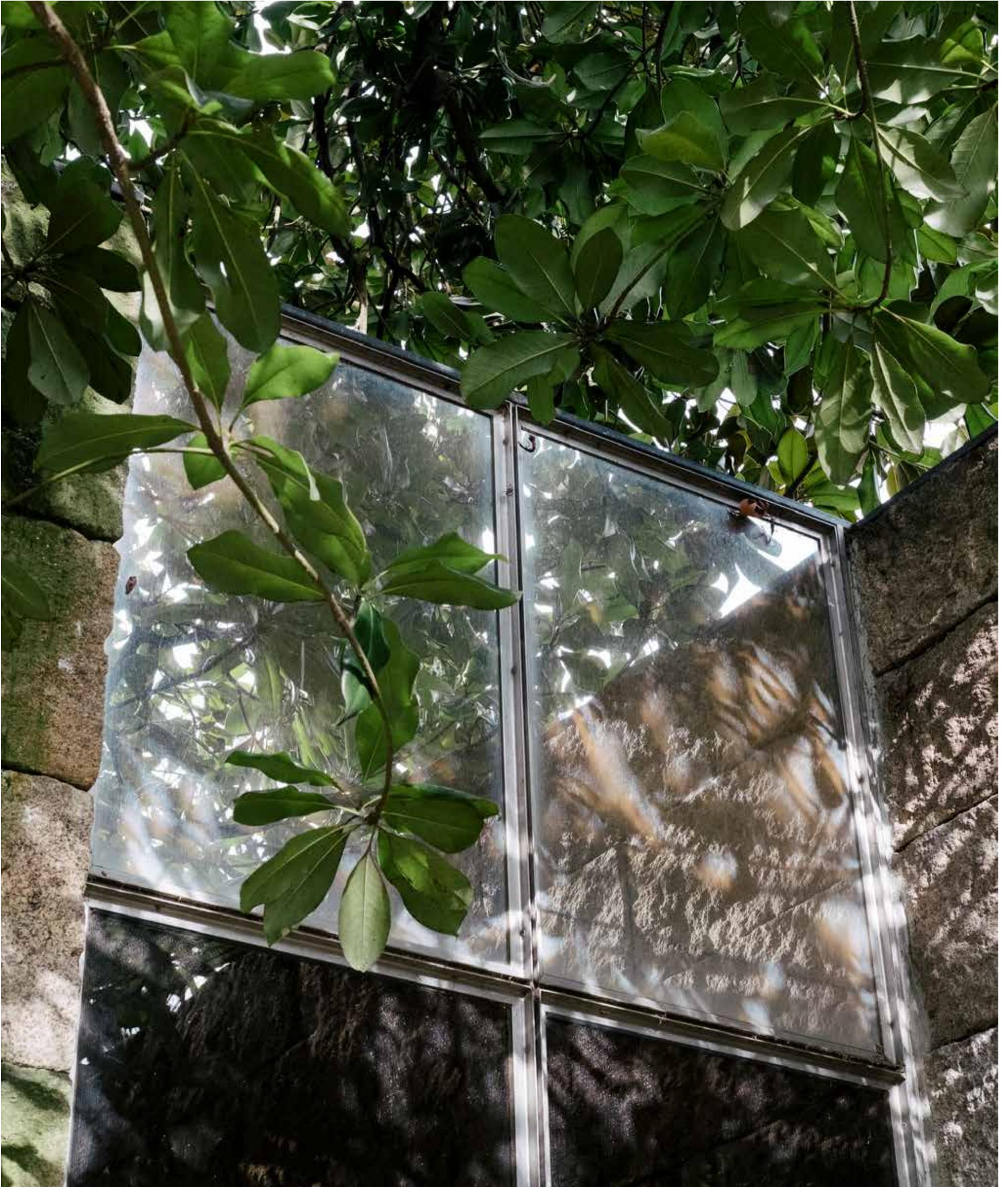
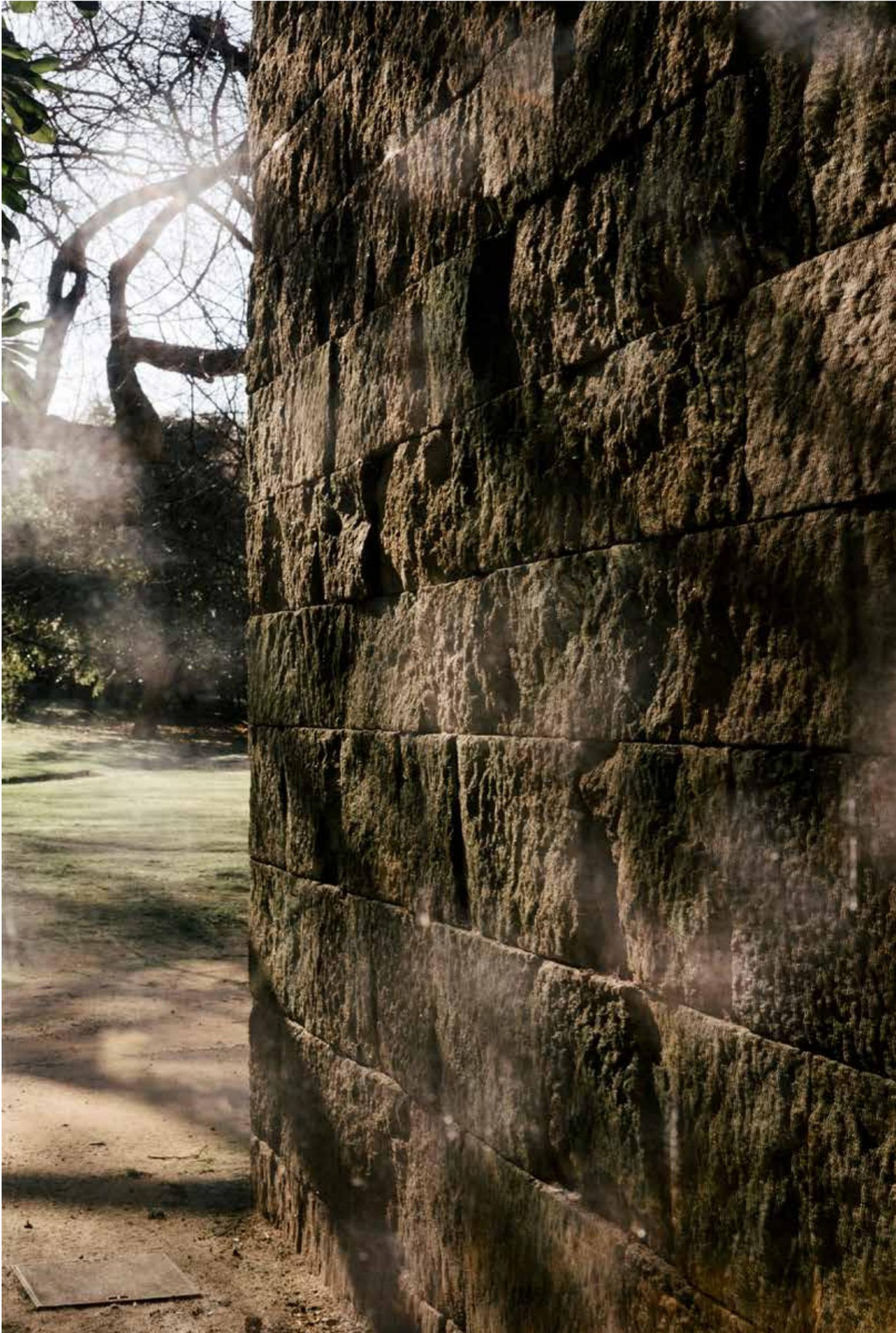


