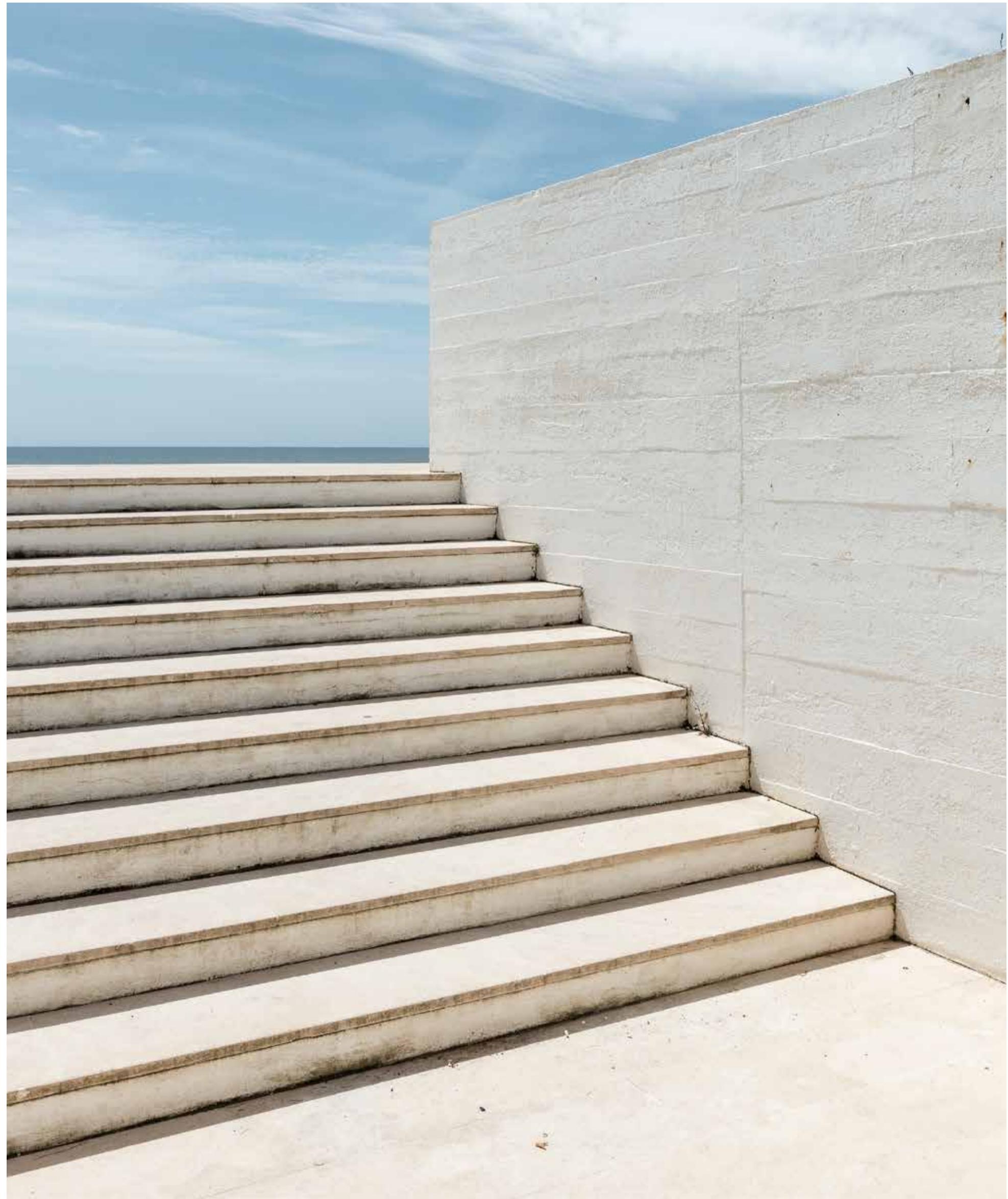
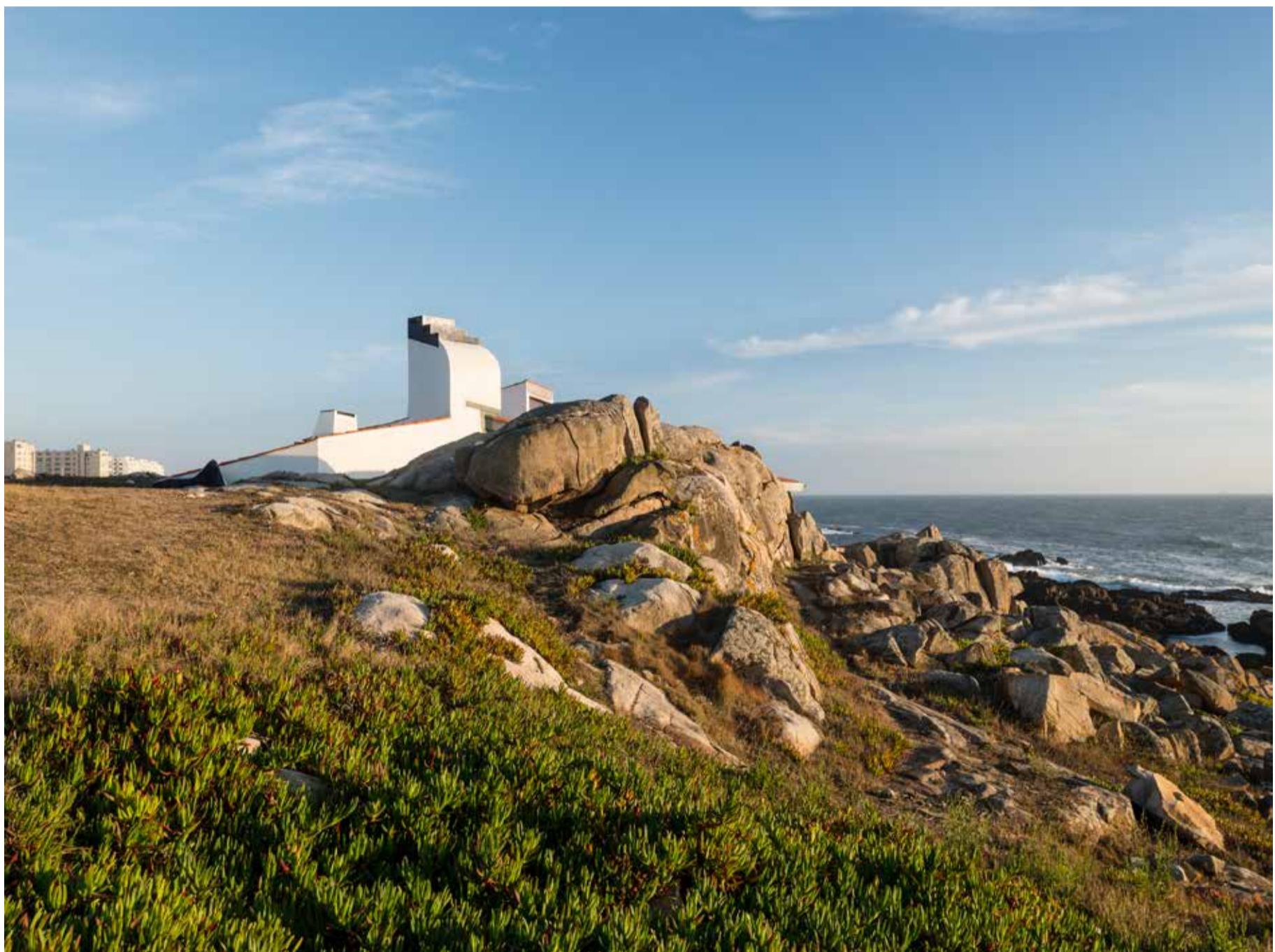
