

THE ARCHITECTURE OF JOSE BAGANHA

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*Quem te sagrou criou-te português
Do mar e nós em ti nos deu sinal
Cumpriu-se o Mar, e o Império se desfez.
Senhor, falta cumprir-se Portugal*

O Infante

Fernando Pessoa (1)

Works such as those of the young architect José Baganha are currently a breath of fresh air, a sign of hope and a lesson in the skills to be found in Portugal. Baganha seems to live up to Fernando Pessoa's call for Portugal to fulfil its potential. Over the last century, there has been a ceaseless confrontation between the ongoing desire to create "Portuguese architecture" and the wish to imitate foreign styles. Since the 1970s, Portugal has forged a few paths of its own, by giving continuity to tradition without renouncing the new.

A new sensitivity in Europe and the world towards protecting a balanced environment has resulted in the need to protect our surroundings, our medium, our rural and urban landscapes. As in so many other parts of Europe, Portugal has seen much of its great architectural heritage vanish, both in the country and the city. In this sense, given this new sensitivity and the growing interest in traditional architecture by ever greater sectors of the population, Baganha's work is a veritable education.

I will begin with a very general overview of some of the more important episodes in 20th century Portuguese architecture, to provide a context for José Baganha's approach and his body of work.

PORTUGAL'S RICH AND ECLECTIC TRADITION

The strength of Portugal's eclectic architecture was in evidence as the 19th century gave way to the 20th. Marking the start of Avenida da Liberdade in Lisbon, "Master" Monteiro's

Rossio Station (1886-87) and the adjacent Hotel Avenida Palace (1890) have left us with a clear example of mastery and control. The railway station brought trains right into the heart of the capital, and its form is that of a palace in the Neo-Manueline style. Alongside, José Luiz Monteiro (2) built the aforementioned hotel, but it is more reminiscent of the classical French style of the day, like many of the luxury residences to be found on Paris's boulevards.

Of course, José Luiz Monteiro (3) is one of the great names of Portuguese architecture. But the high standards of perfection – in fact mastery – of somebody like Monteiro was not unique. Ventura Terra (4) shows a similar mastery of styles, an outstanding eclecticism, as witnessed by his parliament building, the Assembleia Nacional (1896-1938), built over former São Bento Convent. Later, in 1906, Terra designed the expressive and monumental Banco de Lisboa & Açores building, with no hesitation in slotting its expressive and rich façade in amongst the adjoining sober and modest Pombaline buildings, with their simple façades. (5)

Part of this prevailing eclecticism derived from a tradition of recalling Portugal's past, as can be seen at Rossio Station. The Neo-Manueline style and those styles that include Manueline elements were a romantic way of recalling the buildings of Portugal's glorious past.

Be that as it may, it is worth pointing out the outstanding quality of the works of this period: the excellent build quality of Portuguese architecture. Logically, this implies the existence of schools and workshops where masons, carpenters, smiths, and so on could learn and acquire such mastery. Those Portuguese trade skills would endure for many many years, and would be one of the keys to explaining the build- and finishing quality of Portuguese architecture.

TOWARDS A PORTUGUESE STYLE OF ARCHITECTURE

The eclectic profusion of styles created a sense in Portugal that its own identity had been abandoned; in other words the tendency to follow languages and styles emulating foreign tastes produced a desire to re-create a Portuguese form of architecture. The country needed to look inwards, into its own soul.

This clamour to retreat into one's own home was not exclusively Portuguese. At the end of the 19th century, in Portugal, just as in Spain and other European countries, there was a call for truly national architecture: architecture that reflected the traditions and culture of the country and its regions. One good example is a country which was on the margins of central European trends and the great cultural powers: Sweden. In 1909, the architect Ragnar Ostberg said, in *Architectural Record*:

“The cosmopolitan character of the 19th century brought to Sweden, perhaps in a greater degree than to other civilised nations, a mixture of historic styles, from Greek to the Renaissance or the Middle Ages and the Baroque, all based rather upon academic knowledge than upon the true artistic feeling for architecture. In our country, as in many other lands, the excessive amount of foreign material has prevented the development of a uniform type of architecture. It has been recognised during the last decade that this universal spirit in an art like architecture, which is influenced by climatic and local conditions, presents a distinct danger for the building art. For this reason the problem of the day with Swedish architecture is to develop a national architecture based upon the study of national edifices”. (6)

The same could be said of Spain, which was also peripheral at the end of the 19th century. The pessimism that followed the loss of its last colonies, Cuba and the Philippines, in 1898, gave rise to what was known as the '98 Generation, which called upon the country to value what was truly Spanish.

Architects such as Domènec Muntaner (7) made a determined call for an interest in traditional architecture. Regional styles emerged, created by major figures. (8)

Something similar occurred in Portugal, where from 1890 or 1895 in certain Lisbon circles a desire arose for home-grown architecture. The eclectic whirlwind of the second half of the 19th century had made Neo-Manueline the style that most genuinely represented Portugal's past.

However, as José Luis Quintino (9) tells us, it was Ramalho Ortigão who set down the guidelines for what Portuguese architecture should be, at what were termed the “Casino Conferences”, in 1871. He praised the Counts of Arnoso house, built in 1871, as an

exemplary expression of Portuguese architecture. It contained no Neo-Manueline allusions. It was robust-looking architecture, the solid walls had clear substance, and it had overhanging, sloped roofs with traditional tiles. The balconies were roofed and the walls painted. There was absolutely no decorative Neo-Manueline rhetoric.

Ramalho's views had important followers, but undoubtedly Raul Lino was the most significant of his contemporaries to lay down a series of guidelines for Portuguese architecture, or more specifically for the single-family house in Portugal. For Lino, Neo-Manueline was not the most truly Portuguese form of expression, because it comprised disparate Gothic, Mudejar, Renaissance and Naturalistic elements. *"Rather than Gothic, Portugal's character is found in Romanesque art, with its robust materiality. It is so related to the rhythm of this style after a distance of three centuries that some Manueline architecture is still unconsciously based upon it".* (10)

THE PORTUGUESE HOUSE

Raul Lino was a decisive personality as Portugal entered the new century, and in fact his shadow and influence would last throughout the 20th century. He was educated in England and Germany, and arrived in Lisbon at the age of 18, in 1897. His Hanover apprenticeship with the architect Albrecht Haupt had familiarised him with the ideas of Ruskin, and with Morris's Arts and Crafts movement. His appreciation of traditional values, the traits of his own country and nature as a source of all inspiration gave him an affinity with the aforesaid Englishmen.

His proposal for the Portuguese Pavilion at the 1900 Paris World Exposition demonstrates Raul Lino's interest at that time in architecture that revives certain features of Portuguese vernacular architecture, such as walls with few windows, traditional sloping tiled roofs and long narrow chimneys. It all shows that Ramalho's ideas regarding the Counts of Arnoso house were not lost on Lino. But it has to be said that his proposal for the exposition does have a few Mudejar windows, and a tall conical structure similar to those on Sintra Royal Palace, which for Portuguese romantics is the paradigmatic expression of the country's soul.

Years later, his proposal for the Portuguese Pavilion at the 1931 Paris Exposition reflected a more personal and eclectic architectural language, but more refined, with its own approach.

In 1918, Lino published *A Nossa Casa* [Our House], sub-headed *Apontamentos sobre o bom gosto na construção de casas simples* [Notes on good taste in the construction of simple houses]. For Lino, it was very important to educate taste, at a time when classical roots were being abandoned in favour of solutions of doubtful taste. This urge to seek out good taste would guide the rest of his life and his entire career.

But Raul Lino's best known work is the book *Casas Portuguesas* [Portuguese Houses], published in 1933, and sub-headed *Alguns apontamentos sobre o architectar das casas simples* [A few notes on designing simple houses]. This book was highly controversial. Architects interested in incipient modern Portuguese architecture from the end of the 1920s (which owed a great deal to Art Deco) saw this work as a step backwards, or an attempt to oppose the ideas of the new architecture arriving from Europe. This was because what Lino provides is a direct criticism of the idea of the house as proclaimed by Le Corbusier.

Nevertheless, Lino's book had a considerable influence on architecture for the single-family house amongst architects in the second half of the 1930s and immediately afterwards, during the zenith of the architecture of the *Estado Novo*, which is to say architecture under the Salazar dictatorship.

