

## TOWARDS A NEW MONUMENTALITY: THE CREATION OF AN URBAN CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

### K NOVEJ MONUMENTALITE: TVORBA URBÁNNEJ KULTÚRNEJ KRAJINY

The Gulbenkian Foundation Headquarters and Park during the construction, detail of the Auditorium, 1964

Riaditeľstvo Gulbenkianovej nadácie a park počas výstavby, detail auditéria, 1964



Zdroj Source: Calouste Gubenkian Foundation Archive, © Mário de Oliveira

V období po druhej svetovej vojne – ako sa ukázalo – sa vzdialil pokus o založenie celosvetovej novej monumentality modernej dogme sledujúcej sylogizmus Lewisa Mumforda „Ak je to monument, nemôže byť moderný a ak je moderný, nemôže byť monumentom“. V rámci snáh nájsť spojenie monumentálneho výrazu a progresívnej ideológie si moderní architekti od východnej Európy po západnú začali uvedomovať nevyhnutnosť vloženia kolektívneho symbolického obsahu do novej estetiky hľadajúc pritom spôsob oživenia monumentality ako „ľudského výrazu tých najvznešenejších kolektívnych kultúrnych túžob“. Tento príspevok pristupuje k problematike novej monumentality prostredníctvom analýzy projektu lisabonského riaditeľstva a parku Nadácie Calouste Gulbenkian, ktorý k jeho konečnému verejnemu uvedeniu do života priviedol rozsiahly tím technických pracovníkov v priebehu dlhého procesu trvajúceho od roku 1956 do jeho otvorenia v roku 1969. Tento

The Lisbon headquarters and park of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (FCG), located in the *Parque de Santa Gertrudes*, created the public image of the Gulbenkian Foundation: an expression of culture that became synonymous in Portugal with social progress and thus a sign of a new monumentality. This aspiration was defined at the outset by its commissioner, the chairman of the foundation, José de Azeredo Perdigão (1896 – 1993), and brought to fruition by an extensive team of technical staff, through a process lasting from 1956 until its opening in 1969.

Alberto Pessoa (1919 – 1985), Pedro Cid (1925 – 1983) and Ruy Jervis d’Athouguia (1917 – 2006), the architects of the building complex, together with the landscape architects António Viana Barreto (1924 – 2012) and Gonçalo Ribeiro Telles (1922 –), translated Calouste Gulbenkian’s legacy into a modern version of an epic cultural landscape. Within this landscape, best described as a designed environment of natural and man-made topography, of hard and soft landscaping, of interlocking spaces and forms, the diffusion of culture has been understood by the public as a

stavebný komplex prepájajúci výtvarné umenia, architektúru a záhradnú architektúru, anticipoval modernizáciu portugalskej spoločnosti, v tom čase stále ešte hlboko ponorenej v diktátorskom režime Estado Novo. Už len samotný vznik nadácie bol náznakom rodiacej sa slobodnej a demokratickej spoločnosti, ktorá sa však v Portugalsku stala realitou až po roku 1974.

Argumentom tohto príspevku je, že to boli práve budovy, ktoré vytvorili image Gulbenkianovej nadácie, a tak prispeli k definícii istej formy novej monumentality reprezentujúcej pojem kultúry, ktorá sa následne stala synonymom sociálneho progresu. Image nadácie je previazaný s jej architektúrou a s pravidlami, ktoré usmerňujú projekt budovy: priestor organizovaný ako urbánna kultúrna krajina, zostavený ako mega štruktúra obidvoch jej prvkov, budov a parku, ktorý ich rozširuje a fungujúca ako celok v mnohom pripomínajúci topografickú skulptúru schopnú prepojiť modernosť spolu s monumentalitou.

voluntary “offering”, reversing the enshrined tradition of imposed, doctrinaire cultural values.

Involving art, architecture and landscaping, the built ensemble anticipated the modernisation of Portuguese society, which was still immersed in the dictatorial regime of Antonio Salazar’s *Estado Novo*<sup>1/</sup>. The creation of the Gulbenkian Foundation hinted at the free and democratic world that would only become a reality for Portugal after 1974. Everything in the realm of culture undertaken by the Foundation up to that point – which included scholarships that enabled Portuguese active in the arts or sciences to work in the main research hubs of the world, as well as social assistance and support of the arts and sciences within Portugal – had been steeped in a discourse of modernity<sup>2/</sup> still unknown to the Portuguese until that time. This new discourse would spread as the Foundation’s work began to benefit the community. The expression “when ‘modern’ was not a style but a cause”<sup>3/</sup>, frequently used to express the transforming power of architecture, gained particular significance in the Portugal of the 1960’s, because the Gulbenkian Foundation was indeed a “cause” of

culture and was understood to be an engine of urban progress.

As such, the Gulbenkian Building and Park signalled a new understanding of the values of monumentality, even on an international level. The concept of a monument that conveys from within itself a sense of representation, symbolic value, creates an architectural image that conveys a civic, cultural, political and ethical agenda. As initially conceived, the building was meant to be a mega-structure that blended into the surrounding park, in line with the foundation's image and the precepts that guided the design of the building: space organized like an urban cultural landscape <sup>141</sup>; created as a mega-structure both by the building and the park that extends it, and functioning as a whole much like a topographic sculpture capable of bringing together modernity and monumentality.

In the post-war period, the attempt to establish a "new monumentality" <sup>151</sup> endeavoured to pass beyond the modern dogma that claimed: "if it's a monument it can't be modern, and if it's modern it can't be a monument" <sup>161</sup>. In their efforts to find a blend of monumental expression and progressive ideology, modern architects began to realise that it was necessary to include collective symbolic content into the new aesthetics, seeking to revive monumentality as "the human expression of the most elevated collective cultural desires" <sup>171</sup>. The organisation CIAM (*Congrès International d'Architecture Moderne*) itself undertook to debate issues relating to community, the value of links with tradition, and the renewed importance of rebuilding the "heart of the city" as recalled in 1951 at the VII CIAM convention in Hoddesdon.

Responding to this need for re-centrality, for creating spaces that could, through their use and function, constitute urban anchors, the creative, liberating and actively critical dimension of the arts came to be seen as playing a balancing role in urban societies <sup>181</sup>. Hence, the strategy for the reconstruction of the post-war city made investments in cultural programmes capable of redefining the centrality of urban life. It was in this context that the question of arts or cultural complexes – and accordingly, the search for an image that could function as an urban reference for the new era – dominated the agenda in eastern and

western European countries in the late 1950s. The issue was very much one of defining a new monumentality – in other words, a monumentality that embodied development and contemporaneity.

