

**Partilhar Memórias
Piscina de Marés**

Álvaro Siza

**Sharing Memories
Ocean Swimming Pool**

1960–2021

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Álvaro Siza
Piscina de Marés (1960-2021)

SHARING MEMORIES
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CRITICAL RECEPTION: OCEAN SWIMMING POOL

TERESA CUNHA FERREIRA

The Ocean Swimming Pool was designed by the Portuguese architect Álvaro Siza between 1960 and 1966 (with construction ongoing until 1973) for the coastal town of Leça da Palmeira, near Oporto. This work marks a turning point in its author's career by expressing a tectonic shift from regionalist inspiration towards more abstract design and modern constructive solutions. The bathing complex has now been in operation for almost sixty years, ever since its public opening in 1965. Simultaneously a leisure area and a meeting place for both local people and visitors, this has become a social and cultural landmark for the community, playing an essential role in its identity and collective memory.

Álvaro Siza's recent intervention in the Ocean Swimming Pool (2018-2021) represents an exceptional case of an architect preserving his own work, enhancing its significance. Preserving the architectural integrity of the ensemble and accepting the signs of time as a densifying element of architecture, Siza definitively finishes the work to the north - in the place where the unbuilt restaurant was to be settled - by carefully integrating new intervention within his own urban and landscape design for the Leça da Palmeira waterfront.

The building is currently listed as a National Monument (since 2011) and is included in the "Ensemble of Álvaro Siza's Architectural Works" in the Tentative List for World Heritage (2017), for its cultural values and for being an essential reference of modernist architecture which still remains in full use by local communities.

*Critical reception*¹

The Ocean Swimming Pool has been the subject of numerous essays and academic works, photographic reports and even documentary films, becoming a place of pilgrimage for architects and scholars from all over the world, conveying the influence of Álvaro Siza as a key figure of twentieth-century modernism. Indeed, the bathing ensemble was the object of over eighty publications in

multiple languages (Portuguese, English, French, Spanish, German, Japanese, among others), including books, book chapters, articles in journals and academic dissertations.

This interest started even before construction ended, with the comprehensive article published by the Portuguese architect and critic Pedro Vieira de Almeida in 1967, firstly in the Spanish journal *Hogar y Arquitectura* and, only two months afterwards, in the Portuguese *Arquitectura. Revista de Arte e Construção*². From a formal point of view, this project is presented as the beginning of a new stage in Álvaro Siza's work in which the former additive strategy was giving way to perfectly integrating the expressive means that converge towards the whole. This economy of expression, furthermore, definitely overcomes the references to the "Survey on Portuguese Regional Architecture" and the trivialization of the vernacular. In addition, Vieira de Almeida considers this to be the first time in Portugal when an architect is able to critically face and control the spaces along a route, revisiting the rationalist theme of the *promenade architecturale*.

Less than a decade later, the Portuguese Revolution of 1974 and its consequences in the domain of architecture led to the publication of a dedicated issue by the influential journal *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* (1976)³ with essays by Vittorio Gregotti and Oriol Bohigas, including the Ocean Swimming Pool (being this edition adapted from an earlier publication in the Spanish magazine *Bis*). Despite Portugal's relative isolation, the interest sparked by Álvaro Siza's work at the time derived from its contribution to the ongoing international debate on the critical revision of modern architecture, simultaneously integrating Bruno Zevi's contributions, Ernesto Nathan Rogers strategy of 'continuità' and the ethical and aesthetic premises of Brutalism as theorized by Reyner Banham.

Despite the fact that the Ocean Swimming Pool was not included in the selection of works presented in the journal *Controspazio* (1972), preceded with essays by Vittorio Gregotti and Nuno Portas on Siza's architecture, the bathing complex would be featured in the Exhibition on Álvaro Siza, curated by Gregotti, at the Padiglione di Arte Contemporanea (PAC) in Milan (1979).⁴

The Swimming Pool's international recognition will be fully consolidated (along with Siza's architecture) in the following decade, especially through the publication of *Álvaro Siza: Poetic Profession* in 1986⁵, that counted on critical contributions by Kenneth Frampton, Nuno Portas, Alexandre Alves Costa, Pierluigi Nicolini, Oriol Bohigas, Bernard Huet, and Giovanni Chiaramonte's photographs of the swimming pool.

In the national context, in 1985, the Leça Swimming Pool was included by José Salgado in a monograph focused on Siza's designs for his home town of Matosinhos (*Álvaro Siza em Matosinhos*)⁶. The following year, an essay by Eduardo Souto Moura in the Spanish journal *Arquitectura*⁷ provided a critical comparison of the bathing set with Frank Lloyd Wright's Taliesin West and Mies Van der Rohe brick house.

