

The Process of Creation: Artistic Creation and Creative Processes

Maria Sílvia Barros de Held^{1,2}, Carlos Alho¹, and Vanda Matos¹

¹CIAUD, Research Centre for Architecture, Urbanism and Design, Lisbon School of Architecture, University of Lisbon, Lisboa, 1349-063, Portugal

²University of São Paulo; School of Arts Sciences and Humanities, São Paulo, 03820-000, Brazil

ABSTRACT

This research is built upon the search for the understanding of today's status of the process of creation, and how it has been considered through time, first through an philosophical approach, then through psychological aesthetics and finally, more recently, through psychology. If all construction of reality are built upon the interaction between physical world, the psychological or subjective world and the world of human creation, it seems to be clear that the creative process is, by excellency, a paradigm of the human experimental or experiential phenomena. Assuming a descriptive case study approach, Boa Nova Tea House of Siza Vieira is analyzed. In Siza Vieira's creative process, the drawing constantly validates his work. Architecture balances between art and technique as a creative act resulting from the artist mental reflective and experimental construction.

Keywords: Artistic creation, Creative processes, Boa Nova Tea House, Siza Vieira

INTRODUCTION

The artistic creation and the creator were objects of reflection since the early ages. Philosophers such as Aristotle and Plato reflected on the subject. For a better understanding of the creation and the artistic process, it is necessary to understand the role of the creator as a constructor of visual and artistic narratives when interacting with the materials of his work.

For Aristotle, Plato and Thomas Aquino the creation was related to the divine, the individual being a mere artisan with no place in the arts. In the Humanism, namely in the Italian humanism, the man was the center of the world, which permitted a change of paradigm. In the last centuries, the focus was centered on the creation of art and on the work of art. What was important was the final and closed work as the result of the relation between the creator and the act of creation. In addition to the creator, the public, who would see the work of art, was important. In the 20th century the psychology, the philosophy, the aesthetic and the neurophysiology were gathered to explain the mysteries of the artistic creation. Also, social sciences such as the phenomenology, the psychoanalysis, the structuralism, the semiology and the gestalt theory tried to explain the artistic creation. In the field of psychology, Gardner and Piaget stand out, who consider the

child or the adult as creators. Personality, motivation, emotion, knowledge, thought, language, perception and memory are the fragmented areas that permit to foresee the creator. The cognitive-constructivist model considers the individual as a project which is permanently updated regarding a relational matrix, in an authorship process, which should be considered as a psychology of experience. Thus the creation process is an experiential phenomenon (Santos; 2004, pp. 12-13).

To contribute to the study of the artistic creation and creative processes we have chosen a work of architecture of Siza Vieira, Boa Nova Tea House (Matosinhos, Portugal). We adopted a descriptive case study methodology. The case study is set to describe natural phenomena which occur in determined data. The purpose of this case study is to understand the creative process of Siza Vieira through the analysis of one of his work. Regarding the strengths of this case study, we stand out that this building is of a Pritzker architect, which embodies much of the aspects of Siza's creative process. The singularity of Siza work, recognized worldwide, is also another strength point of this case study. Siza Vieira constructs his works, adapting himself to diverse cultural contexts without losing his identity. The singularity of Siza works in Portuguese territory lies in the way he epitomizes and incorporates the aesthetical and architectural principles of Portuguese knowledge regarding techniques and materials, as well as those of the Modern Movement (from its origins to its metamorphoses and current development). As weakness, we can point out that, though Boa Nova Tea House became an iconic building, because it is an early work, it does not have the maturity and complexity of Siza's later works. Therefore, the analysis of Siza's creative process cannot be completed.

BOA NOVA TEA HOUSE

The construction of Boa Nova Tea House Restaurant (1956–1963, 1991, 2012) is the result of a contest promoted by the Municipality of Matosinhos, in 1956. Due to various reasons, Fernando Távora and Francisco Figueiredo could not work on the project contest. Thus, it was their collaborators, Alberto Neves, António Meneres Joaquim Sampaio, Luís Botelho Dias e Álvaro Siza, who developed the project. Not convinced by this proposal, Álvaro Siza reformulated the project, which would be accepted by Fernando Távora, and approved in 1958, already under the direction of Siza Vieira, by delegation of Fernando Távora. It is a building made in period of reflection of the Portuguese architecture. It has an immense international dimension, transpiring an *aaltian* and *wrightian* inspiration, and combines a great organicity with the concern with the place, the promontory that had been chosen by the architect Távora to build the project to be submitted to the contest. The natural and the built environment were part of the place.

