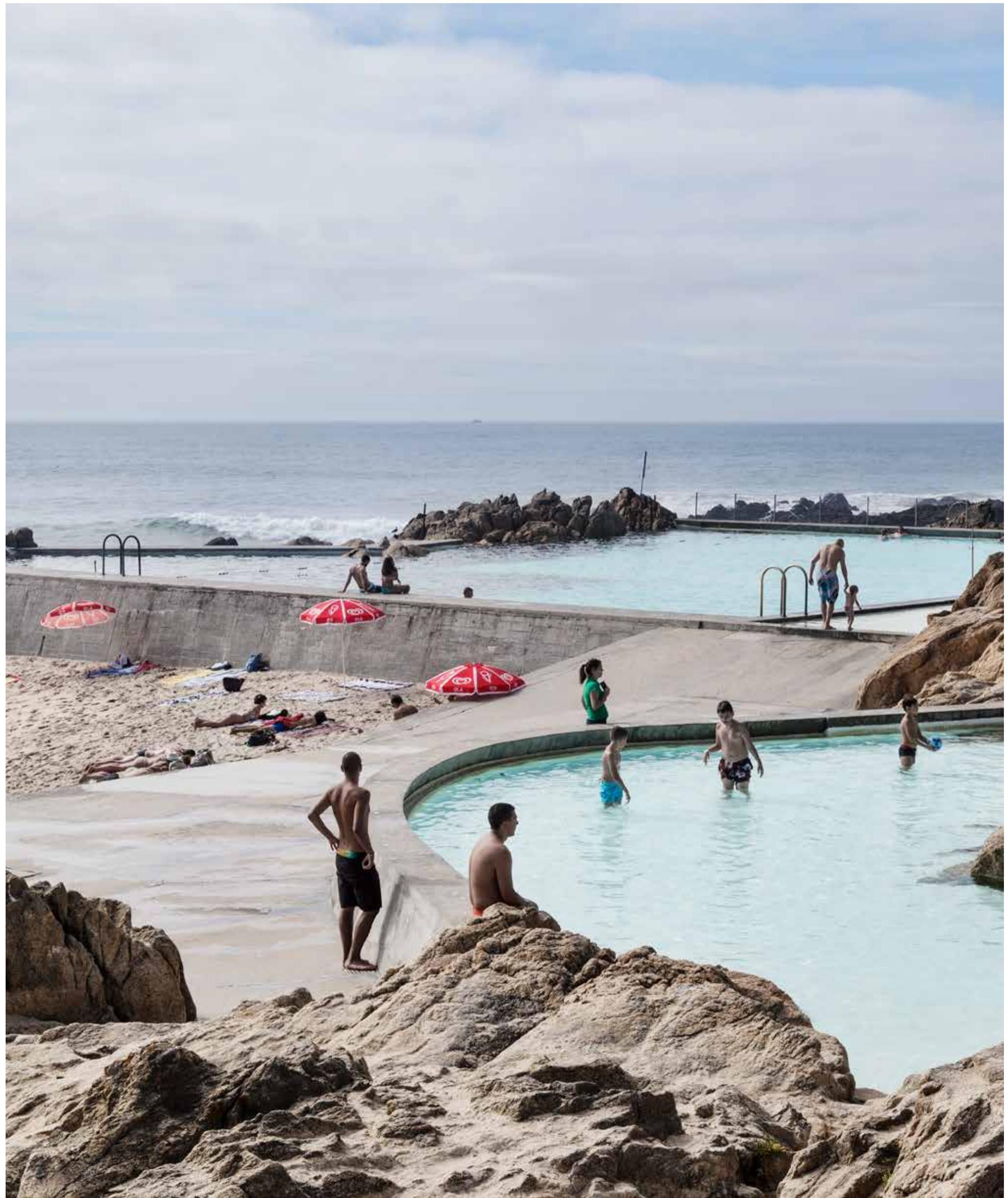
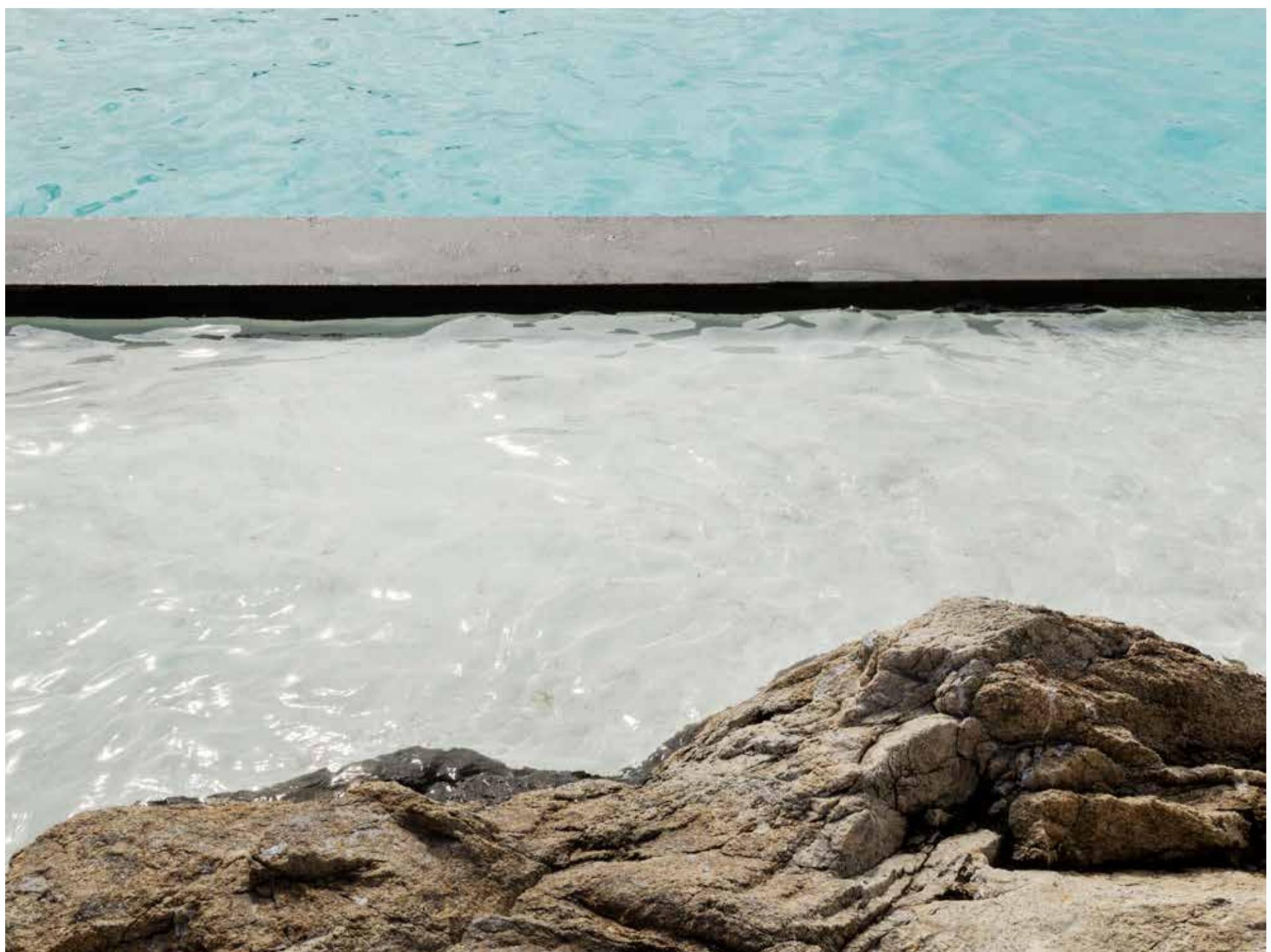


