

HPA

Histories of Postwar Architecture

1923-2023

Fernando Távora at 100

HPA Issue 11

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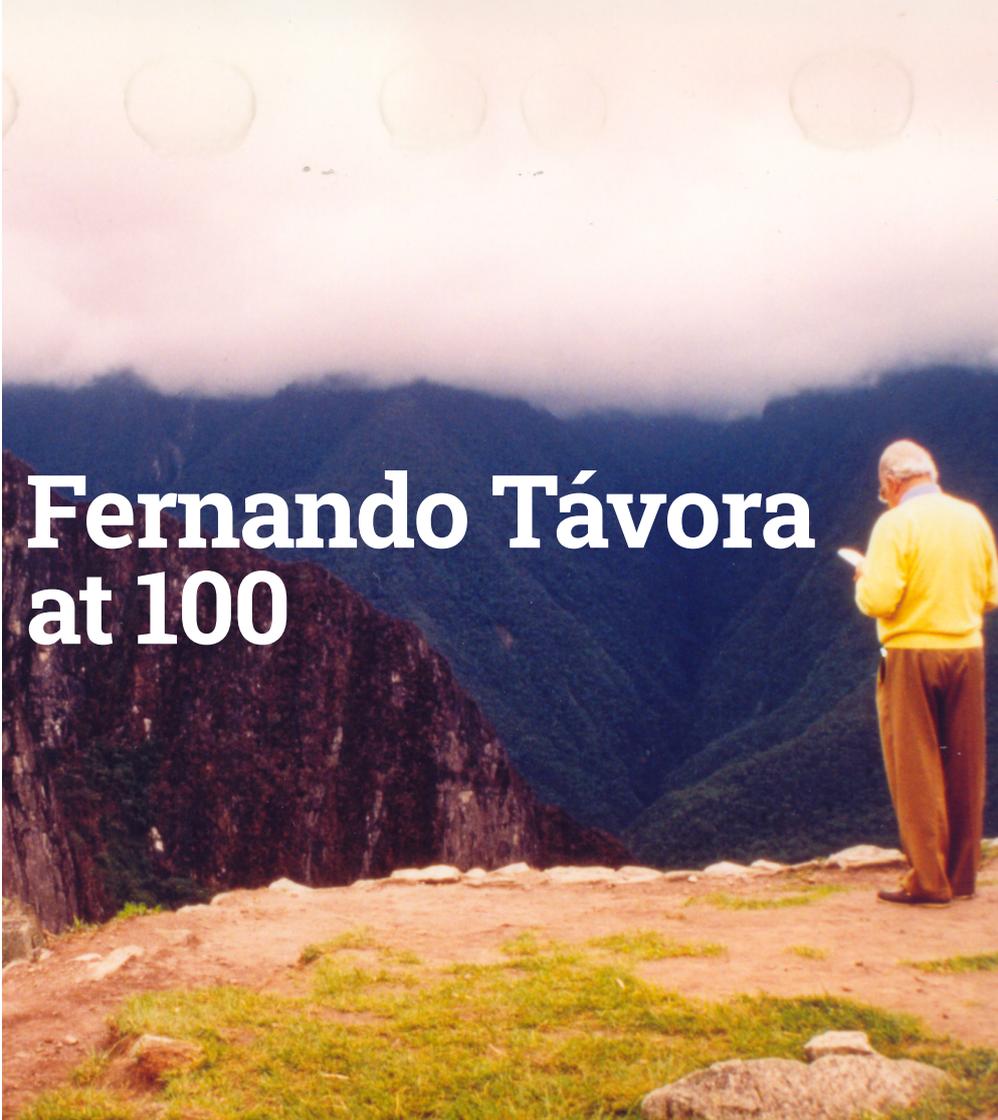
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CALL FOR PAPERS



Fernando Távora at 100

1923-2023 Fernando Távora at 100

Fernando Távora was born in Porto on 25 August 1923. A leading figure in Portuguese architecture in the second half of the 20th century, Távora is the author of dozens of built works – most of which are located in northern Portugal – an urban planner, a prominent lecturer first at the Escola de Belas Artes and then at the Faculdade de Arquitectura da Universidade do Porto, a refined intellectual and prolific writer. Despite his early arrival on the international scene, especially in the decades immediately after World War II, and notwithstanding his authoritative standing in his homeland, his choice to work specifically in the region where he was born and had always lived made it difficult for him to become known abroad, his fame deriving mostly from his being a “teacher” of famous “pupils” such as Álvaro Siza and Eduardo Souto de Moura. In recent years, thanks to the efforts of his heirs and the Marques da Silva Foundation, which holds his archive, there have been a number of scientific studies on every aspect of his work.

