Patrick Lynch studied architecture at Liverpool and Cambridge Universities and completed his PhD at the Sir John Cass Faculty of Art, Architecture and Design. He is the founding partner of Lynch Architects. Based in London, the practice has won numerous awards and its work has been published extensively internationally. Lynch Architects exhibited at the Venice Biennale of Architecture in 2008 and 2012, and at the Milan Triennale in 2016. Patrick is the author of *The Theatricality of the Baroque City*, 2011, and *Mimesis*, 2015, which is a companion to *Civic Ground*. He has taught at Cambridge University and the Architectural Association, and is currently a Visiting Professor at the University of Liverpool.

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Civic Ground

PATRICK LYNCH

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Civic Ground

Rhythmic Spatiality and the Communicative Movement between Architecture, Sculpture and Site

PATRICK LYNCH

In *Civic Ground: Rhythmic Spatiality and the Communicative Movement between Architecture, Sculpture and Site*, Patrick Lynch traces the philosophical background to his work as an architect, raising ethical and aesthetic considerations about what it means to make good architecture—and good cities—today.

Lynch identifies the comparison of buildings with sculptures—and the cliche "sculptural form"— as an urban problem, critiquing this formalist tendency as one of the main failures of contemporary architecture, arguing that parallels should instead be seen in the phenomenon of rhythmic spatiality. Rhythmic spatiality situates a sculpture or a building in its physical setting and civic context, articulating the interdependence of both. These spatial and symbolic relationships are presented in a series of drawings and photographs by the author, revealing the profound reciprocity of architecture, sculpture and site.

This book, a version of his PhD dissertation, underlines why Patrick Lynch is one of the most thoughtful architects presently working in the UK, combining successful practice with a strongly argued philosophical basis to his work, analysed here alongside historical examples such as the architecture of Alberti, Palladio, Borromini, Sigurd Lewerentz, Álvaro Siza and Rafael Moneo, a critique of Peter Eisenman's work and discussion of the sculpture of Richard Serra and Eduardo Chillida.

Civic Ground is the second book published by Artifice books on architecture with Patrick Lynch, following *Mimesis*, 2015, which focused on several built projects by his practice Lynch Architects. *Civic Ground* and *Mimesis* can, indeed should, be read in conjunction. *Civic Ground* sets out the basis for the renewal of a poetics of architecture.

"Patrick Lynch is one of the few architects running a thriving and creative practice who finds time to seriously reflect upon urban design and architecture."
—Peter Carl

"Architecture and sculpture are intimately involved yet in sharp contrast, and Patrick Lynch is one of the few architects who has made both this contrast and complicity crucial to his practice and his thinking. His book makes a brilliant contribution to the making of the public realm."
—Joseph Rykwert

Civic Ground

Rhythmic Spatiality and the Communicative Movement between Architecture, Sculpture and Site

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Artifice
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She sang beyond the genius of the sea.
The water never formed to mind or voice,
Like a body wholly body, fluttering
Its empty sleeves; and yet its mimic motion
Made constant cry, caused constantly a cry,
That was not ours although we understood,
Inhuman, of the veritable ocean.

The sea was not a mask. No more was she.
The song and water were not medleyed sound
Even if what she sang was what she heard.
Since what she sang was uttered word by word.
It may be that in all her phrases stirred
The grinding water and the gasping wind;
But it was she and not the sea we heard.

For she was the maker of the song she sang.
The ever-hooded, tragic-gestured sea
Was merely a place by which she walked to sing.
Whose spirit is this? we said, because we knew
It was the spirit that we sought and knew
That we should ask this often as she sang.

If it was only the dark voice of the sea
That rose, or even colored by many waves;
If it was only the outer voice of sky
And cloud, of the sunken coral water-walled,
However clear, it would have been deep air,
The heaving speech of air, a summer sound
Repeated in a summer without end
And sound alone. But it was more than that,
More even than her voice, and ours, among
The meaningless plungings of water and the wind,
Theatrical distances, bronze shadows heaped
On high horizons, mountainous atmospheres
Of sky and sea.

It was her voice that made
The sky acutest at its vanishing.
She measured to the hour its solitude.
She was the single artificer of the world
In which she sang. And when she sang, the sea,
Whatever self it had, became the self
That was her song, for she was the maker. Then we,
As we beheld her striding there alone,
Knew that there never was a world for her
Except the one she sang and, singing, made.

Ramon Fernandez, tell me, if you know,
Why, when the singing ended and we turned
Toward the town, tell why the glassy lights,
The lights in the fishing boats at anchor there,
As night descended, tilting in the air,
Mastered the night and portioned out the sea,
Fixing emblazoned zones and fiery poles,
Arranging, deepening, enchanting night.

Oh! Blessed rage for order, pale Ramon,
The maker's rage to order words of the sea,
Words of the fragrant portals, dimly-starred,
And of ourselves and of our origins,
In ghostlier demarcations, keener sounds.
—Wallace Stevens, *The Idea of Order at Key West*

