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Synthesis of the Arts: The Project of Architecture in its Relation with the Process of Design. Carlos Tojal, Manuel Moreira and Carlos Roxo (1960- 1974): *Multipiano*, a case study.

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Abstract

Within the Theory and History of Material Culture, as well as the Theory of Design, this project relies not on essayistic, but on historiographical based investigation, strongly founded in documental sources. Aiming to reveal inedited documentation, actions and agents witch may contribute to the comprehension of the place of design, has of the culture of project oriented thought within the Portuguese context, it assumes as its object of study the architecture studio *Multipiano* – therefore, framing the problem of Design in Portugal from its process point of view, rather than from its object.

Established in Lisbon around 1972 by the architects Carlos Tojal (1929-2015), Manuel Moreira (b.1933) and Carlos Roxo (b.1935), three architects known by the “Three Wonders” epithet, *Multipiano* and its interveners guard witness to several moments of national projectual culture. Between 1961 and 1974, Tojal, Moreira and Roxo have jointly developed a vast and coherent project-oriented and ideological body of products: demarcating up from *Beaux-Arts* contemplation, ideal Deco, or Modernist interactions to embrace projectual materialist dialectics, extending yet the concept of useful by structurally integrating artistic thinking along the social utopia of design; to be later overtaken by market.

Keywords

*Portuguese Design History, Synthesis of the Arts, Projectual Culture in
Portugal, Material Culture, Design Studies.*

Introduction

Objectives

Within the context of the history of material culture, as well as the theory of design, the present PhD project aims primarily to provide new data on Portuguese Design History. An intention achieved by the unveiling of inedited documentation, actions and agents able of contribution to the understanding of the place of design, as well as that of project oriented thought and culture, within Portugal in the comprised period.

The PhD project inquires the relation between the architectural project and the process of design, focusing in Portugal between 1960 and 1974 – a period of “affirmation and development of design in Portugal”¹. Another goal is to reflect on bauhausian practice of *Synthesis of the Arts* within the Lisbon circle in the period in question.

The case study and its chronological boundaries

The object of the study is the *Multiplano* architectural atelier. A studio established in Lisbon around 1972 by the architects Carlos Tojal (1929-2015), Manuel Moreira (b.1933) and Carlos Roxo (b.1935) whom, between 1961 and 1974, jointly developed a vast and coherent project-oriented and ideological body of products.

“Originally a medium-sized architectural studio, Multiplano has gradually evolved into a complete design bureau handling a wide range of design, engineering and architectural projects.

By introducing new techniques and working methods [...]. For each commission a team of specialists is formed, to operate, as far as possible, on a free and flexible basis. [...] architects, civil engineers, painters, interior and industrial designers, graphic artists, quantity and equipment surveyors and other qualified technicians.” (Multiplano, 1972).

The state of the art and the relevance of the study

This investigation comprises an original survey, since no more than brief references in general studies are found about the mentioned architects work², along with a few personal testimonies within *Arquitectura* and *Binário* magazines.

¹ See (Souto, 2013,1 and 2012-2015).

² By the hand of authors such as: Ana Tostões, Gonçalo E.O. Moniz, João Paulo Martins, Jorge Manuel Simões Alves, Rui Afonso Santos or Vítor Manaças.

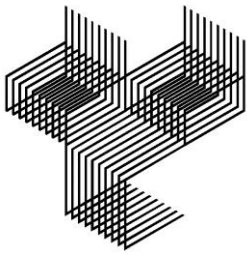


Figure 1. *Multiplano's studio: Largo de Santos, nº13,1º, Lisbon. Reception aspect with sofa designed by painter Rogério Ribeiro (1930-2008) (according to Arch. Eduardo Martins³). (Sandra Antunes)⁴*