Boa Nova Tea House is a referential building in the work of Siza Vieira. In this building, it can be seen concerns that are observed in the architect future works: the attention to the place, the adequacy to the program, the careful detailing. The building was built between 1958 and 1963, resulting in an iconic work of Siza Vieira, though a peculiar building, given the Portuguese

panorama at the time. It was the time of the Portuguese Inquiry to the Regional Architecture. The Portuguese architectonic culture was focused on the vernacular architecture, in order to achieve its roots, and turned its attention to the Italian architectonic production. Boa Nova Tea House announced the projects that would shape the 1970s and the 1980s and outlined themes concerning the form and the image, as well as the structural elements of the modernity in architecture. It challenged the metaphysics of transparency, and it showed that the reality of the place is the result of a process of representation and construction.

For Santos (2004), art can be considered a cultural mediator because, though it is a personal experience, it is connected to specific cultural and artistic representations. The artist filters and reflects these representations through his own experiences and intentions, constructing images and narratives, which themselves construct individual and social representations. The world as a cultural reality helps to signify the notion of mind, interfering in the representation. The mind is not a mere mirror but instead a reflection of the “visible” reality that happened. According to Piaget, it constructs formal and abstracts realities (Santos, 2004, p. 147). In the creation and in the creative process of Siza, the role of the memory, so dear to Siza, is closely connected to the inner self of the artist, which establishes a relation with the world through the narratives that the architect constructs in his work, constantly validated by the drawings. For the architect, to imagine signifies to recollect everything of the memory, which is wrote inside of oneself, and to confront it with the exigencies and conditions, taken in their real complexity, and finally to restore them in the oblique simplicity of the project (Siza Vieira, 2009, p. 10 *apud* Martins, 2019, p. 30).

The architect works with the memory, manipulating it, consciously or unconsciously, constructing a subtle mesh which will be the form of architecture. There are no fixed rules or patterns made. The logic of the project is originated from ideas and empiric memories appropriate to each project and each context. The first intuition is crucial for the project, and presents a strong relation with the past through the memory. Each project experience is closer to the solution.

The act of drawing exercises the memory: Each drawing is full of history, unconscious memory, which is full of influences and ideas, that is, the architectonic culture gained over the years. Therefore, there is, according to William Curtis, a continuous body of research in Siza buildings from which are gradually unburied and crystalized some elements. Additionally, the city is in development, is not stagnated in time, and therefore has a memory: a past, a present and a future. Siza Veira works this immense material full of relations, identity and history and integrates it in his projects. Bearing in mind that a building is never finished, Siza works with the memory, believing that the world and the memory of the world will continuously draw the city (Martins, R., 2009). Boa Nova Tea House is also the validation of the work of the drawing over all the above mentioned aspects (the attention to the place, the adequacy to the program, the careful detailing) that conducts to the final work that we know as Boa Nova Tea House. And this will be the working method that Siza Vieira prevails: the drawing as a way to draw the evidence.

According with Siza Vieira this building is marked by a multiplicity of influences. The influences of Alvar Aalto, by the Maison Carée, are present in the corrugated wood ceilings and in the white plaster, as well as, by the Viipuri Library, although this influence is less felt. The influence of Frank Lloyd Wright is felt on the roofs and their relation with the openings, and the intensity of the wood used to revet walls and ceilings, evoking, according to the architect, the prairie houses of Wright, whose work was shown at the time in the architecture magazine *Arquitetura* and in the book *History of Modern Architecture* by Bruno Zevi. From Fernando Távora, it can be seen the influence of Ofir House, a project that was being finished at the time and which is a compromise between vanguard and history. Ofir House is a building that has a typical organization of the modern house, which, according to Siza, is very close to Breuer. We will see its presence in Boa Nova project in the use of white volumes without openings, in the roofs, chimneys and skylights, combined with the interior spaces, and in the use of the wood and the roof tile.

The choice of the place, a place apparently improbable, became the essence of the project itself. The building emerges from the place, marrying with the territory, rebuilding it, giving it significance and revealing to the observer its full expression.

Much has been written about the massive and heavy presence of the landscape in this project, which reminds the strong relation that Siza establishes with the landscape and his obsessive relation with the topography, leaving the rocks immaculate, as the construction emerges between them. The revelation of the singular presence of the sea in that place is made to the user of the space through the careful delimitation of the landscape by openings and roofs. The preexistence of a chapel in this place is also a value of the place. In this building the “natural values” of the place are identities as important as the modern work and the elements that construct the project (Gomes and Portas, 1992 appud Beker, Tostões and Wang, 1998, pp. 238–239).

Regarding the adequacy to the program, the furniture was thought simultaneously with the project of Boa Nova restaurant and tea house. The openings are a source of indirect light, fitting and giving back to us the horizon, the landscape and the pre-existent buildings.

The detailing is considered a luxury, not because the building materials are opulent, but because the detail makes them magnificent, drawing zones of light, zones of shadow between plans of walls and ceilings, and areas to stay, zones of conviviality and of sharing table. The building was completely restored in 1991 and all its original characteristics were preserved.

