

# The influence of African art and imaginaries in the built work of Pancho Guedes in Maputo

## La influencia del arte y de los imaginarios africanos en la arquitectura de Pancho Guedes en Maputo

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### Abstract

Non-European forms of art have made a deep impact on western sculpture and painting, as the circulation of engravings, photos and artefacts –from China, Africa and the Americas- gradually influenced late XIX Century artists such as Vincent van Gogh or Paul Gauguin. African art in particular directly inspired Pablo Picasso in ground-breaking works such as *Les Femmes d'Alger* or changed the established canons of dance through the performances of Josephine Baker. Such influences were not so obvious in architecture, which followed the agenda of standardization, mass construction and modernism required after the destruction of Europe by two World Wars. In this context, it is particularly interesting the work of Portuguese born architect Pancho Guedes, who lived in Maputo, Mozambique, and incorporated images and influences of African Art in his vast production of drawings, paintings, sculptures and projects. In his projects and built works, Pancho Guedes invented several styles that echoed different imaginaries –from traditional Portuguese picturesque rural villages to Wrightian influences, and from sails and tents to African and free art inspired works that he referred to as “Stiloguedes”. In this paper, an analysis is made of the direct influences of an African imaginary in the architectural production of Pancho Guedes, still notably present in buildings in Maputo.

**Key Words:** Pancho Guedes; architecture; Maputo; social imaginaries; Africa; African Art.

### Resumen

Las formas de arte no-europeas han tenido un fuerte impacto en la escultura y pintura occidentales. La creciente circulación de grabados, fotografías y artefactos –desde China, África y las Américas- ha influenciado gradualmente a artistas de finales del Siglo XIX, como Vincent Van Gogh o Paul Gauguin. El arte africano, en particular, ha inspirado directamente a Pablo Picasso –en obras rompedoras tales como *Les Femmes d'Alger*- o ha cambiado los cánones establecidos de la danza a través de las *performances* de Josephine Baker. Esta influencia no ha sido tan evidente en el dominio de la arquitectura, que siguió un camino de la estandarización y de la construcción masificada requeridos por el modernismo tras la destrucción de Europa por dos Guerras Mundiales. En este contexto es particularmente interesante el estudio de la obra del arquitecto Pancho Guedes, nacido en Portugal pero que vivió en Maputo (Mozambique), y que incorporó imágenes e influencias del arte africano en su vasta producción de dibujos, pinturas, esculturas y proyectos. En sus proyectos y obra construida Pancho Guedes inventó diversos estilos que reflejan diferentes imaginarios, desde el pintoresco tradicional de las villas rurales portuguesas, hasta influencias de Frank Lloyd Wright, desde velas y tendidos hasta obras de inspiración libre en el arte africano, a las que solía referirse como “Estilo Guedes”. En este artículo se hace un análisis de las influencias directas del arte y de los imaginarios de África en la obra de arquitectura de Pancho Guedes que hoy aún se encuentran presentes en numerosos edificios en Maputo.

**Palabras clave:** Pancho Guedes; arquitectura; Maputo; imaginarios sociales; África; arte africano.

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## Introduction

In 1975 Mozambique, located at the Tropical East Coast of Africa, reached independence from Portugal after having fought a 10-year guerrilla war. The social upheaval and collapsing economic structure of the country led many Portuguese out of the country. Within these, the Portuguese-born architect Amancio d'Alpoim Miranda Guedes (1925-2015) sought exile in South Africa, starting a 15-year academic career at the Witwatersrand University [Wits] in Johannesburg and leaving behind 25 years of intense, inventively creative and committed architecture practice. Between 1950 and 1974 Pancho Guedes, as he was also known, designed more than 500 buildings and built many of them [see Figures 1 to 4] –a “deluge of buildings”, in the words of Lars Lerup (Guedes and Guedes, 2003), an outpouring of creative energy and talent, of enormous fecundity and variety in which he blurred the boundaries between painting, sculpture and architecture and applied himself to all three simultaneously.



Figs. 1 (left) and 2 (right). Prometheus building (c. 1953) and O Leão que Ri [Lit. The Smiling Lion] (c. 1958). Source: Archive Pancho Guedes ©.

His buildings were exuberant, eclectic and complex to such an extent that Green (2005) considers him a “post-modern, 20 years before the term was (even) invented”. Jacinto Rodrigues describes Pancho’s production as an “apparently paradoxical composition between organic and modern, modern and post-modern or even pre-modern and neo-modern” (Santiago, 2007:9). David Adjaye (Kaufman, 2011:50), talking about his extensive survey of Architecture in Africa, specifically credits Pancho as a seminal architect in the context of this continent, whose “futurist semi-Surrealist buildings remain colourful curiosities to this day”. Adjaye adds that “Guedes figured out a number of critical things (...) particularly his strong understanding of shape and the importance of how shapes work”; and at a time when a younger generation of architects was

just starting to question the axioms of an exhausted modernism, Pancho made such an impression with Alison and Peter Smithson that he was invited to attend to the first Team 10 meeting and became a permanent member of the Team-10 think tank that gathered Jaap Bakema, Georges Candilis, Giancarlo de Carlo, Aldo Van Eyck, Alison and Peter Smithson and Shadrach Woods, who were “manneristically far more severe than Pancho, but admiring of his talent and his clarity of thought” (Cook, 2012:2).



Fig. 3. Otto Barbosa Garage (1953-55). Source: Archive Pancho Guedes ©.

Pancho extensively travelled around the world, documenting the buildings, sites and people through an immense gallery of photographs (Tavares and Magri, 2015; Santiago, 2007:6-7, 181); corresponded with and befriended architects and artists all-over the world –Tristan Tzara changed his travel plans to return to Paris and paid a visit to Pancho in Lourenço Marques (the present-day Maputo) (Pomar, 2016: 12)– ; and had an impressive personal library on painting, sculpture and architecture that can still be seen today displayed along walls and piled in stacks in his houses in Portugal: in Alfama, Lisbon, and in Eugaria, Sintra.

Revel Fox, in the small publication *Viva Pancho* for the occasion of the Honorary Doctorate awarded to Pancho Guedes by the Wits in 2003, notes that “not only did [Pancho] bring his influence to bear on everything around him, he also became a patron, sponsor and mentor to local artists, sculptors, poets and musicians who were attracted to the studio where he lived and worked, in a lively combination of home, workshop and office”.

When reflecting on his vast architectural output on the occasion of a monographic publication of his oeuvre (Guedes and Marques, 1985) ten years after the finale of his career in Mozambique, Pancho creates (yet another) persona for himself and coins the term “Vitruvius Mozambicanus” as a synthesis of his standing in Architecture and a mocking self-reference.

Interestingly, he roots his production in Africa, wittingly blends it with erudite references to the author of *De architectura* (Vitruvius, c. 40 BC), and proceeds to classify his buildings and projects according to 25 books, each referring to a different architectural style or way of designing (Ferguson, 2007:10; Guedes, 2009:79-243; Santiago 2017:53-86):

- Stiloguedes;
- Buildings with walls twisting and turning this way and that;
- A few grass houses;
- Parts of villages remembering other villages, far away in my mother country;
- How Frank Lloyd Wright used to help me in the beginning;
- The gentle art of bending space;
- Forty-eight blue and white little banks on the east coast of Africa and ten other black and white ones on the other side;
- The American Egyptian style;
- Some bargains in a tropical bush style;
- A neo colonial revival;
- A family of Euclidian palaces;
- A hypothetical industrial zone;
- Tents and sails;
- Learning machines;
- Habitable boxes and people shelves;
- The odds and the dead ends;
- Half a dozen disparate churches;
- Tombs and other houses for the dead;
- My arched and somewhat roman manner;
- Temporary towers, slabs and slices of street face;
- Additions and alterations;
- Metamorphosed places;
- A chain of service stations;
- The passages, steps, places, squares and monuments of the imaginary city;
- The bubbliies.

In this paper, our attention will be focused on the influences of African Art and of an African Imaginary in the architectural work of Pancho Guedes. Although this influence can be seen in a number of projects, it is most notably recognizable in the “Stiloguedes” buildings, in the “Buildings with walls twisting and turning this way and that”, as well as in a “A few grass houses”. First, a very succinct overview of African Art and manufacture is presented, with reference to the direct influences of African Art on the modern Art of the XX century. Secondly, a short biography of Pancho Guedes is presented and contributions made to understanding his personality through the many published testimonies available and through notes from an

interview to Veronika Guedes, his second daughter. Finally, direct references to buildings and projects are made in which influences from an African imaginary and artefact production can be detected. Whenever possible, original photos will be shown along with present-day images of these buildings, some of which have suffered many alterations and disfigurations.

