

Casabella Looks at Porto

The Magazine's Interest in a Critical Practice of Architecture

Casabella, Architecture in Porto, Vittorio Gregotti - Álvaro Siza, Italy - Portugal, Des-continuidade

/Abstract

The paper intends to analyse how the magazine *Casabella* interpreted the “phenomenon of a School in Porto” (understood as a field of frequent relations and not as a historicist identification) and to comprehend how themes and projects pertaining to that context were used to orient the cultural debate in Italy. Between Gregotti’s editorship, starting with Évora’s “manifesto”, and the last issue of Dal Co’s editorship dedicated to the designers of the new generation, twenty issues of the magazine published between 1982 and 2017 were selected and studied in order to organise a reflection on the narrative strategy that illustrated the evolution of the collective and simultaneously composite research of different generations of Porto architects. The paper aims to investigate how the Porto experience has oriented the Italian architectural debate of the last forty years by setting up a reasoning on some bridging themes that accumulate the two cultural contexts. Through the analysis of some published projects and the words of protagonists and scholars, arguments for a critical practice of architecture will be isolated and the presence of shared values among the various generations of architects will be verified, despite a great variety of languages and independent research paths that have defined links, discontinuities, common roots and personal autonomies.

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This article is based on the examination of twenty issues of *Casabella* — four from Gregotti's editorship and sixteen from Dal Co's [Fig. 1]. The aim is to analyse how the magazine interpreted the "phenomenon of a School in Porto" — understood as a network of ongoing relationships rather than a strictly historical definition — and to understand how themes and projects associated with that context were used to shape the cultural debate in Italy. Accordingly, this article does not seek to reaffirm the myth of a "School of Porto," but rather to outline, through a review of the texts and projects published, a framework of cultural interconnections and recurring themes that *Casabella* has brought to the attention of Italian architects over the past forty years, ultimately assessing their contemporary relevance.

Tools for a Critical Practice

A small square photograph appears on page 41 of *Casabella* 478 (1982) [Fig. 2]. This was the first issue of the magazine edited by Vittorio Gregotti, and the image portrays him, in the half-light of a lecture hall at the Politecnico di Milano, alongside Ernesto Nathan Rogers. Although the editorial on the facing page makes no explicit reference to Rogers — who had directed the magazine between 1954 and 1964 — the short text clearly reveals a programmatic intention to follow in his footsteps and to continue the cultural direction under which Gregotti himself had been trained.