Methods

Supported by strong historiographical and applied research methodology, considering “[...]design as a social and historical phenomenon” (Walker,[1989]1990,1), this is an original historical research survey. It assumes as its primary source the *Multiplano's* archive of drawings, manuscript and typewritten documents, which Sandra Antunes found in December 2013 in the care of Architect Eduardo Martins (by those days responsible for the housing cooperative *Percurso*, the *Multiplano's* studio successor at Largo de Santos, nº13, 1º)⁵. The testimony of the interveners and their personal archives are also assumed as primary sources. The drawing of a national and international time line helps on the contextual questioning of the facts and the observation of conclusions, documenting and regulating the final analysis in the face of incomplete or displaced memories dictated by the interveners. All collected statements are subsequently validated by the interviewees. Access to *Multiplano's* archive also allows a less idealized view of the work process, over the consideration of the role of market and regulatory authorities in the design process, enabling the look beyond the canonized design object or its romanticized author.



Figure 2. *Multiplano's archive at Largo de Santos, nº13, 1º on December 2013. (Sandra Antunes)*

³ A former collaborator of Tojal, Moreira and Roxo, since the *Mãe d'Água's* studio.

⁴ This space was dismantled in February 2014. The above mentioned sofa was collected at MUDE, Lisbon.

⁵ IADE-U is now *Multiplano's* archive trustee depositary, until the national archive of architectural and urban heritage (safeguarded by the information system for the architectural heritage (SIPA) of institute for housing and urban rehabilitation (IHRU) within Forte de Sacavém archive) may be able to welcome it for public consultation. SIPA/IHRU - Institution to which Carlos Roxo has already bequeathed his architectural drawings archive.

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The preamble of my investigation lies in the survey pronounced by Maria Helena Souto at MUDE⁶ regarding her research project “Design in Portugal (1960-1974): the actions, actors and repercussions of the Art, Industrial Architecture and Industrial Design Nuclei of the National Institute of Industrial Research (I.N.I.I.)”⁷ and the subsequent debate on preservation of the Portuguese design heritage; combined with the fact of my working within an architectural space that has always aroused my interest. Only to find out, by searching its archives, that it was the first joint work of Tojal, Moreira and Roxo: by 1961, the school building of Penafirme’s Lyceum Seminar⁸.

Fellow researcher, between August 2014 and June 2015, within Helena Souto’s project⁹, I acquire the knowledge within Portuguese Design History arising from a path she has been braving since at least 1992¹⁰. Such residence has also grounded the methodological bases for the investigation which I now aim to conclude.

According to the methods of the Social and Human Sciences, this project has been structured in two main nucleus. The first – of heuristic character – for the archive inventory and classification of actions, interveners, clients, regulators and their actual contingencies, plus collecting relevant testimonials. The second – hermeneutics, considering design history has the history of material and immaterial culture – to the production of knowledge able to underpin future research: by observing semiotics principles; framing and comparing the facts, plus constructing interpretative analysis of the drawings, the work, the actions and writings of the interveners; collecting and interpreting the body of concepts in presence (or absence) and trying to understand its impact on architecture, design and project-oriented culture in Portugal.

Results

The Work

Among the work documentarily attributed to the studio in report, the following pieces are observed: 1961 – remodelling *Loja das Meias*, Lisbon (Silva, Tojal, Moreira & Roxo, 1961, 19) and project to the school building of *Seminário Liceal de Penafirme* (Penafirme’s archive); 1963/70 – remodelling *STOP*, Lisbon (Multiplano’s archive); 1964/67 – *Rualdo* and *Instituto Luso-Fármaco*, Lisbon (Duarte, 1968, 15, 20); 1965/67 – *Banco FONSECAS & Burnay’s* filial,

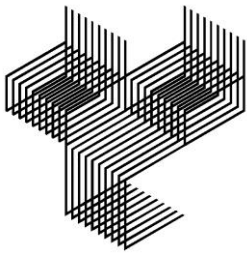
⁶ Lisbon’s museum of design and fashion (MUDE), on May 2013, within the debate on “Preservation of Interiors and Modern Design in Portugal”, by occasion of the exhibition “INTERIORS. 100 years of Interior Architecture in Portugal (1900-1999)”.

