

# WOMEN ARCHITECTS IN PORTUGAL

## A LONG AND WINDING ROAD

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*This essay aims to contribute to the study of the role that women have assumed in the history of Portuguese architecture, an issue in need of further work. Given the difficulty involved in the identification of clear milestones, it became necessary to extend the time span of this study, from the second half of the 19th century right until the 1940s. All things considered, this time frame was chosen because the context between wars in Portugal is so much looser than in other European countries. This article is divided in four parts, each of which hopes to add to the central issue by identifying the most relevant facts and principles behind it. First, it attempts to establish a framework of the Portuguese political agenda between the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. Second, it focuses on the development of the teaching of arts in Portugal, the tardy creation of the major in architecture and the emergence of the first women students. Then, it considers the involvement of women in a work environment traditionally dominated by male architects. Finally, it deals with the subject of architects that sustained both a teaching and a professional practice, more specifically the experience of two women pioneers, Maria José Estanco and Maria José Marques da Silva. In addition to identifying a provisional chronology, it also deals with the specific constraints of the Portuguese society and the subsequent consequences on academic research, as well as the emergence of the first Portuguese women architects.*

*Este ensayo tiene como objetivo contribuir al estudio del papel que las mujeres han asumido en la historia de la arquitectura portuguesa, una cuestión que necesita seguir siendo trabajada. Dada la dificultad que entraña la identificación de hitos claros, se hizo necesario extender el lapso de tiempo de este estudio, desde la segunda mitad del siglo XIX hasta la década de 1940. A fin de cuentas, este marco de tiempo fue elegido porque el contexto de entreguerras en Portugal es mucho más flexible que en otros países europeos. El artículo se divide en cuatro partes que amplían la cuestión central identificando los hechos y principios más importantes. En primer lugar trata de establecer un marco de la agenda política portuguesa entre el final del siglo XIX y comienzos del siglo XX, para después centrarse en el desarrollo de la enseñanza de las artes en Portugal, la creación tardía de la principal en la arquitectura y el surgimiento de las primeras mujeres estudiantes. A continuación, se considera la participación de la mujer en un entorno de trabajo tradicionalmente dominado por los arquitectos masculinos, centrándose en el sujeto del arquitecto que sustentó una enseñanza y una práctica profesional determinadas, destacando la experiencia de dos mujeres pioneras, María José Estanco y María José Marques da Silva. Por último, este artículo se ocupa de las limitaciones específicas de la sociedad portuguesa y las consecuencias posteriores en la investigación académica, así como la aparición de las primeras arquitectas portuguesas.*

Women's access to certain professions traditionally considered to be male oriented is directly related to the social and cultural conditions of the country and the specific period analysed. It is vital to understand how the distinct male and female roles have been historically represented as well as to identify the internal structure and the wider relationships in the family unit. It is therefore necessary to look into the history of Portugal in the 20th century, its political practices such as the Monarchy, the establishment of the Republic in 1910, the Military Coup in 1926 and its development into the Second Republic (Estado Novo) from 1930 to 1974, before any draft can be drawn of the history of Portuguese architecture from the point of view of women architects.

As the philosopher Eduardo Lourenço states, Portugal can be seen as a country that finds it difficult to maintain what he defines as “political fullness”<sup>1</sup>. A predicament that seems to be caused when the fulfillment of a particular challenge outmaneuvers the dimension of the country, which is clearly the case with the maritime expansion and the difficulty to deal with a collective achievement in a peacefully manner. The absence of themselves identified by Lourenço in the Portuguese experience will allow a majority of people, who have gone through a long period of civic passiveness, to accept four decades of António de Oliveira Salazar's dictatorship as a legitimate governance<sup>2</sup>. In May 1926 the country witnessed the military coup which knocked down the First Republic, giving way to a process that would culminate in an authoritarian regime, the Estado Novo, of which Salazar would be the head almost until the end. According to historian Fernando Rosas, this happened in a European interwar period marked by nationalist and authoritarian options<sup>3</sup>. Portugal had already been part of the first group of European countries with authoritarian experiments (the short dictatorship of Sidónio Pais in 1917) but, at the end of the 1920s, it happened against a background shaped by the first post-war crisis<sup>4</sup>.

