

# **COLLEGE OF SOUND CONSTRUCTION**





# **COLLEGE OF SOUND CONSTRUCTION**

António Coxito



**HOBBYECTS**  
made by you



This essay consists of an anachronistic reflection on the transmission of knowledge and praxis in Architecture, in the form of a manifesto, with the structure of a course model. The issues raised in the scope of the research **Architecture and autonomy, experimentation in periurbanity**<sup>1</sup> have led to this projection from the collegiate institutions. As an incursion into utopian reflection, it could not fail to include a pedagogical proposal.

The College's concept of *sound construction* came a year after the beginning of the investigation. The version published here is close to those of 2014 and is not the one that was published as an Annex to the final dissertation in December 2015.

It is considered that the delirium allowed at an early stage of the reflection process, still without the corrective convenience that later came about due to scientific obligation, is inseparable from the seed of utopia that lies in this essay.

---

<sup>1</sup> December 2015, University of Évora

# 1. I'M IN

*Not better, just different.*

Susan Naomi Nordstrom

## 1.1. Coherence

Acknowledging the petulance of this proposal, it nevertheless fits into a coherent effort. In the context of the approach developed in the research to which to which it refers<sup>2</sup>, it was considered that this discourse had the duty to be assumed from its root *i. e.*, from their collegiate institutions.

## 1.2. Everything is architecture, nothing is architecture

Starting from the paradox that architecture is a sum of proprietary disciplines, which leaves it as a set depleted from its own scope<sup>3</sup>, let us take advantage of this emptiness as creator.

---

<sup>2</sup> This essay was included as an Annex to the dissertation **Architecture and autonomy, experimentation in periurbanity**, defended in 2015 at the University of Évora.

<sup>3</sup> Jeremy Till in **What is architectural research: Architectural research, three myths and one model** (2005), starts from this paradox to develop his proposal.

### **1.3. What is *not* architecture**

On the question of *what is architecture*, it looked appropriate to try to define upstream what we *do not* consider to be architecture.

Due to the contaminating proximity that the institutional versions would have on this discussion, it seemed an excellent starting point to define that *it is not* architecture *everything* that is conventionally considered architecture. This method is not intended to be provocative *per se*, it would be implemented merely for reasons of operational ease.

The re-admission of the elected would be made, later, by inclusion of parties.

## **2. ARCHITECTURE, CONSTRUCTION AND *SOUND CONSTRUCTION***

In this process, a term was formulated to refer to those works that we wanted to bring value, leaving the term *architecture* to the Romans<sup>4</sup>.

It was introduced the notion of *sound construction*, which has nothing to do with well built. *Sound construction* is a local consideration, both geographically and personally. It

---

<sup>4</sup> Allusion to the expression "these Romans are crazy" of René Goscinny in **Asterix le Gaulois** (1961). It refers not only to the Roman people and to their culture (which is ours) but primarily to those on the other side of the palisade.

can never aim at a global recognition because it responds to concrete and non-generic contexts<sup>5</sup>, but above all because it manifests itself in personal and non-transferable plans.

It will include henneries and beehives, hidden houses behind the hill and *ad hoc* solutions in the backyard. Obviously, it will admit in its bosom constructions executed by someone who has never acceded to a course of architecture. With the same degree of evidence, it will admit buildings designed and executed by accredited architects; this review will not use the compendiums. It will only be open to active constructions (not ready to be photographed). All political, agricultural, and social solutions that involve architecture will be allowed in this collection as long as they contribute to the Theory and History of *sound construction*<sup>6</sup>.

---

<sup>5</sup> The reflection on the generic in Rem Koolhaas refers exclusively to cities and proves to be unsuitable for this situation for ethical reasons. This case refers to an autonomous periurbanity.

<sup>6</sup> The **Phalanstère** of Charles Fourier (early 19th century) or **Garden City** by Ebenezer Howard (early 20th century) have not contributed to the History of building but belong, by their very merits, to the *History of sound construction*.



### **3. COLLEGE OF SOUND CONSTRUCTION**

#### **3.1. *Status quo***

The institutions that educate for architecture will continue to form to serve the urbanity, as it is the center of the capital. If their reflections always contained seeds of counter-power, their practice never gave up of being part of the *great narrative*.

The programmatic inadequacies of their collegial institutions to the demands of minor rural issues do not qualify them as really useful to serve those individuals who, by choice or by the collateral constraints of capitalist society, find themselves outside the urban and inter-urban system.

The urban and inter-urban system represents a tiny part of what exists, in spite of being more densely populated. Although the mental map that man creates of a territory is a sum of points and of the lines that unite them (localities and routes), the interstitial space represents, in Europe, more than 98%. Only with a horse or good legs and a lot of will you can access that knowledge.

In a rhizomatic system, these inner spaces have few connections to the outside and create their own connections. However, true.

### 3.2. Brief proposal for a college

Therefore, we feel the need to establish a course for thought, design and construction in the periurbanity<sup>7</sup>. Upstream, it will seek the formation of the individual; not for paternalistic reasons but for the first necessity of being a *sound constructor*, between individuals.