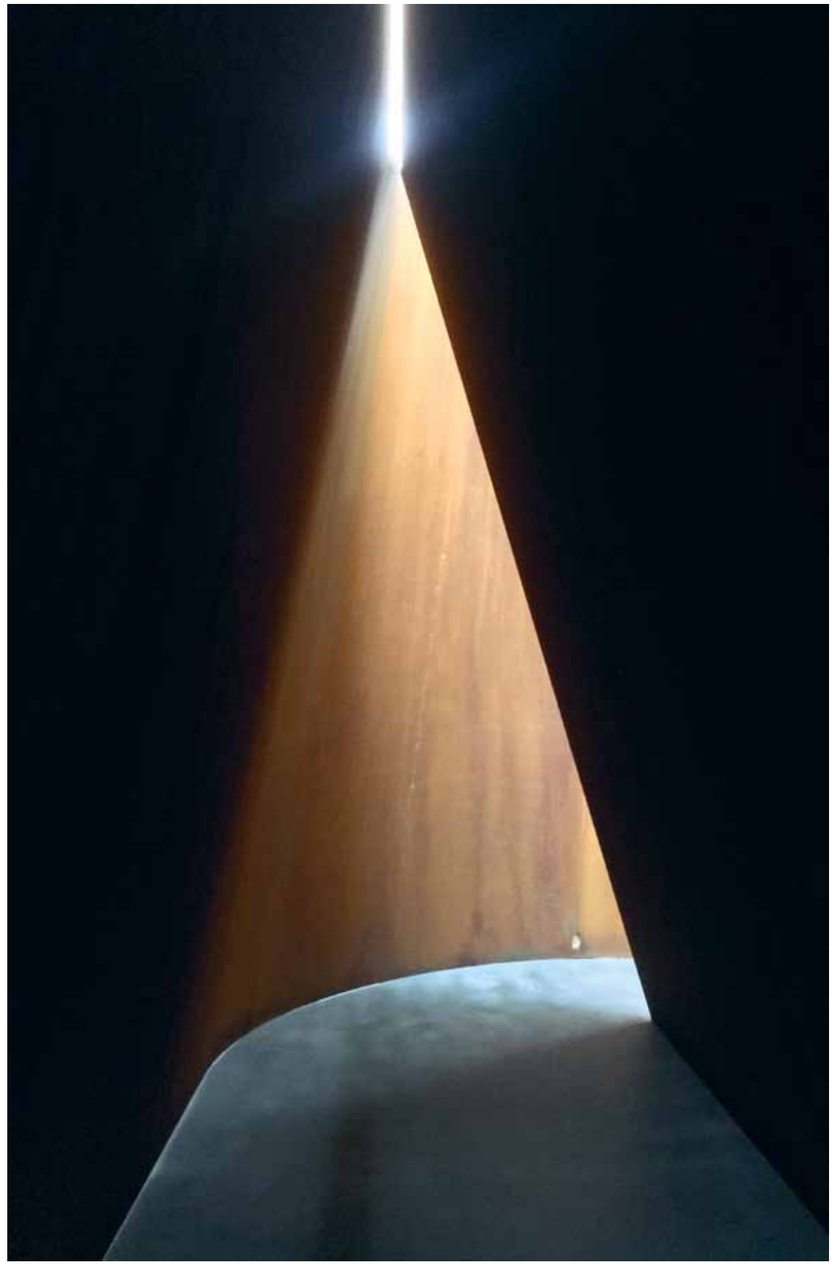
We can only hear the rhythm that is immanent within a given form if we ourselves introduce rhythm into it. That means we must really be actively involved ourselves in order to elicit rhythm at all. Every work of art imposes its own temporality upon us, not only the transitory arts of language, music, and dance. When considering the static arts, we should remember that we also construct and read pictures, that we also have to enter into and explore the forms of architecture. These too are temporal processes. One picture may not become accessible to us as quickly as another. And this is especially true of architecture… we have to go up to a building and wander around it, both inside and out. Only in this way can we acquire a sense of what the work holds in store for us and allow it to enhance our feeling for life.
—Hans-Georg Gadamer, *The Relevance of the Beautiful and Other Essays*

… one has to be willing at some point in his reflections to turn from it to the bustling, arguing, acutely sensitive Athenian citizens, with civic sense identified with a civic religion, of whose experience the temple was an expression, and who built it not as a work of art but as a civic commemoration.… The one who sets out to theorize about the esthetic experience embodied in the Parthenon must realize in thought what the people had in common, as creators and as those who were satisfied with it, with people in our own homes and on our own streets.
—John Dewey, *Art as Experience*

There is no such thing as an absence of content, no gap between the practical and the symbolic, only progressively more explicit modes of symbolic representation.
—Peter Carl, *City as Image Versus Topography of Praxis*

"Every perception is an act of creation" as [Gerald] Edelman says. As we move about, our sense organs take samplings of the world, and from these, maps are created in the brain. There then occurs with experience a selective strengthening of those mappings that correspond to successful perceptions —successful in that they prove the most useful and powerful for the building of "reality"… "signals were going back and forth in all kinds of hidden ways (as you usually get them by the non-verbal interactions between the players) that make the whole set of sounds a unified ensemble".… The players are connected. Each player, interpreting the music individually, constantly modulates and is modulated by others.… This is Edelman's picture of the brain, as an orchestra, an ensemble, but without a conductor, an orchestra which makes its own music. When I walked back to my hotel after dinner with Gerry that evening, I found myself in a sort of rapture. It seemed to me that the moon over the Arno was the most beautiful thing I had ever seen. I had the feeling of being liberated from decades of epistemological despair—from a world of shallow, irrelevant computer analogies into one full of rich biological meaning, one which corresponded with the reality of brain and mind.
—Oliver Sacks, *On the Move*

When new factors intervene, the law must be reformulated because of new observations and new conditions. Aristotle's *causa efficiens* still belongs to the natural, prescientific worldview.… The Greeks distinguished four causes: material, formal, final, and efficient. Let's take the example of a silversmith who is going to make a bowl. Four causes must be distinguished in making it: the order (to make the bowl) is the determining factor, "what ought to be done", something final, the "for the sake of which".… The second cause is the shape of the bowl which the silversmith must have in mind as its form. This is the eidos. *Forma* is already a reinterpretation of eidos, which means (visible) shape. The final and the formal cause are interrelated. Together they determine the third cause, the material… here, the silver. The fourth cause: this is the *causa efficiens*, the production, poiesis…; this is the craftsman. The modern *causa efficiens* is no longer the same! Poiesis and praxis are not the same: making and doing. Praxis has a motivation! In the modern sense, causality presupposes a process of nature, not a poiesis.… In today's science we find the desire to have nature at one's disposal, to make it useful, to be able to calculate it in advance, to predetermine how the process of nature occurs so that I can relate it to safety.… That which can be calculated in advance and that which is measurable—only that is real.… In physics, the law of causality has a reality (*Wirklichkeit*), but even there only in a very limited way. What Aristotle said is true according to the worldview of those days: the Aristotelian concept of motion for instance… means that a body is transported from one place to another, to *its* place. Galileo abandoned notions of above and below, right and left. Physical space is homogenous. No point is more distinctive than any other. Only this conception of space makes it possible to determine locomotion. Space must be homogenous because the laws of motion must be the same everywhere. Only then can every process be calculated and measured. Nature is viewed in a very specific way to satisfy the conditions of measurability. Beings acquire the character of being mere objects and of being objectified.… Being "an object" only makes its appearance in modern natural science. The human being then becomes a "subject" in the sense of Descartes. Without these presuppositions, the expression "objective" is meaningless… Is our totally different conception of space merely subjective?… This is already a glimpse of being! A genuine insight! It's a different kind of truth than in physics, perhaps a higher one! If one sees that, then one has a free stance towards science.
—Martin Heidegger, *Zollikon Seminars: Protocols, Conversations, Letters*



Richard Serra, *NJ-2*, Rounds: Equal Weight, Unequal Measure, Rotate, Gagosian Gallery, Britannia Street, London, 1 October 2016–10 March 2017.

