



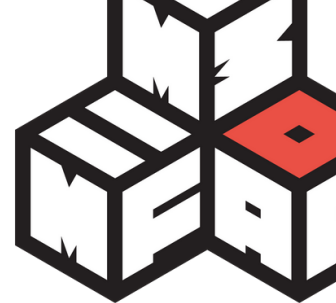
# MOMO IN FARO

THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE  
MODERN MOVEMENT IN FARO

Educational Project  
School Year 2020/2021

# MOMO IN FARO

## THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE MODERN MOVEMENT IN FARO



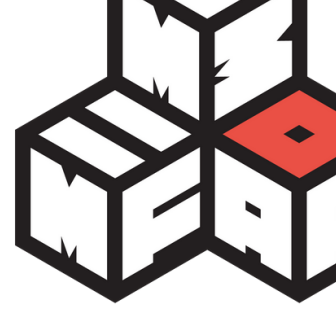
### THE MODERN MOVEMENT IN ARCHITECTURE IN PORTUGAL

Modern Architecture represented a new way of thinking about and creating architecture that developed almost everywhere, mainly from 1920 onwards, and from 1925 in Portugal.

It is well known that Architecture, just like modern art, is not a unitary movement and that many movements had expressed very different ideas since the start of the 20th century; in its principles, the Modern Movement was characterised by being open to a wide range of modes of thinking, both internationally and within each country.

It therefore confronts us with a variety of viewpoints that must be understood first and foremost on the basis of their multiple principles, whether ideological, social, philosophical, technological or aesthetic; and it is in this multiplicity that the major differences between the two periods of the modern era we have lived through are mainly to be found. These are clearly separated by the war of 1939-1945, during which the consequences were felt even though Portugal was not involved. For this reason, we are not actually talking about the same things whenever we refer to the modern era, with differences that are accentuated by different time periods.

There was therefore a modern trend of experimentation that characterised the period between 1925 and 1935, marked by the I Salão dos Independentes (Salon of the Independents), with works formulated in very different ways, alternating between more traditional and more modern languages. It was in the 1930s with the establishment of the Salazarist regime that there was new investment in public works as a way of responding to the crisis, which attached increasing importance to the role of the architect. This was despite the fact that much of the investment was in commemorative works, such as the Portuguese World Exhibition (1940), and manifested itself in an architecture that was primarily propagandistic in nature, with the aim of exalting the values of the regime, and with a primarily aesthetic basis. This first modernist period occurred during the 1930s and 1940s and was clearly dominated by a generation born in the final years of the 19th century; the principal works during this phase were those by Jorge Segurado, Cassiano Branco, Cristino da Silva and Carlos Ramos, among others.

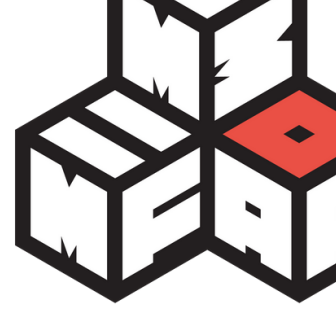


However, it was with the end of the war that the political discourse changed, as did the vision of architecture, and this characterised a second, very different period starting in the mid-1940s. Significant differences started to be seen in the direction followed by many of the modern architects, which raised questions about some of the earlier ideas. Especially noteworthy during this phase was the first National Architecture Congress, organised by the National Syndicate of Architects at the National Society of Fine Arts between 28th May and 4th June 1948, at which topics were discussed such as “Architecture at national level” and “The Portuguese problem of housing”. At this congress, a new generation that was culturally aware and socially committed gained a voice and modernism gained ground in an “indisputable victory for architects, in so far as they came together for the first time to discuss ideas freely, and wholeheartedly affirm the need to produce modern Architecture within the framework of a new professional awareness” (Ana Tostões, in *A Arquitetura e a vida*:

Francisco Keil do Amaral, *o arquitecto e o pedagogo, o cidadão e o homem* (Architecture and life: Francisco Keil do Amaral, the architect and pedagogue, the citizen and the man), 2012). The debates and resolutions at the congress had a profound influence on architectural output in the following decades, which represented a break with and a challenge to the architecture of a traditionalist nature fostered by the Estado Novo (New State).