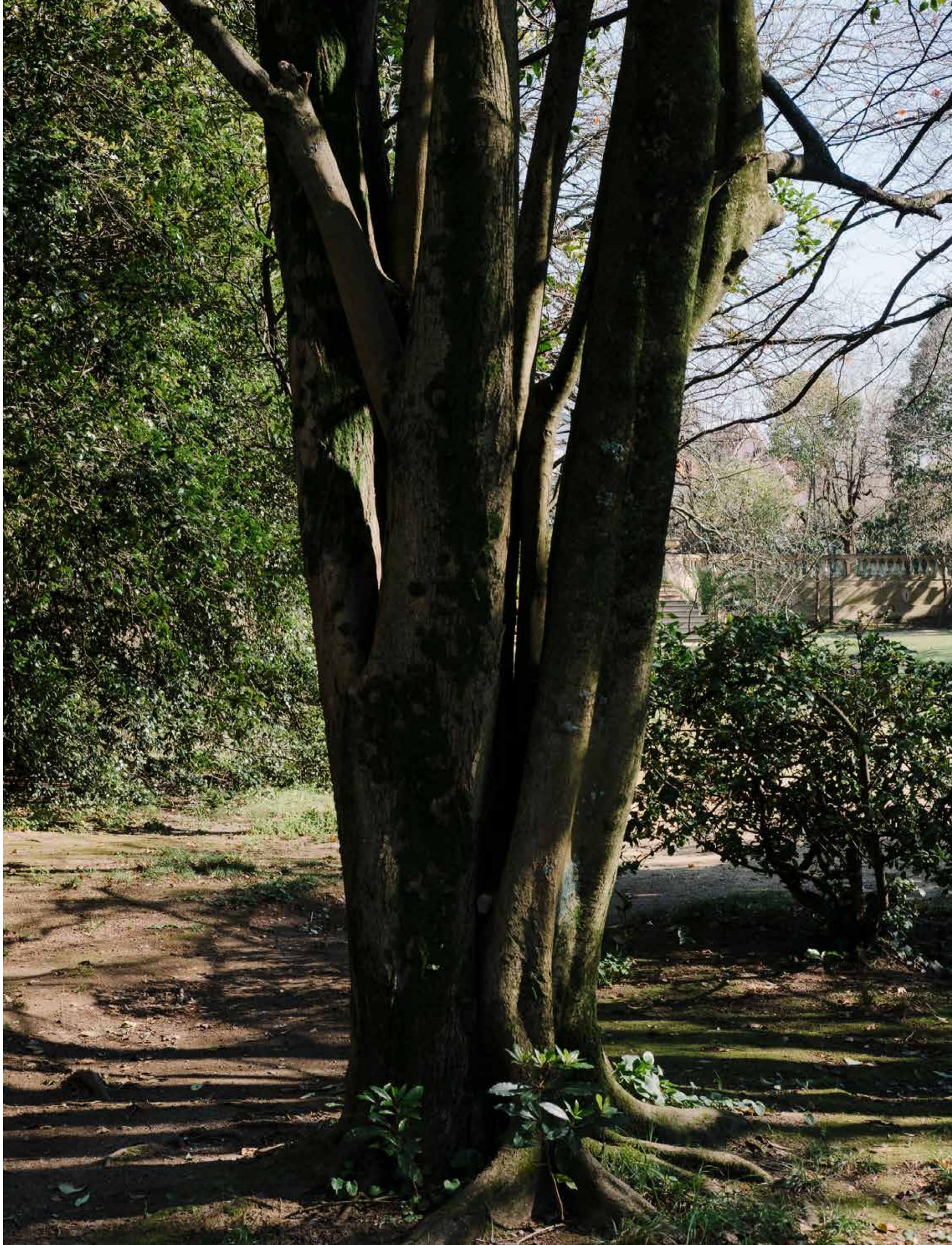
SCOPIO NEWSPAPER

VISUAL SPACES OF CHANGE
