

## FOR AN ARCHITECTURAL MEMORY: Francisco Conceição Silva

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## Keywords

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### Partner Institutions

Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal (BNP)

### Expected Future Partner Institutions

Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian (FCG)

Sistema de Informação para o Património Arquitetónico (SIPA)

## OBJECTIVES

This Project is organized by short- and long-term objectives.

In the short term, the main objectives of this research are: (1) Preservation of memory - the conservation, archiving and cataloguing of the received collection of FCS, contributing to complete the historiographic picture of Portuguese architectural production in the 20th century; (2) Study and support to the scientific study of the collection - research and promotion of the investigation of 20th century Architecture, through the production of articles, and the direction of Master's and PhD thesis, focusing on the architect under analysis.

In the long term it is intended to develop a digital database (following Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation) to introduce the processed data and make it available to the general public and promote cooperation with institutions with similar objectives in order to disseminate, enhance and study Portuguese Architecture.

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## ABSTRACT + IMAGES

In 2015, Faculdade de Arquitetura da Universidade de Lisboa (FAUL) founded the project "Por uma Memória Arquitectónica" (PORARQ) with the aim of identifying, studying, and disseminating the estate of Portuguese architects, centered in Lisbon, which have been deposited in this institution. More than ever, it is important today to understand the safeguard of what is the Architecture of the last century and that comprises "the last generations of paper", that is, the work of architects who have all their projects in physical support. The rescue of these elements represents ensuring the future of the past. Within this framework, in 2018 FAUL received in deposit the estate of Francisco Conceição Silva (1922-1982). This documentation comprises about 600 projects, developed between the 1950s and the 1970s.

With a unique career, Francisco Conceição Silva (FCS) was one of the most important Portuguese architects of the second half of the 20th century. In a pioneering way, he sought interdisciplinary involvement and highest architectural detailing to achieve, in each of his works, maximum efficiency throughout the design and construction process and, above all, strict compliance with spatial and material quality.

His projects present Architecture as a work of synthesis, where all scales are thought: from the urban insertion, to typological and morphological features, to spatial characteristics, to structural, constructive and material definition, to the design of furniture and equipment, and the integration of works of art - to create its own unitary environment: the achievement of an integral work of Architecture.

FCS obtained his architect's diploma in 1949. In 1953, he set up his own individual studio. Of his vast work we highlight Loja Rampa, Hotel do Mar, Hotel and Apartment Block of Balaia, several noteworthy single-family houses, the Tróia Tourism complex, the Alfragide Housing Towers, and the Valentim de Carvalho record factory.

During the three decades that his studio was active, it worked as a school for many professionals, from the most diverse areas – architects, designers, artists, landscape architects, engineers, others - who worked in his studio or collaborated with him, personalities who are today recognized as important in our cultural panorama - besides his (short-term) partner Maurício de Vasconcelos, the architects Tomás Taveira, José Forjaz, Manuel Vicente, Santa Rita and Bartolomeu Costa Cabral; the landscape designer Gonçalo Ribeiro Telles; the designers Gonçalo Afonso Dias and Carmo Valente; the artists Sá Nogueira, Almada Negreiros, Querubim Lapa, Júlio Pomar and Manuel Cargaleiro; the geographer Jorge Gaspar; and the writer Herberto Helder; among many others.