At the beginning of the 20th century and still a monarchy, Portugal is faced with a set of feminist claims which will develop along the first decade<sup>5</sup>. These claims were concerned with education, work and the right for political intervention, mainly the fight for voting rights, as well as legal changes in marriage, divorce and affiliation. Since the 19th century, it had been established by law that a woman should obey her husband and her basic rights, from day to day decisions to issues related to property, were to be recognized by her husband<sup>6</sup>. Some authors affirm that the 1920s were the “golden years” of feminism in

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[ 1 ] LOURENÇO, Eduardo: *O Labirinto da Saudade*. Lisboa: Gradiva, 2001, p. 28.

[ 2 ] Ibid., 48.

[ 3 ] ROSAS, Fernando: “Portugal na Europa dos anos trinta”, in ROSAS, Fernando (ed.): *Portugal e o Estado Novo (1930-1960)*, Vol. XII, Lisbon: Editorial Presença, 1992, 9

[ 4 ] Ibid., 11.

[ 5 ] TAVARES, Manuela: *Feminismos. Percursos e desafios (1947-2007)*, Lisbon: Texto Editores, 2011, 39.

[ 6 ] PIMENTEL, Irene: “Cem anos de vida das mulheres em Portugal”, *História* 34, 2001, 12-23, 12.

Portugal<sup>7</sup>. During that decade, two feminist congresses took place, in 1924 and 1928, in consonance with the bolder actions and thoughts of those involved. Tavares suggests that although the consolidation of the Estado Novo intensified the difficulties in making those claims, women and men of different segments of society had already created difficulties to the promoters of those changes<sup>8</sup>. But with power in the hands of Salazar, Portuguese women were more and more deprived of their own organizational capacity, except for the women whom the Estado Novo supported for their willingness to maintain the traditional roles of women and family. However, as Irene Pimentel sets out, it is important to note that it was the Estado Novo, and not the First Republic, that allowed the process of granting voting rights to women<sup>9</sup>.

By and large, a clear definition of male and female work spheres is, according to Paulo Guinote, more likely to be a social strategy than an alleged exclusion of women from some segments of work. Guinote adds that the catalyst role of World War I as women entered the world of work due to the lack of manpower was less important in Portugal than in other countries<sup>10</sup>. Still, in the 1930s the presence of women in some workplaces had lost the oddity of other times. In the following decade, the prevailing movement would take women, and people in general, back home<sup>11</sup>. It is also advocated that, in Portugal, the relationship between the women of the first decades of the 20th century with the world of work was established because of necessity, and not as a result of socio-political demands<sup>12</sup>.

The longevity of Salazar's regime, which spanned more than four decades, was due to what Fernando Rosas identifies as "the art of balancing and rebalancing" the often antagonistic interests, pressures and expectations<sup>13</sup>. Driven by a sense of adaptation together with a concern for survival, the 1950s witnessed a significant change towards industrialization to which the Portuguese society and economy were not indifferent<sup>14</sup>. The rural flight which resulted from the appeal of the thriving industry and the country's infrastructure would change the face of the countryside and of the cities. As set out by Ferreira, over those years the tertiary sector assumed a prominent role by providing approximately 40,000 new jobs, of which an estimated 40% were taken by women<sup>15</sup>.

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[ 7 ] João Gomes Esteves cit. p. *ibid.*, 12.

[ 8 ] TAVARES, Manuela: *Opus cit.*, pp. 40-41.

[ 9 ] PIMENTEL, Irene: *Opus cit.*, 14.

[ 10 ] GUINOTE, Paulo: *Quotidianos Femininos (1900-1933)*, 2 vol., Lisbon: Organizações Não Governamentais do Conselho Consultivo da Comissão para a Igualdade e para os Direitos das Mulheres, 1997, 249-250.

[ 11 ] *Ibid.*, 251.

[ 12 ] GUINOTE, Paulo; Arquivo Fotográfico Municipal: *Quotidiano feminino: 1900-1940*, Lisbon: Câmara Municipal de Lisboa, 2001, 104.