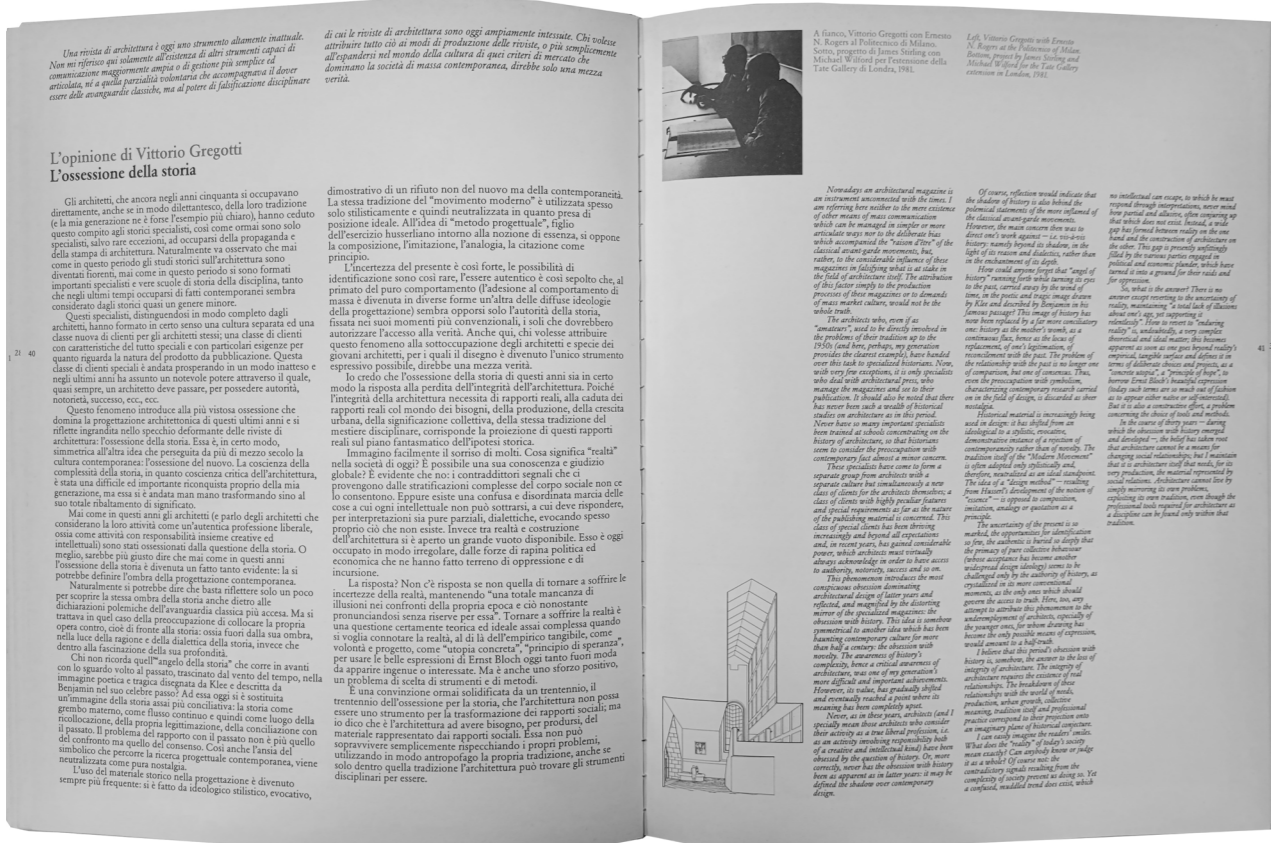
Like Rogers, for whom "continuity meant historical consciousness",¹ Gregotti opened his editorship by drawing a parallel between "critical architectural consciousness" and "historical consciousness."² The latter — which for Rogers represented the "true essence of tradition," that is, the foundation for "free research" as long as it does not yield to formalism, mannerism, or dogma — was reinterpreted by Gregotti as an instrument with which to criticise both the stylistic ideologism of the early, idealistically misrepresented phase of the Modern Movement and the "Postmodern wave"³ of the early 1980s. In different yet parallel ways, both of these currents rejected contemporaneity and its principle of coherence with the historical moment in which it unfolds.⁴

Gregotti's proposed response to this "obsession with history," while still grounded in openness and debate,⁵ was a "return to the uncertainties of reality [...] because the integrity of architecture requires real relationships, [...] concrete utopias." Gregotti's attention to phenomenological reality — which for Enzo Paci meant denying the conclusion of tradition and enabling "a new horizon in

1 Ernesto Nathan Rogers, "Continuità," *Casabella Continuità*, no. 199 (December 1953–January 1954): 2. All the translations in English were done by the author.
 2 Vittorio Gregotti, "L'ossessione della storia," *Casabella*, no. 478 (March 1982): 40.
 3 Francisco Barata, "L'architettura colta di Fernando Távora," in *Fernando Távora: Opera completa*, ed. Giovanni Leoni and Antonio Esposito (Milan: Electa, 2005), 332–335.
 4 Chiara Baglione defines Vittorio Gregotti's position on this subject in "I territori del progetto 1982–1996," in *Casabella 1928–2008* (Milan: Electa, 2008), 513.
 5 "The answer? There is no answer other than to return to suffering the uncertainties of reality while maintaining a total lack of illusions about one's own era and yet unreservedly speaking out for it."



Fig. 1
Covers of the twenty issues of *Casabella* analyzed for writing the article.



which the past relives, becomes present, and opens again toward the future”⁶ — became a hallmark of many articles published in *Casabella* until 1996. His cultural programme promoted a critical project grounded in engagement with the concrete problems of society, sustaining the thesis of doubt, rejecting aprioristic consensus, and broadening the terms of debate as much as possible.

