

A NEW AGENDA FOR PORTUGUESE MODERN ARCHITECTURE contributions to contemporary teaching and practice

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Portugal-Brazil.

Partner Institutions

Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal (BNP)

Expected Future Partner Institutions

OBJECTIVES

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

In the short term the expected contributions of NAPA are: 1) to increase our understanding of PMA, through the deepening of the study one of its most important influences; 2) to identify and rescue key architectural features of qualified examples of PMA, important for present and future architectural teaching and practice; 3) to promote public awareness of the importance of modern architecture as cultural heritage and collective memory.

In the long term it is intended to develop an open-access online website, promoting the dissemination of the knowledge achieved to a wider audience; this 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

Portuguese Modern Architecture (PMA) was influenced by different sources, but these relations were reciprocal, and despite the time lag, PMA also ended up influencing several similar modern movements. Alongside with central European modern architecture and later, Italian, and British architecture, Brazilian Modern Architecture (BMA) can be pointed out as one of the major influences.

In fact, PMA and BMA share key moments of confluence, when the meeting of architects combined knowledge, ideas and experiences and led to the design of remarkable projects and architectural works, achieving a synthesis of new architectural languages. These confluences manifested themselves in many different forms, and involved many architects, Portuguese and Brazilian.

The confluences have been identified and studied by architectural historiography. However, the reading developed so far focuses mostly on historiographic aspects and does not seek to assess what changes occurred, whether they be found in a new process of designing, the development of new architectural languages, or the definition of new tectonics.

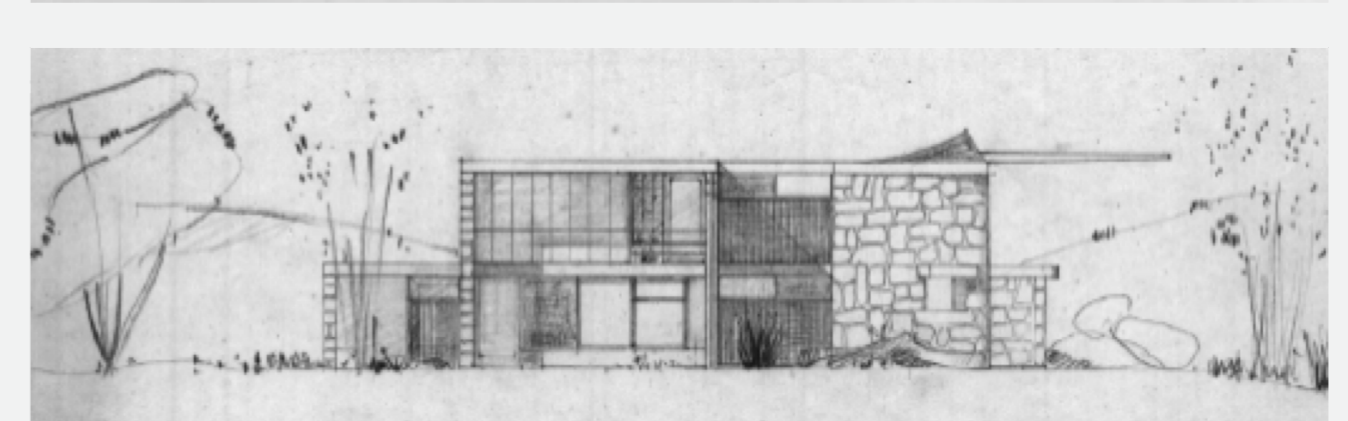
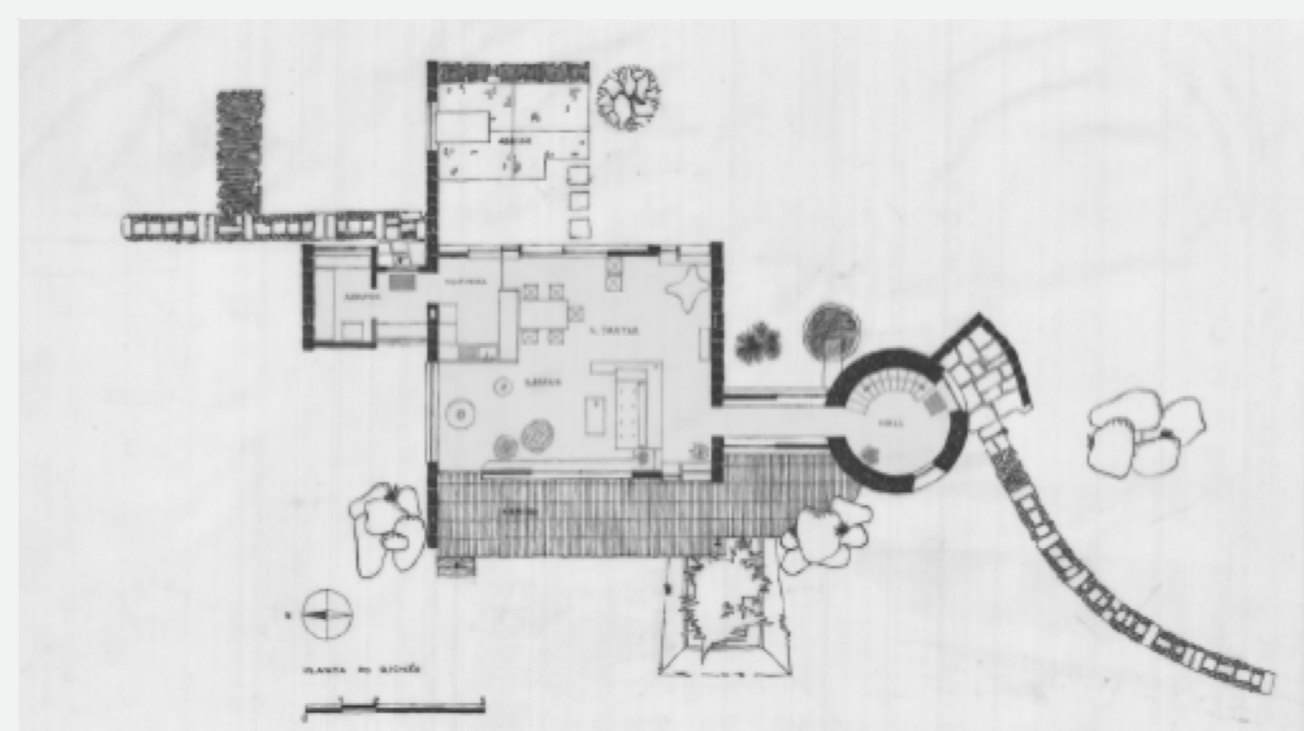
The aim of NAPA is to study the relationship between PMA and BMA. Based on an in-depth architectural project analysis methodology that covers typology, morphology, language and tectonics, the proposal aims to analyze projects and built works developed by architects who were directly involved in these confluences, to evaluate the influence of BMA on PMA. This methodological approach will allow for a new reading of these confluences and, above all, how PMA evolved/changed for each architect, each work, in different times and territories of Brazil.