ALLEN (CASA DAS ARTES)
by Cláudio Reis
#7 May 2021



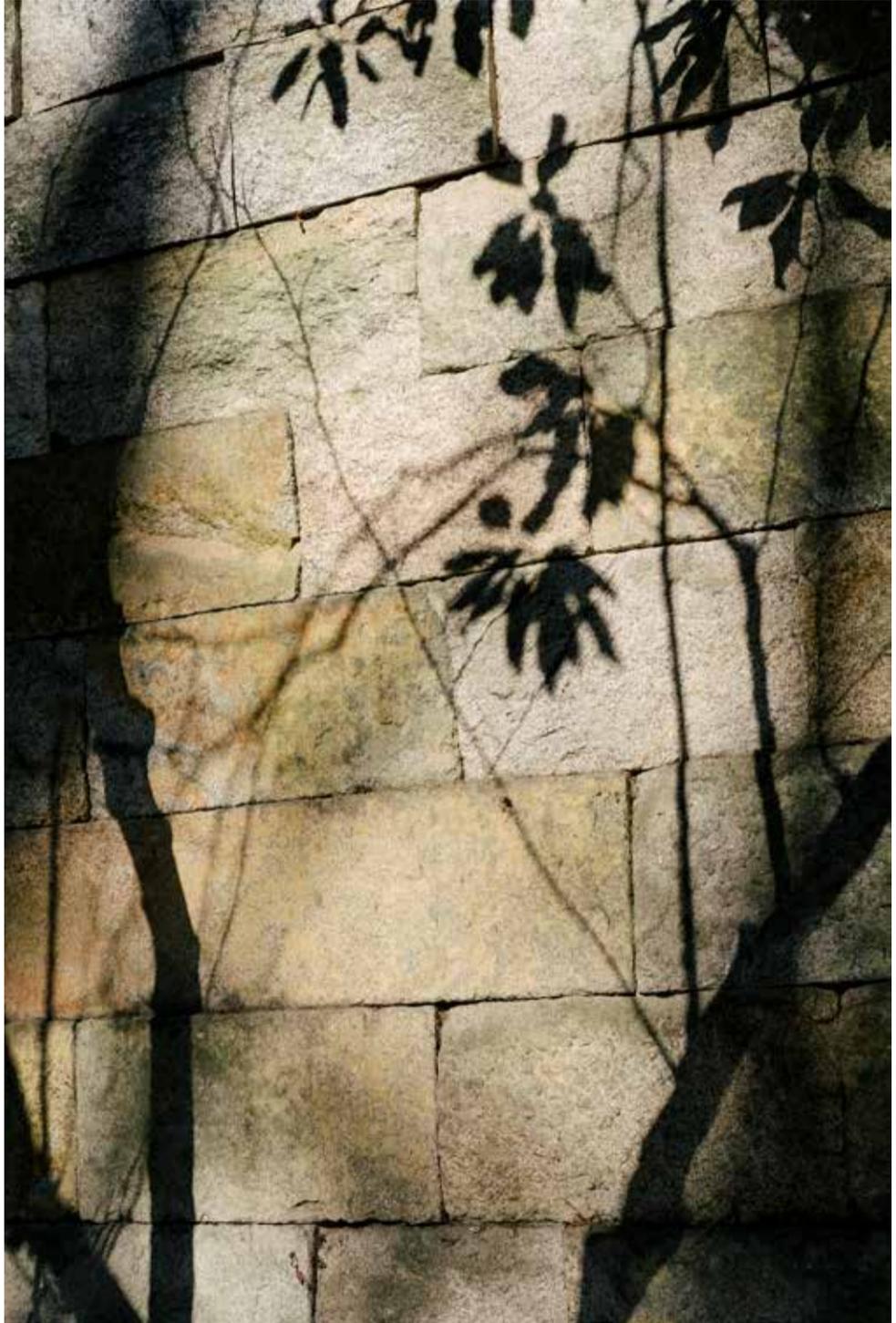