The book is a compendium of common sense. Lino explores the most important issues to be considered when designing a house, from the most technical ones to the most functional, as well as issues of representation, the façades, and matters of good taste. In this sense, the book is extraordinarily topical, because it was conceived with great clarity and practicality.

Lino deals with such important matters as economics in Chapter I; between economics and beauty in Chapter II; beauty in Chapter III; and adds various reflections as appendices, such as the one concerning the house and landscape. The latter chapter begins as follows:

“To understand the meaning of a Portuguese feel in architecture, one needs to have taste, which is usually the case amongst all foreigners who come here to study our country; one needs a love of Portuguese things, because from that is born a deep understanding of our character; and one must travel the country with eyes open and a tender heart, and an agile hand ready to take a thousand notes with feeling. And the flame of the indefinable sentiment of inexplicable things will eventually descend on the impassioned artist ...”. (11)

That keenness to look at the Portuguese vernacular world, the history of Portugal, even an ideal and sometimes merely imaginary world, and that love of tradition was shared by other leading architects, such as the Rebelo de Andrade brothers, who designed the Portuguese Pavilion both for the 1922 Rio de Janeiro Exposition and the 1929 Seville Exposition, and architects such as Cristino da Silva, Porfirio Pardal Monteiro and others. (12)

THE PORTUGUESE HOUSE IN THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE *ESTADO NOVO*

The architecture of the *Estado Novo* reached its zenith of splendour from the early 1940s. Just like other chronological milestones in Portugal's history, such as the proclamation of the republic in 1910, or the years following the First World War, the 1928 coup d'état did not coincide with specific changes in architecture, or art as a whole. That is not to say that the new situation which emerged at each moment did not give rise to certain trends or tendencies in the art or architecture world. The same happened with the affirmation of *Estado Novo* architecture, inasmuch as it was not until the 1940s and 1950s that it reached its apogee.

The Salazar régime was determined to project an image of Portugal linked to the rural world. In so doing, it believed that it was expressing a range of values deemed to be inherent in that rural world, from which Salazar himself came. Honesty, work, respect for order, appreciation of permanence, social harmony and so on were values associated with the rural world, and which Salazar wanted to export as the image of Portugal.

So it comes as no surprise that at the 1937 Paris Exposition and the 1939 New York World Fair, the architecture of the Portuguese Pavilions made use of traditional, if clearly monumental, forms. They displayed ostensible and expressive symbols of the Portuguese

nation through the prominent and exaggerated use of certain signs of identity, such as the national coat of arms.

In 1935, an area of “old” Lisbon had been “recreated” in the São Bento district, in much the same way as the Pueblo Español was created in Barcelona. And other examples exist throughout Europe, making use of popular architecture for their recreation.

To an extent, the 1940 Portuguese World Exposition boiled down the previous decades’ experiments, and confirmed the drive to produce genuinely Portuguese architecture.

Thus, as already mentioned, by the 1940s, the architecture of the *Estado Novo* was firmly consolidated. Given the rural values that it tried to portray, its special interest for architects like Raul Lino should come as no surprise.

The policy of establishing regional *pousadas*, the Good Taste Campaign launched by António Ferro at the National Information Office, and the public works policy of Minister Duarte Pacheco from 1932 to 1943 clearly demonstrate that consolidation. It must be said that together with Lino’s influence, in formal or architectural terms, the Spanish example of establishing national *paradores* was decisive. (13)

Ultimately, the “Portuguese house” proved unable to accommodate the larger and more complex plans for the *pousadas*. But there is no doubt that the formal influence of the “Portuguese house” was decisive for the image of those *pousadas*, and it was even more decisive for the image of single-family houses in *Estado Novo* architecture. Because with his book *Raul Lino, and Portugal*, undoubtedly made a very major contribution to European theory about the house, comfort, how to live in a house, and taste. One can even say that Lino’s book was Portugal’s most important treatise on domestic architecture (architecture of the home) in the 20th century.

I will not dwell further on the importance of this well-known book, because it has clearly been extraordinary. Proof of its influence is shown by the deep animosity that the book engendered amongst those architects who leant more towards modern architecture. And this despite the fact that *Estado Novo* architecture produced single-family homes that did not necessarily follow the indications, suggestions, or constructed examples produced by Raul Lino.

They were single-family homes in which the architect had fun with a range of elements of different origins. The result was solid walls, with porched terraces or traditional overhanging tiled roofs, but the emphasis was more on attracting attention, originality and being noticed. And in this sense, in addition to the more striking (and most poorly composed) features, or striking colours, during these years of the *Estado Novo* the architecture of the single-family home also echoed some of the features of larger public buildings of the period. *Estado Novo* architecture is unmistakable thanks to these features (the use of towers topped with weather vanes and armillary spheres; columns on the main façade, either separate or inserted into the façade; the inclusion of powerful and super-expressive Baroque-like entrances; imposing engravings with striking sections; and white or pastel façades, etc.).

Many of those features were incorporated into single-family houses. And perhaps that explains the opposition of those who were so keen for Portugal to adopt architecture in keeping with modern European architecture, as reflected in *Arquitectura* magazine in the late 1940s. This magazine published João Correia Rebelo's resounding *não* [no] to the "national style", in his article *Arquitectura ou Mascarada* [Architecture or Masquerade]. (14)

BETWEEN TRADITION AND MODERNITY

From the end of the 1950s, throughout the 1960s and well into the 1970s, Portugal saw a great resurgence of modern architecture, in line with other European countries. Links with Brazil, which was one of the most brilliant centres of modern architecture, and ties to other European countries, were part of the reason for such openness to outside influences. Carlos Manuel Ramos (1897-1969) played one of the most significant roles.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, a major figure was Fernando Távora (1923-2005). Both as a professional architect and as a teacher he displayed special sensitivity towards Portuguese architecture's historic heritage, the importance of location – the physical setting. Thus, without turning his back on modern techniques and contributions, Távora's architecture sought a balance between modernity and tradition. He was as critical of historicism as he was of formalism that imitated new architecture being imported from abroad.

His willingness to criticise, in the widest sense, is important because, as time has shown, it aided the resurgence of authentic, powerful and beautiful Portuguese architecture within a very few years, both for single-family houses and for architecture as a whole.

In a broader sense it aided the emergence of a new wave of sensitivity towards architecture, less dependent on foreign styles or the historicism of previous decades. It was architecture more in accord with the nature of the country, location, setting, the available techniques, etc.

As such, Fernando Távora is the point of contact between those dedicated to modernity fully open to foreign influence and those who, partly sensitised by certain historical changes, as we shall see, opted to look inwards to the values that Portugal itself had to offer. However, it must be said that Távora's praiseworthy work still harboured certain contradictions. But these were insignificant in his overall body of ideas, if one bears in mind the historic moment that Portugal was about to face (i.e. the changes which have already been noted). (15)

Ana Tostões says about Távora:

"Without rejecting modernity or vanguard contributions, Fernando Távora (1923 -) sought authenticity in the continuation of a tradition, by balancing history and progress". (16)

Many believe that Álvaro Siza (1933-) is the heir to Távora's work and teachings. Siza brings us very close to the present day, which is of huge interest in Portuguese architecture. As Ana Tostões has rightly noted, Siza *"takes up historic progressive themes, making new use of traditional materials in a desire to reconcile the intellectual with the sensual and sensorial. A concern for context results in a design method that makes maximum use of the potential of existing morphology: Houses in Matosinhos 1954; Boa Nova Tea House, 1958-1964; Swimming Pool at Quinta da Conceição, 1956"*. (17)

The impacts of Álvaro Siza and his contemporaries, and those of the following generation, in particular Eduardo Soto de Moura, on Portuguese architecture are well-known.

POST-MODERNISM

I have already mentioned Carlos Ramos's importance in establishing multiple relationships with architects from different countries with a view to opening up Portuguese architecture from the end of the 1950s. That openness continued in subsequent years. An important role was played by critic Nuno Portas. Ties were strengthened with Spain, especially Catalonia, and with Italy. The architecture being produced in Portugal was shown in many parts of Europe and the world, such that by the 1980s Álvaro Siza and others were amongst the world's best-known architects.