Double Frontispiece: Adolphe Appia, etching of stage set for *Orpheus and Eurydice*, Act II, "The Descent into the Underworld", 1926.

Preface

This is the third in a series of books, written over a 20-year period, which consider the architectural and urban significance of different aspects of poetics: theatricality, *mimesis*, and now rhythm.

Civic Ground is my interpretation of the civic and philosophical character of architectural poetics. The heft and urgency of my argument stems from the need to promote and to protect these values in the face of their vulnerability from formalism, cynicism and nihilistic irony.

I have attempted to reveal the persistence of an authentic tradition of poetics in imaginative creative work and critical thinking in major modern thinkers—and their interpretations of Plato and Aristotle—despite the clichés and bad faith of much twentieth-century art history, architecture and design culture.

Civic Ground concerns the public nature of artistic experience, its fundamental position in our culture, and the role that architecture, sculpture and landscape play in articulating this. "Civic" does not refer to a use class as such, ie a town hall, but to something which orients architecture towards the shared conditions of urbanity. The term "common ground" gets close to the original meaning of "civilitas", which more properly means civic order.[1] Its use in English law as common public grazing land, and its survival as "digital commons", suggests its participatory character. However, the ground itself is not simply a matter of property or of one's "rights" to use it, nor is it just a metaphor or a philosophical construction, but it is the basis and grounds for life itself. Martin Heidegger claimed that its central orienting importance for human affairs might be best described as "motive" (what Aristotle called "mythos" or plot) and wrote that: "Motive is a ground for human action.... All different grounds are themselves based on the principle of ground. All that is has a ground."[2] The term "motive" fuses together the representational and practical aspects of architecture as the expression of civic ground.

Similarly, rhythm is also a universal phenomenon, and its manifestation in culture—as festival, architectural decor, performance, sculptural spatiality etc—is one way in which the primary conditions of the natural world and the recurring social aspects of reality become sensible to us.

The traditional appreciation of rhythm in the visual arts is fragmented and disrupted, and so the location of my arguments and the instances of its possible renewal range widely across time and geography. This book is not a literature survey, nor an attempt to demonstrate a preconceived theory: it presents certain prejudices and experiences of a practicing architect, and involved my participation in a number of events and conversations.

It demands this of a reader too. It is phenomenology in the sense that writing and reading this book was and is a participatory experience. It is an example of hermeneutic enquiry in terms of an interpretation of symbolic meanings revealed in everyday life. The serious and playful wit of Sigurd Lewerentz, for example, only becomes apparent if you engage with his spaces in the ways he intended.

Unusually perhaps, interpretation in this book often began with drawings, both as memories of events and places as well as in situ observations.

My conclusions are derived from a form of *praxis* and engagement with artworks and architectural settings, situating them in their social and political and physical topography, and from my own creative attempts as a designer to situate my work in a continuum of civic culture.

My aim has been to uncover the grounds for the recuperation of civic values in architecture, and to make a case for the renewed vitality and relevance of the poetic imagination. These are obviously highly hubristic aims, but I hope that the profound significance of the contributions of the artists and architects discussed on the following pages is nonetheless useful in re-establishing its potential today. In particular, the profound influence of modern philosophy upon modern artists suggests that the ideas that informed twentieth-century visual culture still remain vital today. Coincidentally, as I write this, on 5 October 2016, Richard Serra is exhibiting a new sculpture, *NJ-2*, a few hundred yards away from Artifice's offices at London's King's Cross. Talking about *NJ-2*, and his life's work, Serra provides a coda for this book, and a fitting introduction to its thesis:

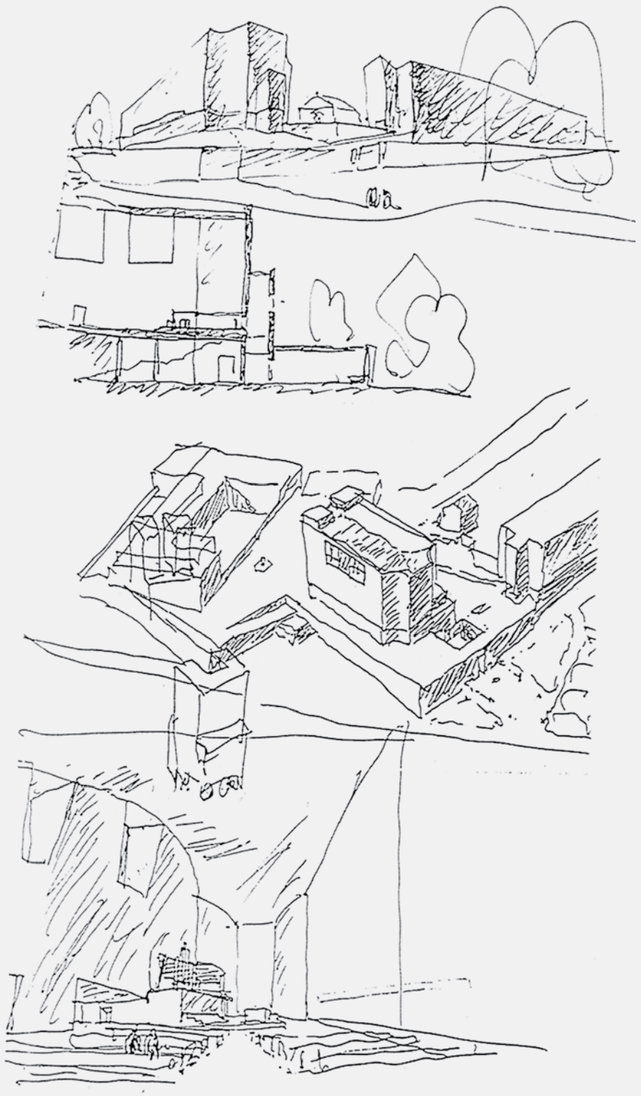
> Matter informs form... the rhythm of your body deals with time in relation to space... as the piece changes, you have to change, and either hasten your stride or turn in ways you hadn't anticipated.... Time enters into the equation of your bodily rhythms as you move through the work. It alters the time of your experience.... All our gestures, all our movements, the rhythm of our body, every time we turn, every time we take a step, every time we move, the gravitational load impinges on us.... It is a defining factor in how we know our bodily movements through space and time. And no one pays attention to that... lightness does seem to be the way the evolution of the planet is going in terms of microchips or whatever. But in terms of understanding your presence on the earth, we're all bound by weight and gravity.[3]