### African Art

There is today a consensus that the Art of a continent diverse and extensive such as Africa cannot be reduced to a single all-encompassing generalization. The production of the Barber tribes of the Sahara are different from the Muslim art that spread along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, in the same way as the culture, organization, rites and symbols of the Tribes of the Igbo People are distinct from that of the Yoruba or the Hausa People (Afigbo, 1992) to cite just the Nigerian case. The East coast of Africa was much influenced by Islamic and Indian cultures and art; and well before the Europeans started to explore the Continent, ancient civilizations prospered such as the people now known as the Shona, who lived in the highlands north of the Limpopo, in the Southern Zimbabwe, and constructed a capital known as Great Zimbabwe (Beach, 1990).



Fig. 4. Leite Martins House.  
Source: Archive Pancho Guedes ©

Nevertheless, some characteristics and formal features stand out across the broad sweep of Africa (Phillips, 2004:13-19; Visonà et al. 2008:14-15):

*Innovation of form:* there is evidence of a continent-wide concern with artistic innovation and creativity directed to the objects and tools manufactured, even if not consciously perceived as 'Art' –objects that signify pride to the author and status for their owners, promoted by local art patrons or institutions. Visonà, Pynor and Cole (2008:14-15) refer the imperative that kings coming to the throne must create a new palace and capital for themselves along with a range of new art forms or textile designs that will distinguish their reigns.

*Visual abstraction:* across media –sculpture, architectural façade paintings, textile design, etc–representation tends to favour simplified and stylized depictions, sometimes bordering visual abstraction, as opposed to more naturalistic renderings of form. These features of visual boldness

and near-abstractness captivated early XX century European artists and helped them to rethink form more generally.

*Multiplicity of meaning:* in many Art forms or even daily objects, different meanings exist concurrently and harmoniously within the same work, providing it with broad and strong symbolic significance. Moreover, even current objects and tools are often brought to a visual and tactile perfection far beyond the needs of practicality (Phillips, 2004:17).

*The primacy of sculpture:* most art in Africa is carved, moulded, assembled or constructed into three-dimensional forms, even though important traditions of two-dimensional painted, engraved or raised designs also exist. This predominance of sculptural forms is accompanied by the use / recycle of all available materials and products that thus are endowed with new meanings.

*Wood as a prime source of material:* Most daily objects, masks, seats or instruments were made of wood, generally carved from one piece, without joints or assemblage of parts. Unfortunately, this feature led to the loss of an uncountable number of artefacts since wood cannot be preserved as metals, stone, bone or clay objects; and paradoxically only with the ethnographic collection of objects to the European museums in the XIX century did some of these objects survived, in collections in Brussels or Paris.

*Performance / anthropomorphism:*

African Art also focuses in representations of the human body, human spirit, and human society, and most sculptural traditions in Africa incorporate human beings or embodied spirits as their primary subjects. This feature has one of its most notable manifestations on the number and variety of masks that early on the XX century impressed artists such as Pablo Picasso (1881-1973) in his ground-breaking painting *Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J. R. M.)* (1907) or Paul Klee's (1879-1940) *Head of Man, Going Senile* (1922) (as referred by Henry Louis Gates (Phillips (2004:28)) –see Fig. 5. The performance side of African Art has been difficult to register until the mid XX century when arguably many rites and festivals may have already disappeared. However, the influence of African dance on European Performative



Fig. 5. *Senecio*, by Paul Klee (1922). Oil in Gauze. 40.3x37.4cm. Kunstmuseum Basel. Source: Wikimedia Commons (2010) CC Zero.

arts was also deeply felt, for example in the very personal style of the coloured dancer Josephine Baker (1906-1975) that thrived in Europe in the 20's.

## **Vitruvius Mozambicanus**

### *A Biography*

Born in 1925 in Lisbon from aristocratic origins, Amancio d'Alpoim Miranda Guedes grew up in Africa where his father had been posted as a government doctor. He studied in South Africa at the Witwatersrand University in Johannesburg between 1945 and 49 by a group of people much influenced by Rex Martienssen, the key link between European Modernism and South Africa (Cook, 2012:1). While still in Johannesburg, Pancho befriends Fanny Klennerman, the owner of Vanguard Booksellers, considered a radical intellectual centre, and early on had direct access to many publications of art and architecture. As his daughter Llonka puts it, since over the 1940's "Pancho was on the cusp of everything published" (Guedes, interview 11.08.2017).

Pancho only reluctantly studied architecture for he wanted to be a painter. Despite embracing the profession with full energy and creativity, he never ceases to paint (rt, 1961:3; P: Guedes, 2009:287; Magri and Tavares, 2011:13) and proclaim as inexistent the artistic borders between different forms of art and within the discipline of Architecture. Still at Wits Pancho writes down his most well-known manifesto in which he claims for architects "the rights and liberties that painters and poets have held for so long". Throughout his life, he effortlessly moves from architecture, to painting, sketching, drawing or sculpting and often combines all mediums within the context of one single project.

At the time, Mozambique was enjoying a springing economical rise as Portugal had come relatively unscathed from the Second World War and benefited with funds from the Marshall Plan. Many Portuguese moved to the colonies, encouraged by promising conditions and a relatively easy life for the white people that could live in spacious houses with several servants – conditions then unattainable for most people in Portugal. The distance to Lisbon also made less present the political control over people; Africa provided a sense of freedom that did not exist in the stuffy dictatorship in Portugal, with its political police, censorship and repression of all opposition. No doubt, Pancho was surveyed by the political police all the time, but the latter never dared to act, for Pancho belonged to "good families" (Guedes, interview 11.08.2017).

In Lourenço Marques in the 1950's, building was starting, the city expanded for the new white neighbourhoods of Polana and Sommerschild people and wanted to invest. The conditions were ripe for a major change in the local architectural *status quo*. Amâncio Guedes first commission came while he still studied at Wits. On a plot bought by his father, Pancho designed and build six apartments. The project was signed by an Engineer, friend of the family (Guedes, interview 11.08.2017). Back to Maputo, Pancho easily blended on the white social circles. At a time when new modern buildings were being introduced to a city marked by historical revival

and imported Art Déco models (Ferguson, 2007:24), his curious blend of functional and highly personal architecture became the focus of much discussion. His lively life style also made a deep impression, as recollected by Malangatana and other of his contemporaries in *Viva Pancho* (Guedes and Guedes, 2003): the architect speeding to and from the building site in his sport convertible, the impeccable attire, the extravagant humour and confidence.

People liked his architecture and soon commissions pour in from family and friends (Guedes, interview 11.08.2017). Although Pancho practices architecture as a total artistic immersion and always proposes the more plastic approaches, he is quick to adapt his designs to suit his clients' preferences with no loss of his original voice (Guedes, 2009:20-21). On the construction site Pancho teaches the building technology that supported his designs to masons and carpenters. He would order the demolition of the mistakes and demanded high levels of precision in the execution. These levels visibly increase with time as he and the building teams get more proficient: as it can be assessed comparing the *Prometheus* building (1951-53) with the *Kholovo residence* (1973), especially in the way volumes and planes seem to slide from one another in the latter without intersections of elements that can still be seen in the former (Figs. 6 and 7).



Figs. 6 and 7. Prometheus building. Kholovo residence. Photos by tha author.

Between 1950 and 1975, Pancho designs more than 500 works and builds most of them. However, when Mozambique obtains independence from Portugal in 1975, the white elite (the investors, the owners of capital and Pancho's clients) flee. The combination of the sudden break of all activity in the building industry, the disruption of the rest of the economy - suddenly converted to a Collectivistic model -, the social unrest and sometimes outright hostility towards the colonizers, change the living conditions in the country. To make matters worse, no more is it possible to exert free speech, which directly collided with Pancho's way of being and freedom fostering in all domains of his life and activity. Pancho seeks exile in South Africa and turns over a new leaf in his life, from then on mostly devoted to teaching.

In his day, Pancho was quite well known in Austral Africa as well as within certain architectural and artistic circles. He was a member of the Team 10 British think tank, was the first Portuguese architect to be published internationally, in magazines such as the *Architectural Review* (Beinart,

1961) or *Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* (Guedes, 1962) and hosted and participated in a number of international conferences, venues and exhibitions.

Today, one of the reasons for his oblivion may be due to the fact that he practiced during a dark period –the end of the Portuguese hold of the colonies, at a time when many other African Countries had already reached independence (Ferguson, 2007:24). Also, as Santiago (2007:23, 96) notices, Pancho was immune to the changing trends of fashion and his production was deeply rooted on traditional means of representation (drawings, sketches, painting), all of which do not appeal to the present-day gleam-oriented publishing industry.