The outcome of the architectural thinking explored at the 1948 Congress was the Inquiry into Popular Architecture (1961). This did much more than simply perceive the relationship between functionality and Architecture: it enabled the supposed nationalist connection between popular culture and architecture, which was always sought by the propaganda of the Estado Novo, to be dismantled. This showed a reality that was quite different to the style that had previously been promoted, and the permanent capacity of humans to reinvent the necessary responses to their circumstances.

Therefore, the works that were created during this period represent a different concept of what is modern, open to a range of influences and forms of action, based on knowledge of what was being done in other parts of the world. Following the deaths of many architects of the earlier generation or their disappearance from the national limelight, a new generation of architects born in the 1920s gained ground, such as Manuel Tainha, Nuno



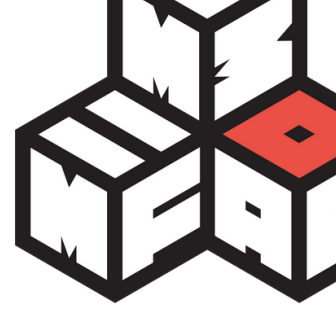
Teotónio Pereira, Maurício de Vasconcelos, Silva Dias, and many others, taking advantage of the different professional and cultural environment that could now be felt.

Portugal was thus opening up to what was being done in Europe, through a range of institutional and personal contacts, and Portuguese architects started to appear in international publications. This gave them access to information about the different trends and questions that were being raised everywhere, in an atmosphere that could be felt in all forms of artistic expression, and the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation played a key role in this from 1956 onwards.

There was therefore a debate about a new concept of the modern, which played close attention to the social dimension of works, as well as to urban problems. Through plans for urban expansion, this enabled a design for the city and its architecture to be trialled on a scale and with principles that had never been tried out before. Against this backdrop, new complexes and neighbourhoods were planned, many of them intended for social housing, where new types of collective housing were tried out for the first time. These expressed social concerns that explored a new complexity and diversity in the programmes and a different relationship between buildings and the urban environment, with a belief in the power of architecture to transform the standards of everyday, contemporary life. It is important to draw attention to the role of architecture periodicals at this time, which were crucial for the critical analysis and dissemination of new ideas and for information about the most important trends taking place abroad, with much of the experimentation being manifested in the use of new languages.

With this in mind, we can say that the modern movement in Portugal was not very consistent from the point of view of theory during the period between its inception and the end of the Second World War, and later, once the conditions for its implementation seemed finally to all be in place, it was revised/superseded on the initiative of its own practitioners.

“Modern architecture thus represented a challenge to the regime, to the status quo, to a fascistising regionalism, in a collective awareness of the need to produce true, up-to-date works; for some, however, this was to be done without losing the conveyor of



tradition and the roots of popular Portuguese architecture, which was the subject of reflection in the theoretical work of some architects”.

- Ana Tostões, in *Os Verdes Anos na Arquitetura Portuguesa dos Anos 50* (The Green Years of Portuguese Architecture in the 1950s) (1997).

The situation of Portuguese architecture developed in a particular context in relation to the European scene. For very specific reasons to do with the power of tradition, spatial culture, the availability of materials, technological development and creative capacity, which was distinctly traditionalist and integrative, architecture in Portugal tended to assimilate the major modern trends into the earlier context, which it had already mastered. This increasingly demonstrated the power of adaptation of our architecture, in which imported models were quickly recreated and adapted, thereby giving Portuguese architecture a very specific position.

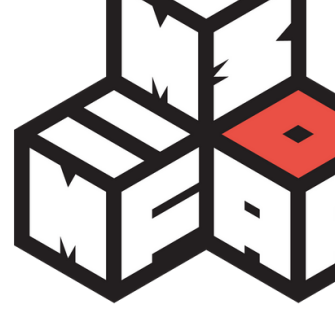
### How to identify post-war Modernist Architecture?