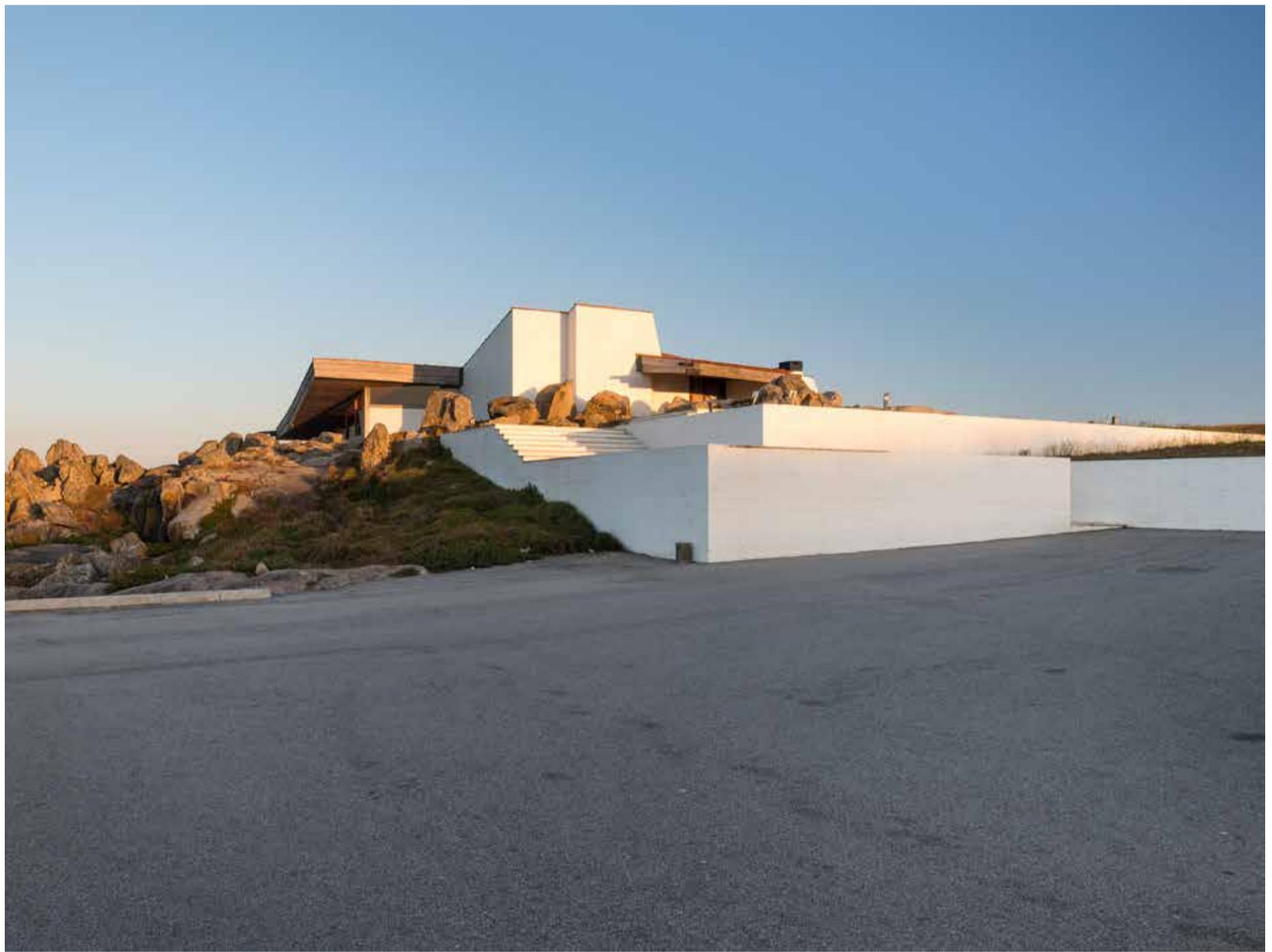