### *On his personality*

No account on Pancho Guedes would be complete without a reference to his personality. And, fortunately, we have an enormous amount of first-hand accounts of his provocative energy, intelligence, irreverence, wit and his legendary “penchant for opposition, rebellion and dissent” (Marilyn Martin in Tavares and Magri, 2015:53). He was an “*Enfant terrible*, an agent provocateur, whose mischievousness, sense of humour and generosity inspired students and teachers” (Kamstra, in Guedes and Guedes, 2003:8).

Pancho belonged to the privileged; his aristocratic upbringing gave him a subtle, mocking snobbish attitude. Many people refer to his disarming sense of humour often marked by obscure references, the “sarcasm to his peers and sometimes barbed wit” (Prims, in Guedes and Guedes, 2003:10), the chilling giggle if you could grasp the depth of its irony (Forjaz, in Guedes and Guedes, 2003:12-13), the merciless poking fun at the self-righteous, the bureaucratic and the undeservedly successful (Raman, in Guedes and Guedes, 2003:1). Also referred is the fact that “Pancho, himself a rebel, could not tolerate those who rebelled against him” and did have his favourites whom he fostered, as opposed to those he more or less elegantly despised.

However, many point out to Pancho’s acute insight that enabled him to discover talents and promote creativity. “He had this faculty of creating a current linking together the people he knew” (Malangatana, in Guedes and Guedes, 2003:16-17; Guedes, 2009:17). “Around Pancho people felt part of a grand adventure, they even thought differently of themselves; it was as if Pancho brought with him a trail of light and creativity” (Guedes, 2017). In Mozambique, he felt at home and thrilled on the vitality and sense of humour that he perceived on the people; he took that energy and shared his enthusiasm, and people would get carried by this mutual feedback (Guedes, 2017).

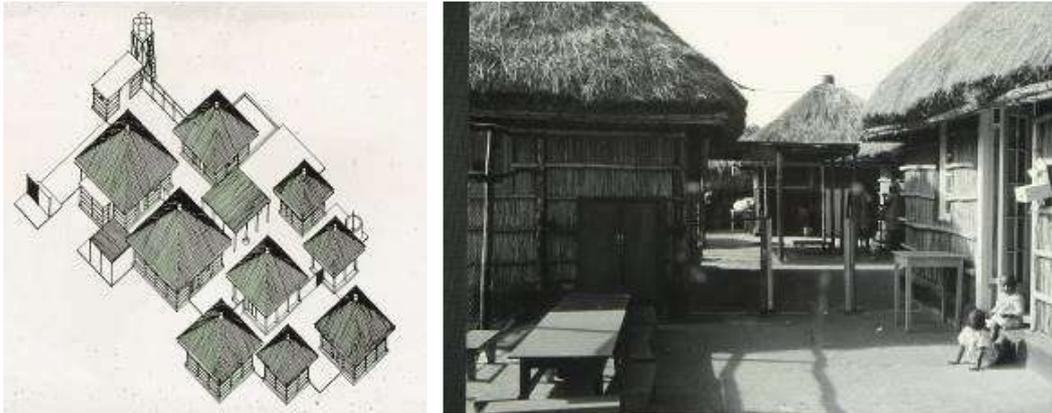


Fig. 8. Clandestine School on Caniço [Reed City] (1968-69). Source: Archive Pancho Guedes ©.

It is interesting to note the relationship he established with the black, at a time when black people were not allowed to walk on the city of the white people without permits, were not allowed to build houses with permanent and durable construction materials, and generally speaking were discriminated in the access to education, culture, transport, health and wealth (Ribeiro and Rossa, 2016:58, 68-72, 82-83, 88-89, 114-126). The fact is that, despite belonging to the favoured part of the society, Pancho also was considerate to the needs of the black: he designed schools and shelter for the disadvantaged, partaking low tech and low-cost technologies (but with erudite influences and composition principles, such as Kahn), in projects like the *Clandestine School in Caniço* (1968-69) (Fig. 8) or the *Primary School for the Antioka Mission* (1964-66) (Fig. 9). He also administrated the scholarships provided by the Swiss mission in Mozambique that allowed a number of young black Mozambicans to study abroad. On top of that, he denounced the dilapidated city of reeds (where the black population lived as opposed to the city of cement, where the white population lived), so lacking of hygiene and the most basic facilities. And in his housing schemes he often included servant quarters, often at the top floors, albeit with lower ceilings or with limited views to the landscape.



Fig. 9. Primary School for the Antioka Mission (1964-66). Source: Archive Pancho Guedes ©.

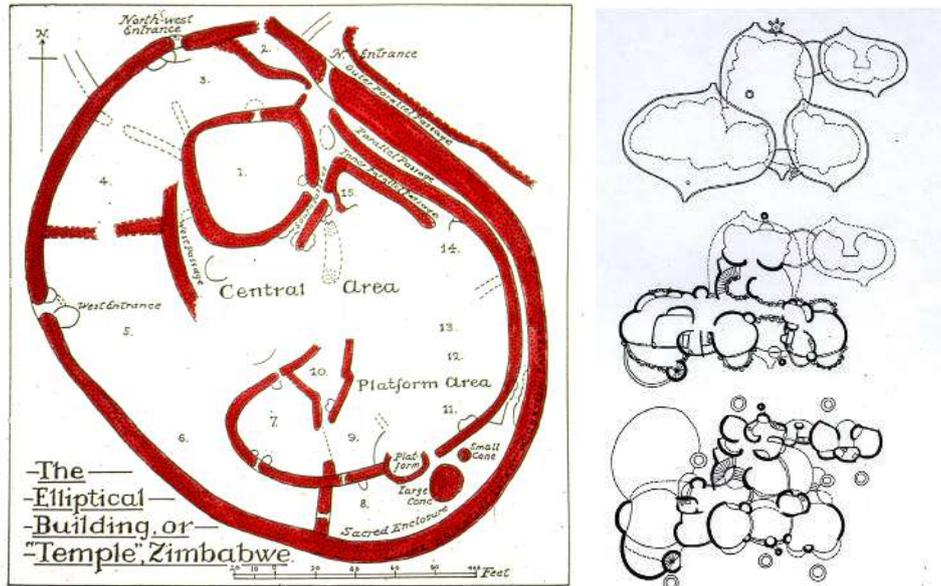
Few stories capture the spirit of Pancho Guedes better than his finding and launching the career of the young artist named Malangatana Ngwenya (1936-2011), that came up to be the most important and recognized Mozambican painter. Malangatana was a servant at the Gremio Civil Club and amateur painter until Pancho detected his immense untamed talent and invited him to quit his job, move to Pancho's own quarters (where he spent three years), work on commission, and guided him on the search for an original voice (Guedes, 2009:14-17). In 1961, Pancho organizes a major monographic exhibition of Malangatana that had no less than Eduardo Mondlane (1920-1969) as a visitor and that resulted in an earth-shaking cultural shock to the white community. Other exhibitions followed under the generous sponsorship of Pancho, to Cape Town, to London, Paris, Nigeria or the USA. In the words of the painter, "the experience I gained while with this family was, and always will remain, useful and valuable to me. Today I discover in myself a man that I never knew existed before" (Malangatana in Guedes and Guedes, 2003:17).

### *Pancho Guedes and Africa*

The passion for Africa crossed generations of the Guedes family. Africa fed a sort of primeval energy to Pancho. He was captivated by how people created objects, how these artefacts boasted life and provided energy and joy to the people (Guedes, 2017). He had an extensive collection of African art acquired directly to their authors that is well documented (CML, 2010) and can still be seen displayed at his houses in Portugal. Notably, he collected objects well before they became considered assets in the commercial circuits of art: everyday objects formally inspiring even if not conceived as 'Art' - this 'life' of objects in Africa has been remarked many times: objects are often crafted as tokens or guardians of spirits, especially the spirits of the ancestors, in the same way as the land is connected to the ancestors (Kapuściński, 2001; Achebe, 1958). However, Pancho was not merely a collector of artefacts: as Manfred Schiedhelm and Karen Axelrad have noted (Guedes and Guedes, 2003:30), he found ways of encompassing all sources available, which also meant that he was nurtured by using the craftsmanship of local woodcarvers, painters, embroiderers and builders of the region.

