

LAURA CRISTEA

breaking ground

22 beginnings

All great architects were once young, probably had no clue where to start, some being more self-conscious, others just following instinct, more or less prepared to 'make great architecture' off the paper and outside of pure theoretical confines. So, where does a young architect, like you, begin, in a more and more complex world? There is certainly no fixed answer to that, no success recipe, but a world of unique stories to learn from.

Debut works always possess the seed of what comes next, and very often have something raw, daring, yet undefined, less curated than mature masterpieces. We invite you to choose a prominent architect/landscape architect that you are personally interested in or admire, and look into their very 'first one' - the story, the struggle, the intellectual interest, the skill, the insecurities, the discoveries, the relevance.

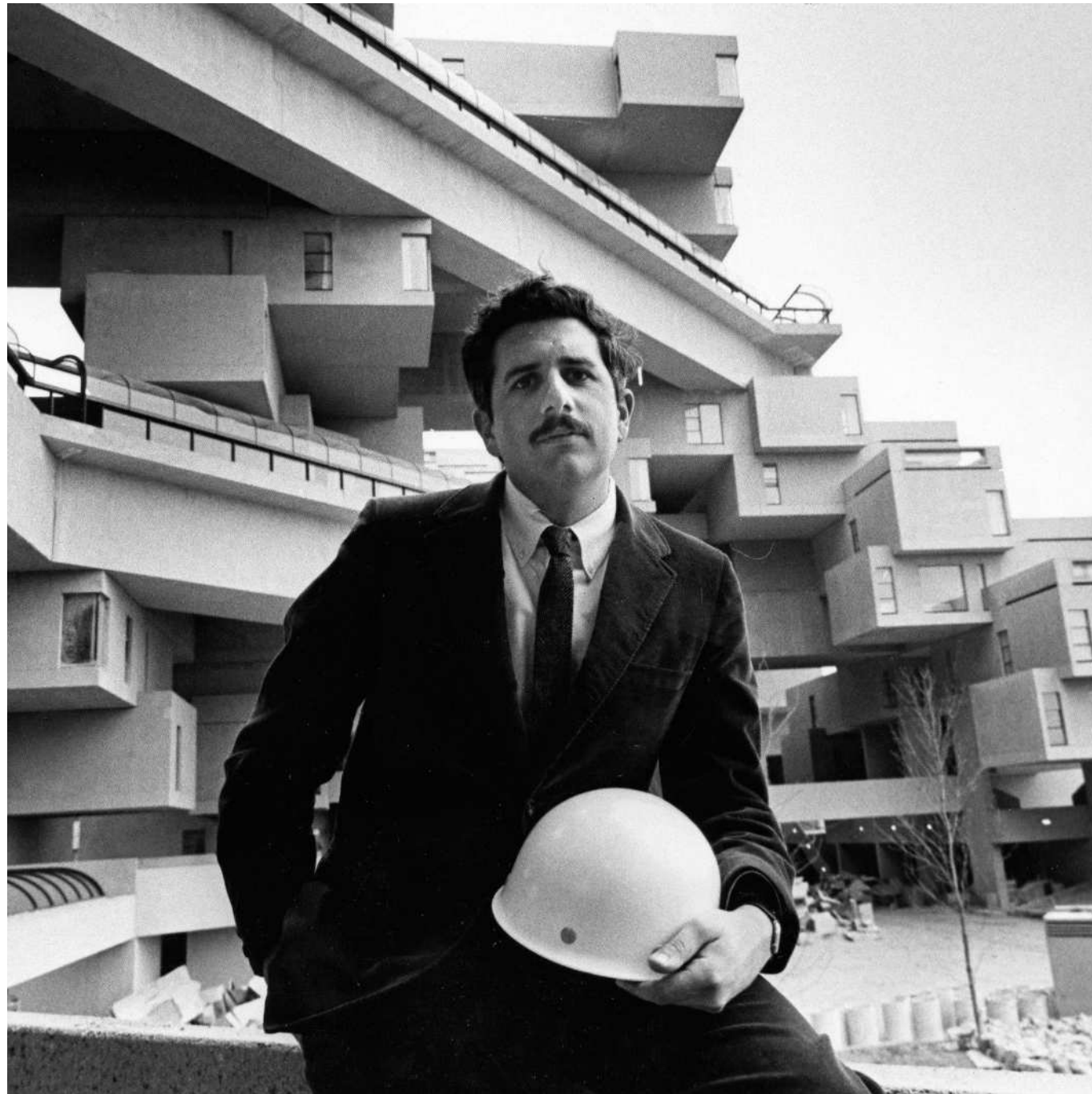
WORKSHOP LEADER

Laura Cristea

STUDIO ASSISTANT

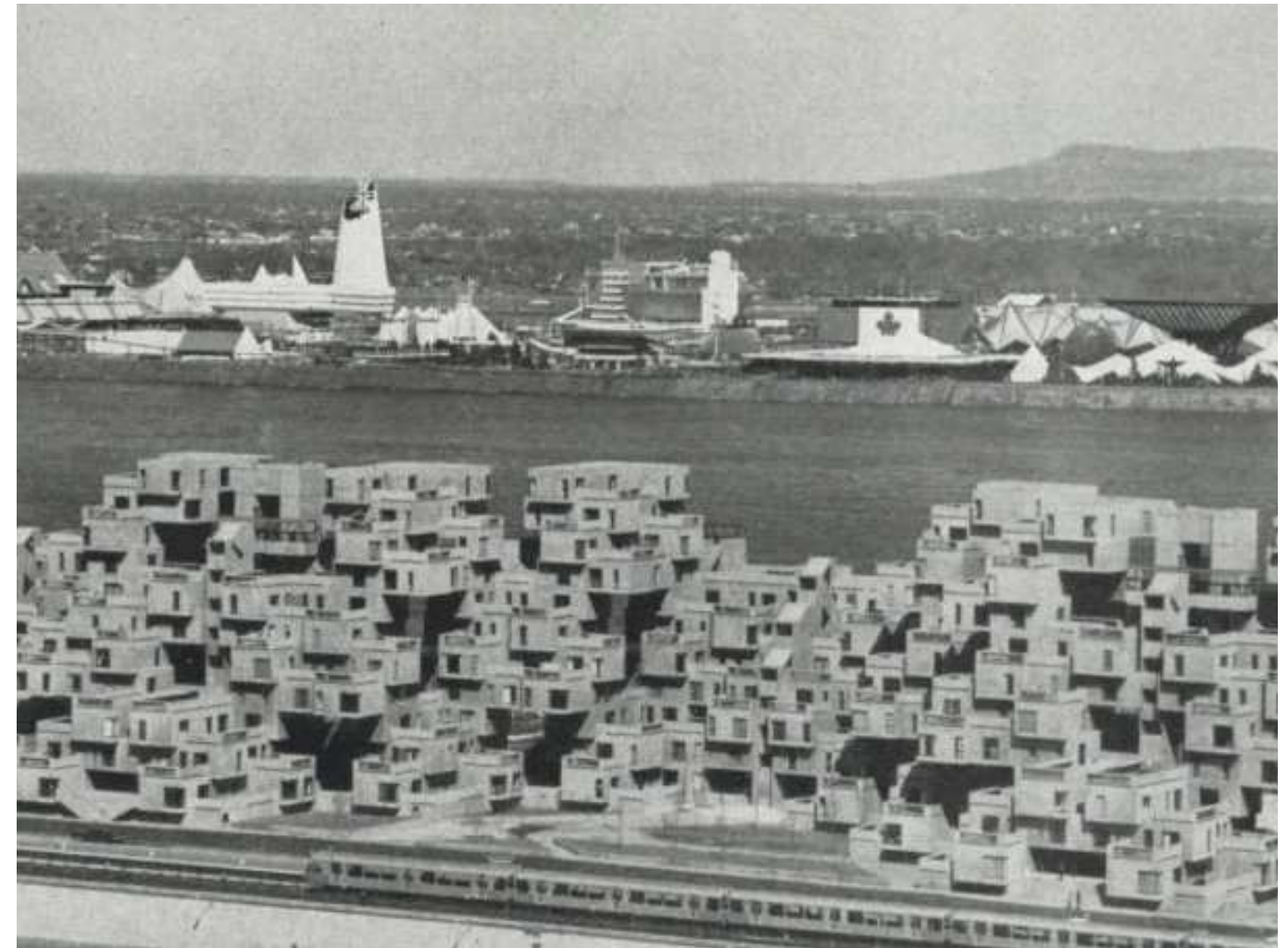
Ludwig Hochleitner

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Moshe Safdie at the construction site of Habitat 67 in 1966.

MOSHE SAFDIE
Haifa, Israel, 1938



Habitat 67 overlooking Montreal's port and the exposition pavillions on the opposite shore photographed in 1967.

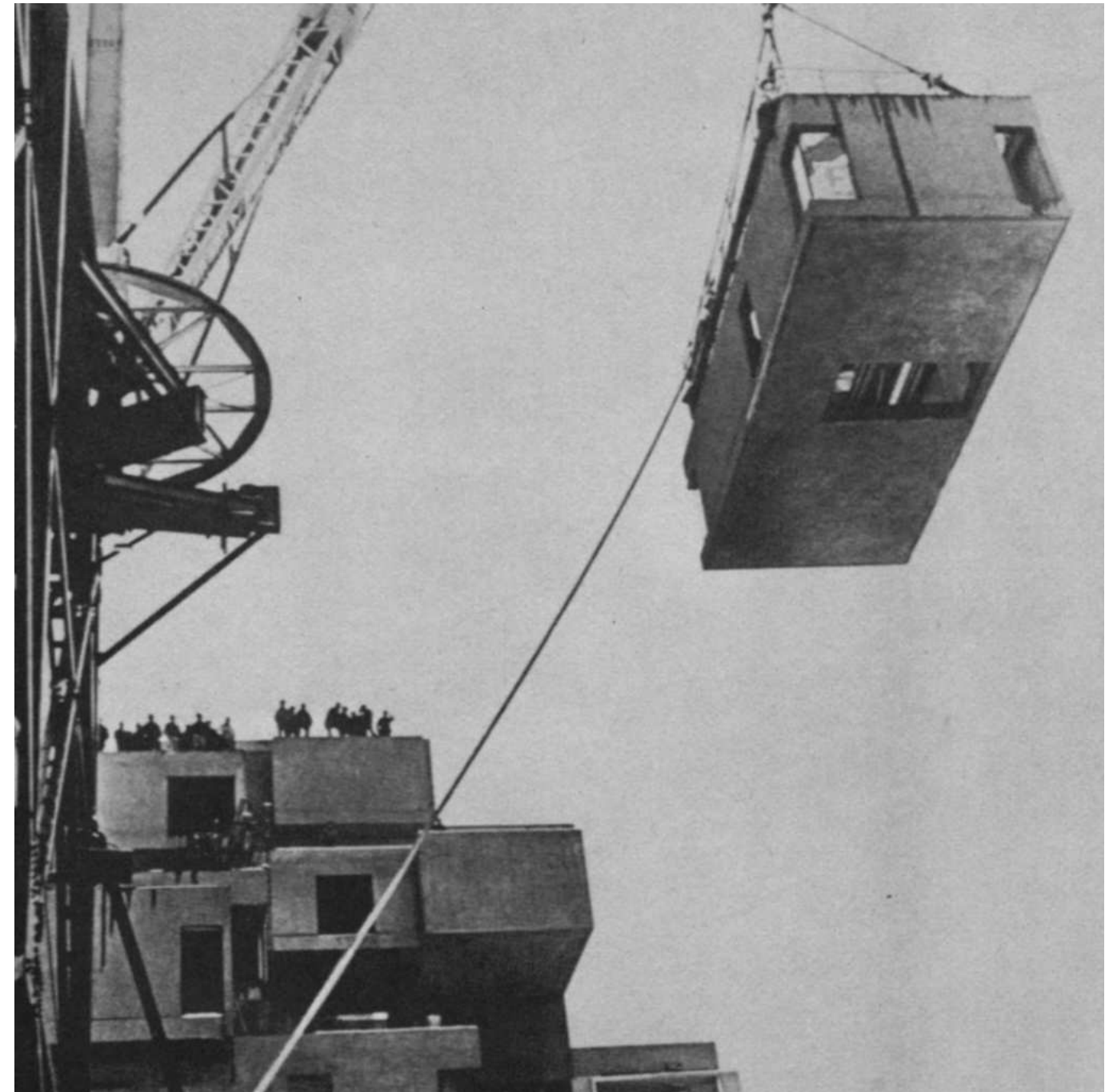
In 1963, at only 25, Moshe was just fresh out of university and on his way to work with Louis Kahn in Philadelphia, when he was approached by his university professor Sandy van Ginkel, who was part of the urban planning commission during the build-up to the Montreal Expo in 1967. Moshe was asked to work on the masterplan of the exposition and to use his thesis project as a basis. Colonel Churchill, who was part of the exposition committee, would stand behind the project saying that "I can see that it (Habitat 67) would make the difference between a real exposition and just a fair. I insist that it stay on".

HABITAT 67
Montreal, Canada, 1963

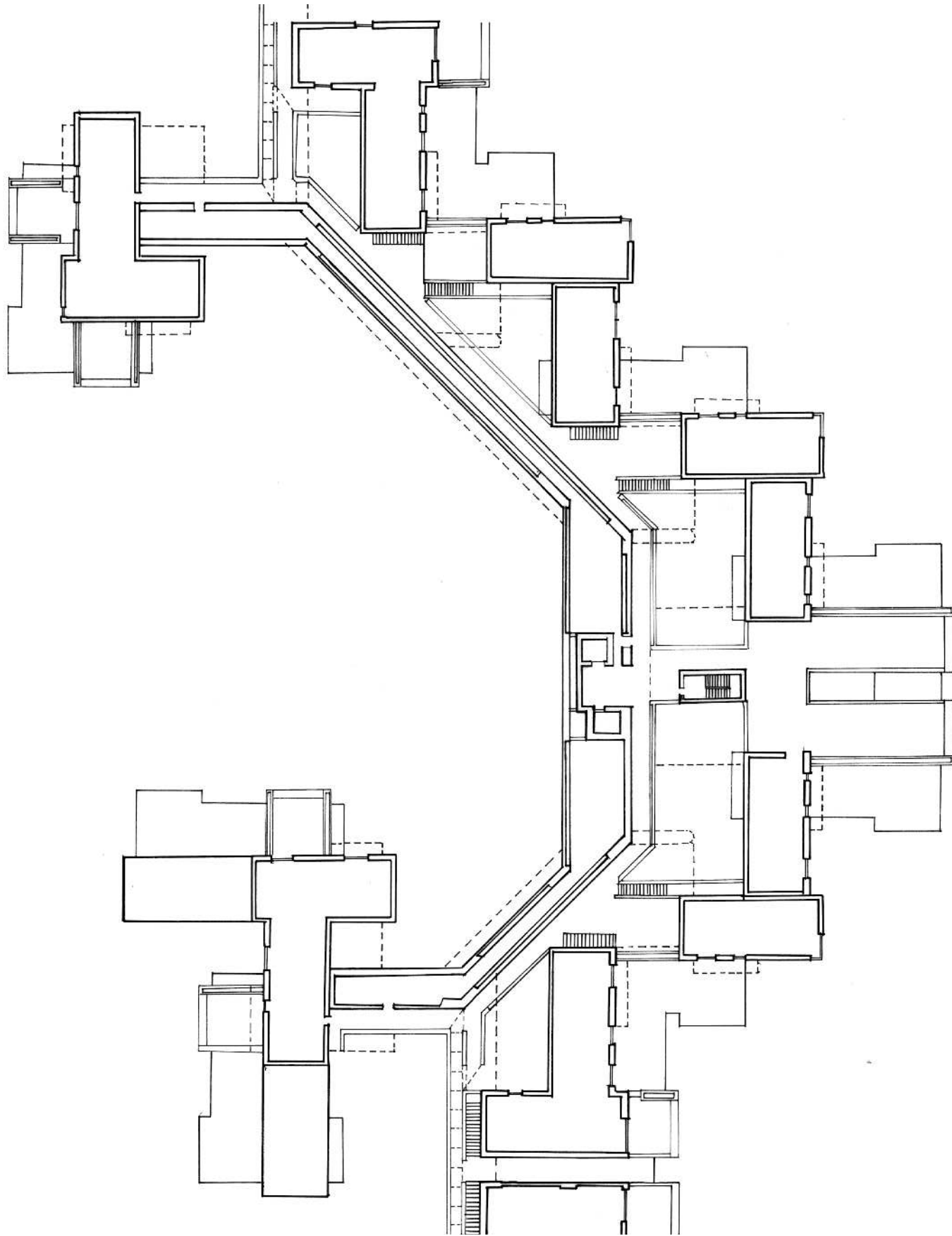


View of the terraces that result from the aggregation of apartments photographed in 1967.

Moshe's idea was to create a housing complex with the advantages of individual housing such as green spaces, natural light, intimacy, private decks, which he had already in his thesis project *A three-dimensional modular building system*. His thesis took inspiration from the town of Taxco in Mexico where walkways and stairs are used to bridge the challenging topography. The original plans called for 1200 apartments, but it was reduced to 146 apartments. The whole complex was built using 354 boxes made of prefabricated concrete, combined so that they form apartments of different dimensions.

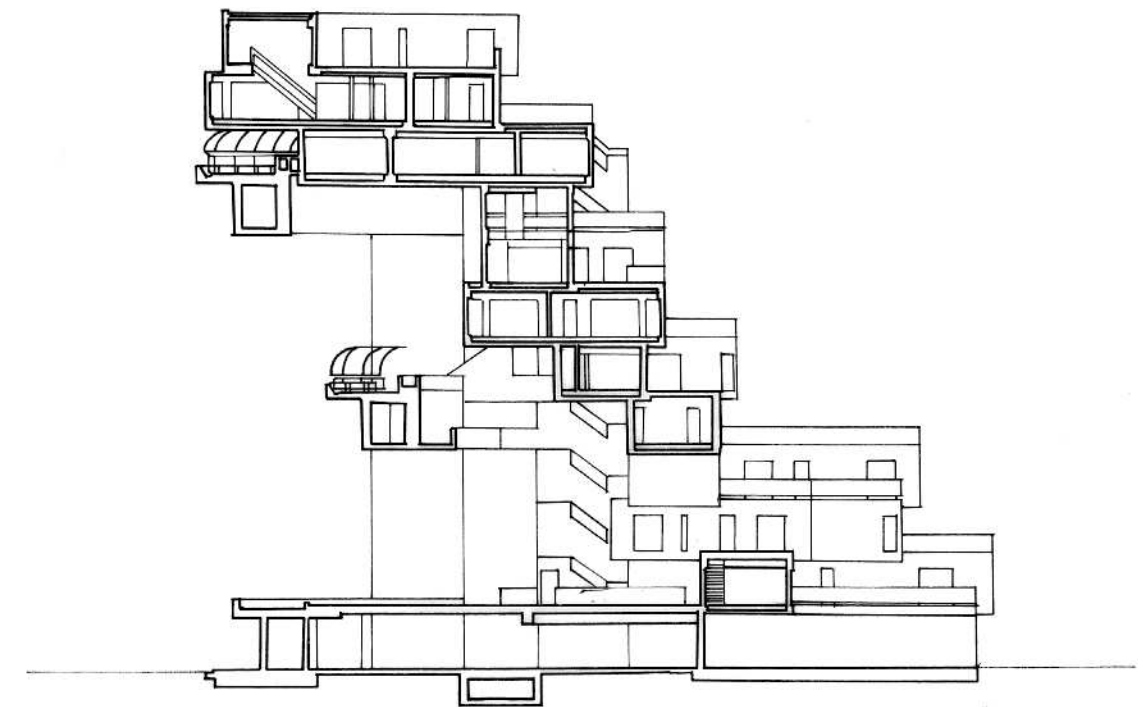


Prefabricated apartments are hoisted onto the superstructure using cranes, c. 1964.



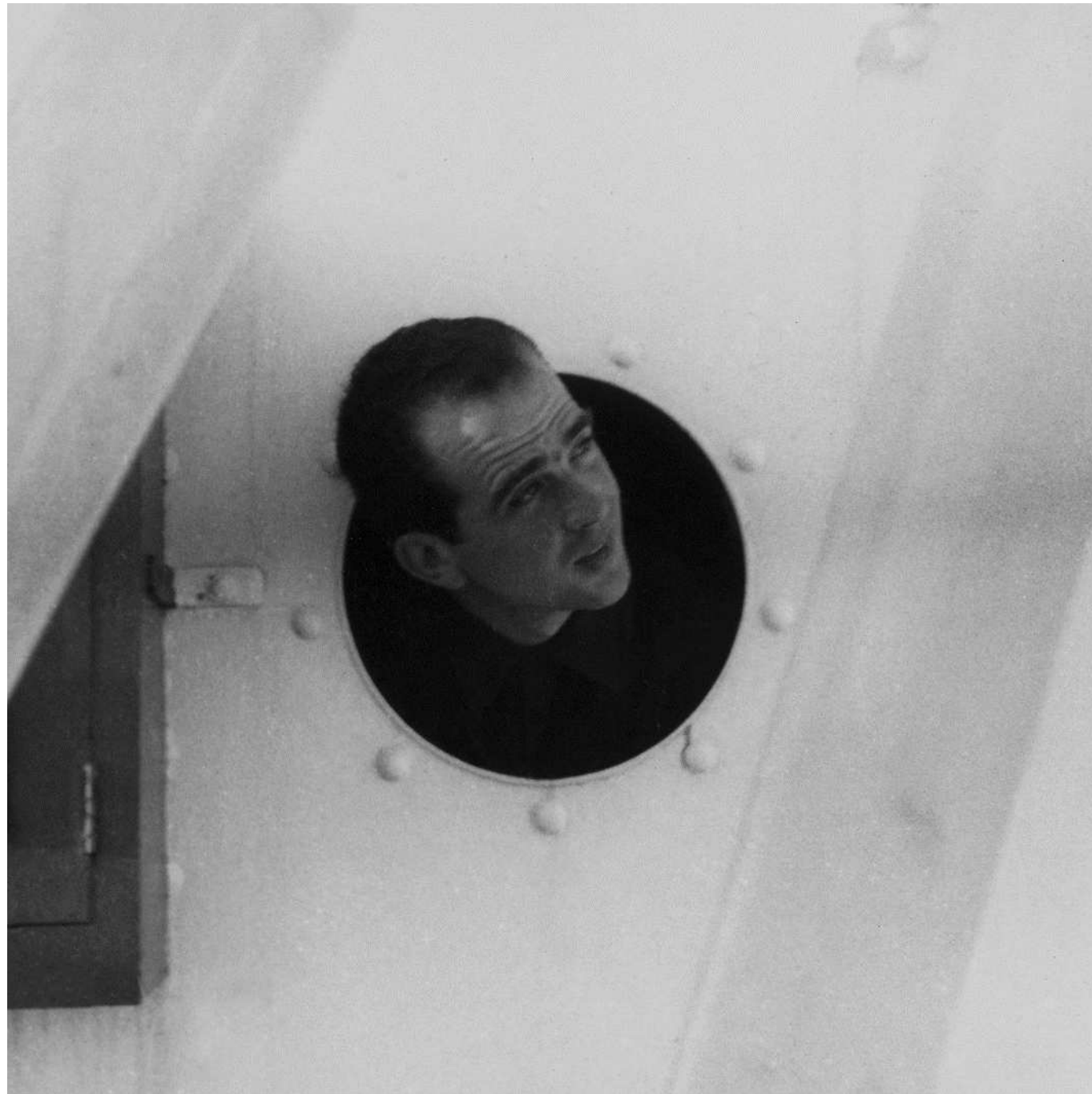
MOSHE SAFDIE

Plan drawn on tracing paper (scale 1:350) by Alexandra Elena Nicu



HABITAT 67

Section drawn on tracing paper (scale 1:350) by Alexandra Elena Nicu



Fernando Távora aboard the ship *Crosbian* photographed by Viana de Lima in 1951.

FERNANDO TÁVORA
Porto, Portugal, 1923



Main entrance photographed by Vincenzo Riso in the 1990s.

In 1953 Fernando was 30 years old and had recently graduated from the Porto School of Fine Arts. He had originally enrolled in the program in 1941, though his studies spanned over a decade as he balanced early professional practices, theory writing, and institutional transitions. The research he had published at the time about human ideals through the transformation of space demonstrated his exceptional capabilities, and made him a visible figure in his local context. As a result of his engagement, the city council of Santa Maria da Feira directly commissioned him to design a new market for the municipality.

