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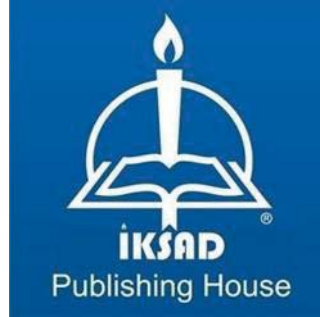
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EDITORS

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**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON GLOBAL PRACTICE OF
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INHABITING THE FUTURE: CRAFTING ARCHITECTURE (in)THE BODY, (in)THE HOME, (in)THE CITY, (in)THE COSMOS

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Abstract

This essay aims to frame and guide the critical, awareness, and operative processes, aiming at communicative action through the mastery of the image, the power of the word and the consistency of argumentation. Through the fundamental ethical-aesthetic-technical triad, our approach emerges from the intersection of two foundational planes: i) the "(E)DUCERE: complexes, implexes and reflexes" which, as a transdisciplinary epistemological territory, aims to strengthen the theoretical field of Architecture through dialogue with other knowledges, enhancing reflection and discernment on the constitutive and communicational dimensions of Knowledge, whose values, subjectivities and substances, between singularities and plurality, will be worked on in the territories Body, Home, City and Cosmos; and ii) "Maps and Dialogues in Contemporary Architecture" which, as a disciplinary (laboratorial) domain, explores the exemplarity of the competences inherent to production and research in Architecture, in whose perspective the recognition of valences, qualities and ambiguities, in a diversified and complex universe (contexts, objectives and intervention technologies), will be experienced in a broad spectrum from the Immaterial to the Sensible, passing through the Visual, the Visible, the Accessible, the Material and the Haptic. In an operative perspective of the human dwelling in the Future, three Study Fields will be experimented: o i) Body-Home, between the visible and the sensitive, passing through the accessible, the material and the haptic, which will address the domains of technology, functionality, materials and design of equipment and furniture in the living space -the challenges will be those of the composition of materials (resources, transformation, production, distribution and maintenance) and their ecological footprint, their ergonomic qualities, resistance and durability, among energies and waste; o ii) Home-City, between the visual and the haptic, going through the visible, the accessible and the material, which will address the domains of urban infrastructures, the public space, the association modes of housing units, isolated and/or grouped, their internal organizations, articulation and transition, taking into account the energy issues, collection and treatment of domestic and urban waste -the challenges will be the organization and compatibility of the various infrastructural, programmatic and functional networks, their modalities, extensions and impacts, in the urban space and in the territory and iii) City-Cosmos, between the immaterial and the material, going through the visual, the visible and the accessible, which will address environmental issues, resources and their optimization, particularly in the constitution and composition of the territory and the landscape.

Keywords: future, body, home, city, cosmos.

The pursuit of rethinking the modalities of inhabiting the future by referencing the past has always been among the main priorities of architects in various eras. This is evident as Le Corbusier, in his seminal book, *Towards a New Architecture*, argued that being modern is not a fashion but rather a state of mind that establishes the relationship of architecture to the past in its pursuit of a viable future¹⁰⁰. In addition, Le Corbusier conceptualises architecture as a multifaceted discipline that operates on various levels, addressing not only the technical and aesthetic dimensions of space and form but also engaging with broader societal paradigms. This is clear in the case of housing, as he argued that "...The problem of the house is a problem of the era. Social equilibrium depends on it today. The first obligation of architecture, in an era of renewal, is to bring about a revision of values, a revision of the constitutive elements of the house."¹⁰¹

This is to argue that architecture operates at various levels at the same time in a parallel manner, from a minor scale of the relation of the body in the space, in the house to the major scale of the city and even the cosmos. Perhaps one could argue that it is due to this mediating nature of architecture that the renowned Finnish architect Juhani Pallasmaa suggests that "[architecture] is conceptually too "impure" or "messy" as a phenomenon and human activity to be logically structured within a single theory."¹⁰²