⁷ See: Souto, M.H. (Principal Investigator). (2012-2015). *Design em Portugal (1960-1974)* [...]. [online]. Retrieved from <http://www.iade.pt/unidcom/designportugal/>

⁸ Seminário Liceal de Penafirme, Torres Vedras, Portugal.

⁹ To study the nucleolus which led to the institutionalization of the discipline of design among us, from the time when the economic context of the Second Post War compelled the Portuguese New State’s dictatorship to develop the industrial sector (the decades of 1950, 1960 and the beginning of the 1970’s) to the Portuguese revolution in 1974.

¹⁰ Souto, M.H. (1992). «Design» em Portugal 1980-1990 – Dispersão Pluralista. *Enciclopédia Temática Portugal Moderno, Artes & Letras*, 99–117. Lisboa: Pomo.



Oporto (Duarte,1968,12); 1965/70 – remodelling *Grande Gala*, Lisbon; 1965/73 *Castilho 50*, Lisbon; 1967 – *Café-Restaurante da Amura*, Bissau; 1967/68 – Port Administration of Bissau; 1967/71 – *Traje*, Lisbon; 1968 – remodelling *Fábrica Portugal* store, Lisbon; 1968/69 – remodelling *Farmácia Liberal*, Lisbon; 1969 – remodelling *Casa Agricola Santos Jorge*, Lisbon; 1969/73 – remodelling *Lavores Femininos*, Lisbon; 1969/1974 – remodelling of *Camisaria Moderna*, Lisbon (*Multiplano's* archive); 1969/70 – *Betesga*, Lisbon (*Multiplano's* archive and Simões,1970,158) and *Crédito Predial Português's* filial, Oporto (Duarte,1971,16); 1970/71 – *Rocia*, Lisbon (IHRU and *Multiplano's* archives); 1971 – *Traje* (Duarte,1971,16), *Dally* (*Multiplano's* archive) and *Meia-Lua*, Lisbon (Duarte,1971,15); 1971/1972 – project to *Simopre* building, Rua Barata Salgueiro/Rua Castilho, Lisbon (Lamas,1979,29); from 1972 onwards they were responsible for numerous remodelations in *Banco Fonecas & Burnay's* filials; 1973 – *Torres do Tejo* project with Emery Roth & Sons Architects (EUA); about 1973 – contest for Vilamoura's port urbanization; 1973/75 remodelling *Chrysler*, Lisbon (*Multiplano's* archive).

The collaborators

As one of the most regular collaborators of Tojal, Moreira and Roxo, at least since *Rualdo stand* (1964/68) and until the group scission in 1974, the painter Rogério Ribeiro (1930-2008)¹¹ is observed. In 1974 Rogério Ribeiro assumes coordination of the group working on the curricular restructuring of ESBAL in the area of design, to the installation of the Industrial Design of Equipment Course (Ribeiro,1999,2)¹².

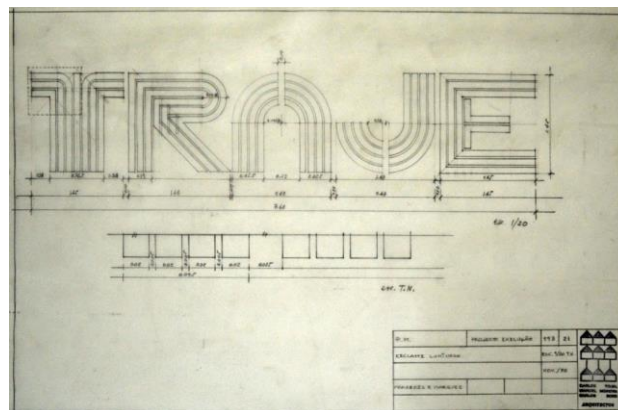


Figure 3. Carlos Tojal, Manuel Moreira, Carlos Roxo (1970, November). *Prazeres e Marques*. Execution project. Luminous advertise. Graphite on vegetal paper. Firmed and dated. *Multiplano's* archive. (Sandra Antunes)

¹¹ Licensee in painting by Lisbon's Fine Arts School (ESBAL) in 1959 (Macaças, 2007).