1 See Temple, Nick, "Rites of Intent: The Participatory Dimension of the City", in *Cityscapes in History: The Urban Experience*, Heléna Tóth and Katrina Gulliver ed, Surrey: Ashgate Publishing, 2014, pp 155–78 and *Renovatio Urbis: Architecture, Urbanism and Ceremony in the Rome of Julius II (The Classical Tradition in Architecture)*, London: Routledge, 2011.

2 Heidegger, Martin, *Zollikon Seminars: Protocols, Conversations, Letters*, Medard Boss ed, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2001, p 23.

3 "Richard Serra and Michael Craig-Martin's 50-year conversation about art", *The Guardian*, 1 October 2016. In suggesting that in his sculptural work "formal and material imagination", inform each other, Serra is surely elliptically referring to the work of Gaston Bachelard, who "defined a new concept" that "images of matter... the material imagination... [is] necessarily required for a complete philosophical study of poetic creation". Gilson, Etienne, "Foreword" in *The Poetics of Space*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1992, p ix. Serra refers at length to his problems with architects (and their lack of understanding and appreciation of sculpture, place, topography, weight etc) and to the influence of architectural space, tectonics, and the importance of phenomenological aspects of perception upon his work in *Writings/Interviews: Richard Serra*, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1994. The influence of phenomenology upon post-war American sculptors arguably originated in the teaching and early writings of Rosalind E Krauss, and is suggested in her book *Passages in Modern Sculpture*, originally published in 1977 (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001, pp 239–40). Its continuing relevance to critical appreciation of American land art, and in particular the importance of spatiality and of Martin Heidegger's essay "The Origin of the Work of Art", is noted by Geoff Dyer in his essay about Walter De Maria's *Lightning Field* (Catron County, New Mexico, 1977), "Space in Time" in *White Sands: Experiences from the Outside World*, London: Canongate, 2016, pp 76–77. I examine below Heidegger's significant interaction with the artist Eduardo Chillida—and perhaps also surprisingly, the profound role that sculpture played in articulating his views on spatiality and temporal experience. Despite his abhorrent political views, Heidegger's influence on artists is profound; anyone seriously interested in modern sculpture cannot ignore this, I fear.

Álvaro Siza and Santa Maria at Marco de Canaveses

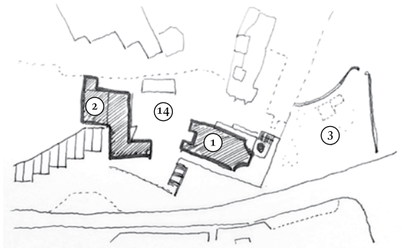


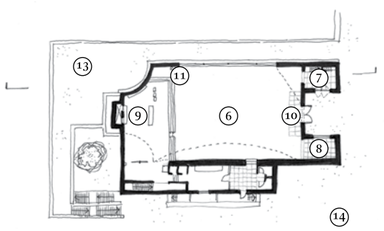
Sketches of Santa Maria by Álvaro Siza showing the architect thinking simultaneously about the role of the horizon and topography in the design of the church and parochial centre, 1990.

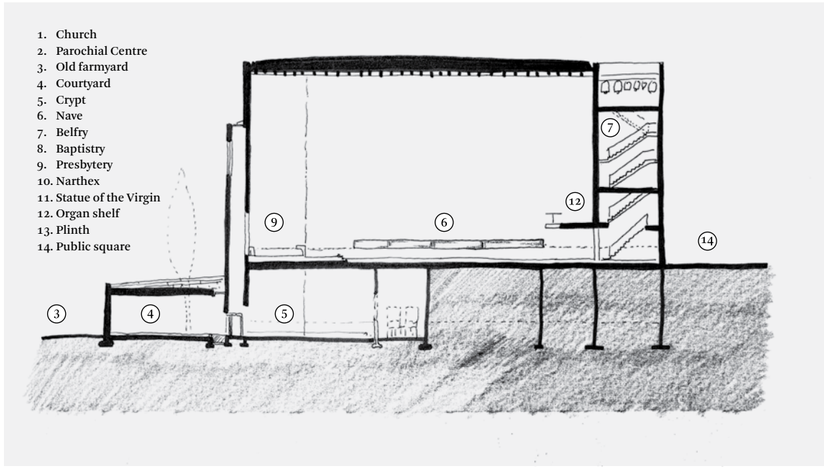
Top left: Site plan.

Top right: Upper level plan (nave).

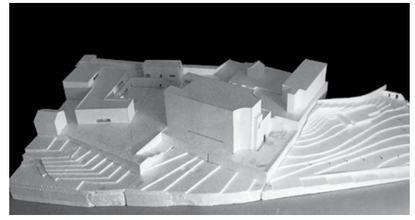
Below: Section west-east.







