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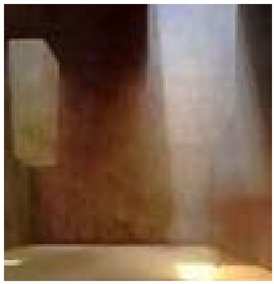
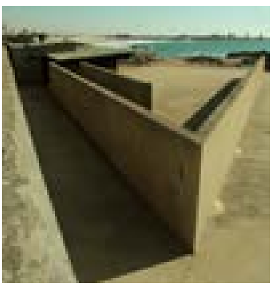
cork - a spatial experience



working with cork

When I was approached by Porto Academy to tutor this workshop, I immediately suggested a hands-on project that could allow the participants to interact with a real site and produce a 1.1 scale project. As the workshop got closer, the opportunity to work with modular cork blocks (100x50x30cm) became real. In order to create a functional project, it was suggested to us to design the equipment needed for the final presentation and closing party - namely a bar, a DJ table, an auditorium, surfaces for presentations and lounge areas.
This concept worked perfectly with what I had in mind - driven by a defined budget of 420 cork blocks, and a tight deadline for the final presentation built entirely with our own hands.

Initial concepts and ideas took place in class and were developed further on site. The proximity of our architecture studio to the site helped us prove right or wrong our thoughts in line with the main objectives of our workshop. The participants presented four different masterplans from which we tried to elicit the several common points in each proposal. Following a group discussion about each proposal, we came up with a final strategy which we could test immediately on site.

The first 1.1 trials started to unfold the problems on site, which included the number of blocks appointed to every intervention. Starting off from 100 blocks per group, we eventually had to negotiate the number of blocks according to the size of the elements designed - a difficult excercise which proved that we required more blocks than what we actually had available.

At that time, i had to act. I looked to make a sinthesis of all the solutions taking them to their essential and taking advantage of the existing constructions like the Carlos Ramos Pavilion, the present walls and trees on site and organized the blocks around these elements to create spaces in tension to each other. Having only one last afternoon on our hands, we managed to make the last configuration of spaces work. With some wine and a group photo in order, this booklet was an opportunity for us to reflect on the process that led us to the final result. Whether our design works or not, we can only tell after the party is over.

ps
beyond all the academic experiences we had this week (lectures, trips, etc) we had above all a great time.