¹² Rogério Ribeiro is one of the several names whom beside Daciano da Costa, António Sena da Silva, Jorge Vieira and Sá Nogueira has collaborate in Frederico George atelier from the end of the 50's (Alves,2003,5). Since 1967 Rogério Ribeiro integrates the team for the study, preparation and assembly of the Calouste Gulbenkian Museum (Ribeiro,1999,7), it is architect José Aleixo da França [Sommer] Ribeiro who invites him (Alves,2003,24). In 1961 he is a teacher of Painting and Technology at Escola de Artes Decorativas António Arroio and in 1971 an assistant in Painting at ESBAL. In this same year he assumes de assembly of the exhibition of Italian industrial design *Compasso d'Oro* – presented at Industrial Fair of Lisbon (FIL), from the 9th to the 15th of December 1971. From 1974 to 1996 he also assumes the coordination of Industrial Design of Equipment and its representing at the Scientific Board of ESBAL (Ribeiro,1999,2,5).

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Between Tojal, Moreira and Roxo collaborators are also identified, among others: the painter and ceramist Querubim Lapa (1925-2016) (Silva, Tojal, Moreira & Roxo 1961,19); the sculptor Lagoa Henriques (Duarte,1968,12)¹³; the painter Jorge Pinheiro (b.1931) (Roxo,1974,102); the painter António Mendes de Oliveira (Lamas, 1979,29)¹⁴ *Multipiano's* logo creator [ab. 1972] and collaborator of *Cooperativa Praxis*, represented in the 1st and 2nd Exhibition of Portuguese Design¹⁵; the designer Dario Romani¹⁶ (born in the Italian city of Lucca) or the landscape architect Júlio Moreira (b.1930) also a collaborator of *Cooperativa Praxis*, represented in the 2nd Exhibition of Portuguese Design. Collaborators named in *Multipiano's* archive to the period in study are also the architects: Alberto Aires Mateus, Armindo Espírito Santo, António Gamito, António Mateus, Carlos Monteiro de Oliveira, Eduardo Martins, Eduardo Rebello de Andrade, Francisco Sequeira, João Paulo Bessa, João Pinto de Oliveira, João Sardinha, João Vaz Martins, Jorge Silva, José Manuel Fava, Nuno Lopes da Silva; Pedro Brandão; Raul Santiago Pinto or Vasco Campos.



Figure 4. António Mendes de Oliveira. Sketch for Simopre's Logo (detail) [ab. 1972]. (according to Arch. Eduardo Martins). Graphite on paper. *Multipiano's* archive. (Sandra Antunes)

The conceptual body in presence

The concept of architecture as a "Visual Art"¹⁷ as that of "Scientific Aesthetics" enounced by Carlos Roxo in 1963, witness his will to legitimate architecture as an art¹⁸; his decenter from the self unexplained expression in the search for a perceived language operating with the basilar elements to the visual communication; and his aim for the questioning of all projectual decision in opposition to an idealistic or technicist concept of architecture –

¹³ Whom between 1960 and 62 is besides Daciano da Costa, Frederico George and Roberto Araújo in the "basic design course" which, being refused as a teacher candidate to ESBAL, Daciano da Costa undertakes in is atelier (Souto,1991,105).

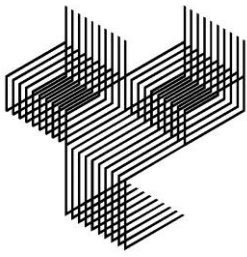
¹⁴ António Eduardo Teixeira Mendes de Oliveira (1944-1993). Death registration 319 of 1993 from the 3rd Lisbon *Conservatória*.

¹⁵ Collaborator also of *Editores Moraes* alongside José Escada, Sebastião Rodrigues, João Rodrigues, Duarte Nuno Simões, Alda Rosa, Moreira Rijo or Victorino Correia Martins (Tamen,2006,8).