In general, Portuguese architecture of the 1950s appears to be characterised by the heterogeneity of references and models that were used, although, in ideological terms, there were general concepts, apparently adhered to as a group, concerning the “question of housing” and the “problem of the city”, which were the major topics of discussion of the decade. It was precisely in connection with these issues that the topics of modern urbanism appeared, dominating the work of the most qualified professionals, which led to the adoption of new techniques, materials and languages, based above all on the ideas of healthiness, the search for a green environment and the need to organise people’s lives in contact with nature.

Five aspects were thus defined that contribute to the understanding and identification of a New Architecture, defined by Le Corbusier in the 1920s:

- **The House Supported by Pilotis**

A somewhat revolutionary idea that has been frequently exploited, especially in urban terms, which, by raising the house on pilotis (pillars), allows the ground floor area to be freed for a garden or, when adapted in accordance with the influences of modern Latin American architecture, for the concept of



sculptural platforms in the field of collective housing and facilities, with the aim of freeing the building from the ground.

- **The Free Plan**

The free plan is the result of the structural separation of the foundation slab and the support. This becomes a process of designing and conceiving a space of universal scope, exploiting the potential of reinforced concrete and thereby enabling everything to be linked in spatial terms. It was the new concept of the flexibility of space that would, from the 1950s onwards, conventionalise the moveable walls that were to invade the undifferentiated spaces of big service and office buildings in a style that was distinctly functionalist.

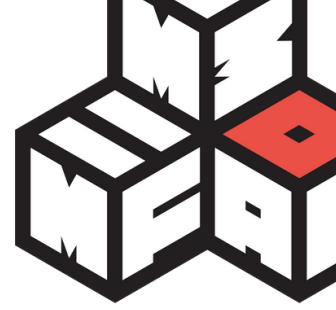
- **The Free Façade**

The free façade is the result of a rationally conceived plan, because the house must respond to concrete functions that do not conform to schemes of composition.

- **The Horizontal Window**

With the separation of the structure and the external walls, it is possible to cut large openings, total fenestration that allows for the desired close relationship between what is built and nature, the interior and the exterior; the notion of the horizontal window is thus given priority, by contrast with the traditional vertical openings, which limited the light in a more intimate way. Horizontal windows allowed for a more homogeneous light in the whole space.

They are frequently used in large buildings and places of work because of the amount of light these require. In some cases, brise-soleils are used or the façade is moved back so as to create a balcony as a transitional element providing shade. The solutions adopted for providing light in buildings reveal the assimilation of modern ideas from Brazilian architecture, which had a profound influence on Portuguese architecture. This illustrated the way in which windows were regarded, as a very rich formal exploration of adaptation to the Portuguese context, involving the use of various solutions including set back balconies, brise-soleils, sun shades and ceramic or cement grilles (Cobogo), key elements in the plastic reading of these modern pieces.



- **The Roof Terrace**

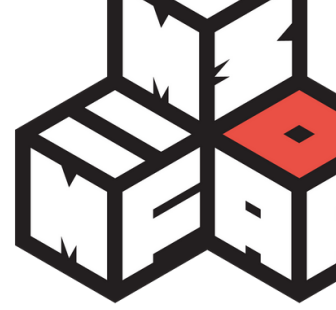
The roof terrace is certainly the feature that has the greatest impact in terms of the shape of a building, in so far as traditional sloping roofs covered in tiles seemed to be the most functional and rational solution for drainage, the primary function of the roof as a protective feature. So, the roof terrace can be justified “functionally” as another space expanding the dwelling on the outside, and the terrace can be used as a space for spending time, and can include gardens, equipment, or simply be a solarium.

Apart from these aspects, others can be highlighted as a way of recognising modernist architecture in the Algarve region, such as the presence of rectangular, cylindrical and cubic shapes; the widespread use of concrete/cement, iron and glass; the flat roof; the use of coloured and geometric tiles, and façades in neutral colours; the presence of plants, frequently forming part of the structure of the building; and the use of ceramic or cement bricks/grilles (also known as Cobogo in Brazil) and geometric shapes to provide protection from the sun and increase the amount of shade. The windows are another good way of identifying and distinguishing this Modernism of the South, as it is a simplified kind of architecture with large openings in a row and large windows.