Joao Paulo Loureiro

the project

construction process



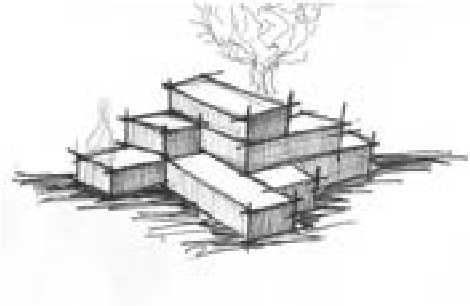


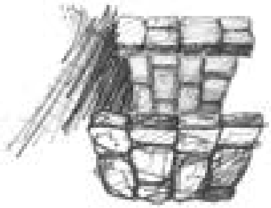
group work

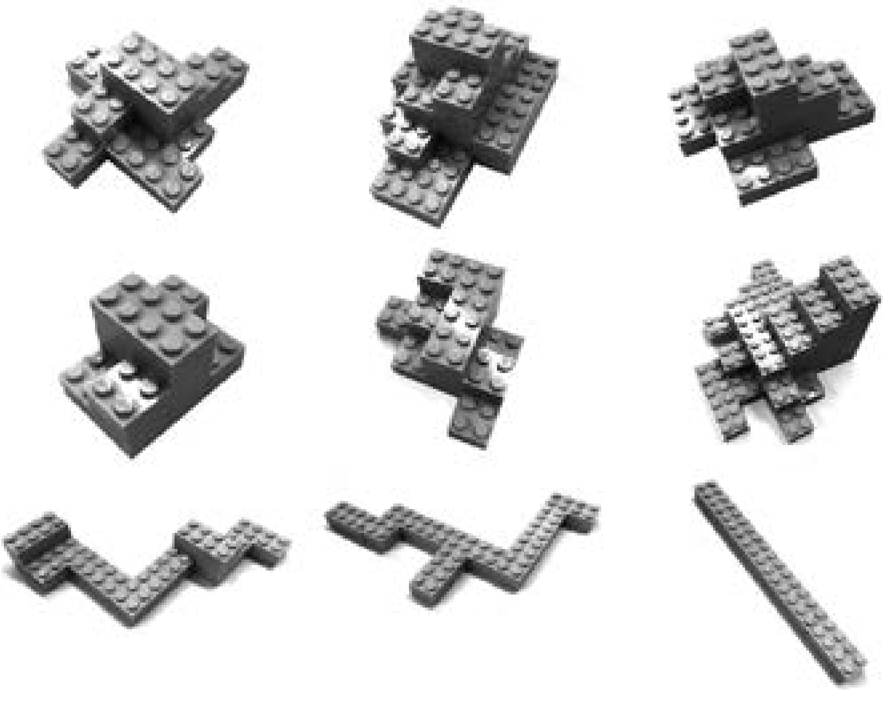
entrance and lounge area

The intervention at the secondary entrance was mainly driven by the presence of the official access to our site, a presence which we tried to reinterpret into a spatial confinement defined by a 5x5m boundary. These walls create a tension that challenges the route of the visitors – whether this spatial experience will be intriguing or avoided by those who will attend the party.

A similar tension is experienced in the layout of the lounge areas spread around the site. Resorting to low and elongated configurations, the cork blocks take the role of low seats occupying the cosiest spaces on site – beneath the trees and close to the landscaped areas.

