

Modernist Manifesto

MUSEU DO
PORTO → CASA
DO INFANTE

Reading Room 1
Casa do Infante

28.08.—
31.12.2025

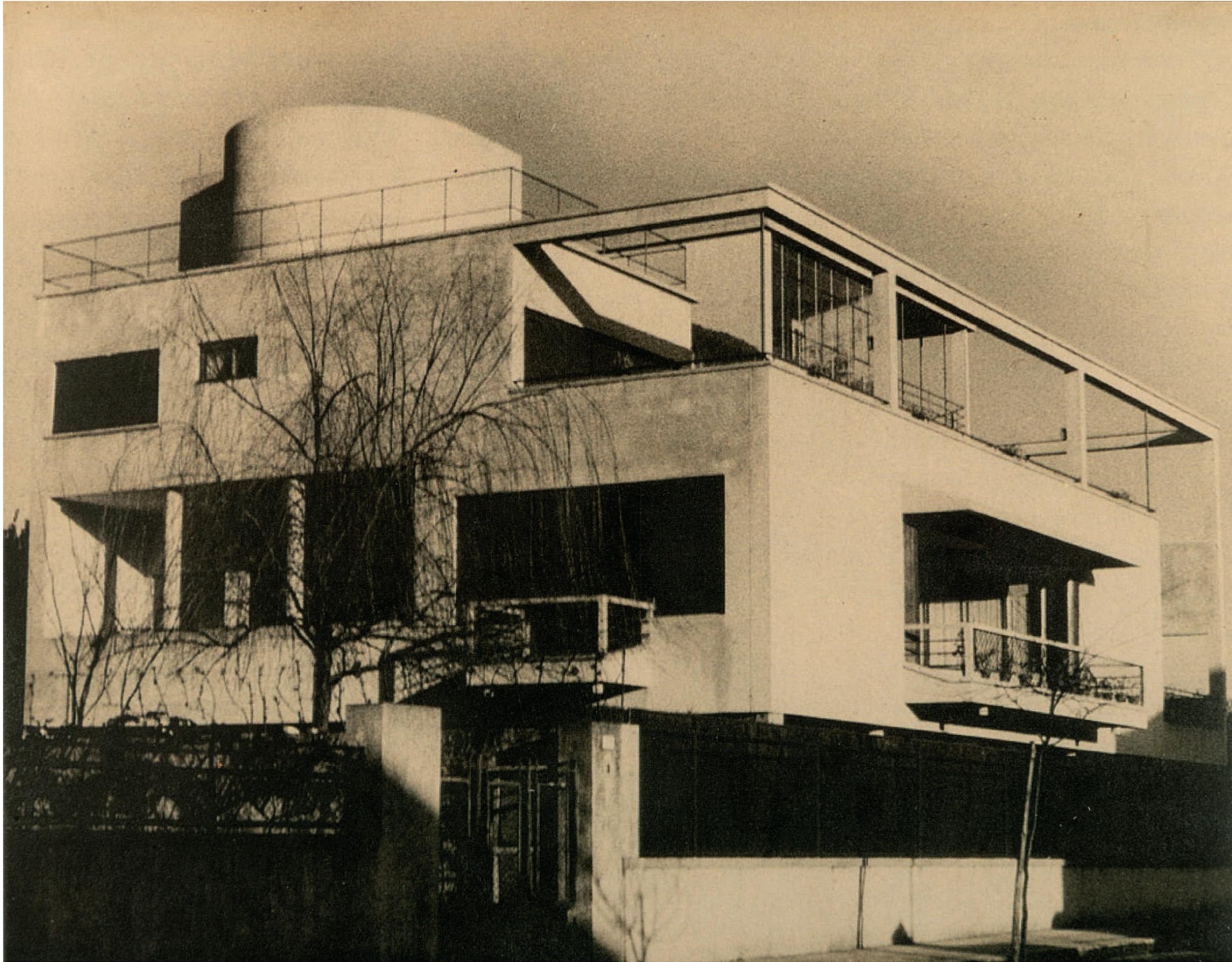
D.R.C.

Curator
Rita Roque

Scientific Consultant
João Campos

Viana de Lima

Porto.