Among the travels of the Guedes family in Africa, of special interest is the visit to the ruins of Great Zimbabwe in 1961. This archaeological site displays curved stone walls constructed with pieces of granite (see Fig. 10) and can be divided into three sections (Visonà et al. 2008:471-473): i) in the oldest, called the Hill Ruin (c. 1250), smooth stone blocks are laid in irregular courses to form curved walls between huge boulders at the hilltop; the walls create irregular compartments and narrow winding passages; ii) the second, known as the great enclosure and built before 1450, is composed of a ruined structure encircled by a single stone wall more than 900m in diameter and 6 to 10 meters high; finally iii) the third section comprises remnants of low stone walls scattered across the valley floor. The visit to the Great Zimbabwe deeply impacts in Pancho Guedes: as always, he photographs the ruins extensively (Tavares and

Magri, 2015:222-225) and later designs a number “curved things” (Fig. 11), as his wife often remarks –houses and hotels that the architect later classifies as “Buildings with walls twisting and turning this way and that”.



Figs. 10 and 11. Plan of the ruins of the Great Zimbabwe and Plans of the Swazi Zimbabwe House. Source: Archive Pancho Guedes ©.

The architect registers meticulously the vernacular structures throughout Mozambique and the surrounding countries. Again, of special interest to this paper are his visits to the far-away Ndebele *kraals* in South Africa, where buildings with complex mud patios had been constructed and decorated by women. Pancho makes many sketches and drawings annotated with dimensions and carefully documents the elaborated painted forms on the facades.



Fig.12. Mural in Zambezi Restaurant. Source: Archive Pancho Guedes ©.

Talking with people about their work became a habit to Pancho who incorporates techniques, themes and materials in his production: in buildings (with painted murals, murals made of stones applied to the mortar base, totem-like chimneys, bulging protuberant forms), sculptures and paintings alike –or, as Ian and Lynn Bader remind us, in embroideries and “figurines that often came in multiples, in a variety of materials, wood, glass, even cast chocolate. Flat heads with target eyes, forced smiles and unconcealed grimaces” (Guedes and Guedes, 2003:6) (Fig. 12). Overlapping all these mediums, “Pancho was speaking a visual language he had invented”.

### *Modern Art*

It is not surprising that Amâncio Guedes should share his interest for the vernacular crafted production of Africa with many forms of Modern XX Century Art, including Cubism, Surrealism, Dada and artists as Paul Klee (1879-1940), Pablo Picasso (1881-1973), Joan Miró (1893-1983) (Fig. 13), or Jean Dubuffet (1901-1985), given the shared formal values between the two and the influence of the former on the European Artistic Avant-guard since the beginning of the XX Century (Magri and Tavares, 2011:14).

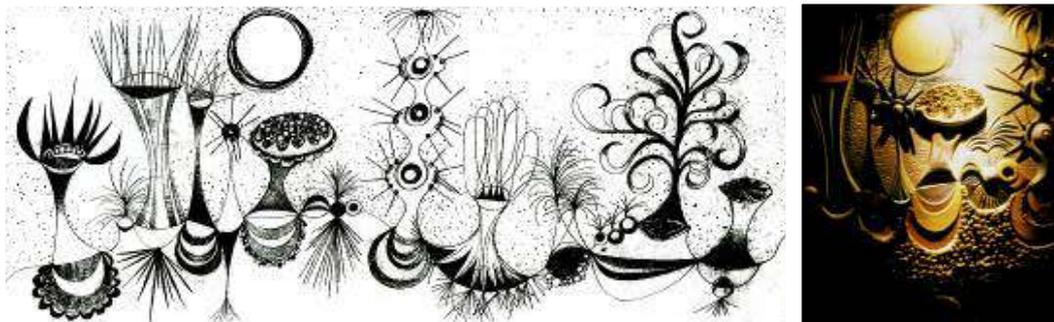


Fig. 13. Study (left) and detail (right) of mural in Zambi Restaurant.  
Source: Archive Pancho Guedes ©.

As seem above, Pancho establishes a large private library and subscribes to a formidable number of periodicals, “assimilating everything with photographic precision” according to Revel Fox (Guedes and Guedes, 2003:4). He knows all the artists, knows how to contact them. He corresponds to a number of architects, artists and art dealers, within which are to be accounted Sir Roland Penrose (1900-1984) –major promotor and collector of modern art and an associate of the surrealists in the UK- or Alfred Barr (1902-1981) –the first director of The Museum of Modern Art. In 1948, he purchases the famous prints of Paul Klee by Curt Valentin (Klee and Soby, 1945) (Guedes, interview 11.08.2017). The book features plates of facsimile impressions of 40 lithographs and etchings from 1903 –1931 by Paul Klee (Soby, 1945). Today these plates can be seen hanging on the walls of his house in Eugaria. In 1954, he travels with his family to Oporto to have his title of Architect certified and begins his “grand Tour” over Europe. He buys artwork from Chagal in Paris, he studies paintings from Dubuffet and Klee in a number of museums. The influence of Klee’s drawings (mixed with African imaginary) can be seen on some

of Pancho's murals (Fig. 12); while the influence of the childlike themes of Dubuffet and Henri Rousseau (1844-1910) is easily perceived in many of Pancho's paintings and drawings, not to mention the enthusiasm with which the architect works from drawings of his own sons. Later he starts a series of studies of Angels inspired in the Angels from Paul Klee –he had books solely devoted to this theme- a work Pancho continues throughout his life.

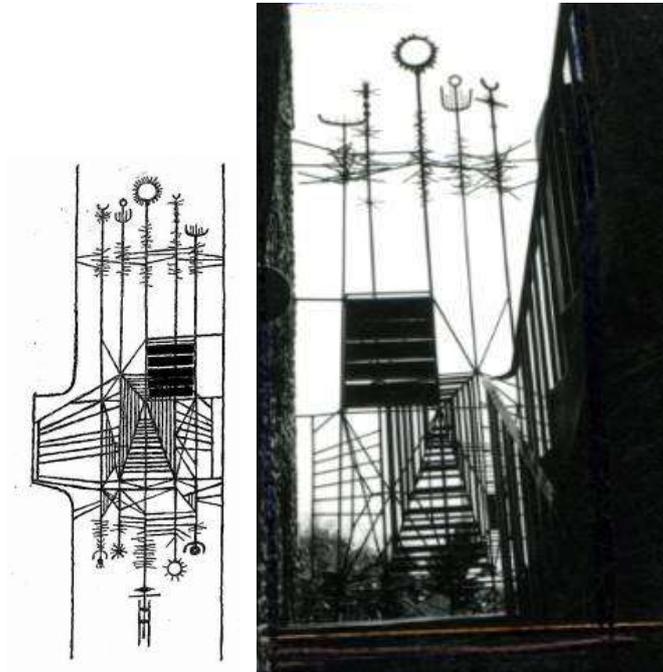


Fig. 14 Metal railings in Leão que Ri, where both the abstraction on Modern Art (most notably the work of Paul Klee) and African art can be recognized.  
Source: Archive Pancho Guedes ©.



Fig. 15. Dr. Luz de Sousa House (c. 1956).Source: Archive Pancho Guedes ©.

Many authors point out to the bridges between Modern Art, African Art and the formal vocabulary of Pancho Guedes, in which he thrives on the symbolic, the oneiric, the surreal and the ethnographic –in his plaster fingers, cigar shapes, totem-like wooden sculptures, metal eyebrows, the stylized railings, and some of his murals. (Figs. 12 to 16). Santiago (2007:91, 171) adds a metaphoric quality to his work that is full of anthropomorphic and zoomorphic similes: Pancho talked about buildings as of living entities; he has an open fascination by the human face and masks (Kultermann, in Guedes and Guedes, 2003:20-21).



Fig 16. Mural at the back of Leão que Ri (see also Fig. 2).  
Source: Archive Pancho Guedes ©.

## The architectural practice of Pancho Guedes in Mozambique

### *General overview*

The architectural production of Amâncio Guedes in Mozambique covers roughly 25 years, from 1950 to 1974. However, as soon as in 1961, his highly personal architectural expression was considered as “probably unsurpassed in Africa” (Beinart, 1961:1). Years later, Pancho proceeds to classify his vast output work according to different styles (Guedes and Marques, 1985:12-74). Cook (2012:2), not unwittingly, explains that “[Pancho] is making this distinction because of his 500 projects there are hundreds actually built. Some are clever shacks, resourceful sheds, some commodious villas, useful city blocks and then there are the icons”.

These families are united according formal characteristics (“Stiloguedes”, “Building with walls twisting”); influences (“How Frank Lloyd Wright used to help me”); construction technology (“A few grass houses”); type of use / program (“Learning Machines” or “A hypothetical industrial zone”) or typology (“Habitable boxes and people shelves”, “churches”). Pancho himself

cultivates the idea that these styles did not follow any sequential pattern in time, since he would make use of them freely throughout his career (Guedes, 2009:31). Nevertheless, he considered that his “most idiosyncratic style –his “royal family”- was the Stiloguedes: a “bizarre and fantastic family of buildings with spikes and fangs, with beams tearing into spaces around them ... full of exaggerations ... [that] stretch[es] the mysterious relationship between plan, section and façade” (Cook, 2012:2).

