Levantados do Chão (Rising from the ground) - Visual essay.

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Rising from the ground

“Por mais que procuremos, nunca trabalhamos num deserto, estão lá as marcas suficientes para nós as envolvermos e as transformarmos”. (Álvaro Siza, in the documentary: Bairro da Malagueira 1996)

The project “Levantados do Chão” (Rising from the ground) is part of the exhibition on architect Siza Vieira - “Siza, uma Malagueira Plural” - by DAUÉ e CHAIA, on the 10th edition of Iberian DO.CO.MO.MO, coordinated by Prof. Daniel Jiménez and curated by João Soares (DAUÉ), Sofia Salema (DAUÉ) and Pedro Guilherme (CHAIA_UÉ researcher).

“Levantados do Chão” is the first essay I have written for my PhD thesis on the “Sense of architectural place in photography-mediated experience “using the research by design approach.

The photographs were taken while walking around Bairro da Malagueira, a project by Álvaro Siza Vieira in Évora, during 2018 and is part of a wide set of images taken between 2017 and 2020. This is a particular view of the neighbourhood, based on images that convey almost abstract and emerging fragments “espera de brotar, das coisas vivas, o aflorar de uma raiz, o rebentar do chão pela rocha”¹.

The origin of the word emerge is the Latin “emergere”, which means “bring to the surface”, rise to the surface. Emerging is a multidisciplinary concept applied to philosophy, psychology, botany. In all areas, this phenomenon occurs spontaneously through time, with no rules or in a previously defined pattern.

Forming a new layer that has emerged and continues to emerge in a disorderly and spontaneous manner leads to new assimilation and layer to the text of a city, a path or, in this case, the neighbourhood Bairro da Malagueira. As mentioned by Siza Vieira when he arrived at the location, the strong water deposit, the streams, the rock masses, the century-old trees, forced the initial project to adapt as the “landscape marks” were perceived and registered and, consequently, made naturally evident.

Reading the neighbourhood means understanding the symbiosis between the natural and the built environment, in a dialogue between the dimension of the planned space, built to last for a long time, and the short and spontaneous time defined by the (natural and artificial) appropriations.

The perspective of “Levantados do Chão” (Rising from the ground) is, therefore, a new time layer in which appropriations, emergence, concrete and stone artifacts, textures, limits, among others, are revealed. In our registry, we did not include the mobile and wondering elements, we rejected shadows, people, and cars, and limited our reading to its essence, in its material, natural and time dimension.

Thus, the images require distance from the general view of the neighbourhood, since they portray several places - somewhat symbiotic among themselves - which, because they are representative of the neighbourhood, allow us to reflect on key elements such as evolution, appropriation, fragmentation, time, and drifting.

Keywords: Malagueira, Álvaro Siza, visual essay, fragment, perception, revelation, ambiguity, blur

Biography:

Gonçalo Duarte Pacheco was born in Caldas da Rainha in 1988. He holds a master's degree in architecture by Universidade Autónoma de Lisboa (2013), and his master project was awarded the Secil Universidades 2013 award. He started his traineeship at Campos Costa Arquitectos in that same year. In 2016 he founded the Gonçalo Duarte Pacheco Arquitectos and he currently divides his time between Architecture and Photography. He founded Outro Estúdio, a company dedicated to producing Architecture and Landscape photography. In 2018, he started doing his PhD at Évora University.

¹ See summary of the exhibition "Siza, uma Malagueira Plural", 2018, by João Soares, Pedro Guilherme and Sofia Salema.