To achieve this goal, this embryo project shortlisted 2 noteworthy modern Portuguese architects: Delfim Amorim (1920-2013) and Maurício de Vasconcelos (1925-1997). From the 2 selected architects, NAPA will choose 3 works from their Portuguese period and 3 from their Brazilian period. These works will be registered, redrawn and critically analyzed. From this methodological approach, the project will evaluate the changes and influences that occur in their designed and built work when they contact Brazilian architecture.

NAPA's main methodological tasks will be: 1) Identification and in-depth study of moments of confluence between PMA and BMA. 2) Collecting, reading, and analyzing existing documentation on selected architects and their production. 3) Selection of projects and works developed by the selected architects. 4) Digitalizing, redrawing projects, and photographing works. 5) Architectural project analysis: in-depth reading of urban/landscape insertion; morphology; typology; composition; spatial and functional organization; structure; construction; materiality; integration of design; specific technical and tectonic elements and solutions of adequacy and adaptability to place, climate, and culture. 6) Architectural project interpretation, comparison, and synthesis. These will be followed by dissemination tasks, namely and most importantly, a free online website and an international conference.

The importance of the project lies in 3 main aspects: 1) project analysis will complement and complete the existing historiographic research, contributing to clarify and establish the influence of BMA on PMA; 2) project analysis will determine key features of significant examples of PMA, rescuing lost conceptual, tectonic, technical and environmental values, that should be registered, studied, updated and proposed within contemporary architectural teaching and practice; 3) the study of these examples will contribute to the establishment of their importance as cultural heritage, thus promoting public awareness for the importance and preservation of Modern Architecture.