At Marco de Canaveses, 40 km east of Porto, Álvaro Siza's church of Santa Maria (1997) sits within the garden of an old farm, beside an ancient chapel. The farm's spring feeds a fountain that fills the courtyard beside the crypt with the loud crash of water, and the violent disruption of broken splashes of light.[1] A cypress tree sits forlornly in the lower courtyard, around which steps rise, creating an informal route up to the church above. The lower ground floor crypt-story is faced in granite and seems to grow out of the topography of the site, fusing the farmyard walls into a rocky plinth.



Santa Maria, Marco de Canaveses, Álvaro Siza, model by the architect.

From outside, the eastern end of the church is defined by two concave curves. From the inside these compress the view towards the presbytery, focusing one's attention upon the tabernacle; they act as a form of natural perspective whilst also recalling the baroque churches that originated in seventeenth-century Portugal. Baroque, of course, is a derivation of the Portuguese term *barocco*, originally used to describe a misshapen or deformed pearl.[2]

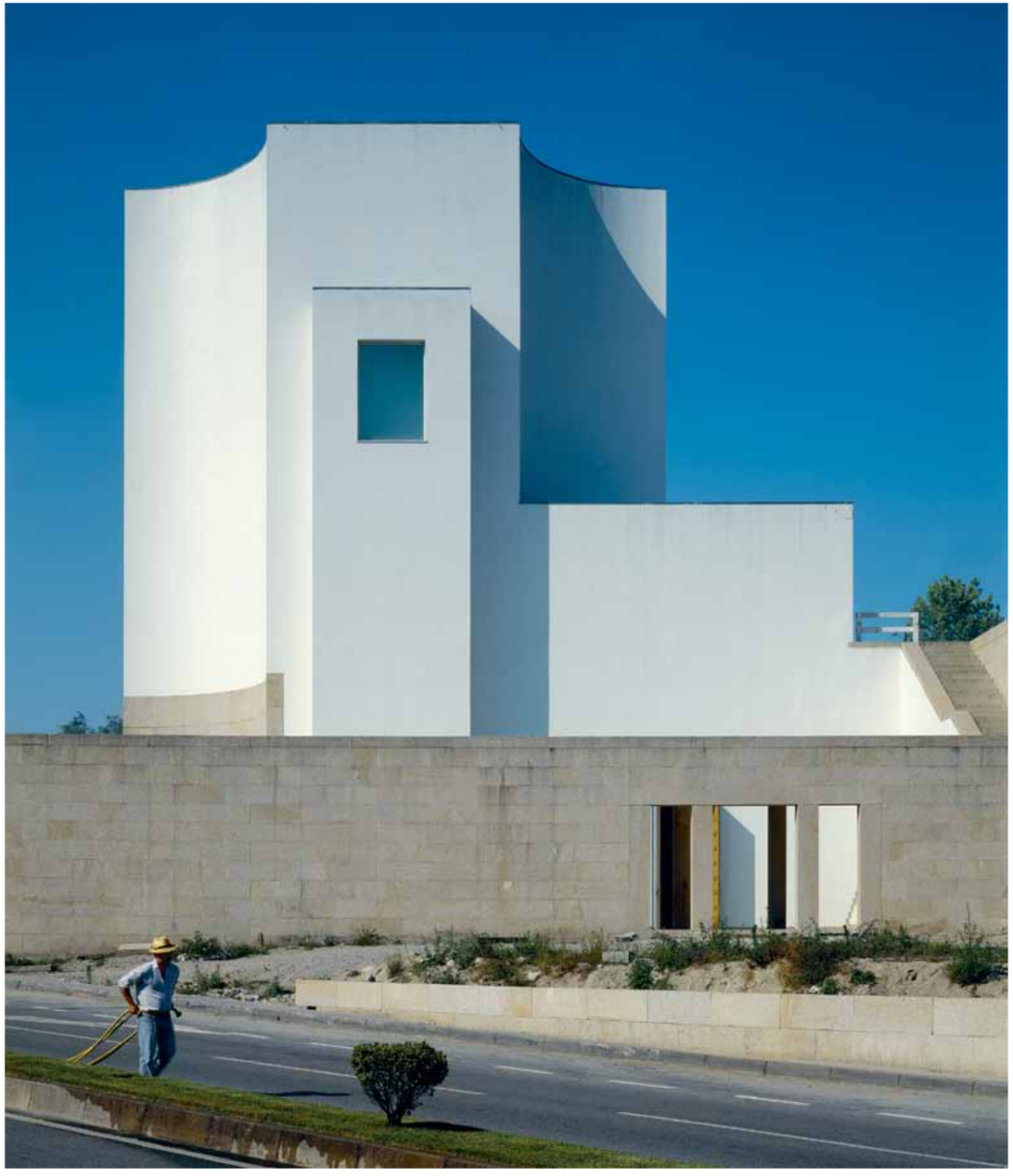
The crypt sits within the battered granite base. It is lit from above with a pale steady light, and from without by the rhythmic oscillation of a broken column of water. The crypt is subtly reminiscent of a Rococo chapel—a sophisticated cave—and the role that water plays is surely not accidental, recalling as it does the tradition of Marian chapels in Portuguese Baroque architecture,[3] and their fusion of Christian and pagan symbolism with Neo-Platonic Humanism. Principally, the Virgin Mary is associated in Baroque culture with the sea (*maria-mares*), with sea caves and with grottos.

Maria is typically depicted in "rocky" chapels as if she is (pearly) light, falling onto and emerging from a grotto. She is symbolic in Renaissance painting of

1 Higino, Nuno, *Garden and Mortuary: Church of Saint Mary: Álvaro Siza Vieira*, Cenateca, 2001, p 44. Higino was a priest, is now an academic, and was Siza's client for the church.

2 Bauer, Hermann, *Barock: Kunst einer Epoche*, Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1992, p 9. Bauer writes: "*Der Ausdruck kommt nach einigen vom portugiesischen barocco (rohe, ungleich geformte Perle)*". For a discussion on the role of rhetoric in Baroque style, see Lynch, Patrick, *The Theatricality of the Baroque City*, Saarbrücken: Verlag Dr Müller, 2011. This text was originally my Master of Philosophy dissertation in the History and Philosophy of Architecture, Cambridge University, 1996. José de Paiva suggests that the first mention of baroque is indeed in relation to pearls: "*Tudo pode ser verdade porque ho aljofare que de cà vai, e as perolas he groso, e redondo, e em toda perfeiçam, e o que della vem das indias sam huns barrocos mal afeiçoados, e não redondos, com agoas mortas*", Orta, Garcia de, "Da Margarita", *Coloquios dos simples*, Goa: Ioannes de endem, 1563, colloquy *35*, fol 139v.