The wealth of these new excavations and recent, fundamental publications such as the critical and anastatic edition of the *Diário di Bordo* (Matosinhos 2012) or the impressive volume *“O Meu caso” Arquitectura, imperativo ético do ser 1937-1947* (Porto 2020), which have made new archive material available, rather than exhausting the historical-critical topics related to Távora’s work, have shed light on its richness and breadth, suggesting countless possible lines of research.



The issue is published on the occasion of the Centennial of Fernando Távora's birth (2023) and organised in partnership with the Scientific Committee of the Italian Centennial, hosted by the Dipartimento di Architettura Università di Bologna, Departamento de Arquitectura Universidade de Coimbra, Faculdade de Arquitectura da Universidade do Porto, Fundação Marques da Silva, Politecnico di Milano Polo Territoriale di Mantova.

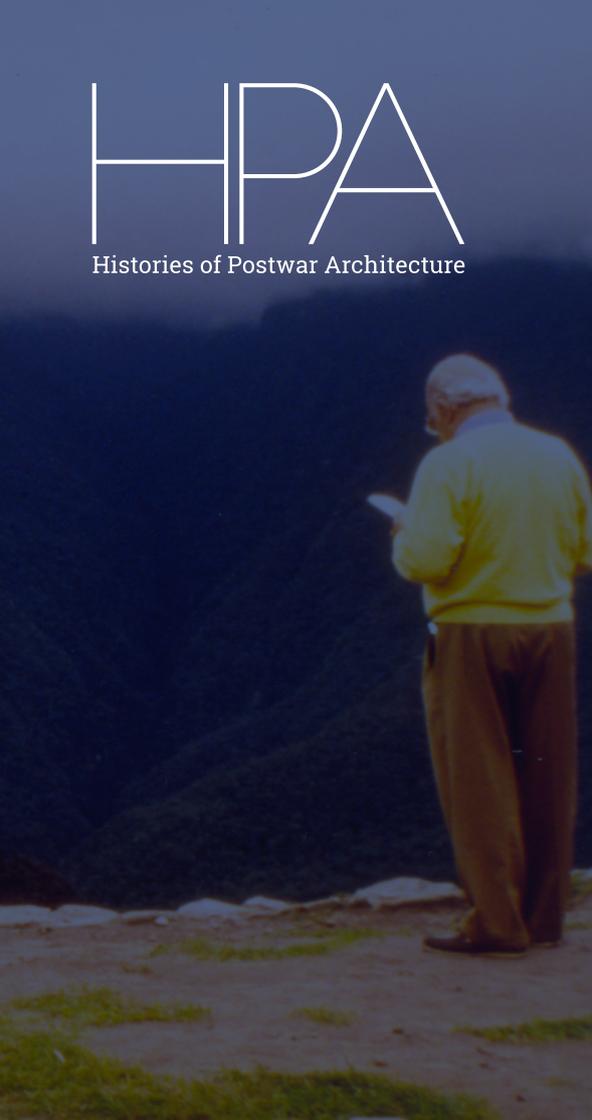
The Committee promotes a programme of events aimed at re-evaluating Távora's legacy and contribution to the culture and architecture of the postwar decades. The papers submitted will undergo a blind peer review with the support of the Committee.

The issue aims to receive contributions dealing with any aspect of Fernando Távora's biographical trajectory, as well as with themes and episodes of the history of postwar architecture that bear relevant connections with the most important issues behind Távora's work.

We will particularly welcome papers capable of broadening the palette of existing interpretations and re-conceptualising Távora's contribution to postwar architecture. Special attention will also be given to papers that focus on a close analysis of available archival sources, as well as uncovering new ones. We finally encourage direct investigations of built and unbuilt works that were overlooked by the previous studies.

Many research topics link Távora's work to the broader questions that were at the centre of international debates on architecture in the postwar decades. Papers might want to address some of these issues from a specific angle.

In addition to historical research, readings and interpretations by designers interested in Távora and his relevance will be taken into account.