Viana de Lima
Photo of House D.R.C., c.1943
Campos, João; Fernandes, José Manuel -
Viana de Lima e a introdução da arquitectura moderna em Portugal:
ensaio sobre a Casa Cortez : Porto [1940]. Porto : Urbatelier, 2011



Modernist Manifesto

*The house is not a machine to live in.
It is a shell for human beings, their extension,
their retreat, their spiritual emanation.*

Eileen Gray

Modernist Manifesto is a documentary exhibition displaying in the Reading Room of the Casa do Infante (House of the Prince) twenty-five original drawings penned by the architect Viana de Lima for the project of Casa D.R.C. (Dona Rosa Cortez House). This residence was built between 1939 and 1943 — only to be demolished in 1971. It was located at the corner of Rua Costa Cabral and Rua Honório de Lima (formerly Rua Aníbal Patrício).

Throughout fifty-five years of activity, Alfredo Viana de Lima embodied the essence of the Modern Movement's ideals. He assimilated the masterful language of Marques da Silva and Le Corbusier, while forging a path of his own and opening new horizons in the field of architecture. Inspired by Le Corbusier's Villa Savoye in France, the ill-fated D.R.C. House was Viana de Lima's first work and one of the earliest exemplars of modern architecture in Portugal.

As of 20th July 1943, the house was inhabited by António de Sousa Cortez and Rosa Cortez, the couple who had commissioned the architect to design a residence comprising a ground floor, two upper storeys, and a solarium. In 1971, twenty-eight years after its construction was licensed, the demolition of the building sparked shock and indignation.

The D.R.C. House can be compared to a felled tree which is not only impressed in the memory of those who experienced it when it existed, but also in the memory of those who begin to discover it now. The exhibition reflects not only on the architectural craft, but also on the circumstances of this project's loss and preservation.

All the drawings showcased in this exhibition were donated by the architect João Campos to the Casa do Infante. These are originals consisting of graphite on tracing paper typically used for duplicate copies placed on the drawing board. Such preliminary drawings would later give way to the precise and firm India ink lines of the project drawing.