MERCADO MUNICIPAL VILA DA FEIRA
Santa Maria da Feira, Portugal, 1953

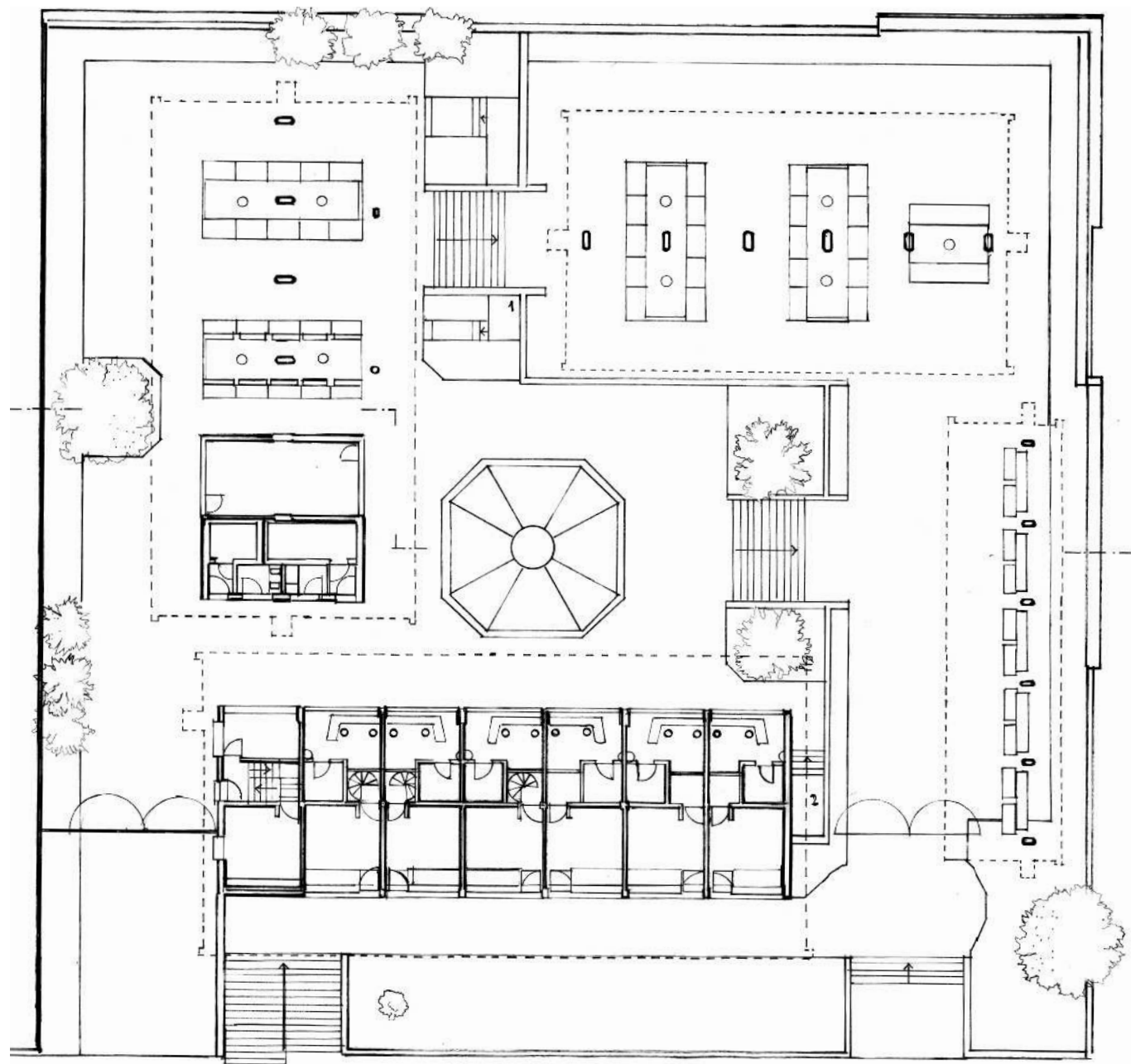


View towards the main entrance from inside photographed by Vincenzo Riso in the 1990s.

The site features challenging topography, to which the project effectively adapts by dividing the complex into two platforms accommodating the four existing pavilions. Commercial establishments are located on a higher level, while a central courtyard, set on a lower level, features a fountain and an octagonal bench. The pavilions follow a structural principle: a linear succession of bays, each with a central column and two cantilevered crossbeams. Spaced four meters center to center, the columns establish a secondary modulation and a clear structural rhythm, while the pavement expresses a 1×1 m square grid. More than just a place for the trade of commercial goods, according to Távora, this project is a place for community gathering, it's a meeting point.

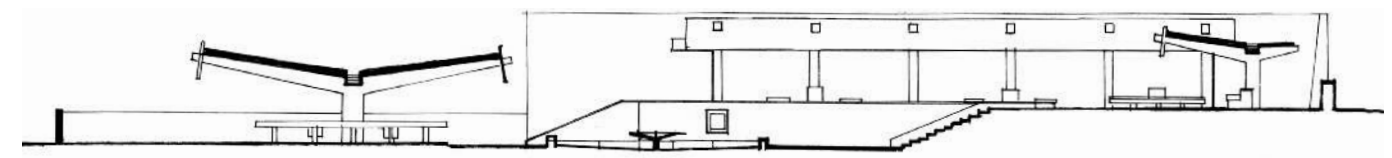


View towards the surrounding from the upper platform photographed by Vincenzo Riso in the 1990s.



FERNANDO TÁVORA

Plan drawn on tracing paper (scale 1:200) by Ana Cabral



MERCADO MUNICIPAL VILA DA FEIRA

Section drawn on tracing paper (scale 1:200) by Ana Cabral



Ralph Erskine working on his foldable drawing table in the house photographed in 1942.

RALPH ERSKINE

Mill Hill, London, England, 1914



External view of the back facade used to store firewood photographed in 1941.

During World War II at the age of 27, Ralph built a cabin together with his wife Ruth on a plot in *Djupdalen* gifted to them by a local farmer who also lent his horse and sledge for transporting materials. The house is in principle a single room with dimensions 6m x 3.6m x 2m high; which is divided into a kitchen and a living space by a fireplace and chimney.

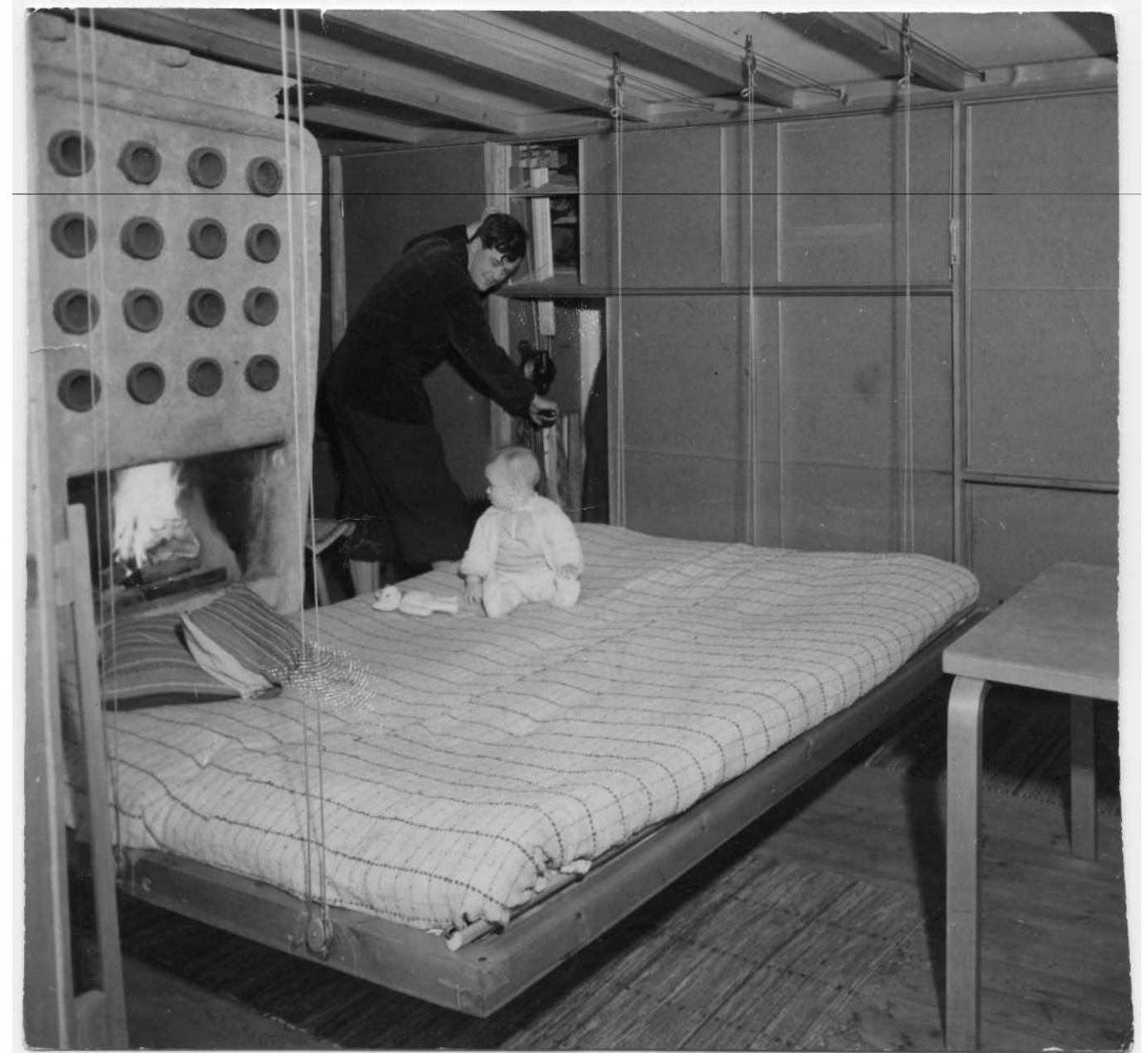
LÅDAN (BOX)

Djupdalen, Lissma, Sweden, 1941

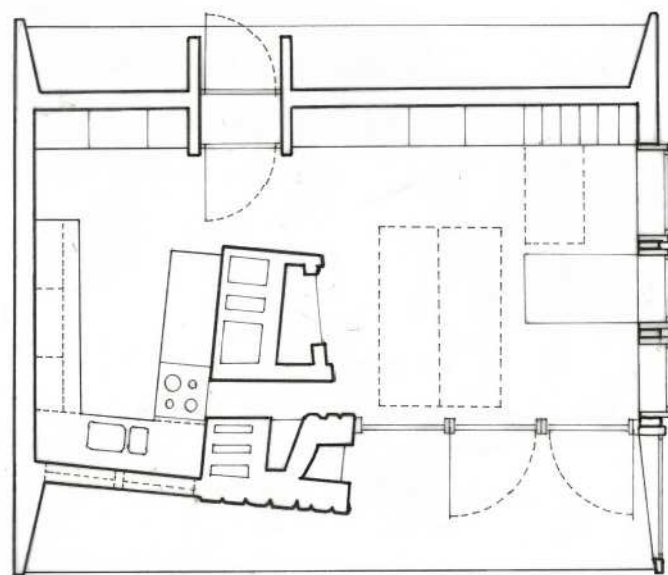
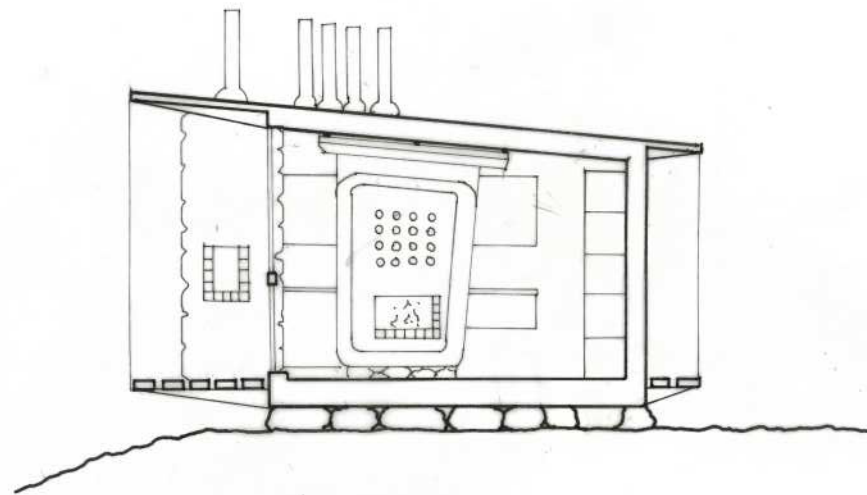


Ruth Erskine photographed during the construction of the house in the winter of 1941.

The north wall of the construction is lined with cupboards for kitchen and office use in which a foldaway drawing table is stored. These cupboards together with the external storage of firewood provide insulation to the north wall. The south-facing wall is fully glazed to the living space and adjacent to an external veranda area, which is protected from the wind by the extensions of the flank walls. In the compact living space a bed is hoisted up to the ceiling when not in use; it can also be arranged as a sofa. There was no bathroom and no running water supplied to the house.

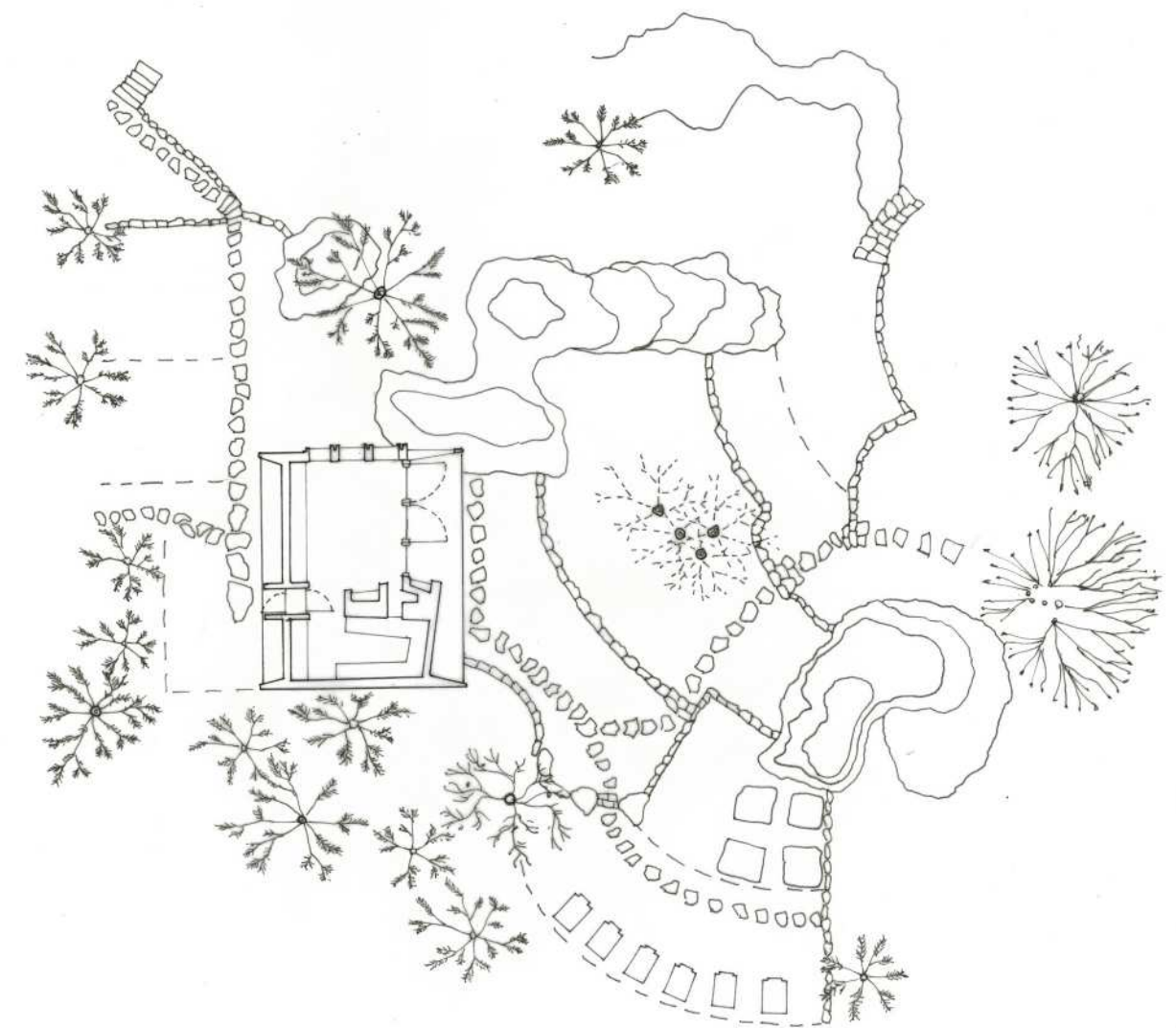


Ralph Erskine with his child sitting on the suspended bed photographed in 1942.



RALPH ERSKINE

Plan + Section drawn on tracing paper (scale 1:50) by Artur Raik



LÅDAN (BOX)

Site plan drawn on tracing paper (scale 1:100) by Artur Raik



JAN KINSBERGEN
Biel/Bienne, Switzerland, 1967



Bottom floor with view to the mountains photographed by Georg Aerni.

After working with Hans Kollhoff, Steven Holl and teaching at ETH Zürich, Jan designed House Flora, his third built house. At the age of 49, he was commissioned by Astrid and Igor Schwegler to design an extension to the former hotel in Seelisberg. The project began with a simple sentence from the clients: “It should be something light, something with columns.” Together with ETH Zürich structural engineer Joseph Schwartz, Jan reduced the initial idea from two columns to a single half-column. What started as a straightforward request became the central architectural idea of the project.

HAUS FLORA
Seelisberg, Switzerland, 2016

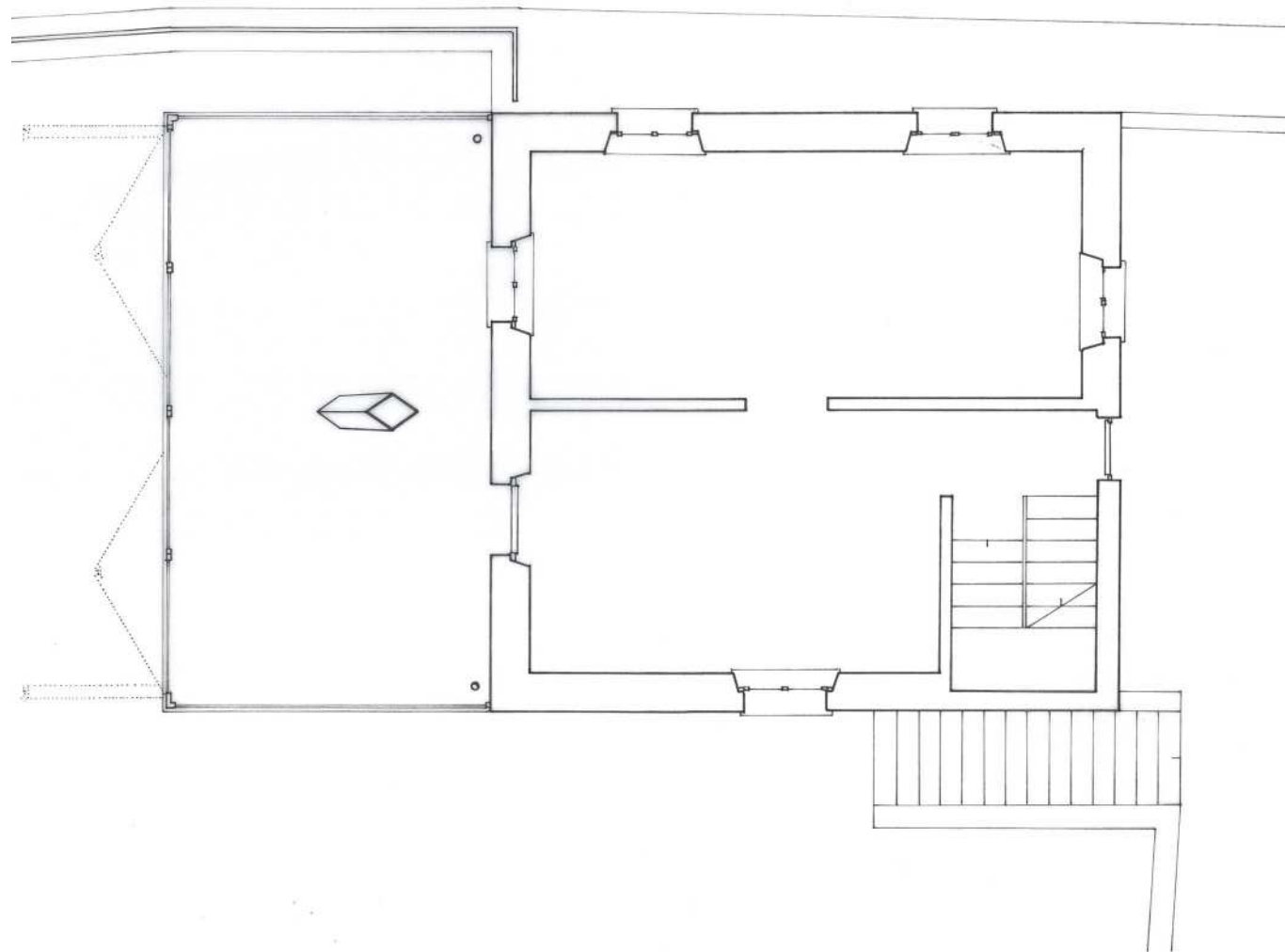


Bottom floor with view to the mountains photographed by Georg Aerni.

Rather than treating structure as a purely technical necessity, Jan used it to generate the entire spatial concept. The reduced structure creates open, precisely proportioned spaces that frame the surrounding landscape, allowing structure, architecture and site to merge into one element. Looking back, House Flora already contains many of the themes that would later define Jan's work: architecture emerging from a single constructive idea, the close dialogue between structure and space, and the ability of a precise intervention to create spatial clarity, identity and atmosphere.

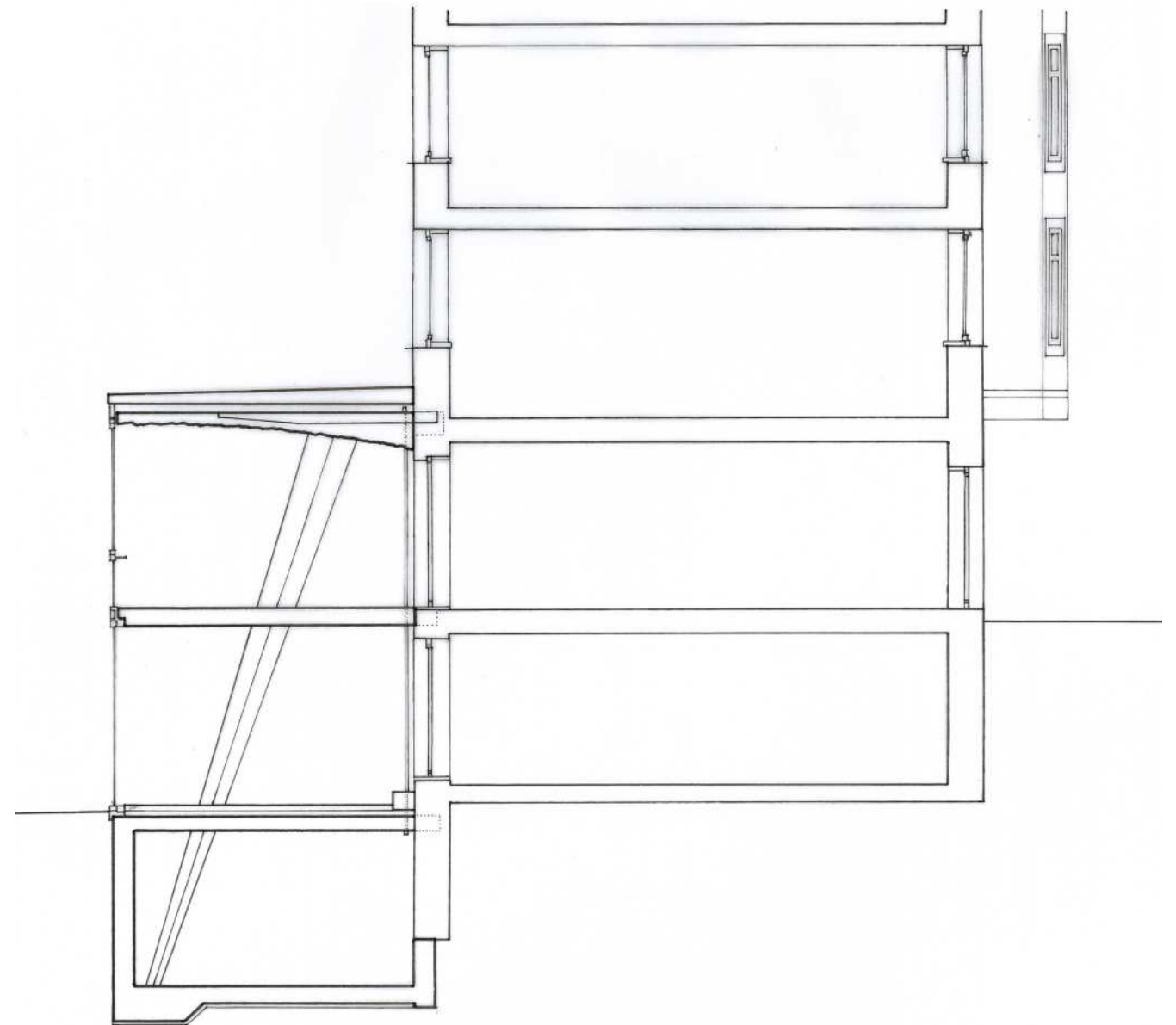


Top floor photographed by Georg Aerni.