### *What is a cobogo?*

The Cobogo was invented in Recife (Brazil), by three Brazilian engineers to improve the comfort of new buildings. The name comes from the combination of the first syllables of their surnames: Amadeu Oliveira COimbra, Ernest August BOeckmann and Antônio de GOes. It is a feature of modernist Brazilian architecture which is mostly made of cement and brick and was very popular in buildings of the 1950s and 1960s. Used to provide protection from the strong tropical sun, intense light and to bring cool air to the inside, it was also used for aesthetic reasons and to provide a degree of privacy. They are also known as “breeze blocks” (in US English) or “screen blocks”.





*What is an azulejo?*

An azulejo (tile) is a form of painted, glazed ceramics, an integral part of Portuguese architecture. It is used both internally and externally, and has a decorative function, and it the most typical way of embellishing and adding value to buildings in Portugal. Tiles have always been used in Portuguese construction; traditionally, tiles are blue and white and bear figurative representations, while modernist tiles are more abstract, lighter and more minimalist, often simply bearing coloured geometric shapes.



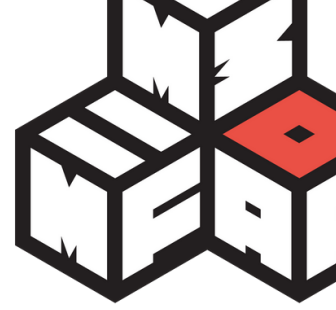
## **MODERN ARCHITECTURE IN FARO**

It was during the post-war period, as Ricardo Agarez says in *Algarve Building: Modernism, Regionalism and Architecture in the South of Portugal 1925-1965* (2016), that the modernist renaissance of a city like Faro took place, resulting in a built fabric that can today be regarded as an admirable example of regional modernism; this was possible thanks to a special combination of political, economic and social circumstances, although it was the architect Manuel Gomes da Costa who created the face of this renaissance to a very significant extent.

The Café Aliança was the “father” of this modern movement of the south, a place where architects and other figures met and discussed the political system. They used architecture as a tool for challenging the status quo, and the modernist movement of the south presented itself as an artistic and political way of challenging Salazar and his traditional Portuguese architecture.

Faro thus stands out as a modernist city in Southern Europe, with around 500 buildings in a somewhat unusual modernist style, because it is heavily adapted to the Algarve climate: flat roofs owing to the low rainfall, ceramic or cement bricks/grilles to provide protection from the sun and light, colourful tiles, and the influence of Latin American modernist architecture. And the success of this movement in the city was due, among other things, to the stance of the local authorities, which, unusually, did not object to





modernism, as Ricardo Agarez says in Algarve Building, but wanted it to be restrained, simple and functional in a wide range of commissions, and to the crucial role of emigrants who went to Latin America and returned Faro with a desire to demonstrate their success through avant-garde modernism.

The fruit of working as a community involving all the different players, the adherence to modernism showed that it is with and not against the community that good, everyday architecture is produced, and that this is the architecture that matters most in the quality of the built environment that surrounds us.

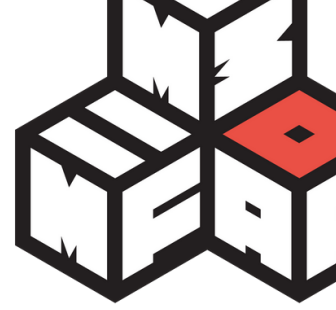
## **Faro's Modernist Axis**

### **Urban area between the Municipal Market and the João de Deus Secondary School**

Location: R. General Humberto Delgado; Praceta Engenheiro Duarte Pacheco; Praceta Coronel Pires Viegas

Classified since August 2020 as an Area of Municipal Interest, the urban area between the Municipal Market and the João de Deus Secondary School comprising the Rua General Humberto Delgado, the Rua Engenheiro Duarte Pacheco and the Praceta Coronel Pires Viegas, occupies a central location in the city, with buildings and roads that mostly correspond to projects carried out in the 1940s and 1950s, and arising from the guidelines of, or linked to, the Preliminary Urbanization Plan by the architect João Aguiar - dated 1945 (with changes in 1947 and revised in 1963).

