

PS
DESIGN DIRECTORY/PORTUGAL
On the make

Portugal's vibrant creative industries – from fine crockery and solid woodwork to forward-looking architecture and wayfinding systems – is ready for discovery. We spotlight the movers and the makers to keep on your radar.



Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation
Memorable monument
Lisbon

When Lisbon's Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation opened in 1969 it stood out like a sore thumb in a cityscape best known for colourful tiled façades. Yet the brutalist buildings by architectural trio Ruy Jervis d'Athougua, Pedro Cid and Alberto Pessoa have stood the test of time, winning over critics through clever use of concrete and landscaping. In 2010 it was even recognised as a national monument.

Created to house the artistic holdings of the late Armenian oil magnate Calouste Gulbenkian, the institution has a collection of about 6,000 pieces, from ancient Egyptian statuettes and Islamic art to works by Rubens

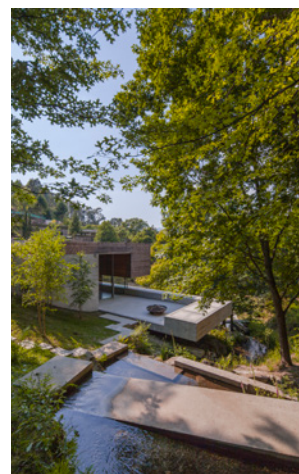
and Rembrandt. Locals often linger on weekends, relaxing in the gardens or taking in a concert at the open-air amphitheatre or the impressive wood-panelled Grand Auditorium where the foundation's own symphony orchestra performs. — IC gulbenkian.pt

Carvalho Araújo
Architecture firm to watch
Braga

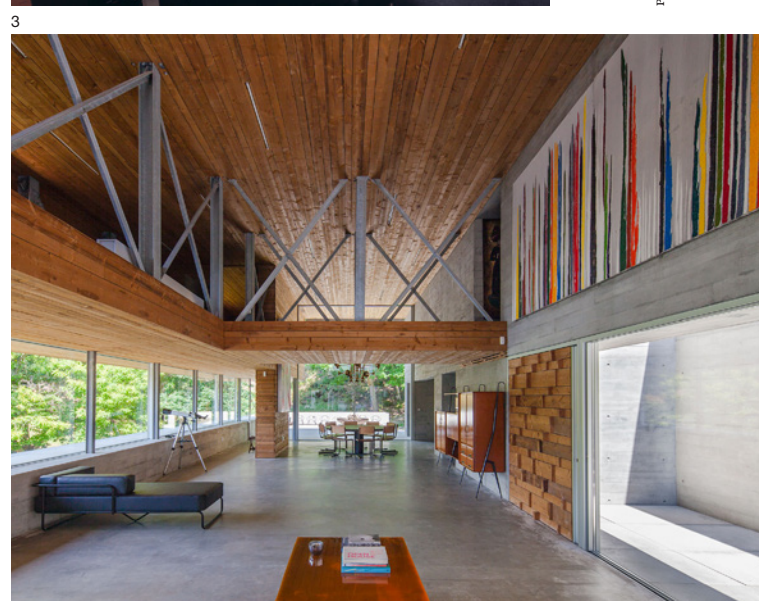
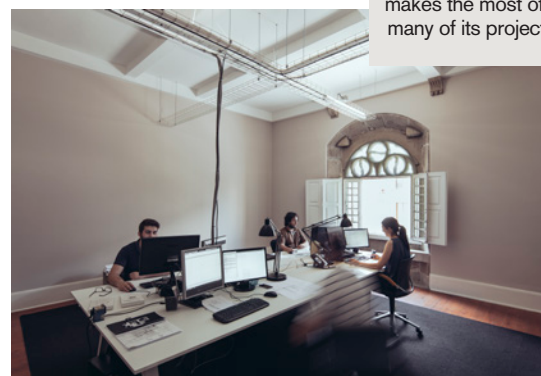
With offices in both the small northern city of Braga and Brazil's São Paulo, Carvalho Araújo's architecture firm works on projects from Switzerland to Mozambique. Flexibility comes courtesy of an assorted team of architects, product designers and communication specialists who have created an eclectic portfolio. Initially the studio

focused on commercial architecture but later shifted to housing; furniture came next before the team moved on to bathroom wares. "We always look at a new project as an opportunity and that motivates us," says Araújo. "There is constant concern for the project to have a soul." However, working to improve quality of life and adding to a community can sometimes mean having to rein in intentions. "A related concern is how far we can, and should, contribute. It is important to know the limit of where we should interfere."