Regarding the legal feasibility of such a procedure, this is an issue that we will not address (for now). As for its real degree of utopia, we quote Orson Welles in Mr. Arkadin<sup>8</sup>: "Those who engage only in battles whose victory is certain, never make history."

### 3.3. Objectives and Model

The objective of the *College of sound construction* is to train for autonomy (own law) and for autarchy (self-sufficiency).

It is headed to architects who wish to participate actively in the construction of Worlds of others and to all those who wish to build their own World.

The backbone of its formation will divide the approaches of scientific character, essentially on the instituted, from the ones with artistic approach, in the sense of producers of

---

<sup>7</sup> On the outskirts of urbanity. However, it does not refer to a strictly geographical space since, unlike suburbanity, it is defined by internal, virtual and cultural relations. Particularly the virtual relations, deterritorialize these spaces.

<sup>8</sup> Also known as **Confidential Report** (1955).

reflections from the existent to the not yet existent, to the future. These will not, however, be matters within the scope of visual or performative Arts, but part of the epistemological structure on which seized knowledge will rest.

Topics discussed will include introductory lectures on current social mechanisms taught by devil's advocates, who will be confronted with wheel invention workshops.

In Science it will be sensitive to pataphysics, not seeking patterns but heterogeneities. In History it will not read continuities but strengths. In hermeneutics it will seek more doubts, not answers or coherences.

It will travel through the theory of the limit of natural cycles. It will expose the current economic system of *money as debt*<sup>9</sup> and counter alternative systems of valuation.

Drawing and writing will be considered weapons for suggestion, where scratching signs to reflect and communicate personal concepts will gain prominence.

On construction, it will inform on legal solutions to avoid the payment of taxes through the use of legislation for agricultural structures and construction sites. It will have first consideration for the characterization, availability and

---

<sup>9</sup> Paul Grignon's **Money As Debt** (2006) is an enlightening film about the origin of the meaning we attribute to money.

assembly of *contemporary vernacular materials*<sup>10</sup>. It will use the principles of *Open Source Design* to refer to the redundancy of knowledge and to what is necessary, sufficient and ethical. To experiment it, there will be conveyed practical principles of locksmithing, carpentry and generic masonry. It will be supported in case studies that will involve participatory visits to squats and ecovillages and the consequent organization of this information in a non-cartesian manner, given the disparity of typologies and topologies perceived.

## **4. RELEASED SUBJECTS**

### **4.1. Introduction to current mechanisms**

This will be a subject of Universal History addressed to the mechanisms that we consider to be the cause of social and economic deregulation (consumerism, financial markets, mass speculation, growth fallacies, aggression, speed ...) <sup>11</sup>. It will take a scientific approach.

### **4.2. Introduction to nascent mechanisms**

This will be a subject of artistic approach, in the sense in which it will produce reflections from the existing to the non-existent, focusing on ways that are in opposition to the

---

<sup>10</sup> Concept coined during this investigation and also published by HOBBYEETS.

<sup>11</sup> This text was written in 2015. In December 2016 it would include Twitter.

current mechanisms. It will be conveyed through professional-oriented brainstorming workshops.

#### **4.3. Rosa do Mundo<sup>12</sup>**

Universal culture.

#### **4.4. Thought and communication**

Inputs for an autonomy of the decision.

#### **4.5. Methodologies of scientific work**

How to read, summarize, interpret and associate ideas.

It will propose alternatives to the cartesian knowledge organization, using digital platforms for mind maps.

#### **4.6. Creative writing**

An expeditious tool for reflecting on and communicating abstract concepts.

The simultaneous objectivity and subjectivity of the written word is appropriate to humanity.

#### **4.7. Drawing**

Exclusively on free-hand drawing.

---

<sup>12</sup> Allusion to the poem of W. B. Yeats, also appropriated by Hermínio Monteiro in his collection of **Poems for the future** from 1999.

Drawing exercises on simple analog machines, in order to understand the prospective function of the drawing.

Drawing exercises on tension situations (springs, cantilever slabs, large differences in depth of field or brightness...) aiming to highlight what is apparent in perception.

Drawing exercises on abstract figures (lines, dashes, stains, crosses, surrounding circles...) in order to practice reflection and communication of non-figurative concepts. These last exercises would take the form of *conversation drawings*.

#### **4.8. Digital**

3D modeling, image editing, video editing, sound editing.

Its purpose is to communicate digital information.

#### **4.9. Body knowledge**

Following the dictum *an healthy soul in an healthy body*, it will minister theoretical principles of anatomy and procedures for personal consciousness, as well as practical sessions of gymnastics.

#### **4.10. Leakage legislation**

Legal solutions to avoid the intervention of architects and engineers in the project and in the building process and to

obviate the payment of construction fees. Legislation for agricultural buildings and construction sites.

#### **4.11. Construction techniques**

Theoretical and practical principles of locksmithing, carpentry and generic masonry.

There will be place for the construction of structures and objects of effective use.

#### **4.12. Systems of self-sufficiency**

Water harvesting, sanitation, water purification, electric generation, wi-fi antennas.

This module will provide just the practical component.