An important stage in the international recognition of the Ocean Swimming Pool also derives from the numerous Exhibitions in which this work was systematically highlighted, namely in "Álvaro Siza" at the Centre Georges Pompidou (1990)⁸, "Álvaro Siza: Obras y Proyectos" at the Galician Centre of Contemporary Art and other itineraries (1995)⁹, "Arquitectura do Século XX: Portugal" at the Deutsches Architektur-Museum (1997)¹⁰, "Alvaro Siza Architetto" at the Basilica Palladiana (1999)¹¹, "Les universalistes. 50 ans d'architecture portugaise" at the Cité de l'Architecture & du Patrimoine (2016)¹² and, more recently, "Álvaro Siza: (In) Discipline" in the Serralves Museum (2018)¹³, among others. The inclusion of the Ocean Swimming Pool in a vast set of monographs on Álvaro Siza should also be mentioned, being these intensified after he was awarded the Pritzker Prize in 1992 and since then until the present days¹³.

The first monograph exclusively dedicated to the Ocean Swimming Pool was published in 2004 – *1959-1973 Piscina na praia de Leça da Palmeira*¹⁵ – by Christian Gänsshirt, a former collaborator in Siza's office, who is also the author of a chapter in the Volume IV of *Twentieth-Century Architecture* by Willey-Blackwell (2017)¹⁶, where the Leça bathing complex features alongside with iconic buildings such as the Villa Savoye, the Fallingwater, the Villa Mairea and the Salk Institute.

Numerous essays by renowned authors would also require referencing, such the ones by William Curtis, Rafael Moneo or Manuel Aires Mateus¹⁷, deepening knowledge and highlighting the design lessons of Siza on this early work.

In 2016, two books recall the attention to the bathing complex: *A Pool in the Sea: In conversation with Kenneth Frampton* (2016)¹⁸, contains dialogues between Frampton and Siza, and Michel Toussaint's monography *Piscina na praia de Leça: pool on the beach* (2016)¹⁹ with texts of recognised authors in the Portuguese context. More recently, the Catalogue of the Exhibition "No place is deserted. Álvaro Siza: Ocean Swimming Pool (1960-2021)" (2022)²⁰ presents the work as a palimpsest (as it was never conceived as single gesture but is the result of several commissions and additions), while it provides critical essays, design reports and an illustrated chronology of the building's design and construction phases.

In this framework, the present book *Sharing Memories. Álvaro Siza: Ocean Swimming Pool (1960-2021)* generates renewed insights on this emblematic work of 20th century architecture, organized in five chapters – with unavoidable overlapping and contaminations – "Context and references", "From history to memories", "Critical perspectives", "Lessons from the Pool" and "Representations of the Pool", providing perspectives and readings on this landmark work of 20th century architecture.

Sharing Memories

This book gathers the contributions made at the "Sharing Memories: Ocean Swimming Pool"²¹ webinar, organized on the 9th September 2021 by the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Porto, in partnership with the Matosinhos Municipal Council and Casa da Arquitectura. This initiative was held in the context of a Getty Foundation grant from the 'Keeping It Modern' program, aimed at safeguarding and preserving the Ocean Swimming Pool. The webinar counted on the presence of Álvaro Siza and a selection of renowned authors who shared their experiences, memories and reflections for contemporary architectural practice.

Oral histories play a major role in modern architecture documentation, as often architects,

building actors and even contemporary critics or historians can be engaged and provide precious information on the building, while participating in its safeguarding and preservation²². Alvaro Siza, with his lucid mind, as his presentation of this book confirms (transcribed from the oral intervention), is an epitome of how living memories can positively contribute to the study of 20th century architecture, being also involved within the evolving life of buildings by collaborating in their study and conservation, as it happened in the Leça Swimming Pool.

In the chapter “Context and references”, the authors provide us with a background on the Ocean Swimming Pool’s positioning whether in the history of 20th architecture or in the framework of Álvaro Siza’s career. While Alexandre Alves Costa and Ana Tostões focus mostly on the national context, Dominique Machabert, Michel Toussaint and Nuno Grande provide a broader reflection on its standing within the international panorama, expanding on its critical relations with other arts.

“From history to memories”, entails precious testimonies through the living memories of Brigitte Fleck and Pierluigi Nicolin, among the first to visit and publish on the swimming pool outside of Portugal. On the other hand, Christian Gänshirt and Roberto Cremascoli, both former collaborators of Siza, provide direct memories and experiences on the Ocean Swimming Pool.

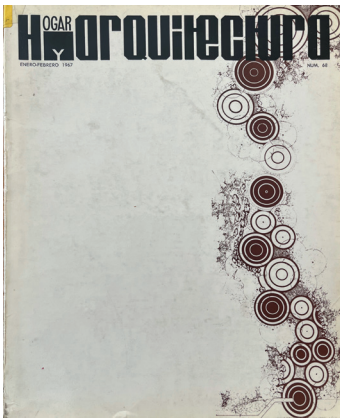
“Critical perspectives” comprises essays by Wilfried Wang, Peter Testa, Carlos Machado and Eduardo Fernandes, allowing for further interpretative readings on the bathing complex. Wang and Testa explore the correlations of the Ocean Swimming Pool with other emblematic architectural works, while Machado and Fernandes deliver reflections on the pool, framed within the design principles of Álvaro Siza.