The NAPA embryo project is part of a larger research project that was submitted to FCT's last call, and for which we are currently waiting for the results. The embryo project selects two architects of the complete list of eight that was defined in the larger-scale project. It also simplifies tasks, aims and expected results in order to ensure their completion in the time period defined. The embryo project will act as a first collection of information – about the confluences, the 2 selected architects, and their works and projects – and as a test of the methodology. The results of the embryo project will constitute a solid basis either for the beginning of the larger-scale NAPA, or for a renewed and more solid application.



SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE FOR THE DISCIPLINE

NAPA is expected to impact on a scientific, academic, and disciplinary level through the contribution to knowledge on PMA and BMA.

Developing research processes applied to architects who developed their professional activity between Portugal and Brazil, in the time frame of Modern Architecture, between 1945 and 1975, it aims to understand the key moments of the confluence of Portuguese and Brazilian Modern Architectures (PMA and BMA), and the architectural languages that resulted from them and that synthesized new tectonics.

Through the analysis of the projects of the two selected architects – that will be a privileged source for obtaining new and relevant information for ongoing research in the fields of Architecture, both Portuguese and Brazilian - NAPA will also contribute significantly to the identification and rescue of key architectural features of qualified examples of PMA – namely on sustainability issues of adequacy and adaptability to place, climate and culture - important for contemporary architectural teaching and practice.

EXPECTED ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL IMPACT

NAPA is expected to impact on a societal level through its contribution to the recognition of modern heritage – Portuguese and Brazilian - and the need for its protection and preservation. In fact, Modern Architecture is presently menaced in many Portuguese and Brazilian cities and there is an urgent need for its recognition, preservation, rehabilitation and reuse, both for the safeguarding of collective identity and memory, and also for economic reasons.

NAPA is expected to impact on an economic level, since the identification and rescue of key architectural features of qualified examples of PMA – namely on sustainability issues of adequacy and adaptability to place, climate and culture – can constitute the beginning of the definition of a Manual of Best Practices that can act as an important tool for the achievement of a more bioclimatic and sustainable design, for students and for professionals. This achievement would definitely have a positive economic impact on present and future architecture.

RESEARCH PLAN AND TASKS

Portuguese Modern Architecture (PMA) was influenced by different sources, including central European modern architecture and later, Italian and British architecture; Brazilian Modern Architecture (BMA) can also be pointed out as one of its major influences.

Throughout the 20th century, Portuguese and Brazilian Architecture share a significant set of key confluence moments: at those points architects have met and shared knowledge, ideas and experiences, which boosted the development of new theoretical, notable works, as well as the synthesis of new architectural languages. Such confluences have been identified by architectural historiography: however, the analysis developed so far focuses mostly on historiographic aspects and does not seek to assess whether, because of these confluences, there was a change in the way of designing, the development of new architectural languages, or a definition of new tectonics. Among the main confluences identified during the studied period we can point out: travels and writings; books and magazines; BMA exhibitions in Portugal and PMA in Brazil; conferences by Brazilian architects in Portugal; applications and awards of PMA in Brazilian events. Despite the fact that all these contribute to the methodological and theoretical research framework, the project focus will be focused on the migration of Portuguese architects to Brazil and their work produced before and after relocation.

NAPA aims to analyze projects and built works developed by 2 architects who were directly involved in these confluences, to evaluate the influence of BMA on PMA. From an initial list that identifies their designed and built work, first in Portugal, later in Brazil, the project will select 2 works from their Portuguese period and 2 from their Brazilian period. Based on an in-depth architectural project analysis methodology that covers typology, morphology, language and tectonics, the project will deepen the knowledge of PMA and assess the influences and changes that occur in each architect's work, between their Portuguese and Brazilian production, thus evaluating the importance and results of their direct contact with BMA.

The achievement of NAPA objectives will consider the following methodological tasks:

TASK 1 – Identify confluences between PMA and BMA in the defined time, clarifying nature of the confluence, involved architects and possible results.

The objective is to develop a state of the art regarding identification and understanding of moments of confluence established between Portugal and Brazil within Architecture, during the modern period of the 20th century. This task intends to clarify, identify and describe the moments of confluence between PMA and BMA. It will also provide the necessary theoretical framework for the following tasks.

TASK 2 - Compile existing documentation on the 2 selected architects and their production, both in Portugal and Brazil

The objective is to collect and analyse information on the 2 selected architects. It will provide an in-depth knowledge of their careers, through the compilation of written, designed and built work. The information will be collected in the architects' personal archives, to which the research team has access, but also in public libraries and archives. This task will provide state of the art knowledge on the selected architects, their biographies, and their theoretical and practical design production. It constitutes the basis for the next task.