Generally speaking, the chronological development of architecture in Portugal has matched that of Spain, with both countries lagging behind others in terms of economic and technological development – some three decades compared to Italy.

Nevertheless, Post-Modernism brought new ideas that considerably attenuated the feeling that architecture had to be created in a modern idiom. A new look was taken at history, the historic city was more highly appreciated, and architecture in context (context in the widest sense) was again being taken into account. Numerous individuals contributed to that change, in particular the theories of Robert Venturi and Aldo Rossi, as well as Colin Rowe and Leon Krier. All of them conducted a monumental critique of many merely stylistic (and artificially ideological) conventions and taboos which held sway at the time.

In the case of Rossi, Rowe and Krier, that critique extended to the thesis of progressive architects with regard to urban development, which after four decades had had such devastating effects.

Portugal was no stranger to those changes, and to these it owes much of its attitude of looking towards what is Portuguese.

Of the values which post-modernism revived, the most important (some consider it the worst legacy of post-modernism) is the question of "identity", in general terms. Here, I will limit myself to the identity of architecture inherent in each place, which is to say vernacular or popular architecture.

At the end of the 1960s, and especially throughout the 1970s, interest in this kind of architecture was revived. Back in 1955, a Survey of Portuguese Regional Architecture had been launched, which some had been calling for since the 1940s. It was completed in 1960, and part of it was published as *Arquitectura Popular em Portugal* [Popular Architecture in Portugal], in 1961.

The survey began as an initiative by more “modern” architects to demonstrate authentic Portuguese architecture to the Salazar régime, as compared to what the *Estado Novo* understood as “Portuguese architecture”. Although that was its purpose (as Keil do Amaral notes in the preface to the second edition in 1979, when the régime was no more), in fact this huge project and its publication (subsidised by the *Estado Novo*) were presented to the régime in a way radically different to that described by Keil de Amaral. They were in fact presented as a major contribution to the expression of Portuguese “national architecture”. (18)

In 1979, almost 20 years on, the second edition was published, followed by a third in 1987 and a fourth in 2003. (19)

Reprinting of the book for the second edition happened at a time when traditional architecture – vernacular or popular architecture – and the traditional city and the heritage of the past were being re-assessed yet again. (20) But it has to be said that they were being re-assessed in academic architectural discourse, and not so much in practice by architects teaching at architecture schools.

The academic world was evoking popular architecture in theoretical presentations, but when it did so in buildings, it fled wholesale from any kind of vernacular literalness. And, in my view, it fled because of the still huge weight of modern architecture, or the modern idiom, which is to say the enormous weight of the modern style as a “forced compromise with the present day”; i.e. a kind of *diktat* of the *Zeitgeist*.

Teachers of architecture showed such little interest in teaching popular architecture, that the new generations of architects emerging from architecture schools were quite at a loss when they had to design and build a house that followed a traditional architectural style. Nobody had taught them how to undertake a commission that was increasingly in popular demand.

Such inexperience gave rise to a vast swathe of architectural monstrosities, stylistically half-way between something resembling modern and something recalling tradition. And because of schools' lack of interest, nothing was done by universities to prevent the rapid disappearance of a wealth of vernacular architectural heritage. In fact, it is highly revealing, and very dramatic, that the prologue to the third edition of *Arquitectura Popular em Portugal* acknowledges the book as an "official record" of what Portuguese architecture had been, but which had since practically vanished: an official record, or a death certificate.

It says:

"This sweeping change – just 10 years were needed to change the face of the earth – turned the material gathered by the survey, of which the book only reproduces part, into an invaluable document. Apart from pockets of stagnation which were bypassed by the process – almost all of which are in the Alentejo – today only scattered elements have physically survived the collapse of the world which produced them".

A NEW SENSITIVITY

It might be said that Post-Modernism opened the way for "diversity" or "diversities" to become a legitimate part of the human world (and the Western cultural world), which until then had been bounded by the unilateralism or uniqueness of what was "modern" as an exclusive and excluding single category. Modernism and modernity had (consciously or unconsciously) acquired the status of a veritable ontology. And that would explain the squalid sectarian attitudes of criticism that opposed any choice which did not accord with the main lines preached by modernity.

In architecture, one can identify a similar scenario to the one I have broadly described for Western thought. Before Post-Modernism, no architectural option was accepted that did not fit in with "modern" fashions, forms and languages. This reductivist (exclusive and excluding) position was imposed with an iron fist – possibly indicating a deep insecurity – by a great many architecture schools.

Post-Modernism swept all this away, and such liberation from the self-imposed “historic commitment to modernity” and “obligation to our time” would quickly give rise to an eclectic avalanche of images, options and lines, all voraciously competing to survive and gain the upper hand in the great global market that our world has become in the last 30 or 40 years.

Along with that avalanche of images, and the resulting disorder, one of the values of Post-Modernism has been the clamour for an “identity” (at different levels): from the smallest scale in physical terms – the quarter or district in which one lives – to larger territorial or cultural scales.

Leaving aside the possible aspects of an “identity” understood as a separation from the “other”, and hence a possible source of confrontation, identity on a planetary scale has led us all to feel like inhabitants of the same place: planet Earth. And at that planetary scale a new sensitivity has arisen, beyond any individual or local level; over and above any ideology, race, or religious creed. I am referring to the need to preserve the environment and heritage of our planet as it has been handed down to us, so that we can pass it on to generations to come.

Care for the environment is a subject that concerns everyone, because we all live in the same place. Preventing global warming and water pollution; reducing tropical deforestation and gas emissions; eradicating nuclear energy and weapons of mass destruction from the planet, etc., are all global commitments, as everybody is aware.

But this new sensitivity is also very apparent on a smaller physical scale. Perhaps the dizzying thought of the global scale, the impossibility of acting on such an unattainable scale, or perhaps even of understanding such a scale, has brought us closer to our own less vast world, where we can make our own small contribution to preserving the environment, by developing and perpetuating sustainable development.

Within this new context of sensitivity, the architecture of each place is being studied, weighed up and valued once more. This is because within the context of sustainable development, vernacular or popular architecture has so far proven to be the form which best fits in and is most in balance with its environment. That fitting in and balance with the

environment is easy to understand, given that centuries of empirical effort have been expended on fitting in.

Uniformisation of the house, which is to say the same house for different contexts (context being understood in its widest sense), be they Morocco or Norway for example, based on today's technological ability to create a suitable climate and comfort within the house, is totally absurd. It may be possible: in fact it is. But the issue is not whether one can do it, but rather whether it really makes sense. And its very pointlessness makes it absurd, bearing in mind the energy squandered to fit out a modern house which is designed for the cold so that it can deal with a hot climate, or vice versa.

Be that as it may, the new sensitivity that has emerged with the decline in environmental quality has produced a growing public interest in architecture suited to its location, as I have said.

Another question is whether architecture schools are preparing their students to respond to this increasing call for architecture rooted in the vernacular tradition; in popular architecture.

A journey around Portugal, Spain or Italy shows just to what extent the landscape has been invaded by houses that want to be, emulate, recall or evoke vernacular architecture. But the designers of those houses were unable to resolve certain issues (which are simple, if one examines the precedents – houses already built), because they were not taught how to in architecture school.

At architecture school, “copying is a crime”; the entire subject of imitation is a crime. So it is no wonder that our landscapes are filled with so many thousands, or hundreds of thousands, of these houses. Nobody knows what these “objects” are, or what they are purporting to be. Whether they try to be traditional or modern, they are so deformed that they only serve to illustrate the axiomatic maxim of so many schools that “copying is a crime”.

But how do people learn any of their skills, if not by copying? How has the academic world managed to shackle itself to such an aberrant belief as “copying is a crime”? When imitation is eliminated and copying deemed a crime, what happens is that people still copy,

but they copy badly. And all in the name of freedom of creation, in a never-ending cult of the designed object.

The views of Colin Rowe, below, are in my view extremely illustrative of how important it is to copy. In other words, it is important to value precedent, what existed prior to one's own creation, or, if you prefer, to value what one has learnt, what one knows, what one has seen: to value memory. If no precedent exists, we would have to re-invent the world with every passing second. But precedent is the ingredient that articulates the memory, culture and civilisation on a global scale. The value of precedent is undeniable.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PRECEDENT

What follows is a brilliant piece by Colin Rowe concerning the importance of precedent. In it, the author regards preventing students from copying as totally perverse, or, as he puts it, he regards it as perverse to ask them to be creative and at the same time prevent them from copying. He is responding to an exercise that Walter Gropius asked his students to carry out. In that exercise, Gropius asked them to be creative, but not to copy anything!! Colin Rowe considers Gropius's proposal to be nonsense, and quite simply perverse.