JAN KINSBERGEN

Plan drawn on tracing paper (scale 1:75) by Daniel Nitsche



HAUS FLORA

Section drawn on tracing paper (scale 1:75) by Daniel Nitsche



Pedro Ramalho, third from left, photographed in 1964.

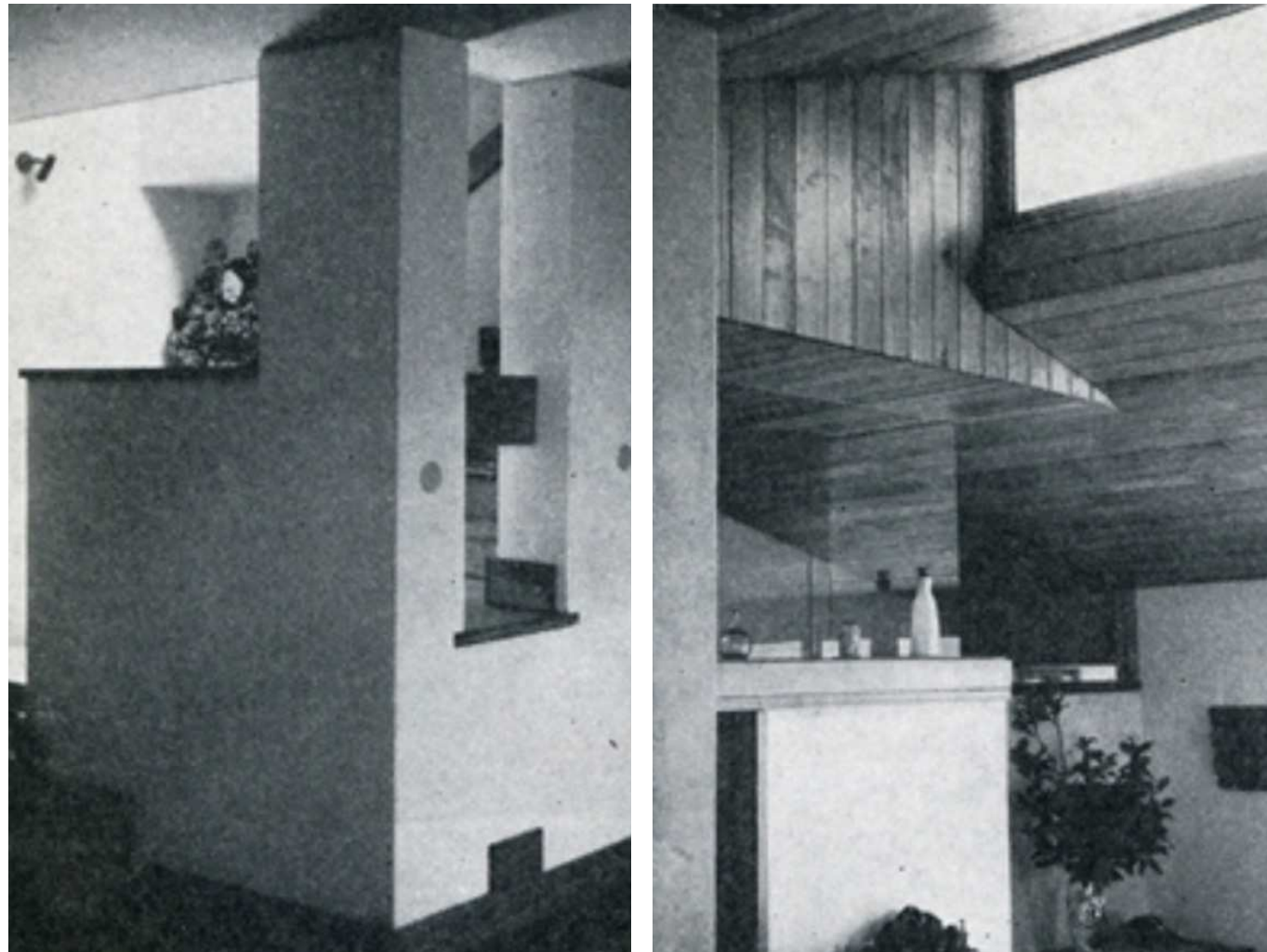
PEDRO RAMALHO
Caminha, Portugal, 1937



Main facade of the recently finished house photographed in 1966.

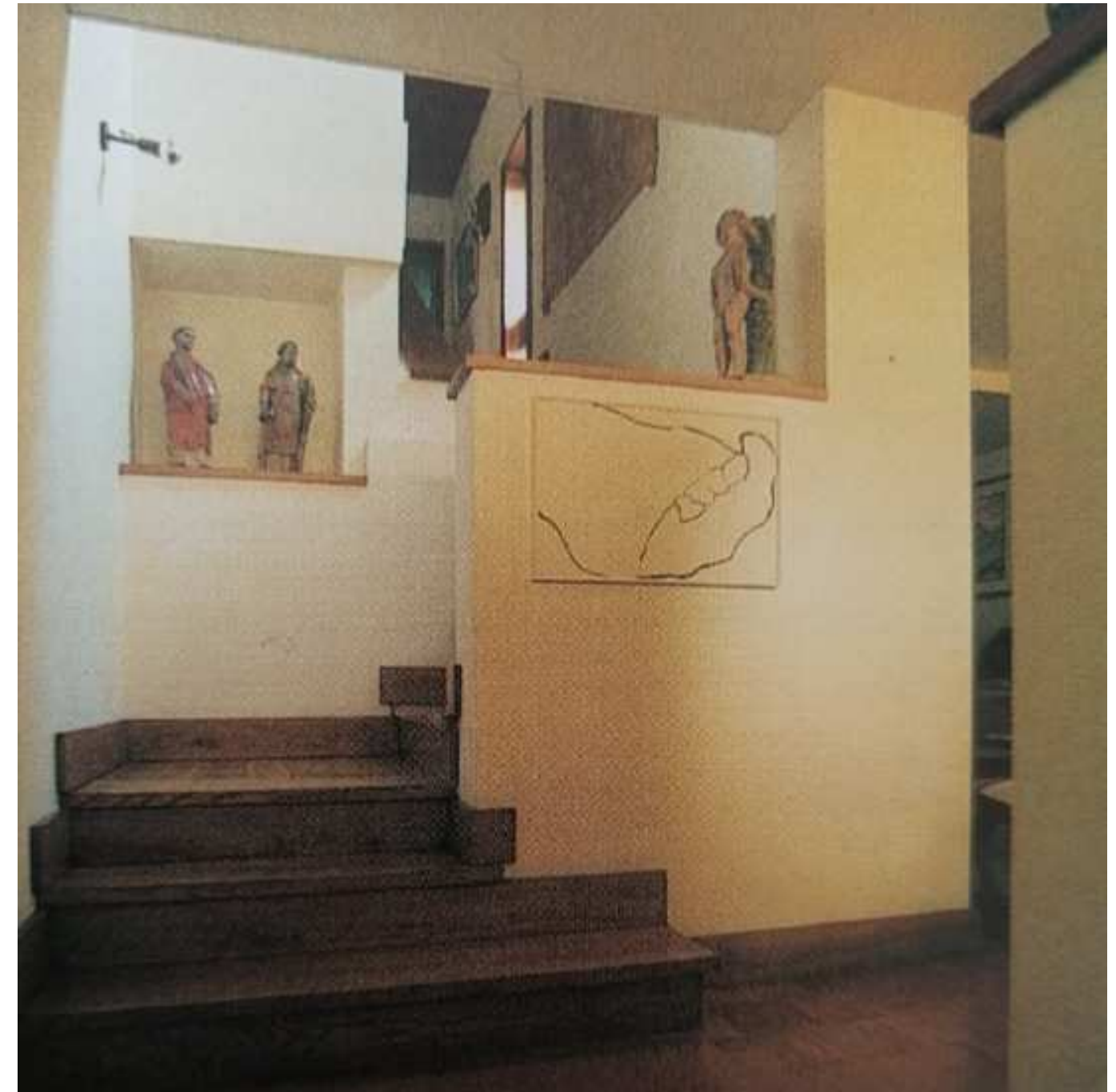
In 1963, Dr. Emílio Peres, who is considered to be the “father of portuguese nutritionism”, commissioned Pedro to build a house for him in Foz do Douro, Porto. As a young architect, only 26 years old at the time, he took the chance to implement some of the progressive views that were brewing in ESBAP (School of Fine Arts of Porto). The house gained such notoriety for its quality and uniqueness, that the couple which commissioned this work were later divorced, in great part, due to the impact this building had caused in their lives.

CASA DR. EMÍLIO PERES
Porto, Portugal, 1963

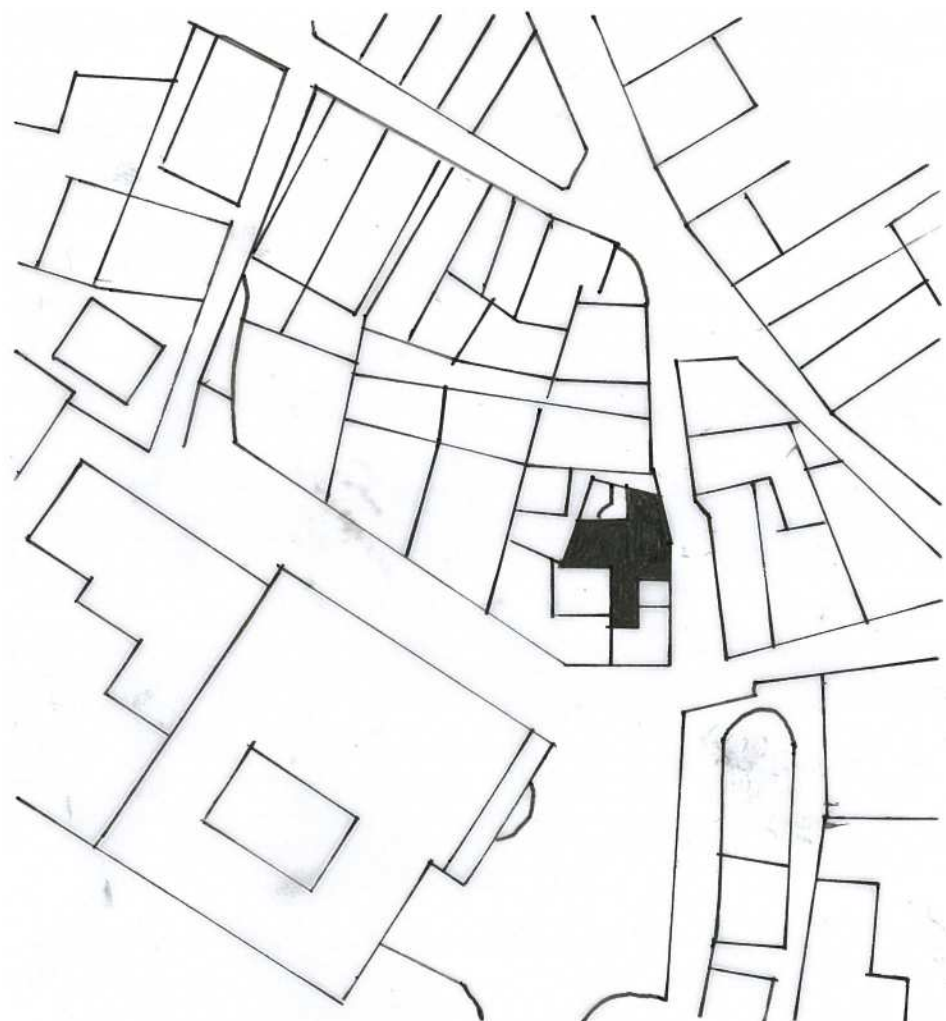


Interior photographed by Luís Ferreira Alves in 1980.

Since the house would be constructed in a difficult site, with a considerable difference of heights and a platform at the top, the stairs, which never overlap, became the defining feature of the building. The most important chambers of the house are connected to the outside, whether through a balcony or a patio. Alvar Aalto was one of the biggest influences in his early works, as in Casa Emílio Peres he combined aspects of baltic modernity with the portuguese traditional materials and finishings. The whiteness of the walls contrasts the wood carpentry works, the use of exposed concrete and granite, and the dialogue between the tilted surfaces of the ceilings and the multiple vertical plans make for a unique perception of spaces, their sequentiality and fluidity. These are some of the aspects that would define his works as a whole, throughout his life.

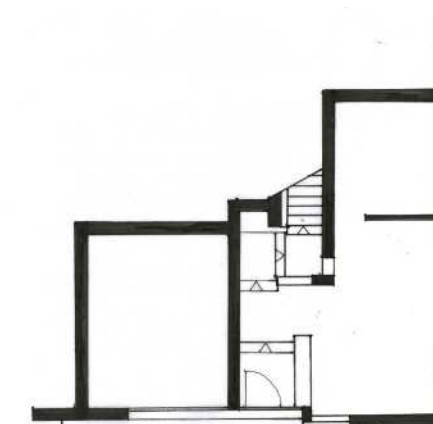
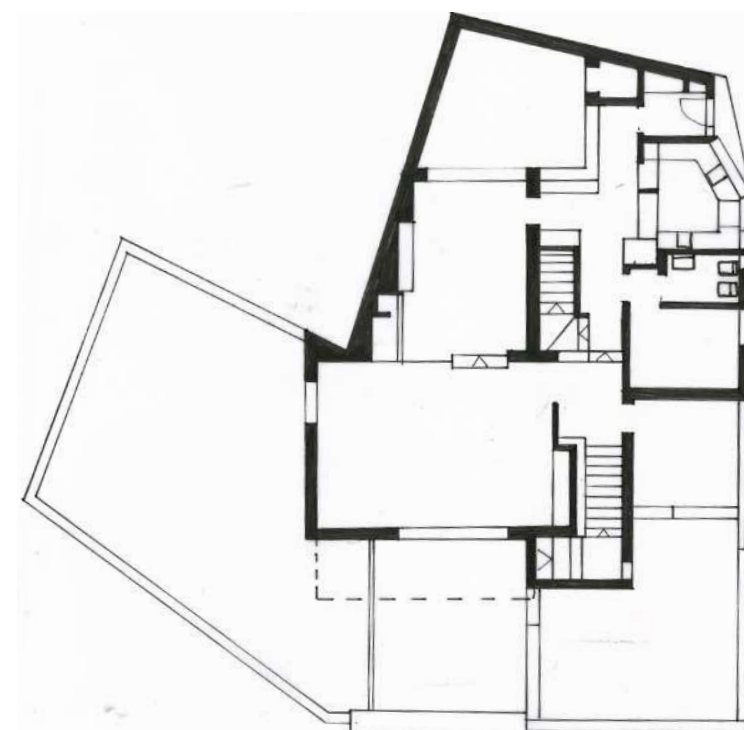
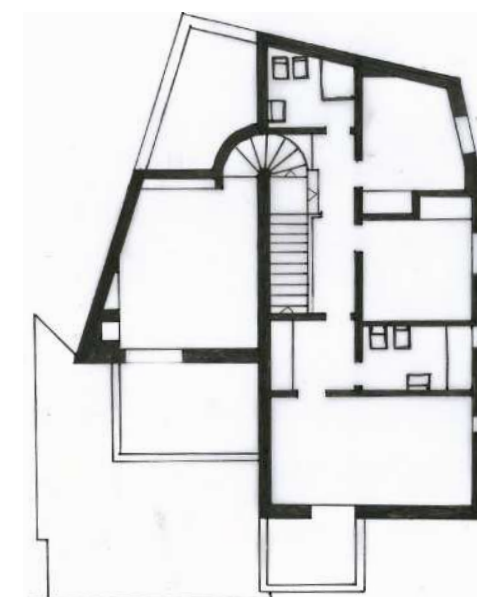


Interior view of the ascending staircase photographed by Luís Ferreira Alves in 1995.



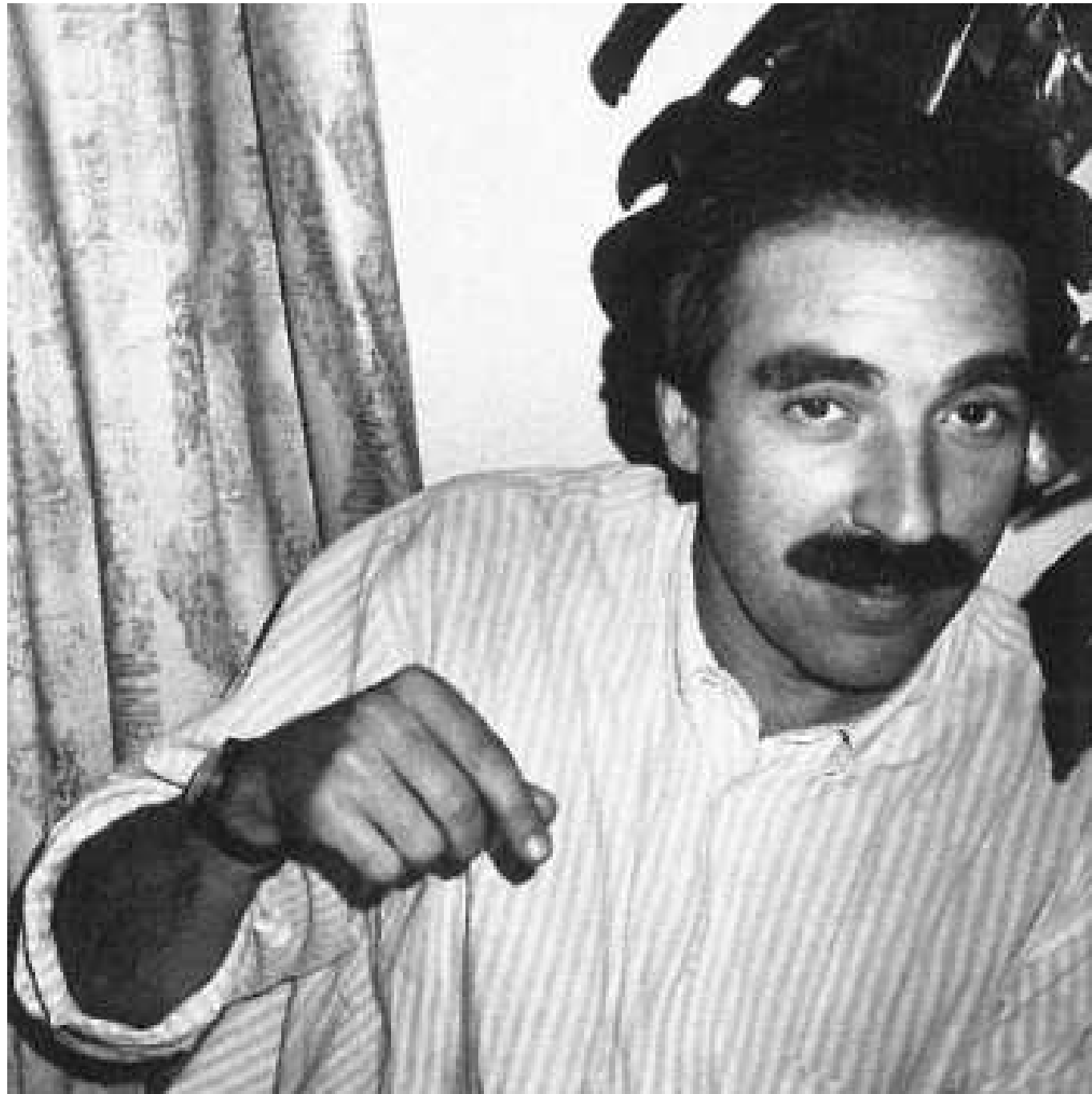
PEDRO RAMALHO

Site plan drawn on tracing paper (scale 1:500) by Diogo Macedo Malcata



CASA DR. EMÍLIO PERES

Plans drawn on tracing paper (scale 1:100) by Diogo Macedo Malcata



Eduardo Souto de Moura photographed in his home, c. 1980s.

EDUARDO SOUTO DE MOURA
Porto, Portugal, 1952



Interior photographed by Manuel Magalhães in 1982.

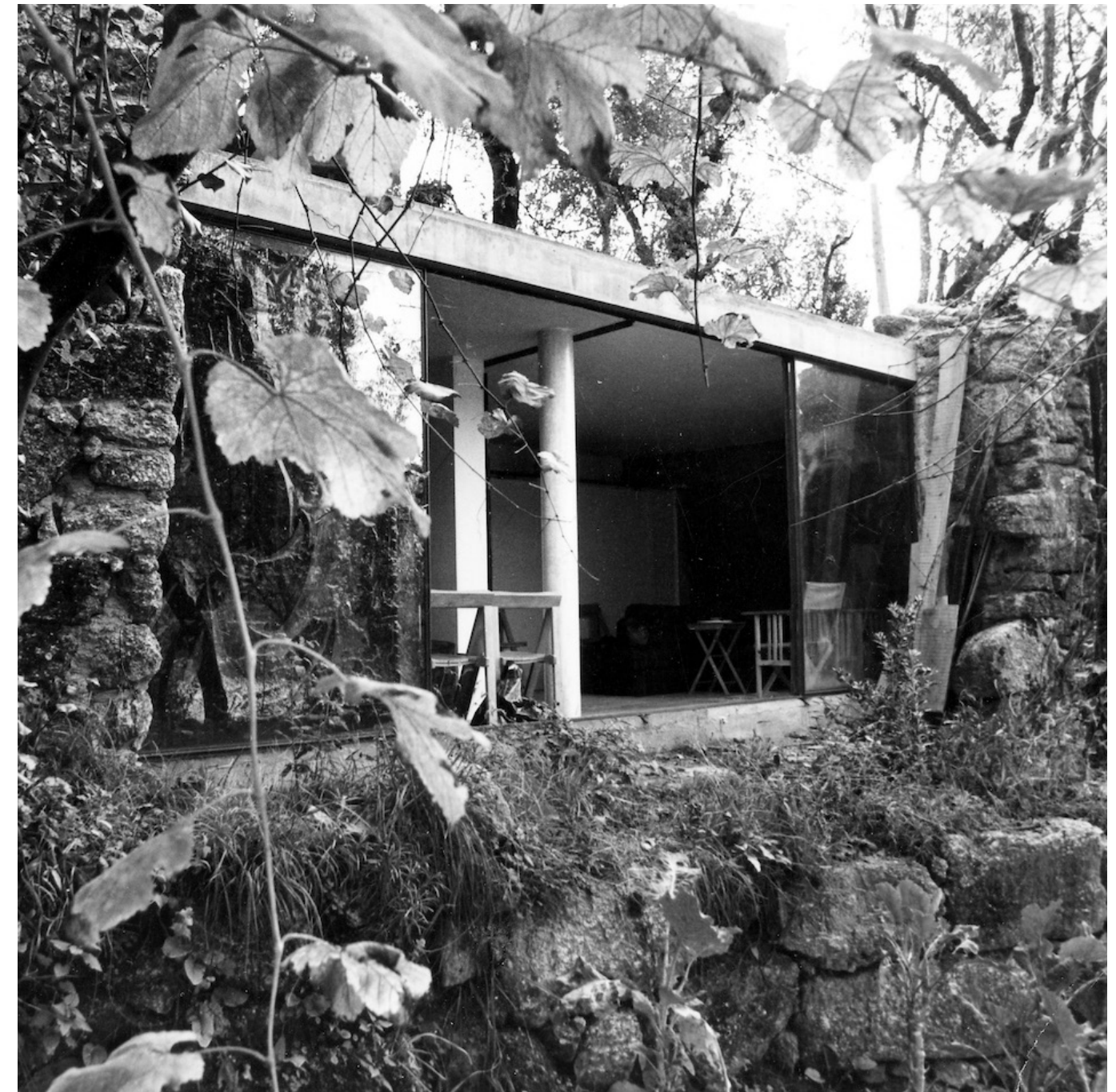
At 28 years old, Eduardo, still taking his first steps after finishing his degree at the Escola de Belas Artes do Porto and collaborating with Álvaro Siza, received his first independent commission: to reconvert a ruined farmhouse in Gerês. It was this small, discreet, almost artisanal project that opened the doors to his autonomous architectural practice. The intervention respects the existing walls of the old structure, inserting the new house within the perimeter of the ruin, as if the memory of the place continued to sustain the present.