3 José de Paiva notes: "The connection of Mary and the sea has, in sense, always been there, though of course historically it is entirely based on wordplay. We see this throughout the Middle Ages in the Latin play between the word *mare, -is,* and in the pl. *maria* (lit. 'seas') and *Maria*. The connection to water is there too in medieval iconography either relating to Mary, or the baptism of Christ. This develops with the multiplication of Medieval pilgrimages to Marian shrines—finally coming to identify the pilgrim himself with the shell, under the protection of Mary. In the fifteenth century, this takes a turn with the maritime expansion under the patronage of Henry the Navigator, and by 1500 we are dealing with churches like *Santa Maria de Belém*, the foundation of which is availed by the Papal *Bula inter cætera*, and built for mariners as they arrived in Lisbon from the expeditions to the indies. The aim of the sea expansion was made explicit in the sails bearing the cross of the Order of Christ, and could be described as religious, political and commercial. In the *Lusíadas*, a Renaissance epic poem published in 1572, Camões describes it as 'the expansion of the empire and the faith'. In line with Franciscan interpretation, the expansion was now seen as leading potentially to a fifth empire, in this case a Christian one, following the empires of Antiquity", email to the author, 8 March 2014.



Opposite: Santa Maria at Marco de Canaveses, Álvaro Siza, 1997. View of the east facade showing the nave of the church sat on a granite plinth, with the old farm yard to the right.

Left: François Boucher, *The Triumph of Venus*, 1740.

Right: View of the interior of Santa Maria de Belém.

4 See Sedlmayr, Hans, "Zur Charakteristik des Rokoko", *Manierismo, Barocco, Rococo*, Rome, 1962. See also Miller, Naomi, *Heavenly Caves: Reflections on the Garden Grotto*, London: Allen & Unwin, 1982.

divinity, and of the fecundity of the natural world.[4] The elision of light and water is evocative in Marian symbolism of both the sea (*mares-marias*), baptism and the church itself. Each individual baroque church is seen—both literally and figuratively—as a protective (oyster) shell. Pilgrimage and refuge also typify Marian devotion, as well as the simultaneity of death (crucifixion) and life (baptism). These extreme contrasts typify the material and spatial hierarchies of Baroque décor; they are fused into highly theatrical images of the ground and the sky—painted, plastered and carved spatial thresholds mediated by the rhythmic movements of pilgrims, and by the musical devotions of worship. This dramatic spatiality resonates in the material iconography of death-earth-darkness, and in the counterpoint of life-water-light; its recuperation in modern architecture is particularly clear in Siza's church at Marco de Canaveses.

A change in level situates the entrance to the church on the crest of a hill, one story above a garden and the crypt. This difference is articulated also in the contrast between the white stucco render on the outer and inner faces of the nave, as well as in the contrast between the rough exterior walls and the smooth, slick light of the interiors, which are predominantly lit from above. Visitors find themselves precisely situated between a lambent ceiling and a rocky ground.

The church is accompanied by a two-story parochial centre that sits facing the west doors of the church, forming a series of deep thresholds between the dusty piazza and the variously scaled rooms within. Discrete spatial volumes and definite, more or less specific situations are established in shadows and niches; territories are implied by kinks in the walls, variations in the borders of horizons and a stepped internal ground plane.

Freedom of movement between the buildings continues within the anterooms of the parish centre, which are generally freely accessible when the centre is open in the summer months. The co-existence of defined spaces is at once clear and also intimated and sensed, rather than absolute. A double-height meeting room is announced by changes to the height of the marble skirting boards, which rise to become wainscoting. Doors rise up and step back from the common parts of the plan, away from the staccato rhythm and movement implied by the staircase. The desert-like piazza is common ground, and the beat of a football often marks time on weekday afternoons.

The tall oak doors of the church are opened at funerals, enabling the western afternoon sunlight to reach in and touch the altar. Inside, the church is cool, the nave a simple rectangle. A baptismal font sits to the left of the west gate, beneath a tall roof light. This massive shaft situates the font beneath a tower of air and light. Similarly, a bell tower sits on the other side of the tall entrance, forming a seemingly solid shaft of space that echoes and inverts the baptistry. Above head height in the nave, the north wall billows outwards like a broken pearl, cut by two clerestory windows.

One is struck by the extreme contrast between the abstract material qualities of the space and the figural material qualities of the equipment within it. At two places this contrast comes together to provoke movement of thought from contemplation towards comprehension, resonating without ever fully resolving itself into an image. Reflective, polished oak floorboards direct one's eyes towards the sacristy. Oak chairs sit on this oak ground like coiled, reclining figures.

A tall processional bronze cross sits on the northern Gospel side to the left of the altar, and a *Cathedra,* or bishop's chair, sits to the right. There is a strong contrast between intricate timber furniture and the scale-less, waxy light of the upper curved surfaces, so that the latter dissolve into shadowy and cloudy peripheral focus; meanwhile, the furniture seems to become extensions of one's body, a rhythmic armature of postures and gestures. The timber floor strongly emphasises the traditional nautical character of a "nave" suspended above water. Siza has avoided all explicit religious symbols, he claims, although one can see small crosses in some of the handmade tiles marking the sites of each sacrament.

Behind the altar two pale, weak columns of light appear in the gloom, and one realises or remembers that they drop light down onto the face of someone in a coffin in the crypt below. A faint sound of splashing

Left: View of the old farmyard to the east of the church.

Right: View of the "common ground" in between the church, seen on the left, and the parochial centre on the right, looking south.

Left: View of the courtyard with pool and window to the crypt.

Right: View of the south facade looking west towards the parochial centre with houses beyond.

Left: View of the south facade of the church with the parochial centre on the left.

Right: View of the interior of Santa Maria showing the baptismal font.