In light of these arguments, the choice of the debut project in Gregotti’s first issue can be interpreted as a programmatic manifesto aimed both at fostering debate and at guiding scientific dissemination. Álvaro Siza’s Malagueira starts in Évora,⁷ presented by Jean-Paul Rayon, encapsulated many of Gregotti’s central concerns — issues that, through *Casabella*, would in subsequent years become messages and lessons for Italian architects seeking to understand the state of Portuguese architecture, and especially that of the city of Porto.

What themes did Gregotti wish to highlight through the presentation of Malagueira?

First and foremost, the capacity to interpret the territorial scale of the intervention, in which architecture composes and restores “meaning to the entire

6 Enzo Paci, “Fenomenologia e architettura contemporanea,” in *Relazioni e significati*, vol. 3, Critica e dialettica (1966), 172–173.

7 As is well known, Vittorio Gregotti met Álvaro Siza in the mid-1960s. He subsequently dedicated an article to him in *Controspazio* in 1972 and curated the 1979 exhibition at the Padiglione d’Arte Contemporanea in Milan on Siza’s work with Italo Rota. Ana Tostões outlines a very clear picture of the relationship between the Italian and Portuguese contexts in her essay “A diáspora ou a arte de ser português,” in “Da identidade da arquitetura portuguesa,” *Camões Revista de Letras*, no. 22 (2013).

physical environment.”⁸ Gregotti recognised in Siza’s project the ability to preserve the qualities of the landscape through form, enhancing its original character and establishing new relationships between man-made and natural elements. The photographs accompanying the article [Fig. 3] illustrate this quality, showing the architect’s ability to work “in relation to links, to adjacencies, to the sequence of events leading to that experience, to the memory of previous experiences.”⁹ Different scales are progressively introduced to facilitate continuity between the object and its sphere of reference.

Within this continuity between landscape and project, a second theme — that of place and its specificity — comes into play. In this project, place becomes an active agent, not through imitation or annulment, but through dialogue with the environment to be transformed: learning from it and proposing a new image of the complex web of relations that persist in every site. Malagueira thus thrives on modifications rooted in the conditions and transformative potential of the context itself.

A third central issue is the relationship with tradition. One may hypothesise that Gregotti found in Siza that dynamic cultural experience described by Rogers, whereby “the best way to bring history back to life is to graft it onto the trunk of existence and compose it with the propulsive energies of an inexhaustible flow, where mutations do not result from sudden, arbitrary, and ephemeral attitudes but are rooted in the continuous furrow of tradition,”¹⁰ where tradition signifies “both the validation of permanent emergencies and the energy of mutations.”¹¹ In his 1982 editorial, Gregotti accused his generation of architects of having ceded the task of engaging with tradition to specialists; in Siza, he rediscovered a natural capacity to deal with the architecture of the past — whether learned or anonymous — by internalising it “as structural material.”¹²

Two subsequent issues of *Casabella* — 500 and 630–631 — were crucial in clarifying the magazine’s editorial position on this subject. In the first, Kenneth Frampton introduced the concept of critical regionalism,¹³ while in the second, an entire issue was devoted to critical internationalism.¹⁴ Without entering into the historiographic debate that might classify Siza’s work within one or the other framework,¹⁵ it is useful to read these texts retrospectively to understand the communicative line pursued by *Casabella* under Gregotti’s direction. Both, in fact, speak of “Consciousness” and “Critical Practice” as counterpoints to a new internationalist cultural mindset — the product of a homogenising universal

