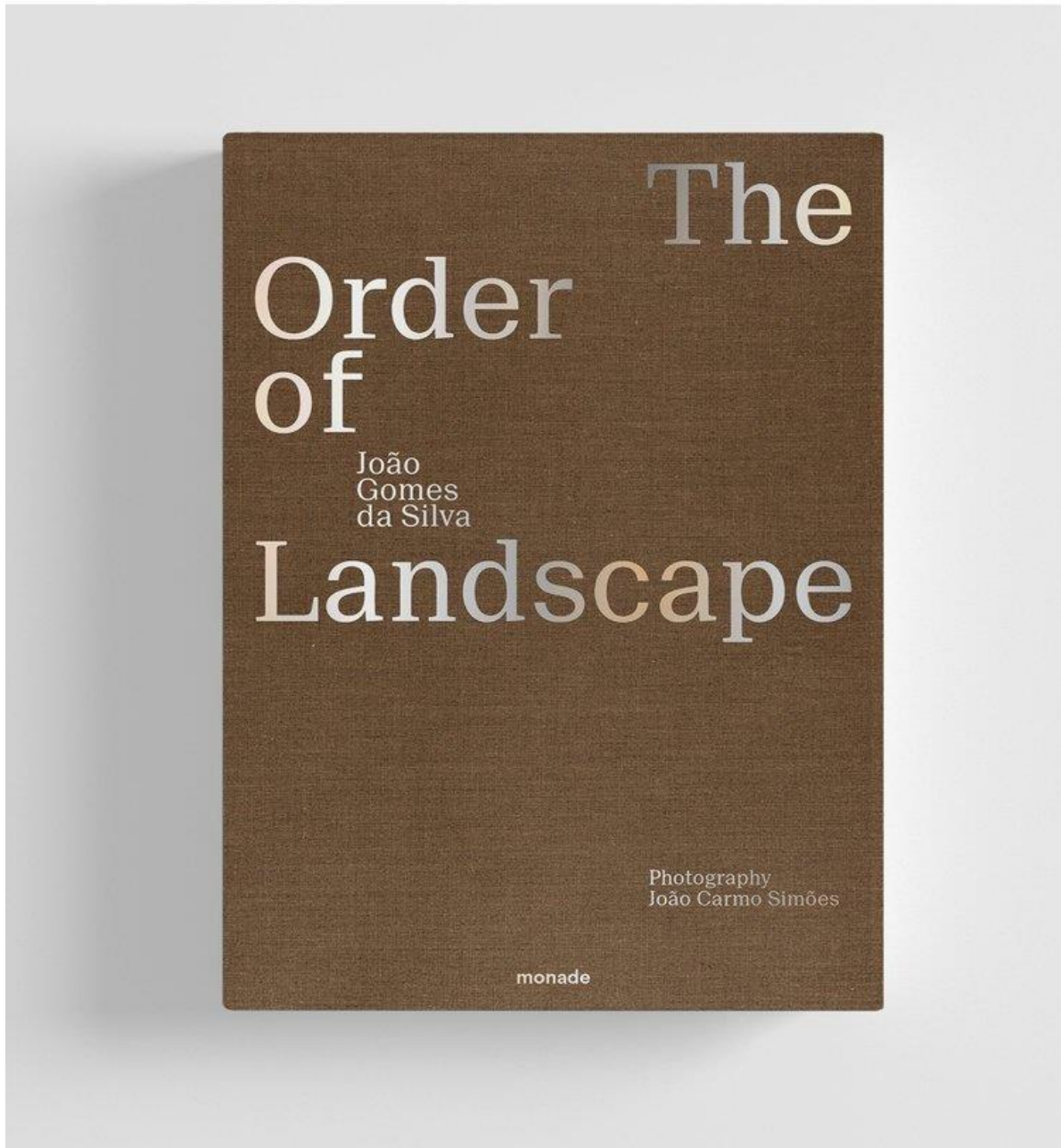


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## **The Order of Landscape**

**João Gomes da Silva**

—

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Beginning in 1987, with Álvaro Siza in the Malagueira plan, his career has decisively marked Portuguese contemporary architecture. From Lisbon's riverfront to Serralves Museum Garden and Madeira's Seafront Promenade, Gomes da Silva's conception of new grounds proposes a formality without formalisms and a naturalness without naturalisms.