RECONVERSION OF A RUIN
Gerês, Portugal, 1980

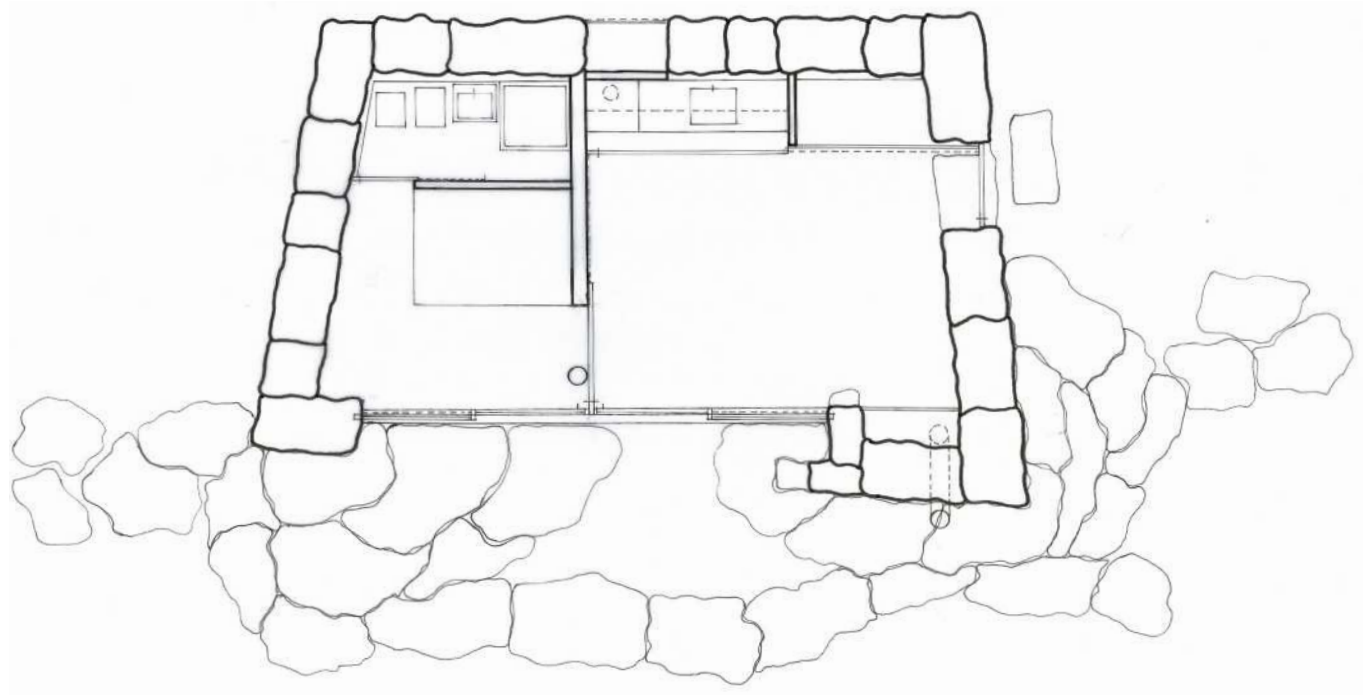


Existing ruin photographed before the conversion.

Eduardo experiments here with a theme that would accompany him throughout his entire career: the ruin as design material, not as an obstacle to erase, but as a structure of meaning to be reinterpreted. Curiously, the work was never inhabited nor fully completed, and it eventually turned into a ruin itself. Even so, the gesture left its mark: the dialogue between history and contemporaneity born here reappears later in the Carandá Market, the House of Arts, and the Santa Maria do Bouro Convent Inn, becoming one of the most recognizable signatures of his career.

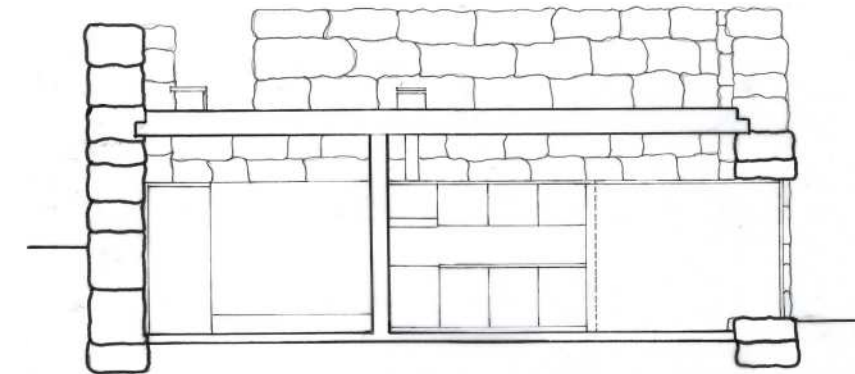
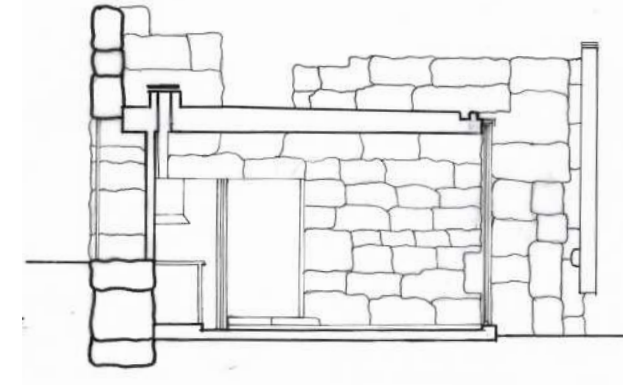


Entrance to the ruin photographed by Manuel Magalhães in 1982.



EDUARDO SOUTO DE MOURA

Plan drawn on tracing paper (scale 1:50) by Eduardo Rodrigues Quintãos



RECONVERSION OF A RUIN

Sections drawn on tracing paper (scale 1:50) by Eduardo Rodrigues Quintãos



Portrait of young Ruy Othake.

RUY OTHAKE
São Paulo, Brazil, 1938



View to the entrance of the house photographed in 1969.

Ruy was 29 when he designed the house for Chiyo Hama and his family. 7 years after graduating from FAU-USP he developed the project together with Hitoshi Koyama, Ana Regina D'Andretta, and Leiko Hama. The house is conceived of as a “small covered plaza” organised around spaces for shared activities. This emphasis on collective space and spatial continuity would remain central in his later work.

CASA CHIYO HAMA
São Paulo, Brazil, 1967

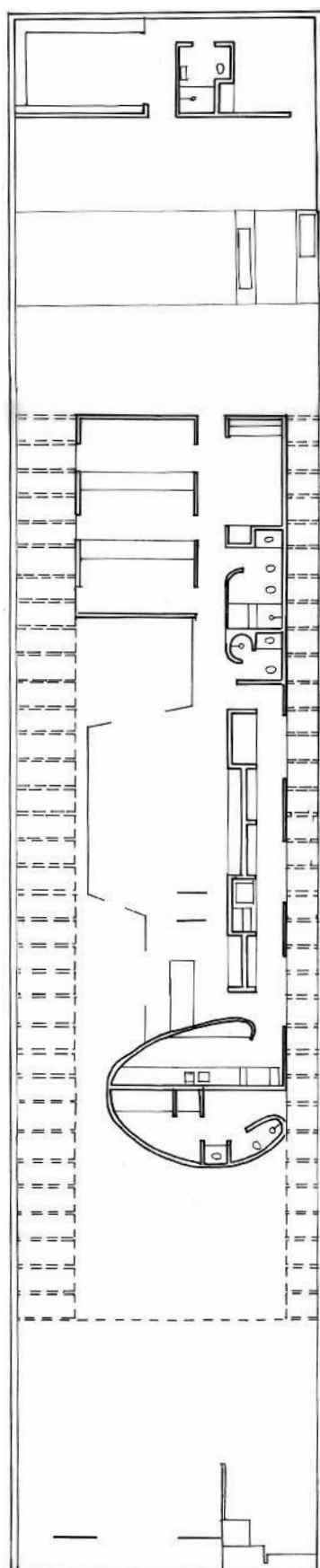


View of lateral pergola on the more public side of the house photographed in 1969.

The long and narrow site plays a direct role in the organization of the house. A single roof brings the different spaces together, while a lateral pergola occupies the required setback and incorporates this strip of the plot into the domestic space. The relationship between interior and exterior extends throughout the house, allowing the living spaces to continue into the outdoor areas. Bedrooms, bathrooms, and service spaces are concentrated within smaller volumes, leaving the rest of the plan as a continuous and collective space. It is in this project that

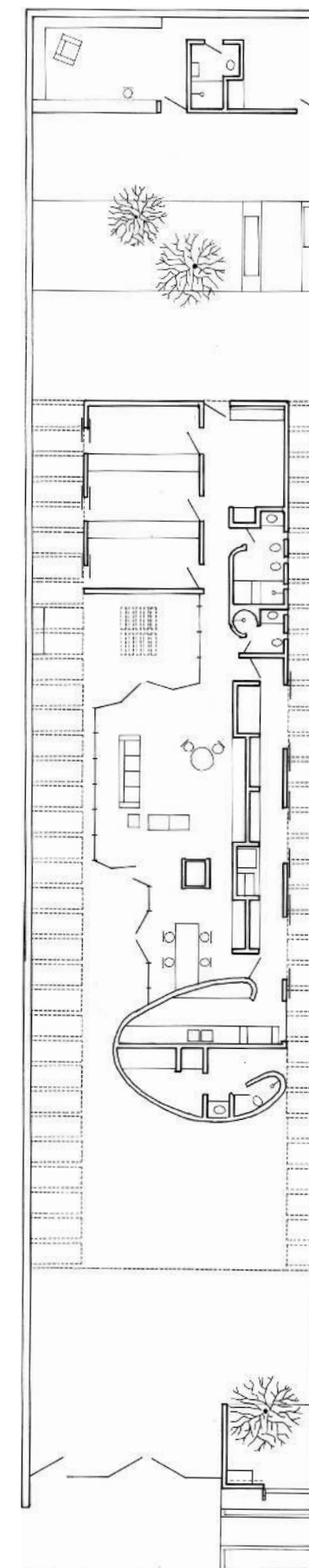


View of lateral pergola on the more private side of the house photographed in 1969.



RUY OTHAKE

Plan drawn on tracing paper (scale 1:100) by Fabbio Augusto Savioli da Silva



CASA CHIYO HAMA

Plan drawn on tracing paper (scale 1:100) by Fabbio Augusto Savioli da Silva



Enric Miralles and Carme Pinós, c. 1980s.

ENRIC MIRALLES
Barcelona, Spain, 1955



Pergola covering the plaza photographed from surrounding building by Hisao Suzuki.

Enric was 30 when he and Carme Pinós received the public commission to redesign of the Plaça Major in Parets del Vallès. The task came from the local municipality, possibly through the recommendation of architect Albert Viaplana, to transform an exposed town square through a series of lightweight roofs, a kiosk and benches. The project became the young architects' first opportunity to build at an urban scale. What seemed like a modest commission soon turned into a testing ground for ideas that would define Enric's architectural language.

PLAÇA MAJOR PERGOLA
Parets del Vallès, Catalunya, Spain, 1985

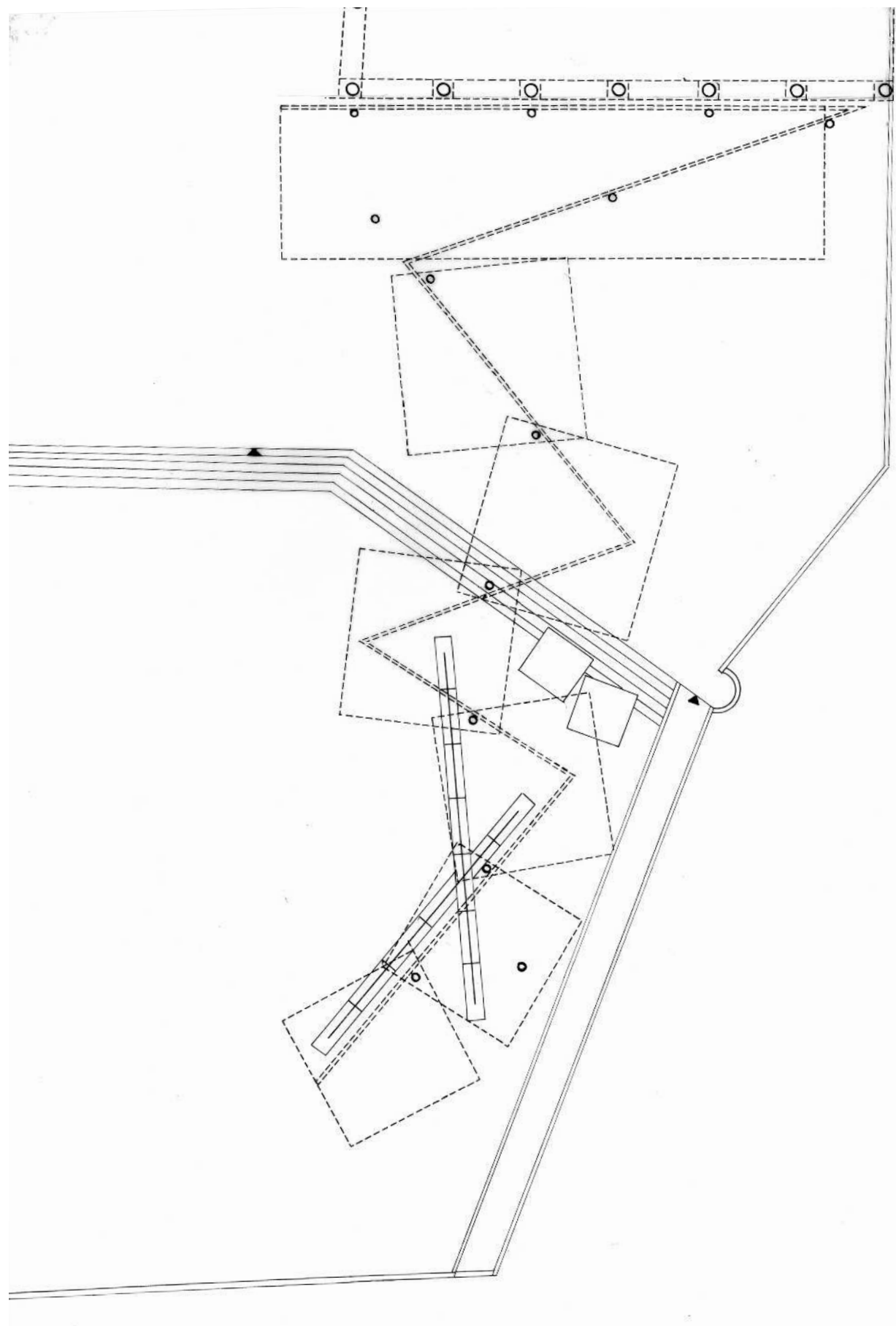


Photograph by Ferran Freixa.

Rather than imposing a new object onto the square, Enric worked with the existing site. The fragmented roofs create shade, frame places to gather and invite people to move through the space. As visitors walk beneath them, the relationship between the sky, the surrounding buildings and the ground is constantly reframed through shifting perspectives, light and shadow. Looking back, Parets already contains many of the themes that would shape Enric's later work: architecture understood as movement rather than form, a close dialogue with the landscape and the transformation of everyday places through precise, expressive gestures instead of monumental interventions.

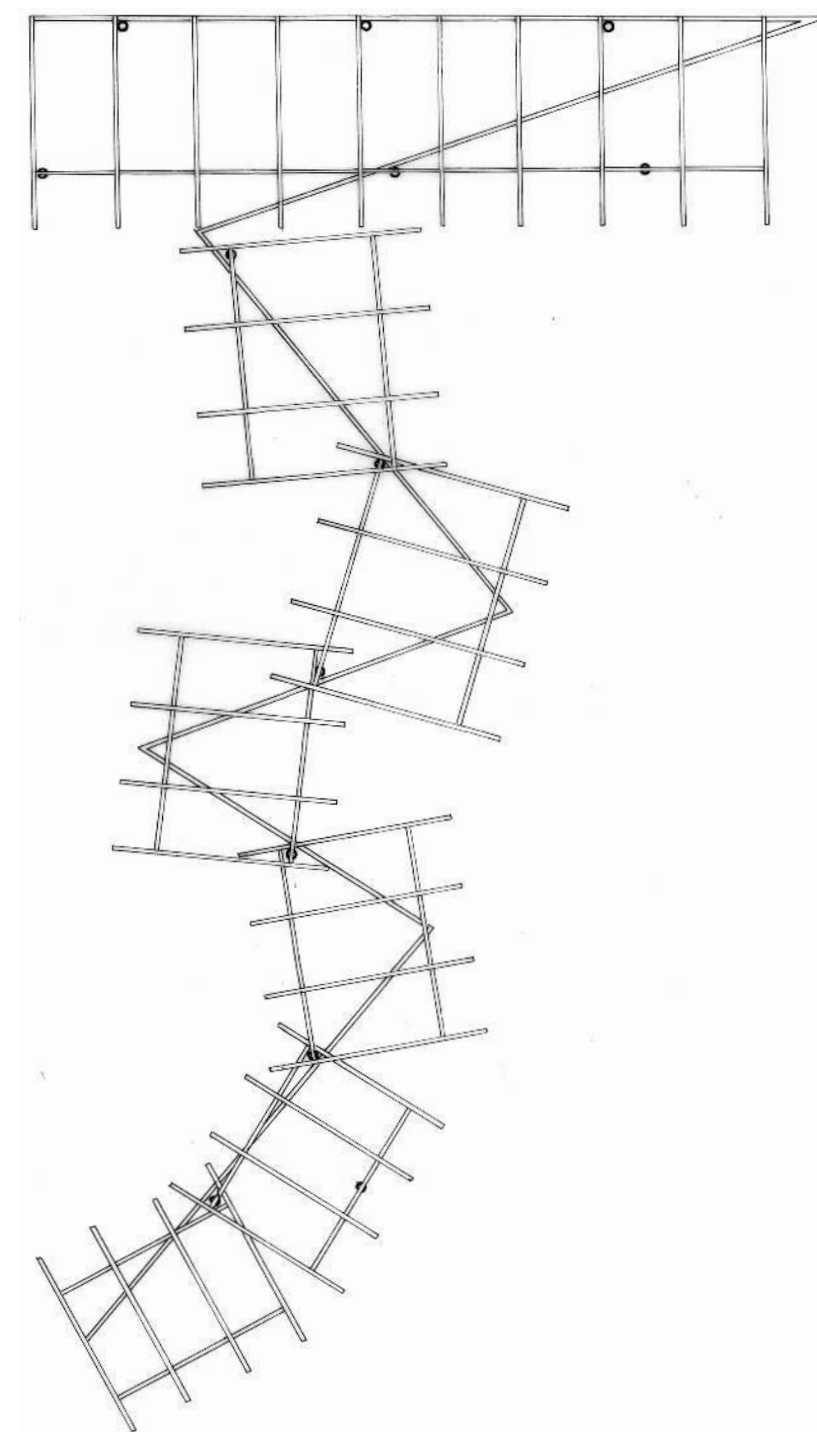


Photograph by Ferran Freixa.



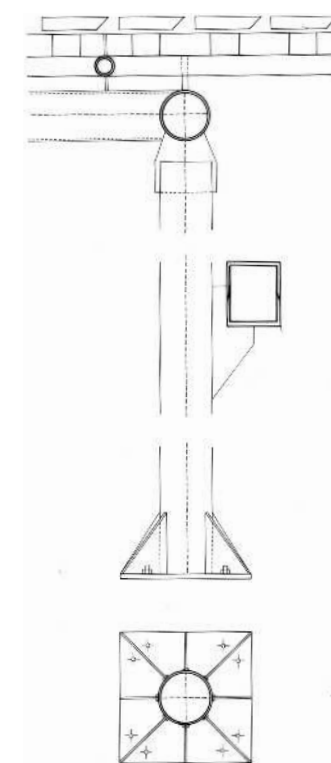
ENRIC MIRALLES

Plan drawn on tracing paper (scale 1:100) by Felicia Maria Sciuto



PLAÇA MAJOR PERGOLA

Plan + Detail drawn on tracing paper (scale 1:100, 1:5) by Felicia Maria Sciuto





Kazuyo Sejima photographed for El Croquis cover, 1983-2000.

KAZUYO SEJIMA
Hitachi, Japan, 1956



Exterior photographed by Tomio Ohashi in 1989.

At age 30, Kazuyo founded her own office after leaving Toyo Ito to begin working on Platform 1, a holiday house in Katsuura, Chiba Prefecture. The site had a four-metre height difference between the entrance and the furthest area, and the clients asked for a house with as much space as possible to enjoy their leisure time while contemplating the sea. For this reason, Sejima placed the living room, the terrace, the bathroom and the Japanese-style room on the highest part of the plot, ensuring a privileged view over the ocean.

PLATFORM 1
Katsuura, Chiba, Japan, 1987

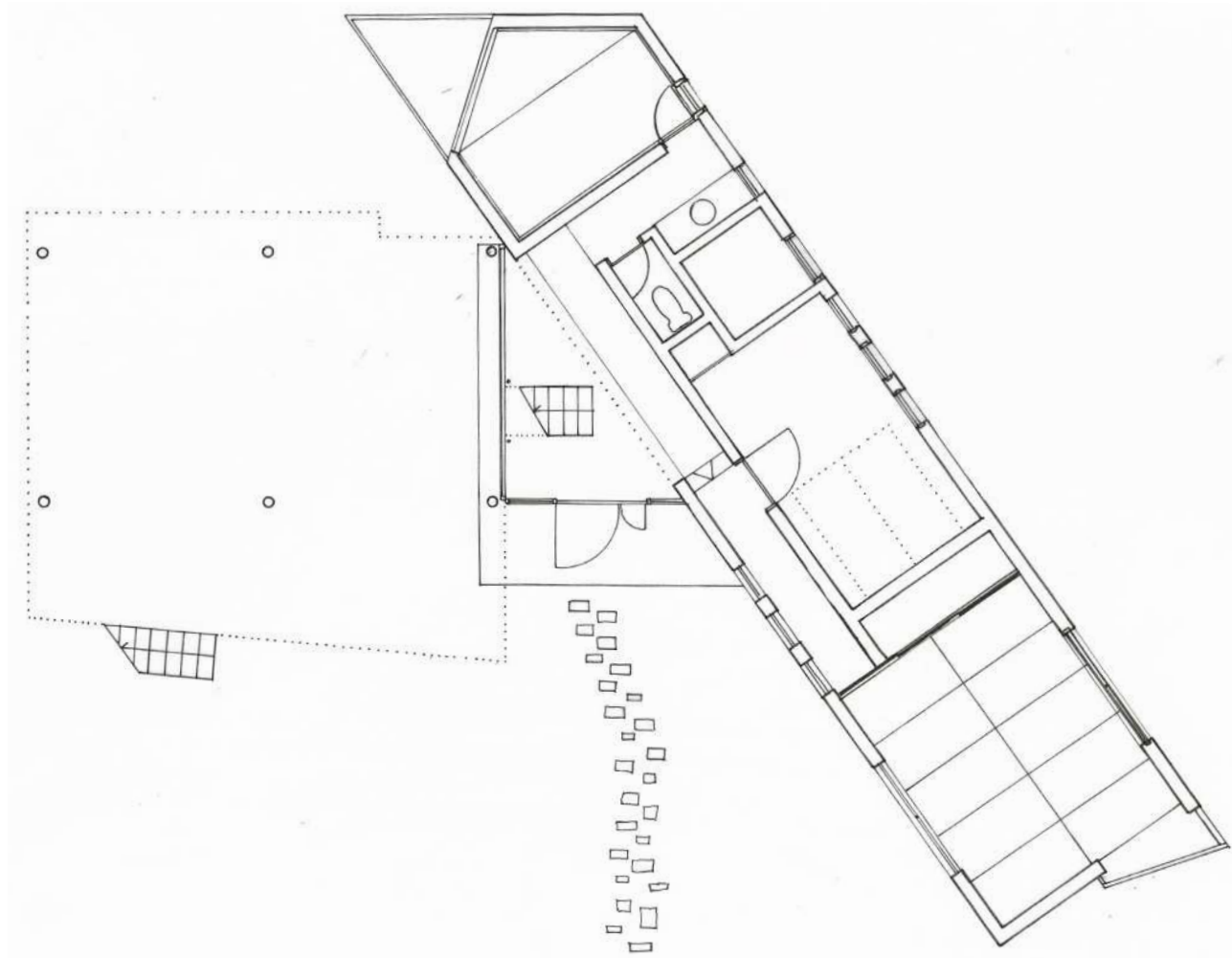


Interior photographed by Tomio Ohashi in 1989.