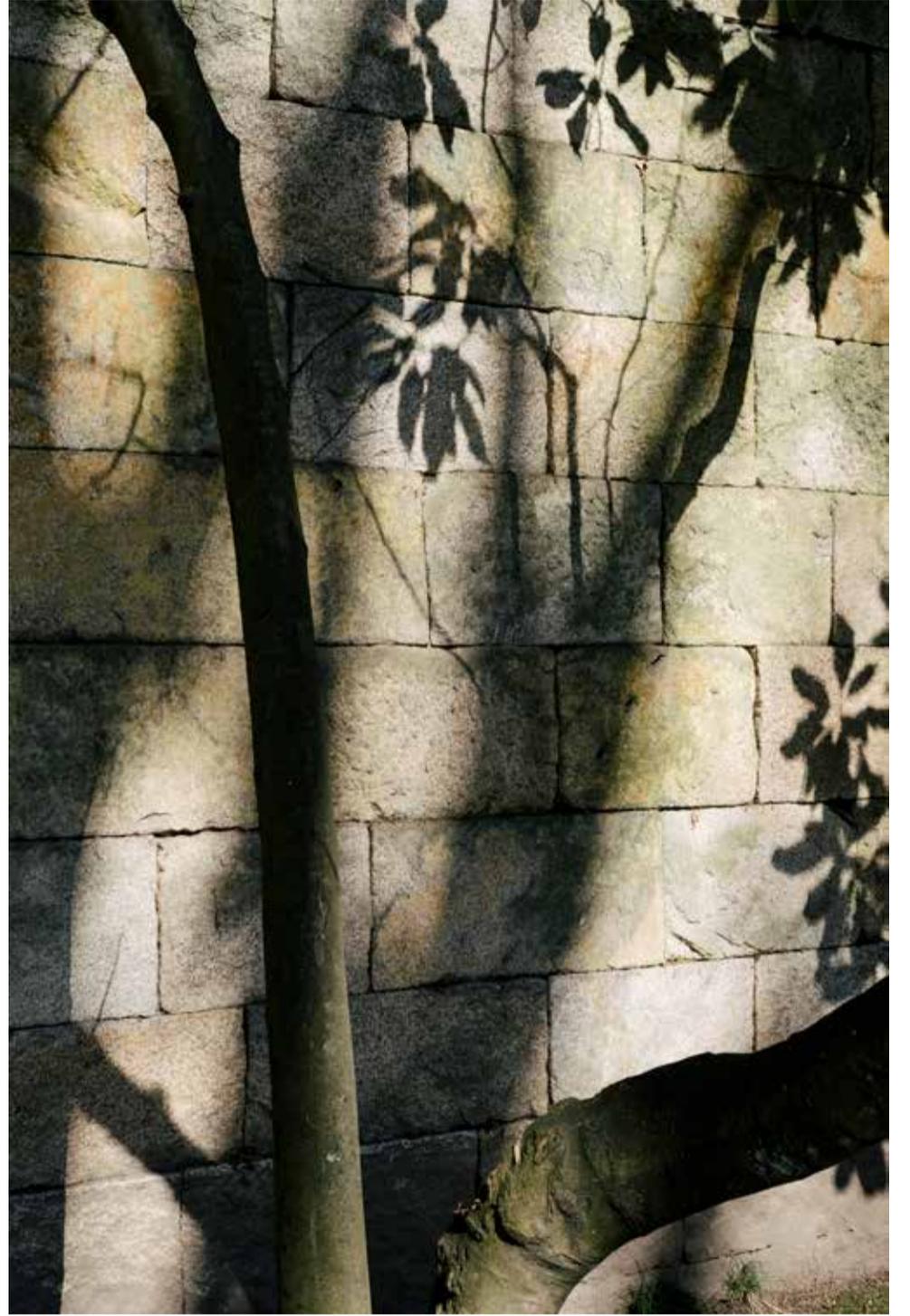
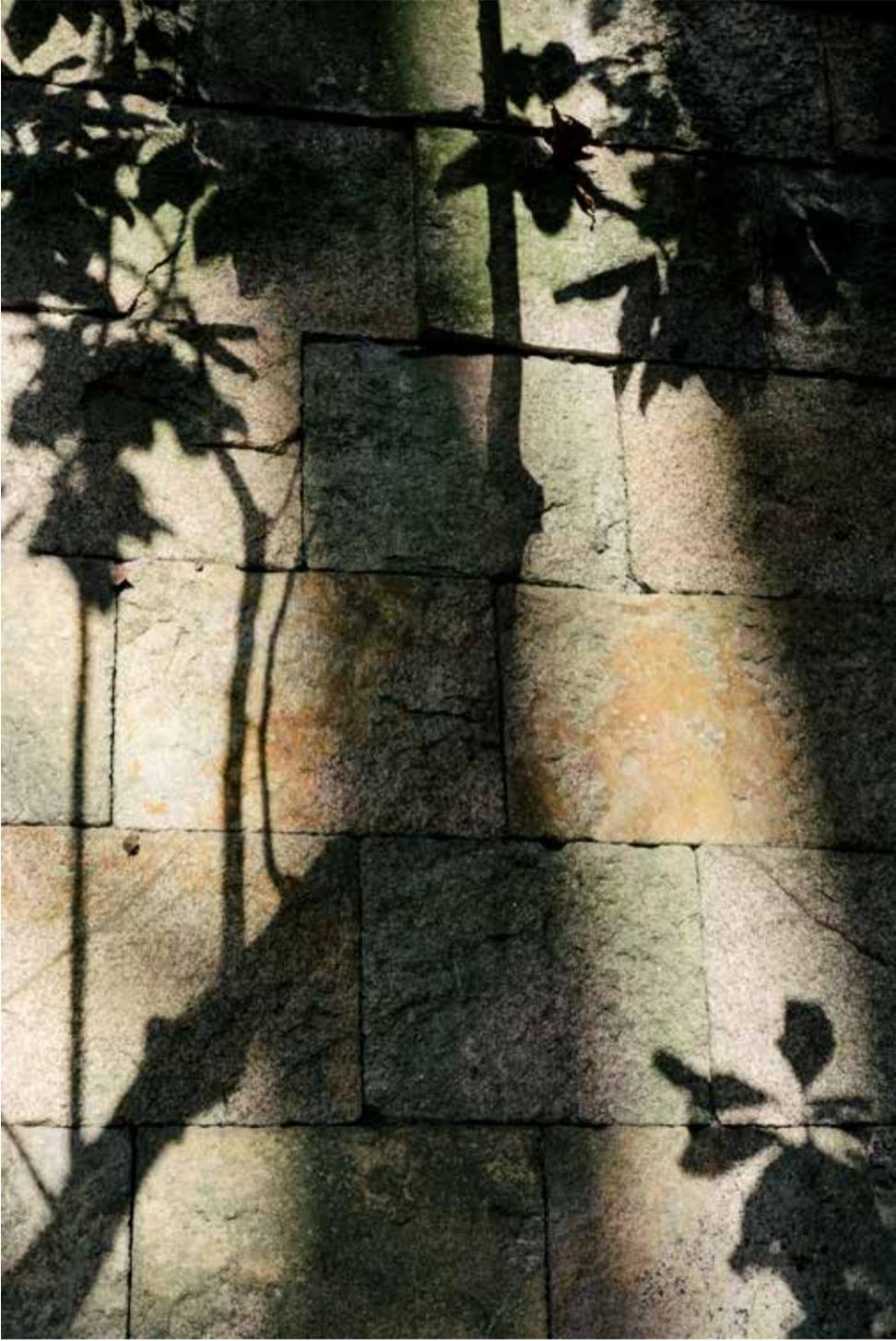