Rowe wrote:

“Let me first stipulate that I don't really perceive how your topic, *the use of precedent and the role of invention in architecture today*, can very well lead to profitable dispute.

I can never begin to understand how it is possible to attack or to question the use of precedent. Indeed, I am not able to comprehend how anyone can begin to *act* (let alone to *think*) without resorting to precedent. For, at the most banal level, a kiss may be instinctual, and a handshake remains the product of convention, of habit, or of tradition; and in my reading, all of these words and whatever they may signify are related—loosely no doubt—to the notions of paradigm, of model, and hence, of precedent.

So much is my initiatory bias which I will now expand upon via the ancient strategy of a series of rhetorical questions:

Just how is it possible to conceive of any society, any civilisation, or any culture without the provision of precedent?

Are not language and mathematical signs the evidence of convenient fables and hence the advertisement of prevailing precedent?

Further, in the romantic predicament of interminable novelty, surely one must be at a loss to discover how any discourse (other than a grunt) is to be conducted?

Is not precedent, and are not its connotations, the primary cement of society? Is not their recognition the ultimate guarantee of legitimate government, legal freedom, decent prosperity, and polite intercourse?

As painfully obvious and horribly banal as these implicit propositions are, I assume that they belong to the platitudes that any one operating in a *reasonably* structured society (neither savage nor subjected to overheated revolutionary excitement) will be compelled to observe. I do not assume—I *cannot*—that these platitudes are available to the average architecture student. For he or she has been educated in a much more expansive milieu, with boundaries and limitations fragile to say the least.

In the days when it was understood that all art is a matter of imitation, whether of external reality or of some more metaphysical abstraction, the role of precedent was scarcely to be disputed; and, needless to say, Aristotle produces the argument very succinctly.

The instinct of imitation is implanted in man from childhood, one difference between him and other animals being that he is the most imitative of living creatures and through imitation learns his earliest lessons; and no less universal is the pleasure felt in things imitated”.

Colin Rowe goes on to provide examples of the relevance of memory, referring to a poem by Wordsworth, before returning to the exercise which Walter Gropius gave to his students.

“But if Wordsworth expands upon Aristotle and begins to relate mimesis to infant worship (the child is the father to the man) one must turn to Walter Gropius to receive the full, the kindergarten drift of this diversion. Inadvertently, Wordsworth describes the architecture student as one knows this creature to be: but the impulsive Walter goes on to specify a *beau ideal* for the species.

Creativeness in the growing child must be awakened through actual working with all kinds of materials in conjunction with training in free design...But this is important: no copying, no elimination of the urge to play, i.e., no artistic tutelage!

Such is to provide pointers to a condensed history of the doctrine of mimesis and its decline; and such is also to bring into prominence your business about the use of precedent. For with the best will in the world, it is not extremely easy to understand the Gropius distinction between 'copying' and the 'urge to play': Yer gotta play but yer not gotta copy and that's what you guys have gotta do. But could there be any dictate more perverse and inhibiting?

Is it not evident that any form of play is inherently 'copying'—and is related to fantasies of war or fantasies of domesticity? And, without these models either of battle or building, surely it is extremely hard to imagine how any game from chess to architecture could very well survive. No, all play is essentially the celebration of precedent.

Now, what about the second part of your topic: *the role of invention in architecture today?*

Well, one thinks about the lawyer with a whole library bound in blue morocco behind him. This is the inventory of cases bearing upon the specific case that he is required to judge. So simply to pronounce a legal innovation, to discriminate the new, our jurist is obliged to consult the old and the existing; and it is only by reference to these that genuine innovation can be proclaimed. For are not precedent and invention the opposite sides of the same coin? *I think a better topic might have been: How does the new invade the old and how does the old invade the new?*

Sincerely,

Colin Rowe (21)

Such is Rowe's illustrative text. I felt that it was very important to recall his observations, bearing in mind the author's mindset and brilliance – undoubtedly one of the clearest heads of architectural critique in the second half of the 20th century.

RETURNING TO PORTUGAL

In addition to what I have said so far, I want to highlight a circumstance that I feel to be very important as we try to comprehend the stance of Távora's disciples (Siza being the best-known), and more generally the stance of Portugal's people and architects. I am referring to the quest for the country's own values, to which I referred in the section entitled *Between Tradition and Modernity*. That circumstance is none other than the national trauma that followed the colonial wars and the loss of the vast Portuguese empire.

Portugal was alone in living through the terrible trauma of its very bloody African colonial wars. I believe that the Portuguese people felt misunderstood by their European neighbours, and, as I say, had to face up to that change entirely alone.

Along with the war and its human losses came material losses, and in particular the feeling that part of Portugal's organism had been amputated. It had lost part of its body, and was mutilated.

This country on the western extreme of the Iberian Peninsula had always looked towards the sea, to the to-ing and fro-ing of ships that set sail from or arrived upon its coasts, and it seemed to lose motivation. It had lost its reason for looking to the horizon. Portugal's gaze had been fixed on that horizon, beyond the Atlantic, beyond the Indian Ocean, to the furthest reaches of the world. On that horizon it had left its history, its life, its vocation, its soul.

Now Portugal, at the western extreme of the Iberian Peninsula, was alone to lick its terrible wounds, and nobody could console it.

More detached from Spain than one might have thought, just as Spain had been from Portugal, it seemed as if Portugal's closest travelling companion might now prove to be the neighbour to which it had turned its back for centuries, to build an empire and live independently.

The loss of the empire coincided with the establishment of democracy in Portugal, and shortly afterwards the sweeping transformations required for membership of the European Union.

The trauma of losing the empire was undoubtedly one of the reasons why its people (and of course its architects) had to turn inwards, to the country's own values. One reason was to ask questions about Portugal's destiny, its role – its new role in harmony with the world.

Portugal, which had left a deep mark on the culture of the West and many other parts of the world, had lost its imperial role and that of an international power, and had to set out on a new path. Its centuries of experience, its know-how, its practical sense and so many other Portuguese virtues meant that it was destined to play a decisive role in defining the future of Europe, especially in the south of the Old Continent, from the Atlantic to the Middle East and North Africa; and a role in relation to its neighbours: Spain, France, Italy and Greece. With Spain, as part of Iberia, it has been called to form a bridge with its former empire, especially in Latin America.

Eduardo Lourenço highlights that fact in his book *O Labirinto da Saudade* [The Labyrinth of Longing], in 1978: "The Portuguese have always seen flight to more favourable skies as a desperate solution to insurmountable obstacles". Suggesting a different attitude, given the new reality, he says: "The time has come to take refuge at home, to barricade ourselves inside, to create something steadfast – a country where we all can live without pining for an eternal 'elsewhere' or 'far away' as a solution which, as the saying goes, can be found here in our own back yard". (22)

THE ARCHITECT JOSÉ BAGANHA

When those changes (colonial wars, the revolution of April 1974 and the establishment of democracy, the appearance of Post-Modern ideas, etc.) shook Portugal, from the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s, José Baganha was a teenager about to begin studying architecture.

He was born to a well-to-do family from Coimbra in 1960. His father was a well-respected pneumologist and professor at Coimbra University. He was very meticulously educated throughout his childhood. Travelling with his parents since he was a child, he gained a deep knowledge of Portugal, along with other European countries, especially Spain and France. He had always been interested in his country's history and traditions, and the overseas "provinces", which he would visit over time. He also paid close attention to the

events shaking up his country, which caused a mix of concern and hope, but mainly uncertainty.

In 1978, at the age of 18, he entered Oporto Architecture School, which as a school of extraordinary originality and vitality was a focal point of Europe. He spent two years there, until 1980, when he moved to the Architecture Faculty of Lisbon Technical University.