TASK 3 - Select relevant projects and architectural works developed by the selected architects, both in Portugal and Brazil

The objective is to select, for each of the 2 selected architects, the projects and/or built works that will be the case studies for the next stages of the research project. Starting from the documents prepared for each architect in the end of the previous task, this stage will elect the case studies to be read and analyzed in the following tasks: defining case studies to be read, studied, and analyzed in the next tasks. Thus, it constitutes a defining moment for the rest of the methodological steps of project.

TASK 4 - Redrawing the projects

The objective is digitalizing and redrawing selected projects, as well as photographing the remaining built works. Digitalizing is key to preserve original documents and share the information on NAPA website. Redrawing (plans, sections, elevations, perspectives, details, other pieces) is particularly important for comparison and analysis of projects and works. In fact, only through standardizing and updating drawings, using the same scales and graphic expression, it is possible to have a clear and direct comparison between case studies. This is also an important interpretative tool that will contribute to clarify typological, morphological, technical and aesthetical principles and elements of each case study. Photographing exteriors and, if possible, interiors, will complement original and other existing registers, allowing to assess the current state of case studies. As final product of this task an updated folder containing drawn and photographed material on each case study will be provided, thus constituting the basis for architectural analysis, the next task.

TASK 5 - Analysis of the Architectural projects

This task is central to NAPA's innovation, because the application of a specific methodology of architectural analysis in PMA case studies influenced by BMA has never been done. The analysis will give relevance to typological, morphological, tectonic and technical aspects, reinforcing the research's innovative qualities. The main objective here is to develop an in-depth architectural analysis of previously selected case studies. Starting from redrawn and interpretative elements developed previously, reading of each case study will be reached through elaboration of interpretation drawings, schemes, models and also critical texts, interpreting and synthesizing findings for each case study. These graphic elements and texts will clarify the most relevant features and each project elements. When completed, the task will provide a new in-depth understanding of case studies in their different architectural measures: for instance, urban and building scales, design integration, technical and tectonic features. It will thus constitute the source for the next task: interpretation of findings.

TASK 6 - Architectural project interpretation, comparison and synthesis

Development of analytical and critical texts for each selected architect and work, addressing the following aspects: insertion in temporal and physical context; formal, spatial, compositional, structural, constructive, material, and environmental analysis; synthesis of the most relevant aspects and elements of the work's contribution to the consolidation of MA; and establishing convergences and divergences between PMA and BMA.

The objectives are a) clarify analytical elements that resulted from previous task; b) compare between Portuguese and Brazilian case studies of each architect, to assess possible influences and change that occurred in their architectural works after direct contact with BMA; and c) contribute to clarification of influence and exchange emerged in PMA through BMA influence.

EXPECTED SCIENTIFIC RESULTS

The expected contributions are: a) To increase our understanding of PMA; b) To deepen the study of the influence of BMA on PMA; c) To identify and rescue key architectural features of qualified examples of PMA – namely on sustainability issues of adequacy and adaptability to place, climate and culture - important for contemporary architectural teaching and practice; d) To promote public awareness of the importance of modern architecture as cultural heritage and collective memory, contributing to its protection and preservation.

The expected scientific results are: a) Production of a portfolio on each of the two architects studied, including all the results of Tasks 4, 5 and 6; b) Production of an open-access online website to disseminate and share the elements produced during the research; c) Participation in conferences and lectures, constituting an opportunity to present the results of the research and to discuss NAPA's achievements; d) Production of Papers to be published in indexed publications.

BUDGET: € 7.499,12

At this moment NAPA has a fulltime PhD grant holder which allows the fruition of the work schedule. However, our research project does not have its own equipment. For this reason, the budget we present is for a computer, a scanner and an external disk; equipment necessary for the continuation of NAPA's good work.

Desktop Compact Workstations - This expense refers to one desktop compact optimized workstation. The workstations will be used permanently by NAPA PhD grant holder, giving support to all the tasks of the research project. Cost 1555 euros.

Large Format Scanner - The scanner will be used to digitalize all the original architectural drawings that are collected regarding the case studies, many of them large scale drawings. These digitalized elements will be shared on NAPA's website. Total Cost: 5900,12 euros.

External Disk – Necessary for the well keeping of all the research information. Total Cost: 44 euros.