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MINIMIZAÇÃO DE RISCOS

NÁDIA SCHILLING



MINIMIZAÇÃO DE RISCOS | NÁDIA SCHILLING



There's a new way to experience the landscape in Foz do Arelho, Portugal. The new project that aimed the cliffs and dunes rehabilitation transformed a degraded landscape, that was used as an unsafe parking space for years, with no regard for its character and ecological aspects, into a new area that creates different relations to the landscape and the sea, in a way that preserves and respects its intrinsic values.

The project, that was part of the Operational Programme for Territorial Development, is almost complete, but still lacks some equipment, such as chairs, safety barriers and signage.

The project was conceived by the landscape architect Nadia Schilling. The Municipality of Caldas da Rainha wanted to create safety conditions and to requalify Foz do Arelho lookouts, but the author of the project decided to develop and present to the promoters an idea that extended beyond the space embellishment.

Cliffs and dunes have an enormous ecological sensitivity and are subjected to a natural erosion caused by the sea and wind. Over the years, it has been observed that erosion was largely accelerated by the misuse of these areas. The access to vehicles, the devastation of its autochthonous vegetation, among other factors, led to its gradual destruction and created dangerous conditions that risked the visitor's safety.

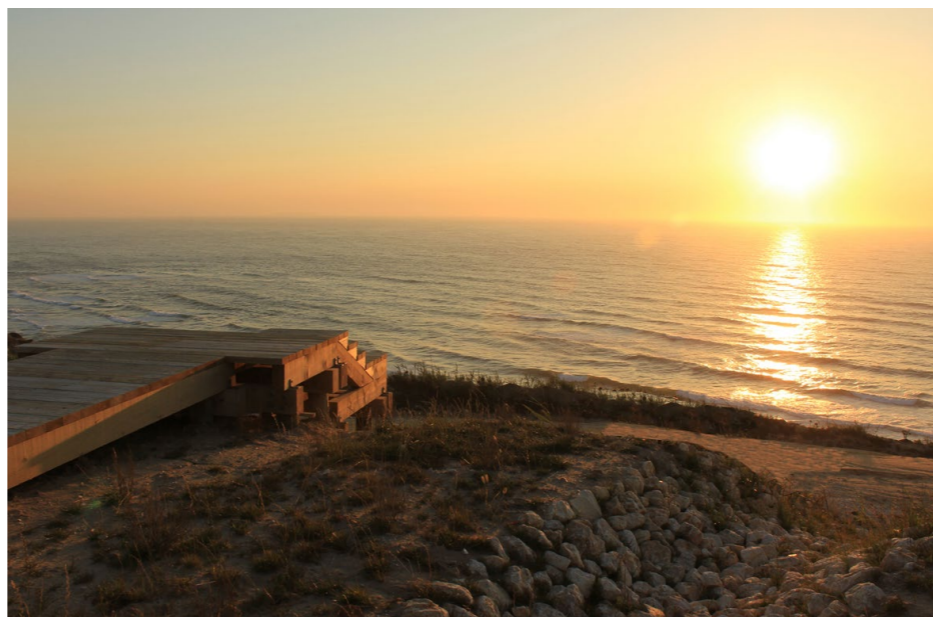
For a keen observer it was clear that these problems existed and an urgent intervention was necessary. Natural vegetation needed to be reestablished to promote erosion control and create conditions for the visitors truly experience this landscape.

The solution found for these problems consists in the connection of the main lookouts with a raised wooden walkway, which defines the paths that people can use safely. Another aspect of this solution was an ecological concern that led to the eradication of cars in these natural areas and the preservation of the biophysical dynamics, as a first step to restore the native vegetation, so unique and rare.

Before advancing with sketches, a study was conducted by the University of Lisbon, commissioned by the Municipality of Caldas da Rainha, which defined, after tests carried out on site, the cliffs risk range. It was only based on that information, along with a survey of all the constraints, that it was developed the main plan.

In this project, it was crucial to merge the artificial structure with the natural elements. The goal was to build a continuous path which took people away from risk areas, that prevented vehicles access and could regulate pedestrian circulation on the cliffs. Based on the aerial photograph, the design of the project was developed from the natural dynamics of cliff and dune systems: the fractals. This way, the wooden path looks as natural as possible and holds several different areas sought primarily as a space for reflection and contemplation. The wide lookouts were divided into small individual high platforms, which will include a swivel chair (so that the user can choose where to look) and that allows each individual to have a moment of reflection, with its own space.

This was an important step in the renaturalization of degraded areas, creating conditions for its recovery, which included the replanting of native vegetation. All materials and construction



techniques were chosen considering the ecological aspects, safety and the structure's durability.

Even though it's an ongoing project, it will contribute to the rebalancing of the ecological area, and will allow Foz do Arelho visitors to have a new way to relate and enjoy one of the most notable landscape of the portuguese coast.

MINIMIZAÇÃO DE RISCOS | NÁDIA SCHILLING

Full Project Name | Projecto de Requalificação das Arribas – Minimização de Riscos
Cliffs Rehabilitation Project

Location | Foz do Arelho – Portugal
Designer | Nádía Schilling
Year of Design | 2009
Year of Construction | 2012
Text Credit | João Pombeiro
Images Credit | Nádía Schilling

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WLA LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE MAGAZINE

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DIGITAL | gumroad.com

ADVERTISING |
advertise@worldlandscapearchitect.com

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PUBLISHED DECEMBER 2013
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