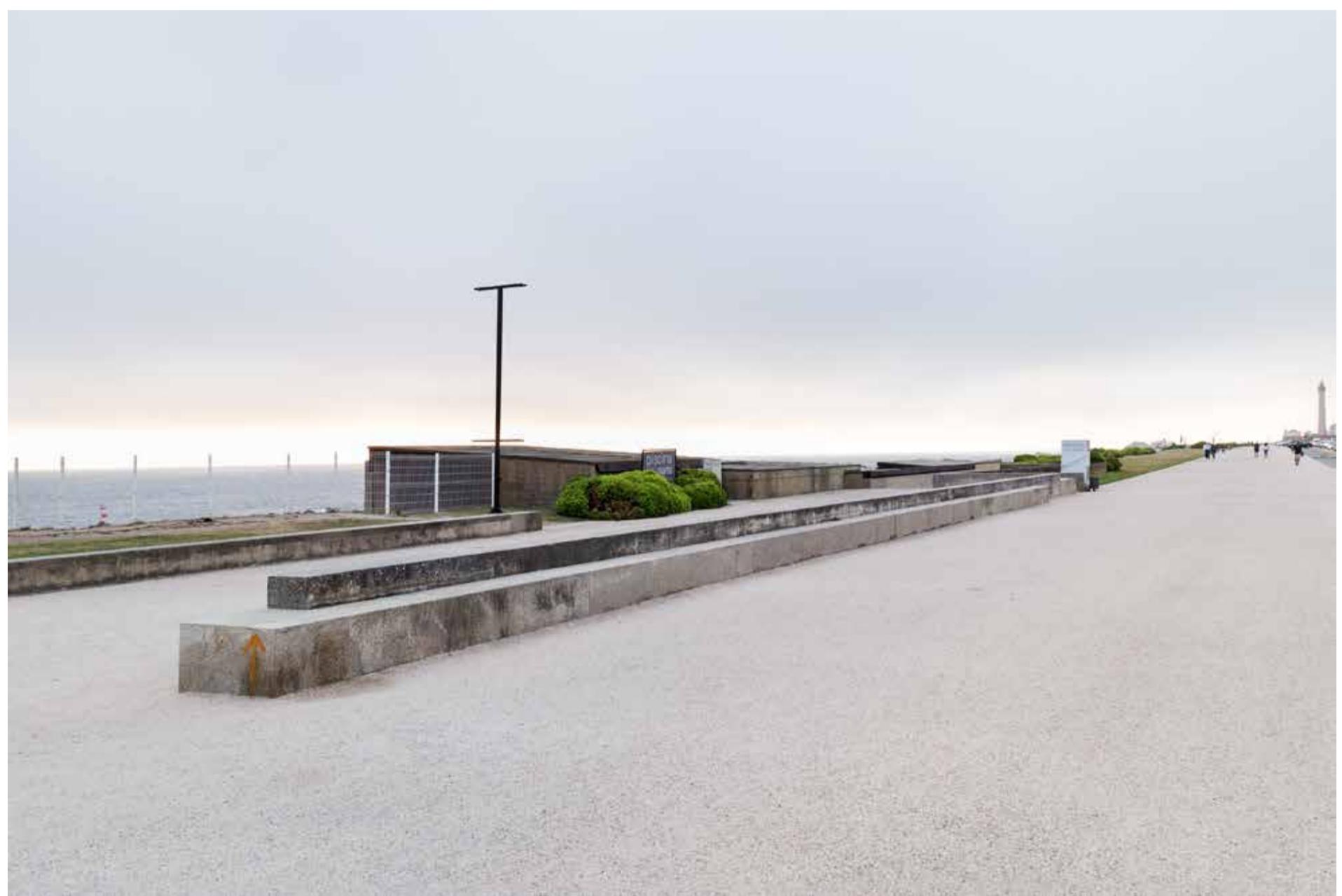
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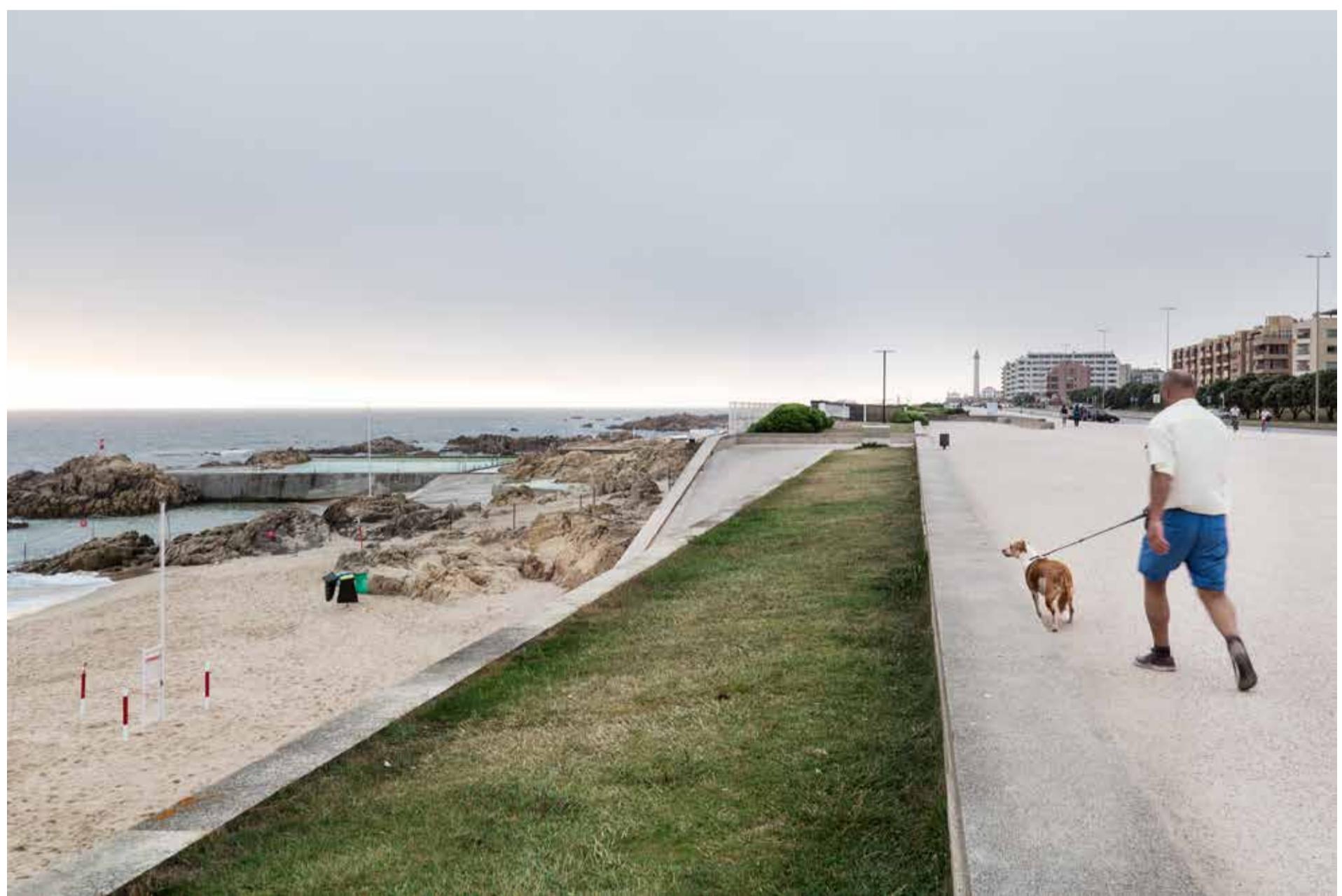
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PISCINA DAS MARÉS  
by Marta Ferreira  
#3 May 2021