Due to the nature of the ever-growing complexities of contemporary life, architecture should spontaneously consider various factors and respond on different scales. Contrary to Vitruvius, who argued that architecture should encompass three main questions of "Utilitas, Firmitas and Venustas"¹⁰³, in the current days, architectural practice should operate beyond this triad. Consequently, the contemporary framework of architecture should not solely focus on aesthetic and technical proficiency but also should consider the ethical implications of design decisions. Ethical considerations often involve sustainability, community impact, and social equity, ensuring that architecture responds to people's and the environment's needs. Aesthetically, architects are concerned with creating spaces that evoke emotional responses, harmonise with their surroundings, and contribute to cultural expression. The technical dimension emphasises the materiality, structure, and engineering requirements to make these visions a reality. Hence, this triad intends to create a balance between form, function and ethics, enhancing the role of architecture in shaping human experience in a socially responsible manner¹⁰⁴. The responsibility of architecture to society is clear, as Rasmussen, in his renowned work *Experiencing Architecture*, argued, "architecture is produced by ordinary people, for ordinary people; therefore it should be easily comprehensible to all"¹⁰⁵.

One of the prominent architects of our era, whose oeuvres reflect the ethical aesthetic-technical triad, is the renowned Portuguese architect Álvaro Siza, who emphasises the interplay between human experience and technical innovation. Siza's architecture is grounded in spaces designed to be inhabited by humans, and hence, the needs of the inhabitants are prioritised. In an interview, the contemporary Portuguese architect Eduardo Souto de Moura specified this aspect

¹⁰⁰ Le Corbusier, *Towards a New Architecture*, trans. Frederick Etchells (Dover Publications, Inc.,1986), 245.

¹⁰¹ Le Corbusier, *Towards a New Architecture*, trans. Frederick Etchells (Dover Publications, Inc.,1986), 88.

¹⁰² Juhani Pallasmaa, "Architecture as Experience," *Architectural Research in Finland*, vol.2,no.1 (2018): 9-17.

¹⁰³ Vitruvius. *The Ten Books on Architecture*, trans. Morris Hicky Morgan (Harvard University Press, 1914) Book I, Chapter III.

¹⁰⁴ Kenneth Frampton, *Modern Architecture: A Critical History* (Thames & Hudson, 1980), 34-39.

¹⁰⁵ Steen Elier Rasmussen, *Experiencing Architecture* (The MIT Press, 1959), 14.

of Siza's architecture by stating, "What's great about Siza is this!- It is either drawing, or intelligence, or his remarkable ability to link together various factors. It's a kind of alchemy."¹⁰⁶ This exemplary quality of Siza's architecture is clearly manifested in Santa Maria Church in Marco de Canaveses. The church is deeply embedded in a dialogue with the surrounding built environment; one can even define the elevations of the church as one of the main elements of the facade of the city, an urban element of the city's landscape. Connecting two different urban topographic points, Siza designs an urban square at the entrance of the church, which belongs as much to the church as it belongs to the city.

The form of the church is highly influenced by the typical and traditional Portuguese architecture found in many churches in the province of Minho, which are characterised by two white outstanding adjacent towers. The church, though belonging to the contemporary era, replicates some of the same architectural elements of the vernacular churches in Minho, like the ceramic tiles (Azulejo) and the wooden floor finishing¹⁰⁷.

However, according to Souto de Moura, the modernity of his architectural work can be traced through references to several key pioneers of twentieth-century architecture. He dares inspiration from Adolf Loos's Villa Steiner. The use of high window openings designed to allow natural light to enter from above reflects the influence of Alvar Aalto's approach in the design of light in his churches. Similarly, the narrow, linear windows on the east side of the building echo the design of Le Corbusier's La Tourette, integrating both form and function. Additionally, the design of the cross can be linked to the work of Luis Barragan, whose architecture incorporates experience within a modernist framework¹⁰⁸.

In other words, Siza's architecture integrates elements of both vernacular and Modernist traditions. This characteristic of Siza's architecture is manifested in his own words as he argues that "architects don't invent anything; they transform reality"¹⁰⁹, hence creating spaces that are instilled in our era but not limited to it, resulting in an architecture that dwells both in time and space.

¹⁰⁶ Eduardo Souto de Moura, "Exposição Siza (2019)", Serralves, Porto, April 2020, 5 min., 12sec., <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=InmLyFzmi28&t=609s>.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. 7 min.05,sec.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. 8 min.57,sec.

¹⁰⁹ Alvaro Siza as quoted in Juhani Pallasmaa, "Dwelling in Time," *Forum Journal*, Vol.29, no.3. (2015): 17-24.

