan and economically meager working techniques fail to respond to a deployment system and modern domestic solution system architecture with an image of transition between traditional Spanish house and the utopia of modern European housing.



The book likewise analyzes a total of 12 villages of colonization by a clear structure. First, it refers to all the urban scale parameters, from the layout of the new plan of what used to be small towns, from the organization of the roads, in some cases differentiating the rolled from the pedestrian, to the strategic placement of public buildings. It's what the author defines as "Projecting the place" where you discover the links between what was to be a new urban landscape and the surrounding natural environment.

Secondly, the home is discussed in detail at all scales. The plot of land as a basic organizational element and the home itself within it. The latter position regarding the plot leads to functional optimization of the courtyard as an element and vital mechanism in the project. The use of the courtyard served as transition between the home and the work in the field. The materiality of the houses is studied with delicate care and it's the details that make up the image of the rudimentary wager of Spanish architecture through pure and truly modern language. In the book it is called "Projecting the necessary", which represents the minimum housing requirements that are performed on the villages.

The third and final section includes one of the most interesting elements of the book. It has to do with Centellas' successful work regarding the artistic content of public buildings that develops with

greater intensity in the churches. The integration of the arts and the reflection of a golden age of Spanish contemporary art are apparent in this austere architecture as a socialization of the culture that reaches the inner corners of the country. This, let's say, didactic spirit of the proposals of these villages on all levels accurately reflects a new way of doing things within the Spanish culture of mid-twentieth century.

In excellent writing, research depth, quality graphics and architectural interest, this book represents the opportunity to re-read our most recent past and find in it seemingly outdated tools and, at the same time, show immense contemporaneity.

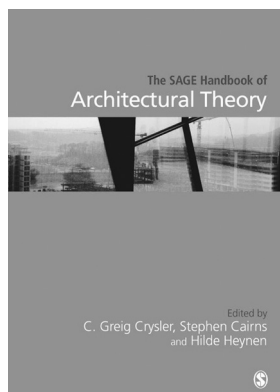
Juan Pedro Sanz Alarcón,
Architect

The Sage Handbook of Architectural Theory

By C. Greig Crysler, Stephen Cairns and Hilde Heynen (ed.)

Publisher: Sage Publications, London
ISBN: 978-14-12946-13-1

Language: English
Year: 2012



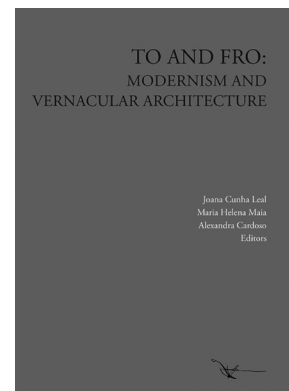
The core of architectural theory for the past several decades has looked to architecture's autonomous structures and formal procedures as its primary material for analysis. Now in this collection, architectural theory expands outward to interact with adjacent discourses such as sustainability, conservation, spatial practices, virtual technologies, and more.

K. Michael Hays

Eliot Noyes Professor of Architectural Theory,
Harvard University

To & Fro: Modernism and Vernacular Architecture

By Joana Cunha Leal, Maria Helena Maia and Alexandra Cardoso
Publisher: CEEA, Porto
ISBN: 978-97-28784-48-8
Language: English
Year: 2013

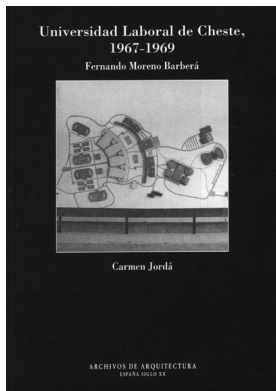


This book results from a research project entitled "The Popular Architecture in Portugal. A Critical Look" which began in April 2010 under the leadership of Pedro Vieira de Almeida. The aim of the project was to undertake a re-reading of the book *Arquitetura Popular em Portugal* as a clearly delimited reference basis in order to put to the test the two expressive variables in architecture: 'transition-space' and 'thickness', the latter understood to give rise to a poetics of thick walls and a poetics of thin walls. These two variables were characterized by Pedro Vieira de Almeida in 2010 as mezzo voce architectural parameters, a term which we used as an overall title for a series of four volumes published between 2010 and 2013 with the results of our research. The project ended up generating a second line of work. Published in 1961, the book *Arquitetura Popular em Portugal* had a significant impact on Portuguese architectural culture. Thus two distinct yet complementary focuses were encompassed by this project: the Survey used as a pretext for theoretical reflection and the Survey taken as object of study in itself. This second line of enquiry is what brought this book into being.