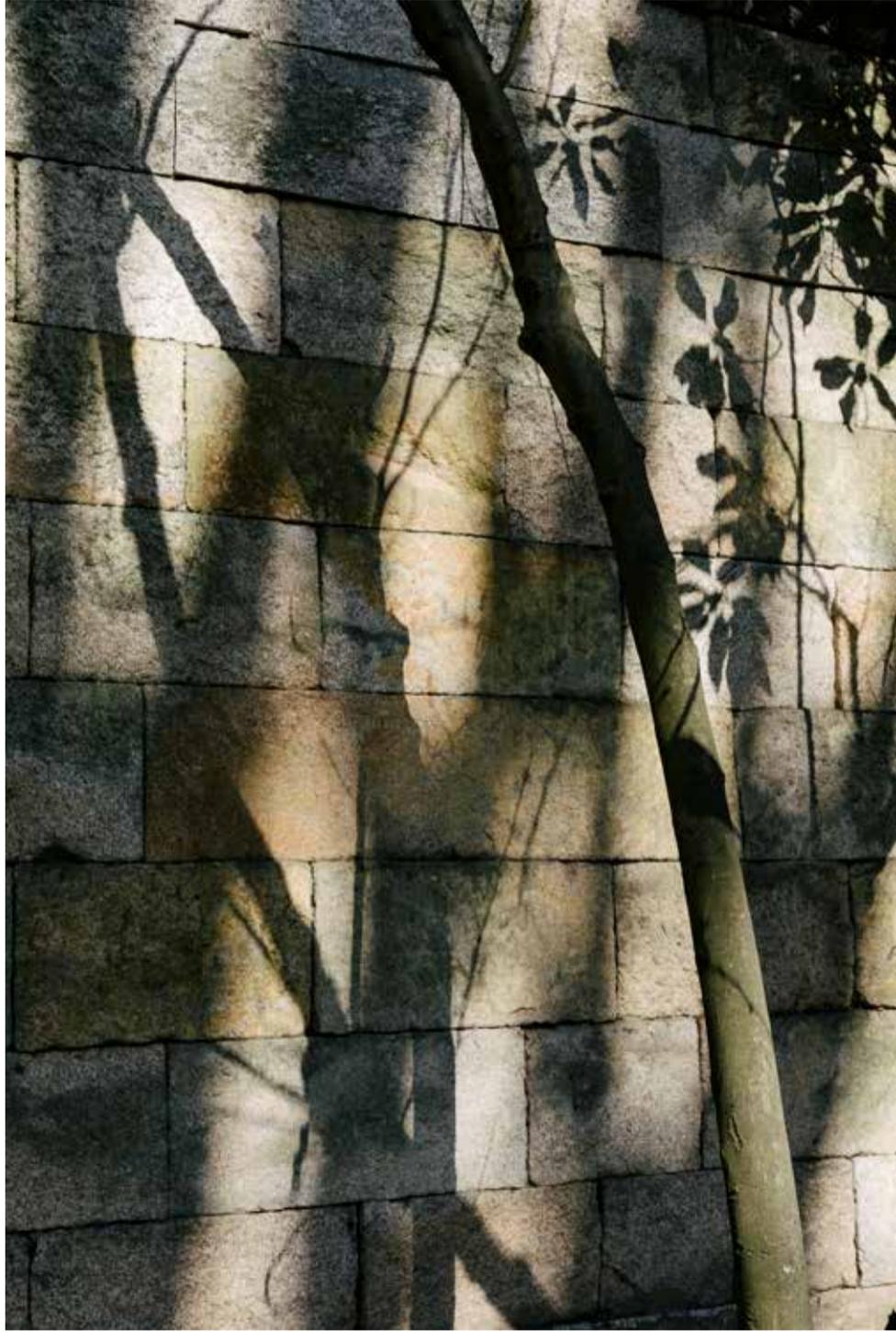


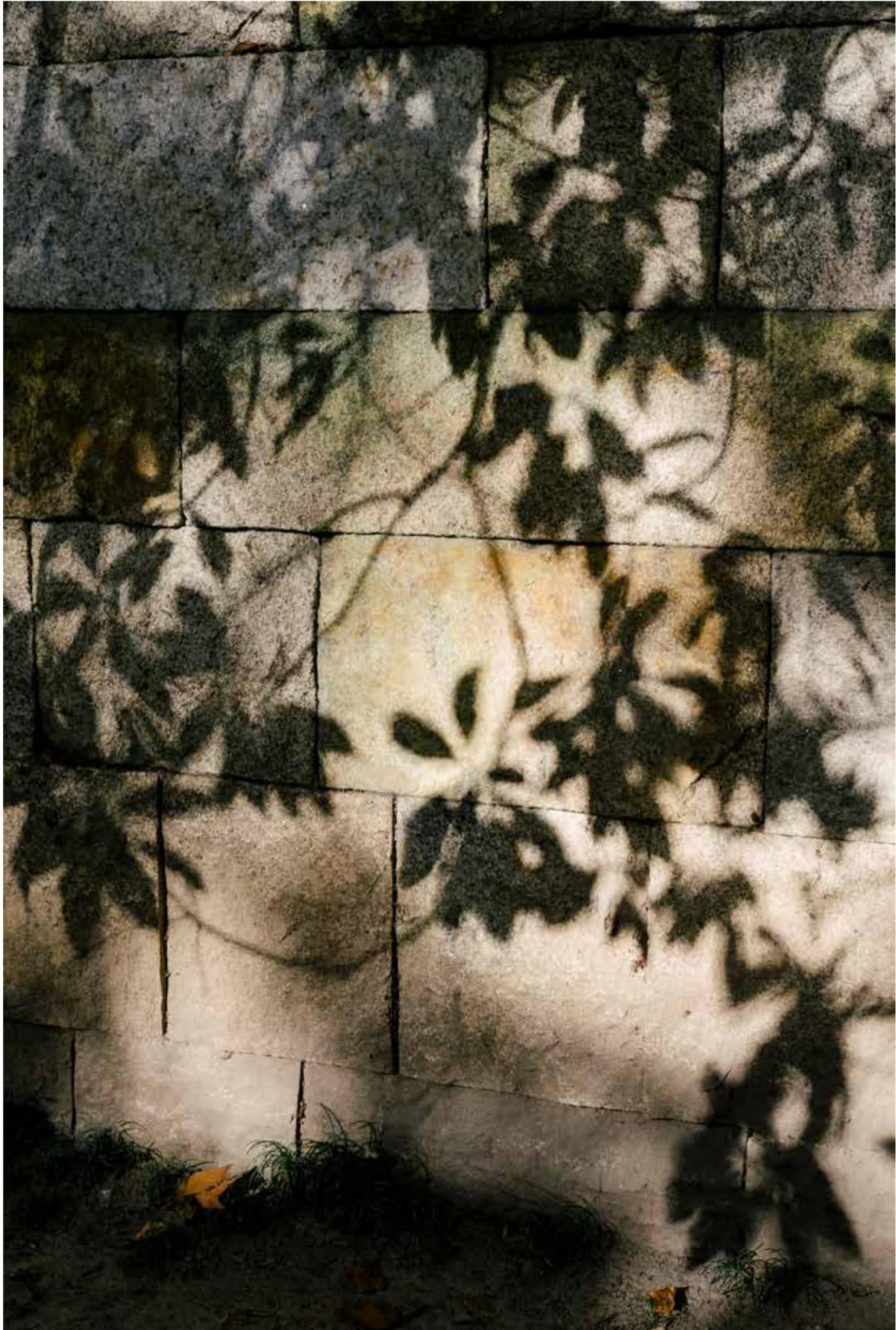


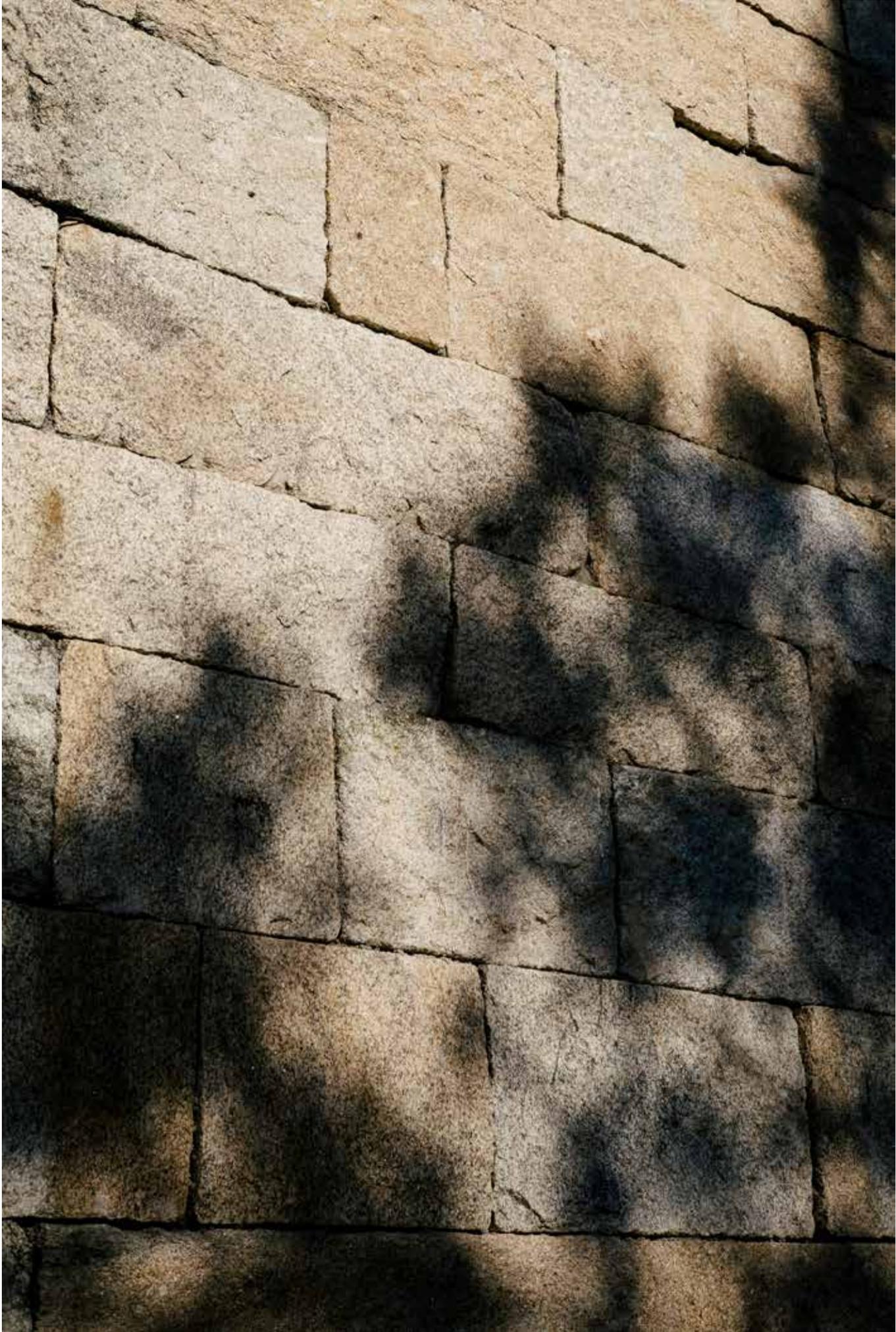


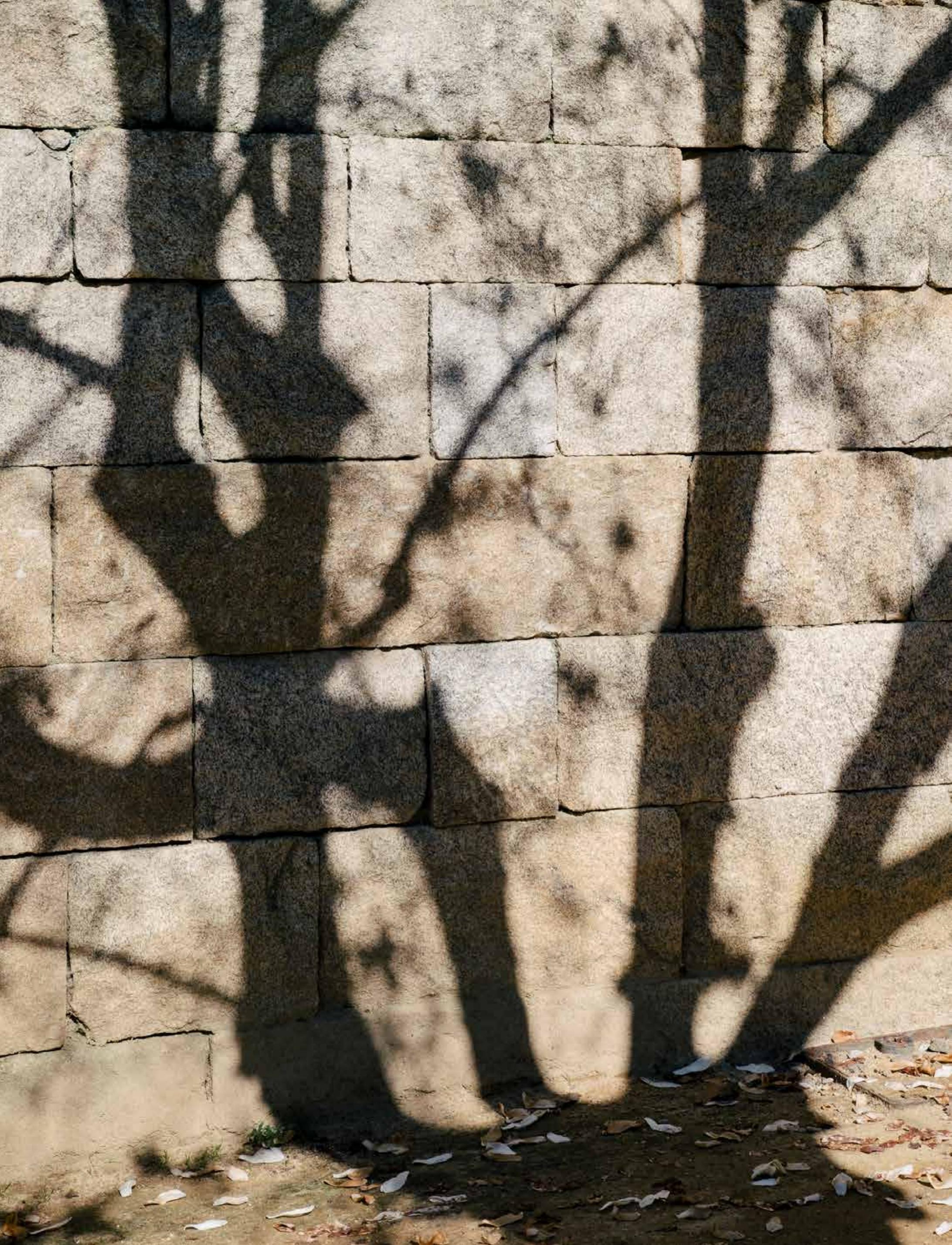




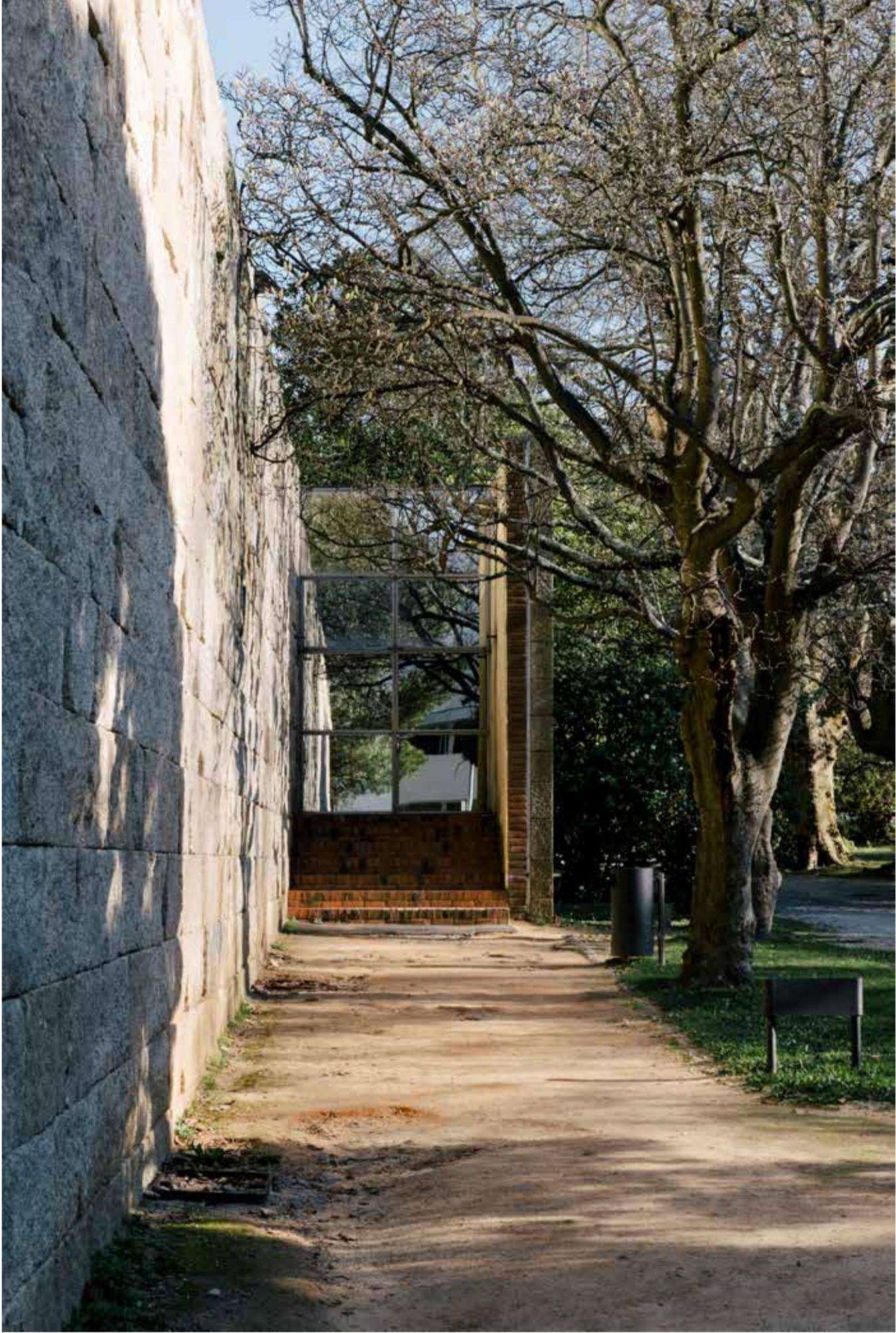




















ALLEN: EXPLORING TIMES IN ONE OF THE MOST ICONIC WORKS OF EDUARDO SOUTO DE MOURA

BY MARIA NETO AND PEDRO NETO

Note of Introduction

Eduardo Souto de Moura is the Portuguese architect jointly with Álvaro Siza (Pritzker in 1992) with the most visibility and international prestige, having been awarded the Pritzker Prize in 2011. His body of work is a foremost reference in Portuguese and international architecture, influencing various generations of architects. Souto de Moura enrolled in the School of Fine Arts in Porto, where he finished his degree in architecture, having worked for architect Álvaro Siza for many years. He is frequently invited as a guest professor to several prestigious universities and schools of architecture as Lausanne and Zurich in Switzerland or Harvard in the United States. Souto de Moura's first major commission was the Municipal Market in Braga, Portugal (1984). He won a competition to design the cultural centre Casa das Artes in Porto (1991) and in the following years Souto de Moura steadily engaged in building single-family houses, mostly in northern Portugal, and these include, just to mention some examples, the House Number Two (1994) in Braga and the House in Serra Arrábida (2002), Portugal. Souto de Moura is also responsible for a variety of large-scale projects as the Braga Municipal Stadium (2003), the Metro do Porto, the subway system in Porto (2005); and the Burgo Tower, an office complex also in Porto (2007) and the Comédie Clermont-Ferrand (2020), a theatre in France.