scopio NEWSPAPER

VISUAL SPACES OF CHANGE
CASA DE CHÁ BOA NOVA
by Helder Sousa
#2 May 2021





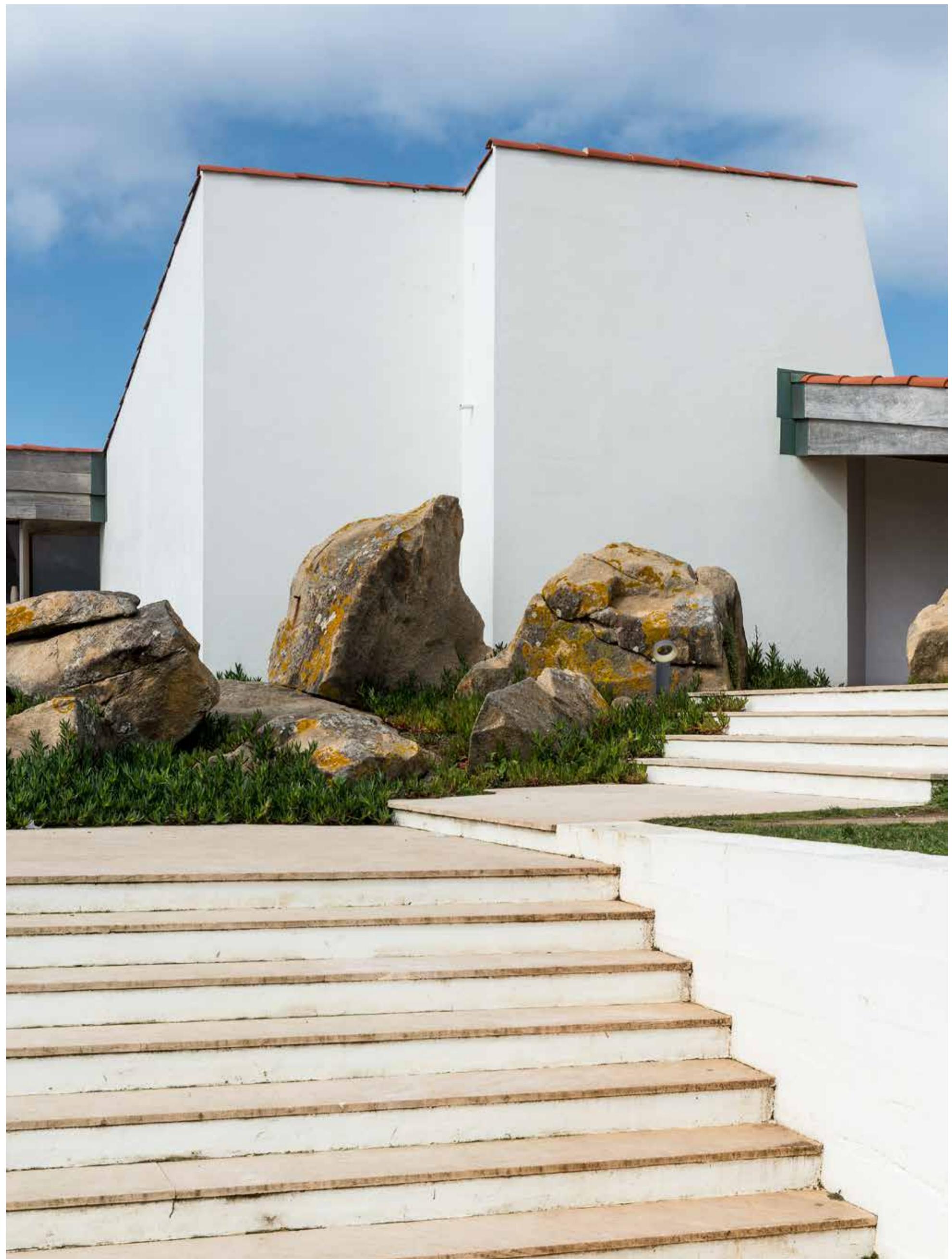




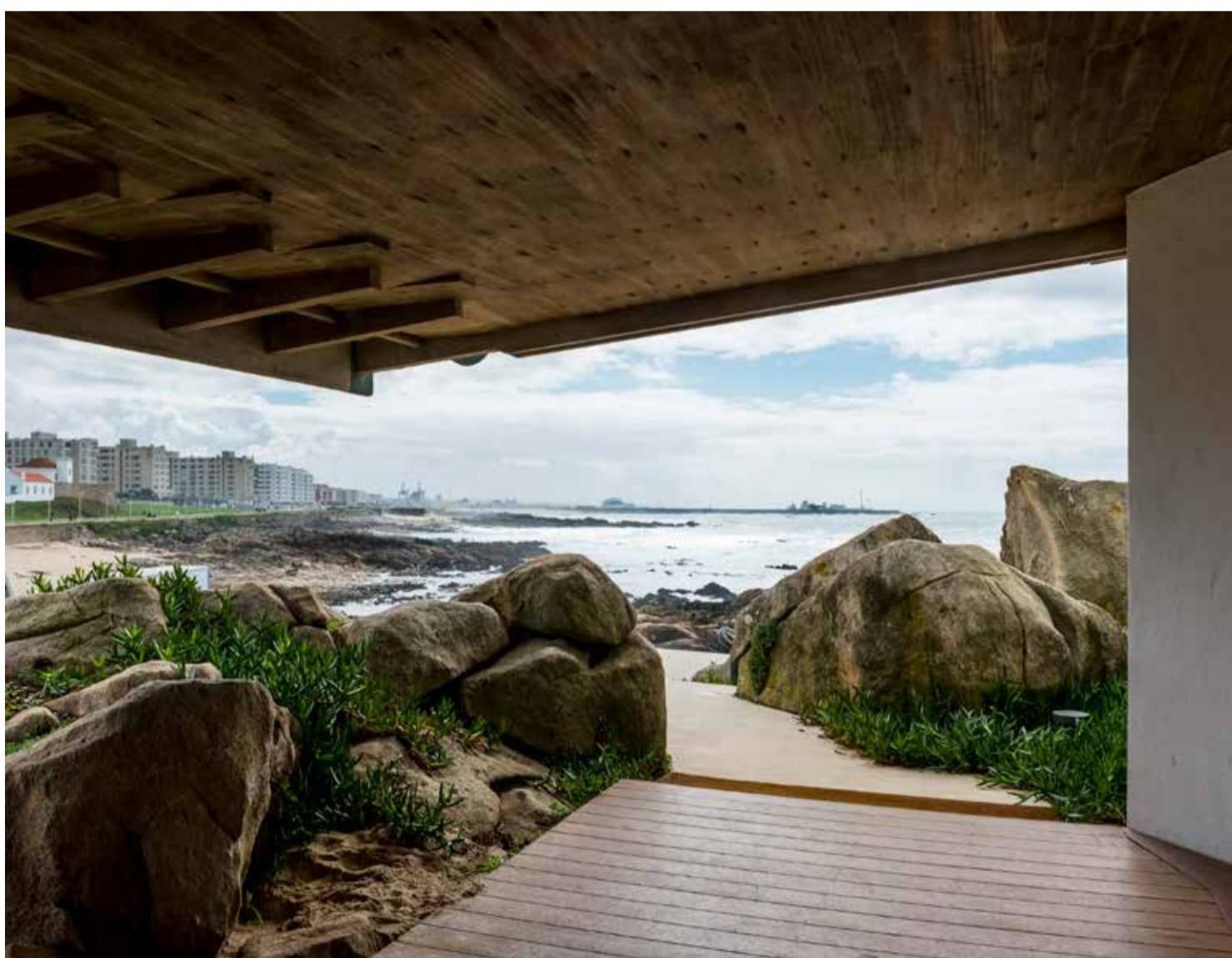














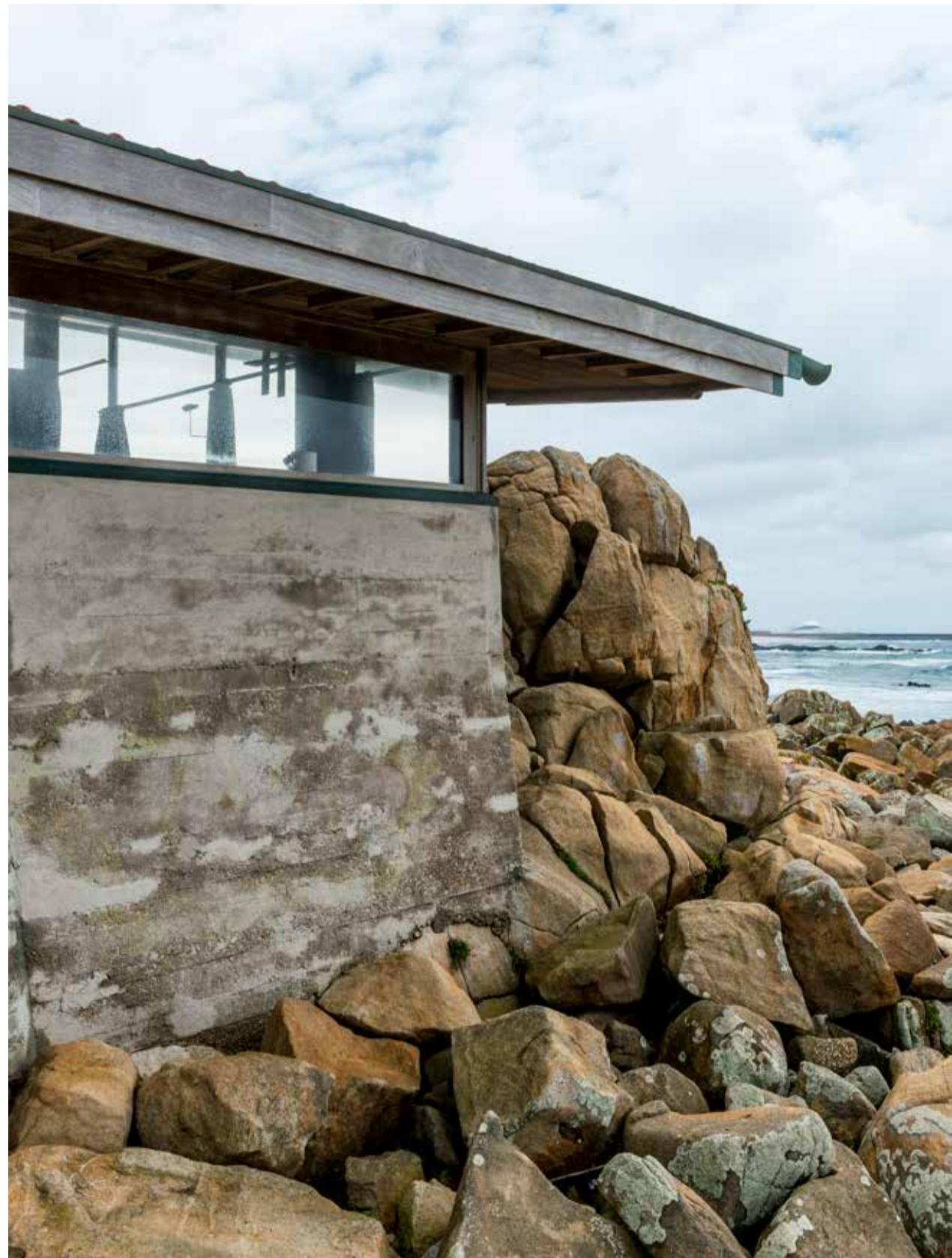


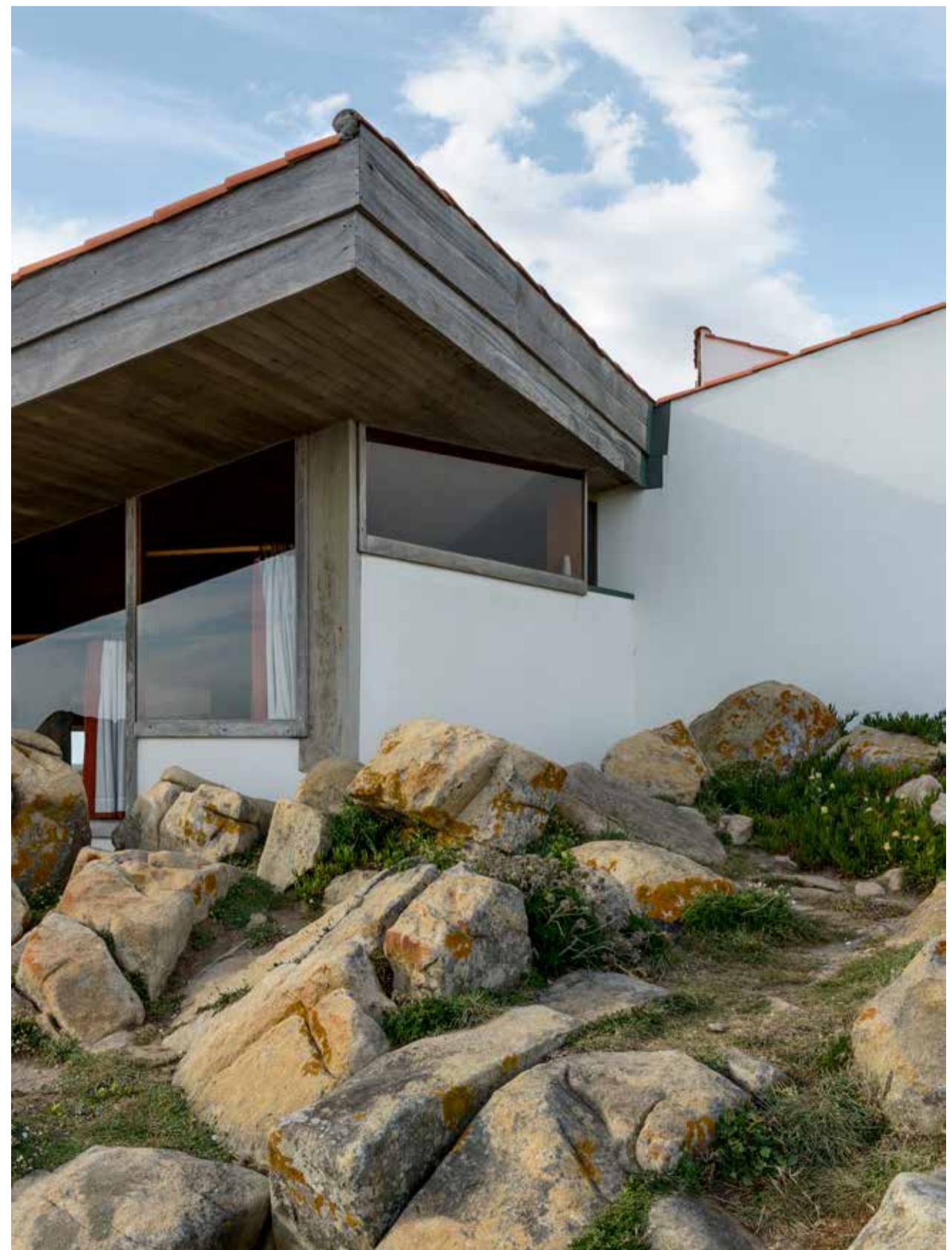


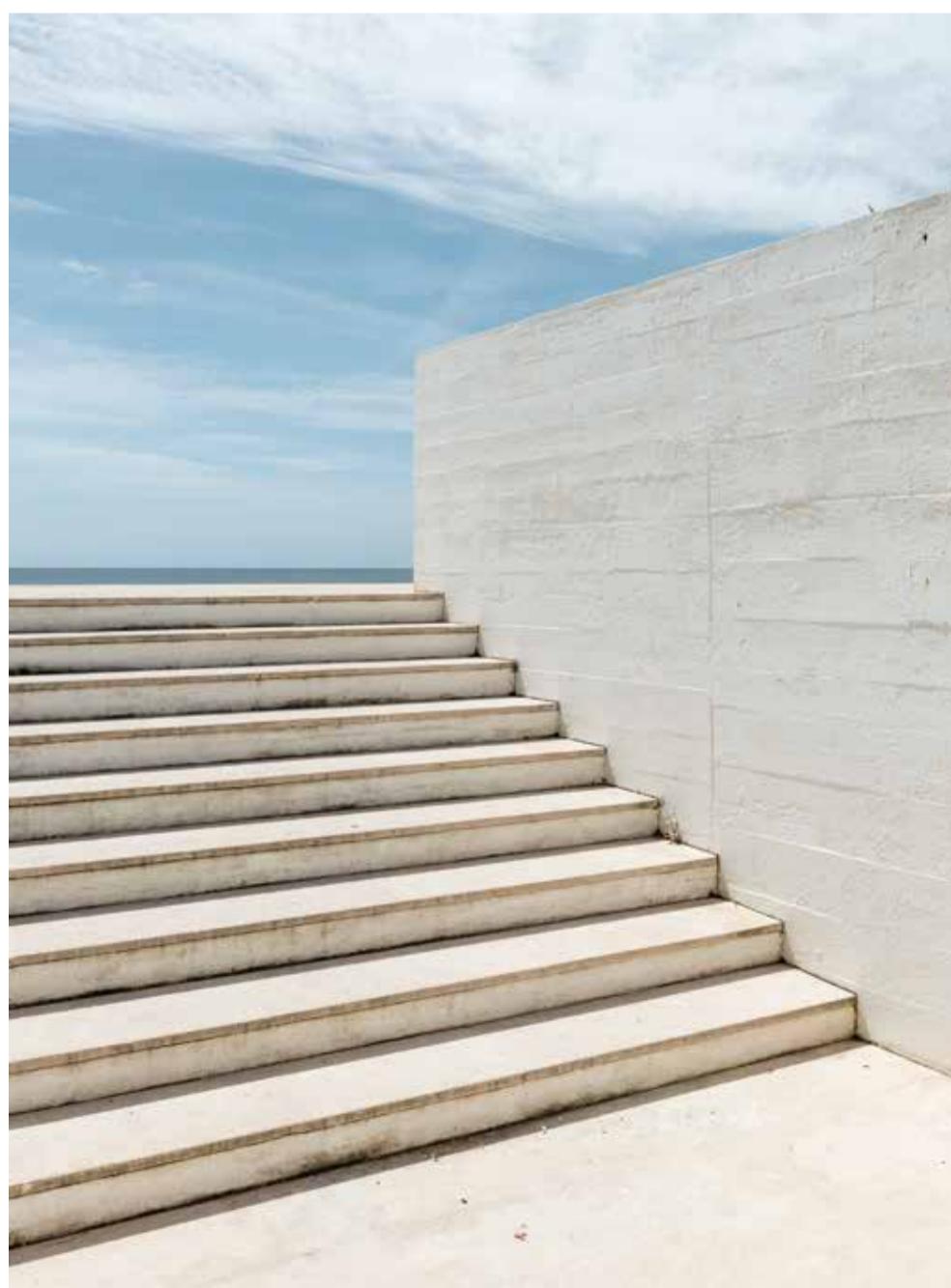














VISUAL SPACES OF CHANGE IN CASA DE CHÁ BOA NOVA: PHOTOGRAPHY OF HELDER SOUSA

BY PEDRO LEÃO NETO

Located in Leça da Palmeira, the Casa de Chá da Boa Nova (1963), photographed by Helder Sousa, is an architectural design that presents a notable example of integration into the landscape and topography of a rocky site at the far western edge of the Praia da Boa Nova. What most aroused Helder's interest to explore this photographic project were the characteristics of identity and inclusion in the extraordinary context of the rocks and the sea, together with the design and form in both the building as a whole and in the details.

Between document and subjectivity, we feel that Helder's visual narrative transmits a strong spatial experience and a singular capacity to sound out the existing dialogue between the constructed landscape, Álvaro Siza Vieira's work, and the natural elements. We appreciate how the photographer has not only succeeded in intuiting the work but has also let himself be fascinated by the way the building and the horizon line and the sea emerge and disappear along the articulated path of the exterior's steps and tiers and by the group of rocks which frame the immense, uneven and singular topography of the site. Helder's narrative photography thus allows him not only to discern the *genius loci* of the space but also to understand how the Casa de Chá assumes itself as nearly being of a second nature, one that is highlighted in terms of the colour and expressive volumetry of the work, without ever coming into conflict with the landscape, integrating itself into the rocky outcropping to the point of allowing the rock to invade its interior (pg. 108-109).