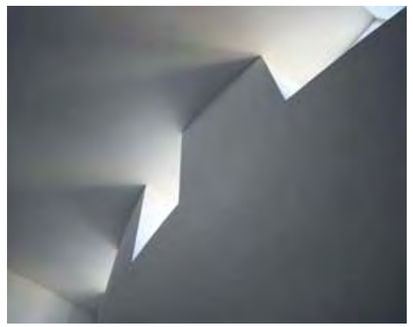
View of the south facade of the church (1997) before the construction of the parochial centre with the old chapel in the distance.

Left: Interior view of the parochial centre.

Right: View of the interior of Santa Maria showing the baptistry to the right of the tall doors, and the belfry to the left, with the organ shelf in the foreground.

Left: View of the interior of Santa Maria looking south.

Right: View of the interior of Santa Maria looking up towards the north-facing clerestory windows.



View of the interior of Santa Maria looking east, showing the presbytery.

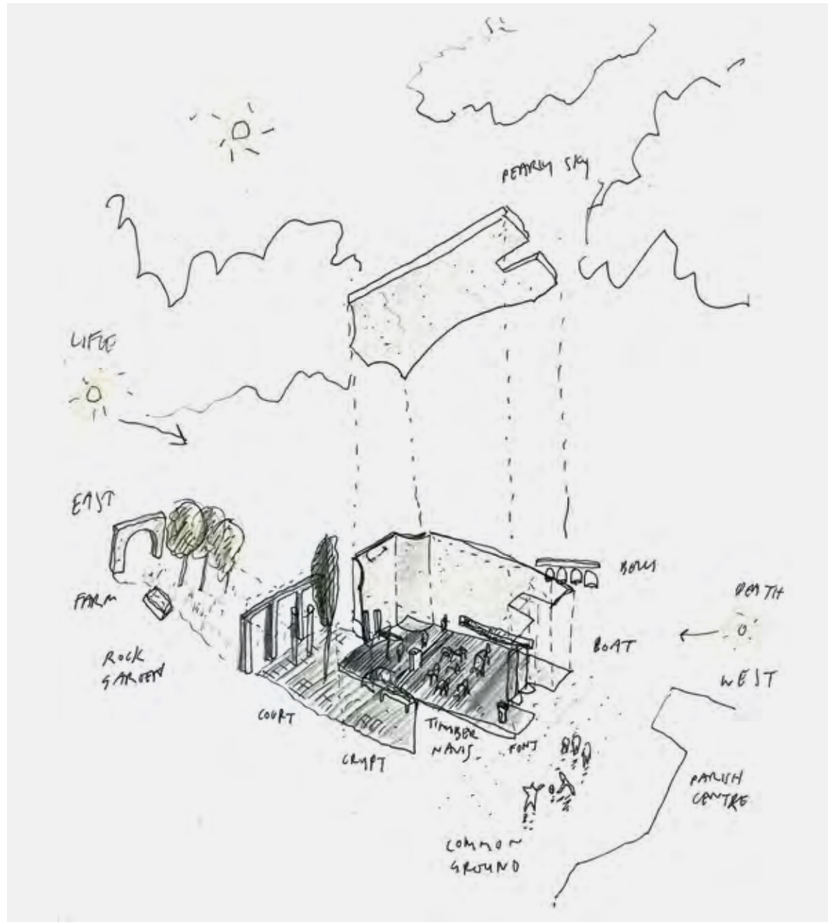
water rises up from the pool beyond the crypt. A body on a cross is implied by the absence of matter each side of the thin vertical shafts of light.

At the moment in the Mass when one first kneels, attention is almost always upon the altar, the Eucharistic prayer, and the actions of the priest. At Santa Maria, however, attention towards the Sacred Mysteries is balanced by a peripheral sensation of light entering from the south. The source of this light reveals itself to be an enormously long horizontal slit window, set 1.2 m off the ground. Midday sunlight falls in through this long slot. A northern Portuguese landscape—of arid hills and scrubland, cars, petrol stations and small houses—comes into view.

At the end of this very long window, Siza placed an old, paint-flaking half-scale statue of the Virgin Mary holding the infant Christ. Maria is of course patron of the church and, for worshippers, the human link between numinous and the material realms, something that Christian belief co-laminates. Traditionally, statues of the Virgin Mary are set within a niche, or held above head height on a shelf or bracket. Here, she looks at the congregation at their eye height, sat exactly at the threshold between the sacred topography of the presbytery and the body of the church; prayer and worship are situated in a frank encounter with the fragile actuality of the everyday world beyond the church. The Gospel is read from a simple oak lectern that appears to grow from the timber floor of the church. In

View of the interior of Santa Maria showing the statue of the Virgin and Child at the threshold to the presbytery with the south-facing window on the right.

Sketch of Santa Maria showing the church sat within the landscape oriented with the solar symbolism of the Christian liturgy.



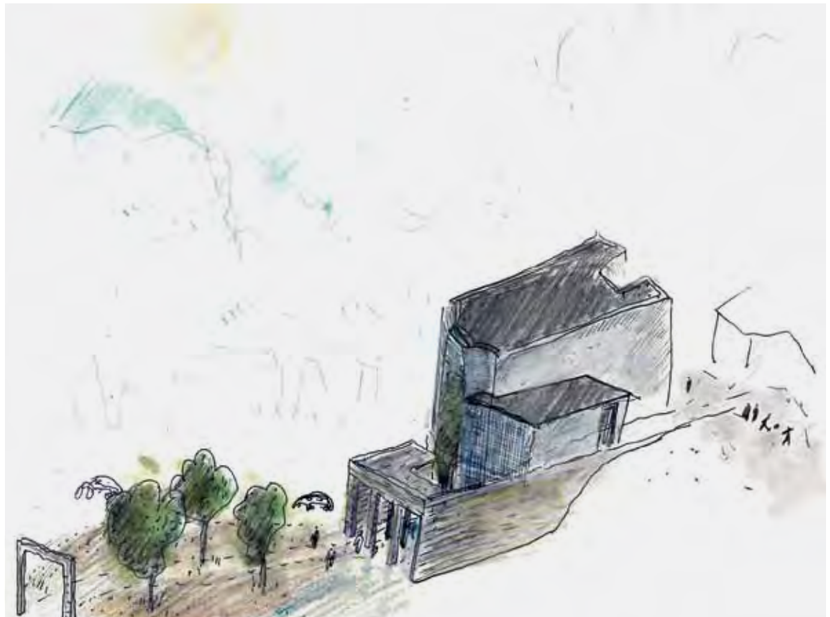
contrast, the golden cross sits upon the presbytery floor, hovering between matter and light.