Designed by the architect Souto Moura, the Casa das Artes was built between 1981 and 1988 being located in the gardens of a neoclassical style house of the early 20th century in Porto called Allen and was awarded the Secil Prize. The building is a silent, discreet work, rich in references to modern masters and the tradition of local forms and materials, it is almost invisible next to the work of Marques da Silva (1869-1947) and forms one of the boundaries of the singular garden. The entrance to the building is parallel to the main directrix of the project, on the wall that limits with the garden, via a small staircase, being the mirrored glass door of access an element that emphasizes the compositive independence of the stone walls and reflects the sunset and the treetops on the way up, helping in this way to blend the building into its unique historic site.

Exploring times in one of the most iconic works of Eduardo Souto de Moura

“Allen” is a Contemporary Photography project created by Cláudio Reis that was based on the exploration of time in one of the most iconic works of Eduardo Souto de Moura. A significant example of the valuable role of photographic projects in the perception and design of architectural environments, this photography series was integrated by the interdisciplinary research project Visual Spaces of Change, which fosters a renewed understanding of contemporary architecture by inviting photographers to respond to the work of Portuguese architects. It instigates the research of new photographic approaches, which depart from the traditional imagery displayed in the architectural press, offering visual narratives that enrich the discussion on architectural buildings and their uses.

Although many images seem to be instantaneous, in reality, they are the result of an elaborated study where nothing is left to chance.

Allen could be about a house, but it soon became clear that this was not the reason to return, again and again. Sometimes the work of architecture needs very little to be, just like photography.¹

1, 2, 3 See the full text of artist statement “ALLEN (House of Arts)” in last page

Reis's photographic work attempts to explore Casa das Artes space suspending the architectural gaze implicit of his formation as an architect and allowing the phenomenological experience and memory of this garden to become the real architectural landmark of Souto de Mouras' building, jointly with the interplay of light and shadow. In fact, the photographic project turns visible an alternative path through the dynamic surfaces and the overlapping meanings of the material and immaterial world, stimulating a critical and reflexive reading of space.

The house is an absence in the garden, respecting the house that precedes it. The house is a blind stone wall, a setting for the traces of shadows.²

The light/shade interplay that Reis's work proposes results from an intense effort of repèrage, of tests and knowledge of the place from his many visits to the Allen house. Indeed, what we see is a photographic work which seeks, in the observation of the temporality of light/shadow, to offer another perspective of the Casa das Artes spaces, a renewed perspective that is a poetic understanding of the gardens Aura. The confrontation between architecture and nature, light and shadow, paints the architectural neutral surface and adds complex living patterns to the blind walls. Through an accurate gaze, the author allows us to walk through a different place where the limits of architecture are blurred.

The hours pass by and the surrounding nature slowly finds an echo in the built surface, ephemeral murmurs looking for shelter. What lies on the other side, behind the wall, will not find an answer here. The house is the garden. Here we chose to remain, waiting between the trees and the stone, each photograph a declaration of time.³

As the author points out "the house is the garden", perfectly attached as the light and the shadow and the photographic series has the potential to makes us rethink our ideas of architecture and its relation to the place, giving visibility to spatial and temporal aspects that are difficult to perceive without the purposeful use of photography and empowering the perceptions and memories of those places. Undoubtedly, this photographic series reveals the concentrated and humble observation of the temporality of light, which means a refined method of contemplation, going far beyond the mere factual register, making possible a unique experience of inhabiting the space portrayed, in tune with its genius loci.

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EDITORIAL

BY MARIA NETO & PEDRO LEÃO NETO

In this number of scopio newspaper journal # 1 October 2020, we present the photography project “Allen” of Cláudio Reis focused on Casa das Artes (House of Arts) in Porto, which is one of the most interesting works of Portuguese Pritzker architect Eduardo Souto de Moura who designed this cultural program in the gardens of a manor house, constructing a “wall-building” using one of the existing walls on one of the gardens.

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.

“Allen” is a Contemporary Photography project based on the exploration of time in one of the most iconic works of Eduardo Souto de Moura. Although many images seem to be instantaneous, in reality, they are the result of an elaborated study where nothing is left to chance. The photographic project turns visible an alternative path through the dynamic surfaces and the overlapping meanings of the material and immaterial world, stimulating a critical and reflexive reading of space. The confrontation between architecture and nature, light and shadow, paints the architectural neutral surface and adds complex living patterns to the blind walls. Through an accurate gaze, the author allows us to walk through a different place where the limits of architecture are blurred. As the author points out “the house is the garden”, perfectly attached as the light and the shadow.

ARTIST STATEMENT

ALLEN (House of Arts)

Allen could be about a house, but it soon became clear that this was not the reason to return, again and again. Sometimes the work of architecture needs very little to be, just like photography. The house is an absence in the garden, respecting the house that precedes it. The house is a blind stone wall, a setting for the traces of shadows. The hours pass by and the surrounding nature slowly finds an echo in the built surface, ephemeral murmurs looking for shelter. What lies on the other side, behind the wall, will not find an answer here. The house is the garden. Here we chose to remain, waiting between the trees and the stone, each photograph a declaration of time.

Cláudio Reis

BIO

Cláudio Reis

Lives and works in Vila do Conde, Portugal. Has a Bachelor's degree in Architecture from the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Porto (2004) and a Master's degree in Photography, with distinction, from the School of Arts of Universidade Católica Portuguesa (2014). Since 2015 his artistic practice has been made in tandem with a PhD research in Digital Media, under a collaborative framework established between the University of Porto and the University of Texas at Austin. Several recent projects have resulted from artist-in-residence programs, carried out for the Triennale der Photographie Hamburg (2017/18), Fundaziun Nairs (2018), Bienal Fotografia do Porto (2018/19).

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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