As a result, a number of such projects began to emerge in the post-war years: London received the South Bank Arts Centre, built around the Royal Festival Hall (1951, Robert Matthew and Leslie Martin); in New York it was the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts (1955 – 1969, Harrison, Johnson and Abramowitz); in West Berlin, the *Kulturforum* complex centred on Hans Scharoun's *Philharmonie* (1957 – 1963); Stockholm acquired the *Kulturhuset* (1965, Peter Celsing); Helsinki received the *Kulttuuritalo* (1955 – 1958) and the *Finlandia-Talo* (1967 – 1971), both designed by Alvar Aalto; and Le Havre gained the *Musée des Beaux-Arts* (1958 – 1961, Lagneau and Audigier). A strikingly similar process occurred, almost in parallel, with great intensity in the former Soviet Bloc cities as well, presenting a typology of abstract forms to project an international and progressive image. The Houses of Culture built throughout the countries of the Soviet Bloc in the 1960s are an eloquent example of the search of a new monumentality: to cite some of the Slovak projects, namely the Agriculture University in Nitra (1961–1966; Vladimír Dedeček, Rudolf Minovský) or the *Slovak Cultural Society: Matica Slovenská in Martin* (1962 – 1975, Dušan Kuzma, Anton Cimmermann). As Henrieta Moravčíková states in her contribution "Monumentality in Slovak architecture of the 1960s and 1970s", these "works that appeared from the end of the 1950s are much more expressive in the context of Slovak architecture" <sup>191</sup> arguing that "an evolutionary 'shift of the boundaries of possible things' intended to reform the political establishment into the so-called 'socialism with a human face'. Nevertheless, architectural change in specific circumstances could bring real social changes" <sup>101</sup> as happened under one of the remaining fascist dictatorships in the "Lisbon Cultural Centre".

In the Portuguese context, reconstruction projects were funded or subsidised by the central or local governments. The fact that the "Lisbon Cultural Centre" was to be financed privately by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation made it something of an exception, even if its intentions, scale

and ambition were similar to its contemporaries.

In fact, the question of monumentality, within the framework of modernity, was initially considered heresy. Clear proof of this view is that in the "Athens Charter" <sup>111</sup>, green spaces were unequivocally held in high regard as the great modern urban achievement, and the concept of the monument was considered entirely useless <sup>121</sup>. Yet, as history shows, that public works have always been linked to a notion of monumental representation. Over time, they emerge as the spaces in which the community gained a sense of itself, and the formal expression of these buildings expressed a *Zeitgeist* clearly understood by all. It was unanimously accepted that the affirmation of the Modern Movement and the culture to which it tried to give voice must represent a complete break from the past. That past was, for the most part, a recent one – the nineteenth century, filled with revivalist and historicist concessions like the referenced caricatures of centuries when classical imagery ruled. This past had to be countered in the name of progress and of a budding new society that sought its inspiration in the aesthetics of the machine. How could the modern ideals of functionality and rationality, along with the *Neues Sachlichkeit*, be wedded to a monumentality until then defined solely by history? Or rather, its historical aspect consisted in the sense of having been forged peacefully over the centuries and captured paradigmatically in the new project-buildings of the nineteenth century city, based on the importance of the façade. Hence there was a need to create new meanings for public buildings in modern life, a need for a new monumentality <sup>131</sup>. This target shaped the agenda of architecture and research in the second half of the century. Yet its most intensive manifestation appeared far from the old world of Europe: in the new capitals of the "developing world", such as Brasilia and Chandigarh, and in the modern university campuses of Mexico City and Caracas.

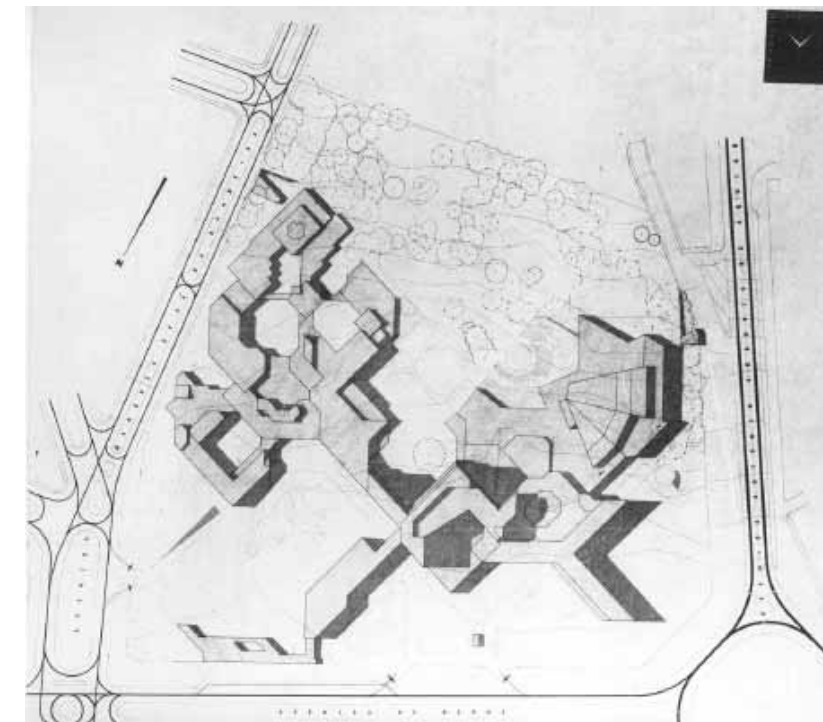
In this context, the competition for the design of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation complex represented an unexpected challenge for large-scale architecture, since the search for a new concept of monumentality was the most innovative element of this project. In truth, the generous legacy of Calouste Sarkis Gulbenkian (1869 – 1955) allowed

Solution proposed by team C, maquette of implantation and implantation plan, 1960

Návrh riešenia vypracoval tím C, model implantácie a plán implantácie, 1960



Source Zdroj: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Archive



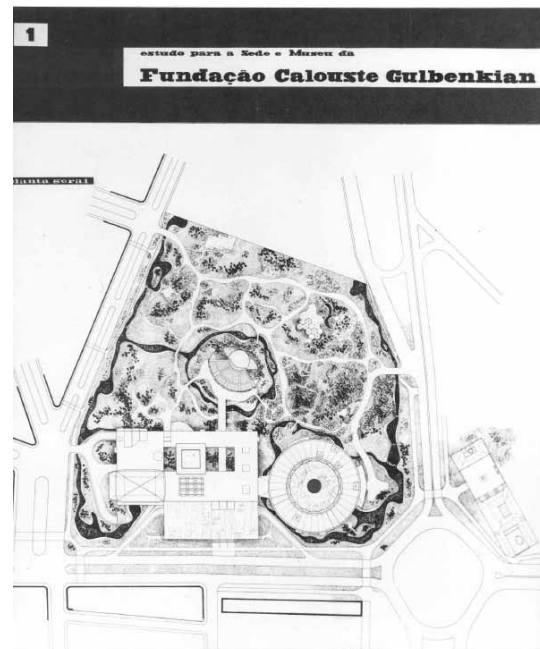
Source Zdroj: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Archive



Source Zdroj: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Archive

Solution proposed by team B, maquette of implantation and implantation plan, 1960

Návrh riešenia vypracoval tím B, model implantácie a plán implantácie, 1960



Source Zdroj: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Archive

for the project's unusually large scale, as well as the high standard of quality in the building's construction. Unusually, the completed building stayed true to its design and bore no marks of superfluous ostentation or self-aggrandisement; on the contrary, it displayed restraint and sobriety, which in turn contributed to the image of modernity<sup>14/</sup> and the prestige of the Foundation itself. Thus, in the framework of Portuguese architectural production, it helped to advance the cause of the "new monumentality" that had so eagerly been sought in modern historiography.