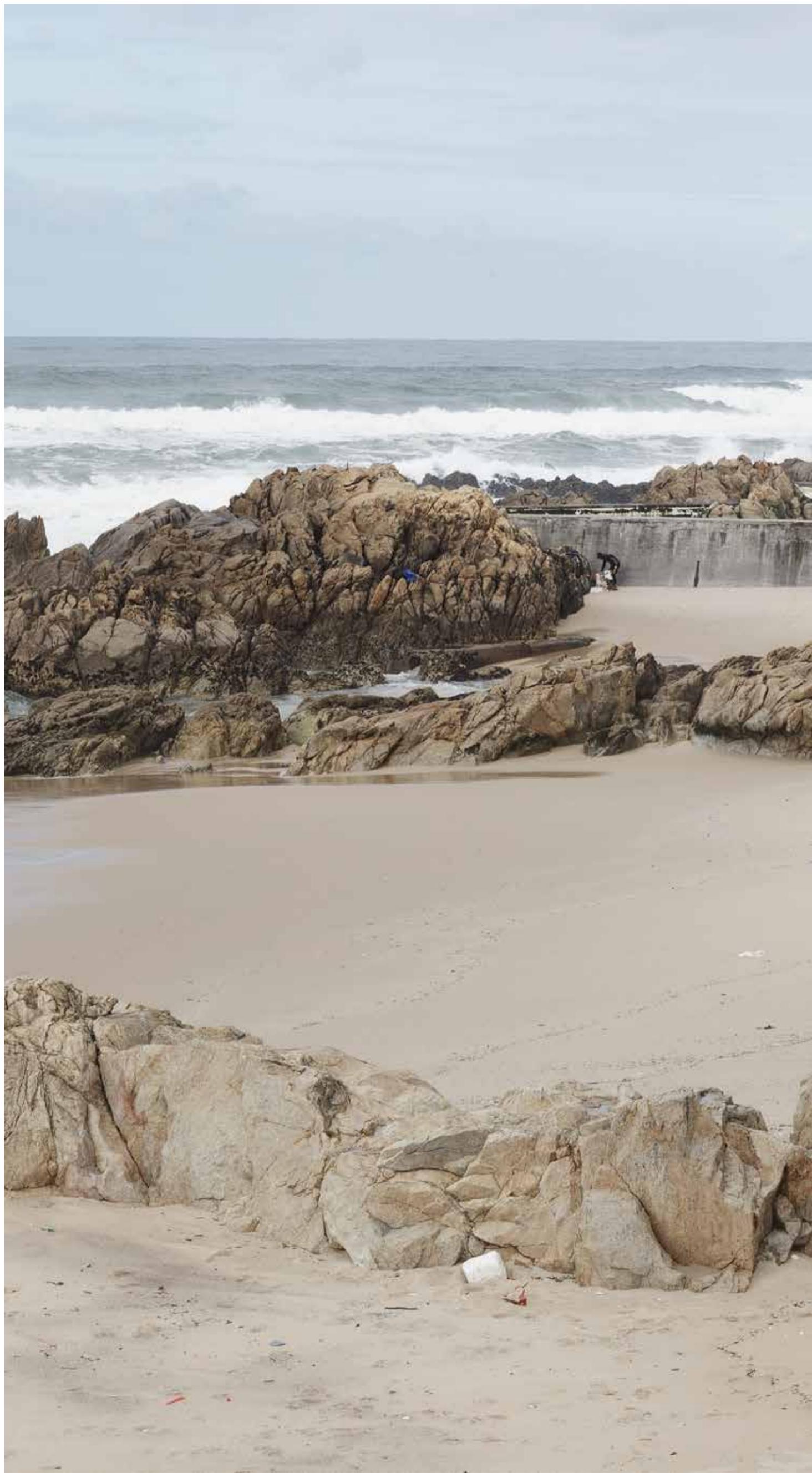


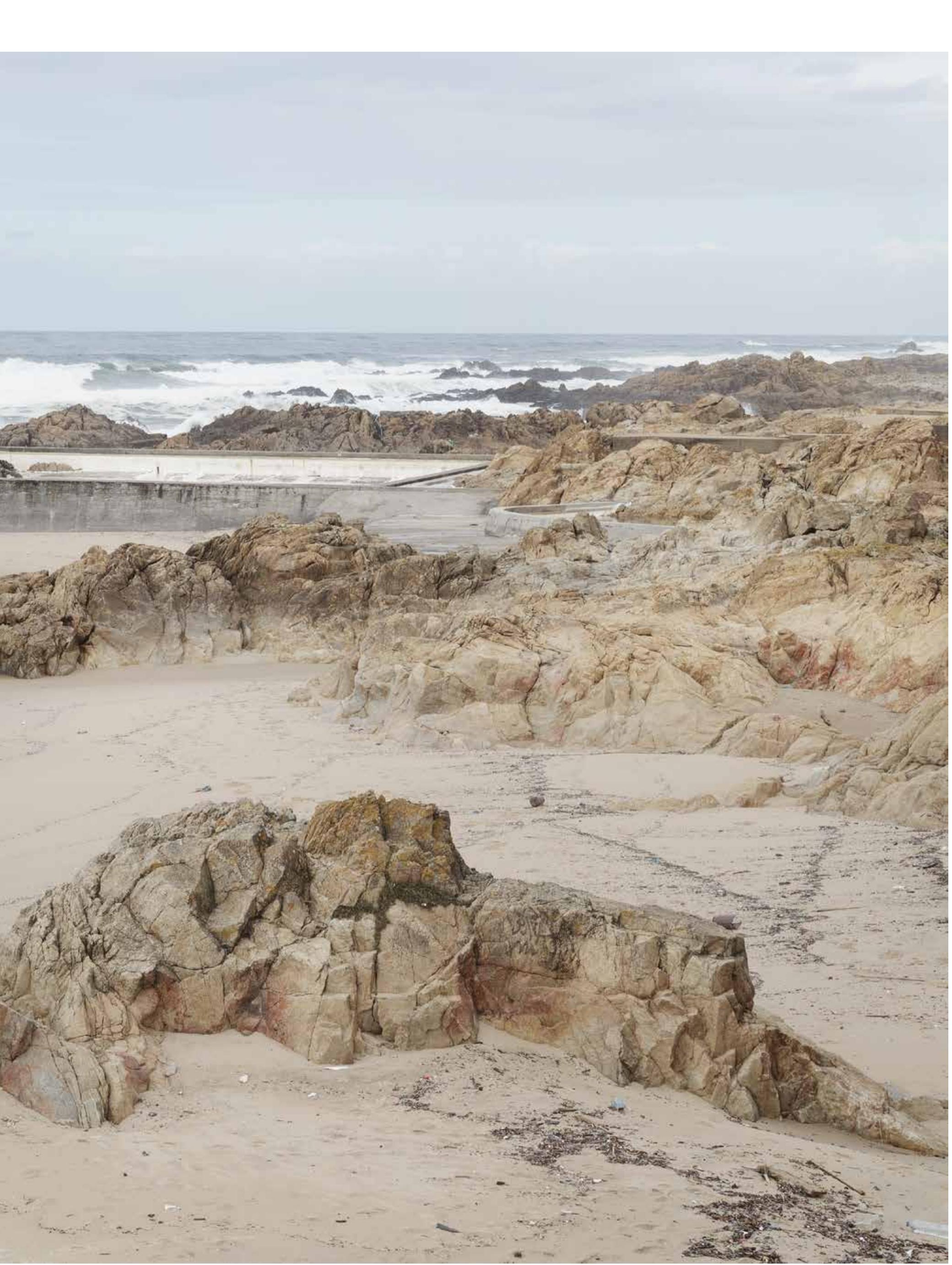




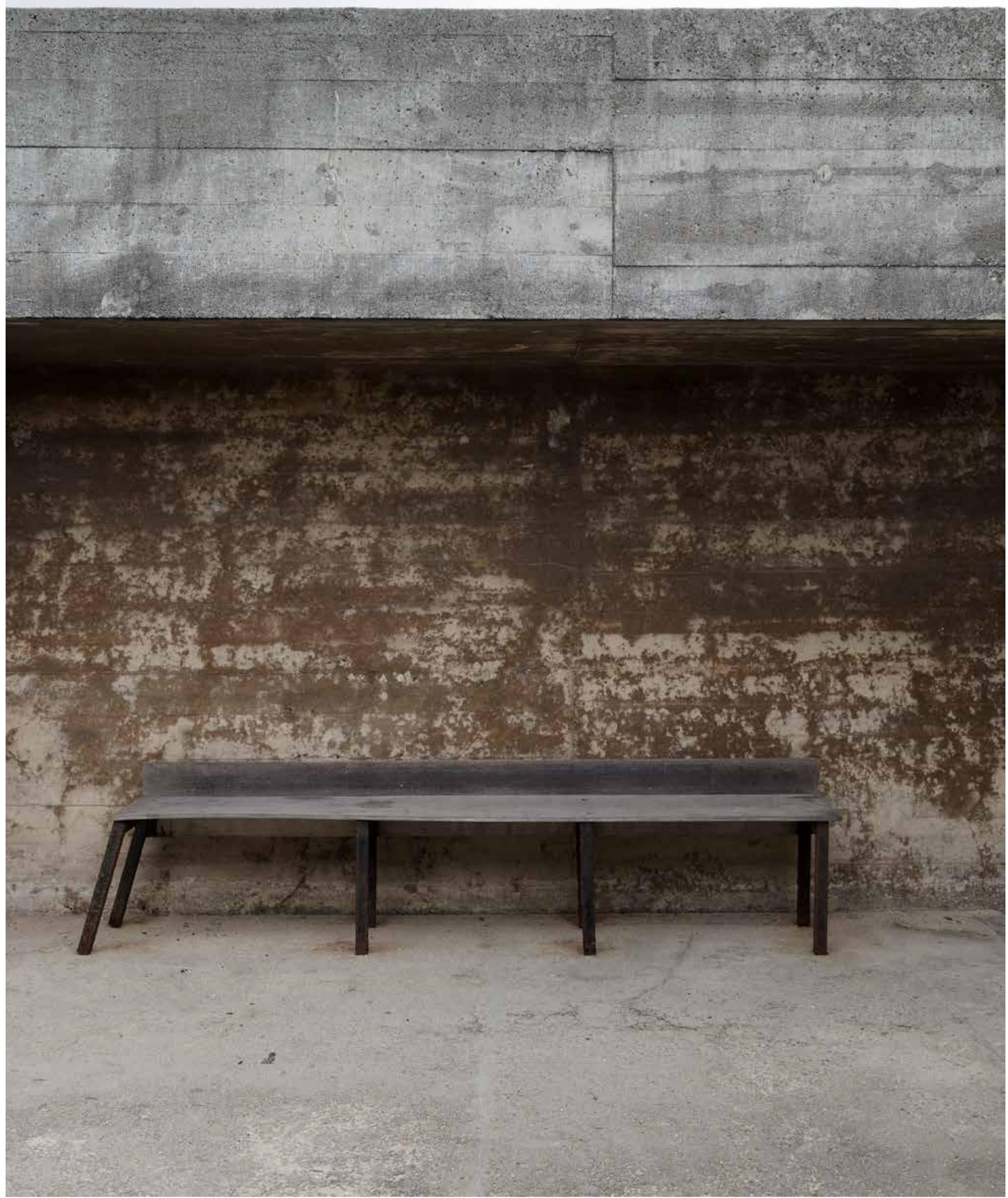






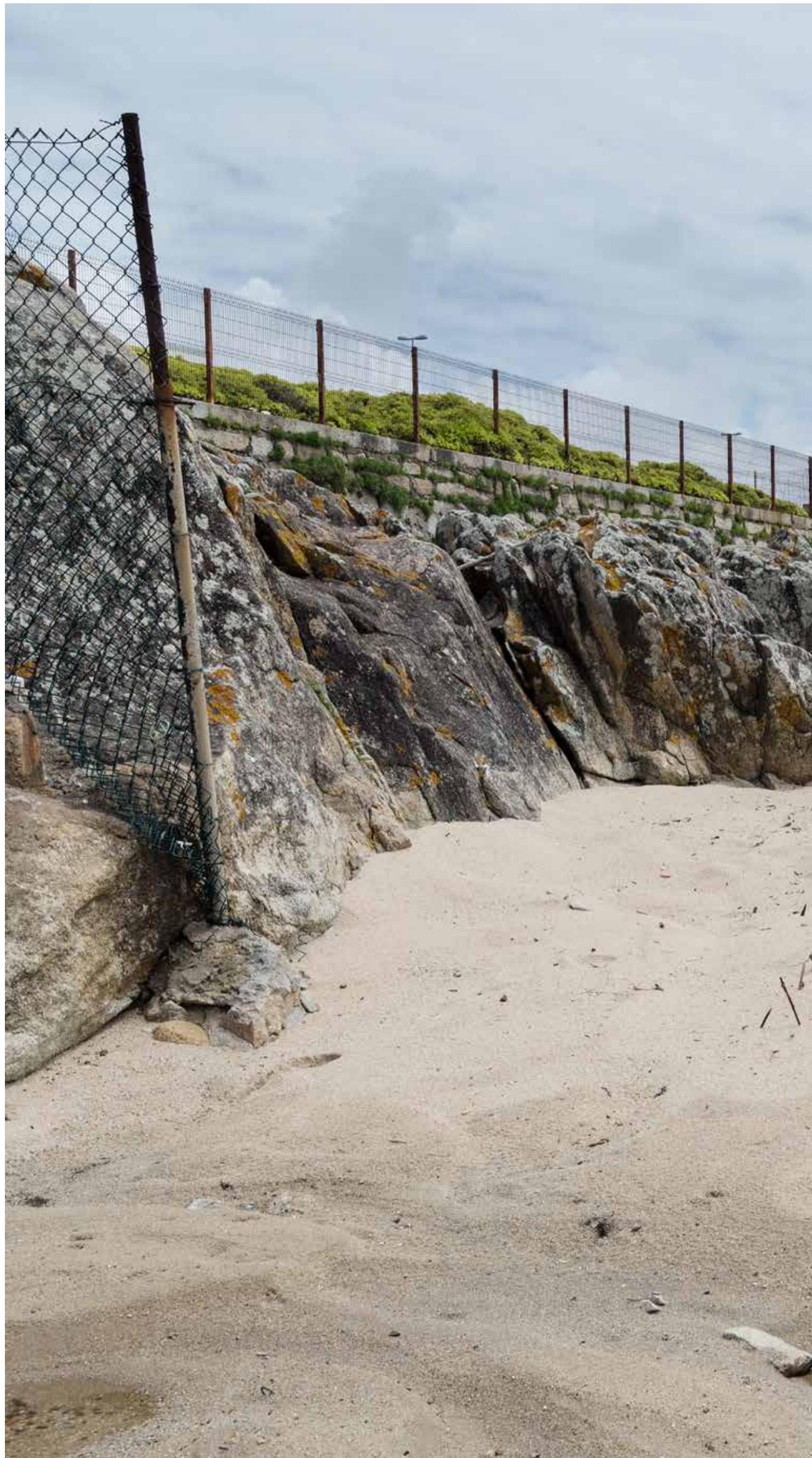










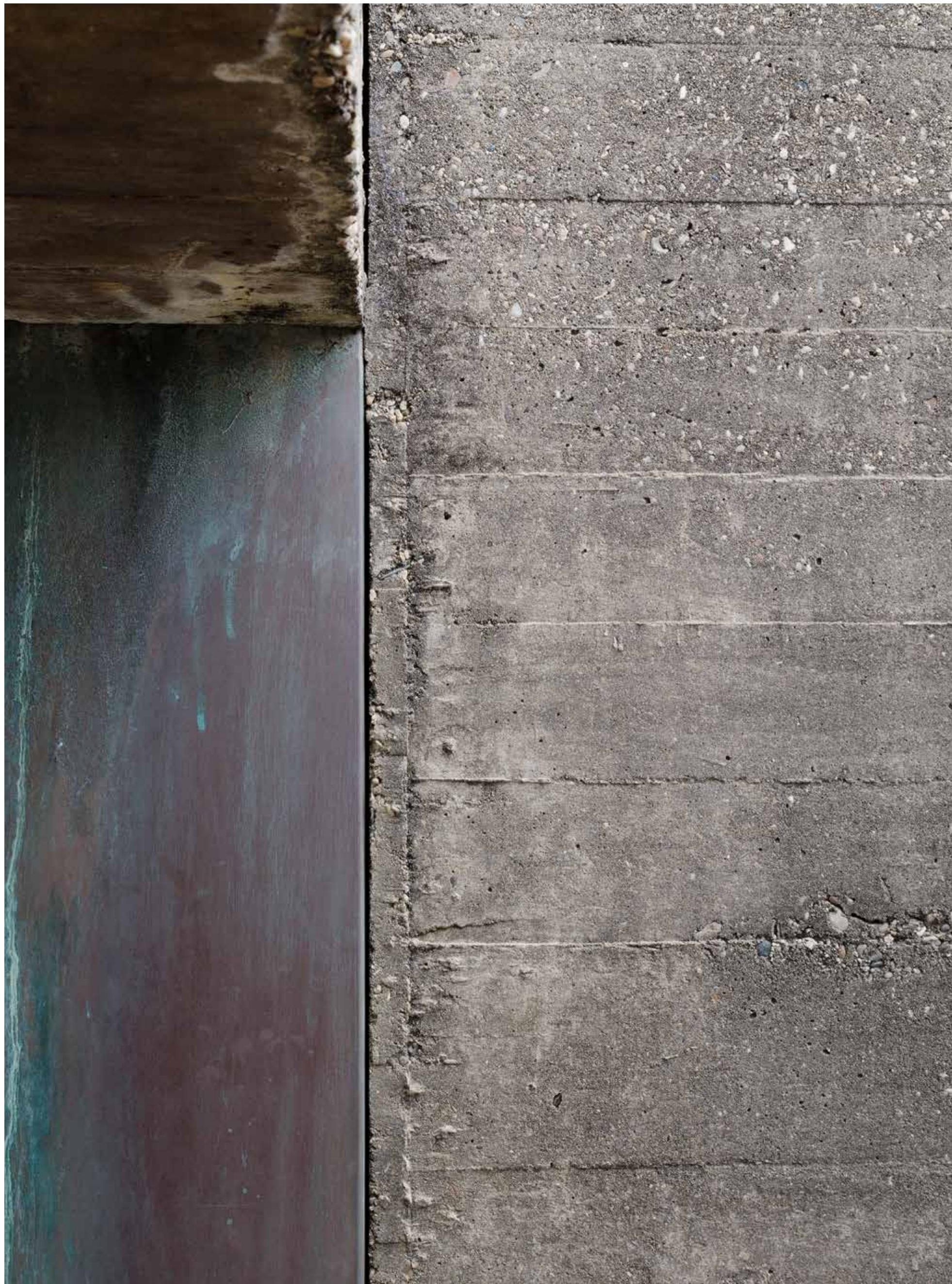










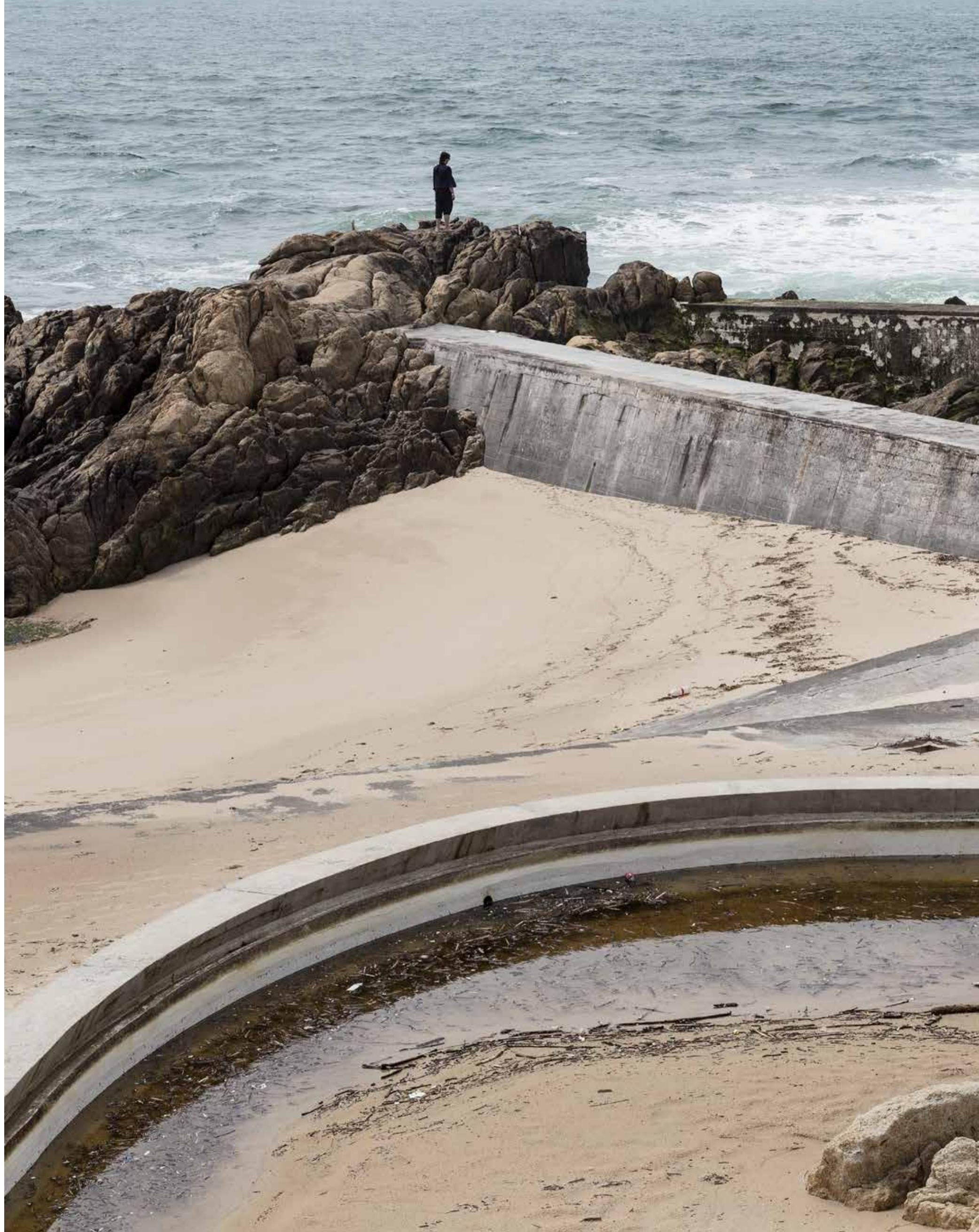








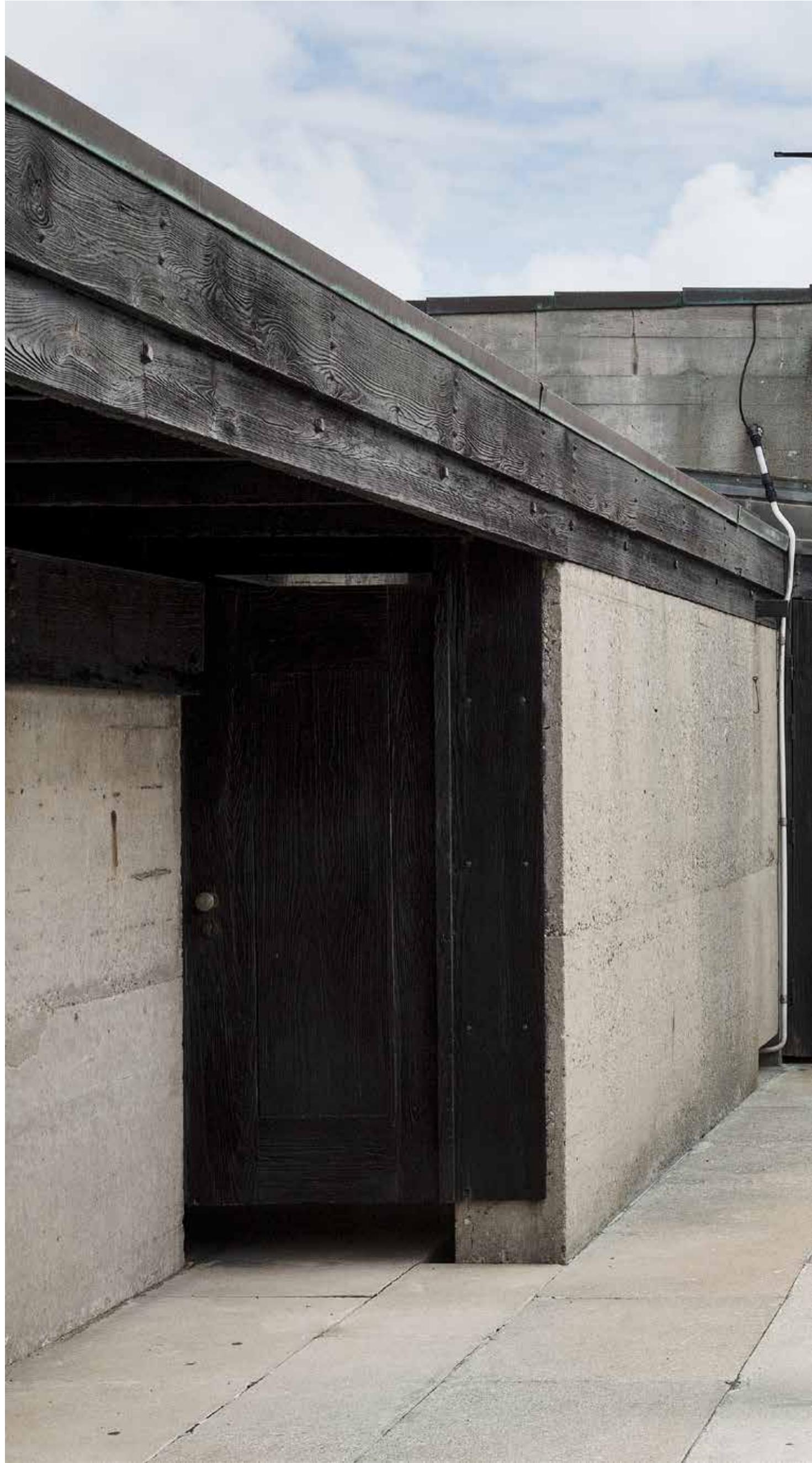


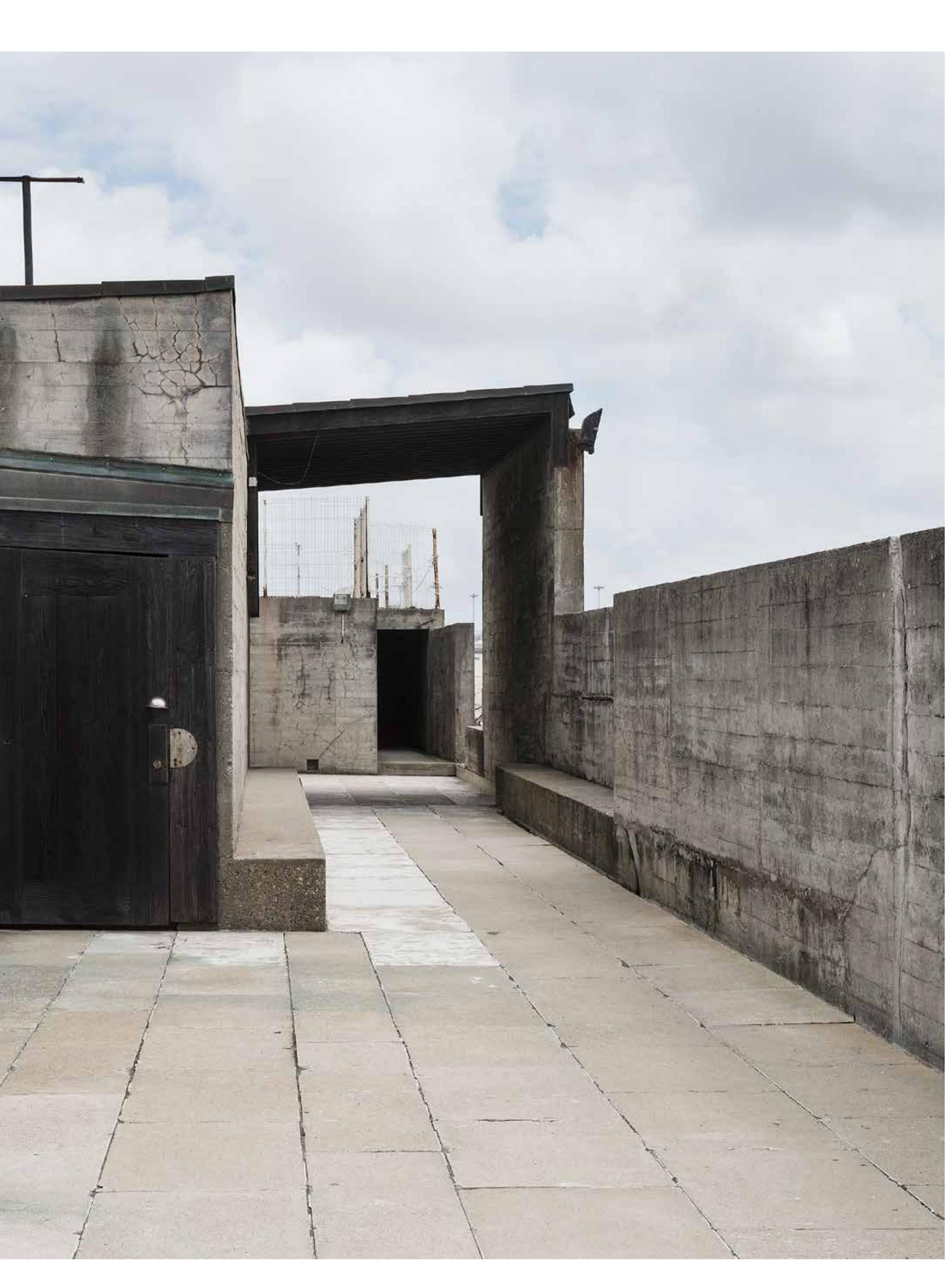




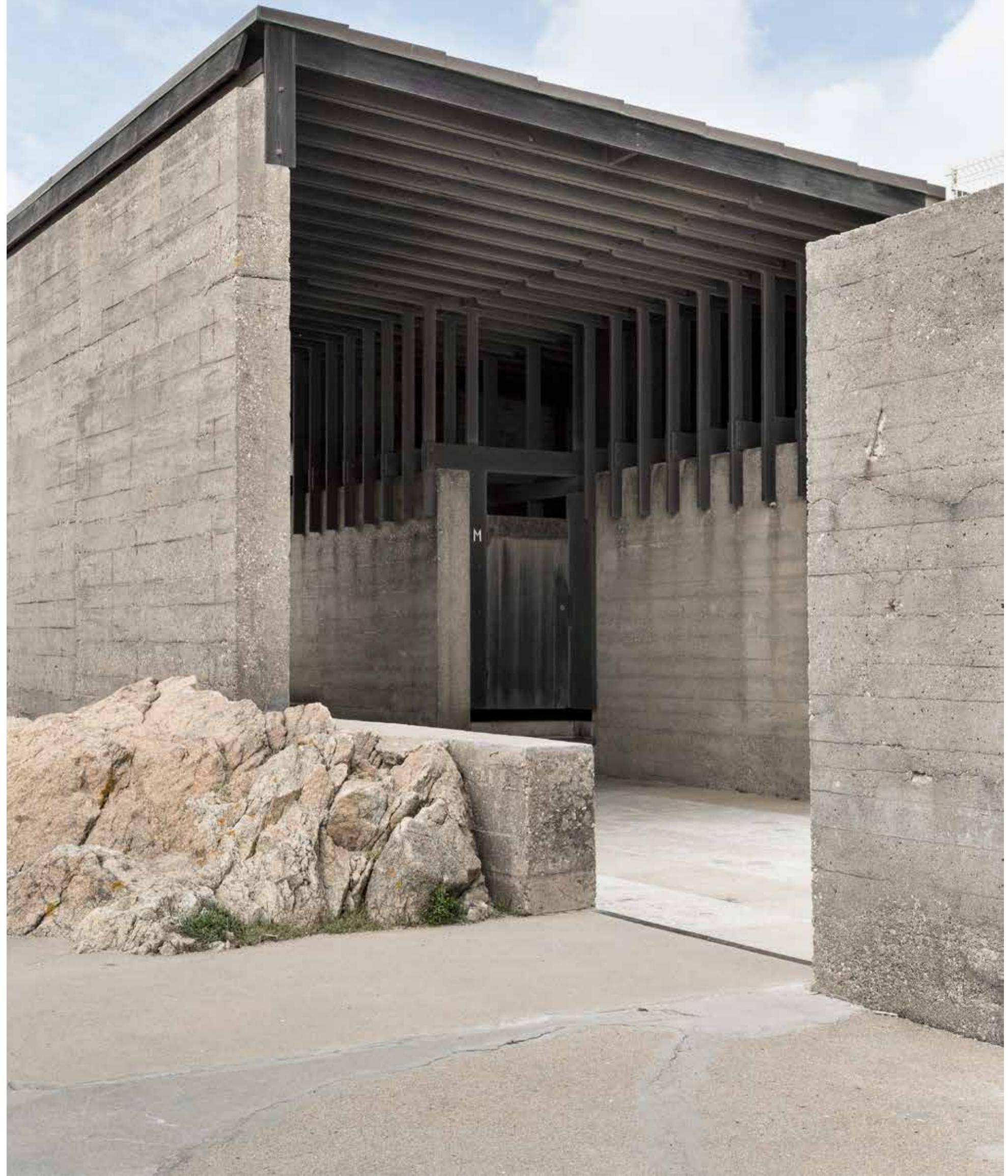


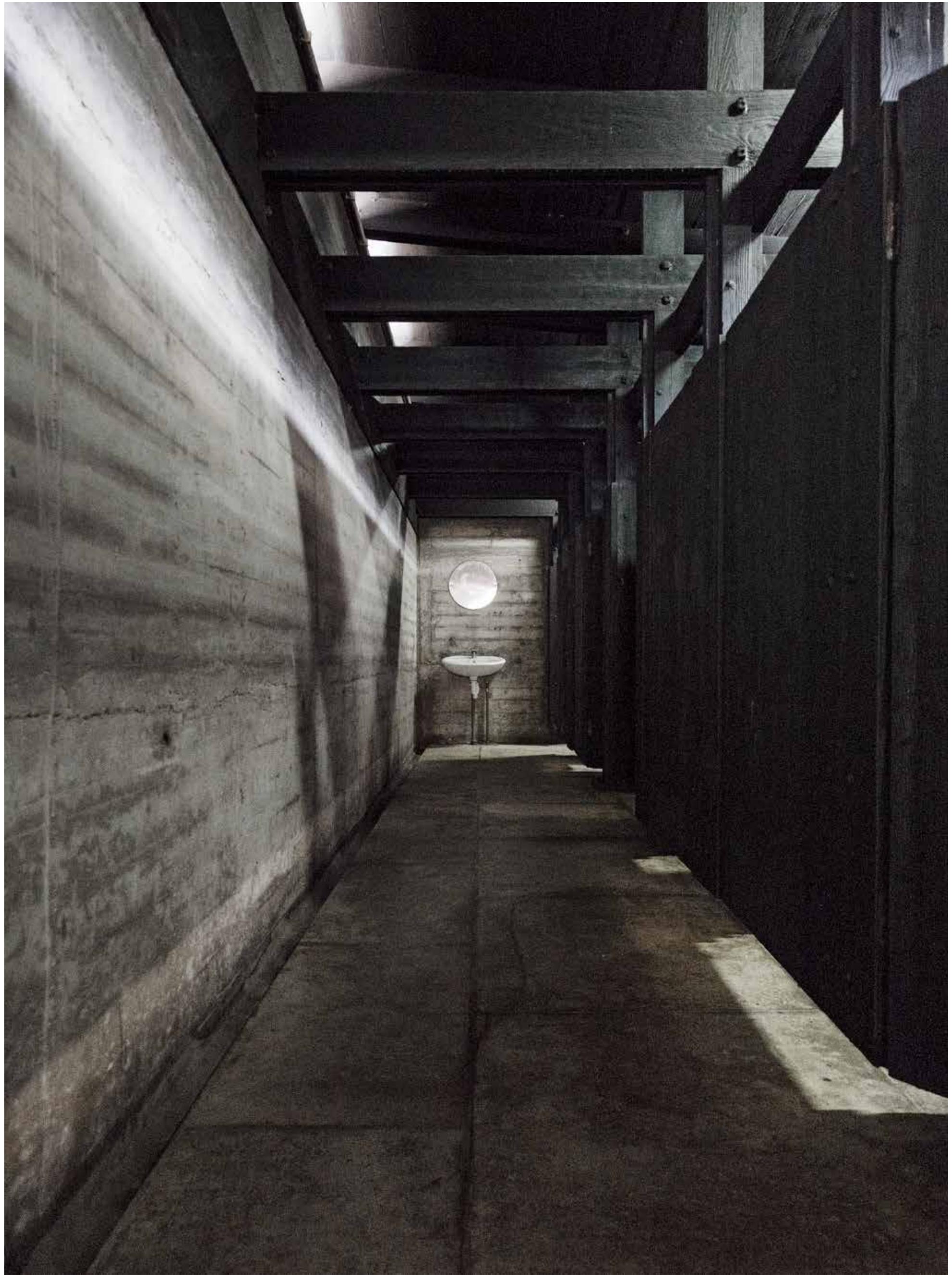




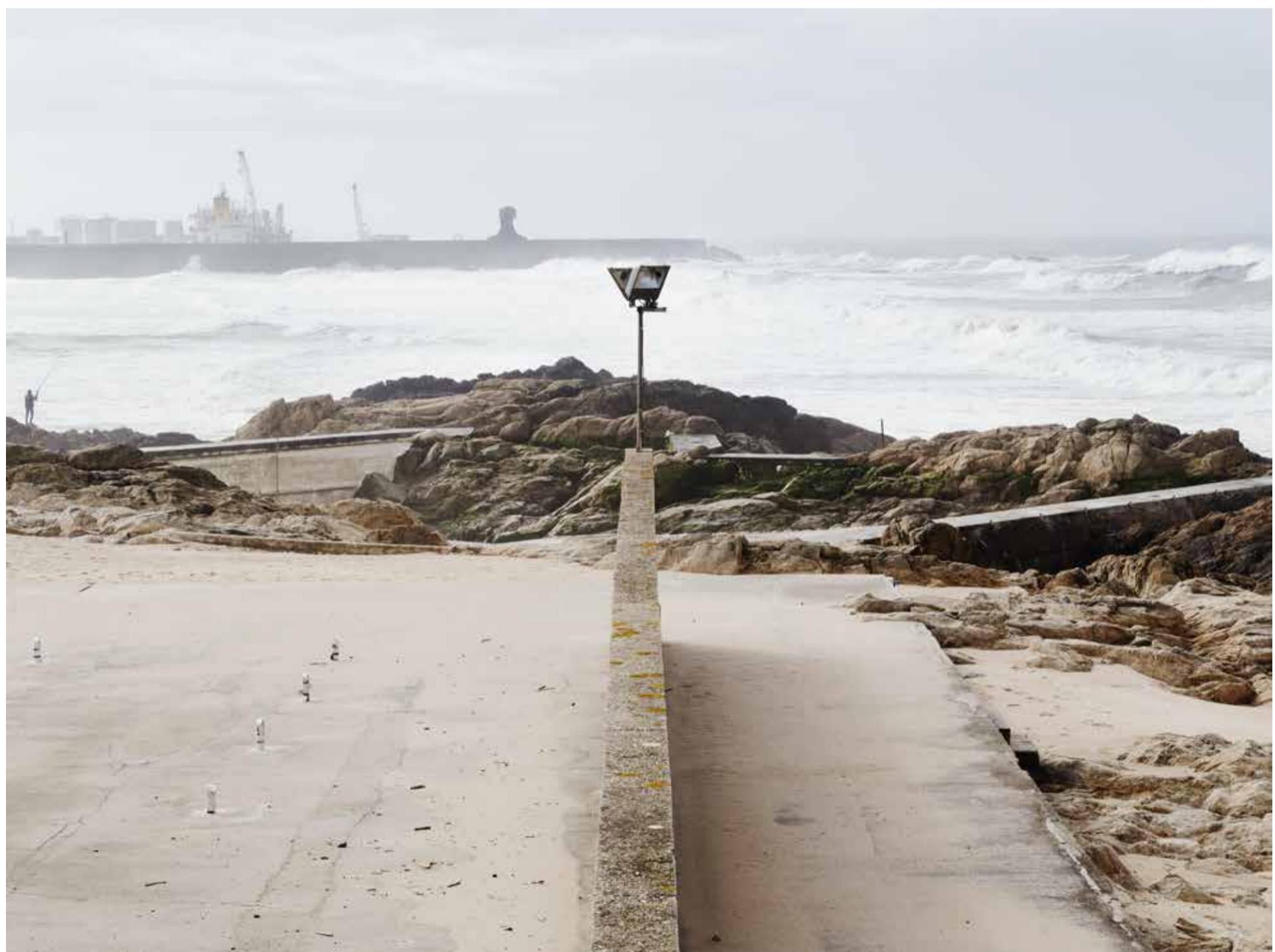




















# VISUAL SPACES OF CHANGE: AN ARCHITECTURAL PROMENADE THROUGH ÁLVARO SIZA'S MARÉS SWIMMING POOL BY MARTA FERREIRA

BY PEDRO LEÃO NETO

## On the works of Álvaro Siza Vieira and Marés Swimming pool

*VISUAL SPACES OF CHANGE: an architectural promenade through Álvaro Siza's Marés Swimming pool by Marta Ferreira* is a project based on one of the four edifices selected as case studies for the research and photography work conducted for Visual Spaces of Change (VSC), an interdisciplinary research project financed by the Portuguese public agency for funding (FCT) combining contemporary photography and visual documentation with georeferencing.

One of the objectives of VSC was to foster a renewed understanding of Portuguese architecture through the development of diverse case studies focused on a selection of remarkable architectural spaces within the Oporto Metropolitan Area. By inviting contemporary photographers to respond to the architectural works of some of the most prominent Portuguese architects, we intended to instigate the research of photographic approaches that depart from the traditional imagery displayed in architecture specialized press and offer visual narratives that can contribute to an enriching discussion on contemporary architecture and its uses. Thus, the photographers involved in this 1<sup>st</sup> phase have rehearsed a documentary and artistic photography methodology to address some of Álvaro Siza's earlier works, located in his hometown.