Located in the urban area of São Luís, and forming an axis linking the João de Deus Secondary School, the old Faro Liceu, and the Municipal Market, this urban area consists mainly of plots for private buildings intended largely for an upper middle class that was growing widely in the city and wanted to use them for single- and multi-family dwellings; they represent various architectural styles, either those influenced by an architecture embedded in the context of the reaffirmation of the political regime at that time - Estado Novo (New State) and the formulary of the "Casa Portuguesa" (Portuguese House) by Raul Lino - or by an architecture of the Modern Movement, evident



in works by the architects Jorge Ribeiro de Oliveira and Manuel Gomes da Costa.

Aware of the cultural significance of this urban area, Faro Municipality, under the Basic Law on Cultural Heritage (Law no. 107/2001), classified it as an Area of Municipal Interest; this was justified on the basis of its intrinsic aesthetic, technical and material value, its conception in terms of architecture, urban planning and landscaping, and the collective memory that it represents, as well as the circumstances likely to cause its longevity or integrity to be reduced or lost.

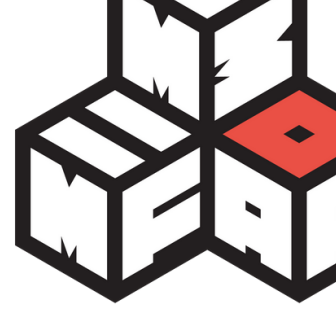
Although this urban area has nowadays lost some of its character owing to the later construction of tall buildings, it still retains an important formal homogeneity, with good examples of experimental modernist architecture and the traditionalist architecture of the Estado Novo; side by side in this area, there are buildings with traditionalist structural elements, materials and details and others with modern façades, box-shaped balconies, straight lines and reinforced concrete brise-soleils.

### **The main architect: Manuel Gomes da Costa** **Vila Real de Santo António, 1921 - Faro, 2016**

Manuel Gomes da Costa was a key figure in contemporary architecture in the Algarve, as one of the most influential architects of his generation and the one who introduced modern architecture to the region, where “between 1950 and 2002, he designed and constructed around four hundred buildings” – Ricardo Agarez, in Manuel Gomes da Costa (1921-2016): o motor da arquitectura moderna algarvia (The driving force behind modern Algarve architecture) (2016).



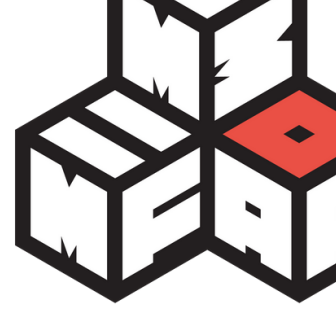
An Honorary Member of the Order of Architects, he started his academic career at the School of Fine Arts in Lisbon, but transferred quickly to Porto, where he trained as an architect. He was a student of Carlos Ramos and a colleague of the well-known architect Fernando Távora, and was also



acquainted with two other major figures of Algarve modernism, Manuel Maria Laginha and António Vicente de Castro. What he had in common with his two compatriots was a profound interest in international architecture; he frequently bought French and Italian periodicals, in which he learned so much about the grand masters of European architecture like Le Corbusier, Walter Gropius, Giuseppe Terragni and Jaap Bakema, and he also started at that time to be interested in the Brazilian architecture of Lúcio Costa, Oscar Niemeyer and Affonso Eduardo Reidy, who inspired his work so much.

