

Ink on the Table...

Fernando Távora, Conversations, Tradition, Commemoration, Documentary Project

/Abstract

The text captures the memories of architect Távora and the deep connection his collaborators had with him. It describes their regular lunch gatherings, filled with laughter and meaningful conversations. The bond they shared extended beyond the professional realm and into a cherished friendship. After Távora's passing, his collaborators continued to honor his legacy through tradition and commemoration. The group, fondly referred to as Tavorianni, has sought to preserve Távora's memory and impact through gatherings and a documentary project to record the stories and experiences he left behind.

/Author

Pedro Pacheco
Architect

Born in Braga, Portugal, 1965. Graduated in Architecture from the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Porto in 1991.

He worked as a trainee with Josep Llinás in Barcelona between 1990 and 1991, with Eduardo Souto Moura as his trainee supervisor. He collaborated with Fernando Távora in Porto between 1992 and 1996.

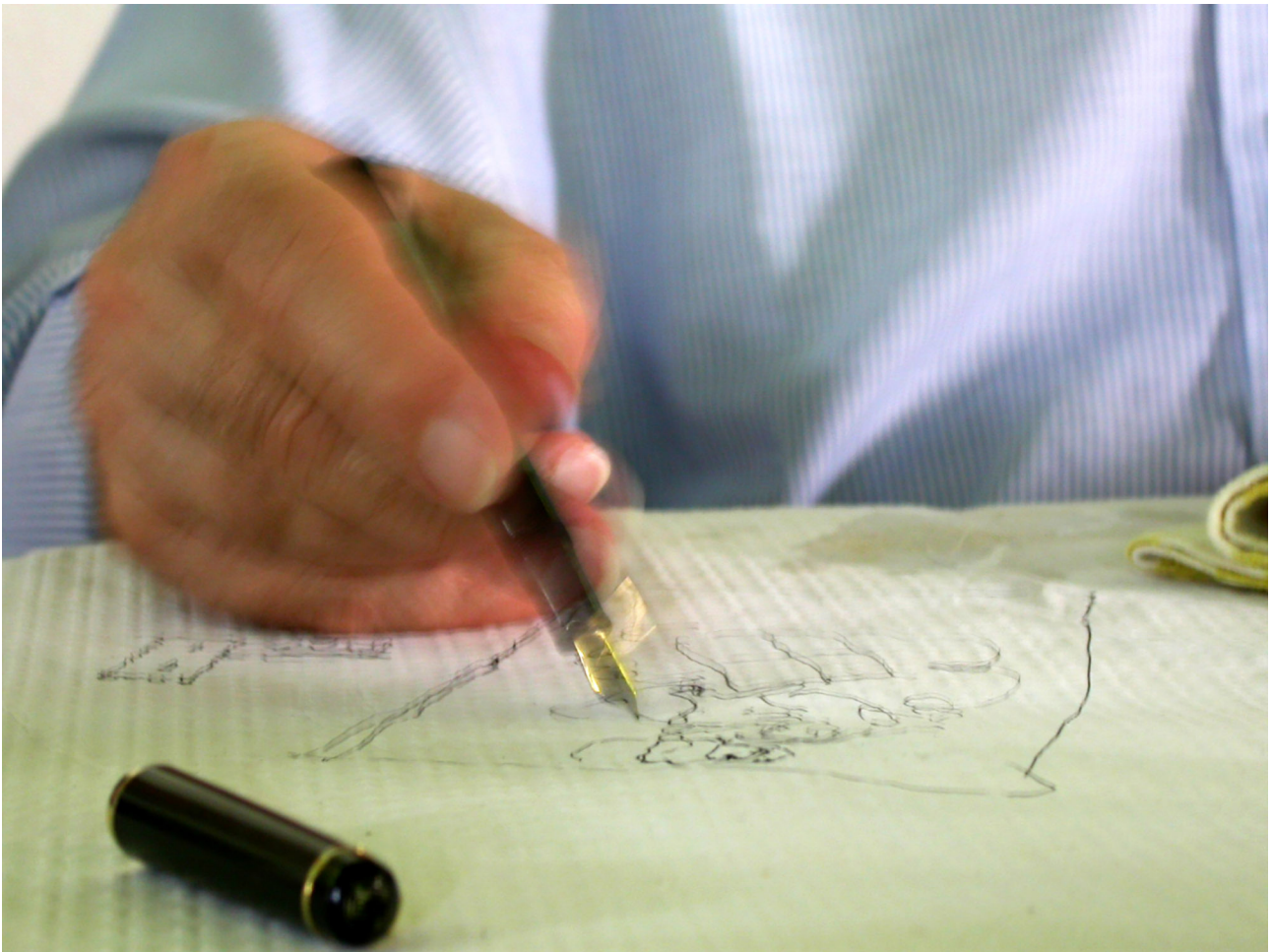
He formed a studio with José Adrião in Lisbon between 1996 and 2004, resuming their collaboration between 2013 and 2018.