Within this context from amongst the immense and significant work of architect Álvaro Siza<sup>1</sup> *Marés Swimming pool* was one of the selected architectural programs because it was seen as an undeniable seminal work needed to understand Siza's architecture, namely the influence of Modernism and other architects such as Alvar Aalto and Frank Lloyd Wright, the importance of place, and the brilliant synthesis of these factors, which this work displays.

Dating from the beginning of the architect's career located in Matosinhos, Leça da Palmeira, the city where Álvaro Siza was born and raised, this work also represents a prominent

landmark important to the identity of the Greater Porto Area, as it is an example of an unequalled language characterized by a notable synthesis between the forms and the materials of the architecture and the natural contexts in which each is placed: rocks, sand, and sea. This work has left its mark on the panorama of both Portuguese and international architecture in the way that the architect has blended the identity-based and regional context with the modern.<sup>2</sup>

Marés Swimming pool (1966), a work photographed by Marta Ferreira<sup>3</sup>, is located on the Marginal in Leça da Palmeira, near the Casa de Chá da Boa Nova, and similar to it, a work that emerges as if born out of a rocky formation. This architecture accompanies the coastal avenue in a nearly imperceptible way, sitting at a level slightly lower than that of the roadway itself, and featuring a topography that links it in majestic way to the Marginal, the rock formation and the sea. In the words of Peter Testa<sup>4</sup>, the swimming pool functions "as a smooth, 3-dimensional opening that organizes the passage from the land to the sea".

Following the curatorial work of Visual Spaces of Change Marta Ferreira rehearsed a documentary and artistic photography methodology that had architecture as its subject and artistic matter. Thus, as will be seen next, Marta'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.

## The Marés Swimming pool promenade architecturale

Through a complex *promenade architecturale*<sup>5</sup>, Marta Ferreira shows us the genius of the spaces and materials of the Piscinas das Marés (1966) and the rich and poetic dialogue that this work establishes with the surroundings of the sea and the rocks where it is integrated.