[ 13 ] ROSAS, Fernando: *Opus cit.*, 17.

[ 14 ] MARTINS, Fernando: "Visão sintética sobre as realidades estruturais e a sua evolução", in ROSAS, Fernando (ed.): *Portugal e o Estado Novo (1930-1960)*, Vol. XII, Lisbon: Editorial Presença, 1992, 272-305., 272.

[ 15 ] FERREIRA, Virgínia: "A feminização do emprego nos escritórios (1940-1980)", *História* 34, 2001, 27-28.

From that moment on, Portugal started to go through a process in which it became less traditional, resulting in an increasing redistribution of its areas of activity. The retreat of the primary sector to a point of no return and the unique leap of the secondary sector reshaped the fabric of the active population<sup>16</sup>. This set of changes brought about significant effects upon the increased and fragmented roles of women. Besides being the wife, the mother and the lady of the house, she then started to work, with or without qualifications, outside the house. Changes were slow but, they gradually produce extensive and radical alterations. For instance, as noted by Irene Pimentel, it was only in the 1960s that in some female occupations women worker ceased to have their personal lives thoroughly controlled. Until then, primary school teachers had to ask for authorization from a senior authority to get married while the employees at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the nurses at Civil Hospitals were simply forbidden to do so<sup>17</sup>.

At the same time, the modernization of the family structure would jeopardize the clear role the Estado Novo had given to women. The 1960s saw a decrease in the average number of household members as a direct result of the new urban families, which were more nuclear and with less offspring<sup>18</sup>. The Portuguese woman, who until then helped to guarantee the order and the restrained and submissive model expected to be found in all parts of society, became herself an agent of change. In this context of transformations in a country which started to break with its obsessive rurality and where some attempts of modernization could be found in the productive segments of society, the social structure and the roles of many of its members began to gradually show signs of change. As a result, in the 1960s these changes would become irreversible and the Portuguese woman would gain more effective rights in the professional, educational and public life spheres which the 1974 Revolution and the establishment of democracy would further support.

## Teaching arts and architecture

Within the scope of this study, it is important to understand the general characteristics of the developments in the teaching of arts, including architecture, to measure the change of events in this area. In Portugal, the training of architects became autonomous from the teaching of Fine Arts later than in other countries. While the Faculties of Architecture of Lisbon and Oporto only appeared in 1979, Madrid had already started offering the teaching of architecture in 1844, and Paris, the most emblematic example, had done the same in the 17th century<sup>19</sup>. This fact will permanently affect the history of this profession in Portugal, due to its struggle to define itself based, on one hand, on its artistic identity and, on the other hand, on its technical nature.

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[ 16 ] MARTINS, Fernando: Opus cit., 272.

[ 17 ] PIMENTEL, Irene: Opus cit., 17.

[ 18 ] PEDROSA, Patrícia Santos: *Habitar em Portugal nos anos 1960: ruptura e continuidade. Um caminho pelo interior do discurso*, Barcelona: Escola Tècnica Superior d'Arquitectura de Barcelona - Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya, 2010 (Unpublished doctoral dissertation), 179-180.

[ 19 ] LISBOA, Maria Helena: *As academias e escolas de Belas Artes e o ensino artístico (1836-1910)*, Lisbon: Colibri, 2007, p. 91.

Some facts and views proposed by historian Maria Helena Lisboa may help explain the Fine Arts academic context between the end of the 19th century and the first decade of the 20th century. Generally speaking, one may find in the surveys carried out, a high number of students attending the Drawing course, followed distantly by students in Architecture, and students in Painting or Sculpture, in much fewer numbers. The explanation provided is based on a higher employability of the first as opposed to the latter courses. This vocational orientation to training is reinforced by other facts. As Lisboa noticed, data showed that many students registered as “professionals or apprentices from different areas and crafts” hoped to develop their knowledge directly related to their performance at work<sup>20</sup>. Some available information stressed this tendency with the residual number of students that entered higher education after receiving basic training. The professional dimension of education and the small number of amateurs aiming at developing their artistic skills would naturally define the type of student attending Fine Arts schools and academies<sup>21</sup>.