#### PLACE AND PROCESS

The sequential process in which the building project was carried out reveals the foundation's commitment to the perfect fulfilment of the main goal: "do more, do better and do differently"<sup>15/</sup>. The procedure was exemplary, from the choice of the site to the setting up of the Projects and Works Service (SPO), from the fine-tuning of the design to the composition of the teams of consultants, from the choice of the competition winner to the conclusion of the building process.

The choice of site was considered of the utmost importance from the beginning: it was essential to find an urban site that could embrace its future public role, i.e. to become the dynamic focus for the city of Lisbon as it spread towards the north. The new building would be the pretext for the conscious creation of the image of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, as an interpretation of its founder's desire to see art and nature brought together.

The site, the *Parque de Santa Gertrudes* at *Palhavã*, was chosen for its seven hundred hectares of wooded area in the northwest outskirts of the city, an area that would, in the future, become one of the main city cores around the soon-to-be-created *Praça de Espanha*.

The methodology ensured a broad range of skills among the architects chosen through the competition, the national and international consultants and the technical specialists. Francisco Keil do Amaral (1910 – 1975) and Carlos Ramos (1897 – 1969) were the Portuguese architects chosen by the Foundation to work alongside Franco Albini (1905 – 1977) (who had been responsible for the creation and renovation of some of the more re-

cent museums in Italy) and Sir Leslie Martin (1908 – 2000) from England (professor of Architecture at Cambridge, a former London County Council architect, and co-designer of the Royal Festival Hall, then currently working on the extension of the Oxford University Library with funding from the Foundation), thus forming the group of permanent consultants. Georges Henry Rivière (1897 – 1985), an innovative museum planner and also Director-General of UNESCO-ICOM, and William Allen (1914 – 1998), an architect from the Building Research Centre in London, specialising in architectural technique, with particular expertise in the area of building physics, worked under Luis Guimarães Lobato, the head of the SPO, which was formed by the architects Sommer Ribeiro and Sotó Mayor.

The competition was announced in 1959, after two years of careful study and research. These two years led to an in-depth, comprehensive, and careful definition of what was sought: the head-quarter offices, the museum, the library and the auditoriums could have diverse, specific volumes, provided they were capable of constituting a solidly structured architectural complex, in keeping with the importance of the institution and its prominent role in the life of the city<sup>16/</sup>.

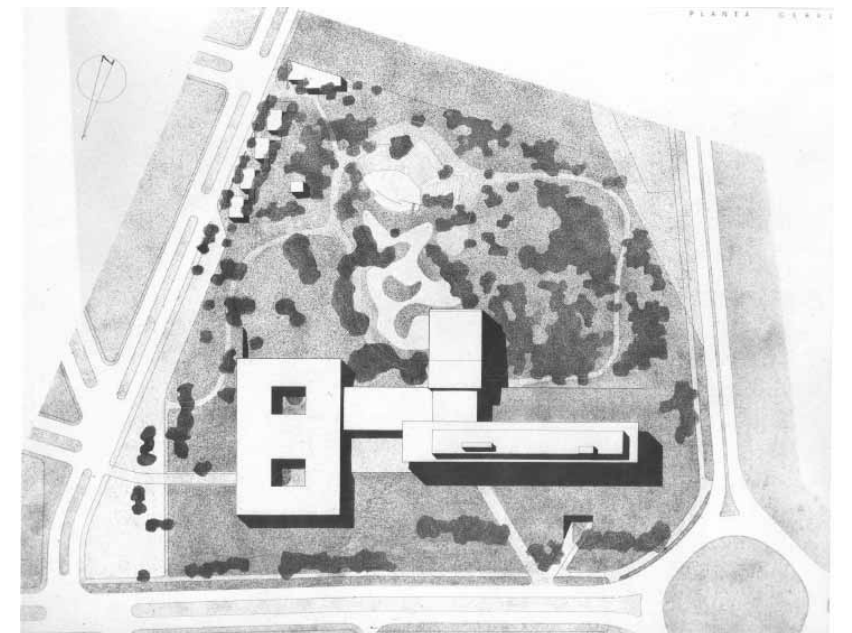
#### MONUMENTALITY AND THE CRITICAL REVISION OF THE MODERN MOVEMENT

The three projects in the competition reflected the search for a monumental design, indicative of the revision in the view of the Modern Movement in architecture at that time, with its questioning of the International Style and the need for a more humanist approach. They also showed the influences of the most diverse trends of the epoch.

Composed of Arnaldo Araújo (1925 – 1982), Frederico George ((1915 – 1994) and Manuel Laginha (1925 – 1983), the team conceived a plan for a group of buildings dispersed in the park, based on the open spaces between the trees to form an organic arrangement. With its idealism, the ensemble hints at the many spatial experiments undertaken by the European organic and expressionist trends, in opposition to rationalist asceticism. A concept that expressly distanced itself from the more canonical architecture of the Modern Movement, it was based on the idea of