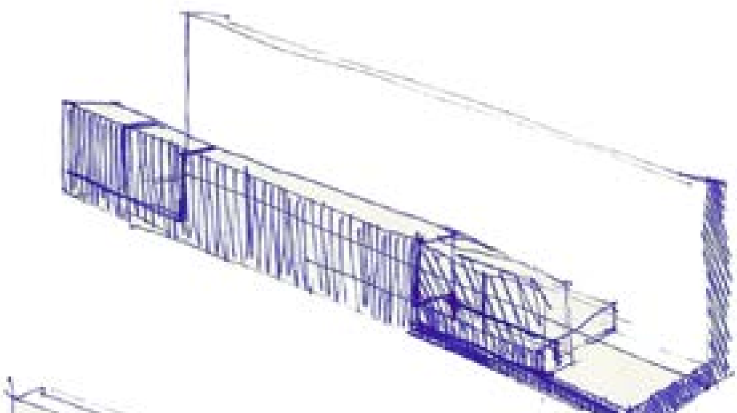




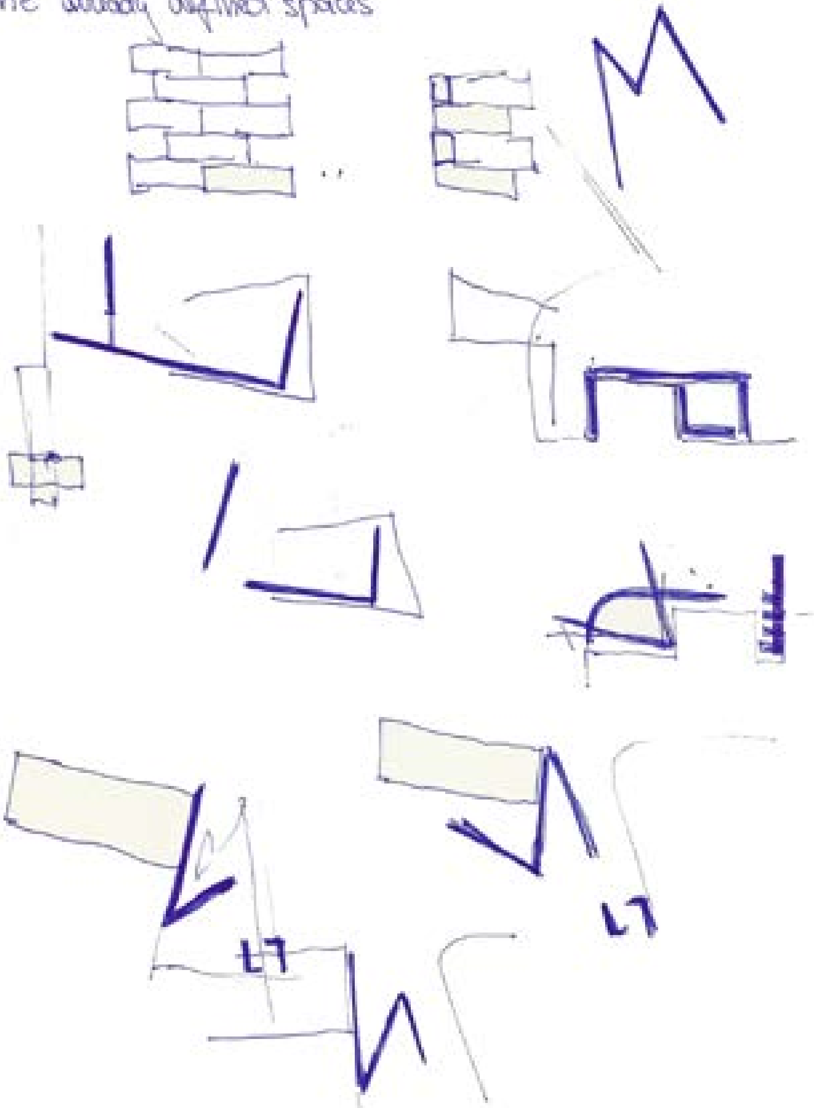


dj table & dancefloor and bar area

The area of the party is placed in the middle of the garden, beetween the Siza's Carlos Ramos Pavilion and the Pink house, it combines the lounge space, exhibition space and the auditorium for the presentation of the projects.
From the analysis of the area and the study of the functions we defined the equipment collocation; We had have the possibility to talk with the planner of the evening, and he help us to understand how they work. It's important that the bar table is linear and continuous and there must be a zone to make the payments, this zone can be lower than the rest of the other structure, so we decide to put the bar on the orizontal line linking the longue space and the auditorium space.
The Dj set is placed so to create a 90 degree corner with the bar table. It is visible from all the point of the garden, and he separete the a more quite part of the lounge part from the dancefloor trough a gate.
The design of the two structure were born by the study of th cork and his size. We try to create a continium with the other structure that rappresent also the crearive process of our workshop and the entire Porto Accademy workshop during the week.



redefine already defined spaces



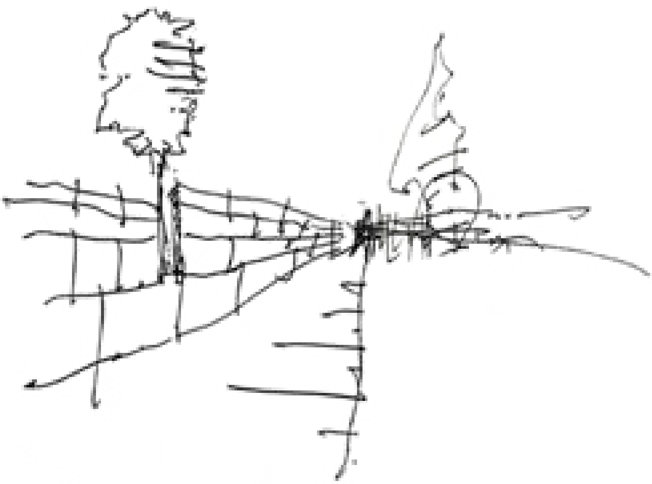
exhibition area

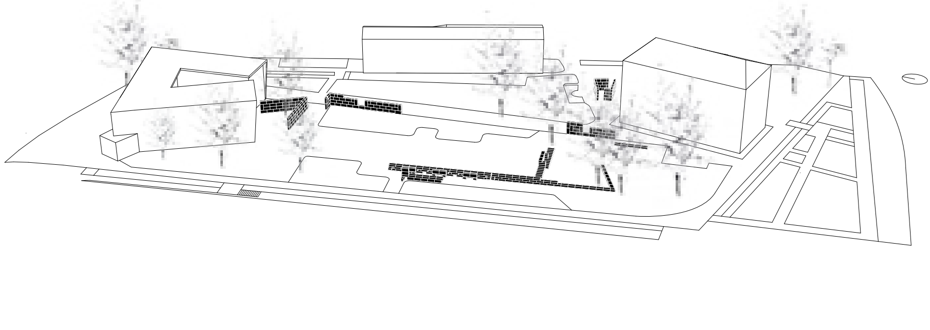
The exhibition area is placed along the main garden boulevard, adjiacent to the green space destined to the bar and to the party.

The design solution guarantees a visual and compositive continuity with the auditorium design. It is formally related to Siza's Carlos Ramos pavilion as well.

It is made by 70 cork blocks arranged to form a linear element divided into two pieces and placed just on one side of the boulevard.