The classification of his work proposed by Pancho sheds little light to the comprehension of his production in the context of colonial Mozambique. In Table 1 (see final Annex), it is shown the list of the major works grouped by style and plotted against time. At first sight, it would seem that the styles are indeed distributed more or less irregularly through time. However, a deeper analysis shows two main periods, with a dividing line around the year of 1961. Before that year, Pancho has projects belonging to the styles of “Parts of villages remembering other villages (...)”; “How Frank Lloyd Wright used to help me in the beginning”; “The gentle art of bending space”; “The American Egyptian style” (with one exception); and “Habitable boxes and people shelves”. These projects correspond to a formative period in which traditional, classical or erudite architectural influences directly impact on the architect. After 1961, we find other styles as defined by Pancho: “A few grass houses”; “Some bargains in a tropical bush style”; “A family of Euclidian palaces”; “Learning machines”; “Half a dozen disparate churches”; “My arched and somewhat roman manner”. Interestingly, the “Stiloguedes” and its cousin “Buildings with walls twisting and turning this way and that” do occur throughout time (albeit more concentrated on the beginning of Pancho’s career), perhaps reinforcing the importance of these styles to Pancho himself and (his) perception that all styles could be used any time.

If the works of Amâncio Guedes are grouped by program type in spite of their style, a clearer picture can be obtained of the output of the architect. In fact, an analysis of Table 2 (see final Annex), reveals that his projects cluster around a relatively short number of groups. At the top, are grouped private houses, groups of semi-detached houses and small-scale housing schemes (with two floors); this group represents a constant and regular presence during Pancho’s career. Next, comes the group of larger scale residential schemes: collective housing and building with a vertical organization (towers and blocks); this commissions occur since the very beginning of his career until about 1965. From 1958 onwards (and especially since 1961), Pancho begins to get commissions of a different nature: public buildings, even if commissioned from private promoters. Within these we find a number of schools, student residencies and related facilities, on the one hand, and churches, on the other hand.

From the previous analysis, it can be said that Pancho’s architectural production was deeply rooted on private residential programs –either private houses (that were present throughout his career) or collective housing schemes, both of which commissioned by the social and economic elite of the colonial Lourenço Marques, to which Pancho belonged. During the early years, not only his family but also friends of the family passed a great amount of work to Pancho (Guedes,

interview 11.08.2017). Gradually, though, Pancho was able to obtain different types of commissions due to the booming economic development of Mozambique: a large number of bank agencies –whose chronology is not possible to established in the literature; and several education buildings and churches, both of which benefited from his long-time collaboration with the Swiss Mission in the country. As a matter of speculation, one can wonder where this path might have led were it not drastically cut: no doubt an increased number of high quality public buildings might have been created, judging from the clear organization and spatial syntax –that owes much to Louis Kahn (1901-1974), an architect that Pancho greatly admired- and the expert and sophisticated detailing of a building like the *Khovolar Residence*, finished in 1973 (Fig. 7).

### *Influences of African Art*

African art was used by Pancho Guedes as yet another influence –along with modern art or the work of the architects he admired: Gaudi, Frank Lloyd Wright or Kahn- and not to pursue some kind of desire for the regionalism or the picturesque. During his travels and from the Mozambican context, Pancho extracted information that directly influenced form –and thus space- or were incorporated in his designs as inherent part of the solution. All of these influences contributed to the creation of a formal imaginary, plastic and pictorial, inextricable from his designs; even if the organization of the plans represent quite simple, sensible, functionalist responses to the program: compare the plan of *Prometheus* building with the punctuation of the facades with fins and the powerful effect obtained by the thrusting balconies and hanged structural elements (Figs. 1, 6 and 17).

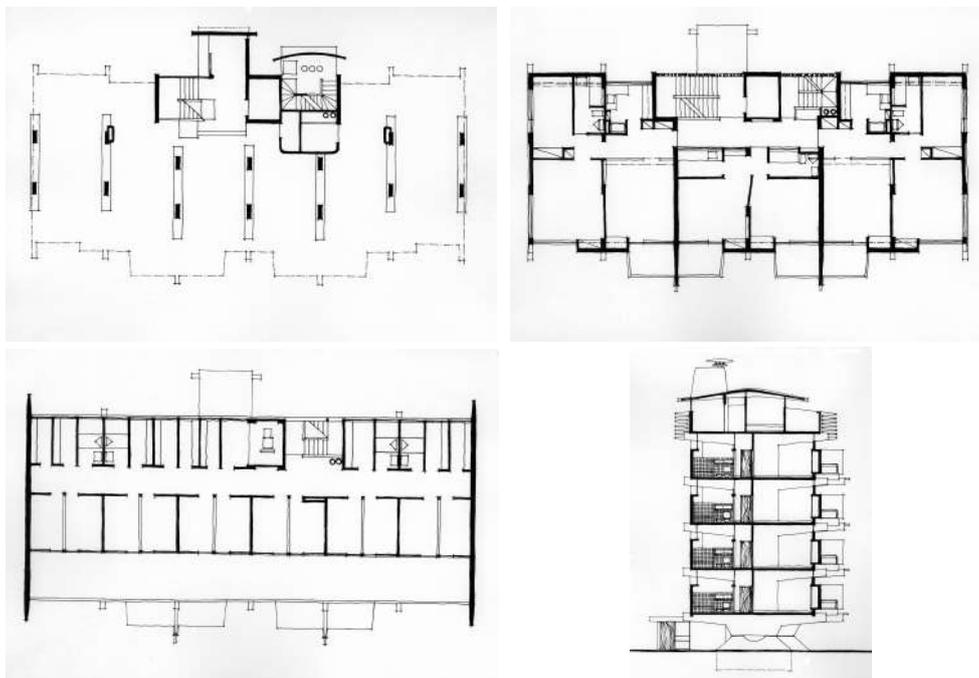


Fig. 17. Ground floor, typical floor plan, top floor and section of Prometheus building.  
Source: Archive Pancho Guedes ©.

Four levels can be identified in his use of African influences: a) direct spatial appropriation; b) the use of traditional building techniques; c) pictorial use in murals and paintings; d) aesthetic / iconic use of totemic, animistic or abstract representations, as mentioned above.

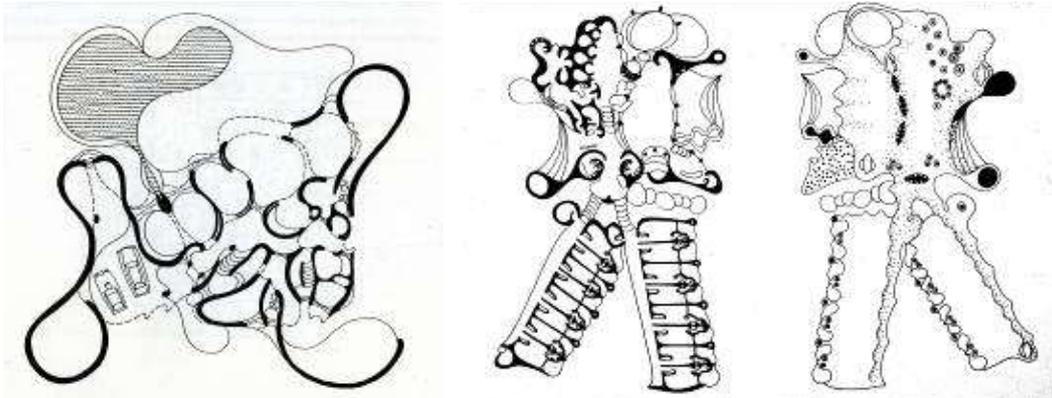


Fig. 18. Examples of plans of “buildings with walls twisting and turning this way and that”: Moreno Ferreira House in Beira (left) and Hotel for Bilene (right). Source: Archive Pancho Guedes ©.

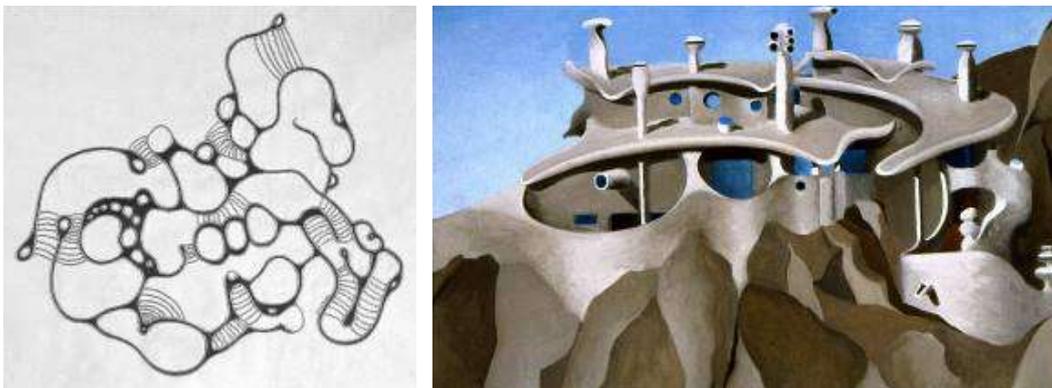


Fig. 19. Habitable Woman (1963): plan and general view (oil painting). Source: Archive Pancho Guedes ©.