Women began to enrol at Portuguese Fine Arts academies in 1879. According to Maria Helena Lisboa, although their experience at the turn of the century is not clear due to lack of information, some relevant information may be provided. Four women began to attend classes at the Academy of Fine Arts of Lisbon in the academic year 1879/1880. They took subjects in the area of drawing: basic drawing, figure drawing, antique drawing and decorative drawing. The subjects of architectural drawing and life drawing were not chosen. Lisboa suggests that if the latter was not taken for moral reasons, architectural drawing was rejected because it was a professional area that was “away from any ambition or professional prospects of women<sup>22</sup>”.

The early attendance of women in the drawing and painting classes at Fine Arts Academies is reinforced by a socially uncommitted professional outlook on this choice. On one hand, as stated by Paulo Guinote, the learning and practicing of plastic arts are seen as activities of the elegant elite, like music, which are accepted as distinct pastime for girls and ladies<sup>23</sup>. On the other hand, the remote possibility that it may become a profession safeguards those who choose them from being regarded as radical and refers to the study and practice of drawing or painting as adequate ways to spend time. The non-professional feature of these women’s activity is highlighted by the fact that in the first three decades of the 20th century there were practically no individual exhibitions of female artists. Yet, Guinote points out two accepted possibilities, although not in general terms, of professional outcomes of Fine Arts studies. On one hand, it is possible to find women teaching painting, such as the painters Emília dos Santos Braga and Adelaide

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[ 20 ] *Ibid.*, p.134.

[ 21 ] *Ibid.*, pp.133-135.

[ 22 ] *Ibid.*, pp. 137-138.

[ 23 ] GUINOTE, Paulo: *Opus cit.*, p.311.

de Lima Cruz, to an amateur audience in Lisbon. On the other hand, in some cases they are able to develop work in the area of book illustration, such as the sisters Raquel and Mamia Roque Gameiro<sup>24</sup>.

The first woman to be awarded a graduate diploma in Architecture, Maria José Estanco, achieved this in 1942. Having previously studied painting, she redefined her goals at a certain point. Her professional path was built afterwards but it serves to point a direction, from painting to architecture, which is not the most usual. Other women had joined the architecture course before this pioneering woman but they had to either withdraw from the course or change to painting. In a description provided by João Paulo Martins of the students who signed up for the first year of the Architecture course in 1915, there were six students registered, a high number at the time. Among them was a woman, Luiza Ferreira de Mattos e Silva, who later on did not complete the course to obtain a diploma in Architecture<sup>25</sup>.

In the context of the Fine Arts, the relationship established between women and the Academy may be regarded under the dichotomy profession/pastime. Since there are no feminine humanitarian reasons, as will be seen in the future with Medicine, it is believed that learning, and further practicing, is somewhat acceptable as long as it is done discreetly at home for entertainment and proper use of time by girls and ladies. The closer the teaching is to practicing a profession, the harder and more delayed it is for women to pursue and finish their studies.

### **The multiple conditions of the pioneers**

In 1943 the women's magazine *Eva* enthusiastically dedicated three articles to female university students from three different faculties. If the order of the interviews – Coimbra, Lisbon and Oporto – exhibited a deep-seated hierarchy in Portuguese universities, the choice of the Faculties of Letters was based on the fact that they already displayed a significant number of female students. The atmosphere of the interview conducted by the journalist Roberto Carlos is, in general, frugal and seldom provides questions or answers which might defy the prevailing way of thinking: it is fine to study, preferably in an adequate course, not in those “less proper” such as engineering, but it would be appropriate if the woman did not have to work, expecting to get married between the ages of 20 and 24<sup>26</sup>. In the interview conducted by Alice Gomes to the students in Lisbon, the topics discussed are unequivocal: the most expected ones in a context of young women and in a women's magazine – love, happiness, man, family – and once again, profession. Based on the journalist's accounts, these students at the Faculty of Letters of Lisbon also tend to give priority to the family over the profession and regard autonomy

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[ 24 ] Ibid., 311-315.