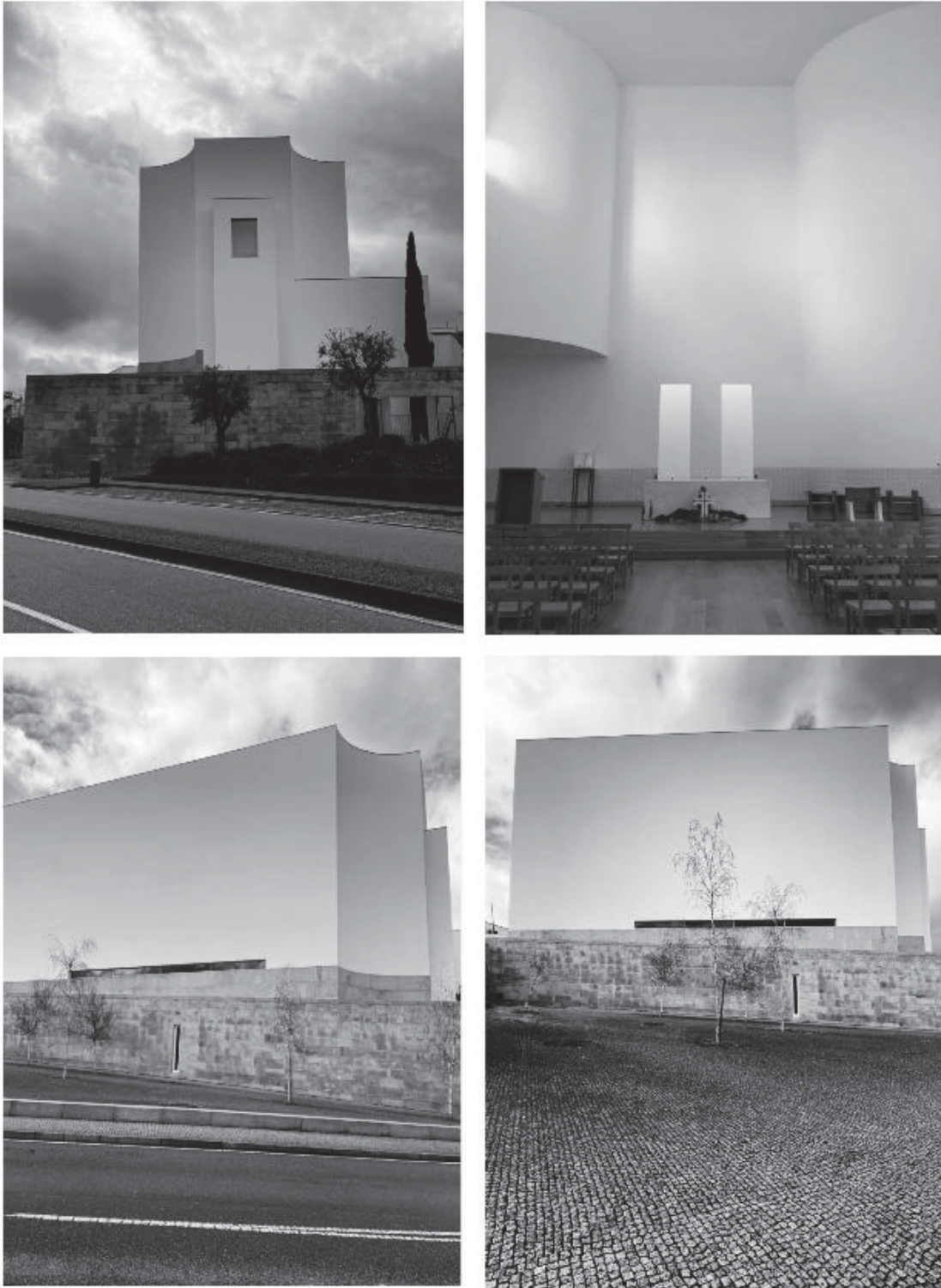


Figure 1. Various photos from the exterior and interior of Santa Maria Church in Marco de Canaveses. Photos Mahdi Alizadeh, May 2024.

Furthermore, the inherent task of architecture can be divided into four scales: the body, the home, the city and the cosmos, which will include a spectrum of immaterial to sensible experiences through the visual, visible, accessible, material and haptic.