Relevant themes include

1. Távora “Archipelago”. Recent publications have shed light – even more widely than was known from his writings and his activities as a lecturer and conference speaker – on the rich framework of cultural references outside the discipline of architecture. In addition to his being, in his own words, “Pessoan” – also being an important collector of Fernando Pessoa – there are numerous philosophical and literary references in his private writings, from Oswald Spengler to Ortega y Gasset, from Luis de Camões to Abel Salazar, from Henry Bergson to Teixeira de Pascoaes to name but a few of the recurring authors, especially in the formative phase of his cultural project.

2. Walking, observing, understanding. Távora considers travel – conceived as a joyful collective experience, of teaching or sharing interests – to be an “indispensable” practice for an architect’s training, and throughout his life he combined it with design research and teaching. Travel brought a wealth of cosmopolitan references to Távora’s designs: from the “Great Tradition” of the axis of Greece, Rome and Europe to his interest in anonymous, ordinary architecture and in Japan or in overseas cultures, references that were skilfully combined with Portuguese traditions. But the habit of travelling also gave a methodology to his design that was evident in his work and central to his teaching: walking in places, crossing them repeatedly and carefully in the company of the “client” – an individual or a community – as a decisive exploratory and creative act.

3. “But I know this and I also know the opposite”. The structure of Távora’s thought and design makes the use of the term “master” interesting and complex, both because of the figures to whom it refers as he was trained – Raúl Lino, Carlos Ramos, Le Corbusier, Wright, Lucio Costa, Alvar Aalto, Italian “realism” – and because of his subsequent role as a guiding figure in the culture of Portuguese design in the second half of the 20th century. It is perhaps more correct to refer, as he does, to the model of the heteronymous personality that has Pessoa as its matrix: “a curious phenomenon like being identical to yourself when you are many. Paradoxically, it is a necessity of identity”.

4. A small, simple work made by men for other men. The theme of a return of design to anonymity or to a structure of collective work that goes beyond the domain of the



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artistic personality is central to Távora's entire design and theoretical production. On the one hand, the theme links him to other designers who were working on and experimenting with it in the same period of time, like Coderch and Rogers, figures he had a direct interest in. On the other hand, the theme makes his relationship with the masters of the early 20th century, and especially with Le Corbusier, complex and productive. But there are many other themes that punctuate Távora's "return to the Anonymous": from his interest in Portuguese popular architecture to his activity in the field of restoration, from the radical rethinking of the discipline initiated with his text on the Organisation of Space to the exercises in heteronymy that can be found in his built works. The profound reason for this research stems from his estrangement from postwar, positivist and analytical American society and his commitment to a social assimilation of interest in architectural culture. This theme also implies a reflection on Távora's relationship with the positions of Bruno Zevi.

5. Teaching. When Távora took over ESBAP from Carlos Ramos in the 1960s, he circumvented the legislative and regulatory dictates of the Regime and led it towards a new pedagogy of architecture radically centred on practice. From the break with the 1957 reform initiated in 1968 and elaborated during the so-called *Experiência* of the early 1970s, to the birth of the FAUP in 1977, the role played by Távora is central and inescapable in order to understand both the roots and the recent developments of the teaching of architectural design in Portugal, including in the perspective of the international interest that Portuguese architectural culture has achieved since the mid-1970s.

Contributions will be accepted in English, Portuguese and Italian.



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**Authors must submit
directly full papers by
September 30, 2022**

**Accepted authors
will be notified by
October 30, 2022**

**Publication is
expected to be in
December 2022**

Papers should be submitted using **<https://hpa.unibo.it/user/register>**

The guidelines for paper submission are available at
<https://hpa.unibo.it/about/submissions#authorGuidelines>

Please, fill in the author's profile with all the informations required as:

- Applicant's name
- Professional affiliation
- Title of paper
- Abstract
- 5 keywords
- A brief CV (max 2,000 characters)

Please submit the proposal in the form of MS Word (length between 20,000 and 80,000 characters). The submitted paper must be anonymous. Please delete from the text and file's properties all informations about name, administrator etc. Papers should clearly define the argument in relation to the available literature and indicate the sources which the paper is based on. All papers received will go through a process of double-blind peer review before publication.

HPA also looks for contributions for the review section.
<https://hpa.unibo.it/about/editorialPolicies#sectionPolicies>

To addressed questions to the editors:
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