Fig. 20. Swazi house in Zimbabwe (1968). Source: Archive Pancho Guedes ©.

The most evident example of spatial appropriation can be found in the groups of “Buildings with walls twisting and turning this way and that”, which directly stem from the geometries associated to the Ruins of the Great Zimbabwe (Fig. 10), that so much impacted on Pancho. In spite of the fact that these geometries correspond mostly to unbuild projects (Figs. 18 and 19) –

with the notable exception of the Swazi house (Figs. 11 and 20)- they represent the most striking rupture with the modernistic box operated by Pancho Guedes.

At a decorative level, many are the examples of the use of murals and painted geometries, influenced by African Art, which Pancho had had the opportunity to see first-hand (Guedes, 2009:264; Tavares and Magri, 2015:198-203, 273). These murals and paintings directly reflect the patterns used by the women-painters of the Ndebele tribe, on the one hand, or of the African Mythology in general (Beinart, 1961:6; Malangatana in Guedes and Guedes, 2003:16-7), compare Figs. 23 and 24. The Ndebele women developed a bold wall painting style –using bright pigments and strong contrasts of light and dark- to decorate the whitewashed walls of the rectangular housing of the farms where they worked from the end of the XIX century (Visonà et al., 2008:487-8). Pancho was also certainly influenced by the colourful, decorative paintings on the doors of the reedhouses, many of which he photographed (Tavares and Magri, 2015:198-203). The influence of these patterns, often also compared to African tattoos, can be seen on the series of murals that decorate bank agencies in Mozambique and Angola (Figs. 24 and 25) or in decorated friezes and panels in a number of Pancho's buildings (Fig. 26).

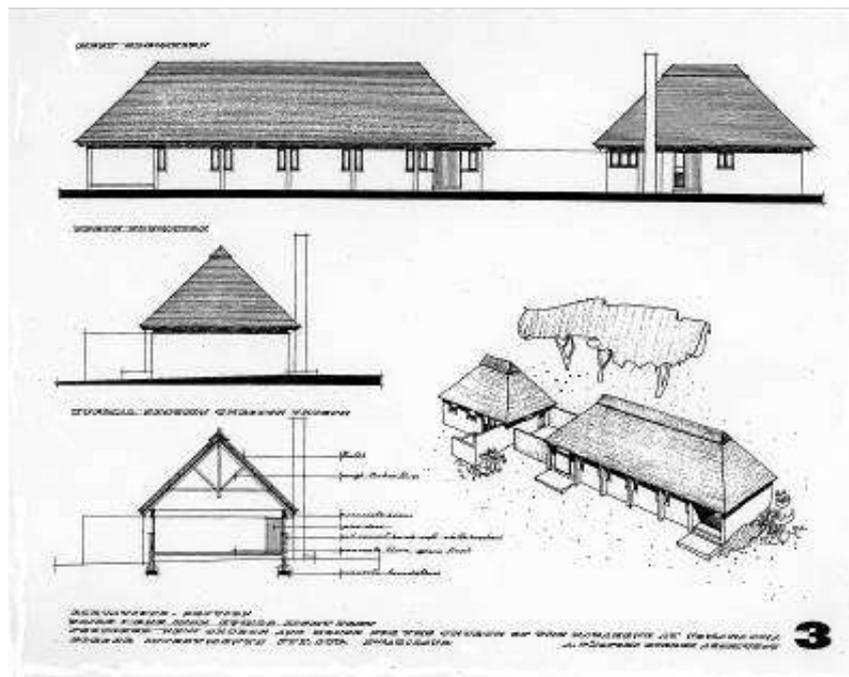
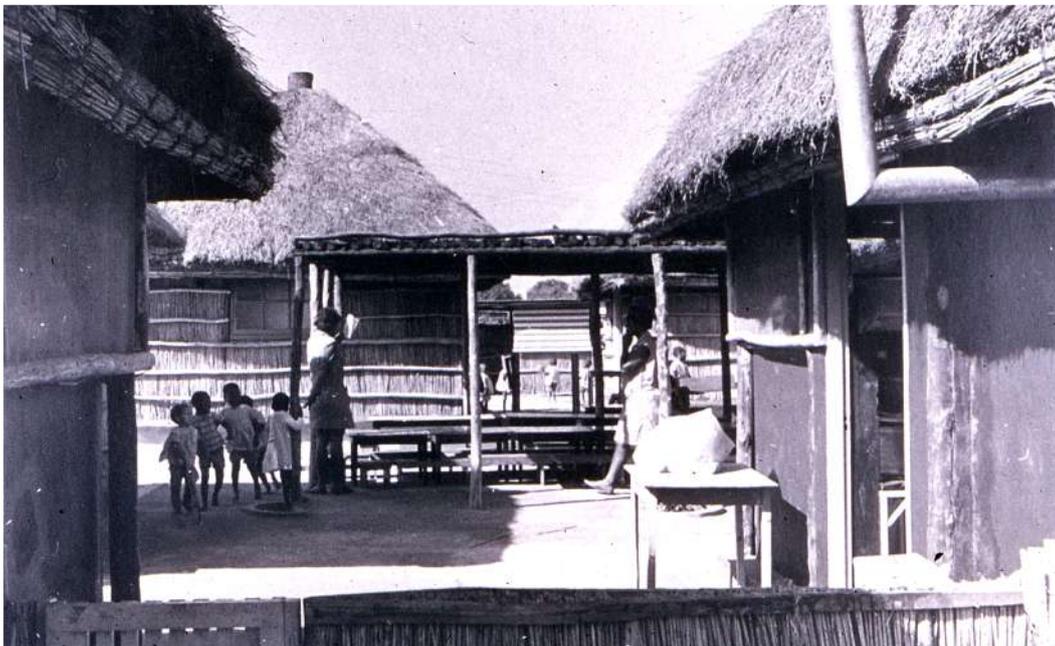


Fig. 21. Project for the Church of Nazarene in Namaacha.  
Source: Archive Pancho Guedes ©.

The last level of the influence of an African imaginary in the work of Amâncio Guedes corresponds to the use of an iconic lexicon of forms, often anthropomorphic or zoomorphic (Fig. 12), carrying meaning well beyond their function. As seem before, this is a characteristic that to a great extent is common to the production of tools and artefacts in Africa. In Pancho's architecture they occur on the voluptuous presence of his buildings, often punctuated with totem-like chimneys or odd architectural elements such as fingers, fins, teeth, water gutters, etc.

(Figs. 1 to 4, 15, 16, 20, 26), especially in his earliest buildings and in some of his unbuilt projects (Figs. 27 and 28).



Figs. 22a,22b. Clandestine Kindergarten in Caniço. Source: Archive Pancho Guedes ©.

Such formal experiments developed side by side with the prolific sculptural work and painting of Pancho Guedes (Guedes, 2009:47-63, 287), carried out in his workshop / studio / home. Although the analysis of these works falls out of the scope of this paper, there are obvious connections between the wooden, one piece, totem-like sculptures of Pancho or his masks and stylization of the human face with the artistic production of Africa. To a certain extent, such imaginaries can be identified in the desire to mould the façade (and often the roof) as unified element (Figs. 20 and 27, left). Significantly, the composition of the façade as perceived in the elevation sometimes unmistakably refer to the universe of tribal masks and paintings (Fig. 27, right).



Fig. 23 and 24. House front mural of the Mapogga, in Transvaal. Mural in bank Agency in Nacala.  
Source: Archive Pancho Guedes ©.