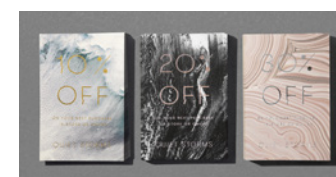
The Gerês house in Portugal is an exercise in both subtlety and a feeling for the land: nestled on a hillside, it is a small-scale example of the principles that run through all of the firm's projects. — CHR carvalhoaraujo.com



Why it works
A tight selection of materials gives this project coherence: running through both exterior and interior, concrete is combined with wood from Portuguese forests, a natural resource the firm makes the most of in many of its projects.



PHOTOGRAPHERS: Rodrigo Cardoso, Nuno



Studio Ah-Ha
Freshest designs
Lisbon

Two recently completed projects illustrate the diversity of Lisbon-based graphic-design firm Studio Ah-Ha's approach. Tactile ribbed papers, metallic embossing and muted tones feature in an identity, website and packaging for upmarket Brooklyn-based jewellery brand Quiet Storms. For the rebranding and communication materials for Portuguese organic pharmaceutical company Biocol the duo employed bright primary colours with tongue-in-cheek naming and simple typography.

"Our projects are diverse but they do have a language in common," says co-founder Catarina Carreiras. "We don't take ourselves too seriously, we like to play with the work a little and tell a story about the brand." — TL studioahha.com

Burel Mountain Originals
Textile revivalists
Manteigas

In 2006, João Tomás and Isabel Dias da Costa's love of the outdoors brought them to Portugal's mountainous

Serra da Estrela to run a hotel. However, attracted by the region's traditional felted-wool fabric *burel*, they decided to invest in the textile industry.

Today their brand has revived production and found new uses for the fabric. Woven on looms from the 1940s, the hardwearing material is turned into shawls, blankets and bags, while companies order it to soundproof walls and ceilings in their offices; clients include Google and Microsoft. The homeware line offers 50 colours in a collection ranging from bedspreads to magazine racks. — IC burelfactory.com

Alentejo
Lasting vernacular
Southern Portugal

Rural and sparsely populated, Alentejo is Portugal's largest region, occupying a third of the continental land mass. Its vernacular architecture reflects the traditionally simple lives of its people. The region's towns and villages feature low, single-storey cottages, whitewashed and with window and door frames painted in bright blue or ochre.

Inside there is usually a large kitchen that doubles as a living room and bedrooms leading off from it. The design is sustainable, made using materials such as pressed earth and terracotta roof tiles, and also has thermal



properties. Alentejo is scorchingly hot in summer but, thanks to thick walls and small windows, the inside of these homes can be as much as 15C cooler than the outdoors on summer days. Minimal and sober, yet not without optimism and charm, this architecture suits both the Portuguese temperament and the stark beauty of the countryside. — TL





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De La Espada
Finest furniture factory
Mira

The De La Espada factory of Luís De Oliveira and his wife Fatima De La Espada sits in the agricultural town of Mira, an hour outside Porto. Established as a small joinery firm in 1993, it's now a producer of high-end solid-wood furniture. After a 10-year sojourn in London, the company – which encompasses a woodworking workshop and upholstery department – resettled in Portugal in 2004.

De Oliveira and De La Espada developed a pared-down design aesthetic with a nod to the mid-century movement and Scandinavian minimalism. “We take pride in creating the most beautiful furniture possible and this takes an incredible amount of care, patience, time and dedication,” says De Oliveira. “We enjoy working in the luxury market, which allows us to focus on all of these details – using tactile

materials, creating enduring value and taking every aspect into consideration, no matter how small.”

After many years of solely producing and selling in-house designs (everything from beds to tables) the team began collaborating with international designers in 2007. Last year they launched about 20 new products, of which half were designed by Shanghai-based architectural-design practice Neri&Hu. This year they are introducing a collection in collaboration with Jason Miller, US designer and founder of lighting brand Roll & Hill.

When asked whether Portugal has been an inspiration, De Oliveira says, “I like to think there's a link to modern architects such as Álvaro Siza and Aires Mateus; we aim towards enhancing the human experience.” — MSS [delaespada.com](#)

Gür
Top textiles
Porto

Designer and print-maker Célia Esteves launched Gür in 2013 with the aim of celebrating the handloom flat-weave tradition found in her hometown of Viana do Castelo. “I remember always



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having these handloom rugs in my house,” she says. “They are typical of Portugal. They are beautiful in their own way but are very simple and use recycled textiles from random fabrics.”

Esteves picked up on this tradition, working with weavers from the north of Portugal on cotton-rag rugs while also adding a modern design factor into the mix. “One of the most known techniques in Portuguese weaving is *puxadinho*, where a high-relief dot is pulled out of the rug line, creating the illusion of a second colour,” she says. This technique allows weavers to produce designs and texture with one colour, defying the restrictions usually associated with a wool handloom.

