

Patchworks Parisiens has just a few plans and maps. Darin instead suggests that those interested in the core theme of the book should go to the websites of the land registry office or Paris's Archives for more pictorial information and historical maps. His aim is not to offer a complete analysis of the selected examples given within the book.

Patchworks Parisiens is not organized topographically, but thematically. The examples of 'incongruities' or 'oddness' are classified in different categories which are used to organize the chapters. The book is made up of four primary parts each with chapters within it: 'voisinages' (neighbourhood relations), 'contours' (outlines), 'formes' (shapes), and 'rencontres' (encounters). The first chapter, opening the core of the book, is devoted to what are often considered as 'warts' in city landscapes, here transformed by Darin as 'beauty spots': small constructions (often shops) occupying residual spaces between buildings or walls.

'Voisinages' should be understood as the diversity of relations existing between adjacent buildings aligned along the street, and recurs as a subject in the chapters on 'Silhouette', 'Unexpected floors', 'Small isolated buildings', 'Big solitary buildings', 'Joints and harps', and 'Stylistic sequence'. Questioning the nature of the 'silhouette' of the street, Darin considers gaps between buildings as well as matters associated with the form of party walls.

The 'Contours' part is an examination of the quality of the voids between buildings, including 'Gardens and courtyards', 'Set-back buildings', 'Zigzag façades', 'Bases' (particular ground floor treatments of buildings, or 'socles'), 'Nooks', and 'Triangular additions' (which are another of Darin's 'beauty spots').

'Formes' (or shapes) opens with two photographs of the Rue de Rivoli, one from the level of the Jardin des Tuileries and the other of the Hôtel de ville de Paris. These are discussed with reference to one of the most famous Parisian streets. Thought of as an exemplar of the built diversity that comprises the city landscape, the Rue de Rivoli is explained in relation to the symmetrical composition of the façades in front of the Jardin des Tuileries, the more diverse layout in front of the Hôtel de ville, and rue Saint-Antoine, with an even more uneven alignment. This part of the book does not just focus on perfect alignments: it also covers irregularities and unsightly or unusual juxtapositions. Darin also questions the 'Swollen streets' resulting from the widening of some streets

and their disregard of the alignments of streets lines formed in the nineteenth century. The last part of *Patchworks Parisiens*, 'Rencontres' (encounters), focuses on 'Corner buildings' located at crossroads, or at what are referred to as 'Empty corners'.

Darin concludes his book with numerous 'Absences' in the city, and by re-inviting the reader to look at the 'art of ordinary assembling'. Cities therefore are said to be 'fascinating as collective artefacts developing with time, according to the successive contributions given by a multitude of people' (p. 206). As an invitation to carry on the work of the author the book ends with blank pages that form a notebook entitled 'Other urban curiosities and oddness'.

References

- Darin, M. (2009) *La comédie urbaine: voir la ville autrement* (Infolio Editions, Gollion).
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O ser urbano: nos caminhos de Nuno Portas. The urban being: on the trails of Nuno Portas edited by Nuno Grande, Imprensa Nacional - Casa da Moeda, Lisboa, Portugal, 2012, 640 pp. ISBN 978-972-27-2067-0.

Between 8 December 2012 and 24 February 2013 the Centro Cultural de Belém in Lisbon hosted an exhibition designed to cover more than 50 years of professional activity by the celebrated Portuguese architect Nuno Portas (1934-). It had been previously hosted, in early-to-mid 2012, in the then European Capital City of Culture, Guimarães, Portugal. A bilingual catalogue (in English and Portuguese) with the same title as the exhibition was based on the collaboration of a number of individuals, including Nuno Grande, João Serra, Gabriela Vaz-Pinheiro, Jorge Sampaio, Alexandre

Alves Costa, João Ferrão, Nuno Portas, and Costa Lobo.

Organized into a book, the catalogue is divided into four parts. The first part introduces the purpose of the exhibition through appreciations of Nuno Portas by Nuno Grande, the curator of the exhibition, who introduces Portas as ‘the urban being’; João B. Serra, President of the City of Guimarães Foundation, who reflects on ‘Nuno Portas’s cities’; and Gabriela Vaz-Pinheiro, co-ordinator of the Art and Architecture Programme for Guimarães in 2012, who assesses ‘Nuno Portas’s senses of a gaze in the art and architecture programme’.

The second part consists of four essays. Jorge Sampaio, a former Portuguese President, examines Portas as the man from whom one can always learn. Alexandre Alves Costa, a former colleague of Portas, discusses ‘Nuno Portas in four moments’. João Ferrão, a former State Secretary for Spatial Planning and Cities within the Portuguese Ministry of Environment, writes about ‘Nuno Portas, unique architect, and plural people settler’. Finally, Nuno Grande sheds light on ‘An urban being in the Labyrinth of Mirrors’.

The third and main part is structured according to six themes, organized in chronological order. They collectively reflect on the evolution of Portas’s 50 years of vocational activity, namely ‘The architecture for today (1957-1965)’; ‘The city as architecture (1962-1974)’; ‘The process also designs (1969-1989)’; ‘New urban policies (1978-1998)’; (v) ‘The city as an open work (1985-2008)’; and ‘The urban hypertext (1983-2012)’. Each theme includes a selection of Nuno Portas’s architectural works, essays, reports, books, conference papers and other published work, thereby testifying to a commitment to the study of the urban form, developed both in governmental workplaces, private activity, and the academic environment.

The final part comprises two contributions. The first, written by Portas, reflects on the theme of the ‘The city for today: a multiple choice trail’. Here Portas reviews his professional career according to the six stages previously mentioned in the third part of the book. However, he also includes a seventh stage which corresponds to his present professional

activity. Here Portas expresses his current engagement as a researcher and a teacher of urban studies. Carlos Lobo, on the other hand, an artist in residence during the year when Guimarães was European Capital City of Culture, examines ‘For an idea of landscape’.

The book includes a generous number of images to accompany the various themes under consideration. However, the greatest value for urban morphologists is perhaps in the many journal and book references. It is an important catalogue of references not only on the study of urban form in Portugal, but also on this subject internationally. The existence of a pan-European international flow of knowledge concerned with the study of urban form is very evident. The reader is left in no doubt about Portas’s important contribution to the internationalization of Portuguese architecture, and his strategic influence in bringing into Portugal international lines of thought relating to the study of urban form (Marat-Mendes and Cabrita, 2012; Marat-Mendes *et al.*, 2013).

References

- Marat-Mendes, T. and Cabrita, M. A. (2012) ‘Morfologia urbana em Portugal: percurso e visibilidade’, in Sampayo, M., André, P. and Marat-Mendes, T. (eds) *Morfologia Urbana nos Países Lusófonos. Conference Proceedings of the Portuguese Network of Urban Morphology, 2012* (Instituto Universitário de Lisboa ISCTE-IUL, Portugal) 1750-1781 (<https://repositorio.iscte.pt/handle/10071/3633>) accessed 12 May 2013.
- Marat-Mendes, T., Cabrita, A. and Oliveira, V. (2012) ‘Teaching urban form in Portugal’, unpublished paper presented to the Nineteenth International Seminar on Urban Form, Delft, The Netherlands, 16-19 October.

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