“Lessons from the Pool” presents the bathing set as a didactic work both for students and for architectural design practice through the words of architects and teachers such as Juan Domingo Santo, Jonathan Sergison, Luis Martínez Santamaría, Nuno Brandão Costa, Teresa Novais, and Ana Alves Costa, Filipa Guerreiro and José Cabral Dias.

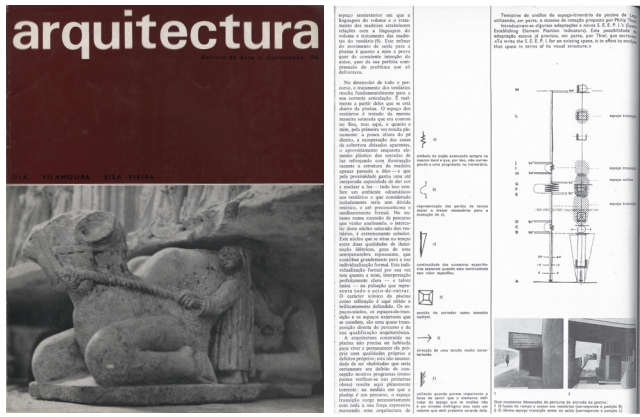
Finally, “Representations of the Pool”, opens with the emotional testimony of Giovanni Chiamonte, among the first to photograph the architectural artefact, followed by Luís Urbano’s reflections on his film making process in the short film *Sizigia* (2012). Furthermore, Pedro Leão and Joaquim Moreno present artistic perspectives through the lens of photographers such as Marta Ferreira and Guido Guidi, both from 2018.