¹⁶ Mentioned as decorator, while working at Daciano da Costas's Atelier Between 1968-1969 (Martins, 2001, 316).

¹⁷ Which Carlos Roxo introduces after quoting Gropius in *Alcances de la Arquitectura Integral*. (Roxo,1963, preamble).

¹⁸ In a time when the architect should sign his projects as "the technician responsible".



demonstrating awareness and method of a science of design, reached through objective findings rather than personal interpretation.

In 1968, on the 101st issue of *Arquitectura* magazine, Tojal, Moreira and Roxo sign a manifesto which concurs in the same direction: they favor the social environment, and consequently life and *the man of human condition*, the common man, as the protagonist of the reality to be considered by architecture and all aesthetical language.

Along the period between 1960 and 1974 two stages are clearly distinguishable in Tojal, Moreira and Roxo activity: a period lead by Utopia (corresponding to the experimentalist freedom of a studio working mainly with private commissioners for ephemeral stands remodeling) and a period lead by Market and the specialization of knowledge (from around 1972 on when, under the society *Multiplano*, they officially associate with *Banco Fonseca & Burnay* and its real estate agency *Simopre* – who bears the final approval of many projective decisions).

Discussion

Observing the Project of Architecture in its relation with the Process of Design, in Portugal in the period in question, it is not primarily a discussion about the object and boundaries of design, but rather the discerning of a quest to implement methodologies that may question the design project, by promoting dialectical interaction between all the objective knowledge embedded in it: exact sciences, arts, technology, human and social knowledge, operating in favour of social development and the common man's welfare. For it is mainly the expanding of this attitude by working through problems that holds significance in this period of our history.

By the seminal action of Frederico George¹⁹ (1915-1994), within the Lisbon circle design assumes the Bahausian globalizing nature. To George the battle of utilitarianism in architecture is won, so, he surnames the architect of “visual artist”²⁰ and professes “the integration of the emotional value, among the material functions of architecture”²¹ (George,1948,23). A confluence point with Tojal, Moreira and Roxo's practice, with several examples of organic articulation/shared methodologies with artists/ artistic knowledge.

Dissertating in 1999 to the obtainment of the Associate Professor consideration in Equipment Industrial Design, at Lisbon Fine Arts Faculty, Rogério Ribeiro defends that in such context “[...] the nature “industrial” is a consequence, not a rule.”²² Signifying, he secures, “[...] the integration in the whole where painters, sculptors and communication designers are formed[...].”²³ (Ribeiro,1999,11). To him, between designer and user, industry introduces the businessman – moving in different fields of interests. A fact that

¹⁹ Studied by (Souto,1992).

²⁰ “artista plástico”.

²¹ “[...]a integração do valor emocional, nas funções materiais da arquitectura.” (George,1948,23).

²² “[...]a natureza “industrial” é consequência e não primado.” (Ribeiro,1999,11).

²³ “Esta inserção significa ser integrado no conjunto de matérias “ditas” comuns ao longo do curso onde se forma também pintores, escultores e designers de comunicação.” (Ribeiro,1999,11).

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legitimizes the need for humanistic, ethical, cultural, social and aesthetical knowledge, acting in defence of the student, by providing him safe means of contemporaneity and innovation (Ribeiro,1999,17).

In his investigation on the practice of Industrial Design in Portugal, supervised by Rogério Ribeiro, Jorge Alves notices that among the initial group practicing design within the architecture studios, in Lisbon, the majority were painters and sculptors from ESBAL. A typology that contrasts to Oporto, where the practice of design develops by architects (Alves,2003,43) so that in 1974, while in Lisbon the Communication and Equipment Design are formed, in Oporto only the Communication Design it is (Alves,2003,69,214).

Here are some facts which, by act of further analysis, can lead to additional answers on the concept of *Synthesis of Arts* and its persistence within the Lisbon circle of action.

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