<sup>1</sup> Álvaro Siza Vieira is the Portuguese architect with the most visibility and international prestige, having been awarded the Pritzker Prize in 1992. His body of work is a foremost reference in Portuguese and international architecture, with his influence extending to various generations of architects, among whom is the Portuguese architect Eduardo Souto de Moura, himself the Pritzker Prize winner in 2011. An architect from the so-called Porto School, he took his degree at School of Fine Arts of Porto (ESBAP) in 1955, and has received countless prizes and prestigious awards on the national and international stage, such as, among others, the Alvar Aalto Medal (1988), the Prince of Wales Prize from Harvard University (1998), European Union Prize for Contemporary Architecture/Mies Van der Rohe Award (1988) and the Golden Lion of the Venice Biennial (2012).

<sup>2</sup> Peter Testa, *A arquitectura de Álvaro Siza = The architecture of Álvaro Siza*, Edições da Faculdade de Arquitectura da Universidade do Porto, 1988, p. 186.

<sup>3</sup> Marta Ferreira lives and works in Porto. In 2010 she concluded her Bachelor's degree in Audiovisual Communication Technology at ESMAE-IPP, where in 2012 completed her Master's degree in Documentary Photography and Cinema.

<sup>4</sup> Peter Testa, *A arquitectura de Álvaro Siza = The architecture of Álvaro Siza*. Edições da Faculdade de Arquitectura da Universidade do Porto, 1988, p. 137.

<sup>5</sup> What is of interest here is the notion proposed by Flora Samuel when she defines *promenade architecturale* as being simultaneously an experimentation of the space in movement while we walk about the building and a network of ideas (that sustain the work of architecture). See Flora Samuel, *Le Corbusier and The Architectural Promenade*, Birkhäuser Architecture, 2010.

As Marta explains in her short text<sup>6</sup>, the swimming pools were photographed at a time in which the spaces "... were in transition between the 'natural' and the 'artificial'" ... "in other words, between the end of one beach-going period and the beginning of the next season, which traditionally opens around mid-June and concludes