[ 25 ] MARTINS, João Paulo: *Cottinelli Telmo / 1897-1948 a obra do arquitecto*, Lisbon: Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas – Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 1995 (Unpublished master's thesis), p.29.

[ 26 ] CARLOS, Roberto: “Elas pensam assim... (na Faculdade de Letras de Coimbra)”, in *Eva*, April 1942, pp.4-5

as not essential<sup>27</sup>. In the last interview, when the journalist Aurora Jardim talks to the students at the Faculty of Letters of Oporto, the report seems to be more daring. Issues like positions of power (his? hers?) or whether the upbringing of their children should be given in a mixed environment – “so that they won’t feel confused later on” – appear at the beginning of the conversation but soon, to lighten the mood, lipsticks or what they think about men, move them away from more serious topics<sup>28</sup>. Unlike the other reports, here male students are given the floor more often. In spite of some female complaints, the prevailing tone suits the traditional idea still widely promoted in the 1940s that “women are meant to be at home”<sup>29</sup>.

Although the influence of the reporters on the priorities and withdrawal of more argumentative matter is not clear, it is manifestly assumed that higher education study in the area of Liberal Arts is more adequate to young women, at least for the general education it provides. Or rather, to be more precise, it is the less inadequate. If, on one hand, it does not necessarily have a vocational orientation, on the other hand, they could find socially accepted occupations such as non-university teaching, if necessary. Taking into account the characterized conditions in the teaching of Fine Arts and architecture, it becomes clear that the training of the young Portuguese women as architects did not correspond, socially speaking, to that kind of uncompromising university training, potentially non-vocational, which was thought possible to female students of Liberal Arts.

More than pioneering, the female audience in the Faculties of Letters was a forerunner of the significant presence of women in higher education which would take place in Portugal as of the 1960s<sup>30</sup>. In spite of the expected harmlessness in terms of training future female professionals, they educated women such as Virgínia Quaresma (1882-1972), the first Portuguese female journalist, who find new paths and attempt to make a difference in their consciousness of and sensibility to social and female causes<sup>31</sup>. Besides the schools of Fine Arts, as pointed out before, and the Faculties of Letters, other higher education institutions opened their doors to women before the end of the 19th century. In 1889, Elisa Andrade graduated from the Medical and Surgical School of Lisbon<sup>32</sup>. In the following decades this trend would slowly continue and according to Paulo Guinote, in the 1900 *Anuário Comercial*, there were three female doctors with open clinics in

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[ 27 ] GOMES, Alice: “As raparigas da Faculdade de Letras de Lisboa falam”, in *Eva*, May, pp. 10-11.

[ 28 ] JARDIM, Aurora: “As universitárias do Porto”, *Eva*, June 1942, pp. 8-9, 50.

[ 29 ] *Ibid.*, p. 50.

[ 30 ] PEDROSA, Patrícia Santos: *Habitar em Portugal nos anos 1960: ruptura e continuidade. Um caminho pelo interior do discurso*, Barcelona: Escola Técnica Superior d'Arquitectura de Barcelona - Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya, 2010 (Unpublished doctoral dissertation), p. 180.

[ 31 ] SEIXAS, Maria Augusta: “Virgínia Sofia Guerra Quaresma”, in CASTRO, Zília Osório de; ESTEVES, João Esteves (eds.), *Dicionário no Feminino (séculos XIX-XX)*, Lisboa: Livros Horizonte, 2006, 889-895.

[ 32 ] GUINOTE, Paulo: *Opus cit.*, pp.283-284.

Lisbon. Fifteen years later, this number reached seven<sup>33</sup>. In 1913, the magazine *Ilustração Portuguesa*, on its cover and with a full body photograph, reported on the first female Portuguese lawyer in court, Regina Quintanilha<sup>34</sup>. Later in 1927, an official list of 1,700 certified professional lawyers made reference to six women<sup>35</sup>. Although to different extents, several traditionally male-dominated professions allowed a certain degree of female presence. Gradually, by the end of the 20th century it was possible to find the same number of male and female professionals in some of them. As it will be noticed, even the late architecture in the first decade of the 21st century displayed as many males as females newly registered at the Association of Portuguese Architects<sup>36</sup>.