From Oporto he retains a vivid memory of his teacher Fernando Távora. Baganha saw Távora not only as a person of vast knowledge and sublime refinement, but also a man of open, humanist, simple and accessible talent. That blend of knowledge and humility, and his interest in so many areas of understanding, dovetailed well with what José Baganha had learned since childhood at home, and in the circles in which his parents moved. In Oporto, some of his teachers were very well-known in Portugal, such as Álvaro Siza.

The ideas of Leon Krier, which were widely disseminated at that time, had a powerful influence on José Baganha, as did the architecture and writing of Robert Venturi, Demetri Porphyrios, Maurice Culot, Philippe Rothier and others.

In 1984 he graduated as an architect and decided to consolidate his understanding of construction. To that end, he began working at the Engil company, where he remained for three years, supervising building projects and gaining direct contact with how buildings are built.

At 27 years of age, Baganha was given an opportunity at the Turcopol building company to participate more directly in certain decisions that went beyond the building of projects, and which centred around possibilities of prefabrication – the possibility of prefabricated houses to solve the problem of shantytowns, which was the foremost problem being faced by Lisbon and many other Portuguese cities at that time.

In 1993 he opened his own architecture studio in Lisbon: in the early years, up to 2000, with architect José Cornélio da Silva, and since then alone with his own team.

A VISIT TO FIVE HOUSES

Below I will describe a visit to five houses by José Baganha.

- HOUSE IN SESMARIAS

Salvaterra de Magos, Ribatejo

This was one of José Baganha's first projects. It is in the heart of the Ribatejo region. The house occupies a large plot of land, and comprises two L-shape structures. The upper structure contains the entrance; the other sits parallel to the upper structure that forms the house, and contains the garage and a few auxiliary areas.

These upper structures are linked by a wall running parallel with the property's surrounding wall, and so is parallel with the entrance from the road. Thus, the two upper structures (the house and the garage) and this linking wall form a U shape, which creates a type of courtyard opening onto the wooded garden at the rear.

This environment, with its courtyard, gives the house a manorial feel. One has had to pass through the gateway in the wall uniting the two masses to reach the courtyard. That gateway stands at the end of an axis flanked by perfectly aligned orange trees, creating a beautiful garden that leads up to the house complex. Thus, the house is a series of structures that can be viewed from the point of access from the road.

Once inside, one enters the house via a shallow porch entrance topped by an arch. The ground floor of the upper structure contains the day rooms: the hall, kitchen, dining room and lounge. The dining room and lounge have views towards the rear part of the access façade.

In this rear area, thanks to the L-shape plan, quite an intimate space has been created, with a swimming pool at the centre. This intimacy is accentuated by a pergola-pavilion which enables a virtually U-shape environment to be created behind the mass of the house. This pavilion is an excellent facility for outdoor activities, and is a pleasant summer house with views of the pool.

The bedrooms on the upper level have access to the garden and pool via a stairway on the rear façade.

The lower structure has a porticoed part, providing protection on hot sunny days. It also provides a certain cadence to the façade, and greater expression because of the contrast of light and shade. This mass contains part of the living room, because the other part of this twin-space room is contained in the upper body.

The house gives an air of imposing masses with little movement. However, the interplay between the position of the masses and their position in relation to the point of access generate a feeling of a building with extensions, even though that is not the case at all.

It has the feel of a farm estate with a somewhat manorial air, although discreet or, rather, serene. Baganha recognises this connection to a Ribatejo landed estate.

The house is brick-built with solid walls, mortar-clad and painted. The roofs overhang and are finished with traditional ceramic tiles. Door and window surrounds are stone. The floor of the kitchen and bathrooms are also of roughened Cascais azulino stone. The other rooms are floored with terracotta tiles. All of the flooring materials are waxed and very attractive.

The kitchen is a delightful room. Far from being a high-tech laboratory, with astounding latest-generation appliances, stainless steel all over the place, etc., it is a truly welcoming and homely space, with a traditional layout. It is large and well-lit, and the furniture has been specially made for it. The owners have added a few items that accentuate this attractive feeling of an intimate, welcoming and homely area, like the large twin mahogany sideboard, the upper part of which is glazed, with various receptacles containing vegetables, all very well-planned.

In fact, the architect took very special care with both the building materials and construction itself. The complex is painted in soft colours, and it seems to be rooted in a landscape of trees. In the inner courtyard, the U-shape environment, the feel is one of absolute serenity, disturbed only by the coming and going of the family's several dogs.

- MONTE DA CASA ALTA

Melides, Grândola, Alentejo Litoral

There is quite a distance between the house just visited and this one in Melides: physical and conceptual distance, and even distance in the maturity of José Baganha's work.

This house lies to the south of Lisbon, in Alentejo Litoral, near the coast, in an area of woodland much used for sheep grazing. The journey to the house along twisting narrow roads, between holm oak woods that protect the sheep, is truly beautiful. After passing through the village "centre", represented by the school by an *Estado Novo* architect, the house emerges a couple of kilometres away. Despite not being far from Lisbon, one feels as if one is in a remote, out-of-the-way and very peaceful place.

The house appears to be a building with additions or extensions, the layout aligning along a virtual northeast to southwest axis. It has a main two-storey body containing the kitchen on the lower floor and the bedrooms on the upper floor. To the northeast, a one-storey mass houses the lounge, which extends to the house's rear façade, as far as the kitchen garden, into a porticoed area that also serves as a dining area and open-air lounge area. Another body, which is also single-storey, adjoins the other end of the two-storey mass.

The result, as I have said, is a building that seems enlarged, and which follows the land's slightly sloping topography. Below, not far to the west, one can see the sea.

The conceptual distance from the previously visited house is evident: evident that the former is in the Ribatejo and that this one is in the Alentejo.

In the Ribatejo, the house truly plays its part as an established home, because it is occupied all year round: it is the owner's main place of residence. The surroundings are very residential, with numerous villas that are also used as permanent residences, Lisbon being not too far away.

Here in Melides, the house is a weekend and holiday retreat. In that sense, it does not need so many features, nor as much space as the other house. The surroundings are entirely rural, and the distance to Lisbon (far greater than for the other house) seems psychologically great. One has the feeling of being quite isolated.

Construction displays a range of constants that were seen in the house in Sesmarias: solid walls, traditional overhanging tiled roofs, porticoes, walls whitewashed or painted in very pale colours, etc. However, here the proximity to vernacular architecture is undisguised. The walls have been mortar clad so as to give a less perfect finish than at the Sesmarias house. The windows are not strictly or evenly spaced, but open out more “randomly”, to give a more picturesque feel.

The timber roof structure is visible from inside. The roof sits directly on top of the walls, without a cornice. The breastwork of the exterior stairway is a simple wall, with no coping. The chimneys are tall and narrow, and reflect those found in popular architecture.

In short, the colour and texturing of the wall give the whole exterior a sense of continuity that is not seen in the Sesmarias house. Here, the façade is “continuous”: one skin, punctuated by door and window openings made without edging, and without any particular decorative emphasis.

Everything in Melides is direct and simple. Baganha seems to have captured the “vernacular feel” in this house, and that feel is transmitted to each of the rooms, which are made comfortable by the simplicity with which the spaces have been approached. This is very visible in the portico facing the kitchen garden, where the family spends many hours during the holidays.

The kitchen is a space where one can spend time, rather than a place full of technological gadgets for cooking. It is a traditional kitchen, and the furniture accentuates that fact. But I mention this domestic feel of the kitchen – its traditional character – because the sense of harmony, beauty, and above all naturalness of this cooking area is proverbial in José Baganha’s architecture.

Now let us visit the Monte do Carújo house in Alvito.

- MONTE DO CARÚJO HOUSE

Alvito, Alentejo

Moving deeper into the Alentejo, we reach beautiful Alvito, protected by its imposing late-15th century castle. Alvito is a small, typical Alentejo village: very well-kempt and pleasant, with many beautiful built areas, such as the main square and the large fair- and market ground by the castle. It is surrounded by farmland, trees and cattle pasture. The house we are going to visit is on the outskirts of this village.

The house is arranged in a U shape, in the hollow of which is a portico forming a kind of canopy or tetrapylon – a timber structure for enjoying life out of doors. This is where one enters the house.

This layout, which at first may seem surprising, turns out to be highly functional, because it is in this area, protected on three sides and above (thanks to the canopy), that part of the house's life is lived, and where there is also close contact with the lounge. Apparently this layout was imposed by the existence of a few cement structures, but in any case the result is stupendous.