Source Zdroj: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Archive

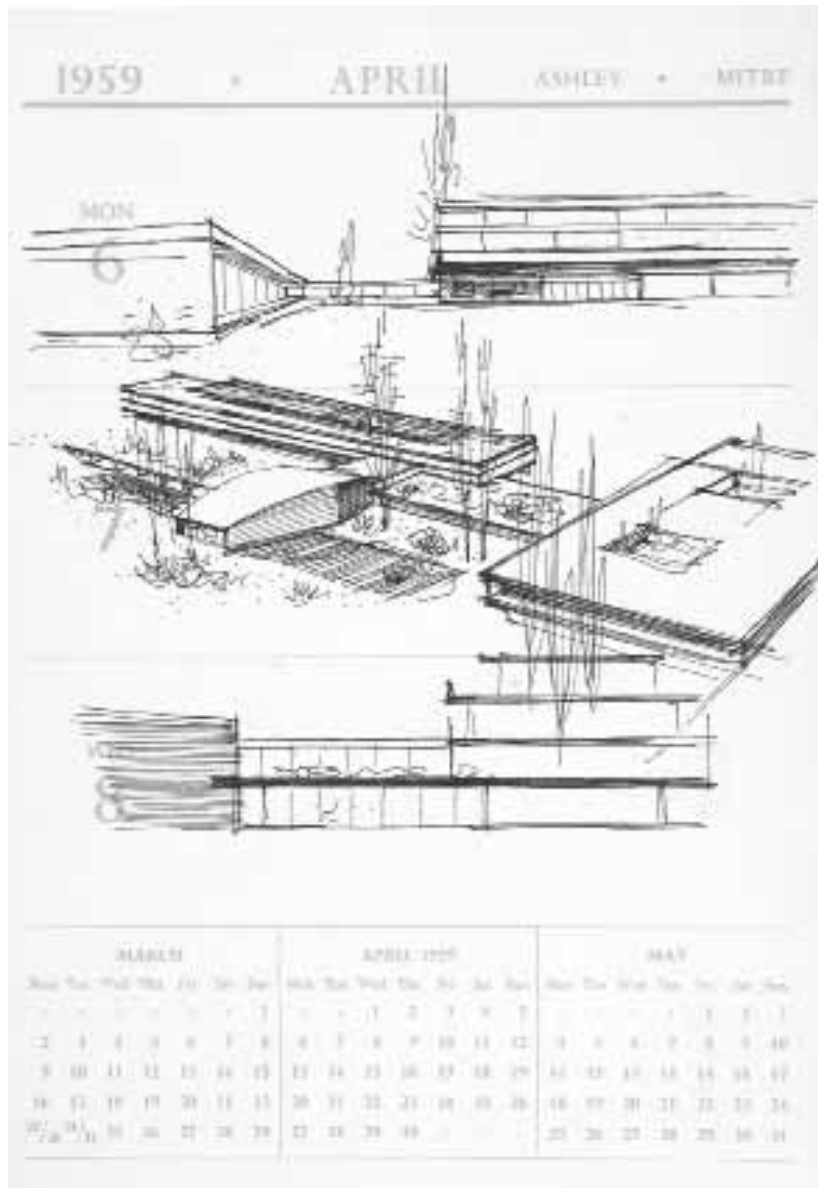


Source Zdroj: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Archive

Solution proposed by team A, maquette of implantation and implantation plan, 1960

Návrh riešenia vypracoval tím A, model implantácie a plán implantácie, 1960

Studies, Ruy Athouguia's briefcase, 1959  
 Stúdie, zložka Ruya Athouguia, 1959



Source Zdroj: Ana Tostoes Archive

volumetric fragmentation, spatial complexity and a circulation path that went beyond its merely functional aspect and occupied the entire site. Certain affinities were visible with Nordic Empiricism, Italian revisionism, or the expressionism of Hans Scharoun, particularly his work following the Darmstadt Conference, as exemplified in the *Geschwister Scholl* <sup>177</sup> design, in which the various facilities were dispersed through the park by geometric articulations, successively adapted to the various ground levels and the buildings' diverse functions, creating a series of patios.

The other two solutions reflected a more rational approach, with the clear intention of concentrating the mass of the buildings in the area roughly adjacent to the main avenue (*Avenida de Berna*), the higher and less wooded area of the park.

The proposal by Arménio Losa (1908 – 1988), Formosinho Sanches (1922 – 2004) and Pádua Ramos (1929 – 2005) interpreted the Foundation's image as a complex of unusual proportions, an approach that intentionally sought representative monumentality. The urban characterisation is faithfully assumed through the articulation of three bodies of contrasting volumes: the office tower in the centre; a single mass incorporating the entrance, broken down into several generous spaces linked to the more prominent volume of the auditoriums to the east; and finally, the cylindrical mass of the Museum on the corner of the future *Praça de Espanha*, given special emphasis. Endeavouring to grant expression to these explicit volumes with symbolic markings, the quest for a new monumentality in this project was perhaps too obvious, assuming the form of a 60-m tower which, if it had been built, would have been the first in the city and would thus have had a very strong impact. In the style of the *grande composition*, the interior was a succession of ample, large-volume spaces.

In comparison with the alternative proposals, the realized scheme balances elegant compactness with the differentiated volumetric presence of the programmatic components. In this configurational approach, Pessoa, Cid and d'Athouguia followed the modernist line so clearly defined by, for example, the Bauhaus in Dessau (Walter Gropius and Adolf Meyer, 1925 – 1926) or the United

Nations Headquarters in New York (Wallace K. Harrison and others, 1945 – 1952), with its equi-poised asymmetrical configurations. Here, as in these earlier instances, dominant horizontal slabs create the principal reference plane against which lower elements are placed.

CLARITY, RIGOUR AND TECTONICS

The consultants and the SPO team unanimously recommended the selection of the solution presented by Alberto Pessoa, Pedro Cid and Ruy d'Athouguia. The headquarters, museum and auditoriums emerged as one body, where the various departments were interlinked naturally and where the public could circulate with fluidity. This design proposal most clearly interpreted the programme, and also resulted in the occupation of only 13.4 % of the park's surface area <sup>18</sup>. The essential concept of the proposal was rooted in the desire to produce a cultural centre free of rigidly

demarcated sectors, ensured through the continuity of spaces between buildings and park.

The transition from project to construction work became a long and complex investigative process, involving a team of national and international experts. As set through the project, the notion of manipulating nature was reaffirmed, since "in the framework of the architectural solution, the landscaping was of great importance" <sup>19</sup>: since 86.6 % of the site area remained free, the vegetation could then serve as a framework for the buildings. Construction took place on the basis of a study that took into account some of the pre-existing features of the landscape, such as the location of the more valuable trees, but also made it possible to effect transformations in the morphology of the site. In this sense, the principle of an unyielding horizontality was appropriate for the distribution of the constructed volumes, because "it allowed a reading of the buildings, in all directions, as



Source Zdroj: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Archive, © Mário de Oliveira

Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Auditorium, interior, 1969  
 Auditórium Nadácie Calouste Gulbenkian, interiér, 1969

a continuation of green spaces”<sup>120/</sup>. The inner spaces also seemed to be organized according to their relation with the outdoor spaces, thus “providing a comprehensive overview of the park”<sup>121/</sup>. A further consequence of this approach was its treatment of the lower volumes as a succession of landscaped platforms integrated with the park. Thus, the construction was manipulated as a mega-structure composed of the park and a series of inert concrete masses, which subtly followed the terrain above recessed foundations.

The ensemble is composed of three fundamental volumes articulated with the park, forming a single body that includes the Foundation Headquarters, the Calouste Gulbenkian Museum, the Main Auditorium, the Congress Centre with two auditoriums and conference rooms, the Art Library and an outdoor auditorium. Construction of the buildings and the park was regarded as an indivisible whole, in accordance with the thinking of the time, across styles from abstraction to minimalism, from metabolism to brutalism, yet tempered by the fundamental value given to the landscape.