8 Vittorio Gregotti, *Il territorio dell’architettura* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1966).
 9 Vittorio Gregotti, “Architetture recenti di Álvaro Siza,” *Controspazio*, no. 9 (September 1972).
 10 Ernesto Nathan Rogers, “Attualità di Adolf Loos,” *Casabella Continuità*, no. 233 (November 1959): 3.
 11 Ernesto Nathan Rogers, *Esperienza dell’architettura* (Turin: Einaudi, 1958), 21.
 12 Marco Mulazzani, “Álvaro Siza è un architetto fuori moda...: Conversazione con Vittorio Gregotti,” *Casabella*, no. 744 (May 2006): 70–74.
 13 Kenneth Frampton, “Anti-tabula rasa: verso un regionalismo critico,” *Casabella*, no. 500 (March 1984): 22–25.
 14 Vittorio Gregotti, “Nei nostri cieli privi di idee,” *Casabella*, no. 630 (January–February 1996): 2–11.
 15 The essay by Nuno Grande, “Arquitetura portuguesa em fim de século,” in “Da identidade da arquitetura portuguesa,” *Camões Revista de Letras*, no. 22 (2013), performs an in-depth examination of this topic.

Fig. 2
 Editorial “The Obsession of History” by Vittorio Gregotti from *Casabella* 478 of 1982. Top right is the image of Vittorio Gregotti alongside Ernesto Nathan Rogers.



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civilisation. Both call for directing architectural practice toward the valorisation of the intrinsic qualities of place, topography, urban fabric, and local construction techniques, while resisting the temptation to exhume vernacular images whose mechanical repetition would disrupt the natural flow of history. Both, moreover, advocate “mediation” – an attitude through which adherence to the context and the historical moment entails a productive contamination of language by pre-existing conditions.

This comprehensive inscription into reality – as advocated by Gregotti in his opening editorial – demanded a rejection of the commodification of architecture, whose success, according to this logic, would otherwise be ensured by the repetition of models typical of mass communication, where images are judged solely by aesthetic criteria detached from specific situations. Ultimately, this amounted to an “architecture of resistance,”¹⁶ one that rejected formalism, the “presumed expressive urgencies of subjectivity,”¹⁷ and the scenographic effects demanded by the “ideal client” imposed by international competition and the globalisation of markets and techniques. Instead, it favoured engagement with

16 The term used by Kenneth Frampton was taken up by Nuno Grande, “Arquitetura portuguesa em fim de século,” in “Da identidade da arquitetura portuguesa,” *Camões Revista de Letras*, no. 22 (2013).

17 Marco Mulazzani, “Álvaro Siza è un architetto fuori moda...,” 70.

Fig. 3

Some of the images illustrating Álvaro Siza's design of the Malagueira Quarter in Casabella 478

concrete social, civic, and cultural scenarios, through attitudes of understanding, identification, and total adhesion to the environment.

The final theme, first introduced through Malagueira and later central to *Casabella's* portrayal of architects from northern Portugal, concerns the dissemination of a design method rooted in drawing – a tool that condenses experience and translates it into form, giving it communicative power. For Siza, drawing is the “mediation from a pre-existing situation to a new and non-definitive one,”¹⁸ allowing the project's response to be simulated in poetic form. Drawing is also – and perhaps above all – a working tool, “not a romantic methodological proposal,”¹⁹ – that helps the architect to order the design process, “to learn to see the questions,”²⁰ and to recognise and rationalise those “tempting utopias”²¹ of the initial idea up to the rigorous verification of final solutions through their immediate visualisation.

The *Casabella* directed by Gregotti also had the merit of making Italy aware of a context of great cultural vitality, one not limited to Álvaro Siza alone, as presented by Manuel Mendes in issue 579 (May 1991).²² That publication, followed by an *Electa* monograph edited by Mendes and Nuno Portas,²³ showcased the architecture of the “Recent Generation” and the differences between the “two poles of expression” – Lisbon and Porto – which “diverge in the expectations and vitality of their poetics, in the diversity of their geo-cultural conditions, and in the specificity of the relationships between discipline and craft.”

In particular, the figure of Fernando Távora was introduced to the wider Italian public as a key reference for the northern Portuguese cultural context that developed between the school and the ateliers – a milieu that found in drawing “an instrumental support to invention” and in “the idea of a process as strong as a tendency”²⁴ working methodology aimed at addressing concrete problems.

