

A perspective on the Portuguese identity: the idea of modernity in A Exposição do Mundo Português and Expo'98

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Abstract

This article will focus itself on *A Exposição do Mundo Português* (The Exhibition of the Portuguese World, 1940), and Expo'98 (1998), which were held in Lisbon in opposed political conditions: a right-wing dictatorship and a democracy.

Both of the exhibitions were supposed to show Portugal as a modern country at different times while relying on the tradition of many of their major characteristics.

Accepting the hypothesis, which considers that the relation and balance between Tradition and Modernity is a significant feature in Portuguese architecture, we aim to find out if those two Exhibitions can be seen as similar faces of the Portuguese architectural thinking.

Without neglecting the differences between the two exhibitions, the developed arguments explore the undeniable convergences. Accordingly, the conclusion shows that it may be possible to stress this fundamental idea: rationality, as well as the adaptation to the available means and circumstances present throughout Portuguese architecture history may also support the closeness of the two events. Indeed, *A Exposição do Mundo Português* and Expo'98 may be closer than the distance that separates a dictatorship from a democracy suggests. In sum, the two exhibitions may be seen as an expression of some essential Portuguese identity traits.

Keywords: Tradition and Modernity, A Exposição do Mundo Português, Expo'98, Lisboa, Portuguese city.