Of remarkable simplicity, the solution basically linked two wings into a T-shaped configuration, with the addition of the independent volume of the auditorium. On the northern side was the solid

and extended horizontal volume (125 m by 25 m) of the headquarters building, which ran parallel to and overlooked *Avenida de Berna*. Extending from it was the lower mass of the Temporary Exhibitions wing; perpendicular to this section, the museum wing emerged on the eastern side, measuring approximately 90 m by 60 m.

The creation of ample peripheral space made it possible to “erect the building on the highest part of the terrain, thus making it feasible to build a large underground structure housing a 7,000 m<sup>2</sup> parking garage. The roof garden above this created a gentle slope, which lent new perspectives to the entire architectural composition”<sup>122/</sup>. The layout of the building complex is organized according to a sequence of volumes which articulate a two-pronged relation: the street to the north constituting a platform with the characteristics of an “acropolis” offering a clear urban expression; and the park to the south combining the different volumes, as if suspended from recessed bases, forming a quasi-organic body with the building site. Artificial platforms were created to this end, and the site was modified as if it were a topographic sculpture. In turn, the roofs of the lower structures were treated as an extension of the park itself or as planted terraces.



Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Headquarters, 1969  
Riaditeľstvo Nadácie Calouste Gulbenkian, 1969

Source Zdroj: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Archive, © Mário de Oliveira



Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation exterior south perspective, 1969  
Exteriér Nadácie Calouste Gulbenkian, pohľad z juhu, 1969

Source Zdroj: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Archive, © Mário de Oliveira

#### ENHANCING THE ACROPOLIS

In terms of its exterior, the headquarters building is the most dominant of the three building volumes. Treated as the major volume, it stands out as the primary image of the Foundation. Sober, rational, and decidedly horizontal, this volume is characterised by its laminar aspect, the repetition of the modules, the rigour of its design and the hardness of the materials (concrete and glass) that constitute it. Sited at a higher elevation than that of *Avenida de Berna*, yet exactly on the same level as the enormous eucalyptus that the architects decided to retain, it takes advantage of the roof of the car park to give form to a gentle, garden-acropolis that gives the building its monumental aspect.

In the interior spaces, an effect closer to human scale is achieved, with the comfortable, low-

ceilinged and luminous atriums effortlessly linked by staircases, which accentuate the element of surprise in their interaction with the park.

It was important that the architectural design was directly expressed through the structure. The aim of a dominant horizontal line to reinforce the image of a low building hugging the land, combined with the wish to emphasize the long concrete slabs that constitute the visible image of the headquarters building, called for a very creative structural concept.

The refinement of the materials chosen for the window frames and the care taken in producing the concrete and the formwork also helped to incorporate the intelligent and subtle enhancement of the acropolis into the symbolic body of the Foundation.



Calouste Gulbenkian  
Foundation Headquarters,  
entrance hall, 1969

Vstupná hala riaditeľstva  
Nadácie Calouste  
Gulbenkian, 1969

Source Zdroj: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Archive, © Mário de Oliveira

#### THE CEREMONIAL DIGNITY OF THE MODERN PLATONIC BOX

The museum of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation is located in the eastern section of the park, with its own entrance. Justifying this position is the museum's twofold symbolic importance: on the one hand, the uniqueness of the collection and its need for exhibition with a certain degree of innovation, on the other, its representing the "prime raison d'être" of the Foundation. Indeed, the desire to house the collection in the best conditions required the dynamic, patient and energetic work of an exceptional multidisciplinary team made up of conservators, architects, consultants and designers, in organising the collection in the museum space. A very clear geometric matrix structured the 60 m by 90 m rectangle of the

external dimensions, dividing it longitudinally into three sectors, which were then sub-divided transversely by five other dividing lines. The structure developed and interpreted this strict geometry, as well as inscribing the museum's two interior courtyards in the centre of the composition. Based on the distribution of long, pre-stressed beams spanning the length of the museum (90 metres), this matrix structure, as in the headquarters building, articulates a hierarchy of served and service spaces. Making use of the 1-metre intervals between the pairs of beams, the service spaces house the service stairwells, bathrooms, archives and other complementary functions, in the levels below the museum's principal floor.

Through the sobriety, subtlety and discretion of its presence in the complex of the three bodies, the volume of the museum forms a clear self-as-



Calouste Gulbenkian  
Foundation Headquarters  
and Park, 1969

Riaditeľstvo a park Nadácie  
Calouste Gulbenkian, 1969

Source Zdroj: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Archive, © Mário de Oliveira

sertion. Contrary to expectations, it is not an autonomous and unique object that manifests itself through bizarre physical form as an extraordinary phenomenon or an exceptional event – but very much the opposite. Interpreted as a metaphor for a temple, it is a "minimalist" box museum with a clearly defined platonic volumetric form that appears to be suspended over the park. Even without elevation on modern *pilotis*, it achieved an effect of suspension, heralding *avant-la-lettre* an approach to contemporary architecture which frequently appeared in the following years. Finally, it is a neutral volume that seeks a synthesis and economy of resources with its presence through a dominant horizontal disposition.

The museum is, essentially, a neutral container that reveals itself as the exhibition route gradually draws us into the magic of the artistic experience.

Modern concepts of transparency, in terms of a free and flexible plan and spatial interpenetration, were followed, though tempered by a densification of the material and the stimulating ambiguity of the game of contrasts that marked the passage from the schematism of the architectural solutions of the 1950s to the complexity of the 1960s. The space is articulated around the patios, orienting the viewers' gaze to a stimulating variety of views directed both towards specific landscapes of the park or concentrating on the intimacy of the interior patios, from which sculptures emerge. In other cases, the sculptures themselves were placed at sources of natural light, such as the celebrated *Diana* sculpture by Houdon. Synthesizing the values of function, form and symbol, the Gulbenkian Museum building sublimely raised the fusion of artworks, architecture and landscape design to new limits.

### THE BEAUTY AND INTIMACY OF A SPATIAL CONTINUUM

In the auditorium, it was necessary to create an innovative space that guaranteed excellent acoustics. Located to the south of the Headquarters and Temporary Exhibition wings, it is the most central element in the complex, sited in the heart of the park.