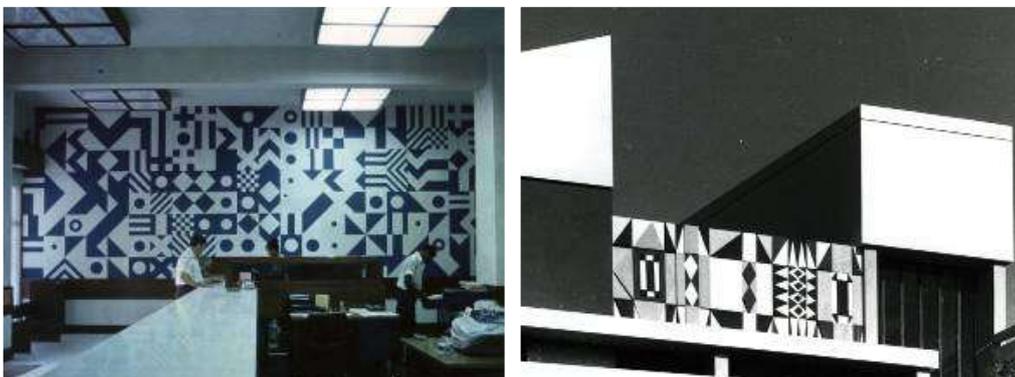


Fig. 25. Mural in Bank agency in Av. 24 de Julho in Maputo and Mural in Arvelos Building in Maputo.  
Source: Archive Pancho Guedes ©.

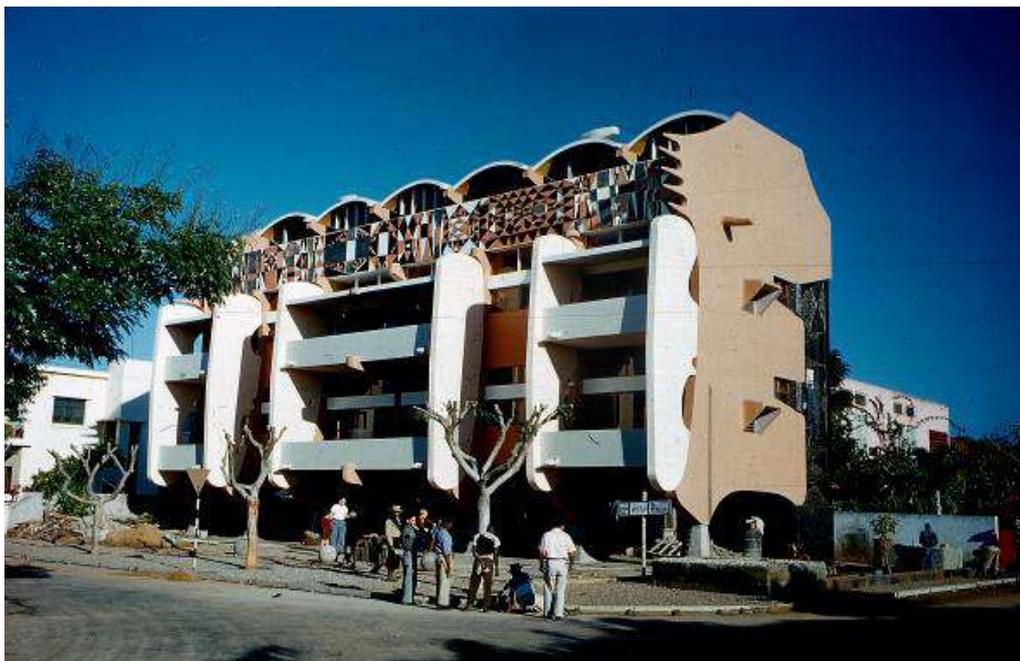


Fig. 26. General view of The Smiling Lion apartment block, at the time of its completion (c. 1958).  
Source: Archive Pancho Guedes ©.

The highest level of a metaphorical use of meaning on his projects is not on the domain of the perceived by the senses, but belong to a conceptual order; Pancho used to refer to his buildings as entities, with feet, hands, wings of bellies as if infused with some sort of life. He went so far as to christen his projects with names heavy with meaning such as the *Habitable woman* (1963), the *Aeroplane House* (1954), *The Smiling Lion* (1958) or *The house that oozes blood to the swimming pool* (1970).

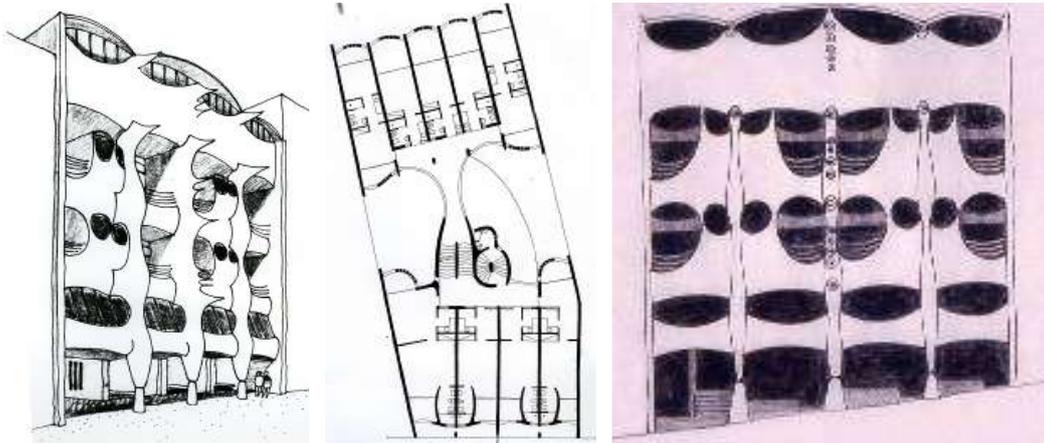


Fig. 27. Menino da Silva building, perspective, typical floor plan and elevation.  
Source: Archive Pancho Guedes ©.

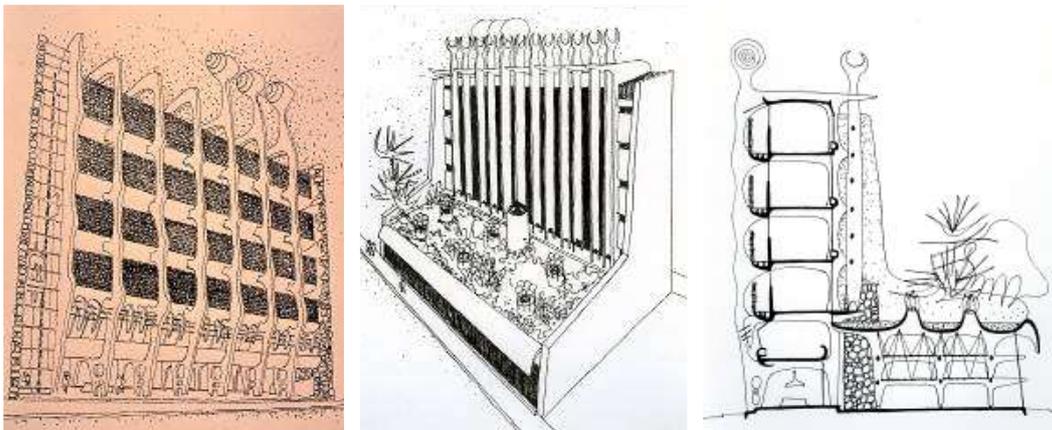


Fig. 28. Santos Marques e Silva building front and rear perspectives, section.  
Source: Archive Pancho Guedes ©.

## Conclusion

In this paper, the life, work and personality of the Portuguese-born architect Amâncio Guedes (also known as Pancho Guedes) are briefly presented. The architect lived his formative years in Africa and after graduating in architecture worked for 24 years in Mozambique, during which he designed and built a staggering number of projects.

Pancho's work corresponds to an intertwined, simultaneous and experimental artistic whole that comprises architecture and paintings, sculptures, lectures, writings and sponsorship to various artists and poets. In his work, "fantasy and art are seamlessly brought together" (Kamstra, in Guedes and Guedes, 2003:8) in a context of freedom according to which the artist can choose

one path and its opposite and incorporate all influences available. Pancho himself had an immense knowledge of modern art, traditional art and architecture from different periods; he corresponded with some of the most important artist, collectors and artists of his time –he was a collector himself, of masks and other African artefacts-; travelled extensively, obsessively registering and photographing his findings; and had an impressive private library on architecture and arts. From all these influences Pancho gathered inspiration for his projects, sculptures and paintings.

It is thus that we can find evidences of an African imaginary in the work of Pancho –or, corresponding to the scope of this paper, in his architectural work. Pancho would recur to the African inspired aesthetic universe not as someone using pastiche or looking for picturesque effects, but rather as a source of meaning and formal seduction, much as he did with the universe of European modern art and the influence of the architects (past and present) that he admired. History, for Pancho, was a banquet of delicacies from which to pick ideas and stimulus for his projects. In such free use of influences and considering the links between certain traits of African Art (tendency to abstraction, stylization of form and the more obvious impact of masks) and the development of Modern Art in the beginning of the XX Century, it is not surprising to find in Pancho’s work a formal discourse whose imaginary belong either to African Art and to Modern Art: the art of two continents, not opposed but complementing and overlapping each other.