- ¹ The critical reception developed with the collaboration of Hugo Mendonça.
- ² ALMEIDA, Pedro Vieira de, "Un análisis de la obra de Siza Vieira". In *Hogar y Arquitectura*, nº 60 (janeiro/ fevereiro). Madrid: Ediciones y Publicaciones populares, 1976, pp. 77-85; ALMEIDA, Pedro Vieira de, "Uma análise da obra de Siza Vieira e Três obras de Álvaro Siza Vieira: Cooperativa do Lordelo. Casa unifamiliar em Maia. Piscina de Leça". In *Arquitectura, Revista de Arte e Construção*, nº 96 (março/abril), 1967, pp. 64-74.
- ³ GREGOTTI, Vittorio; BOHIGAS, Oriol, "La passion d'Álvaro Siza". In *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui: Portugal* nº185, (maio/ junho) 1976. Bohigas' article, including the Ocean Swimming Pool, was previously published in the magazine "Bis" nº12 (março), 1976 pp. 11-19.
- ⁴ GREGOTTI, Vittorio (ed.), *ÁLVARO SIZA Architetto 1954-1979*. (Padiglione d'Arte Contemporanea di Milano). Milano: Idea Books, 1979.
- ⁵ *Álvaro Siza: Professione Poetica / Poetic Profession*. Quaderni Di Lotus, 6, with texts by Kenneth Frampton, Nuno Portas, Alexandre Alves Costa, Pierluigi Nicolini, Bernard Huet, Oriol Bohigas and Vittorio Gregotti. Milano/ New York: Electa/ Rizzoli, 1986.
- ⁶ SALGADO, José, *Álvaro Siza em Matosinhos*. Matosinhos: Câmara Municipal de Matosinhos, 1985. A decade later, Alexandre Alves Costa published the text of a conference: COSTA, Alexandre Alves, *Álvaro Siza em Matosinhos*. Matosinhos: Câmara Municipal de Matosinhos, 1996.
- ⁷ SOUTO DE MOURA, Eduardo, "Piscina de Leça, Matosinhos, 1961-66". In *Arquitectura, Revista del Colegio Oficial de Arquitectos de Madrid* nº261, julho/agosto 1986.
- ⁸ COSTA, Alexandre Alves; SIZA, Álvaro, *Álvaro Siza*. Lisboa: Centre Georges Pompidou, Imprensa Nacional Casa da Moeda, 1990.
- ⁹ LLANO, Pedro e CASTANHEIRA, Carlos (eds.). *Álvaro Siza: Obras e Projectos*. Madrid: Centro Galego de Arte Contemporaneo / Electa, 1995 (also exhibited in San Marino and Matosinhos).
- ¹⁰ BECKER, Annette, TOSTÕES, Ana, WANG, Wilfried (org.), *Arquitectura do Século XX/Portugal*. Lisboa/ Frankfurt: Portugal-Frankfurt 97, S.A./ Deutsches Architektur-Museum. Munchen /New York: Prestel, 1997.
- ¹¹ FRAMPTON, Kenneth (Ed.), *Álvaro Siza: tutte le opere*. Milano: Electa, 1999.
- ¹² GRANDE, Nuno (ed.), *Les universalistes. 50 ans d'architecture portugaise*. Paris: Éditions Parenthèses, Fondation Calouste Gulbenkian, Cité de l'Architecture & du Patrimoine, 2016.
- ¹³ GRANDE, Nuno, CARLES, Muro Soler, *Álvaro Siza: in/ disciplina*. Eds. Nuno Grande e Carles Muro. Porto: Fundação de Serralves, 2019.
- ¹⁴ Among others, TESTA, Peter - *The architecture of Alvaro Siza*. Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1984; FLECK, Brigitte, *Alvaro Siza*. Basel/ Berlin/ Boston: Birkhäuser 1992; RODRIGUES, A. Jacinto, *Álvaro Siza : obra e método*. 1ª ed. Porto: Civilização, 1992; SANTOS, José Paulo dos (Ed.), *Álvaro Siza: obras e projetos, 1954-1992*. Barcelona: Gustavo Gili, 1993; TRIGUEIROS, Luiz (Ed.), *Álvaro Siza: 1954-1976*, Lisboa: Blau, 1997; JODIDIO, Philip (Ed.), *Álvaro Siza*, Köln: Taschen, 1999; GREGOTTI, Vittorio (ed.), *Álvaro Siza: 1954-1988*. Tokyo: A+U, 1989; *Alvaro Siza: 1958-2000*. Ed. Fernando Marquez Cecilia y Richard C. Levene. Madrid: El Croquis, 1994 (nº 68/69); 2000 (nº68/69+95); CASTANHEIRA, Carlos e PORCU, Chiara (Eds.), *As cidades de Álvaro Siza*. Lisboa: Figueirinhas, 2001; FRAMPTON, Kenneth (Ed.), *Álvaro Siza: tutte le opere*. Milano: Electa, 2005 (1999).
- ¹⁵ GANSHIRT, Christian, 1959-73, *Swimming Pool on the Beach at Leça de Palmeira/ Schwimmbad am Strand von Leça de Palmeira/ Piscina na praia de Leça de Palmeira*, Álvaro Siza. Ed. by Luis Trigueiros. Lisboa: Blau, 2004.
- ¹⁶ GANSHIRT, Christian, "The Presence of the Atlantic Ocean - Swimming Pool on the Beach at Leça de Palmeira". In: Harry Mallgrave (ed.): *The Modern Project: Companion to the Twentieth Century*. Volume IV: Twentieth-Century Architecture. Ed. by David Leatherbarrow and Alexander Eisenschmidt, Companion to the History of Architecture series, Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2017, pp. 525-538.
- ¹⁷ CURTIS, William, "Álvaro Siza: An Architecture of Edges (1994)." In *Álvaro Siza: 1958-2000*, ed., Richard Levene and Fernando Márquez Cecilia, Madrid: *El Croquis* (68/69+95), 2000; MONEO, Rafael, *Inquietud teórica y estrategia proyectual: en la obra de ocho arquitectos contemporaneos*. Barcelona: Actar, 2004, pp. 212-214; MATEUS, Manuel "Álvaro Siza Leça Swimming Pools". In *First works: emerging architectural experimentation of the 1960s & 1970s*, ed. by Brett Steele, Francisco González de Canales. London: Architectural Association, 2009. pp. 76-79.
- ¹⁸ *Álvaro Siza Vieira in conversation with Kenneth Frampton: a pool in the sea*, text by Kenneth Frampton and photography by Vincent Mentzel. Chicago: IITAC, 2016
- ¹⁹ TOUSSAINT, Michel. *Piscina na praia de Leça: a pool on the beach*, coord. Michel Toussaint, Maria Melo. Lisboa: A+A books, 2016.
- ²⁰ FERREIRA, Teresa Cunha, URBANO, Luís. *No place is deserted. Álvaro Siza: Ocean Swimming Pool (1960-2021)*. Porto: FAUP/ Afrontamento, 2022.
- ²¹ Commissaires Teresa Cunha Ferreira e Filipa Guerreiro.
- ²² SMITH, Graham, *Oral history*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2017. BURKE, Sheridan, "Beloved Modern: Re-engaging With Original Designers". In CASCIATO, Maristella (Ed.) *Modern architectures: the rise of a heritage*. Wavre: Mardaga, 2012.

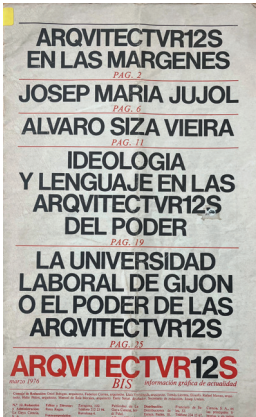
This work is funded by the Getty Foundation (Grant #: ORG-202047064) as well as by the ERDF - COMPETE 2020, OPCI and through national funds by FCT, under the scope of the POCI-01-0145-FEDER-007744 project, 2020.01980. CEECIND and FCT Project SIZA/ETM/0023/2019.