What emerged from this narrative were historical contingencies that could no longer be reproduced,²⁵ but which that group of architects succeeded in transforming into spatial and formal qualities. They also fostered an atmosphere of openness and dialogue between teachers and students, strengthened over three decades by collective experiences such as the Inquérito and the SAAL Program – tangible legacies of both the traditions and the utopias of the

18 Antonio Angelillo, “Álvaro Siza: i recenti lavori in Portogallo,” *Casabella*, no. 579 (May 1991): 12.

19 Álvaro Siza, “Introduzione,” in *Álvaro Siza Architetto 1954–1979*, ed. Vittorio Gregotti and Italo Rota (Milan: Padiglione d'Arte Contemporanea di Milano, 1979).

20 Vittorio Gregotti, “O outro,” in *Immaginare l'evidenza*, by Álvaro Siza (Bari: Laterza, 1998).

21 José Salgado, “Siza Designer,” *Casabella*, no. 667 (May 1999): 68.

22 Manuel Mendes, “Recente architettura portoghese (una geografia diffusa, alcune coincidenze),” *Casabella*, no. 579 (May 1991): 51–55.

23 Nuno Portas and Manuel Mendes, *Portogallo: Architettura, gli ultimi vent'anni* (Milan: Electa, 1991).

24 Mendes, “Recente architettura portoghese.”

25 The contributions by Manuel Mendes, Manuel Tainha and Fernando Távora reconstruct and summarise the context and a series of coincidences favourable to the creation of that cultural environment. In issue 678 of May 2000, Siza further describes that context by speaking of “conditions for unitary action.” With regard to these conditions Vittorio Gregotti will be very clear about their uniqueness in the *Catalogue of the exhibition at the Milan Pavilion of Contemporary Art* in 1979 in the essay “Le operazioni SAAL: un bilancio.” “Positive tension conditions of the Portuguese situation of the past years are intransferable to the condition of contemporary Italy, for example, it is possible to artificially reconstruct impossible participations.”

Revolution — which promoted direct exchange in an environment marked by expressive freedom and a strong awareness of Portugal's social issues.²⁶

The works of José Gigante, João Álvaro Rocha, and Adalberto Dias — alongside the more recent architecture of Álvaro Siza — demonstrate a heterogeneous search for expressive language that confirmed a distinctive feature of the school's pedagogy: the complete absence of models or systematic responses in favour of a design method conceived as a tool for validating needs that are always specific and real.

As the analysis suggests, Vittorio Gregotti used selected projects from the cultural milieu of Porto to articulate a distinctly "militant" editorial line. His aim was to reaffirm the importance of certain principles: the continuity between landscape and project, the vitality of living tradition, the role of history as a foundation for critical practice, and the processual nature of design — a continual research process that highlights values already present in local contexts while simultaneously interpreting individual sensibilities and universal constants. Gregotti's cultural stance thus affirms the importance of dialogue and relationships in the architect's formative process — a professional who acts in the contemporary world yet employs knowledge of past values as a tool for investigation.

"Maximum Freedom, Maximum Responsibility": Values of Shared and Plural Knowhow

Without adopting such a "markedly militant" stance, Francesco Dal Co also deserves credit for continuing the broad narrative concerning the key projects and designers of the Porto context. From 1996 to the present, he has done so by repeatedly showcasing collective design experiences, comparing different generations of architects, and, above all, continuing to explore the issues that define architectural practice within that specific geographic enclave at the edge of Europe. He has paid particular attention to the dynamics of pedagogical methods inside and outside the school, and to the value of drawing as a fundamental tool.

Thanks to the research of Giovanni Leoni and Antonio Esposito, *Casabella* has, since 2000, hosted a series of articles devoted to the theoretical and design work of Fernando Távora. Issue 678, in particular, inaugurated a sequence of texts, interviews, and built works by the architect whom Jorge Figueira described as "the maestro of a small orchestra in search of another music."²⁷ From Giovanni Leoni's presentation of Távora,²⁸ from the accompanying series of photographs [Fig. 4], and from the project for the rehabilitation of a farmhouse in Pardelhas, one central value of Távora's production clearly emerges: continuity.