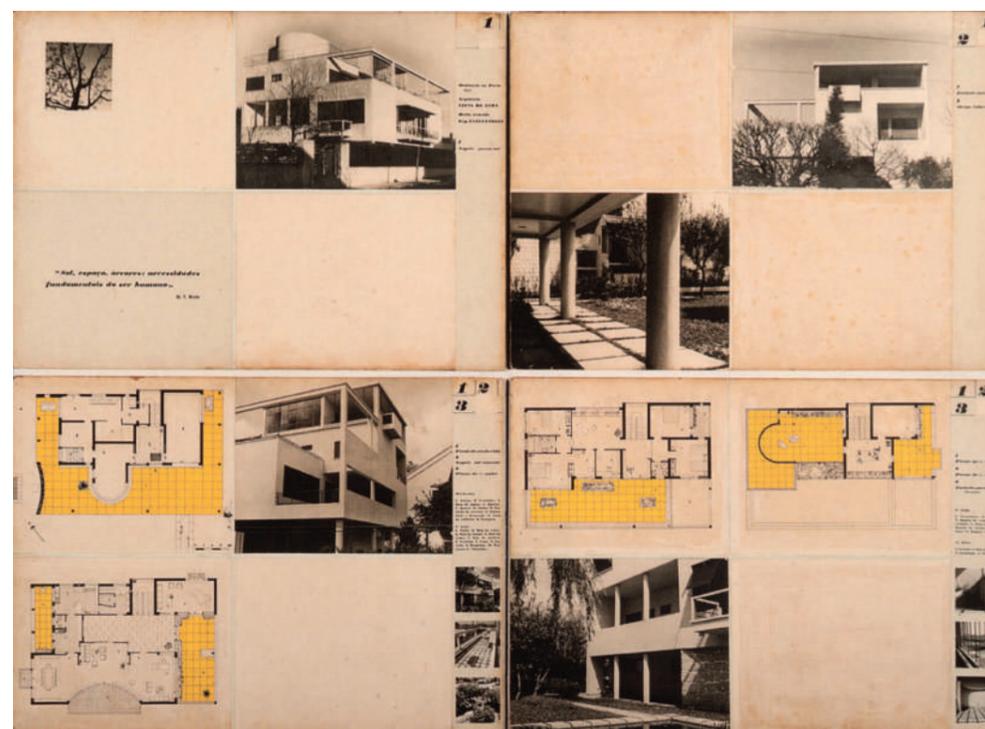
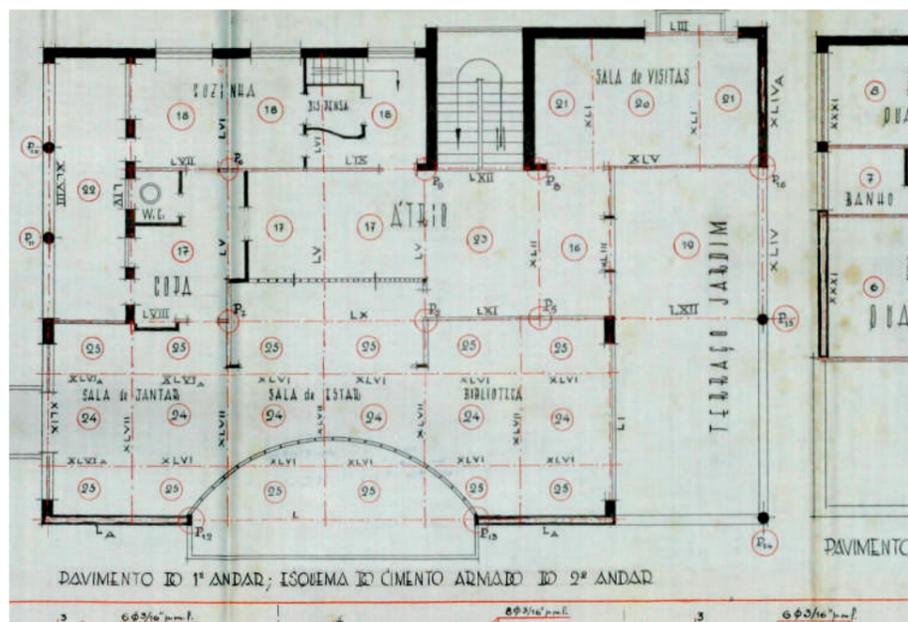
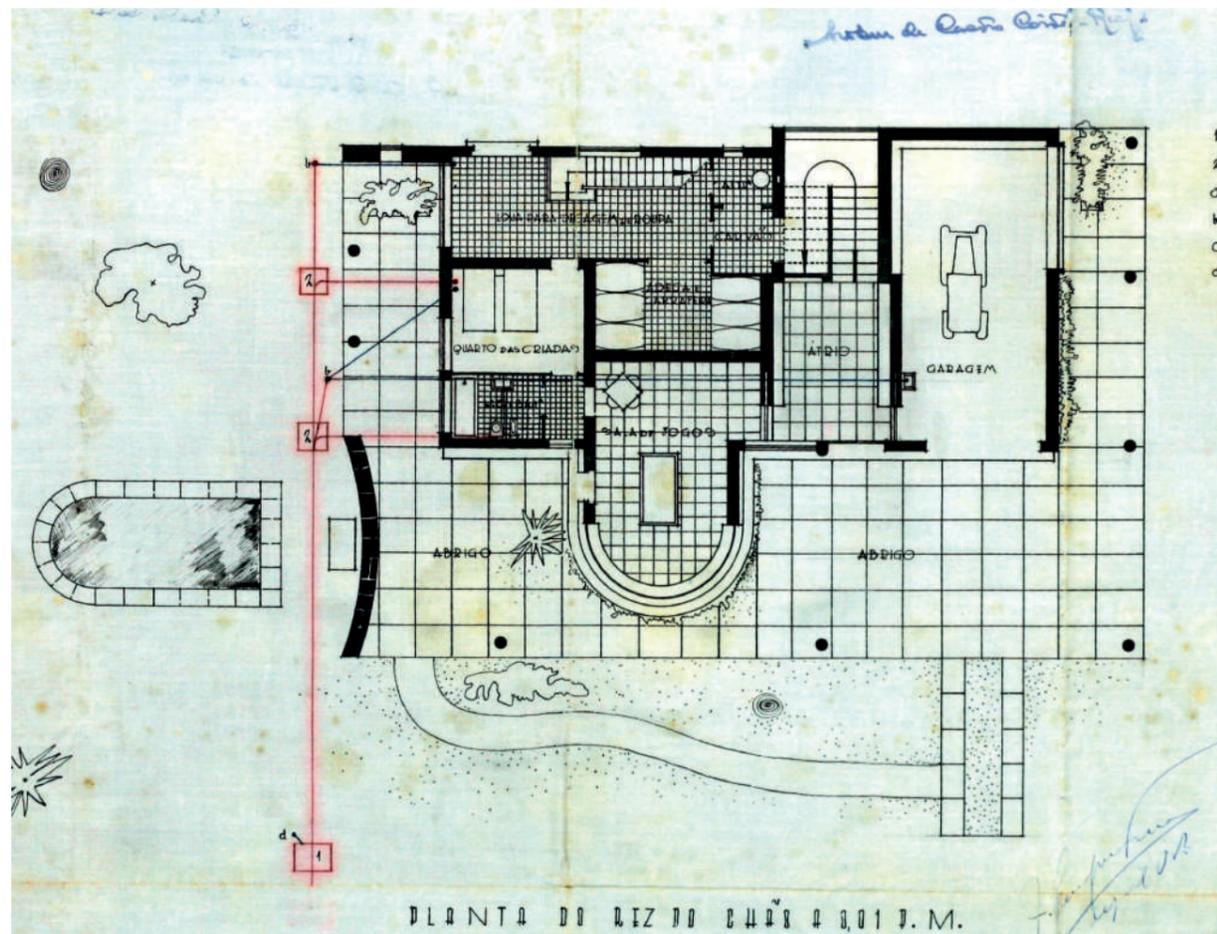
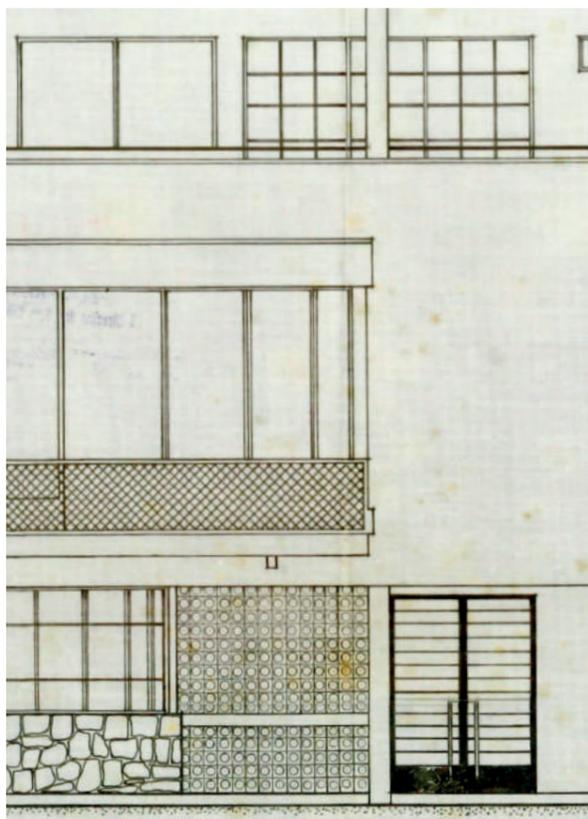
The exhibition also includes a 2011 scale model (1:33) of the House. The Rolleiflex camera further testifies to the use of photography as a fundamental instrument not only for documenting the landscape but also in the architectural practice.