Gomes da Costa gained a reputation as an architect in the early years of his career, and was one of the main figures in the search for a modern Algarve architecture, before the mass construction started following the building of Faro International Airport (1965). Committed to the mission to build houses in a rational way in order to preserve the balance in society and to equip it for the future with technical and linguistic resources of his time, one of the designs of his first houses in Faro (1950-1952) was held up as a “miracle” in the world of architecture. However, he kept away from the major centres in the country and cultivated a network of professional and personal acquaintances in the Algarve region, where he settled in 1953; he had a formal language full of new linguistic values, and won a large number of commissions in the region, especially in Faro, where he had his house and studio and worked alone in the Rua Reitor Teixeira Guedes, for a list of clients that included major organisations and figures such as top government officials, major property developers, and the diocese of Faro that wanted its surroundings to be modernised.

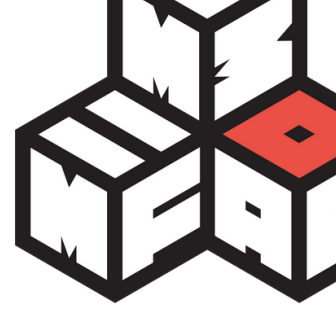
In his huge oeuvre and work, he was able to assimilate the awareness of a social responsibility into the framework of architectural production that has to be within the reach of the greatest number, adapted to location and climate; the influence of Brazilian architects, even when in collaboration with others, left its mark on various centres for multi-purpose social support, amenities for education and support for motherhood, childhood and the family, with which regional and local authorities both public and private sought to mitigate profound social deprivation in the Algarve municipalities. This experience helped make the group known in the region and served to establish the principle that modernist architecture had to find a compromise with the traditional local building practices and to partially adapt to them in



order to be accepted. It was to this end that his buildings were designed so as to combine “typical” elements of the Algarve, such as building with dry stone walls, the use of wooden lattice work, and the installation of flat or single-pitch roofs, with a modernist international language, in a practical synthesis that simultaneously expressed the urgent need for modernisation and a realistic perception of contextual features; he thus achieved greater integration in the communities of which they were part, without losing the modernist lines that characterised his work.

Manuel Gomes da Costa was one of the most influential architects in the Algarve, especially in the eastern Sotavento (Vila Real de Santo António, Tavira, Olhão and Faro), and was singled out as the greatest representative of the Modern generation in the region, which, for too long, had remained closed off, frozen in traditionalist dogmas or in increasingly widespread but rootless construction of the bourgeoisie. Especially noteworthy was “his extraordinary skill, his plastic sensitivity and the distinctive vocabulary he used in his design of façades” (Ricardo Agarez, in Manuel Gomes da Costa (1921-2016): o motor da arquitectura moderna algarvia, 2016), which created his own style; this won a following when it was later adopted by technical designers, engineers and builders in the region, and his style was also well received by the general population. They regarded his work as a more contemporary and cosmopolitan architectural solution and this led to a regional version of modernism especially in the final decades of the Estado Novo. The city of Faro was the main example of the application of this regional modernism, especially in the phase of urban renewal after the end of the Second World War.

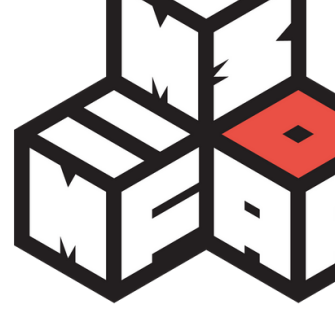
His style was easily recognisable and he was responsible for a number of multi-family residential buildings, of various sizes, built as blocks in the city of Faro and on Faro Island, and other public buildings such as the College of Nossa Senhora do Alto (1960-1965). However, despite the recognised influence of Gomes da Costa, in the recent past there has been no concerted effort to protect his buildings, which have been demolished or subjected to major alterations that totally disfigured the original modernist structure and displayed complete unawareness of the importance of this heritage.