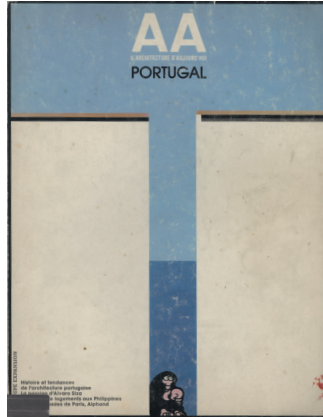
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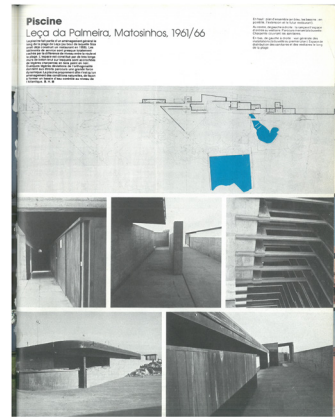
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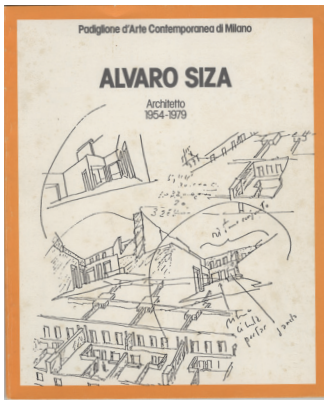
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- A ALMEIDA, Pedro Vieira de, "Un análisis de la obra de Siza Vieira". In *Hogar y Arquitectura*, nº 60 (janeiro/fevereiro), Madrid/ Ediciones y Publicaciones populares, 1976.
- B ALMEIDA, Pedro Vieira de, "Uma análise da obra de Siza Vieira e Três obras de Álvaro Siza Vieira: Cooperativa do Lordelo. Casa unifamiliar em Maia. Piscina de Leça". In *Arquitectura, Revista de Arte e Construção*, nº 96 (março/abril), 1967.
- C BOHIGAS, Oriol, "Alvaro Siza Vieira". In *Bis* nº12 (março), 1976.
- D GREGOTTI, Vittorio; BOHIGAS, Oriol, "La passion d'Alvaro Siza". In *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui/Portugal* nº 185, (maio/junho), 1976.

- E GREGOTTI, Vittorio (ed.), *ALVARO SIZA Architetto 1954-1979* (Padiglione d'Arte Contemporanea di Milano) Milano: Idea Books, 1979.
- F SALGADO, José, *Álvaro Siza em Matosinhos*. Matosinhos: Câmara Municipal de Matosinhos, 1985.
- G *Álvaro Siza: Professione Poetica / Poetic Profession*. Quaderni Di Lotus, 6, with texts by Kenneth Frampton, Nuno Portas, Alexandre Alves Costa, Pierluigi Nicolin, Bernard Huet, Oriol Bohigas and Vittorio Gregotti. Milano/ New York: Electa/Rizzoli, 1986.
- H SOUTO DE MOURA, Eduardo, "Piscina de Leça, Matosinhos, 1961-66". In *Arquitectura, Revista del Colegio Oficial de Arquitectos de Madrid* nº261, julho/agosto 1986.

- I GÄNSHIRT, Christian, *1959-73, Swimming Pool on the Beach at Leça de Palmeira / Schwimmbad am Strand von Leça de Palmeira / Piscina na praia de Leça de Palmeira*, Álvaro Siza. Ed. by Luis Trigueiros. Lisboa: Blau, 2004.
- J TOUSSAINT, Michel. *Piscina na praia de Leça: a pool on the beach*, eds. Michel Toussaint, Maria Melo. Lisboa: A+A books, 2016.
- K *Álvaro Siza Vieira in conversation with Kenneth Frampton: a pool in the sea*, text by Kenneth Frampton and photography by Vincent Mentzel. Chicago: IITAC, 2016.



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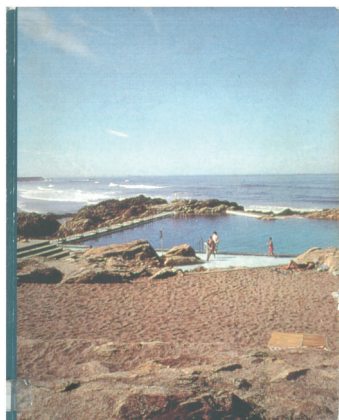
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In the autumn of 1987, I had just moved to Lausanne to study with Luigi Snozzi at the *École Polytechnique Fédérale*. On the desk of a fellow student, a recently published book on Siza's work in Lausanne caught my eye¹. It showed some photographs by Giovanni Chiaramonte, whom we saw earlier today, combined with some of Siza's sketches and drawings, and I remember how bewildered I was by these images and drawings. I couldn't make much sense out of either. For someone who had never been to Portugal and was not familiar with Siza's work it looked all very difficult to understand. Some weeks later, a lecture by Jean-Paul Rayon, one of Snozzi's assistant professors, offered some more impressions, but I'm afraid my French at the time was not sufficient to really understand.