The field of engineering, though, witnessed a slower development in this area. At the Instituto Superior Técnico in Lisbon, the first two female chemical engineers, Maria Luísa Pereira dos Santos and Isabel Maria Gago, graduated in 1939<sup>37</sup>. While Isabel Gago would become the first lecturer in a Portuguese engineering school, the first woman to graduate in civil engineering from this institution was Maria Amélia Chaves, curiously before that, in 1937. She would also be the first female to register at the Order of Engineers<sup>38</sup>. Previously, Virgínia Moura (1915-1998) had graduated in engineering from the University of Oporto, becoming the first engineer of the country, though later on being recognized by her determined antifascist resistance and communist activism<sup>39</sup>. However, besides her political activity, Virginia Moura had a relevant cultural role and despite her multiple interests, she was also responsible for engineering projects. For instance, she collaborated with her lifetime companion and fellow campaigner, the architect António Lobão Vital, in the project for the refurbishment works of the Casa-Museu Abel Salazar in Oporto, carried out between 1961 and 1965<sup>40</sup>.

The graduation of Portuguese women in Architecture took place somewhat later than most of the cases referred to. Even engineering, a quintessential male domain, would see female graduates earlier. As described before, notions of male and female work areas together with conflicting concepts of work and pastime or caregiving occupations, underlie the emerging and growing female presence which started in the second half of the 19th century and sluggishly lasted, as is the case in architecture, until the 1940s.

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[ 33 ] Ibid, pp. 283-284

[ 34 ] "Regina Quintanilha, a primeira senhora portuguesa que exerce a advocacia", *Ilustração Portuguesa* 405, 24 November 1913, cover.

[ 35 ] GUINOTE, Paulo: *Opus cit.*, p.284.

[ 36 ] PEDROSA, Patrícia Santos: "Portugal Architectes", in FOUQUÉ, Antoinette; DIDIER, Béatrice; CALLE-GRAUBER, Mireille (eds.), *Le Dictionnaire Universel des Créatrices*, Paris: Les Editions des Femmes, 2013 (In press) & PEDROSA, Patrícia Santos: "Being a female architect in Portugal: a short introduction to a long ride", in *1st International Meeting EAHN European Architectural History Network* - CD of Papers, Guimarães: CHAM; EAUM; EAHN, 2010, p.234.

[ 37 ] PEREIRA-MÜLLER, M. Margarida: "Encontro com uma antiga aluna dos anos 20", *Laços* 3, June-September 2008.

[ 38 ] "Homenagem às mulheres do Técnico", in Instituto Superior Técnico 1911-2011, 2011, <http://100.ist.utl.pt/iniciativas/mulheres/> [accessed 20 December 2013].

[ 39 ] MOURA, Virgínia: *Mulher de Abril (Álbum de Memórias)*, Lisbon: Edições Avante!, 1996

[ 40 ] See archives of Mário Soares Foundation.

## Finally, Architects!

In 1942, the same year when the many young female university students of the Faculties of Letters are interviewed for the magazine *Eva*, the first Portuguese female architect graduated on June 27 in Lisbon. Although curiously no reference to this event can be found in that magazine, some of the most relevant national newspapers published this piece of news. In the usual editorial line of introduction of the new architects, the graduation of Maria José Estanco (1905-1999) was reported with all the habitual pieces of information associated with this kind of event: the members of the jury, the final mark - 16 out of 20 - and the topic of the dissertation - a kindergarten in the Algarve. The fact that it was the first woman to achieve that in a Portuguese school was revealed in the title of the articles; however, contrary to what would be expected, it was not developed in the body of the text<sup>41</sup>. It took so long to happen, and so many other occupations had achieved the same many years - or even decades before - but, for the journalists, a couple of usual facts were more than enough to report the occurrence.

Maria José Estanco, born in 1905 in Loulé, the Algarve, did not have a linear experience. As she said in an interview, her father left for Brazil when she was 5 years old and at the end of secondary education, she moved to Lisbon with her mother to join a Drawing teacher training course. When she completed this course, she was already teaching drawing to help provide for the family. She added that as she became exhausted from working and studying at the same time, she was forced to have a break which took her mother and herself to Brazil at the end of the 1930s to visit an older sister. Staying there for two years changed the initial directions in her education<sup>42</sup>.