in September. Looking at her photographic project and the sequences of shots that have been selected, we understand that although there are individual images that allow us to perceive how people would use this space during the summer months, the photographer's attention has been drawn more specifically to the long period in which the swimming pools are not being used. This time of being vacant has certainly allowed her the opportunity to create a relationship of greater proximity, intensity and interiority with the work of Álvaro Siza Vieira and its relationship to the natural surroundings.

The photographic project comprises diverse visual narrative sequences which along the pages take us on an interesting journey made up of a perceptive and poetic chain amongst the different images, linked to each other in a dynamic yet unified way, forming a spatial narrative whole that is sensitive and unique. These sequences of shots create a "new spatial voyage", or in other words, a non-traditional *promenade* through the exterior and interior spaces of the Piscinas das Marés. The photographs thus go on to reveal the architecture of Siza Vieira's building and swimming pools, surprising the viewer in different ways. The richness of the perceptive experience that they make possible is in evidence in images such as those on pages 154 and 155, where the forms and materials of the swimming pools can be perceived as if being born and rising out of the rock, or the image on pages 160 and 161, which reveals the magic of the relationships established between the ocean, the swimming pool, the sand, the rocks, and the concrete. Also, the contour and the poetics of some of the shots are quite revelatory of the multifaceted richness of Siza Vieira's work. Note how the image on pages 158-159 is able to masterfully communicate the play of the geometric lines and the vanishing points of the concrete of the swimming pools and the spatial relationships that this creates with the natural surroundings of the rocks and the sea, providing

scale for the entire group through discreet and solitary human presence, a dark silhouette that blends in with the rocks in a place near the sea.