## Examples of Modern Architecture in Faro

- 1 **Extension to the College of Nossa Senhora do Alto**  
1960s, Manuel Gomes da Costa
- 2 **Edifício Tridente - Av. 5 de outubro 19**  
Built in 1979, Manuel Gomes da Costa
- Houses on Faro Island**
- 3 **The Modernist Hotel - R. D. Francisco Gomes 27**  
Built c. 1974.
- 4 **Café Chelsea building - R. 1º de dezembro 5**  
Built in 1974, Manuel Gomes da Costa
- 5 **Buildings at Rua Castilho 4-8**  
1970s, Manuel Gomes da Costa
- 6 **Edifício Nogueira (Mango shop) - R. de Santo António 68**  
Built in 1966, Manuel Gomes da Costa
- 7 **Edifício Sol - Rua de Portugal**  
Built in 1965, Manuel Gomes da Costa
- 8 **Quarteirão Branco - Av. 5 de outubro**  
Built in 1987, Manuel Gomes da Costa
- 9 **Building at Av. 5 de outubro 46**  
Built in the 1970s
- 10 **Casa Afonso - R. Reitor Teixeira Guedes 65**  
Built in 1960, Manuel Gomes da Costa
- 11 **Casa Gago - R. General Humberto Delgado 17**  
Built in 1955, Manuel Gomes da Costa
- 12 **Modernist Residential Area - R. dos Bombeiros Portugueses, R. Emiliano Costa, R. Ataíde de Oliveira, R. Jerónimo Osório, R. José Joaquim de Moura**  
Built in the 1950s. Several architects including Manuel Gomes da Costa and Jorge de Oliveira.





13 **House/office of Manuel Gomes da Costa - R. Reitor Teixeira Guedes 42**

Built in 1966

**Casa Santa Zita - Praceta Eng. Duarte Pacheco**

1957

14 **Casa dos Magistrados - Praceta Eng. Duarte Pacheco**

1960

15 **Buildings at Rua de Berlim 5-63**

Built between 1959 and 1969, Manuel Gomes da Costa

**Buildings in Av. 5 de outubro**

16 The most South American avenue in Faro. Built by Manuel Gomes da Costa and Jorge de Oliveira in the 1950s and 60s.

17 **Building at R. Miguel Bombarda 27**

1960s

18 **Building at R. Conselheiro Bivar 67**

1960s, Manuel Gomes da Costa

10 **Banco do Algarve building - R. Ivens 3/R. Dom Francisco Gomes**

1950s, Fernando Silva

20 **Novo Banco building - R. Ivens 12/R. Dom Francisco Gomes**

21 **Building at R. General Teófilo da Trindade 17**

1960s

22 **Building at R. José Joaquim de Moura 2A**

1960s, Manuel Gomes da Costa

23 **Building at R. José Joaquim de Moura 28**

1960s, Manuel Gomes da Costa

24 **Building at R. João de Deus 22**

1974, Manuel Gomes da Costa

25 **Building at R. Frei Lourenço de Santa Maria 2**

1970s, Manuel Gomes da Costa

26 **Algarve Performing Arts Centre**

Eng. Bento Louro





## BIBLIOGRAPHY

**Agarez, R. (2016).** *Algarve Building: Modernism, Regionalism and Architecture in the South of Portugal, 1925-1965*. London and New York: Routledge.

**Agarez, R. (2016).** Manuel Gomes da Costa (1921-2016): o motor da arquitectura moderna algarvia, in *Público*. [Available online at: <https://www.publico.pt/2016/06/24/culturaipsilon/noticia/manuelgomes-da-costa-19212016-o-algarve-moderno-foi-ele-1736211>. Consulted on 22nd February 2021.]

**Fundación DOCOMOMO Ibérico; Fundación Arquia. (2018).** *Arquitectura do movimento moderno em Portugal: Revisão do Registo DOCOMOMO Ibérico, 1925-1965*. Madrid: Fundación Arquia.

**Tostões, A. (1997).** *Os Verdes Anos na Arquitectura Portuguesa dos Anos 50*. Faculdade de Arquitectura da Universidade do Porto.

## PROMOTORS



## INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERS



**For more information, please contact:**  
Culture Division of the Municipality of Faro  
[cultura@cm-faro.pt](mailto:cultura@cm-faro.pt)