As characteristically of the buildings of Siza Vieira of this period, in the da Boa Nova Tea House a diversity of building materials were used, which construct the color pallet of this building. In this work the architect employed walls coated with white plaster, apparent concrete pillars in the façade and wood for the revetment of the roof terrace. The roof is tiled, supported with a big slab of cement, supported by wooden beams. On the roofs red ceramic tile is used. The afizelia wood is abundantly employed in the revetments of the walls, openings frames and furniture.

The light comes from outside to inside but it is never a direct light, thus the interior spaces are protected from the rawness of the sky. Through the openings, carefully planned, the light shapes the space where the details introduce shadow, originating gradients of *chiaro escuro*, which make us permanently rediscover the different spaces of this building.

As for the shadow the detail becomes the essence, sculpting the space, opening the *chiaro escuro*, giving us a sensible architecture in which the light and detail create zones of shadow. Areas of open conviviality appear, as well as more reserved zones (bar), which predispose us greater introspection.

The Boa Nova Tea House is an iconic building of a major architect of the Portuguese, European and worldwide architecture. This is a building that receives lots of tourists, for whom visiting days are scheduled, so that the normal functioning of the building is not jeopardized by the usual peregrination to this place. The process of urban rehabilitation of the building, which occurred after the abandon of the building during the period of a year, due to a sea invasion, restored the original environment that the vandalism had damaged. The building continues to offer a tea room, the habit of drinking tea in a space specifically designed for that is gaining more adepts in the younger population, the Tea Rote (Rota do Chá), and offers to its users a sophisticated restaurant. The functional actuality of the project is maintained, the Boa Nova spaces offer areas of sharing table, and of inter-generations conviviality. In this urban rehabilitation some technical aspects were reviewed, in accordance with nowadays requisites. Art and technique were careful seen. This raises the question: is Architecture Art or Technique? Which one balances the most in the creative process or in the life of the built project? Undoubtedly Architecture is among the Arts, but often it is subdued to the constructive technique, mathematics and science. However, the artistic aspect, the beauty and the capacity to touch the soul prevail and the similarities with Painting and Sculpture can be seen in the best works of architecture. This is related with the creativity that lays in every work of art which is, according to the innate theories, an innate quality that the artist has. The creative process is a result of mental and vital energy associated to unconscious, impulsive and irrational impulses. The art reflects the concepts of the things that the individual has and the meaning attributed to the world. To do is always to say because one cannot separate the construction of the speech from the construction of the mental reflective and experimental construction (Santos, 2004, pp. 229–231).

CONCLUSION

The artistic creation and the creator were objects of reflection since the early ages, first through a philosophical approach, then through psychological aesthetics and finally, more recently, through psychology. To analyze the artistic creation and the creator the methodology chosen was the single case study, namely the Boa Nova Tea House of the architect Siza Vieira. The study of Boa Nova Tea House permits us to perceive the complexity of Siza's creative process. The memory, so important in Siza's creative process and constantly validated through drawing, is already present in the working

method of the architect at the time. This paper allows us to understand this referential building for the Portuguese architecture. However, being one of the architect first works, it does not embrace the complexity of the later works. The analysis of this case study raised the question whether Architecture is Art or Technique? Architecture balances between art and technique, but the artistic side should always prevail. The creativity is an innate quality in the artist who constructs his speech, hand in hand with his mental reflective and experimental construction.

REFERENCES

- Becker, A., Tostões, A. and Wang, W. (1998). *Arquitetura do Século XX Portugal*; Druck- und Verlagshaus Zarbock, Frankfurt am Main, Germany
- Martins, André David Santos Mendes (2019). *O esquisso como expressão do diálogo inerente à arquitetura*; Universidades Lusíada; Lisboa
- Martins, Raquel Monteiro (2009). *A “ideia de Lugar” um olhar atento às obras de Siza*; Faculdade de Ciências e Tecnologia, Universidade de Coimbra, Departamento de Arquitetura, Coimbra
- Matos; Mariana Martins (2015). *A arquitetura entre as Artes, Reflexões sobre a beleza arquitetónica*; Universidade do Porto, Faculdade de Arquitetura; Porto
- Melo, Maria and Toussaint, Michel (2017). *A Obra de Álvaro Siza: Reconhecimento e Interpretação*; A+A Books; Lisboa
- Santos; Maria Luísa Duarte da Silva (2004); *A criação artística e o processo criativo*; Faculdade de Belas Artes; Lisboa
- Trigueiros; L. (1998). *Casa de Chá da Boa Nova*; Editorial Blau Lda; Lisboa, 1992
- Siza, Álvaro (2000). *Imaginar a Evidência*; Edições 70; Lisboa
- Viiidiella, Alex Sánchez (2009). *Álvaro Siza apontamentos para uma arquitetura sensível*; Bertrand Editora, Lisboa