



The construction of an object suitable for screening an open-air cinema programme was the pretext for transforming the Belém Cultural Center Square, in Lisbon (Manuel Salgado and Vittorio Gregotti, 1992), into a living space for the thousands of people who visit CCB during the summer months.

There were three fundamental circumstances for the project, namely:

1) the Square is a place of constant movement, providing access to the Museum, the restaurant and the hanging garden overlooking the river; 2) the architecture of the CCB building is ruled by a metric made evident by the grid marked out on the ground, the repetition of the cleft limestone slabs, and the design and arrangement of the openings; 3) the blocks of black cork composite, which was the material defined by the client *a priori*.

We designed a wall in black cork, creating a paneling-like lining along the south wall which stays in the shade for nearly the whole day, integrating a bench, cool and comfortable, that allows one to contemplate the urban spectacle of the movement in the Square. The cork wall is itself a modulated wall whose internal metrics establish a rhythm that keeps in step with the metrics that govern the architecture of the CCB, and whose height is that of the base of the existing concrete arch, giving a human scale to the entire square. At the western end, the wall turns and closes the existing pathway, making a corner where it is possible to watch the films sheltered from the wind, at night.

The material qualities of cork will thus mean that the transformation of the square will not only be about experiencing its new scale, but also about perceiving its materiality. By joining the solid blocks of cork, whose color is made of a thousand brown tones that change over time and with a texture that is rude, soft and warm all at once, the slabs of cleft limestone that clad the walls of the CCB building became lighter, more fragile. There was probably not a single person crossing the square without coming over to touch the cork with their hands.

Rather than construct an object, this was about finding a solution that would have the capacity to transform a Square in Summer.



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José Neves, born in Lisbon in 1963, graduated in Architecture from Lisbon's Technical University School of Architecture in 1986, the same year he represented Portugal in the 2nd Biennial of Young Artists from Europe and the Mediterranean, in Thessaloniki, selected by the Secretariat of State for Culture.

From 1986 until 1990 worked with Duarte Cabral de Mello and since 1991 participated in several projects with Vítor Figueiredo. That same year opened his own office.

He received the SECIL ARCHITECTURE AWARD 2012, the VALMOR AWARD 2011, the INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ART CRITICS ARCHITECTURE AWARD 2014 (Portuguese Section), the honorable mention of VASCO VILALVA AWARD 2015, of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, and the TORRES VEDRAS TOWN HALL 1ST PRIZE OF ARCHITECTURE 1996-2000. He was selected for the PREMIS FAD INTERIORISME 2015, the BIGMAT ARCHITECTURE INTERNATIONAL AWARD 2015 and was finalist in the PREMIS FAD PENSAMENT I CRÍTICA 2015.

He was guest professor in the Faculty of Architecture of the Technical University of Lisbon, in the Department of Architecture of the Lusíada University, in the Architecture Department of the Autónoma University and currently in the Department of Architecture and Urbanism of ISCTE.

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