

Timeless Expectations

Two possible lessons from Francisco Barata

Within the mainframe of the Porto School of Architecture (ESBA/FACUP), the intimate, but cultured, reading of architectural and urban contexts is set on an intuitive and sensorial approach, informed by Norberg-Schulz's notion of *genius loci*, where the *sense of place* is seen as a qualitative total phenomena, a delicate equilibrium between the physical conditions or properties of the site and its particular atmosphere and environmental character(s) traced by a long term reading.

Francisco Barata's work is synonymous of this cultured pursuit, in open dialogue with the shape of time within the meaning of place, where the balance between the material and immaterial plays, an important interpretative role.

In this perspective, a shared experience, set on a long standing collaboration with Francisco Barata (FB), since 1988, allows me to bring two works, a Family estate Quinta do Ribeiro and Cooperativa de Massarelos Social Housing ensemble as two possible lessons of this pursuit.

In the beginning of FB's career two formative moments stand out, which will be extremely important for this methodological insight and the subsequent work.

On the one hand, the opportunity to work in Italy, with a European Foundation research grant, in 1985-86, to pursue an in-depth study of Italian modern architecture and, in particular, the meaning and significance of Milanese culture for Portuguese architecture.

On the other hand, his collaboration with Fernando Távora, a central figure of the Porto School legacy. This early professional and later academic connection will be foundational for FB's practical and theoretical approach towards the discipline of architecture.

"The pedagogical model for the teaching of Architectural design at FACUP is both theoretical and practical. We try to establish a point of balance and coherence between theory and practice, and instead of choosing between opposites, we prefer to reflect on the distance between them.

The Vitruvian triad remains valid, not only for its historical significance but also in an operational and practical sense. So, the distance between tradition and modernity is seen as a never-ending reconstruction of the bridges that connect them." (Barata 2018, p.23)

The continuity with Fernando Távora's *métier* was very important for FB, and there is one work in particular he took part in, the conversion of the Convent Santa Marinha da Costa, in Guimarães, which he often referenced when we worked together. An anchor project for FB's *modus operandi*, not only in terms of how