



la Biennale di Venezia

16. Mostra
Internazionale
di Architettura
Partecipazioni Nazionali

Curators
Nuno Brandão Costa
Sérgio Mah

PUBLIC WITHOUT RHETORIC

PORTUGUESE PAVILION
16th International Architecture Exhibition
La Biennale di Venezia
26.05 – 25.11.2018
Palazzo Giustinian Lolin
Fondazione Ugo e Olga Levi



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PORTUGUESE PAVILION

**PUBLIC
WITHOUT
RHETORIC**

**Press Kit
March, 2018**



**Public Without Rhetoric is the title of the
Portuguese Pavilion at the 16th International
Architecture Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia 2018
Press Release**

Public Without Rhetoric is the project selected to represent Portugal at the 16th International Architecture Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia. The curators Nuno Brandão Costa and Sérgio Mah propose a tour of the “Public Building” of Portuguese origin through 12 works created at a time when Western Europe is confronted with its limits and possibilities and as architecture manifests its nonconformist nature in reinforcing its role in political and social intervention.

The central theme given to the Biennale Architettura 2018 in the vision of its curators Yvone Farrell and Shelley McNamara, *Freespace* “celebrates architecture’s ability to find additional and unexpected generosity in every project, even in the most private, defensive, exclusive and commercially restrictive conditions.”

The Portuguese Official Representation this year is an affirmation of Architecture as a celebration of the experience of public space, highlighting its fundamental importance in the creation of experience in contemporary societies. The creation of relationships, dynamics and flows through experimental work in public territory builds and promotes new networks and opportunities.

Public Without Rhetoric is thus the formal basis for a reflection on architecture in public space, part of the 12 projects created in the last ten years by different generations of Portuguese architects.

The exhibition presents the architectural projects through drawings, models and photographs. In parallel, the inhabited buildings are shown through a set of films commissioned from Portuguese artists.

The works chosen by the curators demonstrate the diversity of programmes and scales in which Portuguese architects work, emphasising their universalist culture and cross-generational excellence, with representation of architects born in every decade from the 1950s to the 1980s.

Grouped together to create formal and spatial relationships, the works are exhibited without chronological or generational order, thus escaping any hierarchical reading. The intention is rather to form a compact whole, demonstrating the coherence and rationality of Portuguese architecture without obscuring the idiosyncrasy and charisma of each individual building.

In the exhibition building, the videos by four contemporary Portuguese artists will be presented exploring the current state of the works, specifically in regards to the different methods and dynamics of appropriation employed by the people who inhabit the buildings and fulfil the public mission of these works to various extents.

The overall proposal of the exhibition is thus for its initial impact to be one of greater subjectivity and vibration, which is then further developed in the exhibition rooms with a more objective and architectonic analysis of the works through conventional and current elements of their representation.

For the first time ever, the project representing Portugal in Venice is the result of a public competition promoted by the Portuguese government through the Directorate-General for the Arts. This unprecedented selection model which will be repeated in the future allows the government to issue a challenge to the nation's artists, architects and curators to develop artistic proposals for the Portuguese Representations at the International Art and Architecture Exhibitions of La Biennale di Venezia.

The Official Portuguese Representation will be installed in the Palazzo Giustinian Lolin, located near the Ponte dell'Accademia in front of the Grand Canal and the seat of the Fondazione Ugo e Olga Levi, which is dedicated to music education and with which the Directorate-General for the Arts established an agreement for the use of its space for the year 2018. The Palace dates from the seventeenth century and is considered one of the first works of the architect Baldassare Longhena (1598-1682). The complex consists of two buildings joined by two passages that surround a beautiful walled courtyard.

The official inauguration of the Portuguese Pavilion will take place at 4:00pm on 24 May 2018 at the Palazzo Giustinian Lolin, headquarters of the Fondazione Ugo e Olga Levi.

The 16th International Architecture Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia will be open to the public from 26 May to 25 November 2018.

“We are interested in going beyond the visual, emphasizing the role of architecture in the choreography of daily life. (...) Architecture is the play of light, sun, shade, moon, air, wind, gravity in ways that reveal the mysteries of the world. All of these resources are free.”

Yvonne Farrell and Shelley McNamara

Freespace is the challenge launched by the curators of the 16th International Architecture Exhibition - *La Biennale di Venezia*.

Through its duo of curators, Nuno Brandão Costa and Sérgio Mah, Portugal responds to this challenge with *Public Without Rhetoric*.

The Portuguese Pavilion invites us to reflect on the role of architecture in contemporary societies and allows us to understand the intention of the architect within the context of the larger work that is the city.