Helder's visual narrative also constitutes a *promenade architecturale* that enables a deeper comprehension of how the Casa de Chá has come closer to nature and enters into a dialogue with her, without relinquishing any of its autonomy. Again, we feel a special sensitivity relative to the universe of architecture and how it relates to the context in which it is placed and in which Helder offers a perspective quite near to that which we have called "architectural gaze"¹. His promenade is a path consisting of successive moments, ones that are very much tied to a real experience but which actually have been freed from a unique logic of linear representation given how at the same time there exists a sensitive logic, which is the photographer's mental model². It is the latter that is responsible for each instant and for the photographic shots that form the visual narrative, as well as for the construction of the photographic sequence and the page layout of the narrative³ that allows for a new perspective of this place, its surroundings, its light, and the forms and the space of its architecture. In other words, we are presented with a creator who does not seek to use photography only as a register or a means to document architecture; he is also interested in exploring the documentary and the fictional⁴, using photography as a method and/or instrument of visual research and perceptive of the space in the universe of architecture⁵.

We believe that Helder's photography is thus a second perspective, a mediation, (re)interpreting and (re)discovering Siza Vieira's spaces and architecture in that magical place of identity in Leça da Palmeira. It is a photography that does not merely limit itself to either deciphering or describing or transforming a given reality, but instead does this all simultaneously, just as Luigi Ghirri recounts when speaking of his photography in an interview with Emanuela Teatini.⁶

1 See Rupinder Singh, "The Architectural Sign and the Architectural Gaze", Thesis, Scientific Journal of the Bauhaus-University Weimar, 2003. Available at: https://e-pub.uni-weimar.de/opus4/frontdoor/deliver/index/docId/1277/file/singh_pdaf.pdf.

2 See Stephen Shore, *The Nature of Photographs*, Phaidon Press Inc., 2007.

3 On the importance of the construction of a sequence or visual narrative, photography should be considered as visual writing with its own grammar and syntax, as well as the potential that a sequence of images has for telling a story, or as Gary Badger notes, how a book of photography has the unique potential to challenge the photographer to construct a visual discourse because it obliges the photographer to consider the reason that sustains the sequence of images chosen, see Neto, Pedro L. R. F. 2015. *Art and documentary photography Architecture, City and Territory*. In *Cityzines*, 56 – 76. ISBN: 978-989-97699-9-1. Porto, Portugal: scopio Editions; Imprint – Visual Narratives in books and Beyond by Gerry Badger, David Bate, Bettina Lockemann & Michael Mack (<http://www.tipitin.com/shop/imprint-visual-narratives-in-books-and-beyond-by-gerry-badger-david-bate-bettina-lockemann-michael-mack>).

4 See Garrida, L. et al., Ed.; *REALIDAD Y REPRESENTACIÓN: Coleccionar Paisaje Hoy*, Fundacion Foto Colectania, 2004. "Documentalismo e ficção. Duas coordenadas que fluem na paisagem / representação de muitos artistas contemporâneos. A documentação serve para aceder ao que é real, e os artistas utilizam-na de diferentes formas: como suporte objectivo para dar rédea solta às suas obsessões poéticas, e como distanciamento que ampara uma absoluta adscrição ao realismo." Pag. 124.

5 See Luigi Ghirri, *The Complete Essays 1973 – 1991*, Mack, 2016, ISBN 9781910164143 "Descriptive and illustrative intentions aside, photography offers a method with which to look at and depict places, objects and faces of our time – not to catalogue or define them, but rather to discover and construct images that also offer new potential for perception." Pag. 89.

6 See "A song of the Earth", interview with Emanuela Teatini in Luigi Ghirri Paesaggio italiano / Italian Landscape Documents 11 (1989); Luigi Ghirri: *The Complete Essays 1973 – 1991*, MACK, 2016, ISBN 9781910164143; Luigi Ghirri: *The Landscape of Architecture*, (<http://www.triennale.org/en/mostra/luigi-ghirri-il-paesaggio-dellarchitettura>).

THE CASA DE CHÁ BOA NOVA IN THE PHOTOGRAPHY OF HELDER SOUSA

BY PAULO CATRICA

Architecture photography always involves an act of incision, the act of transforming a three-dimensional architectural object into 2-dimensional fragments in the form of images. In the making of these fragments, either as transcription or transition, there exists a discursive possibility to negotiate the belief in verisimilitude and the making of a photographic place/architecture. The photographs taken by Hélder Sousa at the Casa de Chá da Boa Nova, in Leça da Palmeira, reveal the photographer's initial purpose, that is, to revisit Álvaro Siza Vieira's masterpiece. A well-known architectural piece and one photographed extensively since its construction in 1963, this is an iconic structure that recognises the singularity and relevance of this architect. The understanding of these factors was a decisive element in the aesthetic and ethical positioning in Hélder Sousa's photographs, as his images are affirmatively documentary¹.

To assert the unmistakable relationship of the building with the landscape, Sousa walks around the site so that the object can be seen from different points of view, as is usual praxis². A structure-landscape cannot be understood without appreciating where it is placed; this exercise of appraising both the work and its setting avoids the mistake of common contemporary architecture photographs. Sousa does not use excessive lens angles, bird-eye-views, images where the device overshadows (surpasses) the content. These visual archetypes appear in certain editorial contexts that want to reveal the new work and its architect, in magazines and websites with or without the commercial media.

The Casa da Boa Nova escapes these prerogatives as it is a building with history, with historiography, something that supports Sousa's works and his approach, in the way he frames the image and captures the light. He always maintains the foreground, something that indicates the position of the photographer and that allows us, the spectator, to read the image and its meaning - the architecture and the landscape take up two-thirds of the image. He also prefers soft light, avoiding the tension and contrast between light and shade, and these choices acknowledge the photographer's responsiveness and discretion towards Siza's architecture³.