“A Gür rug is never a copy of the original design; in fact it is a translation using this technique, with all its



Hugo Passos
Designer
Porto

A vivacious culture and a relaxed atmosphere are plus points for Porto but what's really drawing in European designers is the network of manufacturers that surround it. We speak to Portuguese designer Hugo Passos as he settles back here after nine years in the UK.

What made you move back?

Porto used to be stuck in time and that's one of the reasons I moved away but it has changed a lot. The industrial capacity in nearby areas has created a new dynamism.

Many designers have made the same move – why?

It's to do with quality of life but designers who live and produce in Portugal are much more comfortable. The fact that there can be a dialogue between designers and producers makes work quicker and better.

Is there a design community now?

It has definitely appeared and it is across disciplines, which is what makes this city interesting. — CHR [hugopassos.com](#)



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mistakes and limitations,” she says. “In the end it always reveals a surprise – usually a good one.” — STA [rugbygur.com](#)

On the newsstand
Smart design titles
Porto

With such a rich history and architectural heritage, it should be no surprise that Portuguese newsstands are spoilt for choice when it comes to design publications. From established titles to independent ones, there are three that stand out from the crowd: (1) *Arqa*, (2) *Attitude* and (3) *Roof*.

Published every three months, *Arqa* magazine has been catering to architecture practitioners and enthusiasts since 2000. *Roof* and *Attitude* bring a fresher approach to urbanism and interior design.

Based in Porto, *Attitude* is known for its beautiful photography and texture, using a variety of paper stock in each issue. *Roof* sits at the intersection of design, urbanism and architecture

and regularly partners trade fairs. Both titles' clever design has managed to seamlessly offer all content in both Portuguese and English, securing loyal followers well beyond the country's borders. — CCR

Embroidery

Hanging on to tradition
Madeira

Away from the mainland you'll find one of Portugal's most treasured and protected art forms: embroidery. On the island of Madeira, intricate patterns are stitched onto linen, silk, organdie and cotton to make tablecloths, bedding and smaller decorative items. Each piece requires time, dedication and patience – a tablecloth can take about two weeks to make – as it is still crafted in the same way it was more than 150 years ago.

The Madeira Wine, Embroidery and Handicrafts Institute is the body responsible for ensuring the craft's authenticity and quality. It estimates that there are about 3,000 embroiderers registered in Madeira, with many scattered around the island and still working from home.

In 2014 Chanel partnered with one of the oldest manufacturers on the island, Bortal, to create collars for its spring/summer 2015 collection. — CCR [bortal.pt](#)



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Escola Superior de Artes e Design (ESAD)
Where to hone design skills
Caldas da Rainha

Founded in 1989, ESAD has some 1,450 students studying fine art and design. Surrounded by a pine forest and housed in a pleasingly curved light-filled building designed by Portuguese architect Vitor Figueiredo, the school is known for its hands-on approach and its impressive ceramic, metal and wood workshops.

“There's a growing confidence among students that they can create a place of their own here. It's a thriving town where they can make and sell their work; they also propose ideas to museums and host exhibitions,” says ESAD dean João dos Santos. — TL [esad.ipleria.pt](#)



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Graduate to watch:
Designer Eneida Tavares completed her MA in product design at ESAD in 2014 and is now based at Silos Contentor Criativo. Tavares, who grew up in Barreiro, on the banks of the Tagus opposite Lisbon, has African roots: her parents are from Angola and Cape Verde. Her work actively explores this African heritage from within her European experience. With her Caruma series, for example, she combines the Caldas da Rainha tradition of ceramics with Angolan basketry techniques but chooses to weave with pine needles from the trees that surround her workspace.

(1) De La Espada factory (2) Careful carpentry at De La Espada (3) Bed by De La Espada (4) Gür founder Célia Esteves (5) Rug by Gür (6) Hugo Passos' Obon coffee table (7) Portuguese design magazines (8) Students at Caldas da Rainha's ESAD (9) Madeira's embroidery work (10) Designer Eneida Tavares



- (1) Skrei's office in Porto (2) Lamp at Skrei office (3) Skrei's Francisco Adão da Fonseca (left) and Pedro Jervell (4) Margarida Fernandes of Margarida Fabrica (5) Bathroom at Casa Modesta (6) Casa Modesta in the Algarve (7) Gonçalo Prudêncio's designs (8) R2's wayfinding system at EDP's office in Porto (9) Clearly marked floor designs (10) Signage on glass

Skrei

Homegrown heroes

Based on Porto's historic waterfront, the architects at Skrei have watched the area evolve from a forgotten district to one that's starting to pull in the tourists. While the firm's founders Pedro Jervell and Francisco Adão da Fonseca say that tourism has brought them more projects, their work remains rooted in the past.