Public construction works are inserted in their setting, take ground and establish themselves as an integral part of a place. The passage of time provides new forms of spatiality and renewed relational possibilities with the community that inhabits them. The architect's mastery opens the field to thought and recreates public and collective space.

From this conceptual basis, *Public Without Rhetoric* presents to the public a set of twelve works of recent Portuguese architecture, exhibited without any considerations of a temporal, generational or hierarchical nature. Rather, the twelve projects are presented with a view to the formal and spatial relationships they create between themselves, forming a cohesive and representative selection of the rationality of Portuguese architecture. The twelve public building projects give substance to a reflection on the nature of architecture in the public space.

Located next to the Ponte dell'Accademia in the Grand Canal, the Palazzo Giustinian Lolin provides the Portuguese Pavilion with a new centrality and cultural frame. The exhibition uncovers various relationships and scales inside the rooms of this 17th century baroque palace, with each work accentuating the vigour and nonconformity of Portuguese contemporary architecture as a form of political and social intervention. The limits and possibilities of habitability in these twelve buildings are also recreated by four contemporary artists, who present films featuring each of the works exhibited.

Public Without Rhetoric is an emblematic exhibition for the Portuguese government, not least for being the first Portuguese exhibition selected for an international Biennale through a process of public competition, an unprecedented model in Portugal. From now on, this process will allow more of the nation's artists and curators to access and participate in artistic projects as part of Portuguese Representations at the International Exhibitions of Architecture and Visual Arts of *La Biennale di Venezia*.

It should be noted that the Portuguese Pavilion is the result of the efforts of a large number of collaborators, supporters and partners, who are united in their commitment to presenting our finest national architecture in the form which, in constructing the public sphere, concerns all citizens. We extend our thanks to all contributors. This exhibition also belongs to you.

LUIS FILIPE DE CASTRO MENDES
Minister of Culture

Public Without Rhetoric

Coinciding with the economic crisis, the last ten years have seen a movement away from public construction projects, with the predominant neoliberalism of Western Europe viewing them as unnecessarily wasteful, misguided and even harmful.

The construction of public infrastructure such as cultural, educational and sporting facilities is in line with the idea of civilisational evolution and progressive social equity. It simultaneously rebuilds and rehabilitates the form of the city, and qualitatively and culturally renews public space.

In the decade spanning the beginning of the crisis in 2007 to the present, despite the sharp decrease in this type of investment, a significant number of high-quality public works have been built, embodying the resilience of some central, regional, local and institutional niches of decision-making. These include both entities that continued their commitment to projects from before the onset of the crisis and others that assumed responsibility for launching new countercyclical projects during the same period.

These centres of resistance were matched by Portuguese architects.

The discipline's characteristic passion, charisma and voluntary spirit was enhanced and became associated with a very clear understanding of the social and political role of architecture, despite a highly adverse environment for its practice.

This selection of 12 works constructed over the last 10 years offers a short history of the most recent 'public buildings' of Portuguese origin. Each of these buildings reflects the ideas behind 'Freespace', the central theme of the 16th International Architecture Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia.

This choice of works seeks to demonstrate the diversity of programmes and scales in which Portuguese architects work, emphasising their generalist culture and cross-generational excellence, with representation of architects born in every decade from the 1930s to the 1980s.

The exhibition will also include a series of films exploring the current state of the works, specifically in regards to the different methods and dynamics of appropriation employed by the people who inhabit the buildings and fulfil the public mission of these works to varying degrees. The films are produced by four contemporary Portuguese artists with consolidated and widely recognised bodies of work in the visual arts and cinema and with previous experience in the field of architectural representation.