Anyway, how could a few slides and sentences possibly convey such a strong experience, involving all the senses, at certain moments even challenging them? Of course, I remember my first visit, back in August 1988. I had just started my internship in the office of José Paulo dos Santos, and was living near *Praça Marquês de Pombal*, in a tiny 4.5 m² bedroom with a window opening onto a firewall. I remember the very strong sunlight and summer heat on that afternoon, a very strong wind blowing from the sea as well, the strange smell of seawater and rotting seaweed, the hustle and bustle of so many people enjoying their summer holidays, the sudden, blinding darkness of the changing rooms, then those strange rocks and the coarse sand, and the water being very cold.



Álvaro Siza, Ocean Swimming Pool (© Christian Gänshirt, 2008)

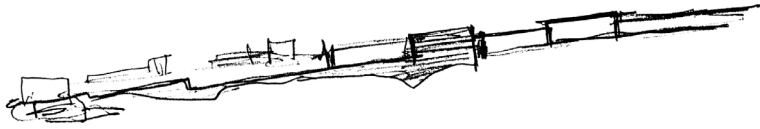
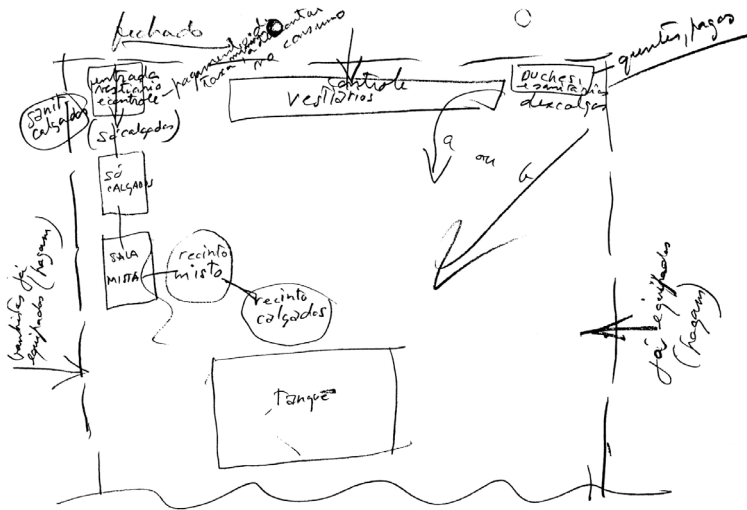
Since that day, I collected many more memories, joyful and sad ones, strong ones, sometimes even shocking ones. From the years when I lived as a young architect in Porto, I recall countless summer weekend afternoons joyfully spent “nas piscinas”. I began to see them as a central part of my favourite weekend walk, starting from the Luis I Bridge and the Ribeira Negra. That’s the reason why in my memory, the project already begins with this bridge, and the powerful *genius loci* of the city of Porto is, at least in my understanding, fundamental to this project, even though it is located far away from the city centre.

Hiking along the Douro riversides, the right or the left-hand one, I slowly moved towards the ocean, admiring the last few shipbuilders who were still active at the time. Then passing through Foz, taking a rest on the Luz Beach or enjoying a fabulous croissant (the soft and sweet Portuguese ones, not the crispy French ones), before continuing to the Ingleses Beach, the Castle of the Cheese, crossing Matosinhos and the bridge over the Leixões port, and finally the small town’s streets leading to the coastal road, which at that time wasn’t lined with housing blocks yet, but with green fields. Often, but not always, the Tea House offered another rest, providing a point of return towards the end of the afternoon, before heading back to the city.

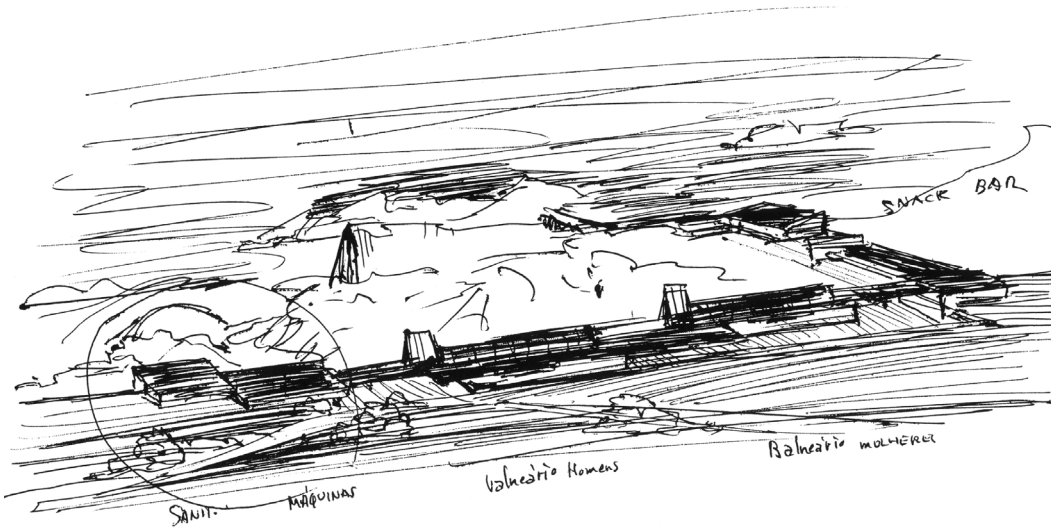
I had almost forgotten that I still didn’t understand how the very young architect Álvaro Siza could have designed such an outstanding piece of architecture. My opportunity to find out came some years later, when I was already living in Berlin and had recently started teaching in Cottbus, as Luiz Trigueiros, the owner of editorial Blau, called me from Lisbon or Cascais, asking for a translation for one of his books. Because I had no experience in doing that, I declined. Instead, we agreed that I’d write the text for a small monograph he intended to publish on the swimming pool. Even though I had no research funding, and never received any on that topic, I travelled back to Porto to start the enquiries. Siza was very supportive but didn’t have much patience to talk about the project, or how he had developed the design. He referred me to Chaira Porcu instead, who had started to reorganize his archive. She recently had rediscovered many old drawings from different phases of the project, also letters to the client and project descriptions, and a batch of Siza’s sketches no one had ever seen for decades, all on single A4 paper sheets, and I was allowed to copy every part of this.