26 In the essay on page 57 of *Casabella* issue 579, Fernando Távora recalls the importance of Carlos Ramos, director of the school since 1952, quoting his phrase "maximum freedom, maximum responsibility." Fernando Távora, "Intorno alla scuola di Porto," *Casabella*, no. 579 (May 1991): 57.

27 Jorge Figueira, *Escola do Porto: um mapa crítico* (Coimbra: eldjarq, 2002), 37.

28 Giovanni Leoni, "Un anonimo del XX secolo," *Casabella*, no. 678 (May 2000): 10–13.



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This characteristic manifests in Távora's work in several complementary ways. He grounds each project in the capacity to endow space with its natural harmony, reconstructing a system of relationships that accompanies approximations, displacements, viewpoints, axes, and human interactions with place. Yet this continuity is also temporal, expressed through the choice of a language that favours an overall vision, free from any protagonism that would undermine the identity of the consolidated space. These "deep relationships"²⁹ give architecture its roots, depth, and rationale, guiding the architect in the process of redefining a place.

There is also another form of continuity: that between the aesthetic and the everyday. This rests on Távora's conviction that the best of artistic and architectural production should find its place within the public realm, since the social purpose of architecture is its truest purpose — the power to foster relations between people. In several reflections collected in the following pages,³⁰ Távora returns to themes already encountered, such as the role of history and specificity. He

29 Fernando Távora, "Pensieri sull'architettura raccolti da Giovanni Leoni con Antonio Esposito," *Casabella*, no. 678 (May 2000): 14–25.

30 *Ibid.*

Fig. 4

Sequence of images of Fernando Távora's projects chosen by Giovanni Leoni for *Casabella* issue 678

stated: “I would like a clearer and more specific architecture, capable of counteracting the processes of standardisation and globalisation,” and of “accentuating specific data to enhance the ‘taste’ of reality.” These statements confirm how his architecture and pedagogy were grounded in a “non-impositional but questioning attitude toward reality,”³¹ developed through context-oriented analytical practices aimed at balancing the conception of the work and its environment. These processes were based on a profound knowledge of local technical and artistic manifestations, regarded as essential to formal expression.

A final aspect worth emphasising concerns Távora’s “choice of anonymity,”³² a mark of his deep humanism and rigorous professional discipline. From this character emerges an architectural theory centred on “circumstance” as a design instrument and on a “relationalist” interpretation of the architect’s role. Drawing inspiration from José Ortega y Gasset and Martin Heidegger, Távora translated philosophical reflection into ethical and practical principles for the architectural craft. The “creator of circumstances”³³ is thus called to take responsibility for his work, broadening the spectrum of professional ethics toward the pursuit of harmony across all scales of design, where architecture and urbanism are understood as interrelated dimensions of a single discipline, and each individual building becomes part of a larger, harmonious whole – the city, the territory, the landscape.

Over the years, the journal has carried out significant work in documenting the “School phenomenon,” which undoubtedly deserves further study. As previously mentioned, it is not the purpose of this essay to determine the existence or non-existence of a “School of Porto,” but rather to analyse the central themes of that collective research and to evaluate their relevance today. This approach aligns with Dal Co’s stated intention³⁴ to bring the issue of architectural education back to the centre of the debate, indirectly reaffirming the architect’s central role in the processes of social development.

It is worth recalling that one of the defining features of the School’s programme was its resistance to the intrusion of disciplines unrelated to the empirical knowledge of architecture. It sought to minimise technocratic interference and to limit the introduction of digital drawing – never, however, as a substitute for manual drawing³⁵ – in order to cultivate in students “the instinct that enables the organisation of space.”³⁶

Álvaro Siza’s contribution in Issue 770 is crucial for defining the system of values that continues to shape the work of Porto architects today.³⁷

31 Giovanni Leoni, “Un anonimo del XX secolo.”

32 “In the contemporary world dominated by representation, it has had the courage to confront, with humanistic and conscious renunciation of its own linguistic identity, the greatest architectural myth, the search for a language of existence.” *Ibid.*

33 Fernando Távora, *Da organização do espaço* (Porto: FAUP Publicações, 2007), 73.

34 Chiara Baglione, “Il farsi delle cose,” in *Casabella 1928–2008* (Milan: Electa, 2008), 615.

35 On this topic, a reference text is Figueira, *Escola do Porto: um mapa crítico*.

36 Jorge Figueira, *Escola do Porto*, 98.

37 Álvaro Siza, “Sulla pedagogia,” *Casabella*, no. 770 (October 2008): 3–5.