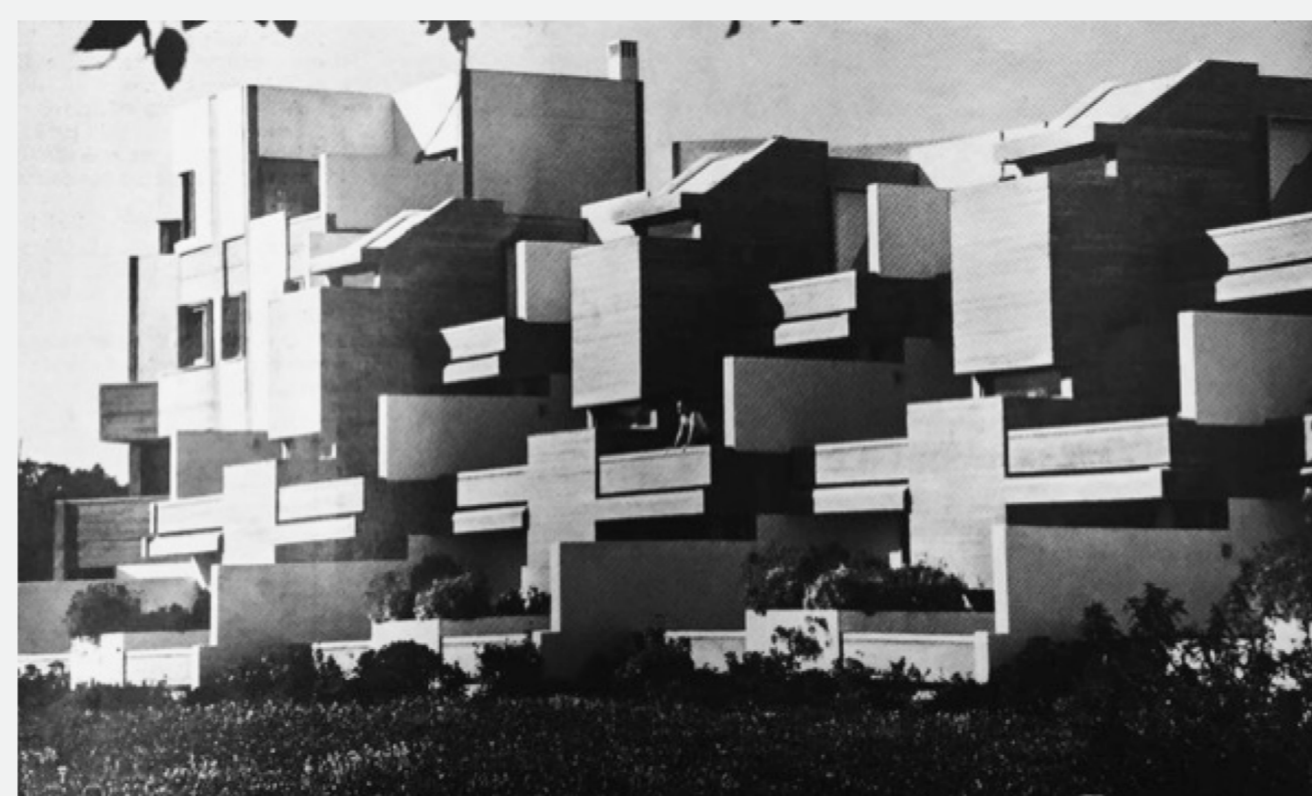
Although the work of this architect is considered to be of great relevance in the framework of 20th century Portuguese Architecture, the estate from FCS studio is still to be studied. In order to fill this gap and to contribute for the knowledge of this timeframe, this application, inserted in the Architecture nucleus, is complemented with the two others, from CIAUD, all integrated part of PORARQ.

The present application thus aims to gather conditions to guarantee the continuity of a mission of the greatest importance, justified by the need, on the one hand, to ensure the architectural memory, and on the other, to adapt the already existing resources to the available technological conditions, in order to maximize their dissemination.

This Project is characterized by a theoretical and practical approach, based on 4 essential aspects: the organization and archival treatment; the transfer of support/digitization; the preservation and conservation of the material (in partnership with Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal), and dissemination through scientific and technical research in Architecture and associated disciplinary fields.

This is an urgent opportunity, since these documents require careful and timely preservation which, if not accomplished, will lead to their loss, with the consequent obliteration of cultural heritage and knowledge, which should be accessible to all. Architects and their collections, as protagonists of 20th century Portuguese Architecture, a period when the professionalization of Architecture took root and architectural practice gradually intensified, both in Portugal and in the territories that were then colonies are fundamental to understand the social and cultural evolution of a country that changed so much throughout this century. Not to contemplate the architectural production of this century is to forget stages, scenarios, and spaces that hosted historical events and their protagonists.