Beatriz Colomina's argument that architecture as media should be understood as a "series of overlapping representational systems", does not entail the abandonment of the "traditional architect object, the building, but recognize them as drawings, photographs and films; these are the means we frequently find, as the building is a representational mechanism as itself., (...) The structure is a construction in every means of the word. When we talk about representation, we speak about a subject and an object"⁴.

1 On the topic of images that discuss architecture, architect Álvaro Siza Vieira, at the Swissport'09 Seminar at the Casa da Música, 24-25 September 2009, at which Jacques Herzog and Souto de Moura were also present, used Google Maps to show and discuss aspects of his work, the Terraços de Bragança, in Lisbon.

2 The idea of walking around a building and photographing it to present the shots in a sequence/panel was extensively used by Bernd & Hilla Becher at the beginning of the 1970s, for example in House, Strenbuschweg 362, Germany 1972, reproduced in The Dusseldorf School of Photography, Stefan Gronert (Ed) Thames & Hudson, London 2009, p 77. The photographs were then mounted in a sequence/panel of sets of eight photographs where the object/building is seen from different perspectives.

3 To contrast with Sousa's photography, see the photographs of the Casa de Chá taken by João Morgado at: <https://www.joaomorgado.com/pt/reportagens/renovacao-da-casade-cha-da-boa-nova>

4 Colomina, Beatriz (1994), Privacy and Publicity: Modern architecture as Mass Media(London: The MIT Press), p.13/14.

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EDITORIAL

BY MARIA NETO & PEDRO LEÃO NETO

In this number of scopio newspaper journal # 2 May 2021, we present the photography project "Casa de Chá Boa Nova" of Helder Sousa focused on the architectural design of Álvaro Siza that presents a notable example of integration into the landscape and topography of a rocky site at the far western edge of the Praia da Boa Nova. What most aroused Helder's interest to explore this photographic project were the characteristics of identity and inclusion in the extraordinary context of the rocks and the sea, together with the design and form in both the building as a whole and in the details.

Following the curatorial work of Visual Spaces of Change Helder Sousa rehearsed a documentary and artistic photography methodology that had architecture as its subject and artistic matter. Helder's photography project had as reference the work of diverse authors coming from documentary and / or artistic universe who have architecture as its subject, thus moving away from traditional mainstream architectural magazines. Besides this documentary and artistic background focused on architecture, this photography work presents novel visual information not usually seen in the traditional scientific and monographic studies over these matters.

This photography project integrates the set of case studies coming from Contemporary Documentary Photography on Portuguese Architecture in Visual Spaces of Change, which is the present major theme of this Public Funded research (FCT) coordinated in FAUP by AAI group of R&D Centre CEAU.

ARTIST STATEMENT

The Boa Nova Tea House is the result of a contest organized by the Municipality of Matosinhos in which the winning architecture project was submitted by Fernando Távora, who then handed over responsibility for the project to his collaborator at the time, Álvaro Siza.

The approach taken here begins with detailed attention paid to the building and continues along to examine its most singular characteristics, but also its most prominent feature, its setting. In the shots adopted, we are able to understand how the form of the object becomes inseparable from its setting. At times, some images are more intimate as they attempt to represent the building in a way that isolates it more from its context to present its most distinct forms. When the approach takes on greater distance, we can see how the tea house's setting is in pure and utter harmony with the natural landscape to which it belongs.

Helder Sousa

Helder Sousa

Photographer with a degree in Fine Arts-Painting by FBAUP in 2007 and a Master in Photography and Documentary Films by ESMAE-IPP in 2012. He participated in the I Edition of the Conviver na Arte Project, Photography Study Camp held in Portalegre, promoted by Fundação Robinson. In 2013 he was a guest photographer of the magazine J-A for nº247 by invitation of the architects André Tavares and Pedro Baía. At the end of the same year he is invited by the architect Pedro Bandeira to make a survey of Aldeida da Luz, 11 years after its inauguration, in which appears the project From Myth to Nothingness. In 2014 he was invited photographer by the architecture office ADOC and the architect Miguel Eufrásia, to participate in the Venice Architecture Biennale, with the newspaper Homeland, News from Portugal.

ABOUT

scopionewspaper is an Architecture, Art & Image Research publication with a special interest in Photography as an instrument of inquiry and expression. This publication is structured around major themes as other publications of scopio Editions and these can integrate diverse related projects.

We are mostly interested in publishing work that explores the grammar and syntax of photography to build exploratory and critical visual constructs about architecture that stand by themselves. Thus the written text in the publication complements the visual essays and they both create synergies securing that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

scopionewspaper wants to disseminate several works and authors who use photography as an instrument to communicate in a critical, exploratory and innovative way diverse themes and who have a comprehensive understanding of architecture as a practice and discipline able to integrate the dimensions of art, sociology, history, politics, construction and the like. We are also interested in photographers and researchers whose work explores the material processes of creating, managing and interpreting sets of documents. This means we are interested in material processes where photography is explored as a significant research tool for critical and innovative views on architecture and urban transformation in their expanded fields.

scopionewspaper has as technological support for its dissemination and communication the scopio News Editorial area at scopio network platform. We want to achieve greater democratisation and diffusion of the AAI universes by making these themes close to a wider audience, while ensuring the integrity and quality of information, analysis and criticism that characterise the scopio editorial group. scopio news is one of several scopio initiatives with the aim to open the university to civil society, integrating and involving the community in the various practices and events linked to the AAI.



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