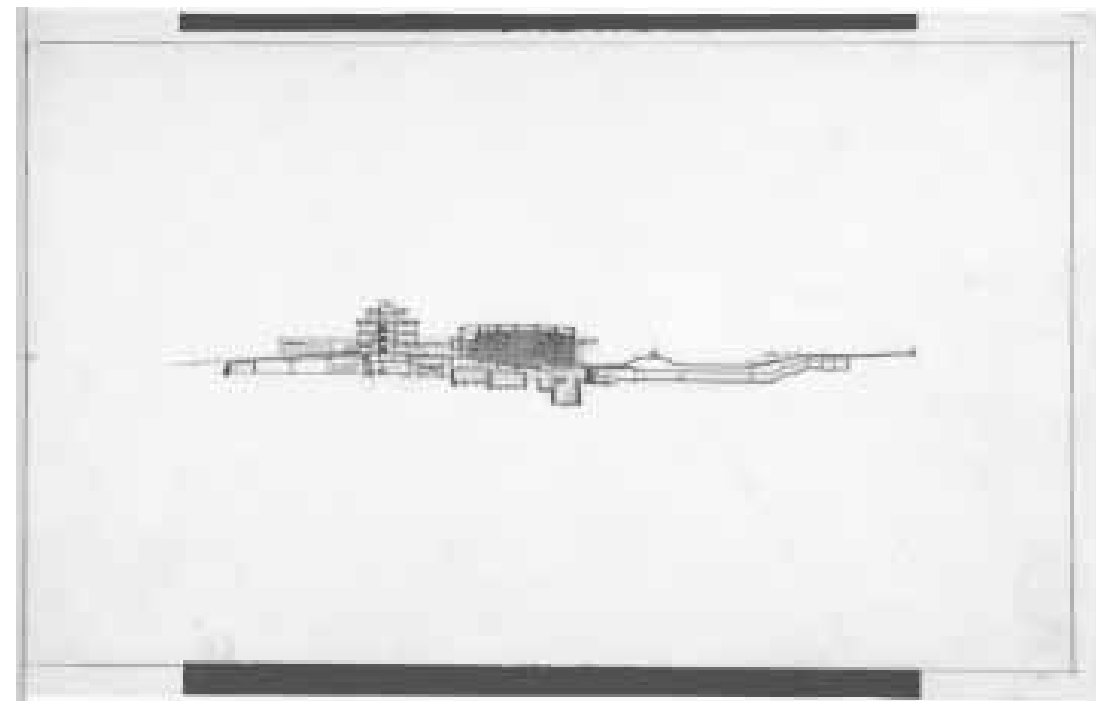
Placing a large window at the back of the stage established a visual relationship with the exterior, to provide interaction with the park and the pond. The result confirms the objective of creating a continuous whole achieved through construction and manipulated nature. The double-glazed wall behind the stage provides a natural scenario overlooking the pond to the south and an open relationship between the hall's interior and the park, thus communicating with the park, the trees and the illuminated pond and "possibly serving as a stage setting, in a surprising perspective for the audience"<sup>123/</sup>.

The placing of the stage at the same level as the pond, separated only by the glass wall, symbolises the close, almost physical, relationship between the interior and the exterior that remained a constant aim throughout the project.

At present, the auditorium is widely recognized as a space of unique architectural value, both marked by a character of beauty and an intimate ambience. Structural logic, constructive rigour and programmatic synthesis all contest with each other towards a synthesis and harmony of the space within its unique atmosphere, a mix of comfort and solemnity contributing to its reputation as one of the most beautiful concert halls in the world.

### A LANDSCAPING MEGA-STRUCTURE

The Gulbenkian ensemble is a testimony to a collective effort unique in Portugal, in which the architectural solution, location and functioning of the building itself are intimately linked to the park through a continuity between exterior



Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Headquarters and Park, longitudinal cross-section, scale 1:500, ozalid 69 x 31,5 cm, unsigned, undated

Riaditeľstvo a park Nadácie Calouste Gulbenkian, priečny rez, mierka 1 : 500, ozalidová fotografia 69 x 31,5 cm, nesignovaná, nedatovaná

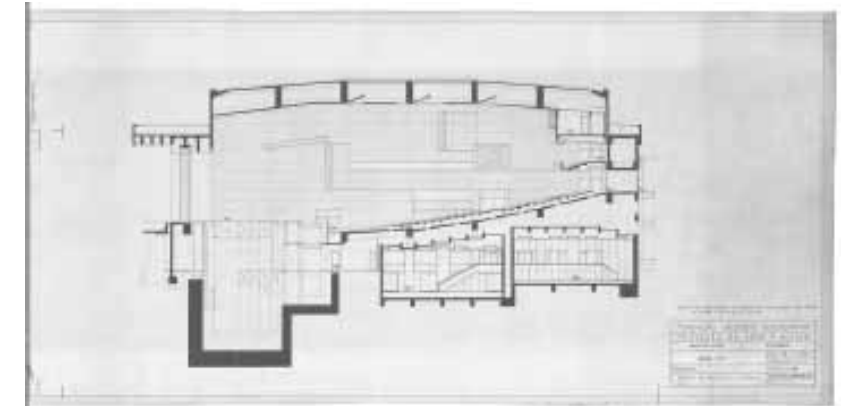
Source Zdroj: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Archive

and interior spaces "based on balance and harmony"<sup>124/</sup>. Indeed, the architectural conception resulted from the integration of the construction into a landscape created by an "aesthetic and biological whole based on existing tree masses and a traditional park environment that still characterised the site"<sup>125/</sup>. Innovatively, it was not merely a question of incorporating a building into a green zone, or a park built to serve a building. On the contrary, greatest emphasis was placed on establishing an intimate relationship between construction and garden, such that the life of the building extends naturally to the exterior areas and from outside to the interiors.

Such a tectonic language emerged from the white abstraction of the early modernists, whether defined by the *fenêtres en longueur* of Le Corbusier or the public housing of J. J. P. Oud, and was adapted by the post-World-War-II architects, particularly in Britain by Denys Lasdun. The University of East Anglia (1963 – 1972), (almost contemporary with the Headquarters and Museum of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation) and the National Theatre in London's South Bank Arts complex (1967 – 1976) are prime examples of an architectural language implying an extension of landscape by creating receding terraces, analogous to hillsides. Such stepped sections could thereby offer unencumbered access to each level: architecture as democratically open topography<sup>126/</sup>.

In fact, the conceptual complimenting of the architecture and landscape merely confirms the same ideological framework, the same contemporary approach of artists, architects and landscape designers within the same generation. At the same time, it reveals a physical and constructive approach to a dominant horizontality and the value of surprise introduced into the apparently abstract and rigid, geometric and hard language of the construction. Just like the building, which one discovers as one explores, the park encourages "pleasurable strolls". The garden successively opens and closes, and thus creates illusions of perspective and points of view composed of boundaries and clearings, light and shadow, different gradations of green and the colourful punctuation of flowers.

As a whole, building and park create an environment, projected as a natural and artificial to-



Source Zdroj: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Archive

pography of spaces and forms that are visually linked. The landscaping works together with the composition of the building, with its orthogonal, abstract and floating forms sculpturally naturalised – as in the case of the paths made out of orthogonal slabs but suspended one on top of the other in an organic, curvilinear, broad and serene movement.

The Gulbenkian Park is the confirmation of a refined aesthetic sensibility and a humanized way of seeing the world. Capable of enhancing the qualities of architecture through the creation of landscape, this vision promotes a landscape that works with the memories of the place, constructing the "link between matter and idea" as an organic and biological whole. Finally, if the function of green space in the contemporary city is "to resolve health problems by meeting the aspirations of the people"<sup>127/</sup>, the landscape is itself a value that serves human interest in all its fullness and must therefore participate in urban life and structure as an indispensable element for balance in the life of man and the city<sup>128/</sup>.