He has been working in Lisbon since 1996. His work includes the Museu da Luz, part of the projects for the villages of Luz and Estrela, realised between 1998 and 2007 with Marie Clément.

He founded the Pedro Pacheco arquitectos studio in Lisbon in 2004. Since 2016, he has been working with José Aguiar in conservation and restoration on various heritage intervention projects, such as the work on the Muralhas de Monsaraz and the Juromenha Fortress.

He has been a visiting associate professor at the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Lisbon since 2004 and an assistant professor at the Department of Architecture of the University of Évora since 2012.

Since 2016, he has been coordinating the curatorial project "Porta 14" in his architecture studio, an exhibition space for contemporary art as a platform for dialogue between art and architecture.



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Almost weekly, or at least monthly, it was a ritual for architect Távora to go to lunch with his collaborators at the Ribatejo restaurant, just a few metres from the studio, just around the corner in Rua Duque de Loulé. The *bolinhos de bacalhau* with cod rice and the *tripas à moda do Porto*, accompanied by a good red wine, were the irresistible dishes that Távora loved, and so did we. The outdoor terrace, covered by a roof of vines, was the ideal cool place to spend the afternoon chatting. Távora surrounded us with stories of architecture and life, and the ink on the table spread out in a constellation of drawings that gave shape and expression to our conversations.

We felt part of a small family that was the engine of Távora's office, fascinated by sharing these moments and the incredible projects we were involved in. When Távora realised that lunch had been extended into the afternoon, he would smile and exclaim: "We're ruining all the work...". In fact, these magical moments were just the right recharge for us to return to the studio and our projects with full motivation and energy.

Távora was already about 70 years old, and the obvious status of master/apprentice faded for a moment; we felt like we were simultaneously standing on the shoulders of a giant and part of a strong friendship that was developing. Being a Távora collaborator meant being able to establish continuity with Távora's thinking, to extend the project's practices to his thinking, to his

Fig. 1

Detail of Fernando Távora's hand sketching a figure with a fountain pen.



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modus operandi and thus learn, incorporate and integrate. Being part of a Távora project meant being permanently with Távora, accompanied by his intelligence, as an extension of his action.

This is how it happened at the Duque de Loulé, 98, 3º Esq studio throughout the 1990s, much due to the happy bond of friendship that grew between some of the collaborators who crossed paths during this period until 1996, when they moved to the new Aleixo offices, together with architects Álvaro Siza, Eduardo Souto Moura and Rogério Cavaca.

As employees left the studio, these lunches with Távora continued, taking place every year at Christmas time, still at Adega Ribatejo until it closed. It was a way of perpetuating what we had already built up very naturally over several years and continuing the unpredictable conversations with Távora. Conversations that already included other topics such as Távora's curiosity about what we were doing, what projects, what trips, what lives?

These lunches took place every year until Christmas 2003 when none of us expected it to be our last lunch with Távora. We remember this last moment at the Al Forno restaurant in Foz velha, next to the church of São João Baptista in Foz do Douro, Porto... Távora was always warm, made us feel like part of the family and the conversations flowed and the ink on the table kept flowing...

Fig. 2

Ribatejo Restaurant, Rua Alexandre Herculano, 219, Porto, 30/07/2002 (from left to right top: Alexandra Borges, Fernando Barroso, Pilar Paiva de Sousa, Pedro Pacheco; bottom: Catarina Magalhães, Susana Martins, Fernando Távora, Carlos Martins).

From then on, we all began a new cycle of life without Távora's presence, but with everything we had lived and shared with him... we had a natural bond.

Távora died in 2005, and nothing would be the same. The man, the architect, the teacher, the master who once claimed to be "Portuguese architecture", left behind a remarkable life's work, with multiple strands, ready to be studied. This man who lived his life to the full would now be celebrated by all those who had any contact with him and understood his message and the power of his greatness... continuing to stand on the shoulders of giants...

Over the last twenty years, this resilient and eternally passionate group has insisted on perpetuating the memory of Fernando Távora through meetings, gatherings, friendship, and the tradition of lunches – now at Buraco, in Rua do Bolhão, another of Távora's favourite restaurants – continuing to make the ink run on the table...

We spontaneously started calling ourselves *Tavorianni*, establishing our connection to Távora's studio and architecture.

Exactly twenty years after our last lunch with Fernando Távora, we came up with the idea of starting a documentary record of the countless stories that Távora left us... many are circumstantial and our own, others perhaps have a more universal dimension that we might be interested in sharing. This idea came about partly out of an interest in surveying and recording the various collaborators who worked in the studio of architect Fernando Távora and the respective projects they worked on. In this record, 'stories with Távora' become unavoidable. For now, we'll start with a more circumscribed record of the group of collaborators who worked at the Duque de Loulé office in the 1990s until its closure in 1996, where Fernando Távora had his office for 42 years (1954-1996).

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