

PROJECT REPORT

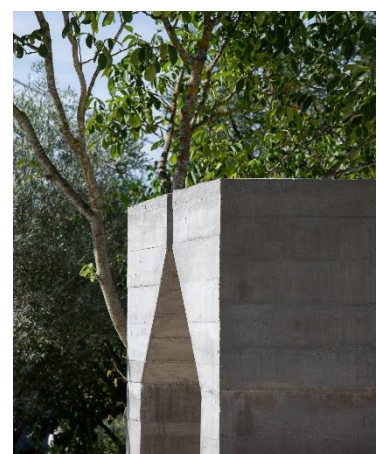
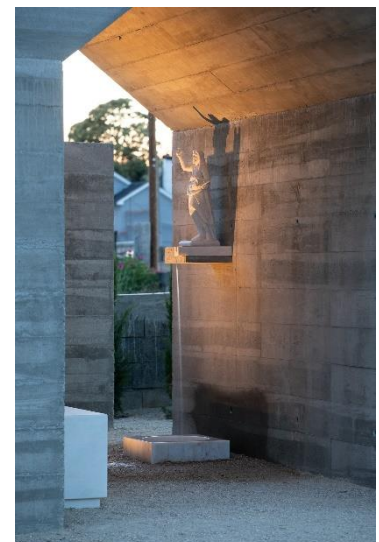
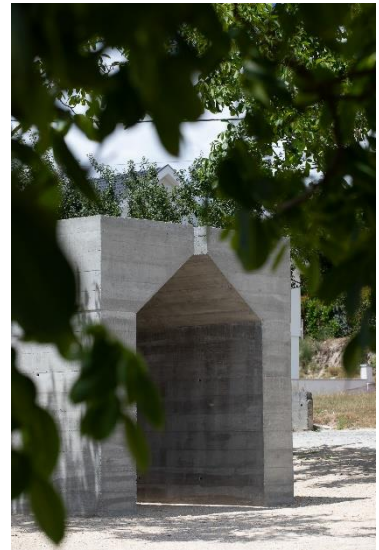
St. John the Baptist Chapel

The idea of designing the chapel was born from the will and generosity of the people of the small village of Touro, in the interior of Portugal. Build a temple dedicated to St. John the Baptist who was the figure chosen by the population for being the most cheerful and popular Saint, who directly represents the people of the village, who are considered devout, enthusiastic, strong and who preserve the local traditions alive. In fact, joy is the dominant note in the feasts of St. John the Baptist. When the Archangel announced to Zechariah that he was going to become a father, he told him: "He will be a great joy to you, and many will rejoice at his birth" (Lk 1:14).

The Touro village has a long history since the Roman roads that ran through paths and villages that led to the paths of Our Lady of Lapa towards Santiago de Compostela. The region is provided with fertile land and fascinating landscapes, crossed by the river Covo that creates a natural corridor rich in nature, in the mountainous region of exuberant beauty, in which stone, water, pine trees, chestnut trees and cheerful people are present.

The concept of the temple was conceived with the premise of being receptive and accessible to everyone, based on Pope Francisco saying that he aims for "a Church with open doors". The temple was conceived based on regional principles, in which natural elements were conditioned as the main source of inspiration, such as the presence of light, water and earth, which alludes to the figure of St. John, thus obtaining a direct connection with the population.

The formal and aesthetic simplicity of the exposed concrete volumes, torn by the monolithic stereotomy and subtracting the stylized form from the vernacular format of a house, was thought with great presence in the symbolism, whose idea is to refer to the house of St. John the Baptist in the village. The concrete has impregnated in its appearance the texture of the pine of the region, which refers to the rustic, organic and natural, implicit elements of the local people. The presence of earth and water are integral materials of the form. The figure of St. John, sculpted in Portuguese marble, has the simple appearance indicated with the hand by the streak of light in the middle of the temple, as a divine symbol.





The work has a simple, comprehensive and intimate aspect in its essence. In the rural and natural landscape, it is an element that stands out, but does not clash, mainly due to its smaller proportions and scales closer to people, becoming an element that integrates and complements itself.

The Chapel was blessed on St. John the Baptist's Day 2023, and currently, it continues as a great popular gathering annually.

Technical information

Location: Touro, Vila Nova de Paiva, Portugal

Project year: 2023

Designer: José Martinho Morgado

Client: Community of the Touro Village

Institutional collaboration: Touro Parish Council and Vila Nova de Paiva City Council

Area: 12 m²

Photography: José Campos