(a) The project is an exercise in nonconformist mediation, using dialogue between past and future to provide a conscious response to a present issue.

(b) The thesis of doubt and the cultivation of a critical spirit ensure adherence to the reality of specific situations, enabling the architect to pursue a social function.

(c) The designer must be educated in drawing as a tool for interpreting reality

(d) The architectural object must always be understood as a fragment of a larger landscape – whether urban or natural.

(e) Architecture is not the affirmation of the ego but the outcome of a rational process where subjectivity and objectivity respond to a collective desire.

The collective project for the Aveiro Campus exemplifies this lesson on constructing the city through fragments, where urban unity derives from the capacity to intuit the qualities of the space between things – a form given by the fabric to the things themselves. As Álvaro Siza, author of the “plan review” for the campus, observes: “There is an essential problem: to be able to assemble different things, as in the contemporary city, which is made up of very heterogeneous fragments [...]. Trying to build a whole out of these pieces is fundamental to developing our methodology.”³⁸

This methodology, shaped more by the experience of guiding figures than by formal teaching axioms,³⁹ has developed over time through a well-established system of knowledge transmission. It is therefore important to recognise that this shared knowledge derives from circumstances of proximity that invite reflection – now more than ever – on the importance of learning architecture through the daily experience of practice. Such collaborations have made it possible to preserve the knowledge of building traditions while maintaining an open dialogue with contemporary sensibilities and needs, granting both equal dignity.⁴⁰ However, this proximity has not resulted in a unified style, but rather in an extraordinary set of dialects within the same idiom – plural languages yielding diverse formal outcomes.⁴¹ A great variety of autonomous lines of inquiry can nonetheless be traced back to a solid unity of values rooted in the cultural context in which these architects were formed [Fig. 5]. Marco Mulazzani refers to *des-continuidade*⁴² as the result of contamination and continuous transformation – a process that looks with admiration at the talent of predecessors while opening new paths of formal expression.⁴³

38 Álvaro Siza, quoted in Laura Peretti and Marie Clement, “Campus Aveiro: Nove capitoli della nuova architettura portoghese,” *Casabella*, no. 643 (March 1997): 12.

39 Eduardo Souto de Moura, “Porto, l’architettura e la sua scuola,” in *Architetti, Architettura* (Milan: Electa, 2023).

40 Antonio Esposito and Giovanni Leoni, “Architetti a Porto: una ‘scuola?’” *Casabella*, no. 700 (May 2002): 4–5.

41 Álvaro Siza, “Intimità e monumentalità,” interview by Carlos Seoane, *Casabella*, no. 678 (May 2000): 26–29; see also Carlo Magnani, “Fernando Távora,” *Casabella*, no. 713 (July 2003): 6.

42 Marco Mulazzani, “Porto: i giovani e i maestri, des-continuidade?” *Casabella*, no. 744 (May 2006): 44.

43 In his talk entitled “Exercises in Discontinuity. What Eduardo Souto de Moura did not learn from Álvaro Siza” at the seminar “Genealogy and Actuality of a School in Porto. The (Dis)Continuity of the Project” held in Parma on May 10, 2023, Marco Mulazzani quotes a phrase by Eduardo Souto de Moura: “what interests me in Siza’s work is talent.”

Fig. 5a-h

Images of projects published in *Casabella* by Fernando Távora, Eduardo Souto de Moura, José Fernando Gonçalves and Nuno Brandão Costa.

