

Fernando Távora: The deontology of the journey as a form of cultural and personal progress

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Abstract

The importance of the journey has accompanied the architect Fernando Távora from the beginning of his architectural learning and continued as an element of the development of a method for evolving and the progress of the cultural formation itself and the update of his on research until the end of his life. The journeys themselves were numerous: several trips to Spain, Italy, and a trip around Europe in 1949, travelling on the CIAM (International Congresses of Modern Architecture). The first journey that will make him wander the ends of his Portuguese territory will be one in 1947, in which for the first time he will start feeling the tight limits of the superstructures themselves, both mental and cultural. The confrontation with different realities, in a crucial historical period such as the post-war, will lead him to an inexorable path towards a clearer conscience of what is really important in life and what place architecture and art hold in it. The journeys are accompanied by writings, in this case, letters addressed to his fiancé in Portugal. Few drawings, many thoughts.

His years of training culminated in a trip around the world in 1960, thanks to a scholarship from the Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon, which allowed him a four-month trip to the USA, Mexico, Japan, Thailand, Pakistan, Lebanon, Egypt and, finally, Greece. With constant discipline, he writes a voluminous diary of thoughts and drawings. In a slow yet constant progress, in his journeys, Távora evolves and his ideal of architecture evolves, always farther from the rigidity of predefined culture and always closer to the mutable and unstable human nature.

Keywords: Fernando Távora, Journey, Diary, Memory, Gulbenkian