If I am dwelling on this feature, which as I say may seem surprising, it is because as one approaches the house one sees two almost identical masses as far as the composition is concerned, with this space between them harbouring the canopy. The masses are not the same size, but they are dealt with in the same (or almost the same) way, with two windows in the axis of the façade wall. This means that the function or use of the rooms behind these windows, which are so similar, is hidden. Where is the dining room? Where are the bedrooms?

Looking carefully, one notes that the windows of the structure to the right are higher than those of the left. It seems that in adapting to the topography a few interior steps have had to be incorporated into either part of the house.

Other differences include an imposing chimney juxtaposed with the body on the left, and one realises that this mass is wider. Although one now can imagine, or "read", the interior layout of the house from outside, I would say that despite the simplicity of the approach (a U-shaped plan), this house is very opaque as regards how usage, and the various rooms, are distributed.

It think it is fair to say (although slightly risky) that in vernacular architecture comprising successive additions or various juxtaposed volumes, one cannot usually read or detect the interior uses all that easily. In other words, they are opaque. And while that is generally true, in the case of this house such initial ambiguity is more the result of the U layout and the positioning of the canopy or pergola between the two long structures of the U than of a house with successive additions (of which there are none, in fact).

Once that initial surprise as to the house's appearance is overcome, we come to the large lounge/dining room, showing off the timber roof structure. The windows opening onto the dining room provide beautiful views of the Alentejo countryside.

The kitchen, which is small but open on one side towards the lounge/dining room, is a veritable jewel, whose every component part has been carefully chosen by the owners: the old stone sink, the furniture, the cooking utensils, the *azulejo* tiles, and even the elegant old domestic appliance. Absolutely everything shows the owners' passion, which has generated such a magical space, a veritable *sancta sanctorum* for these lovers of (and experts in) fine traditional cuisine.

The mass that houses the bedrooms is reached via a passage in the element joining the two arms of the U. The passage is in the form of a rustic brick vault. It is a little mysterious, both very beautiful owing to the "primitive" way in which the vault has been achieved, and because of the darkness which is pierced by a light at the end of the passage. It is like entering a forbidden space. Thus, the bedrooms are "distanced" by this mysterious and beautiful passage.

The bedrooms are very well-lit rooms, and have been furnished in exquisite taste by the owners. The whole house has the discreet elegance of people who value beauty. I must also mention the owners' exquisite sensitivity in every detail of furnishing, which is unpretentious and absolutely natural. Monte do Carújo is entirely harmonious: the house with the landscape, the architecture with the furnishing, and the colours with the light.

Before leaving the house, we stop a while outside, by the fireplace, which can be used for cooking meals out of doors. Alongside is a little sink, of uncertain age, recovered from a very old building in Spanish Extremadura by the house's owners – tireless travellers in search of the most beautiful places and things.

With this house, Baganha has continued his quest for an architectural form that can blend into the landscape, and retain certain traditional features without negating comfort.

The house vanishes into the horizon as we drive away. Now we are heading for one of the Alentejo's remotest corners, right by the Spanish border, to see our fourth house by the architect José Baganha.

- MONTE DA HERDADE DO REGO

Vila Boim, Elvas. Alentejo

Having reached the village of Vila Boim, we are very close to the house we are about to visit. We just need to travel up a few stony tracks only suitable for off-road vehicles to reach the property on which the house stands.

Along the way there are groups of people beating olives from the trees, whose serene greenness contrasts with the vivid redness of the soil. At a given moment one is surrounded by a landscape of hills completely covered with olives planted in perfect lines. Nothing can be seen other than this landscape and the sky above. The feeling of being in a remote place is very strong and intense: really intense.

Suddenly the road gets better. We have arrived at the property, and the owners have improved the access. We delve into the property, and pass around bends where beautiful horses are grazing. Suddenly, beyond a bend, an esplanade appears, with a white house at the far end. That is the house, behind which a wide horizon opens out. All of a sudden the journey between the hills, with its short vistas and very enclosed countryside (which gave no hint of this "apparition"), opens out onto a landscape of endless views. A landscape in which a vast flat green plain blurs into a horizon lost in a mist enveloping the lands of Spain. The view from the house is really spectacular. In the foreground, the vineyards that the owners have planted with different varieties of vine create rectangles of different shades of green: some more violet, others more yellow. The vines cover a large area (about 50 hectares) of this tranquil land. The owners tend the vineyards with unimaginable care, to produce one of Portugal's most famous wines.

Then come the olive trees, and beyond those other properties that give the land its form. In the distance large white country houses can be made out, and the countryside spreads out until lost on the horizon.

It is the kind of exquisite place that reminds me of those the Benedictine order used to choose for its monasteries: isolated, hidden, fertile and, above all, outstandingly beautiful – sublime.

The house dominates the landscape. It is the largest of the five that we will visit, and in fact the largest Baganha has built. The owners spend much of their time here, and it is lived in virtually all year round, despite the fact that they have their residence in Lisbon.

Baganha has consolidated an existing building, restoring it and adding a new building as an extension. He has followed the traditional techniques used for the existing house, and has made every effort to ensure that the new building provides the utmost comfort.

The house has just one storey, apart from a central two-storey mass which already existed. Baganha added a wine vault, built in a style similar to others in the region: magnificent brick vaulting gives one a sense of being in a timeless wine cellar, as if it had always been there. Only the newness of the walls and vaults reveal that it cannot have been built all that long ago.

The house is very large, and is generously and comfortably laid-out throughout, as requested by the owners. Access is via a very discreet door opening onto a passage that forms a spine right through the house, subtly broken up along almost its entire length.

The kitchen is close to the entrance. Once again, this is a kitchen in traditional taste. It is very large, and immediately gives one the feeling of being in an important country house: a genuine manor house of Portugal's rural nobility or aristocracy. The dining room is equally large, as are the two lounges, which are situated one behind the other.

By including this passage as a spine throughout the length of the house, Baganha has achieved two very important things, in my opinion. Firstly, almost all of the rooms have windows and a view of the beautiful countryside, with its extensive views, as already mentioned. The kitchen, lounges, master bedroom and the daughter's bedroom overlook

that landscape. The other three bedrooms (two for the sons) open towards the main façade.

Secondly, the passage, whose height and width vary subtly, and which widens slightly into bays, offers a long view into the house's interior. That view is sequentially lit by shafts of light entering via the windows in those bays: a sequence of light and shade creating a feeling that one "dominates" the entire house, by being able to see down the entire length of the passage.

The upper floor of the central body houses the owner's study, and has an adjoining terrace. Wide stairways link this storey to the wine vault.

Construction follows the same pattern of techniques and materials used in the two previous houses: Monte da Casa Alta and Monte de Carújo. Here, great care was taken over construction. The casual appearance, and the simplicity of certain elements, do not mean careless execution. Construction has been rigorous and solid. The house abounds with interior comfort. The owners have furnished it discreetly and elegantly: once again, owners who are very aware of the place in which they live. They are cosmopolitan Anglo-Portuguese world travellers, very used to simple but beautiful things. Baganha has blended the house into the countryside, and with this house has furthered his impassioned and thrilling journey in pursuit of beauty, noble architecture and their integration into nature.

This visit to Monte da Herdade do Rego was unforgettable. The house, with its white forms outlined against views of one of the Alentejo's most beautiful landscapes, stretching as far as the land and skies of Spain, is thoroughly memorable. Unforgettable. It will always stay with me.

It is now time to leave the Alentejo and return to Lisbon. The final house is in Sintra.

- HOUSE IN QUINTA DA BELOURA

Sintra

We come to a house occupying a plot of land in a garden-city type of development. All of the surrounding houses are large. The development is finished with a certain view to quality, and its location is regarded as highly important in this strategic area close to Sintra.

The first thing that really attracts attention is the outstanding quality of execution. The house includes a lot of granite stonework, executed simply perfectly. The house reminds one of certain precedents in the region. It is a compact two-storey block at the front, with three levels at the rear, and with an L-shape plan opening onto the street. In the inner angle of the L, a one-storey vaulted mass marks the entrance, clearly rooted in the Arab tradition.

