

ARCO RIBEIRINHO SUL. How do we design for a future that we don't know?

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Far from a modern time marked by the conquest of space and the belief of planning the future, the contemporary world is marked by instability and change. The city of "liquid modernity" - complex, multipolar and polycentric - is difficult to understand, driven by different dynamics which make it dissolve into the territory. Its future is difficult to configure, with unstable balances and unforeseen developments.

How can we design for an uncertain future; project and set up new realities in which all the possibilities are open? We present a discussion focused on the importance of time factors in the specific problems of today's urban design. We seek to understand the effects generated in the process of design by the prevalence of unsafe and unpredictable environments that contrast with a need for certainty to decision making. Can urban design incorporate strategies that facilitate change and integrate uncertainty? Or work with general rules that allow different options at various stages of development?

We study the recent case of the announced project to "Arco Ribeirinho Sul", an intervention described as an urban renewal of waterfront areas on the municipalities of Almada, Barreiro and Seixal, encompassing 900 ha. The focus of the project is the conversion of obsolete industrial sites with urban and landscape potential, in a renewed urban structure, promoting new economic and social dynamics. We will analyze the models, difficulties and challenges for intervention, in search of answers to a project in the prospect of an uncertain future.

Keywords: urban design, uncertainty, future, Arco Ribeirinho Sul