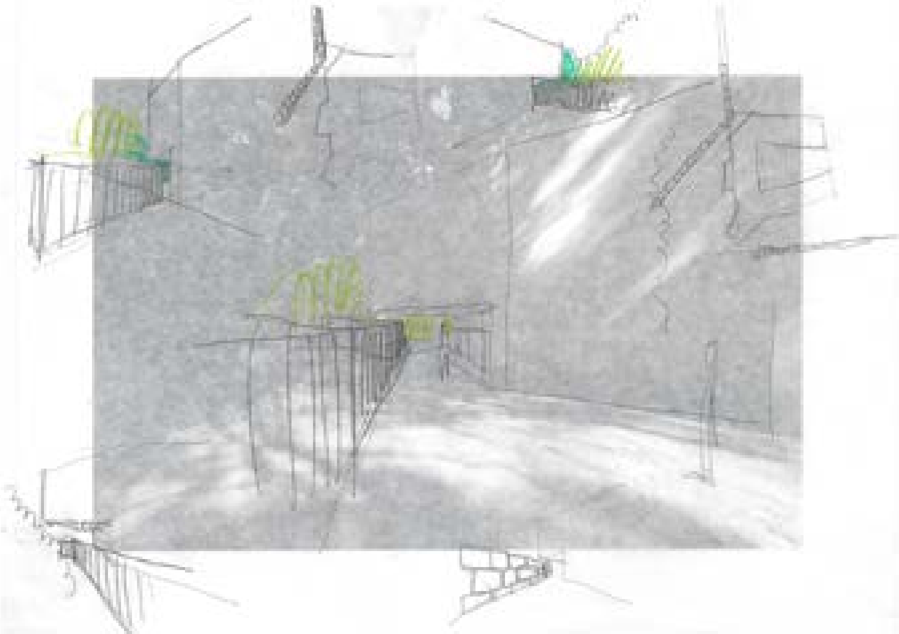
To confer plasticity to the wall, the height varies from 1.50 m till 2.00 m, while to confer it poetry two open air windows create perspective games and a more strict relationship with the organic context and the rest of the equipment design.

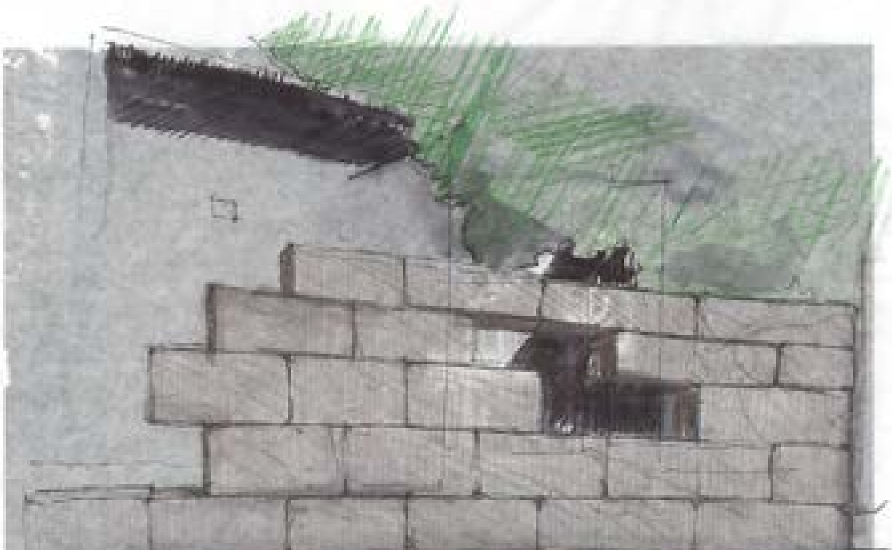




presentation area

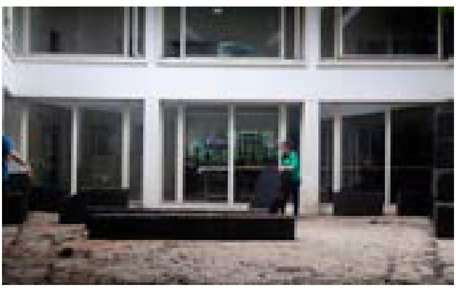
The main purpose of the presentation area is to host the final ceremony of Porto Academy summer school. More than 200 people are expected to present their works, so Siza's building is the more adapted for this purpose. Not just as a symbol of the University of Architecture, but also for its U shape. Thanks to the existing space created by the patio, people feel naturally invited to gather inside. Several rows of benches and the projector screen, placed in the middle under the shadows, will reinforce the idea of the auditorium.
This space is prolonged and enlarge by two additional walls that welcome more people in a less formal way. Following the existing lines and leading the guests to the garden, these walls make the connection between Architecture and Nature. They surround a big tree and, supported by a window, the relation exterior-interior is emphasized.
Moreover, a second intervention modifies the pavilion creating a new space, which works as an access to the exhibition. The missing corner is completed with two provocative walls that dramatize the contrast between the black cork and the white façade.
With a limited number of cork blocks the original project has been changed, reduced and completely rebuilt. The destroying processes were necessary for developing a final intervention that could fit in the budget.