Despite including a window that reminds one of a Palladian window, the openings are simple rectangles with granite surrounds. Several of the windows are topped by an arch that does not begin at the frame recesses at the side of the window. These are to evoke Mudejar windows which in so many houses around Sintra recall the city's Royal Palace.

The house is quite large, as are the generously sized rooms. The ground floor contains the more public areas such as the kitchen, dining room and double-height lounge, exiting onto a large terrace with a pergola facing southwest. The first floor has two bedrooms.

A basement, with access from within the house, contains the garage and a large ground-floor room at the rear. There is also a garden at the rear, surrounding the pool marked by the pavilion, which is perpendicular to the house.

On one side of the house, level with the ground floor, Baganha has created a small garden with granite planters containing olive trees. The garden is like a small square or room serving as a prelude to the wide stairway down to the back garden and swimming pool.

In this building, it is surprising to see how Baganha has created so many and such diverse environments in a house which is not huge. And it is surprising given the major volumetric nature of the house, because one might think that the presence of the house – its mass – might prevent such “fragmentation” into different environments.

By placing the entrance in the bend of the L, the entrance area is separated from the left side, where Baganha has placed the dry garden, with its granite olive-tree planters. This little side square is a world unto itself. So are the terrace opening out before the lounge; the wide and comfortable stairway that descends parsimoniously between two walls to the garden; and the two environments (the garden with the pool, and the open area) into which the pavilion divides the rear.

As mentioned, the house looks to local precedents, and construction clearly shows traditional building techniques at numerous points. They include the garden pavilion, roofed with a timber structure, and also the pergola.

Baganha is returning to a suburban environment – a house on the edge of the city. And in this sense he has distanced himself from the Alentejo houses that blended with the landscape, because here the landscape is defined by all of the neighbouring houses; i.e. it is not a purely natural landscape. In other words, this house is not set in the heart of nature, unlike the other houses which we visited in the Alentejo.

Baganha has tried to develop the greatest possible spatial richness, both inside and out, within the limitations of a plan which when all is said and done is a conventional plan for a well-off family, and also within the limitations imposed by the plot of land itself.

We have visited five houses that show us how Baganha works, his outstanding skill in articulating and composing, and the excellent attention to every detail, combined with a very personal concern to take extreme care over construction. One must add to that his sensitivity for the landscape and for building with the topography, and for regional culture, customs and methods. The houses adapt to the land; gardens and porticoes appended to the house make the transition between the house interior, interior and outside spaces and the surroundings. Views, whether close or distant, and orientation are taken into account. Everything is aimed at contributing to a successful outcome.

LIVING IN THE HOUSE

The ability of an architect to create a house as a one-family home involves establishing a close relationship with the user – the person who will live there. In this way, he can gain

an exact understanding of the user's needs, his/her financial capacity, hopes, dreams, tastes and idiosyncrasies. Eventually, it all becomes an exciting adventure to produce a happy outcome. And I do not just mean the completion of the project – i.e. the building phase – but also that the relationship between the architect and user does not fade, but instead is strengthened.

For anybody, building a home is an adventure that always involves doubt, amongst many other factors. Doubt about the final result, in the sense of whether the plan will be achieved, not falling short, or in the choice of certain materials, colours, textures, etc. So many doubts beset the owner.

Obviously, the architect's guiding role is essential, but so is that of the builder and the various trades. So one can easily see how important it is to create an atmosphere of trust between the three sides of the house-building triangle: the owner, the architect and the builder.

It seems that Baganha has succeeded in creating that atmosphere, judging by how pleased those who live in his houses are with his work. All of them are very proud of their houses. They all identify with them, and thus with how the architect works.

Moreover, I can state that the five houses we visited have been furnished very much in keeping with the house's character. The three houses in the Alentejo have discreet furniture of a serene elegance and refined good taste. There is nothing glaring, pretentious or vulgar. Good tone, and harmony with the house, predominate. And seeing this, and the pride of those who occupy the houses, gives an insight into the healthy atmosphere that brought the house safely home.

The two more "suburban" houses, intended as permanent and weekend residences, are furnished differently to the Alentejo houses. The idea they express is of a more stable house, planned for more permanent residence, opening onto a more domestic form of nature, more fenced in and limited to the garden.

The Salvaterra de Magos house has been exquisitely furnished by its owner, a passionate bookworm. The furniture, paintings, sculptures and other objects, the library and the showcases for collected items, make the house a very beautiful place.

The house at Quinta de Beloura has been provided with more contemporary furniture, and other items reflecting the Imperial style. These owners have very good taste. The house appears to achieve what Raul Lino and so many other 20th century Portuguese designers sought: good taste as a starting point for creating the Portuguese house. All of this makes a visit to these five stupendous houses a very intimate experience.

But, as this book shows, Baganha's work is not limited to these houses. He has produced apartment blocks and office blocks in city centres, which I will now briefly look at.

URBAN DEVELOPMENTS

Baganha recently completed the apartment block close to the Ancient and Classical Art Museum, known as Janelas Verdes, in the urban centre of Lisbon (2003-2005). The site is a trapezoid city block. The building stands within the perimeter of the site, with façades facing three streets, and forming an inner courtyard. I should highlight the level of respect shown for the type of architecture found in the quarter in which the building has been built. All elements of the façades, their windows and doorways, the ironwork of the balconies, the carpentry used, the type of garrets, the entablature, the colours, etc., have a familiar feel.

Baganha has taken care over the rhythm of windows, which seems uniform and well-ordered, and over each detail intended to blend the building into this urban Lisbon landscape.

And he is very aware of the context in which he is working. He wants his work to help sustain or improve the urban context, and this he achieves with "As Janelas Verdes".

Other examples take on different problems, and I want to look at two that are very different from each another. The first is an emblematic and representative building constructed in Maputo, Mozambique, known as the Millennium Park building. It is one of the most important buildings in this city. Baganha has shunned creating an object that revolves around eccentricity, that cries out for attention, and has shunned the irreconcilable. Once again, he has turned his back on the prevailing fashion for this kind of landmark building in

young cities. The building is a balanced composition with a harmonious and elegant façade. The 17-storey building is a block of well-thought out proportions and serene presence.

The other example is the refurbishment of a building between party walls in Figueira da Foz. The space between the neighbouring buildings is just three metres. This is a very narrow and quite deep plot. Baganha's plan incorporates all three levels of the house, the top floor being lit through the roof. The façade is notably discreet, seeking to pass unnoticed, as if it had always been there. As with the Janelas Verdes building in central Lisbon, here in Figueira da Foz Baganha has made a point of introducing order, of composing and above all seeking a harmonious, discreet and elegant result that gives one the impression it has been here forever. Put another way, it gives the impression of being an inseparable part of the existing city, despite its small size.

Baganha is very interested in urban issues. In his professional life he can implement his ideas about cities. He is a founder-member of the CEU (Council for European Urbanism), and an ardent defender of the principles of the Stockholm Charter drawn up by CEU members in 2003. Baganha is a defender of the traditional, compact, mixed-use city, with a residential approach in keeping with by-laws (or building codes) that can ensure that the city grows homogeneously and harmoniously. In that sense, he is opposed to the systematic cult of the architectural "object", which would have it that every building be designed as if there were nothing else around it, like a mere object.

TEACHING AND PRACTICE

I would not want to end this look at José Baganha's work without referring to his activity as a teacher. He teaches Urban Restoration and Construction, with specific emphasis on the importance of the design itself. Teaching restoration and construction requires a practical, observant and unprejudiced mindset. And that has to be transmitted to students. José Baganha once told me of his experience of presenting students with buildings, so that they could analyse the resolution of specific constructional elements: why a given solution is adopted, the logic (or lack of logic) of the solution, or whether the student should suggest an alternative.

Baganha well knows that throughout history many forms owe their structure and look to the constructive issues which gave rise to them. He also knows that after the constructive issue vanished the form continued, even though the constructive reason for it no longer exists.

Teaching, contact with students, for a practising architect who designs and builds, ensures that the subject he teaches is examined from a wide range of viewpoints. Thus, Baganha sees an operative purpose for the design of a building, and thus he sees action that affects the city. History and tradition, or customs that contribute solutions tried and tested thousands of times, are ever present. And so are new technologies and new materials. In short, teaching becomes the act of transmitting to the student a way of being – a way of seeing architecture. Thus, via construction the humanist and technical approach needed by the student is filtered via the teacher. And thanks to being in constant contact with young people, who always want to learn new things and are always inquisitive, the teacher has to explain, converse and deal with the widest range of questions with students, which keeps him on his toes, like an athlete constantly exercising his muscles.