NUNO BRANDÃO COSTA
SÉRGIO MAH
Curadores

List of works

- 1 **Arquipélago - Center for Contemporary Arts**, São Miguel (Azores) – João Mendes Ribeiro and -é+ (Cristina Guedes and Francisco Vieira de Campos)
- 2 **Public Library and Regional Archives**, Angra do Heroísmo (Azores) – Inês Lobo
- 3 **Olivier Debré Contemporary Art Centre**, Tours – Aires Mateus e associados (Manuel Mateus and Francisco Mateus)
- 4 **Gruta das Torres Visitor Centre**, Pico (Azores) – SAMI (Inês Vieira da Silva and Miguel Vieira)
- 5 **Naples Metro**, Naples – Álvaro Siza, Eduardo Souto Moura and Tiago Figueiredo
- 6 **Hangar Nautical Centre**, Montemor-o-Velho – Miguel Figueira
- 7 **I3S, Institute of Innovation and Research in Health**, Porto – Serôdio Furtado Associados (Isabel Furtado and João Pedro Serôdio)
- 8 **Douro Breakwaters**, Foz do Douro, Porto – Carlos Prata
- 9 **Park pavilions for Albarquel Urban Park**, Setúbal – Ricardo Bak Gordon
- 10 **Pavillions for the exhibition, “Live Uncertainty: an Exhibition after the 32nd Bienal de São Paulo”**, at Serralves Foundation – Depa (Carlos Azevedo, João Crisóstomo and Luís Sobral), Diogo Aguiar Studio, FAHR 021.3 (Filipa Fróis Almeida e Hugo Reis), Fala Atelier (Ana Luísa Soares, Filipe Magalhães and Ahmed Belkhodja), Ottotto (Teresa Otto)
- 11 **Thalia Theatre**, Lisbon – Gonçalo Byrne and Barbas Lopes Arquitectos (Diogo Seixas Lopes and Patrícia Barbas)
- 12 **Lisbon Cruise Ship Terminal**, Lisbon – João Luís Carrilho da Graça

Invited artists

André Cepeda
Catarina Mourão
Nuno Cera
Salomé Lamas



1 — Arquipélago - Center for Contemporary Arts, São Miguel (Azores), João Mendes Ribeiro and -é+ (Cristina Guedes and Francisco Vieira de Campos).
Photography: José Campos



2 — Public Library and Regional Archives, Angra do Heroísmo (Azores), Inês Lobo. Photography: Atelier Inês Lobo



3 — Olivier Debré Contemporary Art Centre, Tours, Aires Mateus e associados (Manuel Mateus and Francisco Mateus). Photography: Benoit Fougeirol



4 — Gruta das Torres Visitor Centre, Pico (Azores), SAMI (Inês Vieira da Silva and Miguel Vieira).
Photography : Fernando Guerra / Sérgio Guerra



5 — Naples Metro, Naples, Álvaro Siza, Eduardo Souto Moura and Tiago Figueiredo. Photography: StudioF64



6 — Hangar Nautical Centre, Montemor-o-Velho, Miguel Figueira. Photography: Márcio Oliveira



7 — I3S, Institute of Innovation and Research in Health, Porto, Serôdio Furtado Associados (Isabel Furtado and João Pedro Serôdio). Photography: Luís Ferreira Alves



8 — Douro Breakwaters, Foz do Douro, Porto, Carlos Prata. Photography: João Ferrand



9 — Park pavilions for Albarquel Urban Park, Setúbal, Ricardo Bak Gordon.



10 — Pavillions for the exhibition, “Live Uncertainty: an Exhibition after the 32nd Bienal de São Paulo”, at Serralves Foundation, Depa (Carlos Azevedo, João Crisóstomo and Luís Sobral), Diogo Aguiar Studio, FAHR 021.3 (Filipa Fróis Almeida e Hugo Reis), Fala Atelier (Ana Luísa Soares, Filipe Magalhães and Ahmed Belkhodja), Ottotto (Teresa Otto). Photography: José Campos, Fernando Guerra, Paulo Catrica, Inês D’Orey.



11 — Thalia Theatre, Lisbon, Gonçalo Byrne and Barbas Lopes Arquitectos (Diogo Seixas Lopes and Patrícia Barbas). Photography: Daniel Malhão



12 — Lisbon Cruise Ship Terminal, Lisbon, João Luís Carrilho da Graça. Photography: Rita Burmester

Bios

Nuno Brandão Costa (b. 1970) graduated in 1994 from the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Porto, where from 2001 he subsequently worked as a lecturer and completed a doctorate in 2015. From 1992 to 1993, he studied with Herzog & de Meuron in Basel, Switzerland, and from 1993 to 1997, he collaborated with José Fernando Gonçalves & Paulo Providência in Porto, Portugal. In 1998, he was awarded first prize in a competition to design the Library of the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences at Universidade Nova in Lisbon. His work was exhibited at the 9th International Architecture Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia in 2004; at the São Paulo Architecture Biennale in 2005; at 'Portugal Now' at Cornell University, New York in 2007; at 'Tradition is innovation' in Tokyo in 2011; at the the Milan Architecture Triennale in 2004 and 2014; and at the 2nd Biennale of Architecture in Chicago in 2017. He directed the exhibition projects of the Lisbon Architecture Triennale in 2007 and 2016. He was nominated for the 'Mies Van der Rohe' award in 2008; for the BSI - Swiss Architectural Award in 2012; and for the FAD Prize in 2017. He was awarded the 'Jornal Expresso/SIC' award in 2004; the Secil Prize in 2008; and the Vale da Gândara Award in 2010/2011. He is Visiting Professor at the ETSA of the University of Navarra, at the Estudio Barozzi University of Girona and at the EHL CAMPUS Lausanne. He is guest critic at the School of Architecture of Minho University (EAUM), at the Department of Architecture of the University of Coimbra (DARQ), at the École Polytechnique Federale de Lausanne (ENAC-EPFL), at the FAPyD-UNR of Rosario and at the Harvard Graduate School of Design (GSD), Cambridge, USA. He was a coordinator and professor of the Advanced Studies in Architecture Project (EAPA 2014/2015) at the FAUP. He has contributed to conferences and seminars at faculties of architecture in Germany, Argentina, Bulgaria, Colombia, Croatia, France, Italy, Macedonia, Portugal, Republic of Ireland, Spain and Switzerland.