Marta's photographic project possesses a strong documentary and artistic character which is the result of a process of construction from an architectural and personal perspective that explores the relationship between perception and photographic vision, showing how these two worlds are interconnected and influence our relationship with and understanding of the real world. The journey that she proposes for us corresponds to a process of creation in which Marta's desire to understand, feel and (re)discover Siza Vieira's architecture is felt. The characteristics of each image *per se*, together with the juxtaposition of the images generated via the promenade which constitutes her photographic project, lead the viewer to create another relationship with the Piscinas das Marés and to consider a new reading and spatial consciousness of that place. These are images that endeavour, in a sensitive way, to express what there is in the architecture of Siza Vieira that is most authentic and genius, yet with the knowledge, as noted by Andrei Tarkovsky<sup>7</sup>, that human beings can never understand the totality of the universe, but the poetry of an image can express this completeness.

Marta's shots also reveal the influence and the teachings of Luís Ferreira Alves (LFA), a great master and an undeniable reference in the field of photography of Portuguese architecture, with whom Marta has been working several years. On the one hand, we note in this series how there is concern from the outset with depicting the building in its entirety. Her diptych (pg. 142-143) skilfully shows how the building directly follows the seaside avenue, and at a level lower than that of the road, through a topographical structure that relates with the rocky formation, interconnecting the entire group - the avenue, the swimming pools and the sea - in a remarkable way. This ability to capture that which is the most significant in the relationship of the building with its context is a legacy attributable to LFA<sup>8</sup> who, as we have seen, usually begins by focusing on a building in its entirety and only later initiates the journey or journeys that may take him to a certain detail.