### A NEW MONUMENTALITY

A work of international stature, conceived in the late 1950s and built during the 1960s, this work marked in pioneering fashion what was also underway in other urban centres of western culture: a cultural centre as a dynamic magnet for collective life. Architecture was capable of building the

Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Auditorium, longitudinal section, scale 1:100, China ink on vegetal paper, 91 x 44,5 cm, signed José de Sousa, dated 25 of July of 1967

Auditórium Nadácie Calouste Gulbenkian, pozdĺžny rez, mierka 1 : 100, čínsky tuš na pauzovacom papieri, 91 x 44,5 cm, signované José de Sousa, datované 25. júl 1967

image of the Foundation, and revolutionising the panorama and the significance of a cultural space in Portugal. The head offices, museum and park represent a new and contemporary monumentality of unique value and of international importance.

The search conducted by Pessoa, Cid and d'Atouguia parallels Louis Kahn's interest in the real presence of architectural morphologies, best expressed in his masterpiece for the Salk Institute in La Jolla (1959 – 1965), or Aldo van Eyck's exploration of the poetic dimension of direct construction as realized in his orphanage in Amsterdam (1957 – 1960), not to mention the lessons of the southern Swedish school around Sigurd Lewerentz. A number of architects in the

decades immediately after World War II were simply not interested in what Reyner Banham later subsumed under the title "New Brutalism"<sup>129/</sup>, but instead in the visible and hierarchical structuring of primary, secondary and tertiary elements of architecture. It was a spirit of honesty, directness and anti-spectacular matter-of-factness<sup>130/</sup>, and a spirit that increased interest in the clear presentation of structure.

The atmosphere of contemplative silence is a result of the rigidity of the volumetric composition combined with its spatial malleability. What is therefore naturally imposed is a secret discipline. Values of transparency and opacity follow each other with graphic rigour, creating highly



Calouste Gulbenkian  
Foundation Museum,  
interior, 1969

Múzeum Nadácie Calouste  
Gulbenkian, interiér, 1969

Source Zdroj: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Archive, © Mário de Oliveira

characterised moments of transition between interior/exterior penetration, in a close connection between architecture and nature.

Place, precisely understood in its overall dimension, is what reclaims the Bauhaus idea of "everything from the coffee cup to city planning"<sup>131/</sup>, in other words from the design of a building to the landscaped surroundings. The reflection at the heart of the Modern Movement itself was reclaimed when the term monument was reintroduced into the vocabulary of modern architecture: "monuments constitute human marks, symbols of collectively integrated ideas and aims"<sup>132/</sup>. For that reason, one can only hope that they survive beyond the period in which they were created, and thus can truly constitute a legacy for the future.

A project of rationalist principles, the Gulbenkian complex adopts the canon of the Modern Movement without contradiction, calmly revising the myths of the "Modern Tradition", through the influence of a natural organic continuity where Mies van der Rohe's motto 'less is more' is translated through the fluid organic nature of Frank Lloyd Wright's proposals, vindicating the serene value of the nature of place. Embodying the possibility of modern classicism, conceived when Brasília opened its doors and two years before Mies van der Rohe's *Nationalgalerie* in Berlin, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation was a democratic symbol, in still-undemocratic Portugal, of architecture at the service of community and culture. It proposed a new "space-time", a national contemporaneity.

Assumed by the Foundation itself to be a "work for our time, simultaneously functional and monumental"<sup>133/</sup>, the Gulbenkian Headquarters and Park marks the end of the architectural production of the 1950s that remained genuinely faithful to

the principles of the Modern Movement. Without betraying its structural clarity, the Gulbenkian ensemble confirms modernity's capacity to create a monument and to build, with the brutalist muscularity of the 60s, an "eternal present"<sup>134/</sup>. The unmistakable sign of cultural refinement manifest in the public enjoyment of its space constitutes the utmost confirmation of the maxim "only the best"<sup>135/</sup>. A monumentality now reconciled with history and time here affirmed the identity of place and the value of context, through a kind of timeless modernity<sup>136/</sup>.

The Gulbenkian Headquarters and Park have been recently classified as a national monument<sup>137/</sup>, the first contemporary building in Portugal to have been recognised as heritage. In other words, it has the status of an asset that, despite its young age and modernity, has attained universality and a timeless aura. It has achieved the value of a monument, recognised as such by the community, and for that reason deserves to be safeguarded and passed on to future generations. This distinction has a dual meaning. If on the one hand it recognises the excellence of a concept and structure, on the other it celebrates the careful maintenance and adaptation pursued by the Foundation over the four decades of its use in the daily care of the building and the garden.

At the beginning of the new millennium, some of the concerns that motivated Pessoa, Cid and d'Atouguia in the late 1950s have returned. The expressed neutrality of their architecture has ensured that the building complex has maintained its cultural efficacy, even offering inspiration to those interested in architecture, who recognize the intellectual rigour, the compositional skill, the thoroughness of detailing and the superb craftsmanship present in the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation ensemble.

a different social, economic and political form in order to remain in power with the Allies' support.

<sup>2</sup> See CONDE, Idalina: Writing the History. In: The Architecture of the 60's. Ed. Ana Tostões. Gulbenkian Headquarters and Museum, Lisbon, FCG 2006.

<sup>3</sup> KOPP, Anatole: Quand le moderne n'était pas un style

## NOTES POZNÁMKY

<sup>1</sup> The Portuguese fascist dictatorship currently called Estado Novo, as a reference to the Constitution of 1933, lasted from 1926 to 1974. After the post-war period, the Estado Novo, which politically survived World War II, the defeat of fascism and the victory of democracy, adopted



mais une cause. Paris, École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts 1988.

<sup>4</sup> See WANG, Wilfried: The construction of a cultural landscape. In: *The Architecture of the 60's*. Ed. Ana Tostões. Gulbenkian Headquarters and Museum, Lisbon, FCG 2006.

<sup>5</sup> See GIEDION, Sigfried: *The Need for a New Monumentality*. In: *Giedion, Sigfried: Architecture you and me*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard, 1958 [1944].

<sup>6</sup> See MUMFORD, Lewis: *Culture of Cities*, New York, Harcourt 1938.

<sup>7</sup> See GIEDION, Sigfried – SERT, Josep Lluís – LEGER, Fernand: *Nine Points on Monumentality*. In: *Architecture Culture, a documentary Anthology*. Ed. Joan Ockman. New York, Rizzoli 1996, p. 29 – 30 [1943].

<sup>8</sup> See WANG, Wilfried: *The creation of a cultural landscape*. Op. cit.