The editors

Universidad Laboral de Cheste, 1967–1969. Fernando Moreno Barberá

By Carmen Jordá
Publisher: Archivos de Arquitectura
ISBN: 978-84-92103-89-8
Language: Spanish
Year: 2005

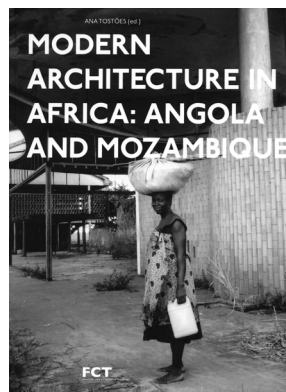


The Universidad Laboral de Cheste allows us to observe a particular process of interpreting Modern legacy through an act of extraordinary magnitude. The Spanish Dictatorship propaganda described it as a 'Spanish record'. Its author, having demonstrated a remarkable qualification, displayed total confidence in the technical and expressive possibilities of a discourse that was still considered valid in 1967 although crisis symptoms had already appeared or at least changes in the international scene had already begun. Entering this place today means meeting the powerful images associated with the vibrant rhythm of concrete umbrellas; remembering Mies' delicacy in building definition; feeling the warmth determined by Nordic interiors; and the Californian and Mediterranean appropriation of outdoor living of architecture... All this in a personal synthesis governed by a great building and planning talent, such as that developed by Fernando Moreno Barberá.

The editor

Modern Architecture in Africa: Angola and Mozambique

By Ana Tostões (ed.)
Publisher: FCT / Técnico Lisboa
ISBN: 978-98-96582-39-5
Language: English / Portuguese
Year: 2013



The book is the result of the research project "Exchanging World Visions: Modern architecture in Lusophone Africa" which assumes the importance of Lusophone Africa Modern heritage and the urgency of documenting its built set. Focusing on the production of the architectural Modern Movement erected in Angola and Mozambique, the in-depth study of this universe was developed seeking to establish relationships with various sources and influences, relating a possible continuity with the Modern Brazilian production but also with references that emerge in the second half of the 50s.

The chronological limits consider the year 1943 as the beginning of the research, being the year when *Brazil Builds* was published by the MoMA in New York confirming the wave of international diffusion of Modern Brazilian architecture, and the year 1974 as marking the revolution process of the 25th April in Portugal and the fall of the colonial regime that led to the independence of these countries.

During these years, the pioneers of the Modern Movement in Africa have demonstrated how Modern design could be interpreted, transcended and enriched in its content. In fact, they were able to cope and respond to diverse physical and social conditions; experiencing innovative solutions that still remain valid and stimulant. At that time, issues now called "environmental sustainable" began to be considered as conceptual key design. Modern buildings were being designed to offer better and more comfortable living conditions. Modern buildings were being designed on economic and flexible solutions capable of responding to new situations,

using either the available technics at the time, whether the local building traditions. The research methodology establishes an order of criteria for the selection and description of urban spaces and buildings which constitute the case studies. The research integrates different sources of information (bibliography, archives and direct observation) crossed with the projective and constructive analysis performed by drafting basic drawings of the selected works, in order to conduct a comprehensive description of the buildings, the layout to detail constructive devices and passive thermal control. These drawings are the basis of the interpretative work and critical essays that follow the desirable future developments based on the reusability of many of these structures.

This research project confirms and reveals the existence of a vast heritage built during the last period of Portuguese colonial regime (1945-1974) in Angola and Mozambique, materialized into qualified works of Modern architecture. A large number of buildings from the 40s and 50s survived to very adverse circumstances: heavy use compounded by a total lack of maintenance, severe economic constraints and consequent social unrest. These buildings show how Modern ideas could be locally interpreted and adapted physically, socially culturally (climate raw materials in a social and cultural context) by solutions so well achieved that after the 50s, remain valid in particular for following the route of designing with climate, as happened in other parts of sub-Saharan Africa, India and Brazil. After the independence of these territories, the spontaneous process of appropriation of this modern architecture by the local population has been attested by the vocation of the Modern model to adapt to the specificities of different contexts and cultures.

We are now approaching a crucial moment. Today, profound changes threaten this architectural and urban heritage. We find ourselves at a decisive crossroads for the survival of this heritage and the community that uses it, pointing to the reuse strategy, committed to examining its full potential, cultural and material, in order to avoid the path of destruction and consequent replacement by new structures without identity, nor any concerns to energy performance. In this research sight, these modern buildings are still cost-effective and flexible, able to adapt to contemporary physical, environmental, and social uses. In the near future, it is believed that these are the premises of an absolutely unique opportunity to deepen and expand to its real dimension the research herein presented.

Ana Tostões
Architect