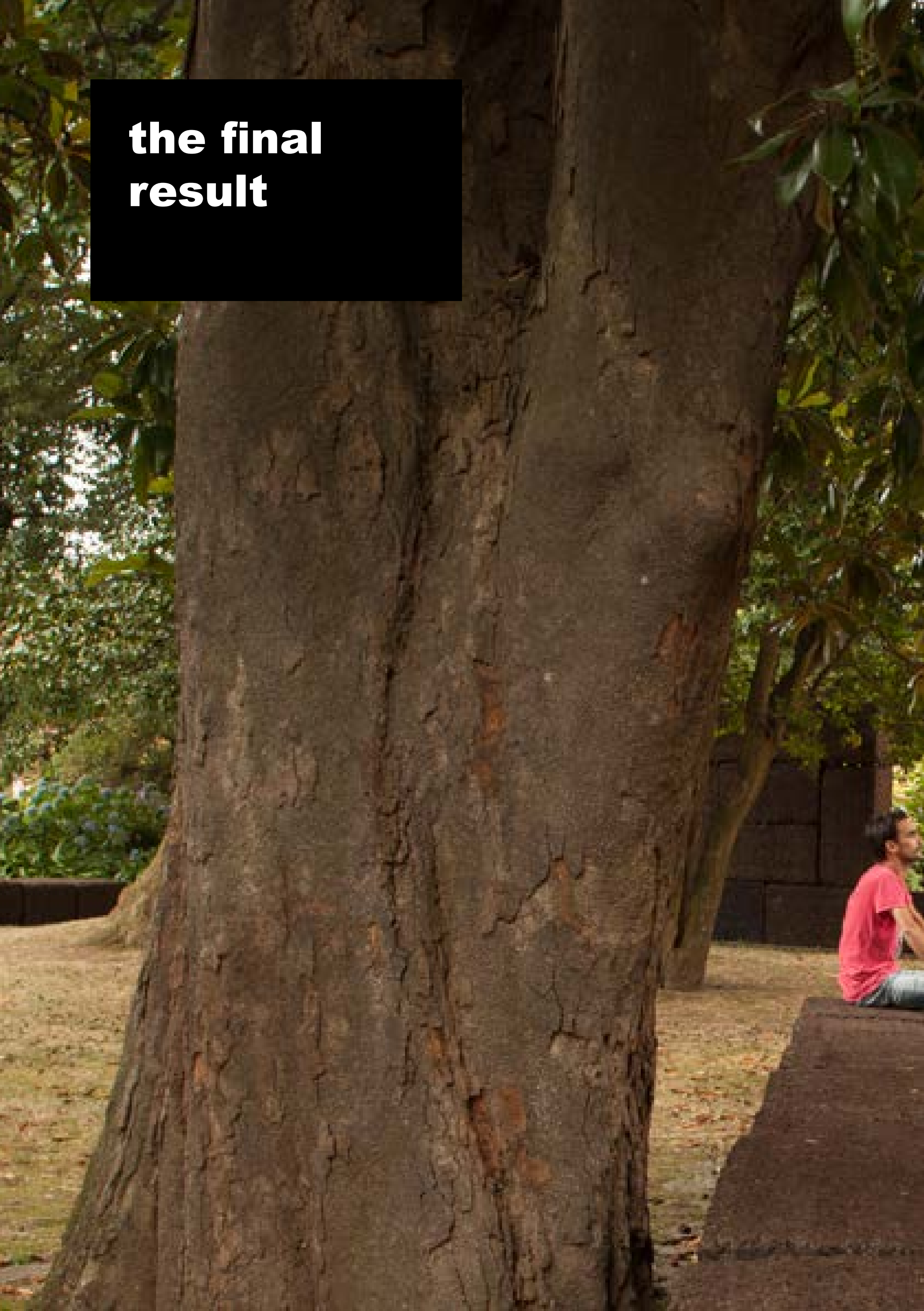









the final result



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photos of the party