6 "The Tide pools inaugurated in 1966, mark in a discreet way the waterfront of Leça da Palmeira with a compound of two pools, changing rooms, changing rooms and bar. The project is by architect Álvaro de Siza Vieira. For three months the pools are used for the real purpose they were created, this time corresponds to the bathing period, mid-June to mid-September. In the remaining months of the year the pools are empty and under surveillance twenty four hours a day. The images taken are the record of a space that is in transition between the "natural" and the "artificial", where the concrete intersects with the primitive rock of the place. Its non "normal" state of use allows in closer planes to intensify this junction/transition of the "artificial" with the "natural", the architect's design, marked by the use of concrete, with the "primitive design" of the rocks. In more general planes the pools are "camouflaged". The interest in photographing during the "non-use" of the site is evident in the selection of images. The placement of some photographs of the pools in use marks the narrative in a punctual way, as well as the time in which the place is used. By Marta Feiria.

7 "We cannot comprehend the totality of the universe, but the poetic image is able to express that totality. The image is an impression of the truth, a glimpse of the truth permitted to us in our blindness. The incarnate image will be faithful when its articulations are palpably the expression of truth, when they make it unique, singular — as life itself is, even in its simplest manifestations." Andrei Tarkovsky, "Andrei Tarkovsky – Sculpting In Time", The Bodley Head Ltd., 1986 [https://archive.org/stream/Andrei\\_Tarkovsky\\_Sculpting\\_In\\_Time/Andrei\\_Tarkovsky\\_Sculpting\\_In\\_Time\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/Andrei_Tarkovsky_Sculpting_In_Time/Andrei_Tarkovsky_Sculpting_In_Time_djvu.txt).

8 Luís Ferreira Alves, *Luís Ferreira Alves – Fotografias em Obras de Eduardo Souto Moura*, Scopio Editions, 2016; Jorge Fernando Silva Dias, *Obras e Arquitectura Fotografada: do Olhar à Comunicação*, Integrated Master's Thesis – Department of Architecture FCTUC, September 2017.

On the other hand, the clean and minimalist images, presenting rigorous frontal planes and demonstrating the horizontality and verticality of the architecture photographed, (pg. 147-148, 169, 174) are also characteristics present both in LFA's work and the photography of the modern movement. Another aspect of this influence is the register of detail (pg. 155) where, as noted by LFA, the design can once again be seen, as well as the singular appreciation of the natural light which allows for capturing the atmosphere of the swimming pools and thus serves to awaken our imagination and emotion for the architecture of that place. With some images, Marta truly succeeds in evoking the soul or the genius loci of these spaces, something which can be observed in the work of the great masters of photography, such as Luigi Ghirri or Guido Guidi.

Some of Marta's images also reveal her ability to use her special aesthetic sensitivity to register the more invisible or not-cared-for spaces, as in those in the image from page 150-151 or the indoor storage space on pages 170-171, ones which recall the magic which LFA employs to capture certain moments of transformation that occur during the process of construction and appropriation of the work. We might also point to Marta's aesthetic concerning certain photography projects along the lines of New Topographics, as in the example of Lewis Baltz<sup>11</sup>, namely his series Park City and Maryland (1976).

Reflecting upon the importance of setting out on a path for the appreciation of architecture, it is important to bear in mind that our perception of the space, generally speaking, is linked to the direction of the course, which involves movement and travelling<sup>12</sup>, a concept which distances itself from the features of the fixed image as it is much more closely aligned with the image in movement able to represent a space in time and (to evoke) movement in a way that is closer to the real.

It is thus notable how Marta has been able to explore the potential of photography to isolate certain movements and a direction of perspective, a shot, and in so doing, allows for a much more lingering and complete analysis of the image and the space represented in it. These fractioned instants are, in fact, the result of a fixed point of view: Marta's location, direction, and sense of perspective (as a photographer) at the time of the photograph's creation, which is an act of selection that will delineate what is to

be shown and what remains invisible. In this way, we may consider not only that each image per se constructs a direction of perspective but also that a series of images can set a course, even if pre-determined and more abstract than the images in movement, as this abstraction of the path is a unique feature specific to photographic series, one which affords us a differentiated analysis and perception of architecture.

Consequently, Marta's visual narratives explore the notions of instant and movement in an integrated way, representing the outdoor and indoor spaces of the Piscinas das Marés through a series of images that construct an analytical and perceptive path that we can experience by leafing through the pages of the book.

These paths are also untied to a single logic of linear representation related to the experimentation of the space in movement - when one is strolling about the work - because at the same time there exists a sensitive and mental logic in the construction of the narratives which enables time and space to be experienced in a new way.

The photograph on pages 164-165, for example, is an image that possesses a deep mental space<sup>13</sup> and urges the reader to mentally walk the space within the image in the direction of the dark entrance to the open passage that awaits, located at a vanishing point at the background of the image. Moving on to the next image, on page 166, the reader is treated to a surprise that serves as a catharsis when offered a superb view of the beach, the rocks, the sea and the pier at Leça, which is indeed the sight we behold when reaching this point along the path.

In addition to this, there is an "invisible" spatial matrix in Marta's images which assures the unity of an architectural and disciplinary perspective of the diverse indoor and outdoor spaces that are portrayed. In other words, after a more careful analysis, we deduce how these paths have been informed by a spatial experience whose origin is in the act of walking the site, identifying an arrival, an entrance, an exploration of the spaces, and an exit.

We conclude by saying that Marta Ferreira's photography conveys a very particular truth and frankness concerning Architecture, something which she inherited from her mentor, Luís Ferreira Alves, and which explains how some of her images can express the deepest and most enigmatic aspects that exist in certain spaces of architecture.

9 Ibid.

10 "There is always more to a photograph than the picture. It conveys because of our fantastic sense of imagination [sic]." Pallasmaa's argument for the sort of poetic image discussed by Gaston Bachelard strikes a chord: all spaces have an atmosphere, so presumably do all photographs." in Marc Goodwin, "A Hinge: Field-testing the relationship between photography and architecture". <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/30884/32382>.

11 See "Oral history interview with Lewis Baltz, 2009 November 15-17" in (<https://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/interviews/oral-history-interview-lewis-baltz-15758#transcript>); International Center of Photography (ICP) Archive (<https://www.icp.org/browse/archive/constituents/lewis-baltz?all/all/all/all/0/>).

12 Juhani Pallasmaa, "The Architecture of Image: Existential Space in Cinema", in Belks Uluoglu, Ayhan Ensici, Ali Vatansever (eds.), *Design and Cinema: Form Follows Film*, Cambridge Scholars Press, 2006. Available at: <http://www.cambridgescholars.com/download/sample/58510>.

13 Stephen Shore, *The Nature of Photographs*, Phaidon Press Inc., 2007, p. 97.

## COLOPHON

scopio@  
scopionewspaper  
AAI Research publication  
SCPIO EDITIONS  
Porto, May 2021

**Publisher**  
**Cityscopio Associação Cultural**  
info@cityscopio.com  
www.cityscopio.com

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ISSN 2183-6906  
ISBN 978-989-53268-0-8

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## Support

UP, FAUP, FCT

This article is a result of the project POCI-01-0145-FEDER-030605 - PTDC/ART-OUT/30605/2017 supported by Competitiveness and Internationalisation Operational Programme (POCI), under the PORTUGAL 2020 Partnership Agreement, through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and through national funds by the FCT – Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia.

## EDITORIAL

BY MARIA NETO & PEDRO LEÃO NETO

In this number of scopio newspaper journal # 3 May 2021, we present the photography project "Piscina das Marés" of Marta Ferreira, focused on the architectural design of Álvaro Siza located on the Marginal in Leça da Palmeira, near the Casa de Chá, that constitutes a notable example of integration into the landscape and topography, emerging as if born out of a rocky formation. Marés Swimming pool is an example of an unequalled language characterized by a notable synthesis between the forms and the materials of the architecture and the natural contexts in which each is placed: rocks, sand, and sea

Following the curatorial work of Visual Spaces of Change Marta Ferreira rehearsed a documentary and artistic photography methodology that had architecture as its subject and artistic matter. Marta'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

A discrete presence on the Marginal in Leça da Palmeira, the Piscinas das Marés, inaugurated in 1966, feature two swimming pools, dressing rooms, shower facilities and a bar. The project is the brainchild of architect Álvaro Siza Vieira.

For three months a year, the swimming pools are dedicated to the purpose for which they were created, corresponding with the summer sunbathing season from mid-June to mid-September. During the remaining months of the year, the swimming pools are empty and under 24-hour surveillance.

The images created are the register of a space in transition, one between "the natural" and "the artificial", where the concrete combines with the primitive rock of the site. Its "normal" state of non-use, allows for planes of closer proximity to intensify this juncture/transition of "the artificial" with "the natural" in the architect's design, marked by the use of concrete and with the "primitive design" of the rocks. In more general terms, the swimming pools are "camouflaged".

The interest in photographing the location when not being used is quite evident in the images selected. The addition of some photos of the swimming pools in use serves to mark an isolated moment in the narrative, such as the time when people are enjoying using the site.

Marta Ferreira

## BIO

### Marta Ferreira

Native of Muna de Besteiros, Viseu district, currently lives in Porto. In 2010, finished the degree in Audiovisual Communication Technology and in 2012 the Master in Audiovisual Communication with a specialization in Documentary Photography. Has collaborated with the scopio, namely in the project "Visual Mapping of Four Works of Siza Vieira" (MFDA-ARP) doing a visual study under the space of the Tidal Pool.

## 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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