Modernist Manifesto includes the original licensing process of D.R.C. House submitted to Porto City Hall under the License n.º 282-1941, archived in the Casa do Infante. This document can be seen on an Olaió drawing board. Also warranting attention is the portrait of Viana de

Lima by Júlio Pomar, which is part of the collection of the Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Porto.

During this exhibition, whose opening day marks the 112nd anniversary of the artist's birth, the Porto Museum offers its visitors the work *Viana de Lima and the Introduction of Modern Architecture in Portugal – Essay on the Cortez House / Porto [1940]*, edited by the architect João Campos, a close associate of Viana de Lima.

Coincidence or not, the motto of the Casa do Infante — *Talent de Bien Faire* — seems to match the inner voice that the architect consistently imparted to the projects he embraced.



Details of the licensing process of House D.R.C
 License number 282/1941 - Porto City Hall
 Casa do Infante Holdings
 Porto Museum and Libraries

Viana de Lima
 Photography and studies of Casa D.R.C, c.1943
 In, *Viana de Lima e a introdução da arquitetura moderna em Portugal*
Ensaio sobre a casa Cortez / Porto 1940
 Courtesy of João Campos



Architect Viana de Lima
Esposende, c.1950
Holdings "Viana de Lima Fonds"
Esposende City Hall

Dear Master,

I write to give you notice that the fine originals you drew for the house of Dona Rosa Cortez are henceforth under municipal custody in the Porto City Archive. I believe this to be a fitting repository to safeguard such important documents for the history of the city, alongside the licencing proceeding records for that iconic, since gone, abode.

That which is commonly called Casa do Infante (House of the Infante) is, after all, a space profoundly linked to you, Master, in light of your long-standing involvement, as City Advisor, with the concerted efforts to safeguard the heritage of Ribeira-Barredo, and to secure UNESCO recognition of the Historical City Centre of Porto as a site of Outstanding Universal Value to Humanity.

The drawings, exhibited in the Reading Room — where once was the office you frequented weekly over the years — were made public through an essay I published in 2011: *Viana de Lima e a Introdução da Arquitectura Moderna em Portugal – Ensaio sobre a Casa Cortez / Porto [1940]*. The latter was meant to spark a homage rightfully owed to you by the country — and especially by some institutions, such as the Gulbenkian Foundation, as well as several municipalities that benefitted from the indelible mark of your architecture. I was unable, at the time, to secure the naturally expected support for the commemoration of your birth. But now, twelve years later, I am glad to, once again, be able to assert this without reservations: in my view, you, Master Viana, are the most important Portuguese architect of the 20th century. Saying so in no way detracts from the standing of other notable names — some of them friends — who continued to shape the Modernity of our landscape. The solemn homage due shall, of necessity, be paid to you.

For the exhibition showcasing the donation I decided to make to the city, surrendering the collection of originals I was uniquely proud to hold in my possession, given your legendary parsimony in granting tokens of your art — I requested to add an object, which was bestowed upon me by Lady D. Iria shortly after your left us. This is the complete Rolleiflex photography case that includes a triple set of Zeiss lenses and other accessories, which I have on occasion carried to the locations and works you wished to capture.

Hundreds upon hundreds of photographic records, including daguerreotypes, were created from the light captured through this and other cameras. To my knowledge, they remain in a vast archive, awaiting proper processing towards facilitating research and the advancement of scholarship. We all await the enrichment to be brought about by studies that, once the wellspring is properly fathomed, will have rectified the deferment in honouring such an indispensable name in the pantheon of its finest.

Concurrently embodying rectitude and the other values you upheld in fulfilling your mission, you have imposed demanding standards on yourself and on the suitability of the means you employed. Above all, you were committed to the integrity of the ethical and technical principles you unwaveringly observed in your pursuit of excellence, right up to the very end.

Porto, August 2025.
João S. de Sousa Campos

Casa D. Rosa Cortez (Viana de Lima) 1939-1941

The onset of World War I would suddenly cut short the ambitious journey that Alfredo Viana de Lima — a young student of architecture in EBAP [Portuguese acronym for Porto School of Fine Arts] — was carrying out through several European cities with the goal of enhancing his preparation for the CODA [Portuguese acronym for Competition for Obtaining the Architect's Diploma]. Nonetheless, his first-hand exposure to the leading figures of the time, especially to Le Corbusier's rich and multifaceted world, came to be reflected in the most widely praised of his achievements: the house of the couple Rosa Carlota Cortez and António de Sousa Cortez.

While that opportunity made completing his studies less pressing, it also raised the expectations of the academic and professional community for such an exceptional aspiring architect. A key aspect in how this work of his was received was the close temporal proximity of its projection and completion to that of other iconic architectural achievements in the city of Porto — such as the House of Serralves (Charles Siclis and Marques da Silva), completed in 1944; the Daniel Barbosa House (Januário Godinho), completed in 1940; or the Manoel de Oliveira House (José Luís Porto), completed in 1942. Viana de Lima would also play an important and recognized role in the latter.

However, none of them — as was the case with any other architectural work in the country at the time — expressed with such clarity and conviction a commitment to the tenets of the Modern Movement. The interpretive possibilities of the *Cinc points de l'architecture nouvelle* — first implemented in Portugal with remarkable consistency in this work by Viana de Lima — are significantly altered when the most prestigious architectural prize in the country promotes the historicist nationalism endorsed by the Estado Novo.

