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TOSTOES

THE GUEST LECTURE
SERIES 2017/18

Culture and Climate: The Modern Diaspora between Africa and Brazil

Ana Tostões

Chair of Docomomo International

Full Professor at Técnico, University of Lisbon

Date and Time——
15 January 2018
1000 to 1200

Venue——
School Conference Room
#03-07, SDE 1,
School of Design &
Environment,
National University
of Singapore

Contact/RSVP——
akickp@nus.edu.sg
<https://goo.gl/kpjPmP>

BOA/SIA——
Kindly note that there will be
no BOA-SIA CPD Accreditation
Points for this guest lecture
event.

The development of concepts such as “hybrid” or the “otherness” has been promoting historical analysis on architecture and politics in the 20th century beyond a Eurocentric vision, sustaining the idea of a transcontinental modernity. To further understanding the worldwide modern diaspora, it is essential to document and analyse the sub-Saharan Africa heritage in its relationship with other peripheral universes: Portugal and Brazil.

The formal, technological and ideological principles of the Modern Movement emerge through the 50s in the Portuguese African colonies (Angola and Mozambique) as a cultural stimulus articulated by geographic and climate specificities promoting modern vocabulary in acquiring new expression and scale. Those territories were geographically distant from the repressive control of the dictatorship metropolis, representing a new world whose dimensions and need to be inhabited sponsored a vast field of experimentation and innovation in the areas of urban planning and construction. The lexicon of modern architecture seemed especially appropriate for dealing with the tropical climate: influenced by the Brazilian modern architecture, followed by Fry and Drew, or Koenigsberg’s researches, this architecture witness a serious concern with the adjustment to the particularities of the hot and humid climate of the tropics.

One of the most central questions in the debate on modernity has been the tension between a pretentious universality of the scientific-technological rationality of a so-called international format and the specific particularities of places and traditions. The homogenizing effects or the threat of the old over the new have informed different discourses on values such as authenticity, regionalism or identity (Ricoeur, 1955). In parallel, the history of Modern Movement architecture has been written from a Eurocentric perspective although deepen studies on concepts such as hybrid or the otherness promoted recently a nuanced analysis on architecture and politics beyond the Eurocentric framework (Henket; Heynen, 2002; Tostoes, 2013).

About the speaker

Ana Tostões, PhD is an architect, architecture critic and historian, and is president of Docomomo International and Editor of the Docomomo Journal. She is a Full Professor at Técnico, University of Lisbon, where she teaches Theory of Architecture and Critical History, and coordinates the Architectonic Culture research group. Since 2012, she has been in charge of the Architectural PhD programme. She has been invited professor at universities worldwide.



Department of Architecture
School of Design & Environment

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