

From Space to Place in Portuguese Architectural Heritage Environments: The Case of Monasteries in Architectural Education and Professional Practice

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Abstract

Social memory holds values relevant to the continuity of an architectural culture that, for political or other reasons, loses its *raison d'être*. Without social memory, places become mere spaces. In the case of architectural heritage environments such as Portuguese monasteries, where the abrupt end of their religious use in the early nineteenth century has left them without social memories, it can be asked how these current spaces, some in ruins, can be restored to contemporaneity. How much experience, and learning from experience, is needed to establish an informed conservation strategy that mitigates negative impacts and is socially sustainable through its preservation of past and current values for the benefit of future generations? In this symposium, the challenge is to intersect two themes – architectural design education and current architectural practice – under the main topic of the preservation of cultural heritage, and to find a common ground where experiences can be explored. The opportunity to reflect on architectural education and architectural practice, framed by Kolb's theoretical framework of reflective thinking, and using the case of the conservation of Portuguese monasteries, reveals the impact of time on the choice of teaching and learning objectives, as well as on practice design decisions.

Keywords: experiential learning, architectural conservation education, architectural professional practice, monasteries, time.