Finally, the project aims to contribute significantly to the preservation of the Memory, Knowledge and Dissemination of 20th century Portuguese Architecture, both among the scientific community and architects, as well as the interested public, nationally and internationally.



## SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE FOR THE DISCIPLINE

The study of this collection will be a privileged source for obtaining new and relevant information for ongoing research in the fields of Architecture, Design and Urbanism. Also relevant is the beginning of a study on the architects who graduated in Lisbon as a way of recognizing and contributing to the establishing of the identity of the Lisbon School of Architecture.

As a complement to the information and sources already explored by historiography, this collection will allow us to identify dates, authors, descriptions and author's justifications, both for projects and works already known, and for many others, whether they were built or not.

This data and its interpretation will allow us to complement and support a panoramic view of the production of a particular studio, integrating it in the framework of architecture and design in Portugal in the 20th century.

At a higher level, the assets will also allow us to highlight the importance of sub-disciplines associated with Architecture (interiors, furniture, graphic design, integration of the arts, etc.) that are often relatively less valued, but ultimately have been a key terrain for the development of everyday life and the collective imaginaries of citizens.

## EXPECTED ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL IMPACT

As in previous work experiences in this field, we know that the results of this project will (re)value a part of the imagined and built heritage that in general is despised by the historiography of Architecture, by heritage policies, by the economic fabric that, with few exceptions, systematically invest in the rapid obsolescence of the built solutions and in the uncritical renovation, without paying attention to the cultural value of the pre-existences or to the importance of preserving collective memories.

The recognition of the value of these works, namely in the city of Lisbon, can and should contribute to their rehabilitation, instead of continuing to destroy in order to build again, which is not only a loss of memory and identity, but also an economic waste of scarce resources.

This project will be another contribution for us to consider the recognition, appreciation, defence, conservation and restoration, as well as dissemination, in a more informed, detailed and conscious way of the values in presence.

## RESEARCH PLAN AND TASKS

Today there is a consensus that Architectural heritage, as a relevant component of the cultural heritage of a region or community, is a powerful factor of social distinction and identification. Buildings and cities survive beyond the temporal limits of each generation and its inhabitants. They become to a large extent, the most persistent material expression of a community's culture.

In recent years, it has been noted that several architects or heirs, seeking to leave the testimony of their professional careers in an institution that offers them the guarantee that their estate will be well received, treated and studied, have turned to FAUL. Belonging to the Lisbon architectural scene, they are protagonists of 20th century Portuguese Architecture, which represents a period of great productivity in almost the entire Lusophone space, including, until 1974, Portugal's former African Colonies and Brazil.

In the case of the FCS collection, as with others recently acquired, we have not yet had the availability in human means to make the systematic work that we now propose to do.

Although the work of this architect is considered to be of great relevance in the framework of the second half of 20th century Portuguese Architecture, the estate from FCS studio is still to be studied.

In fact, only two Master Theses have been produced on his work: one offering a panoramic view of FCS's life and career, and focusing mainly on the design of single-family houses; and another, offering a reading of the collective housing proposals of FCS, throughout the three decades of his architectural work. A PhD thesis on FCS is currently being developed at FAUL, focusing on FCS's touristic and collective housing proposals; the PhD Student, Celia Gomes, is a member of the research team of this embryo project, since the PI (Hugo Farias) and one of the Researchers (João Sousa Morais) are the directors of her Thesis.

The importance of FCS's architectural work can be established at different levels: first of all, the quality and diversity of his work. FCS's design work ranges from urban proposals, to collective housing complexes, to touristic complexes, to hotels, industrial buildings, commercial buildings, single-family houses, shops and the design of exhibitions. All of his work is unanimously considered of outstanding quality. Secondly, FCS's office is a unique case in Portuguese Architecture. In fact, FCS progressively transformed his studio into a large scale design office where a significant number of professionals, of different areas of expertise, worked collectively on the design of urban plans, buildings and interiors: architects, designers, landscape architects, geographers, artists, ceramists, engineers, and even a poet, worked together in FCS's office. In the 1970's, FCS would further enlarge the office, transforming it into a network of enterprises that could ensure all the phases of the design, construction and promotion of a building. His idea was that of an integral project: the proposal of a complete work of architecture, that could ensure a superior quality to what was designed, built and used by the final customer. After the 1974 revolution, FCS decided to move to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, where he opened a new office. He would continue to produce architecture, with the same idea of the integral project, until his death, in 1982. His architectural work in Brazil is almost unstudied, which constitutes yet another level of importance for the proposed research project.