At Santa Maria, the horizon of ritualistic worship is counterpoised with a worldly horizon that is shockingly close by. The immateriality of light above and beyond the altar is counter-poised with the rhythm of sunlight, and one's view of the material world beyond the chapel. In experiential and geometric terms, its centre is displaced.

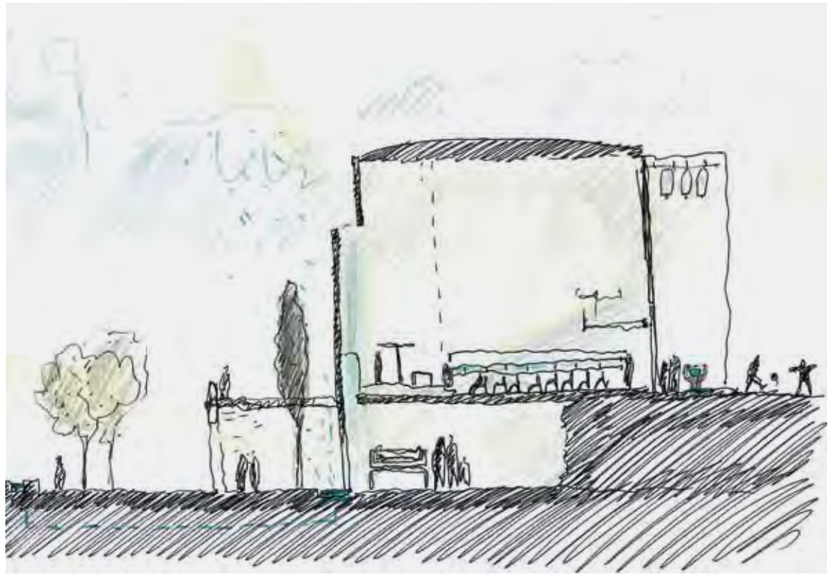
Siza's liminal placement of the statue of the Virgin Mary reminds us that the relationship between architecture and sculpture continues to refer us to spaces beyond their immediate location, and that "orientation", as Leatherbarrow suggests, "is nothing other than the acknowledgement of this ecstasis or alliocentricity".[5]

Communicative space is oriented, in ritualistic and everyday terms, towards situating particular historical circumstances (political conflict, human suffering, human hopes etc) with respect to the conditions that are common to all. A rhythm of associations and spatial counterpoints is established at Santa Maria in such an orchestrated manner as to suggest that architects' and sculptors' work might be understood as something fundamentally spatial, and essentially communicative. It reveals, in other words, the primary conditions of urbanity.

5 Leatherbarrow, David, *Architecture Oriented Otherwise*, Princeton: Princeton Architectural Press, 2009, p 11.

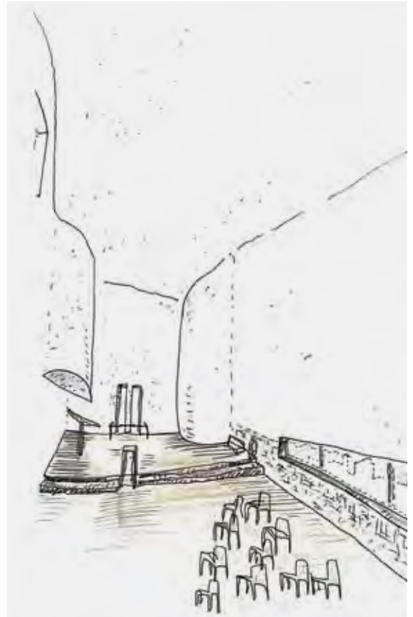


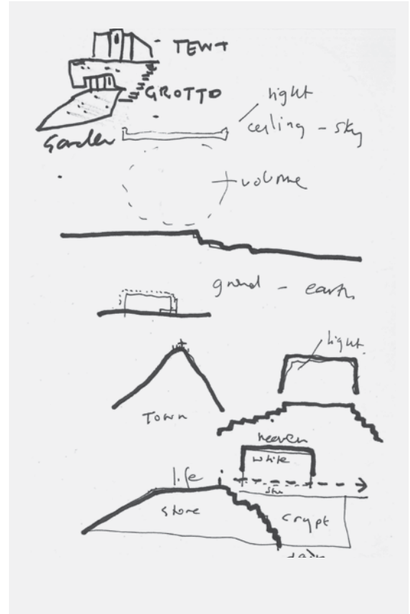
Axonometric sketch of Santa Maria with the old farmyard on the left and the new public square to the right of the church.

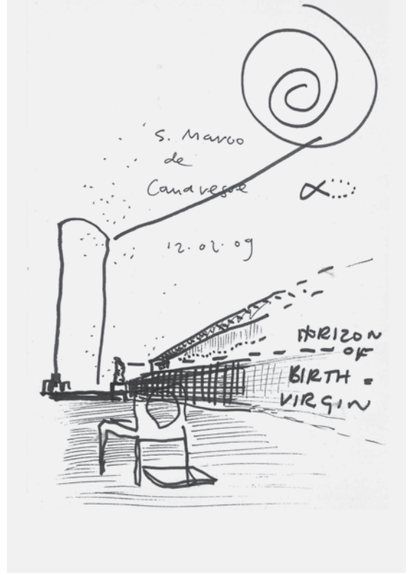


Sketch section through Santa Maria west-east showing the movement of sunlight across the interior throughout the day—the coincidence of solar symbolism with water—and the role of both in sacramental use.

Sketches of Santa Maria examining the significance of its iconographic civic topography in the context of the town and Christian liturgical symbolism.







Overleaf: Views of the interior of Santa Maria.

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