I believe that José Baganha's teaching work also forces him to plan his projects to be as cohesive as possible, because wherever teacher is, his students are looking over his shoulder at the practising architect; because his actions seem to be (and in fact are being) observed by his students; because, ultimately, he has to teach by example.

In rounding off, I must express how much getting to know José Baganha's work directly has awakened a great interest in me. Buildings seen in context, both in the country and the city, have laid bare the talent of this architect as he searches for balance and harmony with the surroundings. His work is very well-built, very well-composed, and sensitive to today's world-wide desire for renewed sensitivity.

A desire, a concern, to create a harmonious environment and ensure sustainable development. Baganha has shown himself to be an important figure in this new world. In addition to his skill, freshness, hope and optimism, his work also shows us the optimism that this new Portugal is bringing to the rest of Europe.

Bilbao, November 2005

Javier Cenicacelaya

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(1). In *Mensagem*, Fernando Pessoa, Ed. Atica, (11th Edition) Lisbon.

(2). For more about José Luiz Monteiro see *José Luiz Monteiro. 1848-1942*. Luiz Trigueiros, Editorial Blau Lda. Lisbon, 2004.

(3). “Although his classical education at Paris’s *Ecole des Beaux-Arts* had few followers, José Luiz Monteiro became the acknowledged starter motor for the renewal and promotion of architecture, which was falling behind in Portugal”, in “Master Monteiro”, by João Alves da Cunha, in *José Luiz Monteiro. 1848-1942*, p. 7.

(4). Ventura Terra (1866-1919) received a full education in Paris, and his work confirms that his tastes were in keeping with that of the French capital. Even more so, he had a taste for grandiloquence, believing it to display certain cosmopolitan values, such as in his famous 1906 Banco Lisboa & Açores, built into the Pombaline fabric of Lisbon’s Baixa district.

(5). José Augusto França says on this subject:

“Lisbon’s first and best eclectic building was born of a declared wish to re-enrich the capital, at least via its banks”. José-Augusto França in *História da Arte em Portugal. O Pombalismo e o Romantismo*. Editorial Presença, Lisbon, 2004, p. 174.

(6). Ragnar Ostberg, “Contemporary Swedish Architecture”, *Architectural Record*, Vol. XXV, no. 3, March 1909, pp 166-177.

(7). His 1878 article “En Busca de una Arquitectura Nacional” [Searching for a National Architecture] is very well-known, and was published in *La Renaixença* magazine. The magazine gathered together the concerns and worries of a movement that, led by intellectuals and the middle class, sought its own expression that was characteristic of Catalanian culture, and also, logically, of Catalanian architecture.

This movement gave rise to *Noucentisme* and *Modernisme* in Catalonia. The latter became internationally renowned through the singular figure of Antonio Gaudí.

Although Catalanian *Modernismo* found the regional architecture of the past interesting, it would eventually be transformed into its own style, with the aim of presenting the Catalanian cultural debate on a level worthy of the European debate of the day. That desire for equivalence with Europe explains the decorative excesses, the eclectic attitudes and the love of craftsmanship that appeared during those years in movements from other countries, with certain factors – decoration, colour, etc. – being given more emphasis than others, depending on the architect.

(8) Leonardo Rucabado created what was known as the *Montañés* style. The influence of English houses, Europe's interest in the Swiss chalet and the presence of Basque vernacular architecture created a beautiful synthesis to form this regional style – the *Nevasco* [neo-Basque] style.

In his induction speech to the San Fernando Royal Academy of Fine Arts in 1910, Anibal Alvarez claimed that the styles that seemed to be closest to Spain, such as Plateresque or Baroque, should be studied, and thus architects should analyse the architecture of the past that was to be found in each region.

Vicente Lamperez y Romea and Leonardo Rucabado were also decisive in calling for more Spanish styles from the past to be adapted to the needs of the present. However, Leopoldo Torres Balbás leaned not so much towards a reinterpretation of significant works and styles of the past, but rather towards a direct look at popular architecture. He, along with Teodoro de Anasagasti and Fernando García Mercadal promoted the value of vernacular architecture up to the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939).

(9). José Luis Quintino, "Raul Lino, 1879-1974", in *Raul Lino*, Luiz Trigueiros and Claudio Sat, Ed. Blau, Lisbon 2003, p. 16.

(10). Op. Cit. p. 17.

(11). Raul Lino. *Casas Portuguesas*, Heirs of Raul Lino and Edições Cotovia, Lisbon 1992, p. 113.

(12). The brothers Carlos (1887-1971) and Guillermo Rebelo de Andrade (1891-1969), Luis Cristino da Silva (1896-1976), and Porfirio Pardal Monteiro (1897-1957) were not alone. They are just some of the names who maintained an interest in historicist architecture up to the decades when *Estado Novo* architecture reached its zenith. There were very many other who, unlike Lino, developed more towards the taste of the European vanguard. In particular, they include Carlos Ramos (1897-1969), Jorge Segurado (1898-1990), and the younger, and brilliant, architect Keil do Amaral (1910-1975).

(13). In 1928 in Spain, the *Junta de Paradores y Hosterías del Reino* [Board of Paradores and Hostelrys] was created, which was the seed for the Paradores Nacionales developed after the Spanish Civil War.

(14). *Arquitectura*, No. 49, October 1953, p. 22.

(15). I am referring to the market building in Vila da Feira (1953-1959), close to Álvaro Siza, Fernando Lanhas and Alberto Neves. The building is clearly laid-out, the marked horizontality creating a courtyard, with volumetric fragmentation adapted to the topography. All of this separates it from modern "orthodoxy". However, the scale misses the mark in the context in which it is set: scale in compositional terms (the interplay of windows and doors, roof gables, the lengths of the walls etc., with those already existing). Ultimately it does not fit in, despite showing a clear desire to do so. In my view, this is caused by a fear of "mimicking" market typologies that were already part of the rural world.

(16). Ana Tostões. "Arquitectura Moderna Portuguesa: Os Três Modos", in *Arquitectura Moderna Portuguesa*, by Ana Tostões and Sandra Vaz Costa, Instituto Português do Património Arquitectónico (IPPAR), Lisbon 2004, p. 139.

(17). Ana Tostões. op. cit. p. 142.

(18). As stated in Decree-Law no. 40 349, which enabled the survey to be subsidised for publication. The Decree-Law states:

"The intense activity conducted by our government to materially rebuild our country corresponds to concerns and efforts to value Portuguese architecture, encouraging it to affirm its vigour and personality, and helping it to find its own route to aggrandisement.

"In part, this involves recognising the evolutionary nature of architectural solutions, which naturally tend to be adapted to their time, matching the improvements in building techniques and the evolution of aesthetic ideals.

"But at the same time it is recognised that new solutions should not cease to be based on Portuguese architectural traditions resulting from the climatic conditions, building materials, customs, living conditions and spiritual concerns of the nation; in short, all the specific factors that are naturally mirrored in Portuguese architecture over successive ages, and which have given it its own character and give meaning to the expression 'Portuguese architecture'.

"Because of changes to factors which gave rise to them, some of those building traditions will not entirely retain their value, and may even become mere historical records of the nation's architecture. However, many are still fully suited to the nation's environment and in themselves contain a living lesson, inasmuch as they show the practical value of creating modern architecture in this country which is truly Portuguese".

(19). *Arquitectura Popular en Portugal*, II Vols., Ed. Centro Editor Livreiro da Ordem dos Arquitectos, Lisbon, 2004.

(20). It is at the root of this renewed interest in the past, with several exhibitions being held covering those architects who had been ignored or greatly derided in preceding decades. For example, it helps explain the retrospective exhibition of Raul Lino's work held at the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in 1974, amongst others.

(21). Published in *The Harvard Architecture Review*, Cambridge, Mass., 1986.

(22). Eduardo Lourenço, *O Labirinto da Saudade*, Lisbon, Don Quixote, 1992 (1st edition 1978), p. 47.