Instead of enclosing the space with walls, Kazuyo imagined the place emerging freely beneath this roof, with the potential to extend horizontally as a “never-ending continuum”. The concept of “platform” was inspired by train stations, where people’s movement can come to a stop. This approach reflects her desire to interrupt the rigidity of traditional floor plans, favouring a simple space-structural unit that relates to people’s continuous actions. The most protected space in the house is a reinforced concrete box that contains the Japanese-style room and the bathroom, both connected to the garden. The roof of this box forms an elevation in the topography, creating a terrace with a view of the sea.

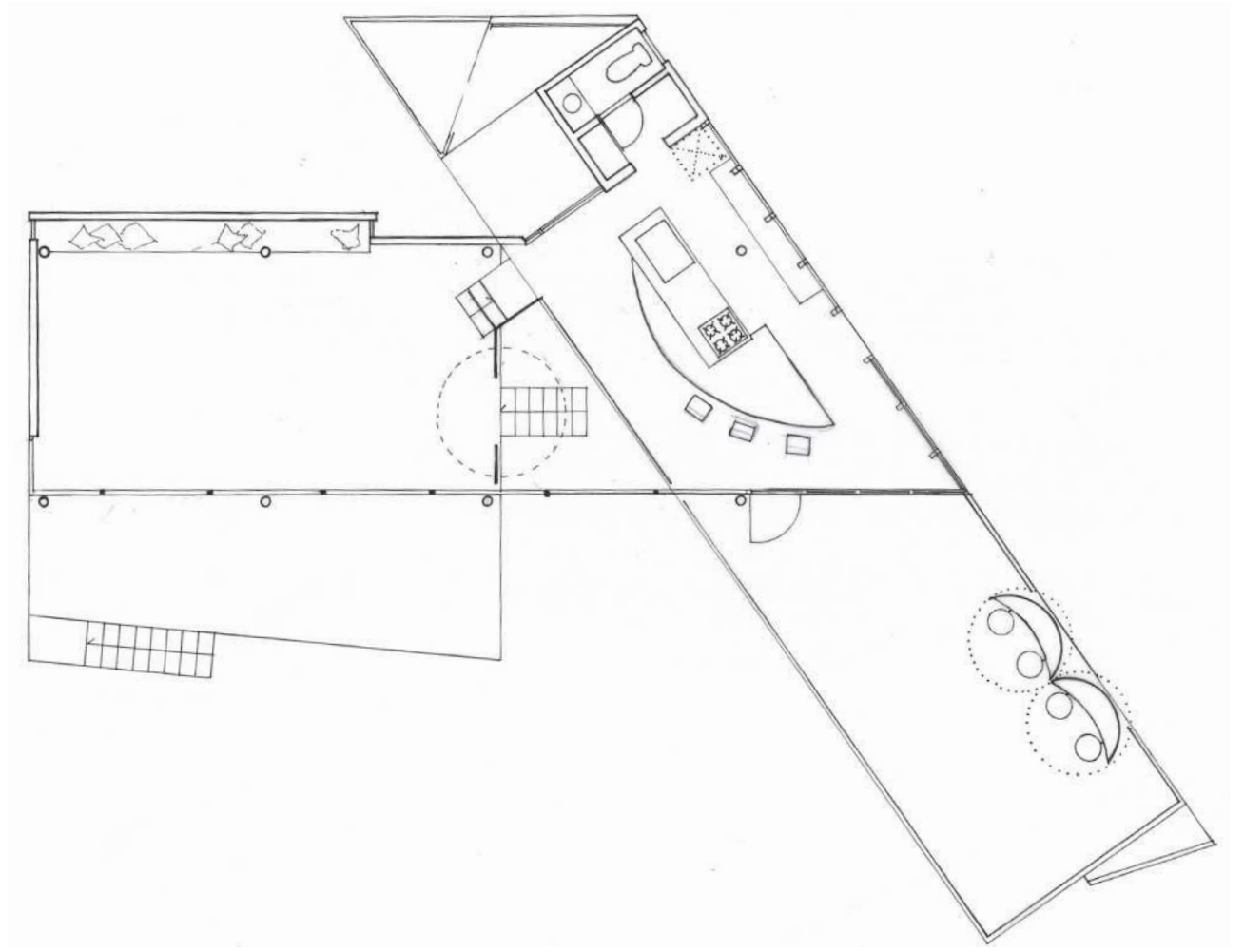


Interior photographed by Tomio Ohashi in 1989.



KAZUYO SEJIMA

Ground floor plan drawn on tracing paper (scale 1:75) by Francisca Costa



PLATFORM 1

Top floor plan + Section drawn on tracing paper (scale 1:75) by Francisca Costa



Gonçalo Byrne at his studio surrounded by young architects, c. 1970s.

GONÇALO BYRNE
Alcobaça, Portugal, 1941



View into the courtyard photographed by José Pereira.

Gonçalo started designing the “Pink Panther” at the age of 31, together with co-author António Reis Cabrita. They were working in Nuno Teotónio Pereira’s studio and, following Nuno’s political imprisonment during the dictatorship, the young architects took on the commission, with occasional assistance from Nuno Portas. The project spans three political moments: dictatorship (1972–74), revolution (1974), and democratic consolidation (1975–79). It reflects both the centralized housing policies of the Estado Novo and the democratic affirmation of the right to housing and to the city.

PANTERA COR-DE-ROSA
Lisbon, Portugal, 1972

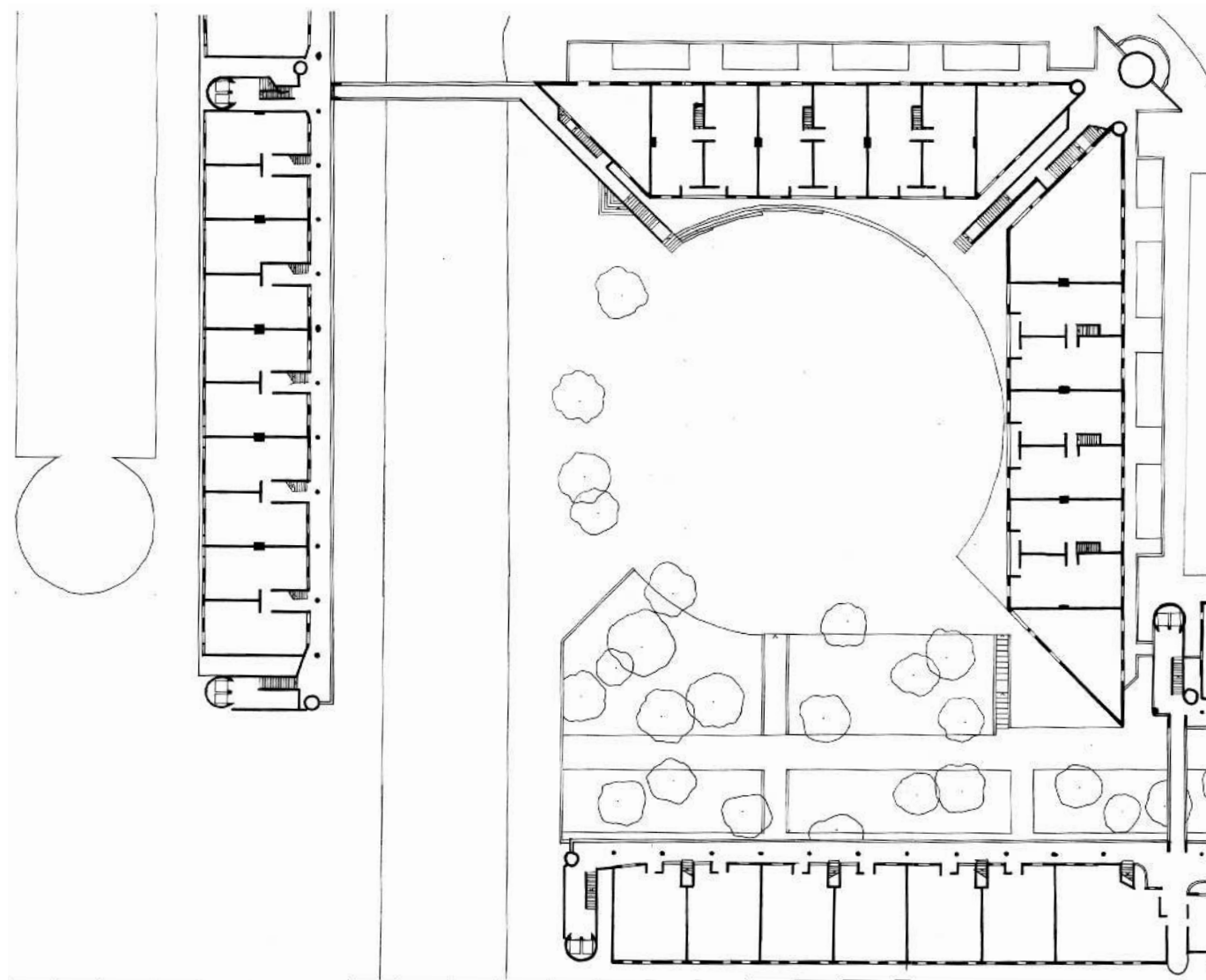


View from a balcony photographed by José Pereira.

Clearly influenced by projects such as Gallarate by Aldo Rossi and Carlo Aymonino, and Robin Hood Gardens by Alison and Peter Smithson, the Pink Panther is built under the Brutalist culture of the seventies. Set within the sloping landscape of Chelas, its long horizontal volumes, galleries and “streets in the sky” create a complex sequence of public, semi-public, and private spaces, encouraging a more urban and collective way of living. Gonçalo experimented with architecture as city-making, by combining the modularity of social housing with circulation and complexity of communal and urban space. Themes such as urban continuity, the sensible understanding of the site and architecture as a framework for collective life would remain central throughout his career.

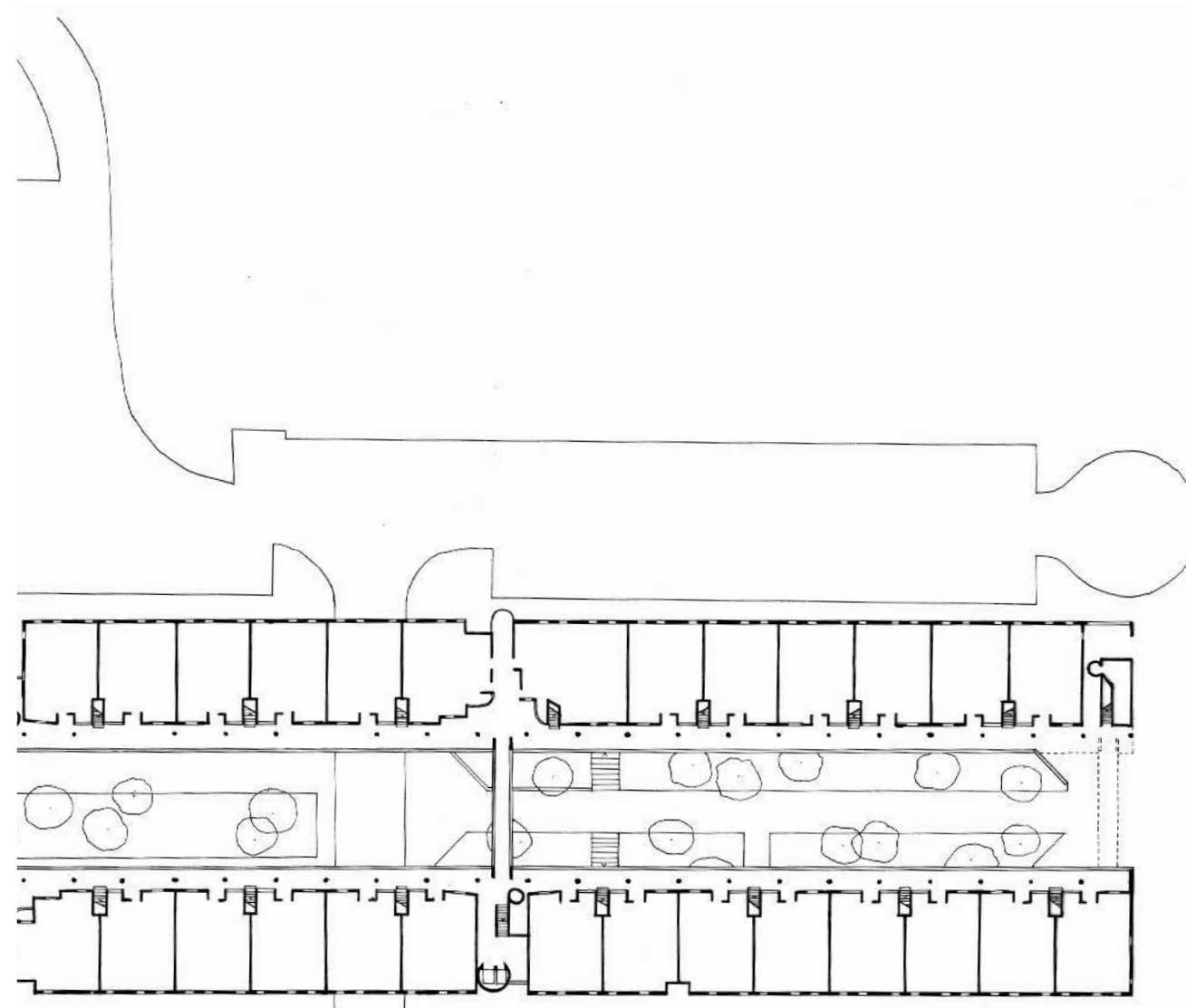


Photographs of the work site, 1970s.



GONÇALO BYRNE

Plan (Part 1) drawn on tracing paper (scale 1:1000) by Francisca da Cunha Dias



PANTERA COR-DE-ROSA

Plan (Part 2) drawn on tracing paper (scale 1:1000) by Francisca da Cunha Dias



Frank Gehry as a young man, c. early 1950s.

FRANK GEHRY
Toronto, Canada, 1929



House seen from the garden photographed by Julius Shulman in 1960.

Frank was approaching his thirties when he got the commission for a private home in Brentwood, California. He was approached by Edgar and Mary Lou Steeves to design a house for them for his hands-on approach and deep understanding of custom residential construction. Perched on a hillside lot, Frank designed the Steeves House as a low-lying, horizontal structure nestled into its Californian landscape.

STEEVES HOUSE
Brentwood, California, United States, 1957

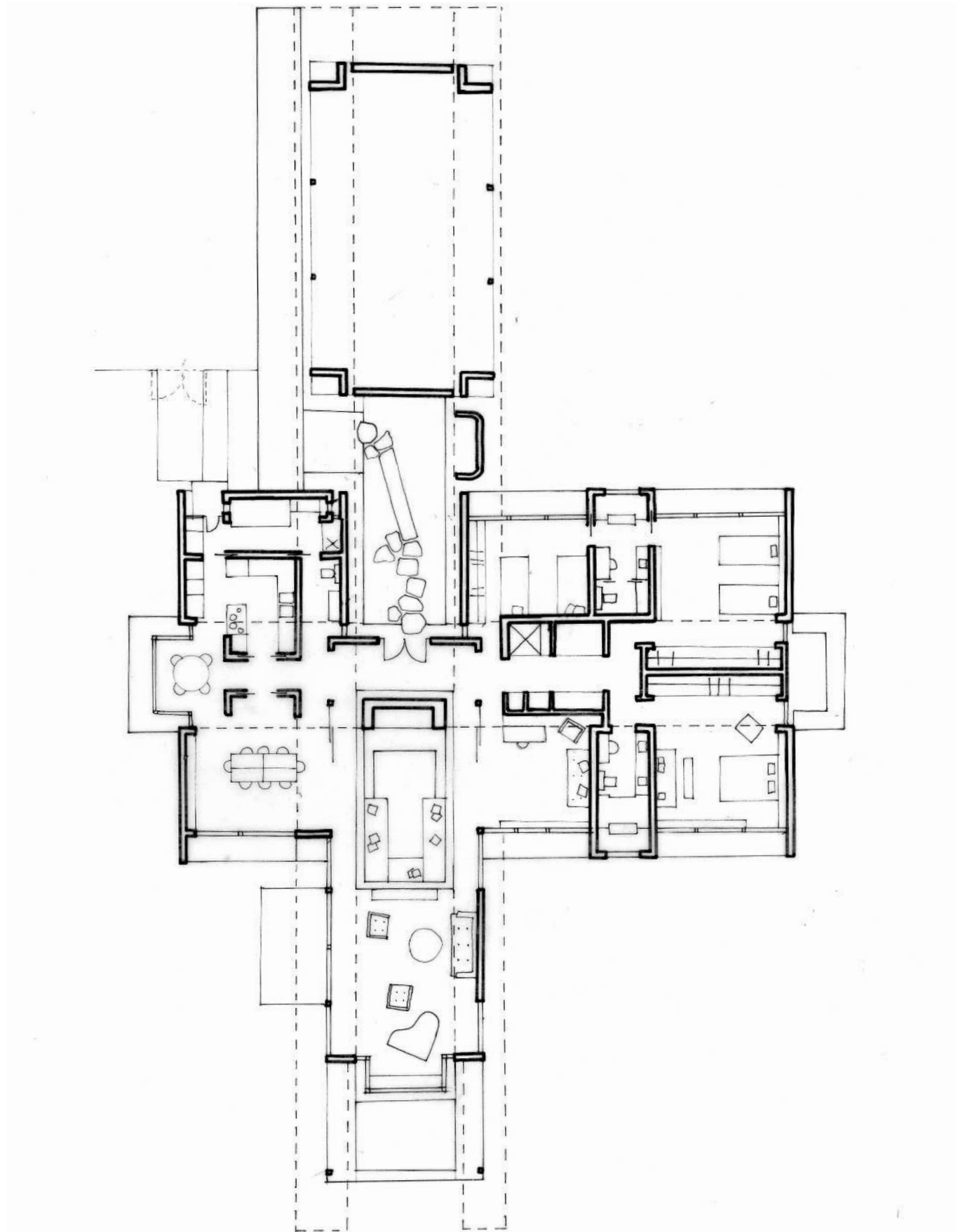


Main entrance photographed by Julius Shulman in 1960.

Utilizing post-and-beam construction, warm timber finishes, and sweeping rooflines, the quiet geometric forms created open-plan spaces connecting indoors with outdoors. The cross plan organized the public and private spaces on separate axes with a fireplace at the center acting as the heart of the building. The design showcased Frank's early experimentation with Frank Lloyd Wright's principles and traditional Japanese architecture, establishing a serene, human-scaled environment. This project formed a unified modernist baseline before he later broke into deconstructivism. Decades later, when asked to design an addition for new owners, Frank contrasted his evolved, fragmented style directly against this early mid-century layout.

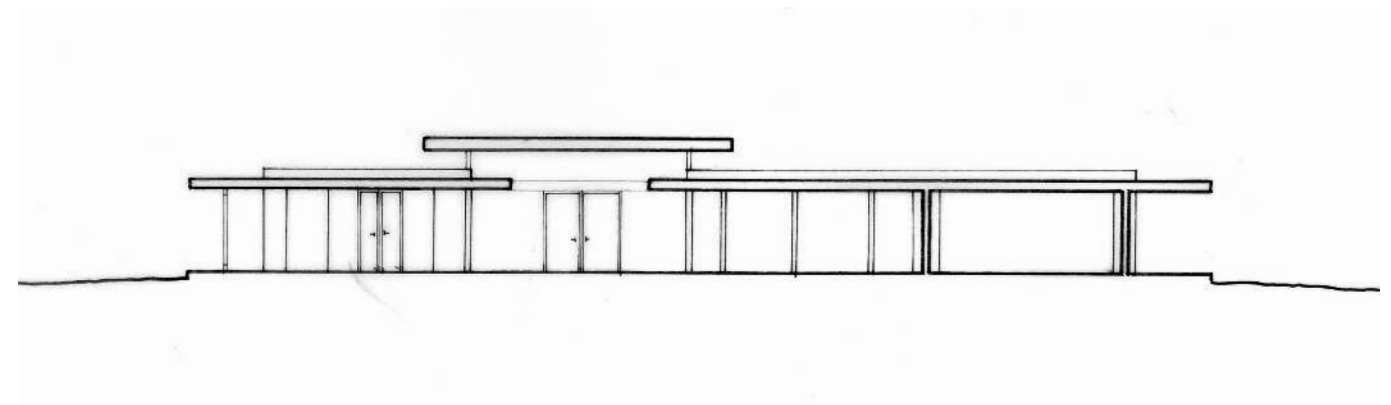


Living room photographed by Julius Shulman in 1960.



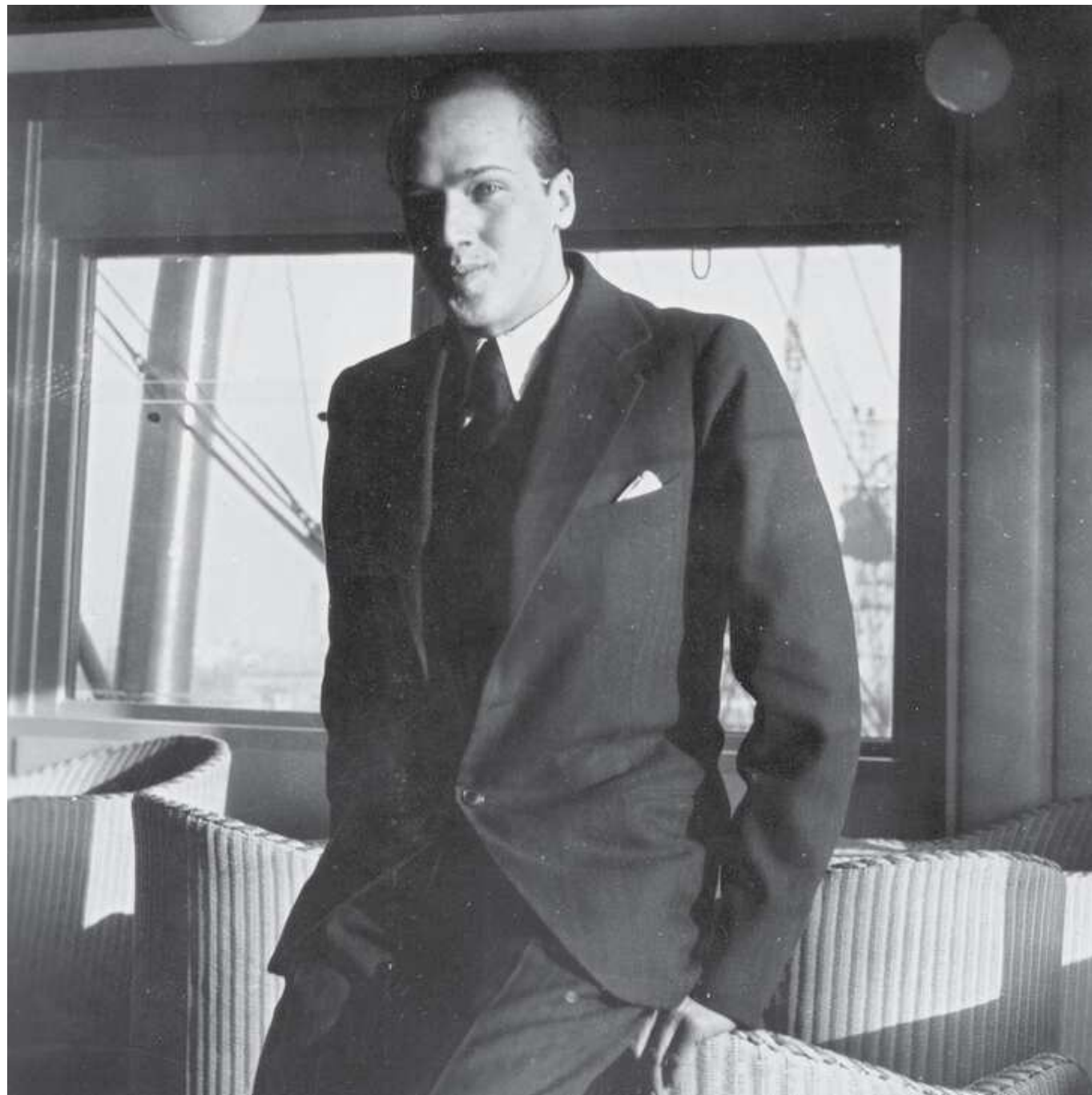
FRANK GEHRY

Plan drawn on tracing paper (scale 1:200) by Greta Uldukyte



STEEVES HOUSE

Plan drawn on tracing paper (scale 1:200) by Greta Uldukyte



A young Luis Barragán photographed aboard a ship, c. 1926.