At that time, I also spoke with Beatriz and António Madureira, Siza’s first collaborators, who had worked on the project, and with Siza’s brother-in-law, José Salgado, who some years earlier had published a book on Siza’s works in Matosinhos, including the ones in Leça, which is part of that city. He told me how the site was used before it became a swimming pool, and how much time Siza had spent there, sketching, and observing, and that he knew the site already as a boy. He must have played on those rocks a long time before even becoming an architect.

¹ SIZA, Álvaro (1986): *Professione Poetica / Poetic Profession*. Quaderni Di Lotus, 6, with texts by Kenneth Frampton, Nuno Portas, Alexandre Alves Costa, Pierluigi Nicolini, Bernard Huet, Oriol Bohigas and Vittorio Gregotti, Milano / New York: Electa / Rizzoli, 1986



Álvaro Siza, Ocean Swimming Pool (© AS/CCA, n/d)



Álvaro Siza, Ocean Swimming Pool (© AS/CCA, 1962)

It was with sketches like the one showing a bubble diagram, mapping the different functions of the facilities to be built, that I started to get an idea of how Siza might have developed the project. Another sketch shows an aerial view of an early version, which almost directly translates this diagram into a series of volumes, arranged around a rectangular open space framed by the buildings and the main pool. I was struck by the simplicity of a 1/2000 scale site plan named “Piscina de Leça, Ante-Projecto AP1”, dating from October 1962, a later version, presenting a fan-shaped restaurant, but still clearly related to the rectangular open space, probably originating from the bubble diagram.

For architecture students it might be helpful to know that the complex floor plan, named “Projecto intercalar da 3ª e 4ª fase” (intercalary project connecting the 3rd and 4th phase), usually published with the project, is dated as late as March 1973. This design wasn’t achieved in a year or two, or even in one go, as I assumed when I first saw it as a student. It’s a project that was developed over a timespan of more than a decade, during which the architect was not only adding elements – doing so very carefully, in a way that the formal and material coherence of the project was not damaged but enriched – but also maturing as an architectural designer. It is beautiful to see that this process has virtually no end, as demonstrated by Siza’s proposal of an additional restaurant in 1995, never built, or the additions resulting from the last major renovation undertaken in 2018-2021.

With the renovations of the facilities that took place in the mid 1990s, the black tarpaper roofs were covered with copper sheets. A building material a bit too precious for such an exposed location, as it turned out. Carlos Castanheira once told me the story that one night, all the copper sheets got stolen. By luck they were discovered on the thieves’ premises, and put back on the roof.

At the time of my research, I took a series of photographs trying to illustrate the *promenade architecturale*, the experience of approaching, entering, and proceeding through the facilities, showing how you take one step up into the beach area and how you move around there, how the horizon and the big wharf shielding the Leça port become the ultimate visual references. This was quite a while before digital photography became ubiquitous, leaving me today with the desire to convey this spatial sequence in a video.

A few years later, upon another visit to Porto, I met on site with photographer Thorsten Hümpel, whom Luiz Trigueiros had asked to take the photos for our book, to discuss how to take the photographs. He decided to take them in the wintertime, without any people, and had the pools, which are usually emptied during the off-season, filled with seawater for his shooting. The landscape book format, especially when using full spreads, allowed for broad panoramic views. The winter light and the emptiness of the landscape resulted in a melancholic atmosphere, very much in contrast to the lively summer experience.

Published on February 1, 2004, the book², which was the first monograph produced on that project, went largely unnoticed. At the time, so many voluminous books had been published on Siza’s works that no one seemed interested in our small contribution, not even the architect himself. No book presentations were held, no lectures

² GANSHIRT, Christian (2004): 1959–73, *Swimming Pool on the Beach at Leça de Palmeira / Schwimmbad am Strand von Leça de Palmeira / Piscina na praia de Leça de Palmeira*,

Álvaro Siza, Trigueiros, Luiz (ed.), with photographs by Thorsten Hümpel and text by Christian Gänshirt. Translated by Melissa Thorson- Hausse and Tiny Domingos. Lisboa: Editorial Blau, 2004

or exhibitions organized, no book reviews written, no one, except a few architecture students and two friends, ever quoted from it. Another wasted effort, I thought.