This work is, in fact, a manifesto. We may recognize it as a truly meaningful break, signalling a renewed understanding of a rapidly changing time. With it, the architect assertively surpasses the academicist model of his training years, decisively embracing a sense — both programmatic and functional — of renovating the domestic space, upholding the “purity of ideas and forms”. He refines the relationships between interior spaces, as well as between these and the exterior, powerfully expressing through them the importance of architecture — not only as a discipline but also in cultural and social terms — in the context of his time.

Minimalist in its geometry and composition, this generously proportioned dwelling aptly exemplifies the dematerialization of the original parallelepiped form. It avoids symmetry to achieve a dynamic interplay of solids and voids, where exterior spaces are conceived as interior. From the dialogue between the latter stands out the meticulous drawing of the ground plane, as well as

the new prominence assumed by design and the suggested use of roof structures. The combination of these elements is largely responsible for a harmoniously exuberant sense of scale, which many have recognized as a renewed monumentality.

The work was concluded in 1943. The unsettling impact of its reception explains the widespread popular perception of it as “foreign”. However, within the academic and professional milieu, the name of Viana de Lima would become a perennial symbol of the Modern Movement. After all these decades, international recognition of his role as a scrupulous and prolific disciple of Le Corbusier is finally glimpsed ahead. Demolished without apparent reason in 1972, when its classification procedure was already underway, this work remained the most widely cited and acknowledged of his entire oeuvre, but also the most subject to flights of fancy and imprecisions. This largely contributed to the belittlement of a work marked by an exemplary and firmly grounded compositional awareness and technical mastery. Its professional rigour is embodied in the balance it strives to achieve, between enthusiasm for the Swiss mater's work and the often difficult, if not hostile national reality.



MUNICIPALITY OF PORTO

Mayor of Porto
RUI MOREIRA

Municipal Director of Culture and Heritage
Director of the Porto Museum and Libraries
ALEXANDRA CERVEIRA LIMA

Director of the Municipal Department for Cultural
Heritage Management
MIGUEL AREOSA RODRIGUES

Head of the Municipal Historical Archive Division
DANIELA FERNANDES

Head of the Municipal Museums Division
MARIANA JACOB TEIXEIRA

Head of the Municipal Libraries Division
SÍLVIA MACEDO FARIA

Head of Unit Support Office for Libraries and Reading
SÍLVIA PINTO DE ALMEIDA

Head of Unit – Support Office for Collection
Management and Technical Document Treatment
CARLA AZEVEDO

Programming and Mediation Support Office
RITA LOBO GUIMARÃES

Director of the Municipal Department of
Communication and Promotion
ISABEL MOREIRA DA SILVA

EXHIBITION

Municipal Director of Culture and Heritage
Director of the Porto Museum and Libraries
ALEXANDRA CERVEIRA LIMA

Director of the Municipal Department for Cultural
Heritage Management
MIGUEL AREOSA RODRIGUES

Head of the Municipal Historical Archive Division
DANIELA FERNANDES

Curator
RITA ROQUE

Scientific Consultant
JOÃO CAMPOS

Curator's Assistant
ROSÁRIO GUIMARÃES

Archival Treatment
MADALENA PEIXOTO

Texts
RITA ROQUE
JOÃO CAMPOS
LUÍS RODRIGUES

Architect
INÉS MORÃO DIAS

Graphic Design
LUÍS CEPAL

Lighting Design
MIGUEL ÂNGELO

Text Revision and Translation
JOANA MATOS GOMES

Photography
ANTÓNIO ALVES

Hiring
EDUARDA PAIVA
MADALENA PEIXOTO

Processing, Conservation, and Restoration
JOANA GUERREIRO
MADALENA OLIVEIRA
MARIA JOÃO CALHEIROS
PAULA MONTEIRO

Communication
BRUNO PEREIRA
GEORGINA CARNEIRO
PATRÍCIA BRÁS

Mediation and Education
NELSON CRUZ
RUI ALVES

Transport
ADÃO VIEIRA
JÚLIO VIEIRA

Assembly, Carpentry, and Painting
DRAPEADOS E LAUREADOS

Graphic Implementation
INFORCORTE

Institutional Partnerships
FACULDADE DE BELAS ARTES
DA UNIVERSIDADE DO PORTO