<sup>9</sup> See MORAVČÍKOVÁ, Henrieta: *Monumentality in Slovak architecture of the 1960s and 1970s: authoritarian, national, great and abstract*. *The Journal of Architecture* 14, 2009, 1, pp. 105 – 125.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. On this subject see also MORAVÁNSZKY, Ákos: *The grand gestures. Public space and expression in the post-war architecture of the socialist nations*. In: *Eastmodern*. Eds. Hertha Hurnaus, Benjamin Konrad, Maik Novotny. Vienna, Springer Verlag 2007.

<sup>11</sup> The collective document put together for the IV CIAM (that took place in 1933 at Patris, from Marseille to Athens), that became known as the Athens Charter, would end up being published ten years later by Le Corbusier. See *Le CORBUSIER: La Charte d'Athènes*. Paris, Plon 1943.

<sup>12</sup> Choay, Françoise: *À propos de culte et de monuments*. Foreword. In: Riegl, Alois: *Le Culte moderne des monuments, son essence et sa genèse*. Paris, Seuil 1984.

<sup>13</sup> See TOSTÕES, Ana: *Monumentalidade, obras públicas e afirmação da arquitetura do Movimento Moderno*. In: *Caminhos do Património*. Lisboa, DGEMN 1999.

<sup>14</sup> The decision-making process was not without acrimony, especially from one of the board members, Ambassador Pedro Teotónio Pereira, who even hinted at the style that the new building should mimic: that of the Palace of the Meninos in Palhavã, situated on the flanks of the Park. We should however make an exception for Delano's project for the extension of the National Gallery in London, to which Gulbenkian responded in his order of 1939. Cf. GRANDE, Nuno: *The Gulbenkian effect, from the policies to the spaces – 3 ages in a precursor cultural program*. In: *The Architecture of the 60's*. Ed. Ana Tostões. Gulbenkian Headquarters and Museum; op. cit.; GRANDE, Nuno: *Arquiteturas da Cultura: Política, Debate, Espaço. Génese dos Grandes Equipamentos Culturais da Contemporaneidade Portuguesa*. Departamento de Arquitectura da Faculdade de Ciências e Tecnologia da Universidade de Coimbra 2009.

<sup>15</sup> PERDIGÃO, José de Azeredo: *Chairman's Report, 20 July 1955 – 31 December 1959*. Lisbon, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation 1961.

<sup>16</sup> See TOSTÕES, Ana: *The Buildings*. Lisbon, FCG 2012; TOSTÕES, Ana: *Idade Maior. Cultura e Tecnologia na Arquitectura Moderna Portuguesa*. Porto, FAUP 2015; TOSTÕES, Ana: *Learning from an outstanding process. The Gulbenkian Foundation Buildings (1959 – 1969)*. In: *Proceedings of the Fifth International Congress on Construction History*. Eds. Brian Bowen, Donald Friedman, Thomas Leslie, John Ochsend. Chicago, Illinois 2015.

<sup>17</sup> In 1951 the city of Darmstadt hosted a conference entitled "Mensch und Raum" (Man and Space), to which not only prominent architects such as Hans Scharoun, Otto Bartning, Rudolf Schwartz and Egon Eiermann were invited but also sociologists, including Alfred Weber, and the philosopher Ortega y Gasset. Today it is above all remembered for the "Bauen, Wohnen, Denken" (Building, Dwelling, Thinking) conference moderated by Martin Heidegger, which had a considerable impact on European thought, particularly with regard to architecture, in the emphasis given to the place in contrast to the abstract space Cf. JONES, Peter Bundell: *Hans Scharoun*. London, Phaidon 1995.

<sup>18</sup> The area set aside for construction of the winning project was 36 536 m<sup>2</sup>, as opposed to the 50 314 m<sup>2</sup> of the team project by Arménio Losa, Formozinho Sanchez and Pádua Santos, or the 63 677 m<sup>2</sup> proposed in

Analdo Araújo, Frederico George and Manuel Laginha's project. They corresponded, respectively to 13 %, 20 % and 30 % occupation of the area of the garden. Cf. *Relatório de Apreciação dos três estudos de ante-projecto da construção da sede e Museu da Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian*, Lisbon, March 1960.

<sup>19</sup> PESSOA, Alberto – CID, Pedro – ATHOUGUIA, Ruy: *Descriptive Note, case 40276/961, July 15, 1961; Descriptive Memoir, proc. 40276/961, 15 July 1961*.

<sup>20</sup> FCG. *Relatório de Apreciação dos três estudos de ante-projecto da construção da sede e Museu da Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian*. Lisbon, Arquivo Fundação Gulbenkian 1960.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. *Descriptive note, Case 40276/961, op. cit.*

<sup>23</sup> "Os Auditórios", *Colóquio-Revista de Letras e Artes*, Lisbon, December 1969, number 56, p. 66.

<sup>24</sup> *Arquitetura*, Lisbon, no. 111, September – October 1969, p. 217.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> See WANG, Wilfried: *The construction of a cultural landscape*. Op. cit.

<sup>27</sup> TELLES, Gonçalo Ribeiro: *A Importância Actual da Vegetação na Cidade*. Agros, March – April 1957.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. TOSTÕES, Ana: *Cidade e Natureza*. In: CARAPINHA, Aurora – TEIXEIRA, José Monterroso: *A Utopia e*

*os Pés na Terra*, Gonçalo Ribeiro Telles. Évora, Instituto Português dos Museus 2003.

<sup>29</sup> Before the book by BANHAM, Reyner: *The New Brutalism: Ethic or Aesthetic?* London 1966, a discussion on new brutalism had already been conducted by Alison and Peter Smithson in the January 1955 issue of the journal *Architectural Design*, London.

<sup>30</sup> See WANG, Wilfried: *The construction of a cultural landscape*. Op. cit.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Mies van der Rohe, Ludwig: *Walter Gropius*. In: NIEMEYER, Fritz: *Mies van der Rohe, la palabra sin artificio*. Barcelona, El Croquis 1995 [1986], p. 497.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. GIEDION, Sigfried – SERT, Josep Lluís – LEGER, Fernand. Op. cit.

<sup>33</sup> PERDIGÃO, José de Azeredo: *Report by the President of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 1961*.

<sup>34</sup> GIEDION, Sigfried: *Space, Time and Architecture. The Growth of a New Tradition*. Massachusetts, Harvard 1941.

<sup>35</sup> The motto "only the best is enough for me" accurately mirrors the criteria for quality established by Calouste Gulbenkian. Cf. PEREIRA, João Castel-Branco – SILVA, Nuno Vassallo e: *Only the best*. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art 2000.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. WOHL, Helmut: *The Buildings, the Park and Tradition*. In: *The Architecture of the 60's*. Ed. Ana Tostões. Gulbenkian Headquarters and Museum. Op. cit.

<sup>37</sup> Dec-Lei nº18/2010, 28th December 2010.