PORARQ-FCS will be developed within CIAUD's Research Group Lab.i.Arq. This group is coordinated by the IR of the present research proposal and is formed by multidisciplinary researchers whose previous work, experience and ongoing research will contribute significantly to the expected results of this embryo-project. Moreover, the development of this project will contribute to other ongoing and proposed projects since the recognition, reading and analysis of the entire breadth, diversity, and depth of documentation in the FCS collection will allow us to establish connections and new lines of study for the Research Group.

The documents and archives of Architecture have, in potential, a substantial relevance as a support to administrative, technical and scientific actions related to the architectural activity, but also as an object of cultural fruition and basis for processes of production of individual and community identities.

This project is structured in 5 phases, each one integrating a task.

TASK 1 – This task focuses on the organization of the FCS collection. The practical work will begin with the recognition and exploratory listing of all the projects, as well as, gathering a set of relevant basic information (project designation, dates, location, commissioner, etc.).

TASK 2 – The main objective of this task is to prepare the estates so they can be handled and digitized.

TASK 3 – The main objective of this task is to catalogue the architectural collections.

TASK 4 – This task focuses on the digitalization of the architectural estate. The task of digitalizing is of key importance for the preservations of the original documents and also for the sharing of information by PORARQ. The methodological approach to this task will include the following steps: digitalization of the drawings collected on the selected projects; definition of types of drawing, scales of drawings and graphic expression.

TASK 5 - The main objective of this task is to develop descriptions for each project and design. This task will provide a new in-depth understanding of the projects composing each collection, in their different architectural scales: urban scale, building scale, design integration and the technical and tectonic features of each project.

According to the information revealed throughout this research process, it is accepted that some of the following research phases may also be considered within the scope of this embryo project: identification of information gaps; research of complementary documentation (licensing files, photographic files, company archives); attraction of institutional partners and preparation of applications for funding research projects at national and European level.

## EXPECTED SCIENTIFIC RESULTS

The expected results are as follows: Treatment and digitalization of the FCS collection; organization of the estate, promoting the future dissemination of the knowledge achieved to a wider audience.

The scientific activities expected to be produced by PORARQ: FCS research scope are:

1. The preparation of a monographic book about FCS's work, covering the different scales and aspects of his office's Architecture.
2. Integration of the results (biography, architectural work and images of the most significant projects) in PORARQ Website, providing public and open access to the principal outputs of the research project at an international level. The implementation process of this platform will also enable the opening of these collections to be studied by Master's and PhD students.
3. Participation in lectures, constituting an opportunity to present the results of the research and to discuss the JS architectonic production.
4. Productions of Papers to be published in indexed publications.

## BUDGET: € 7.497,08

Human Resources - The funding granted will enable the hiring of a research scholarship holder (for 6 months), which represents a value of 1104,64 (grant) + 7,5 (insurance) + 129,89 (social insurance). All in all, per month, this represents a total cost of 1242.03 euros, which amounts to 7452,18 euros for the 6 months of grant requested.

Equipment - An amount of 44,90 euros is also requested for the acquisition of one HDD USB 3.0 1TB 2,5 WDigital Elements external disk.

These two expenses make a final/total cost of 7497,08 euros.

No other costs are expected, since there are FA technical spaces and equipment allocated to activities of this nature that, for the moment, are not fully used due to lack of human resources.

The work of the contracted researcher, duly accompanied by PORARQ:FCS researchers, will allow the collection of information that will be incorporated into personal and/or collective investigations underway and to be developed.