



BIENAL DE FOTOGRAFIA
LAMEGO E VALE DO VAROSA

TECHNOLOGICAL LANDSCAPES

ÁLVARO DOMINGUES

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'(...) this land is very mountainous for the most part and all of it is very well utilised, there isn't a piece of it that isn't used, especially for the Douro. And the people are so benefactors that on the high crags they carry the basket of land on their backs to plant the grapevines and fig trees, pear trees, plum trees and all the other trees. And all the roads are covered with fruit trees and vines (...).'

Back in 1531/2, this was how Rui Fernandes composed the Description of the land around Lamego two leagues away. The romantic way of describing landscapes and the prodigy of photography to reveal certain framings and compositions in the manner of the picturesque tradition practised in 19th century painting were still a long way off.

More than just visual impressions of mountainous and highly utilised land, Rui Fernandes points out modes of transformation, albeit partially fictionalised, since the terraces were built more by excavating and terracing the slopes than by filling them with earth carried on their backs.

This is a clear example of the technological reasons for the landscape. Building terraces and paths, bridges, fountains, houses, hovels, mills, warehouses, cellars... are jobs that mobilise knowledge, techniques, tools, machines and all the infinite things that technology is made of - from grafting techniques to global telecommunications systems. This is the matter that landscapes are made of and a sure indicator of what is coming and what is being transformed - dams, reservoirs, highways, electricity grids, viaducts. Territory is a social construction, a piece of the world which, as Camões wrote, is made up of change, always taking on new qualities.

Exhibition from 20th July to 21st October

Álvaro Domingues (Melgaço, 1959). Geographer, professor at the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Porto. His published work includes: ‘Portugal Possível’ (Museu da Paisagem, Lisbon, 2022 with Duarte Belo); ‘Paisagem Portuguesa’, Lisbon, FFMS, 2022, with Duarte Belo); ‘Paisagens Transgénicas’, Museu da Paisagem, Lisbon; ‘Volta a Portugal’, (ed. Contraponto/Bertrand, Lisbon, 2022); ‘Território Casa Comum’ (with Nuno Travasso, FAUP, Porto, 2015), ‘A Rua da Estrada’ (Dafne, Porto, 2010), ‘Vida no Campo’ (Dafne, Porto, 2012) and ‘Políticas Urbanas I e II’ (with Nuno Portas and João Cabral, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon, 2003 and 2011), ‘Cidade e Democracia’ (Argumentum, Lisbon, 2006). He regularly participates in conferences, educational activities, exhibitions and interdisciplinary projects. He is a corresponding member of the Lisbon Academy of Sciences. He writes regularly for the Público newspaper and Umbigo Magazine.

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