Sérgio Mah (b. 1970) lives and works in Lisbon. He holds a bachelor's degree in Sociology and a master's degree in Communication Sciences. He is currently Professor of Photography and Visual Arts at the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences at Universidade Nova in Lisbon and at the Faculty of Fine Arts at the University of Lisbon. He is the author of several essays on artists, their work and various other topics relating to contemporary visual arts. He is co-author of the documentary series 'Entre Imagens' for the public television channel RTP2. As a curator, he has been responsible for numerous solo and group exhibitions for artists such as Thomas Demand, Walid Raad, Jeff Wall, Francisco Tropa, Victor Burgin, David Claerbout, Hiroshi Sugimoto, Pedro Costa, Albert Renger-Patzsch and Ângelo de Sousa. He has worked with several centres of art and museums both in Portugal and abroad, such as Jeu de Paume (Paris), Reina Sofia National Art Museum (Madrid), Deichthorhallen Hamburg, Bernardo Museum, Telefónica Foundation (Madrid) and the Thyssen-Bornemisza National Museum. He was the commissioner-general of the 2003 and 2005 editions of LisboaPhoto and of the 2008, 2009 and 2010 editions of PhotoEspaña. He was the commissioner of the Portuguese Pavilion at the Biennale Arte 2011.



Opening

24 May, 4 pm

Opening Hours

26 May to 25 November –
10am to 6pm

Closed on Mondays, except May 28th,
August 13th, September 3rd and
November 19th
Closing Day: 25th November

Address

Palazzo Giustinian Lolin
Fondazione Ugo e Olga Levi
San Marco 2893 I-30124 Venezia VE,
Itália
(Near by Accademia Bridge)
Boat / ACCADEMIA
Line: 1, 2 and N

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Curators

Nuno Brandão Costa
Sérgio Mah

Organization

Ministry of Culture of Portugal
Luís Filipe de Castro Mendes,
Minister of Culture
Miguel Honrado, Secretary of
State of Culture

Commissioner

Directorate-General for the Arts

**Executive Production &
Communication**

Costanza Ronchetti
Catarina Correia
Sofia Baptista
Susana Neves

Exhibition design

Nuno Brandão Costa
Sérgio Mah

Represented Architects

Aires Mateus e Associados (Manuel
Mateus and Francisco Mateus)
Álvaro Siza
Barbas Lopes Arquitectos (Patrícia
Barbas and Diogo Seixas Lopes)
Carlos Prata
depA (Carlos Azevedo, João
Crisóstomo and Luís Sobral)
Diogo Aguiar Studio
Eduardo Souto de Moura
FAHR 021.3 (Filipa Frois Almeida
e Hugo Reis)
Fala Atelier (Ana Luísa Soares, Filipe
Magalhães and Ahmed Belkhdja)
Gonçalo Byrne
Inês Lobo
João Luís Carrilho da Graça
João Mendes Ribeiro
Menos é Mais (Cristina Guedes
and Francisco Vieira de Campos)
Miguel Figueira

Ottotto (Teresa Otto)
Ricardo Bak Gordon
SAMI (Miguel Vieira and Inês Vieira
da Silva)
Serôdio Furtado Associados (João
Pedro Serôdio and Isabel Furtado)
Tiago Figueiredo

Invited artists

André Cepeda
Catarina Mourão
Nuno Cera
Salomé Lamas

Exhibition production

Rita Leite

Exhibition local production

João Moreira
Sílvia Bortolini

Local Production and Management

Dumbo Design Studio, Raul Betti

**Project Verifying Act and Feasibility
Study**

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Fabio Cappellato

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Sicurtecno: Fabio Rocchesso

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Official Hashtags

La Biennale di Venezia
#BiennaleArchitettura2018
#Freespace

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