As Glória Maria Marreiros mentioned, although her intentions were to take up painting, when she followed the works of the engineer responsible for building the city of Marília to the northeast of São Paulo, Estanco ended up taking Architecture at the School of Fine Arts of Lisbon, passing all academic subjects at the age of 30<sup>43</sup>. Only in 1942 did she submit her project to be awarded the Diploma in Architecture. This project for a kindergarten in her mother region, the Algarve, was later published in the magazine *Arquitectura*, including the cover and five pages of text<sup>44</sup>. Despite this slight public recognition among architects, her experience as a designer did not last longer. According to Marreiros, several architecture studios would shut their doors to her because they thought it was difficult for a woman to execute feasible architectural projects<sup>45</sup>. Her experience as an architect was reduced to some requests from friends and the most

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[ 41 ] “O diploma de arquitecto”, in *Diário da Manhã*, 28 June 1942, 3 & “A primeira senhora portuguesa a quem foi concedido o diploma de arquitecto”, *Diário de Notícias*, 28 June 1942, 2.

[ 42 ] NUNES, Elisabeth Évora; BORRÊCHO, Maria do Céu: “Depoimento [Maria José Estanco]”, *Faces de Eva* 1-2, 1999, 223.

[ 43 ] MARREIROS, Glória Maria: “Maria José Estanco”, in MARREIROS, Glória Maria (ed.), *Quem foi quem? 200 Algarvios do Séc. XX*, Lisboa: Colibri, 2000, 187.

[ 44 ] ESTANCO, Maria José: “Um jardim escola no Algarve”, *Arquitectura* 120, 1945, pp. 8-12.

[ 45 ] MARREIROS, Glória Maria: Opus cit., pp.197-198.

relevant one was a house in São Pedro do Moel. As she declared in the interview previously cited, she also designed and made jewellery which supplemented her income as a teacher and helped pay for the “dream” trips she took<sup>46</sup>. Following a strategy of professional diversification, according to Marreiros, she was also involved in designing furniture and interior decoration and was responsible for the creation of a section on those two areas in the women’s magazine *Modas e Bordados*, although it was an unpaid work<sup>47</sup>. Rather than as an architect, Maria José Estanco led a remarkable life as a teacher in several schools of Lisbon and as an activist and advocate of women’s rights and member of the Women’s Democratic Movement. Estanco even joined the Architects Union as member number 91, approved in 1945, as opposed to what was said before<sup>48</sup>, considering the fact that her career as an architect did not have many opportunities to succeed.

With a more even and solid experience, and probably because she was the daughter of an architect, Maria José Marques da Silva (1914-1994) graduated in Architecture at the age of 29 from the School of Fine Arts of Oporto in 1943. In that year, ahead of her Lisbon namesake, she registered at the Architects Unions at the Oporto chapter as member number 10, being the first Portuguese woman to do so<sup>49</sup>. As stressed by Maria do Carmo Pires, in her father’s studio, the renowned architect José Marques da Silva, Maria José met the architect and urbanist David Moreira da Silva whom she would later marry and with whom she would share a long and fulfilled personal and professional life<sup>50</sup>. According to close observers as mentioned by Tavares, Maria José’s intense involvement in the management of the studio and follow-up of the project works were undeniable<sup>51</sup>.

The issues explored based on Maria José Marques da Silva’s experience are distinct from those of her colleague from Lisbon. Born and raised in an environment where architecture was commonplace, she would be awarded a diploma and her career as an architect would be a fruitful one, with a considerable number of works. However, as noted before, Maria José Marques da Silva was somehow obliterated as far as herself and her collaborations are concerned because her husband, David Moreira da Silva, was generally recognized as the sole author of works which had been created by both<sup>52</sup>. The relationship between the history of Portuguese architecture and culture and this architect is still to be explained.

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[ 46 ] NUNES, Elisabeth Évora; BORRÊCHO, Maria do Céu: *Opus cit.*, p.224

[ 47 ] MARREIROS, Glória Maria: *Opus cit.*, p.188.