"It's tradition we are fascinated by but we try to work out how to use it in the 21st century," says Adão da Fonseca, noting that a Skrei building is never "finished" and continues to live and develop alongside its occupants.

This notion of giving a building a sense of life is honed at Skrei's studio where a materials library of clay, silt, sand and lime from Portugal's various regions is organised beside man-made vernacular elements. Natural materials have been used in much of Skrei's work. For a luxurious residence, designed by the

firm in the town of Caldas de Aregos, they developed a range of earthen floor tiles that are made from soil from the region. "We are not just an architectural company: we bring research, exploration and construction too," says Adão da Fonseca.

This mentality is clear at Skrei's office where, scale models of projects are dotted across the space, all meticulously detailed with the raw materials that the firm will employ in the buildings. "We talk with the materials," says Jervell. — NSG skrei.pt

Margarida Fabrica

Ceramics specialist

Margarida Fabrica, which translates as Margarida Makes, is an apt name for designer Margarida Fernandes' ceramics brand. The studio, which she runs with her husband André Melo, makes pieces ranging from cups, plates and bowls to lampshades and vases for

individual clients, restaurants and hotels. All of the work is handmade and fired in a small atelier in Lisbon's creative space LX Factory.

Usability and a simple aesthetic lie at the heart of Margarida Fabrica's pieces. The work is understated and organic in shape. "Since the beginning my work has been about functionality; I want to make things that are used every day," says Fernandes. "I don't draw my ideas, I create each model by hand and that determines a lot about the pieces and their form." — TL margaridamf.com

Casa Modesta

Handsome retreat

A former fisherman's residence built in the 1940s, Casa Modesta in the Algarve was given a careful facelift by architectural practice Par. The family-owned operation was opened in 2015 with the whitewashed home and storage shed transformed into a modernist nine-room



PHOTOGRAPHERS: Luís Díaz Díaz, Pedro Guimarães, António Nascimento, Filipe Braga



Top event: Experimenta Design Portugal's Experimenta Design (EXD) event celebrates its 10th edition this year, unpacking the biggest issues facing designers. The conference and exhibition, attended by design-industry professionals, will draw on discussions from previous iterations and bring the ideas and findings into the present.

hotel with a design respecting many original elements of the structure. Patios outfitted with hammocks open onto the south side to protect against cooler winds. Flat-roof terraces previously used to dry fish now sport sun loungers from Portuguese brand Lona.

There's a traditional wood-fired oven and a sturdy Douglas fir table in the barrel-vaulted dining area. Materials from the Algarve feature prominently in the renovation, including brass and cork; the former is used on bath fittings, the latter for lampshades. Sliding doors divide bedrooms from the bathrooms, which have a submerged floor that serves as a shallow tub, making life easier when you need to wash sandy feet after a day's outing on the coast. — IC casamodesta.pt

R2

Best for wayfinding

A stalwart in the graphic-design industry, R2 has built a global reputation over the past two decades. Its output has an international accessibility but pays particular attention to Portugal's eclectic culture.

"We love grids and Swiss typography but we are

passionate about Portuguese vernacular and culture and you can see the inspiration in our work," says Artur Rebelo, who runs the studio with founding partner Lizá Defossez Ramalho.

With clients such as publisher Phaidon, Rebelo's business is certainly on the international design radar. R2's speciality has become its wayfinding work, where the designers apply a minimalist touch and tactile materiality to signage. One of R2's most esteemed clients is Energias de Portugal (EDP). R2 worked on the wayfinding for its Lisbon office last year and provided extensive design elements in its Porto office in 2011. — NSG r2design.pt

Gonçalo Prudêncio

Industrial designer to watch

Launched last year, furniture brand Ghome is the brainchild of designer Gonçalo Prudêncio. The 40-year-old was eager to develop a collection that tapped into the country's best raw materials and artisans. He sources local acacia wood and limestone, which are then worked on by carpenters and stonecutters. "The acacia grows in the Serra da Sintra



forest, where I have the luxury of going out and selecting the trees. It's a big advantage as I can check the quality," says Prudêncio, who leaves cut trees to dry for up to two years before turning them into tableware.

For his sturdy stools and work tables he relies on Portuguese stone pine, while marble quarried in Évora is turned into serving bowls and cutting boards; cork, one of the country's biggest exports, finds its way into lamps and candle holders. His pieces have clean lines and a utilitarian style, influences picked up from his time spent working in Copenhagen. "Danish design is inclusive, it's about ensuring that every item is made well. That's what I look for in my designs for Ghome." — IC ghome.pt