As Martin summarizes (Guedes and Guedes, 2003:27), the work of Amâncio Guedes is a “synthesis of modernism and Africanism, of knowing and understanding cutting-edge technologies and ancient traditions”, through which one can learn the significance of the aesthetic production of Africa. Or Europe.

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Annex

Table 1. Chronological display of Pancho Guedes projects, according to their style as proposed by the architect.

Year	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74
<b>Stiloguedes</b>																								
Casa Leite Martins	■	■	■																					
Prometeu	■	■	■																					
Casas gémeas de Matos Ribeiro		■	■																					
Padaria Saipal		■	■	■																				
Garagem Otto Barbosa			■	■	■																			
Casa gorda				■																				
Leão que Ri						■	■	■	■															
Núcleo de Arte				■																				
Esposa do Prometeu						■																		
<b>Buildings with walls twisting and turning this way and that</b>																								
Casa Swazi Zimbabwe										■	■	■	■	■	■									
Mulher Habitável													■											
Casa que se esvazia em sangue para a piscina																					■			
Hotel para S Martinho do Bilene			■	■	■																■			
<b>A few grass houses</b>																								
Escola infantil Clandestina																			■	■				
Igreja dos 12 Apóstolos de Gala Massala																						■		
Catedral de Palhotas para Maciene																							■	
<b>Parts of villages remembering other villages, (...)</b>																								
Grupo de 8 casas na Coop			■	■																				
Grupo de 12 casas na Coop				■	■	■	■																	
4 casas para a Coop			■	■	■	■	■	■	■															
Casa Mendes de Almeida	■	■	■																					
Casas gémeas José Pedro Gaivão		■	■																					
<b>How Frank Lloyd Wright used to help me in the beginning</b>																								
Casa Sorgentini					■	■																		
Casas gémeas para Urbano Benites						■	■																	
Edifício Delagoa Bay Agency				■																				
Edifício Nauticus					■																			
<b>The gentle art of bending space</b>																								

Year	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74
Portaria da fábrica de cimentos				■																				
Restaurante Zambí						■																		
Hotel na Ponta Vermelha			■																					
Casa Canha																					■			
<b>48 blue and white little banks (...)</b> <b>and ten other black and white ones (...)</b>																								
<b>The American Egyptian style</b>																								
Infantário Piramidal								■	■	■	■													
Yeshouse										■	■	■												
Estação de serviço										■	■													
Casa Desirello															■	■	■	■						
<b>Some bargains in a tropical bush style</b>																								
Escola Primária da Missão de Antioka														■	■	■								
Lar para estudantes de enfermagem																					■	■	■	■
Oficina																				■	■	■		
<b>A neo colonial revival</b>																								
<b>A family of Euclidian palaces</b>																								
Casa Salm														■	■	■								
Casa Almiro do Vale														■	■	■								
Casa Lopes da Silva															■	■	■							
Casa do Frontão quebrado																				■	■	■	■	
Casa Boesch																						■	■	■
<b>A hypothetical industrial zone</b>																								
Fábrica das batatas fritas																								
Fábrica dos cimentos				■																				
Tents and sails																								
<b>Learning machines</b>																								
Waterford school																								
Residência de estudantes Khovolar																								
Convento de S José																								
Escola agrícola de Chicumbane																								
Colégio de Nossa Sra da Conceição																								
Escola técnica dos Caminhos de Ferro																								
Escola dos Correios																								
<b>Habitable boxes and people shelves</b>																								
Casa do Dragão	■	■	■																					
Edifício Tonelli				■	■	■	■	■																
Edifício para António Fernandes						■																		

Year	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74
Apartamentos e lojas em Maxaquene						█																		
<b>The odds and the dead ends</b>																								
Casa Dr. Luz de Sousa					█																			
Prédio no Alto Mahé						█																		
Casa Vasco Teixeira												█												
6 casas para Eileen Fragoso																█								
Comboio de Casas na Beira																						█		
<b>Half a dozen disparate churches</b>																								
Igreja metodista Wesliana																	█	█						
Igreja Anglicana de S Cipriano do Chamanculo																				█	█	█	█	█
Igreja da Sagrada Família												█	█	█										
Igreja da Missão de S Tiago Maior, em Nyamandhlovo												█	█	█										
<b>Tombs and other houses for the dead</b>																								
<b>My arched and somewhat roman manner</b>																								
Estalagem de S Gabriel																				█				
Duas Casas gémeas para Marino Pinto e Aguiar																				█	█	█		
Casa Vermelha																				█				
<b>Temporary towers, slabs and slices of street face</b>																								
Prédio Abreu Santos Rocha						█																		
Prédio Isauro Lopes										█														
Prédio Spence e Lemos										█														
Casa para a Associação dos Naturais												█												
Edifício Octávio Lobo												█												
Edifício José da Costa												█	█	█										
<b>Additions and alterations</b>																								
Igreja de Sta Ana de Munhuana												█	█	█										
Bar do Hotel Polana					█																			
Metamorphosed places																								
A chain of service stations																								
The passages, steps, places, squares and monuments of the imaginary city																								
The bubbliies.																								

Table 2. Chronological display of Pancho Guedes projects, according to their type of program.

Year	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74
Casa Leite Martins	█	█	█																					
Casa Mendes de Almeida	█	█	█																					
Casas gémeas José Pedro Gaivão		█	█																					
Casas gémeas de Matos Ribeiro		█	█																					
Casa gorda				█																				
Casa Dr. Luz de Sousa					█																			
Casa Sorgentini					█	█																		
Casas gémeas para Urbano Benites						█	█																	
Yeshouse										█	█	█												
Casa Swazi Zimbabwe										█	█	█	█	█	█									
Casa Vasco Teixeira												█												
Mulher Habitável													█											
Casa Salm													█	█	█									
Casa Almiro do Vale														█	█	█								
Casa Desirello															█	█	█	█						
Casa Lopes da Silva																█	█	█						
6 casas para Eileen Fragoso																█	█	█	█	█				
Casa do Frontão quebrado																		█	█	█	█			
Casa Vermelha																			█					
Casa que se esvazia em sangue para a piscina																				█				
Casa Canha																					█			
Duas Casas gémeas para Marino Pinto e Aguiar																					█	█	█	
Casa Boesch																						█	█	█
Grupo de 8 casas na Coop			█	█																				
Grupo de 12 casas na Coop				█	█	█																		
4 casas para a Coop			█	█	█	█	█	█	█															
Comboio de Casas na Beira																							█	
Prometeu	█	█	█																					
Casa do Dragão	█	█	█																					
Edifício Tonelli				█	█	█	█	█	█															
Edifício Delagoa Bay Agency				█																				
Edifício para António Fernandes					█																			
Edifício Nauticus					█																			
Prédio no Alto Mahé							█																	
Leão que Ri								█	█	█														
Apartamentos e lojas em Maxaquene								█																

Year	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	
Prédio Abreu Santos Rocha						■																			
Prédio Isauro Lopes										■															
Prédio Spence e Lemos										■															
Casa para a Associação dos Naturais												■													
Edifício Octávio Lobo												■													
Edifício José da Costa												■	■	■	■										
Padaria Saipal		■	■	■																					
Garagem Otto Barbosa			■	■	■																				
Fábrica dos cimentos				■																					
Estação de serviço										■	■														
Fábrica das batatas fritas												■	■												
Oficina																			■	■	■	■			
Hotel na Ponta Vermelha			■																						
Hotel para S Martinho do Bilene			■	■	■																				
Estalagem de S Gabriel																				■					
Bar do Hotel Polana					■																				
Restaurante Zambi						■																			
Infantário Piramidal								■	■	■	■														
Waterford school												■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Escola Primária da Missão de Antioka													■	■	■	■									
Escola agrícola de Chicumbane														■											
Residência de estudantes Khovolar																■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Convento de S José																■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Escola infantil Clandestina																			■	■					
Colégio de Nossa Sra da Conceição																			■	■	■				
Lar para estudantes de enfermagem																				■	■	■	■	■	■
Escsola técnica dos Caminhos de Ferro																						■	■	■	■
Escola dos Correios																							■	■	■
Igreja da Sagrada Família												■	■	■											
Igreja da Missão de S Tiago Maior, em Nyamandhlovo												■	■	■											
Igreja de Sta Ana de Munhuana												■	■	■											
Igreja metodista Wesliana																	■	■							
Igreja Anglicana de S Cipriano do Chamanculo																				■	■	■	■	■	■
Igreja dos 12 Apóstolos de Gala Massala																					■				
Catedral de Palhotas para Maciene																						■			