In the left column: (a) Fernando Távora, Renovation of a farmhouse, Pardelhas (1999), *Casabella* no. 678; (b) Eduardo Souto de Moura, House in Moledo (1998), *Casabella* no. 664; (c) José Fernando Gonçalves, Scout house extension, Oliveira do Douro (2001), *Casabella* no. 700; (d) Nuno Brandão Costa, recovery and extension of a house in the Minho (2016), *Casabella* no. 880 four interventions within an established landscape demonstrating an attitude assimilated in terms of dialogue with pre-existence.

In the right column: (e) Fernando Távora, Amphitheatre of the law school in Coimbra (2000), *Casabella* no. 693; (f) Eduardo Souto de Moura, Bragança Contemporary Art Centre (2008), *Casabella* no. 775; (g) José Fernando Gonçalves, Showroom Douroluz, Oliveira do Douro (2005), *Casabella* no. 744; (h) Nuno Brandão Costa, House in Afife (2004), *Casabella* no. 744) four interventions that testify to very different languages and expressive research.



5a



5e



5b



5f



5c



5g



5d



5h

This broad and inevitable openness – from the Region to the World – has not entailed the loss of certain original principles: the critical ability to select meaningful experiences from elsewhere, craftsmanship in construction and detail, engagement with the context, and an “acute sense of urban responsibility.” Altogether, these define “a line of resistance to the reduction of architecture to mere design [...] capable of restoring to architecture a civic role, fostering a critical attitude toward reality while continuing to measure itself against it.”⁴⁴

As analysed by Elisa Pegorin in Issue 880, the notion of tradition within this

cultural context is subject to constant transformation and formal reinvention, all within a shared process that rejects preconstructed stylistic models in favour of investigative methods grounded in drawing, the study of materials, construction techniques, and collaboration among the various figures involved in the realisation of the project.⁴⁵

The Lesson of Being “Sizian” without Being “Siziesque”

Partly as a result of the undeniable transformation of the educational institution from a small academy into a faculty enrolling hundreds of students each year, “the simulation of the atelier within the school is destined to become a nostalgic and insufficient exercise.”⁴⁶

Despite this, the cultural environment that continues to gravitate around that area of architectural production remains a rich heritage of references for the global culture of design.

At the conclusion of this analysis, it is therefore appropriate to ask what *Casabella’s* work of dissemination, examined in this paper, has meant for Italy. It can certainly be said that this “media exposure” attracted the attention of an entire generation of young Italian architects who, over the past thirty years, have gone to study in Porto. The full effects of this cultural exchange may still remain to be seen; nevertheless, it is reasonable to hope that the outcome of this process of observation will not result in the mere repetition of a language, for that would mean failing to grasp the methodological lesson that constitutes the true

44 Vittorio Gregotti, “Portogallo, Europa,” *Casabella*, no. 760 (November 2007): 63.

45 Elisa Pegorin, “Porto: uma maneira de ser Portugal,” *Casabella*, no. 880 (December 2017): 50–52.

46 Figueira, *Escola do Porto*, 109.

essence of this collective experience.

The circumstances of the Italian context were—and remain—very different from those of Portugal, yet it is possible to identify affinities between the principles that guided the theoretical and practical orientations of the masters in both geographical spheres: from Rogers to Távora, from Gregotti to Siza. As José Miguel Rodrigues reminds us, architects of the recent generation strive to be “Sizian without being Siziesque,”⁴⁷ meaning that they work from principles rather than forms, from process rather than image, and from critical selection rather than imitation.

To adhere to the reality of things, in continuity with a living tradition, is to fulfill the collective desire of which the architect is the interpreter. Those who can inherit this message without becoming conformists will perhaps have understood the true lesson—one based on the shared values that this article has sought to analyse. Values that, even today, and perhaps more than ever, both Italian and Portuguese architecture continue to need.

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47 José Miguel Rodrigues, *Palladio e o Moderno* (Porto: Circo de ideias, 2019), 94; quotation from Graça Correia, “Heirs/Heretics,” paper presented at the seminar “Genealogy and Actuality of a School in Porto: The (Dis)Continuity of the Project,” Parma.