LUIS BARRAGÁN
Guadalajara, Mexico, 1902



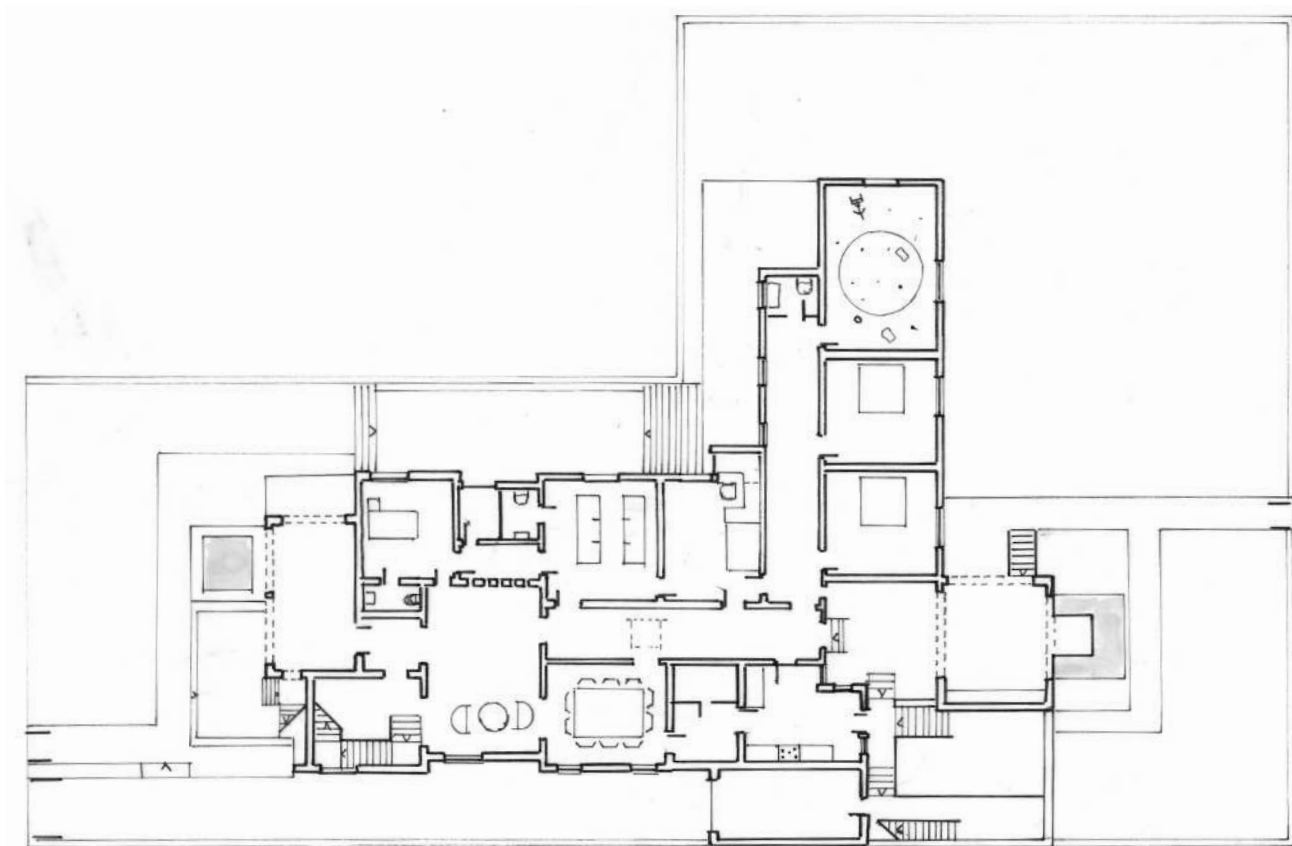
Luis was 26, and only just back from a long journey through Europe and North Africa — the Mediterranean gardens, the Alhambra, the lessons of Ferdinand Bac. Around 1928 the commission came from a friend, Efraín González Luna, a Guadalajara lawyer and man of letters, later the first presidential candidate of the PAN. It wasn't his debut, but it was the first house of real ambition — the one where Luis could try out a language entirely his own. The plot narrowed toward its edges, and Luis made that a virtue: two accesses, each crossing a garden before you reach the house, so the street never touches the interior.

CASA GONZÁLEZ LUNA
Guadalajara, Mexico, 1928



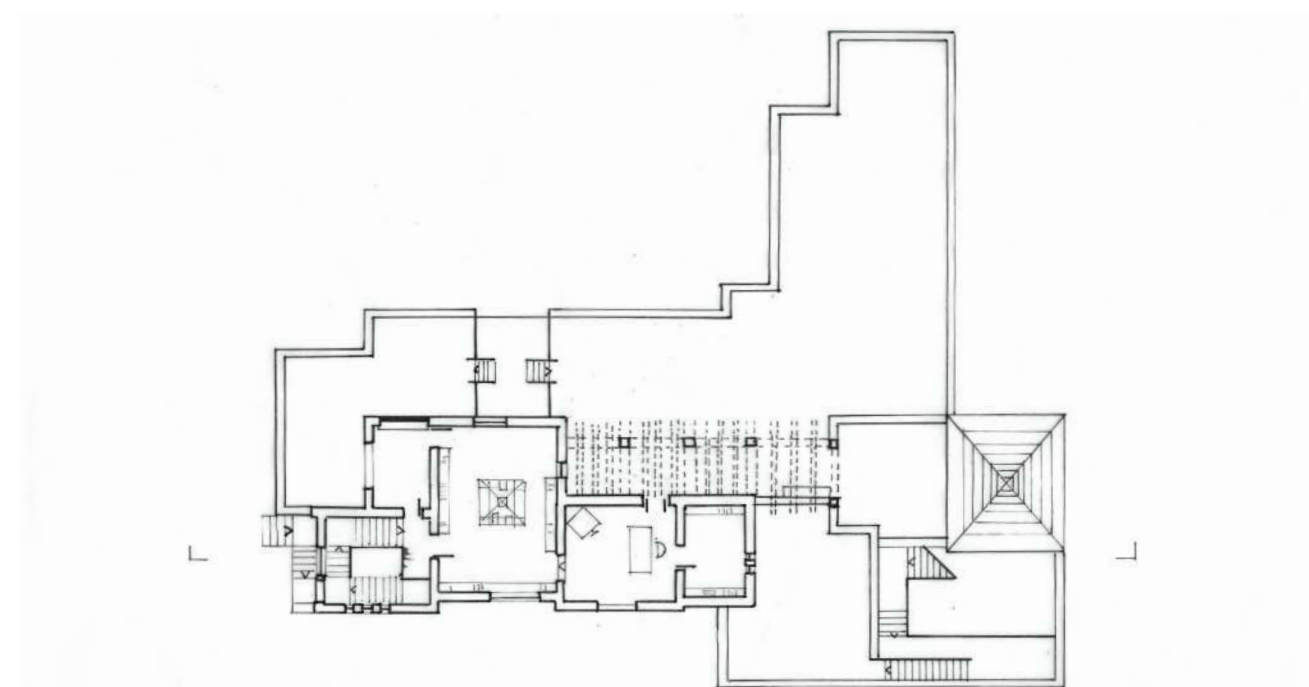
Over two floors — living below, González Luna's library and an oratory above, beside a terrace opening onto a garden with a fountain and reflecting pool — robust clean walls, arcades and regional materials carry an Andalusian, Mudéjar inheritance. Almost everything to come is already here in embryo: openings rationed for intimacy, the tension between inside and outside, light modeled by shadow, the garden as framed landscape. These themes — light as material, the wall, silence, the void that frames — would mature twenty years later in Casa Barragán. Less a regionalist beginning than a first statement.





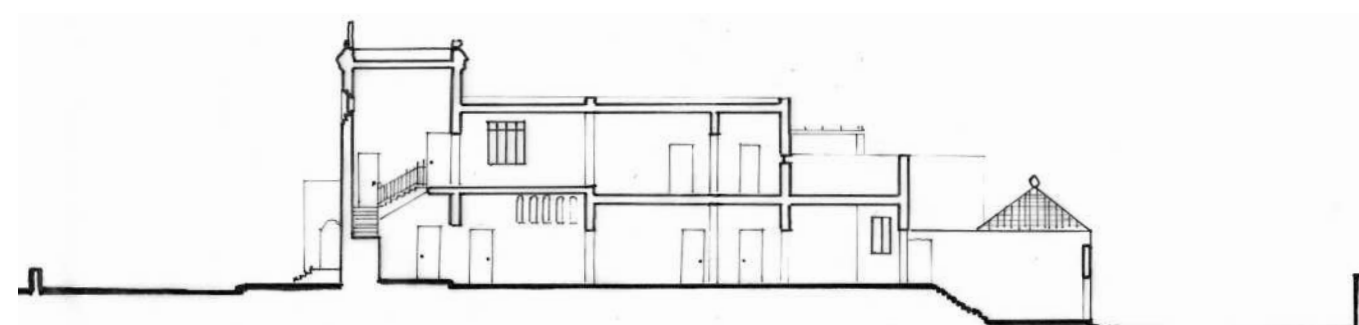
LUIS BARRAGÁN

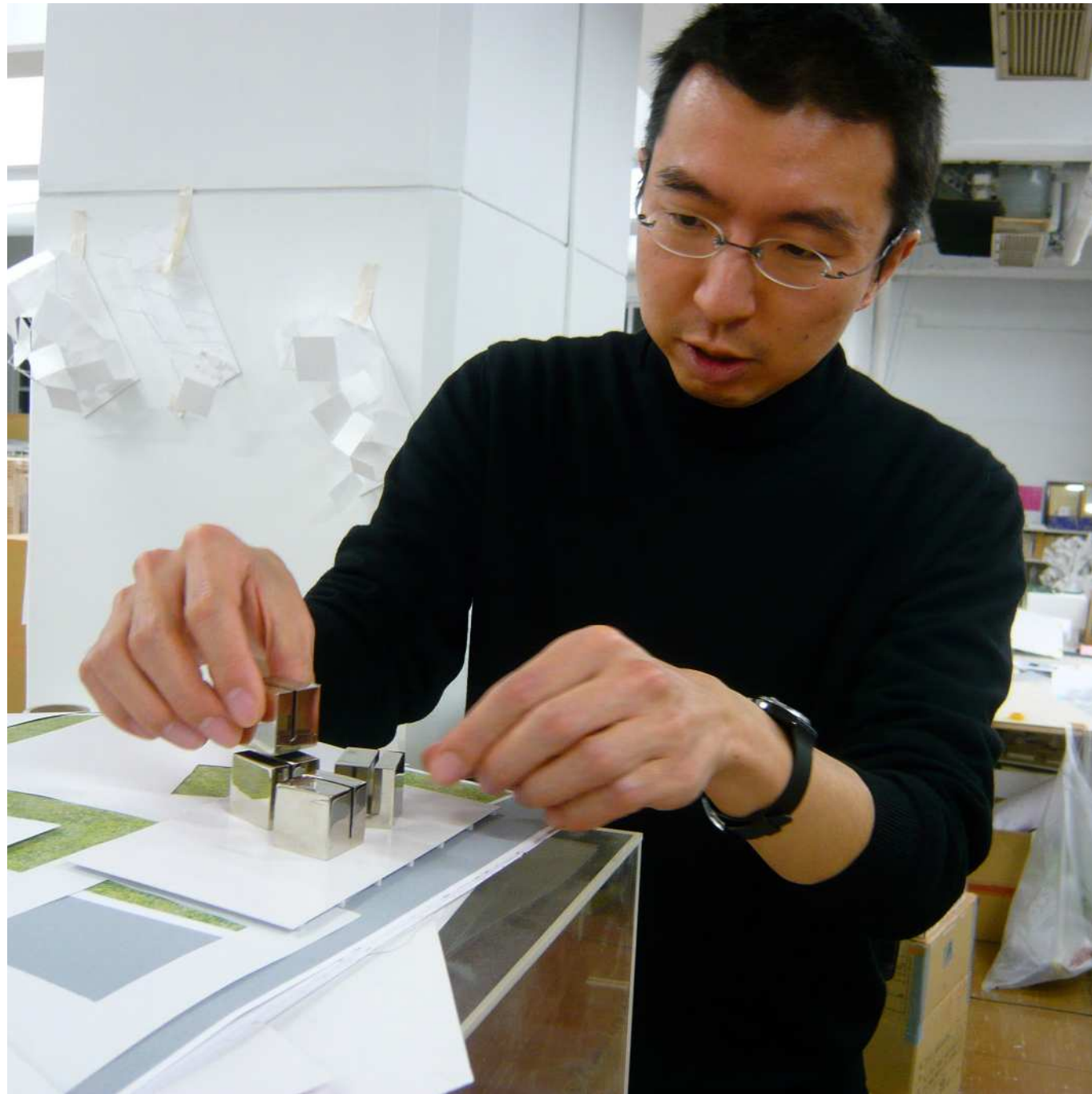
Plan drawn on tracing paper (scale 1:200) by Helder Correia



CASA GONZÁLEZ LUNA

Plan + Section drawn on tracing paper (scale 1:200) by Helder Correia





Sou Fujimoto in his office photographed in 2009.

SOU FUJIMOTO

Higashikagura, Hokkaido, Japan, 1971



Exterior photographed from the surrounding fields by Daici Ano in 2006.

At age 33, Sou was approached by a psychiatrist, a colleague of Sou's father, who directed a large mental hospital in Hokkaido and asked to design a building for him. Having previously designed facilities for his father's hospital, Fujimoto gained the trust of professionals in the psychiatric field and was invited to design a rehabilitation centre specifically for children with psychological and developmental needs. Working closely with medical practitioners, he questioned the conventional institutional model of psychiatric care and instead sought to create an environment where architecture itself could contribute to the healing process.

CHILDREN'S CENTRE FOR PSYCHIATRIC REHABILITATION

Hokkaido, Japan, 2004



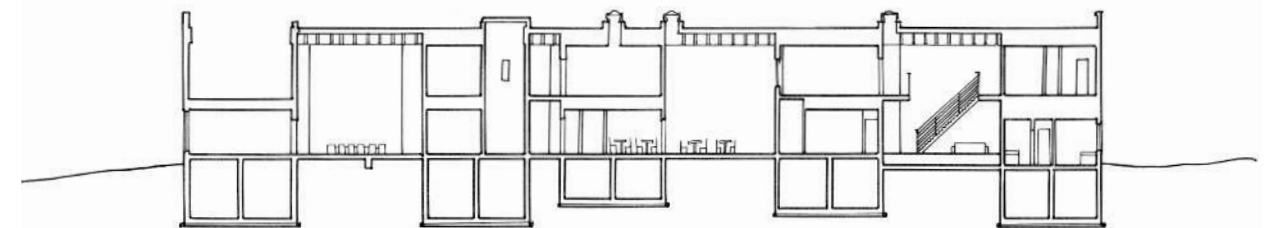
Rather than organising the centre as a series of enclosed therapy rooms connected by corridors, Fujimoto conceived it as a network of interconnected spaces that resemble a small village. The building blurs the boundaries between therapy, play, circulation, and everyday living, allowing children to explore freely and choose spaces according to their emotional comfort. A variety of human-scaled volumes, intimate corners, open communal areas, and carefully controlled natural light create an environment that feels welcoming rather than institutional. By encouraging movement, discovery, and gradual social interaction while maintaining strong connections to nature, the architecture supports children's rehabilitation through freedom, curiosity, and a sense of security.





SOU FUJIMOTO

Plan drawn on tracing paper (scale 1:200) by Huang Yuhan



CHILDREN'S CENTRE FOR PSYCHIATRIC REHABILITATION

Section drawn on tracing paper (scale 1:200) by Huang Yuhan



Paulo Mendes da Rocha photographed for in 1954 for the Mackenzie Faculty of Architecture yearbook.

PAULO MENDES DA ROCHA
Vitória, Brazil, 1928



View of the gymnasium under construction with the elevated esplanade in the foreground, c.1959.

At age 29 Paulo won a competition to design the gymnasium of the Paulistano Athletic Club, a solid concrete building that blurs the transition between exterior and interior spaces. The building offers a basketball court that can be used for multiple sports, concrete amphitheater-like seats, locker rooms and storage space for the players and referees, and two specialized training spaces on the side.

GIMNASIO DEL CLUB ATLÉTICO PAULISTANO
São Paulo, Brazil, 1961

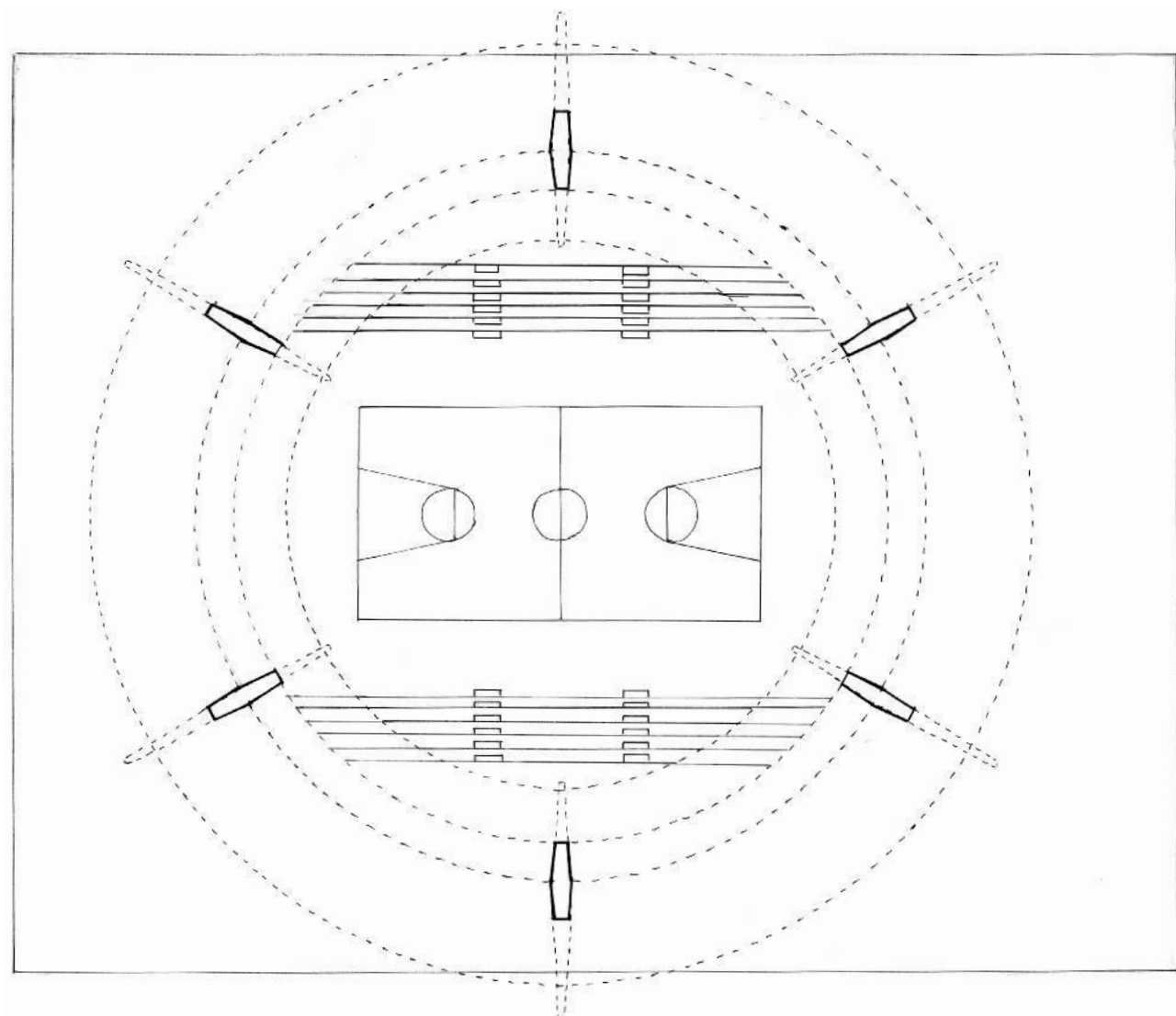


View of the interior court with grandstand during construction, c.1959.

The element that sets the athletic center apart from other projects of its kind is the reinforced concrete ring that covers the arena. The metal roof attached to the ring brings light into the space, creating a unique atmosphere. The basketball court sits slightly below the street's level, accessible by ramps, which gives the space a cave-like quality. Another element that adds to this is the approach to the gymnasium, which is concealed by vegetation and walls. The ring is supported by six slender concrete blades, making the entire building look like a skillful balancing act.

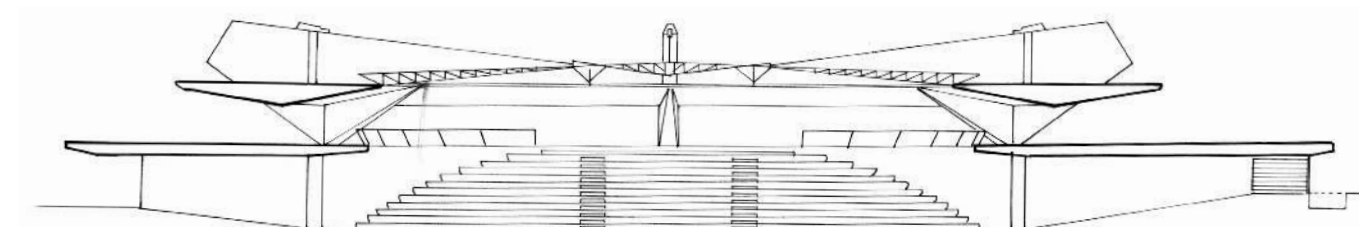


View of the cast-in-situ concrete support during construction, c.1959.



PAULO MENDES DA ROCHA

Plan drawn on tracing paper (scale 1:100) by Iulia-Petra Popa



GIMNASIO DEL CLUB ATLÉTICO PAULISTANO

Section drawn on tracing paper (scale 1:100) by Iulia-Petra Popa



Ludwig Mies van der Rohe photographed in front of the entrance to Haus Riehl in 1912.

LUDWIG MIES VAN DER ROHE
Aachen, Germany, 1886



*LUDWIG MIES-NEUBABELSBERG
Landhaus des Herrn Geh. Regierungsrats Professor Dr. Riehl, Neubabelsberg*

View of the facade with the main entrance, c. 1912.