[ 48 ] PEDROSA, Patrícia Santos: “Being a female architect in Portugal: a short introduction to a long ride”, p.235.

[ 49 ] *Ibid.* 236 & PEDROSA, Patrícia Santos: “Maria José Marques da Silva”, in FOUQUÉ, Antoinette; DIDIER, Béatrice; CALLE-GRAUBER, Mireille (eds.), *Le Dictionnaire Universel des Créatrices*, Paris: Les Editions des Femmes, 2013 (In press).

[ 50 ] PIRES, Maria do Carmo Marques: “David Moreira da Silva e Maria José Marques da Silva Martins. Um Primeiro olhar sobre um atelier do Porto do século XX”, in FERREIRA-ALVES, Natália Marinho (ed.), *Artistas e Artífices no Mundo de Expressão Portuguesa*, Porto: CEPESSE, 2008, 176-178.

[ 51 ] TAVARES, André: “Maria José Marques da Silva”, *Boletim Arquitectos* 112, 2002, 8.

[ 52 ] PEDROSA, Patrícia Santos: “Being a female architect in Portugal: a short introduction to a long ride”, p.236.

In a recent commemorative dictionary dedicated to prominent figures from Oporto in the 20th century, the long entry about Marques da Silva refers to the importance of this architect and his works, identifying some of his disciples such as his son-in-law, David Moreira da Silva, but once again, Maria José Marques da Silva is left unnoticed<sup>53</sup>.

It is not possible to establish a direct relationship between the crises resulting from World War I and II and Portuguese women entering the architectural profession. The repercussions felt were economic but they did not cause a significant manpower shortage which in some countries led to the urgent participation of women in the labour market. In the Portuguese case, however, there were some specific labour and social features which were reflected in the learning and practice of architecture. Generally speaking, the male and female professional domains would not soon become permeable as a result of some kind of persistence of men's and women's roles in society. Women would continue to be seen as the backbone of the family and keeper of the space of the house.

From this slow process of change, education in general and higher education in particular started to be gradually accepted but, under certain parameters. On one hand, at first with certain professions the presence of women was acknowledged because it emphasized their role as caretakers, carrying on their functions as mothers and wives in a public context. It emerged as a kind of professionalization or rather an extension of the essential conditions to fulfil this twofold role, to guarantee the safekeeping of the other before your own. On the other hand, the other trainings which were not related to the context of protection were considered acceptable if they provided a useless professionalization. As observed before, although the teaching of music, painting or literature could lead to careers as teachers, illustrators or journalists, it is significant to note that any interest in these areas should remain in the strict domain of the esteemed household.

The delay in separating the teaching of architecture from the scope of the fine arts generated a complex identity dilemma among architects. In many cases, they were faced with their dual professional self-representation: to be artists and/or to be technicians. In these circumstances, the appeal of the female architect in the professional environment impelled her toward the technical substance rather than its liberating artistic perception. As a result, this work environment found it hard to accept them once they graduated, as could be noticed in the case of Maria José Estanco. The milieu mistrusted them and the training they received for it was highly unsatisfactory regarding technical preparation. Apparently, the sound knowledge and practice of female graduates was not doubted in the engineering schools, maybe because male engineers did not question the vocational education they all had.

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[ 53 ] SILVA, Germano; DUARTE, Luís Miguel (eds.): *Dicionário de Personalidades Portuenses do Século 20*, Porto: Porto Editora, 2001.

Another matter that is imperative to address when referring to the appearance of women architects in Portugal has to do with authorship. As can be clearly seen through the other example provided, Maria José Marques da Silva, despite having access to the profession guaranteed due to family connections, has had some trouble in being placed together with her husband and colleague as author of the projects executed at their studio. In both cases, the experiences of our pioneers foresaw a professional environment which would be in many ways, and for a long time, resistant to the effective and full participation of women. Nowadays, the strong presence of women in architecture schools set about a change in the paradigm of the profession; however, the pyramid of their presence in the senior positions of the studios, schools and institutions representative of the profession is still unbalanced.

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