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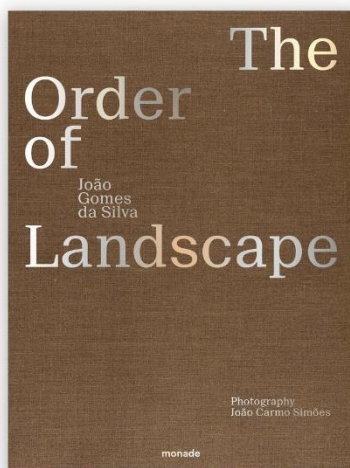
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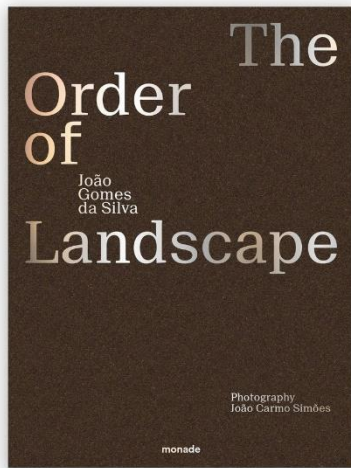
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## Landscape: Order, Transformation, Architecture

### The Order of Landscape

*"Landscape is a noun. First, it designates the surface of the earth people shaped and shape deliberately for permanent purposes."*

Landscape is a spatial phenomenon created by man's transformation of nature in accordance with the distribution of resources, cultural standards and symbolic purposes. There is a specific

order in nature that one recognises, through empirical or scientific methods, and that is decisive for our perception and our actions. There is also a specific order in landscape, which we recognise as form and space, and to which we attribute an interpretation and transformation of the pre-existing natural order. The landscape thus becomes a natural artefact, and order therein becomes the order of landscape.

Nature is not considered here to be an original and pure state that precedes the presence of man, but as a long and constant non-linear process of a natural tectonic dynamic that is ongoing, above all else. This tectonic space formation process is a complex interaction between the physical and the biological world, what one today refers to as ecosystem. Man, who belongs to the biological sphere, is an agent powerful enough to shape the space on a global scale, interfering with the ecosystem<sup>2</sup> on said scale, and generating a new era called the anthropocene<sup>3</sup>. In 1980 in Portugal, Caldeira Cabral advanced the idea of a *continuum naturale*<sup>4</sup>, to give expression to the natural structural elements (such as rivers and other hydrological elements), making the observation that these should always be considered in a dialectic sense together with the idea of *continuum culturale*, giving rise to a new understanding of the synthetic idea of landscape. Later, in 1986, the spatial patterns present in the ecosystems were described by Richard Forman<sup>5</sup> as the result of the ecological relationships between living beings and the physical environment, resulting in a shaping of the space. This idea of landscape, as a spatial expression of ecological interaction, and the cultural con-

struction of natural forms and spaces generating human models is not just an ecological idea of space but also an architectural idea of landscape, i.e., an expression of the human appropriation of natural resources. Landscape can and should be understood as an architectural concept of order, based on manipulation of resources available in the space. In this sense, our growing capacity for manipulation of the form of natural elements or processes (such as the water cycle and wind and solar energy) introduces changes to natural spatial organisation involving such elements, or to their flow dynamics.