Body-Home

The body serves as the fundamental medium through which we engage with and understand the world, asserting our bodily experiences from the basis of knowledge. In this regard, Maurice Merleau-Ponty suggests that our understanding of the world around us is not merely from an intellectual contemplation but rather based on our lived experiences, emphasising the primacy of sensory perception in shaping our awareness of reality. He argues that "We know not through our intellect but through our experience"¹¹⁰. In an architectural context, this is to advocate for the perception of space that is not limited to visual sense and encompasses haptic and sensory inputs to our understanding of space.

In addition, by enhancing the sensory meaning of a home, the common definition of a home is sought to be reconsidered, the physical shelter in comparison to space for mental comfort. As the renowned French philosopher Gaston Bachelard in his renowned book, *The Poetics of Space* suggested, "I should say: the house shelters daydreaming, the house protects the dreamer, the house allows one to dream in peace"¹¹¹, highlighting the relevance of an embodied experience of space over purely visual one is essential for understanding the complexities of spatial perception¹¹². In other words, as Bachelard argues, "inhabited space transcends geometrical space"¹¹³, the traces of the same reasoning regarding the perception of home can be found in the works of Peter Zumthor as he refers to the notion of "carrying one's home"¹¹⁴. Similarly, Pallasmaa introduces the concept of the "mental home"¹¹⁵, which he views not as separate from the physical home but as a continuation of it bound in an existential sense of space.

Home-City

In the Home-City section, the study explores the city not merely as a collection of individual structures but as a collective expression of cultural memory and identity. This view towards the city is also evident in the seminal work of Aldo Rossi, *The Architecture of the City*, where he contends that homes, while private and intimate, contribute to the larger urban fabric, each residence playing a role in the historical continuity of the city. In addition, he argues that the essence of a city emerges from the accumulation of individual experiences and memories associated with homes and buildings, which together form the city's identity; he argues, "One can say that the city itself is the collective memory of its people, and like memory, it is associated with objects and places. The city is the locus of the collective memory".¹¹⁶ In addition, Rossi's view connects the human scale of home life to the larger context of urban planning, suggesting that the city's architecture is inseparable from the emotional and experiential dimensions of its inhabitants' daily lives¹¹⁷.

¹¹⁰ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Donald A. Landes (Routledge, 2012), 298.

¹¹¹ Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas (Beacon Press, 1994), 48.

¹¹² Mahdi Alizadeh, *The Pursuit of Presence in Architecture: A Phenomenological Narrative of Naqsh-e Jahan Square of Isfahan* (University of Porto Master's Thesis, 2022). 09.

¹¹³ Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas (Beacon Press, 1994), 8.

¹¹⁴ Peter Zumthor in conversation with Juhani Pallasmaa, "Architecture Speaks", Aalto University, Helsinki, January 2018, 18 min., 10sec., <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ibwvGn3PkFg>.

¹¹⁵ Ibid. 19 min., 05sec.

¹¹⁶ Aldo Rossi, *The Architecture of the City*, trans. Diane Ghirardo and Joan Ockman (MIT Press, 1982), 130.

¹¹⁷ Ibid. 112.

City-Cosmos

The relationship between the city and the cosmos can be perceived through the lens of human interaction with the built and natural environment, especially how cities are designed to connect with larger ecological systems. This is apparent in the work of Jan Gehl, in his book, *Cities for People*, highlights the critical role of green infrastructure and sustainable urban design, arguing that the primary role of a city is to optimise accessibility to natural spaces and integrate environmental considerations into their development¹¹⁸. By enhancing the construction ecosystem through architecture, one can advocate for compact, walkable cities that reduce the inhabitants' dependency on cars, reduce energy consumption, and minimise ecological impact, ensuring that urban expansion respects the balance between the built environment and nature.

Conclusion

This paper intends to explore the multifaceted role of architecture across varying scales, specifically rethinking and reinterpreting the relationships between body and home (Corpo-Casa), home and city (Casa-Cidade), and city and cosmos (Cidade-Cosmos). The paper suggests that spatial perception, at these different scales, is mediated through a continuum of experiences, ranging from the immaterial to the tangible. These experiences are shaped by a spectrum that includes visual, visible, accessible, material, and haptic dimensions, highlighting how architecture engages physical, sensory and experiential aspects of space. The paper is inspired by an optional course at the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Porto entitled “Dwelling the Future” (Habitar o Futuro), which is in the pursuit of engaging on the topic on both a theoretical and practical level.

¹¹⁸ Jan Gehl, *Cities for People* (Island Press, 2010), 105.

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