In some way, this was very much in line with what happened during that time to the project itself, exposing once more the fragility of that architecture. One of my most shocking memories dates back, if I remember correctly, to the spring or autumn of the same year. On another visit to Porto, I went to see the swimming pool again, even though it was off-season, and I expected it to be closed. But I found the buildings with doors pried open, abandoned, in a miserable state, many things damaged, litter in the corners and sand blown in by the wind, no one there, no one taking care.

Looking back today, I hope our little book has contributed to reversing that neglect. Over the following years, a few more books were published on the project, generally ignoring ours. The building was put back into use, renovated, and in 2012, it was, along with the Tea House, one of the two first pieces of modern Portuguese architecture to be included in the national heritage list.

To my great surprise, in 2013, Alexander Eisenschmidt, Associate Professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago, invited me to contribute a chapter on the swimming pool to *The Companions to the History of Architecture*, a comprehensive 4 volume set of books, to be published in 2017 by Wiley Blackwell, with Harry Francis Mallgrave as the General Editor. Each of the four volumes contains fifty chapters, written by a broad range of authors. Renaissance and Baroque architecture are covered in volume I, the second volume is about Eighteenth-, the third about Nineteenth-, and volume IV, edited by David Leatherbarrow and Alexander Eisenschmidt, is about Twentieth-Century Architecture. It includes the swimming pool in its Part V, which is entitled *The 1960s and 1970s: Questioning Modern Worlds*.³

Therefore, I produced an updated version of the English translation of my text. Of course, when the book came out, I was very touched and happy to see this rather modest and small-scale project presented along with such famous classics like the AEG Turbine Factory by Peter Behrens, Villa Savoye by Le Corbusier, Fallingwater by Frank Lloyd Wright, or Villa Mairea by Alvar Aalto, the conceptual similarities of which with the swimming pool project have been pointed out just a few minutes ago by Wilfried Wang. In the book, it is included right after Louis Kahn's Salk Institute, and followed by some of the most spectacular projects of the 20th century, like the Centre Pompidou in Paris or Frank Gehry's Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao.

Perhaps the ultimate critics of architecture are not the ones who publish in newspapers and magazines, nor the ones sitting in competition juries or curating architecture exhibitions, but the architecture historians. More detached from the struggles and fashions of the everyday, they are the ones who finally look back at a historic period, compare, evaluate, and decide which architects, and which ones of their many works, will be included in the books on architecture history. By doing so, they are providing the ultimate proof that a project was "making history" and is getting canonised. Nonetheless, there's no reason to take my writings on the project too seriously. The publication of *The Companions to the History of Architecture* dates back almost five years now. According to Google Scholar, no one ever quoted from Volume IV, Chapter 35.

² GANSHIRT, Christian (2017): *The Presence of the Atlantic Ocean - Swimming Pool on the Beach at Leça de Palmeira*, in: Harry Mallgrave (ed.): *The Modern Project: Companion to the Twentieth Century. Volume IV:*

Twentieth-Century Architecture, edited by David Leatherbarrow, and Alexander Eisenschmidt, The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to the History of Architecture series, Hoboken, NJ: Wiley- Blackwell, 2017, pp. 525-538

This book gathers the contributions presented at the “Sharing Memories: Ocean Swimming Pool” webinar, which took place on the 9th September, 2021, organized by the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Porto, in partnership with the Municipal Council of Matosinhos and Casa da Arquitectura. The publication brings together the testimonies of renowned national and international authors who, with different approaches, bring us their memories, experiences and reflections for contemporary architectural design. The volume is structured into five chapters – with unavoidable overlapping and contaminations – “Context and references”, “From history to memories”, “Critical perspectives”, “Lessons from the Pool” and “Representations of the Pool”, providing renewed perspectives and readings on this landmark work of 20th century architecture.

Este livro reúne as contribuições apresentadas no encontro “Partilhar Memórias: Piscina de Marés”, que ocorreu a 9 de Setembro de 2021, organizado pela Faculdade de Arquitectura da Universidade do Porto, em parceria com a Câmara Municipal de Matosinhos e a Casa da Arquitectura. A publicação reúne os testemunhos de reconhecidos autores nacionais e internacionais que, com diferentes aproximações, nos trazem as suas memórias, experiências e reflexões para o projeto arquitectónico contemporâneo. O volume estrutura-se em cinco capítulos – não estanques, com inevitáveis contaminações – “Contexto e referências”, “Da história às memórias”, “Perspetivas críticas”, “Lições da Piscina” e “Representações da Piscina”, propiciando renovadas perspetivas e leituras sobre esta obra emblemática da arquitetura do século XX.