#### **4.13. History of Classical Architecture**

In Classical antiquity there was no distinction between art and technique. The Greek *tekne*, as well as the Latin *ars*, referred simultaneously to a know-how and a professional role.

This historical understanding is crucial to surpass the paradigm change in the teaching of Architecture from the nineteenth century on.

#### **4.14. History of the Cities**

This module will confront institutional History with the following situationist discourse:

*The first human clusters emerged as a strategic advantage, a way to secure a monopoly on certain places where food resources existed. They did not arise as a civilizational awareness of the sedentary advantages of specialization, accumulation, and commerce. The nomadic populations that previously also took advantage of those resources, seeing themselves deprived of them, began for this reason the first wars. The division then created between those who had and those who had not started the current class society. The city, therefore, is not born of civility, but rather of incivility. The city is not a defense against nature but against other men. The city is a concentration of phobias, and its exterior is its literal liberation.*

This is intended to result in critical distance creation.

#### **4.15. History of built utopias**

The inspiration for the communities outside the community came from Thomas More's *Utopia*. Its condition and contradiction was that Utopia, when represented by an island, also meant that no one could live there according to principles other than those of Utopia.

It will be introduced by New Lanark, Vista Alegre and the Fourierist influence in the USA. It will pass in Lechtworth, in Brasilia and in SAAL. It will include the History of the *beatnik* communities of the 1960-70s. It will refer to ecovillages, from Auroville to Tamera. It will frame the squats as periurban utopias.



#### **4.16. History of the territory and landscape**

Its approach will be based on the recent current of *landscape archeology*. Instead of reading the traces merely in the context of the History of the peoples who produced them, it adds to this reading the dialectic of Man under the influence of the territory, always superjacent to the action of the man on the territory.

#### **4.17. Theory of the limit of natural cycles**

Also known as Geophysiology.

Geology and biology of resources, natural cycles and their limit sustainability.

This perspective does not put man at the center of the perception of knowledge.

#### **4.18. Economic theory of the debt**

History of money and alternative systems of commercial valuation.

#### **4.19. Theory of education**

Starting from a Montessorian approach, it will reveal the importance of natural, affective and emotional knowledge for the formation of a complete individual.

For an autonomy of pedagogies.

#### **4.20. Vegetal history**

From the vegetal taxonomy to its reproduction and applications.

#### **4.21. Permaculture in agriculture**

If intensive agriculture is a pleonasm, non-intensive agriculture is an oxymoron. Agriculture is, by definition, a breach on the soil. But there are ways to make it in a holistic manner.

There will be place for the construction of a vegetable garden and to savor the food.

#### **4.22. Nutrition and health**

To get to know the right nutrition for each ones body.

#### **4.23. DIY and Open Source Design**

Workshops for construction of utility objects with the use of by-products, surpluses and obsolete artifacts.

It will produce pieces that explore the possibility of a model of construction where everyone draws for everyone.

#### **4.24. Contemporary vernacular materials**

Characterization, availability, assembly.

#### 4.25. Acts of architecture

It is not about the sociological analysis of the implications of architecture but about the sociology of the *architectural individuals*.

The architecture is no longer objectified and becomes part of a planning reasoning.

The planning of the internal functions of the building and its relations to the surroundings, but also of its meaning in a wider network of comparable buildings, weaving territorial connections and significations.

The architecture of the landscape and, consequently, of the human landscapes, will tend to be the matrix in the propositions and in the directions of the reasoning that will lead to the architectural *act*.

If this *act* creates relationships of continuity and significant intimacy with other *acts* in the landscape, visible by subliminal or explicit associations, the resulting set of *acts* can be considered with social life, embodying the architecture. In addition to the psychological reading of the building proposed by Anthony Vidler<sup>13</sup>, architectural *acts* can also be interpreted from a sociological point of view. These *acts* acquire a communal life with a joint meaning, with different ages and peculiar relations of respect or

---

<sup>13</sup> Anthony Vidler, *The architectural uncanny* (1992).

estrangement, some having a history of lineage to tell, others speaking in unison, others like voices in the wind.

## **5. FACULTY**

Apart from exceptional cases, architects do not have the competence to teach subjects in this college. They are generalists by definition and by pride and here we need experts. This principle would furthermore limit the corporate appropriation of the college.

## **6. INSTALLATIONS AND SCHOOL YEAR**

The vortex of this project will be Herdade da Tojeira, in Vila Velha de Ródão.

The first course will be carried out with the duration of one conventional school year, not for institutional reasons but for reflecting the solar year and its implications in the life on Earth.

It will provide four parts in residences of one week in the homestead: in September, November, April and June. Theoretical materials will be taught in Lisbon, in unique weekly classes.

Throughout this process, each future *sound constructor* will build his or her own autonomous spot. It will involve water harvesting, shelter, food production and DIY power generation.

The aggregation will take place in a residence on Flores Island, Azores, for an indefinite period.

The research activity will not be made from long marathons but will be conclusively daily, without ever claiming to close the game. Under the final pressure arise the doubts that spoil the hypothesis and lead to starting over again, always starting over again.

The moment a document is closed, the issues reoccur, but it is time to leave when the party begins.





**HOBBYECTS**  
made by you

december 2016