Haus Riehl sits above Lake Griebnitz, in Potsdam, Germany. In 1909 at age 29, Ludwig designed it for Sofie and Alois Riehl who wanted a retreat for intellectual work as well as a gathering place for Berlin's intellectual life. Despite his lack of experience, Ludwig convinced the couple during a dinner together and was commissioned to design the house. The design drew on the traditional country house style and the architecture of the Mark Brandenburg around 1800, and was influenced by Ludwig's teacher, Peter Behrens.

HAUS RIEHL
Potsdam, Germany, 1909

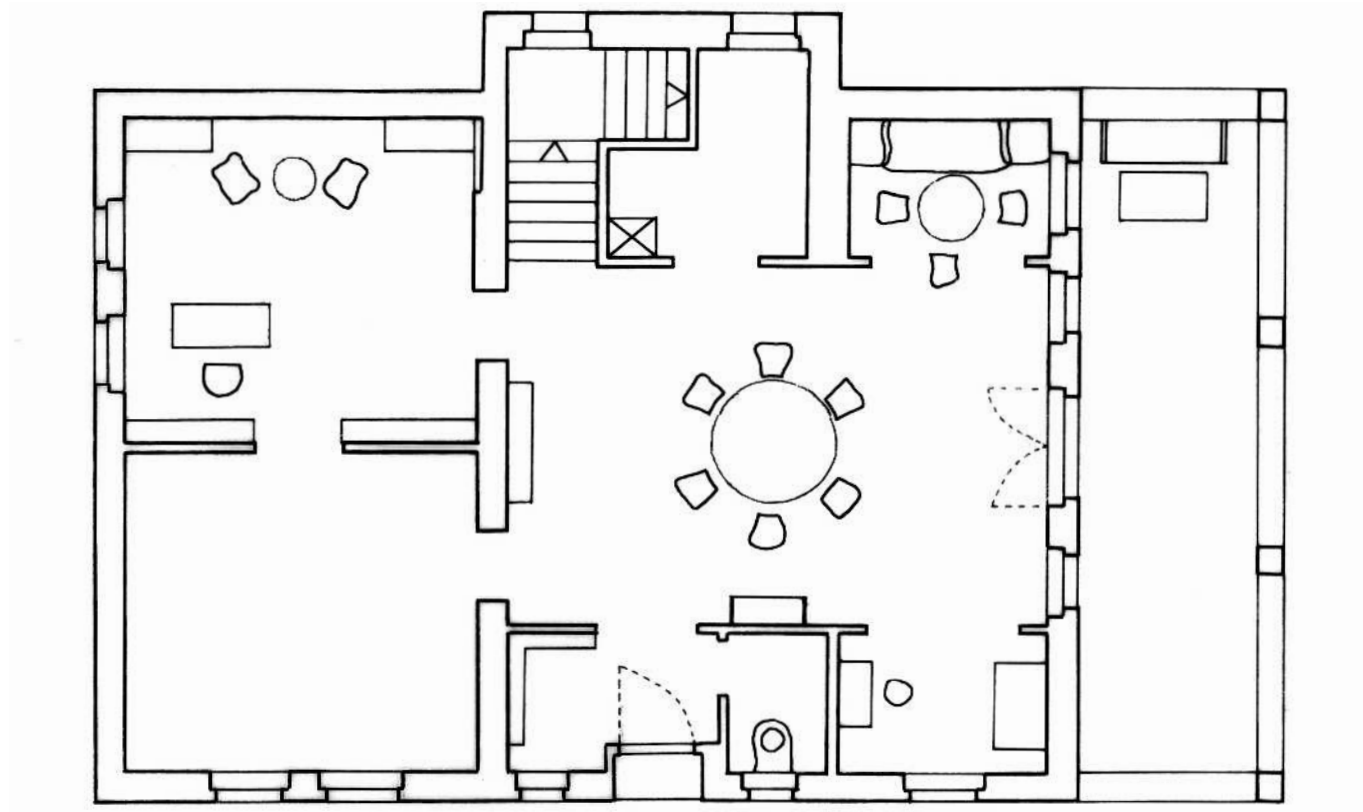


View of roof window niche with integrated benches, radiator and storage, c. 1912.

It is clear that the young architect also wanted to forge his own path. Thus, the residence exemplifies clarity, simplicity, and minimalism without ostentatious ornamentation. Likewise, the loggia—accessed through a spacious double door—creates a transition between the exterior and interior spaces, a feature Ludwig would later frequently employ and refine.

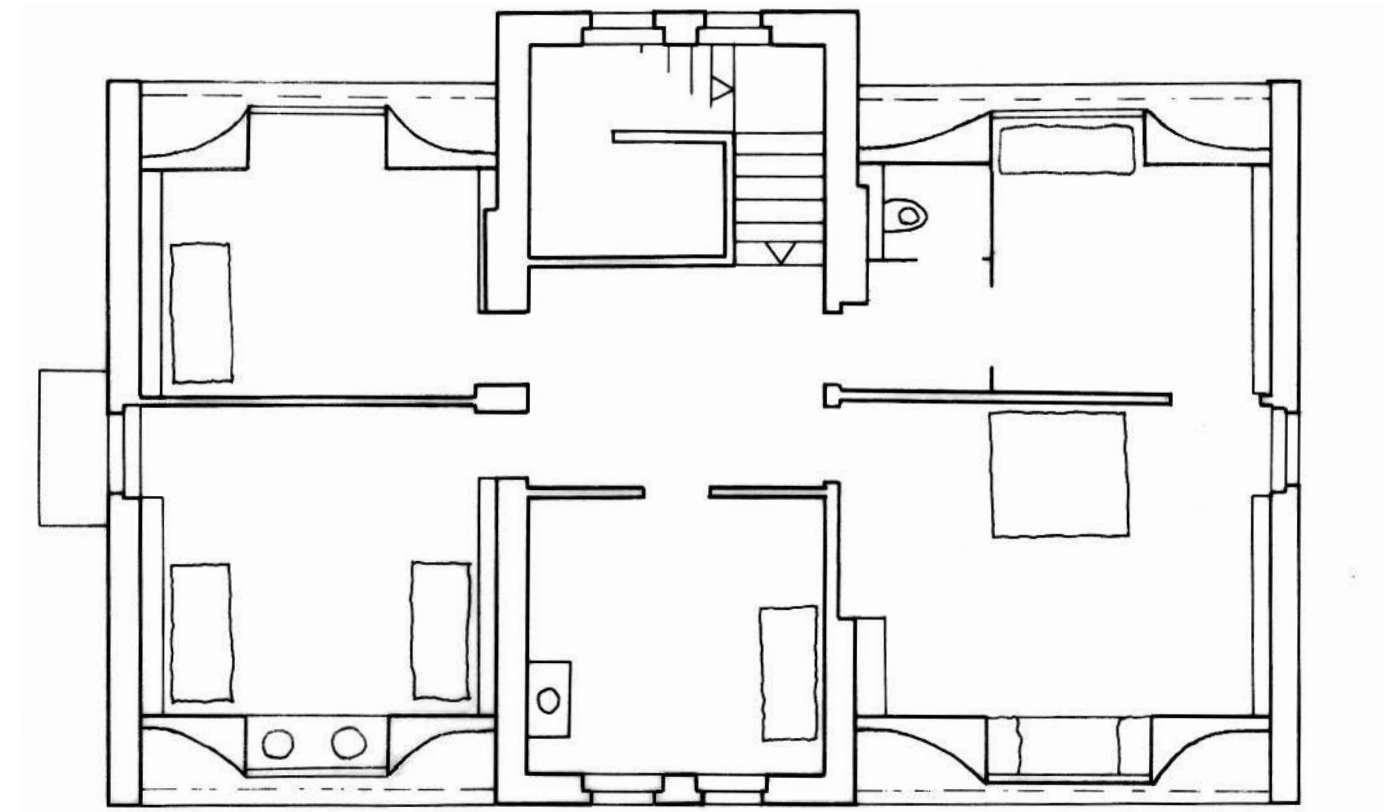


View of the house from the lower garden, c. 1912.



LUDWIG MIES VAN DER ROHE

Ground floor plan drawn on tracing paper (scale 1:100) by Natalie de l'Or



HAUS RIEHL

Top floor plan drawn on tracing paper (scale 1:100) by Natalie de l'Or



Eileen Gray photographed in Paris by Berenice Abbott in 1926.

EILEEN GRAY

Brownswood, County Wexford, Ireland, 1878



View of E-1027 with main access stair to the lifted living space.

At 51 years old, Eileen, an Irish Interior and Furniture designer, after encountering a little financial crisis, tried her hand at architecture after Jean Badovici's, her partner at the time, advice. She built a summer house for herself, E-1027 overlooking the Bay of Monaco, the name stood for her's and Jean's name: E (Eileen), 10 (J, the 10th letter of the alphabet), 2 (B), and 7 (G).

E-1027

Roquebrune, Cap Martin, France, 1927

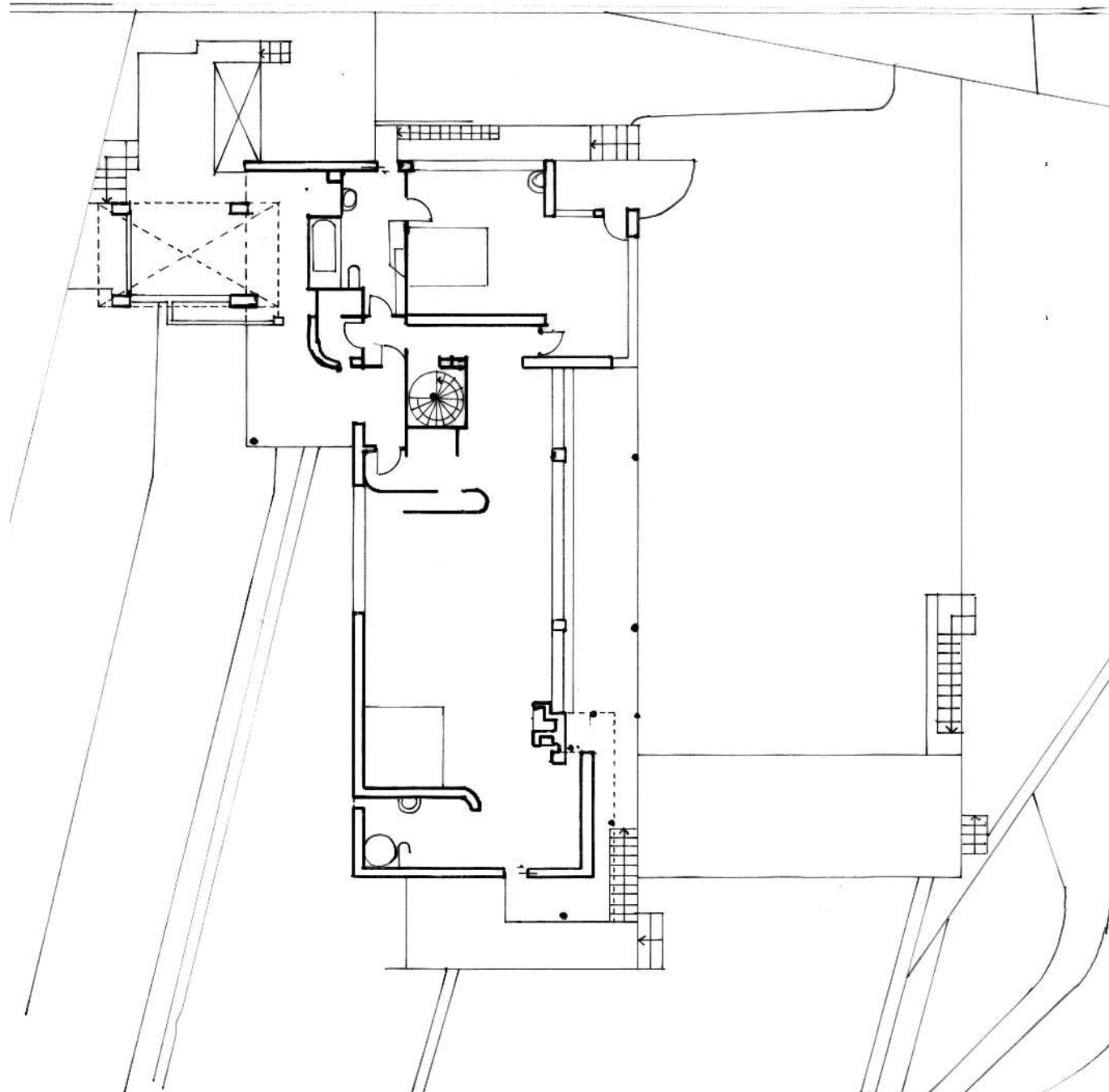


Main salon of E-1027.

Rather than dominating the landscape, Eileen carefully embedded the house into the steep terrain, taking full advantage of the panoramic sea views setting the house on the cliff like a docked yacht. The boundary between interior and exterior is deliberately blurred. Every principal room opens onto a terrace or balcony, while sliding windows, adjustable shutters, and movable screens allow occupants to regulate sunlight, airflow, and privacy. These elements create a flexible living environment in which the spaces remain closely connected to the sea, the landscape, and the changing climate.

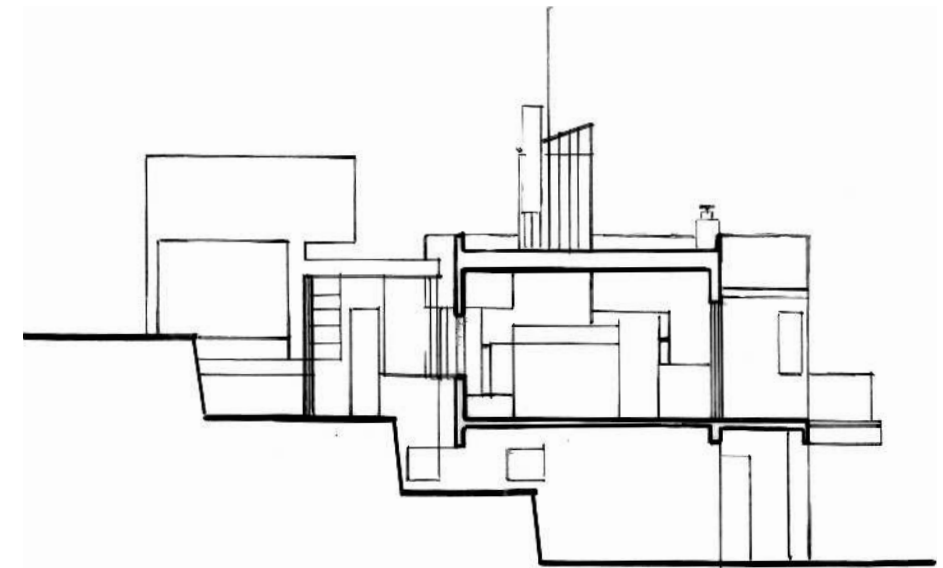


E-1027 photographed from the water.



EILEEN GRAY

Plan drawn on tracing paper (scale 1:100) by Rafael Costa



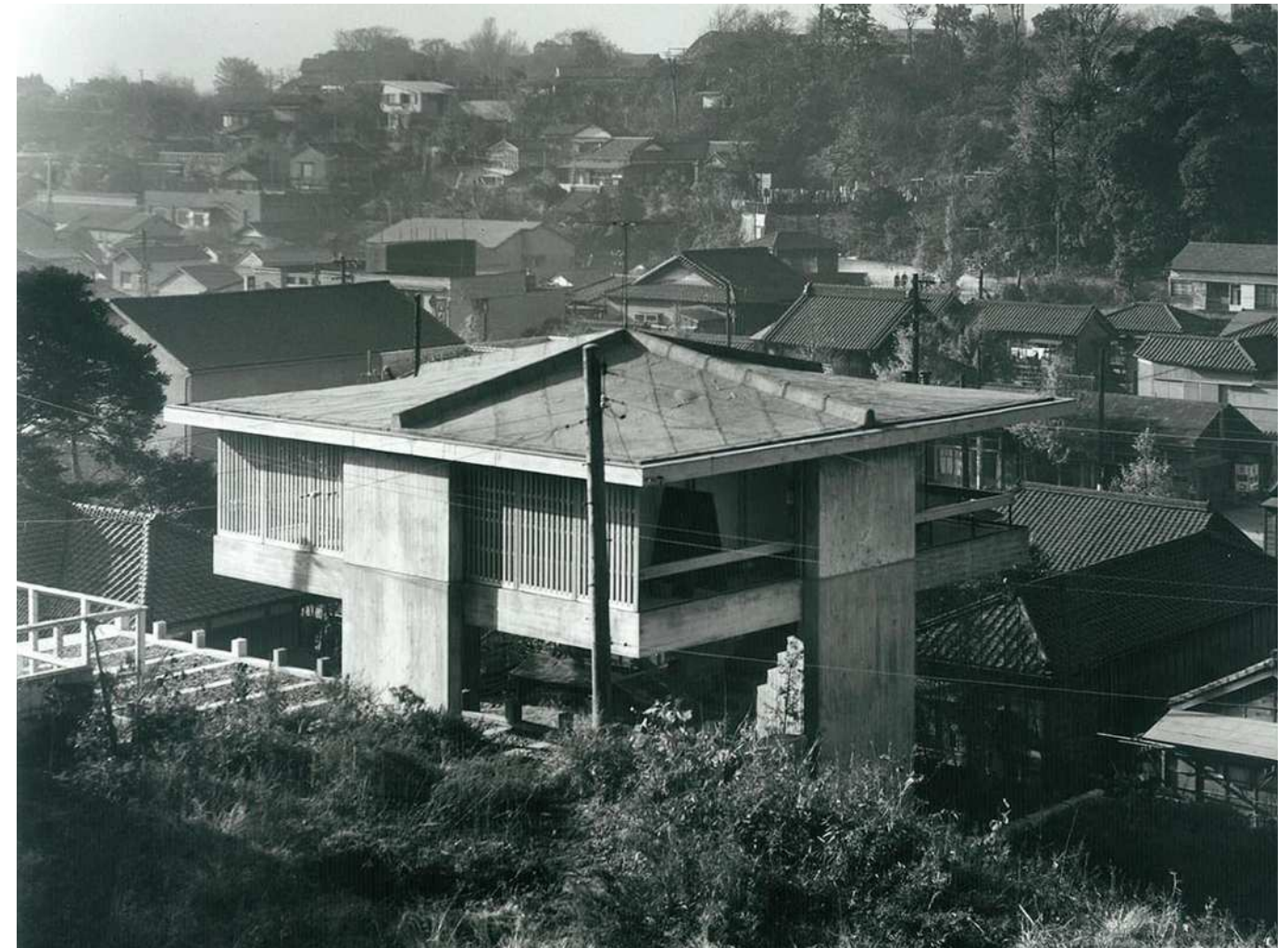
E-1027

Section drawn on tracing paper (scale 1:100) by Rafael Costa



Kiyonori Kikutake, c. 1969.

KIYONORI KIKUTAKE
Kurume, Japan, 1928



Sky house photographed by Akio Kawasumi in 1958.

Kiyonori graduated from Waseda University in 1950 and worked at Takenaka Corporation and Murano Mori Architects, where he gained experience in post-war reconstruction and architectural design. In 1953, he established his own architectural studio, allowing him to develop innovative ideas. Kiyonori was 31 years old when he completed the Sky House (1958) in Tokyo, a home he designed for his own family. Rather than being commissioned by a client, he effectively became his own first client, using the project as an opportunity to test ideas that conventional commissions would not have allowed. Built early in his career, the house became a manifesto for the radical thinking that would soon define the Japanese Metabolist movement.

SKY HOUSE
Tokyo, Japan, 1958

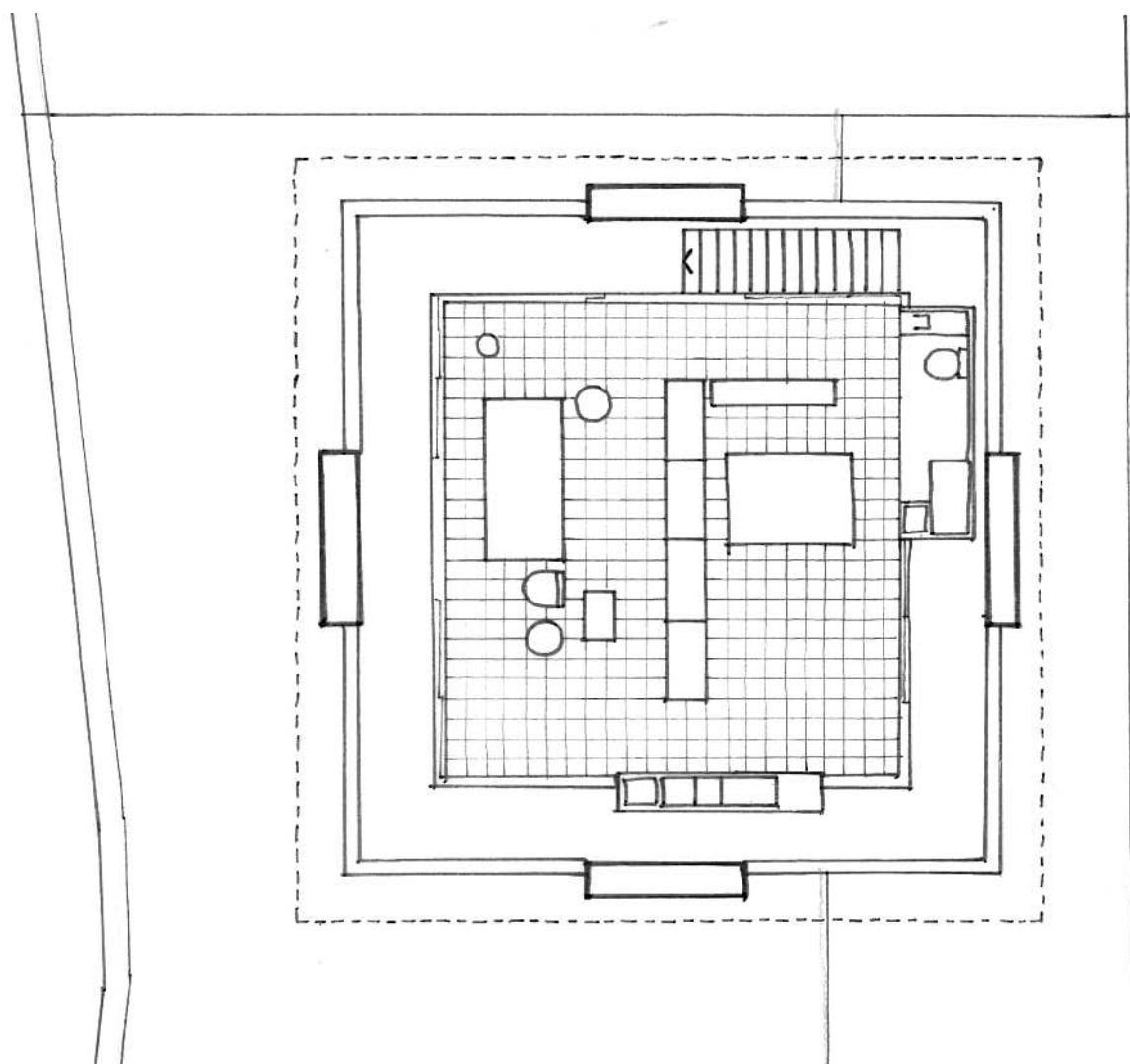


Kikutake interviewed by Rem Koolhaas and Hans Ulrich Obrist in the living room photographed by Joseph Grima.

Set on a compact urban site, the house is lifted above the ground on four reinforced concrete walls, creating an open, sheltered space beneath while giving the main living floor a sense of lightness and autonomy. The single elevated room is organised as a flexible, uninterrupted space, with movable furniture and service pods allowing the interior to adapt over time. Through this project, Kiyonori experimented with ideas of growth, change, and adaptability, establishing themes of modularity, structural clarity, and architecture as an evolving framework that would remain central to his later work.