Hunting or tracking down and domesticating other animal species were the first actions man carried out in terms of spatial recognition and selection, leading to the first civilisations in the form of hunter-gatherer societies and the organisation of differing hunting spaces, where the natural distribution of the various fertile types of soil or water gave rise to spaces that became home to edible plants or fish. Recognition of this natural order (distribution of fertile land or specific hunting habitats) allowed for the semi-fixation of communities around their collective symbols, such as burial sites or the spatial configuration of stone elements (megaliths). For these itinerant communities, establishing fixed and central places gave rise to a kind of proto-landscape order. The graveyard or burial site (necropolis) was the first type of architectural construction to register a certain spatial reference to a specific community. Sometimes these positions established symbolical organisations on a territorial scale, defining the simple formation of the landscape by means of the visual power of the disposition of elements. The art of rock engraving or painting gave rise to an original communication system that matched the scale of the landscape, making more explicit and explaining hunting and fishing or farming activities. Likewise, representation of the organisation of the landscape in hunting areas, grazing fields and forestry resources established rock art culture as the first mapping system of the collective organisation of these societies. Megalithic culture shows how the stones erected by man helped to organise the space and mark out long-distance routes or common territories together with man's activities. Time measurement too, in the form of geometric alignment with cosmogonic events,







The open space of the museum designed by Adam Sze is part of the Serres Park, which was originally a romantic garden belonging to Mada-Lene estate, later it became a series of gardens created by the landscape architect Jacques Couder. This landscape garden was created to contrast with the spatial and material expression of the irregular urban and row garden to the east, with the wood in the city and the boundary by the exterior east on the other side of a high stepped east. By counterbalancing the transition in the transition on three sides, the garden seeks to establish precise relationships between parts of the building - such as the open spaces in the interior rooms, or the secondary access routes - and also with autonomous spaces known as clearings. To the north, the Birch tree clearing defines the entrance and reception space for accessing the museum and auditorium. To the south-east, the tree marks the approach to the former tennis court which is surrounded by the row garden and woods. Transitions are marked by the borders planted with English and Pyrenean oaks and dense shrubbery which give way to borders of lower bushes and grasses and rise comes to the meadow that covers the clearing. The borders establish a spatial discontinuity between the filtered light of the wood



and the intense light on the eastern side: only the pines, in their mysterious black and slender forms, stand out from the vegetation mass. In the early morning, the place has the intensity of a stage setting, when the shadows are long, and the black density of the wood is at its deepest. The Birch Oak Clearing gives the third space and is defined by the impressive body of cedar trees and the building itself, the high garden stone wall that figures as an imposing, vertical sculpture, the dense and high hedges that in the wood and the presence of the large birch oaks to the west. In spatial terms, its character is defined by the elongated oval created by the side borders of trees and bushes and by the dense tree masses at the ends and sides. These consist of the Birch tree wood to the north, the English oak woods along the side borders and the birch oak wood, which together create a kind of oblique passage to the light on the western side. This picturesque effect, the effect of a scenario in which to experience the space, is heightened in the late afternoon, when the intense light from the west crosses the dense mass of Birch oaks, throws itself onto the concrete meadow, bathes the hawthorn border and is reflected in the heights, glimmers bridge and white trunks of the birches.

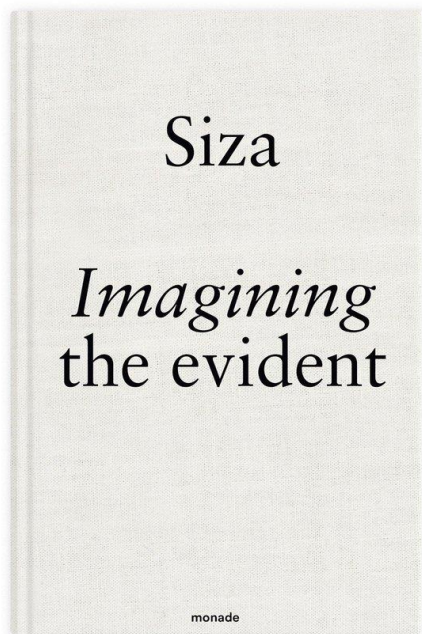


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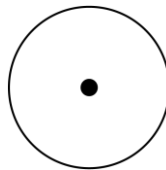
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