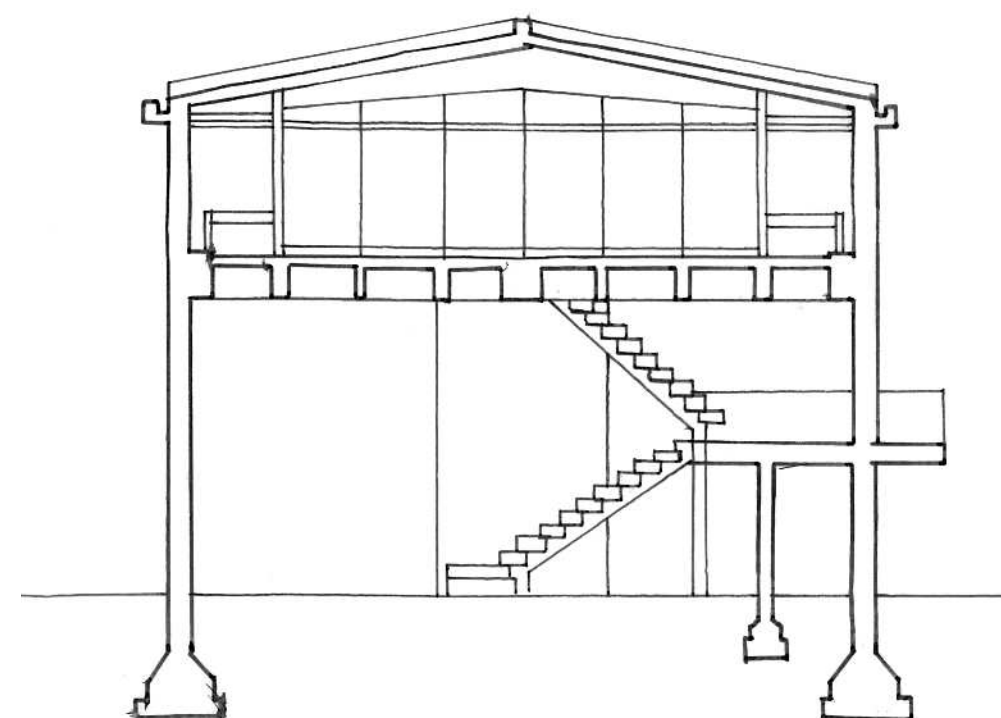


Suspended children bedroom with child playing, c. 1960.



KIYONORI KIKUTAKE

Plan drawn on tracing paper (scale 1:100) by Sabrina Law Shun Ting



SKY HOUSE

Section drawn on tracing paper (scale 1:100) by Sabrina Law Shun Ting



Toyo Ito photographed in 1999.

TOYO ITO

Keijō, Japanese Korea, 1941



View of the exterior with the entrance to the house on the left, c. 1971.

Toyo completed the Aluminium House in 1971 at the age of 30, shortly after establishing his architectural practice, URBOT (Urban Robot). It was his first completed project, commissioned by a private family in Fujisawa, Kanagawa, Japan. As his first client, the commission allowed Ito to test ideas that would later become central to his architectural approach and establish his reputation as an independent architect. Located in a residential neighbourhood near the coast, the house was built during a period when Fujisawa was becoming increasingly urban.

ALUMINIUM HOUSE

Fujisawa, Kanagawa, Japan, 1971

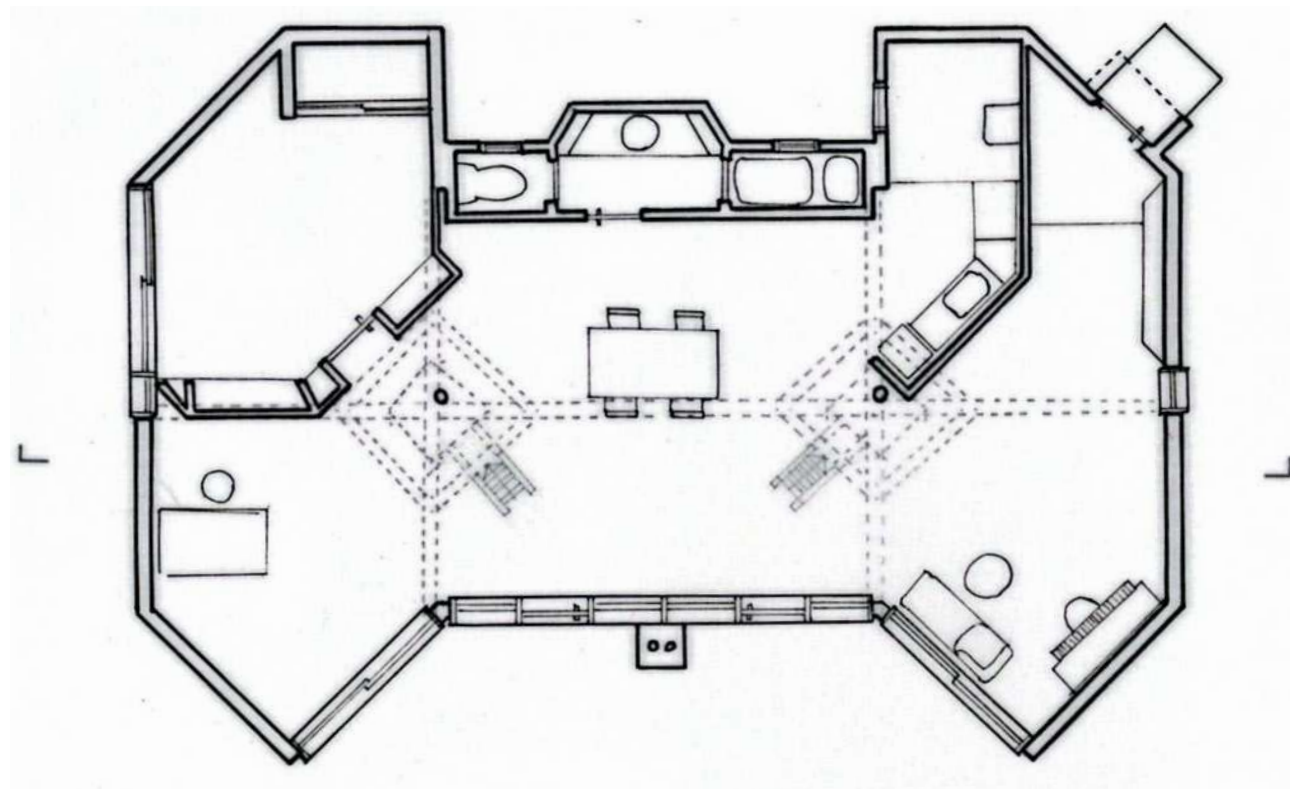


View of the main interior space with the ladder to access the attic space, c. 1975.

Rather than responding with a traditional Japanese house, Ito clad the timber structure entirely in aluminium, creating a simple, enclosed form that reflected the changing industrial character of the city. Inside, the ground floor is organised as an open, flowing space with few fixed divisions, while a central light well brings natural light into the upper level. Although modern in appearance, the house still incorporates elements of traditional Japanese architecture, including a tatami room and a compact, ladder-like staircase. The Aluminium House marked the beginning of Toyo's exploration of openness, lightness, and flexible living spaces. These early experiments with fluid spatial organisation and the relationship between architecture and the urban environment became recurring themes throughout his later work.

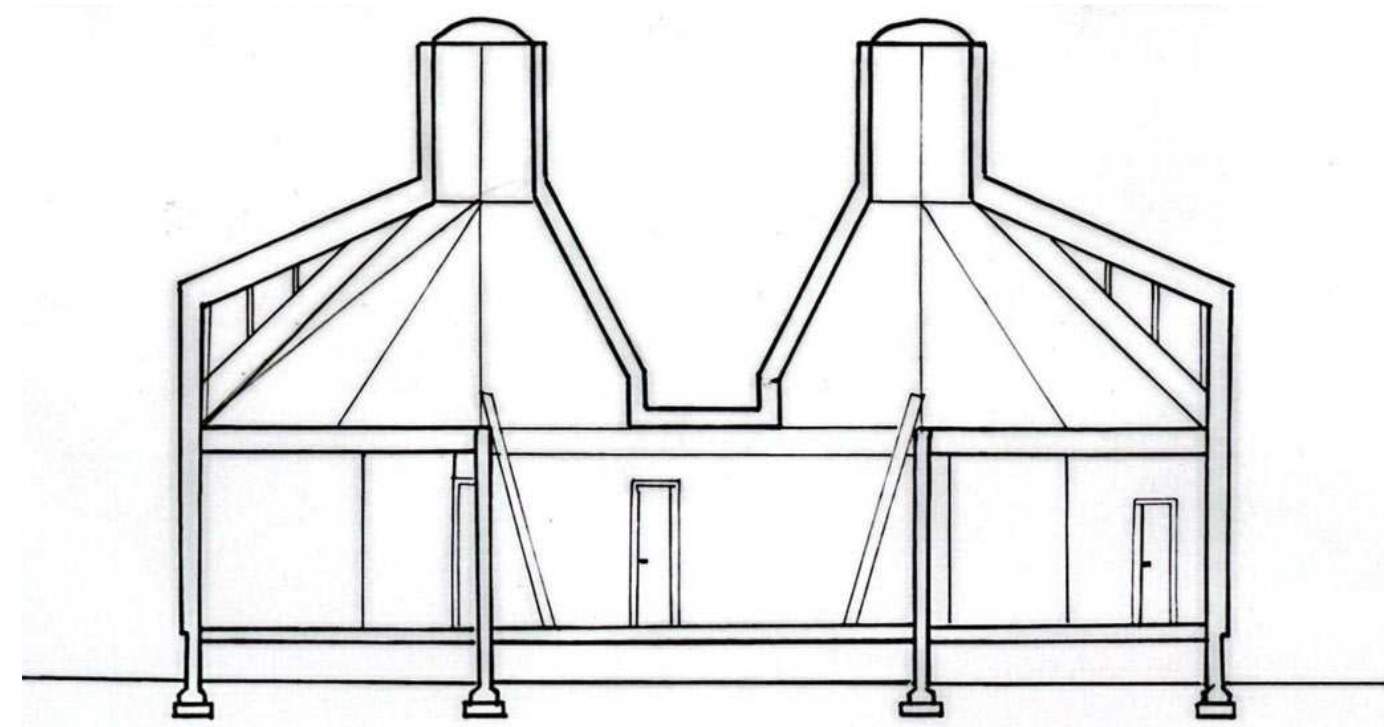


View of the interior seen from the entrance, c. 1971.



TOYO ITO

Plan drawn on tracing paper (scale 1:100) by Tagnipes Kathlyn Jimenez



ALUMINIUM HOUSE

Section drawn on tracing paper (scale 1:100) by Tagnipes Kathlyn Jimenez



Lina Bo Bardi photographed with one of her cats in 1951.

LINA BO BARDI
Roma, Italy, 1914



Lina and Pietro Maria's guests in the main salon of the house, 1951.

At the age of 35, Lina began a new life in Brazil, leaving post-war Italy behind. Together with her husband, she settled in São Paulo, where the couple bought two plots of land in the forested Morumbi district in 1949, then an almost untouched area on the outskirts of the city. Designed as the couple's future home, it became her first realized building and the first house constructed in the neighbourhood. Construction began in 1951, and in November 1952 the house already became the Bardis' permanent home. From the very beginning, Lina envisioned an open-plan light-filled living space filled with her eclectic furniture, objects, and works of art.

CASA DE VIDRO
São Paulo, Brazil, 1951

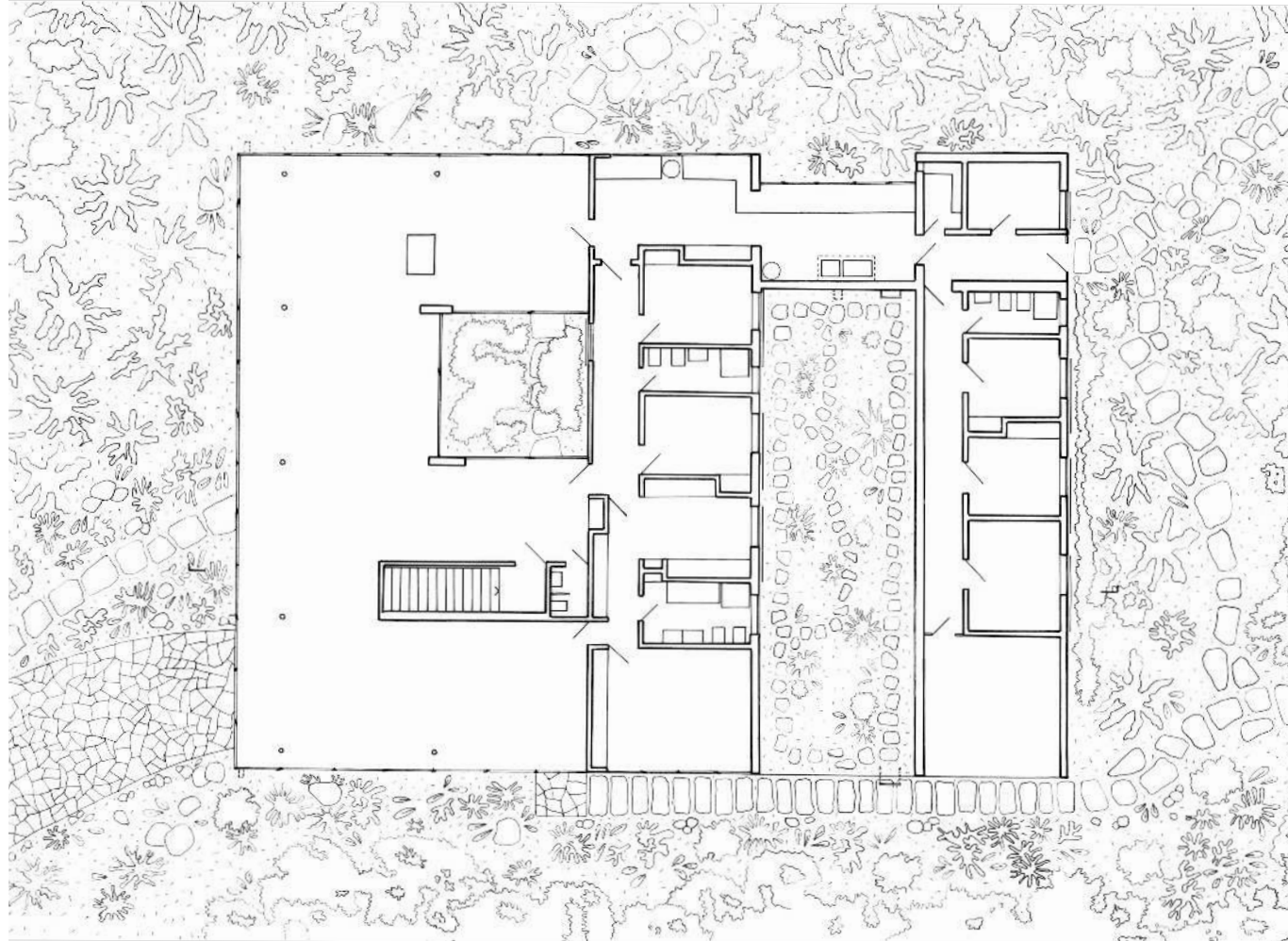


Covered driveway and access stair photographed by Peter Scheier in 1951.

Casa de vidro established a strong relationship with its natural setting. Elevated on slender steel columns, it appears to float above the steep, forested landscape, while its transparent glass façade connects the living spaces with the surrounding Atlantic Rainforest. In contrast, the private areas are built with solid brick walls embedded in the slope, combining European modern architecture with local building traditions. Through this dialogue between lightness and solidity, transparency and enclosure, Lina experimented with rational construction, structural lightness, and the integration of architecture, furniture, art, and nature. These principles became defining themes throughout her later work and laid the foundation for her human-centred approach to architecture.

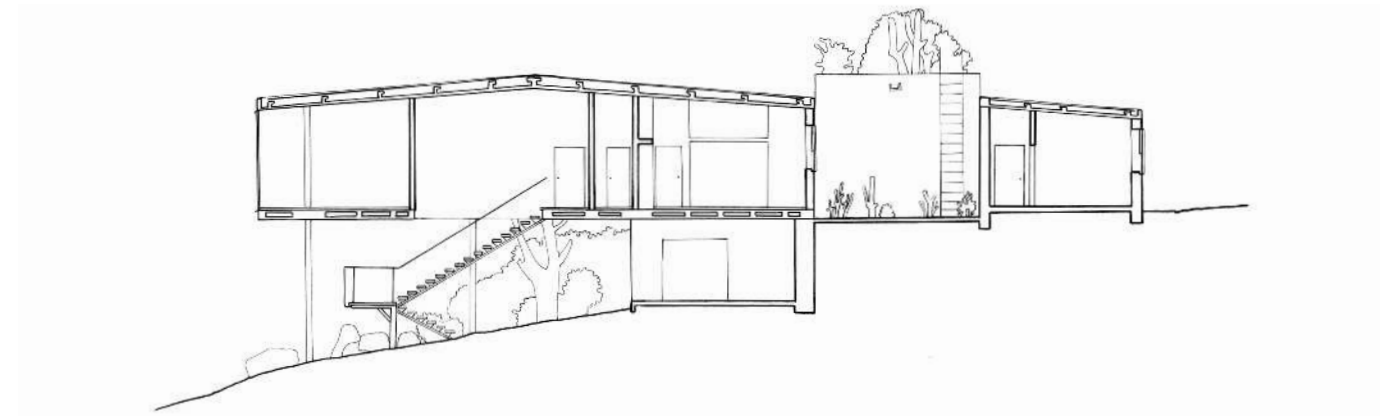


View of the surrounding photographed from the upper interior by Peter Scheier in 1951.



LINA BO BARDI

Plan drawn on tracing paper (scale 1:100) by Varvara Kalupina



CASA DE VIDRO

Section drawn on tracing paper (scale 1:100) by Varvara Kalupina



Shigeru Ban photographed in 2001.

SHIGERU BAN
Tokyo, Japan, 1957



Exterior photographed by Hiroyuki Hirai in 1995.

After graduating, Shigeru spent the next decade experimenting with recycled paper as a new minimum-waste construction material. He was passionate about expanding the idea into liveable spaces and realised that he should create a prototype - his own weekend house. He was 38 years old when he built Paper House, and as both client and architect, he had complete freedom to be radical. This project marks the milestone of the first legal, permanent paper dwelling.

PAPER HOUSE
Tokyo, Japan, 1995

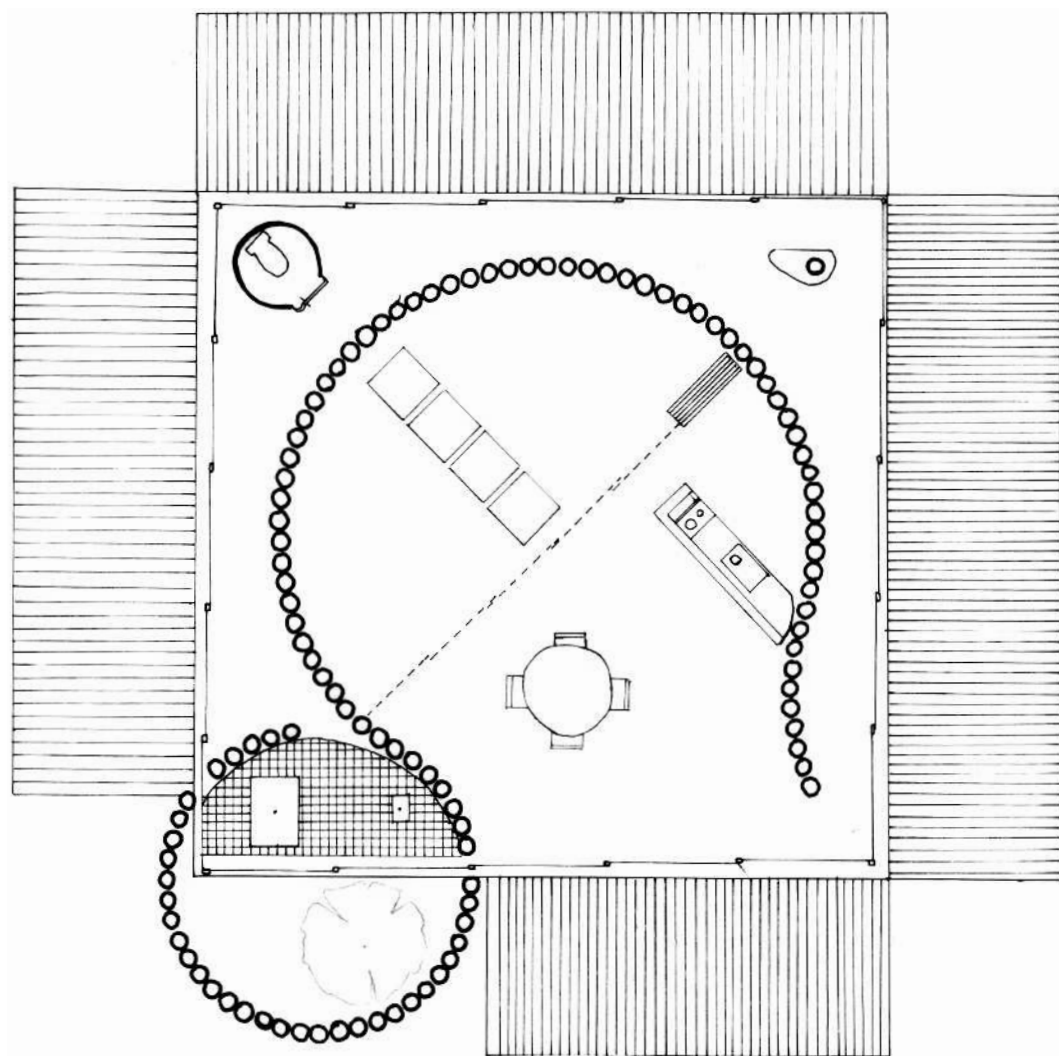


Interior space photographed by Hiroyuki Hirai in 1995.

The site, near Lake Yamanakako in Japan, is surrounded by nature and so this connection with the outdoors becomes especially important. The house can become entirely open, with glass sliding doors on Shigeru's 'universal floor'; a constant surface across rooms and terraces inspired by Japanese traditional living. Interior sliding screens create flexible privacy. The swirling columns eliminate the need for doors or corridors by guiding visitors and slowly revealing private spaces in a hierarchical order. Shigeru is passionate about sustainability and ethical issues. He has used recycled paper construction for subsequent projects such as temporary refugee living, and in the Kobe Church project where he employed locals displaced by an earthquake.

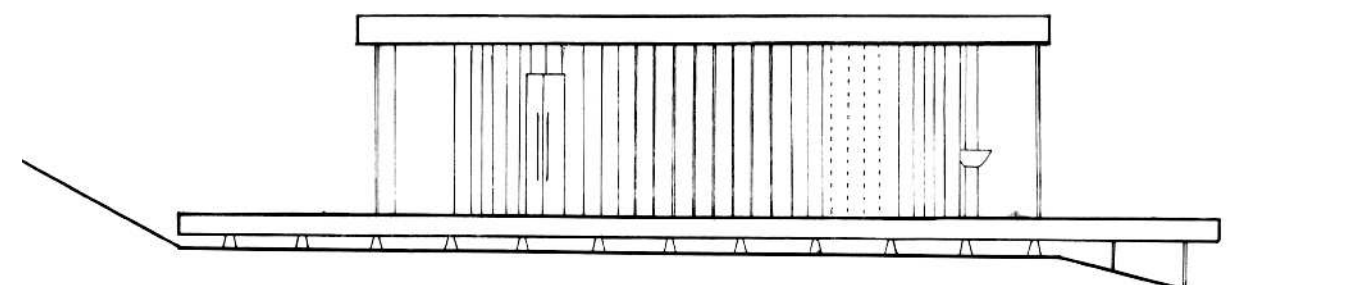


Shadows cast by the structural paper tubes photographed by Hiroyuki Hirai in 1995.



SHIGERU BAN

Plan drawn on tracing paper (scale 1:50) by Yasmin Thornton



PAPER HOUSE

Section drawn on tracing paper (scale 1:50) by Yasmin Thornton

BREAKING GROUND 22 BEGINNINGS

ALEXANDRA ELENA NICU
ANA CABRAL
ARTUR RAIK
DANIEL NITSCHÉ
DIOGO MACEDO MALCATA
EDUARDO RODRIGUES QUINTÃOS
FABBIO AUGUSTO SAVIOLI DA SILVA
FELICIA MARIA SCIUTO
FRANCISCA COSTA
FRANCISCA DA CUNHA DIAS
GRETA ULDUKYTE
HELDER CORREIA
HUANG YUHAN
IULIA-PETRA POPA
LAURA CRISTEA
LUDWIG HOCHLEITNER
NATALIE DE L'OR
RAFAEL COSTA
SABRINA LAW SHUN TING
TAGNIPES KATHLYN JIMENEZ
VARVARA KALUPINA
YASMIN THORNTON